

Establishing a Russian-Spanish Master's Degree in Social Work: Harmonization or a Cultural Fit?

Inna Kozlova

Department of Translation and Interpreting, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

inna.kozlova@uab.cat

Roman Kupriyanov

Department of Social Work, Pedagogy and Psychology, Kazan National Research Technological University, Russia

kroman1@mail.ru

Lluís Quintana

Department of Catalan Philology, former Vice-Rector for International Relations (2012-2016), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

lluis.quintana@uab.cat

Nailya Valeyeva

Department of Social Work, Pedagogy and Psychology, Kazan National Research Technological University, Russia

vmaila53@mail.ru

Elvira Valeyeva

Department of Social Work, Pedagogy and Psychology, Kazan National Research Technological University, Russia

elvaleeva@mail.ru

Abstract

This paper reports on the experience of developing a double-degree master's program in social work between a Russian and a Spanish university. It focuses on the complementarity of the existing training programs in social work and on the handling of cultural and institutional particularities. Developing international master's degrees programs

is a challenge in terms of both adjustments to the curricula and economic viability. A genuine interest in learning from the other country is a *sine qua non* condition difficult to meet because the traditions of social work and welfare in each country are deeply rooted in that country's culture and history. The authors explain how they worked to establish a common ground and describe the results they were able to achieve.

Keywords

international social work – EU politics/policy integration – social work education – social policy – organizations/management – national culture

Introduction

This paper presents our experience of developing a double-degree master's program in social work between a Russian and a Spanish university. It focuses on cultural and institutional particularities that affected this educational initiative, for which reason our study is comparative in nature. Finding a common ground for an international degree requires comparing not only the existing curricula in a given field but also the cultures and the societies themselves. One way to compare cultures is by analyzing the set of values predominant in a given society (Inglehart and Abramson 1994, Schwartz 1994, Inglehart and Baker 2000, Hofstede 2001, Inglehart 2006, Schwartz 2006, Minkov and Hofstede 2014). Values express 'shared conceptions of what is good and desirable in the culture' (Schwartz 2006: 139) and thus may be especially helpful in the field of social work in identifying societal issues to treat and problems to solve. In light of research on global values based on the post-modernization theory (Inglehart and Abramson 1994, Inglehart and Baker 2000, Inglehart 2006), Russia finds itself at the top of the countries with 'secular-rational' values, while Spain is situated in between 'secular-rational' and 'traditional' (including religious) values. At the same time, Russia is characterized by 'survival' values, while Spain shows a predictable shift, within the abovementioned theory, towards 'self-expression' values.

The different weight of religion in society and the fact that Russia tends to emphasize 'survival' values far more heavily than societies that have not experienced communist rule will become points to discuss further in the article. At the same time, to allow for comparison between the two countries on a common ground, we focus on the welfare contexts of the two countries,

a perspective recently suggested by Rush and Keenan (2014) who claim that 'welfare contexts enable and constrain the manner in which social work is practiced' (pp. 1437-1438). Specifically, this approach has been found to be useful in comparing the social work in Ireland, which is characterized by strong religious traditions, with those in other states where the church has had less influence on state policies.

Values predominant in a given society not only mark the way social work is practiced there but also determine the way it is taught and influence efforts to establish international cooperation between educational institutions. Schwartz (2006: 156), who maps the countries of the world simultaneously on seven cultural orientations, finds that Russia is strongly characterized by 'mastery', which is its polar orientation, as well as 'hierarchy' and 'conservatism' (Schwartz 1994) or 'embeddedness' (Schwartz 2006); however, Spain has 'egalitarianism' as its polar orientation, with 'intellectual autonomy' and 'harmony' as two secondary orientations. In Schwartz's dimensions, Russia's values are very similar to those of the United States, while Spain falls into a West European pattern where the culture 'calls for selfless concern for the welfare of others and fitting into the natural and social world rather than striving to change it through assertive action' (Schwartz 2006: 158-159).

Although from a global or multicultural perspective, values come out to be 'more divisive than unifying' (Healy 2007: 11), especially in Europe, which is more characterized by its differences than what its countries and regions have in common (Todorov 2008, Messelink and Ten Thije 2012, Minkov and Hofstede 2014), we need to be aware of possible value gaps when it comes to negotiating between cultures. If we accept that culture consists of 'collective standard solutions to collective recurring problems' (Koole and Ten Thije 1994), values should be understood as showing ideal (rather than real) situations or goals and different ways to achieve them in a given society. As we will see further, the very process of establishing a joint degree, which was a Russian initiative, revealed an attempt of 'mastery' of the situation, while the Spanish counterpart's main concern was to keep 'harmony' of the natural and social world, thus minimizing changes to their existing degree. Even when the countries' goals regarding certain issues coincided (i.e., immigration), the way to treat these issues was different: the Russian partner preferred to speak of 'management of migration processes', while the Spanish partner referred to the 'integration and management of religious diversity' (Table 2). The latter example speaks not only for a distinction between 'mastery' and 'harmony,' but it also reveals 'egalitarianism' as a Spanish polar orientation. In contrast to the immigration issue, the issue of gender equality, which is in line with

the Spanish egalitarian ideal, received much less attention from the Russian partner, who did not regard this issue as a social problem to consider. This fact, which can be partially explained by the stronger tendency towards 'hierarchy' (Healy 2007: 16) in Russia, cannot be stripped of its social and political context: Russian women have formed part of the labor force and have enjoyed voting rights for a century, while Spanish women achieved these rights later and had them vetoed for a few decades until they were re-established in 1975.

It all demonstrates that the analysis of predominant values needs to be complemented by a deeper analysis of the economic conditions, institutions and, in particular, welfare provisions in a given country to be able to suggest a comprehensive curriculum in the field of social work.

Challenges of Double Degrees

The awarding of two degrees by institutions that are located in two different countries has been high on the political agenda for more than a decade (Tauch and Rauhvargers 2002), and several education researchers have already begun questioning the benefits of such programs (Knight 2011, Knight 2013, Maringea, Foskett and Woodfield 2013). These researchers ask, 'What are the reasons for awarding two national degrees for one workload?' and 'Is it a question of trade or a status?' The answers would vary depending on the universities involved; both universities need to see their benefits in the establishment of such a partnership.

Currently in Russia, an additional European degree is synonymous with a high status education that involved either a period of living abroad or in-campus teaching from visiting lecturers. One of the main reasons for Russia's entry into the world educational area is its membership of the Bologna Process, which led to changes in the traditional educational paradigm and a renewal of the content of education. Regardless, the existing differences between the education systems and traditions and the inertia of isolation constrain rapprochement. Although some Russian universities have been developing international relations with universities in Europe over extended periods of time, many problems still persist; for example, the recognition of diplomas is complicated by weak comparability of the content and structure of training (Kupriyanov et al. 2015).

In Spain, double and joint degrees have become a means of attracting foreign students, and the number of such master's programs, which are generally taught in English, is growing rapidly. In 2012, between 75% and 100% of

Spanish higher education institutions offered joint degrees, although the percentage of students who graduated with a joint degree was between 0% and 2.5% (Ministerio de Educación 2012: 6).

While European institutions, nation-states and university management demonstrate their interest in fostering cross-border education and their resolution to promote it via targeted funding, the development of specific program curricula becomes an extra task for the teaching staff. The teachers and coordinators of related programs need to perform analyses of existing curricula, evaluate their strong and weak points in relation to a specific audience and propose a common curriculum. Additionally, the teaching staff is required to offer at least some courses in a vehicular language (usually English) that is suitable for foreign students. Changing the language of instruction might be difficult for some professors, and a number of local students might find such a change discouraging. Another important decision, in this case one made by the university administration, is the determination of the type of degree to award. As Tauch and Rauhvargers (2002: 42) observed, the awarding of one degree in the name of several institutions, or joint degree in Knight's (2011) terms, is legally difficult due to mismatches in national regulations. Instead, it seems preferable to think about double degrees that involve either two separate national qualifications or, alternatively, a single one national qualification that includes some reference to the fact that the degree is an outcome of a joint program, which might be in a form of a diploma supplement.

The outlined scenario for establishing double degrees is exacerbated in our case by the fact that social work is a highly flexible discipline; its aims, objectives and content are largely determined by the current socio-economic situation of the society, the dominant social problems, social policy and, finally, the local culture. The curriculum design of the courses that are to form part of the common curriculum should be relevant to foreign students and ideally provide a new perspective that will complement the training received in their country of origin.

Objectives and Methodology

This paper reports on the experience of developing a double degree master's program in social work between Russian and Spanish universities; in particular, the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB) and the Kazan National Research Technological University (KNRTU). It should be noted that this new project built on already existing Master's in Economics, Law, Organization and Management in Social Work taught at KNRTU and, at its very inception,

conformed with the collaboration agreement between KNRTU and the Spanish University consortium A4U and a Russian Ministry of Education and Science grant that aimed to develop a new master's program in social work. After analyzing the existing master's programs related to social work in the four Spanish universities that form the A4U, the Russian counterpart centered its attention on the Master's in Social Policies, Labor and Welfare that was offered at UAB. To design our joint master's program, we found it necessary to follow the series of steps described below:

- Compare the legislation frameworks for master's degrees between Spain and Russia
- Provide an analysis of precedents and similar experiences to determine the possible scenarios for our perspective joint program
- Outline the social work traditions and describe the evolutions of social work training in both countries
- Compare the existing curricula of the two master's programs in the area of social work in our universities and develop a joint proposal regarding the new double-degree master's program.

The present paper is similarly structured. It begins by presenting an overview of the current higher education systems of Spain and Russia and describes the main decisions made by both countries in the process of European convergence. Our foci in this part were on the specific challenges that are currently faced by Spanish and Russian master's programs and the students' mobility between the two countries.

The second part of our paper comprises an analysis of the parallels to our joint program that was conducted to learn from past experiences. However, we found that the only similar project was developed between Finland and Russia and that ours was the first attempt to establish collaboration in the field of social work between Russian and Spanish universities. Therefore, we included a description of scenarios, including those that were less ambitious, for international collaboration at the master's level between our countries.

The third part of our paper is dedicated to developing the content of the prospective program in social work. This section begins by looking for common ground at various levels. The Spanish and Russian traditions of social work are outlined at the cultural level, and an overview of the social policies that have been implemented by each state at the socio-political level is offered. Training in social work in both countries is described at the academic and professional levels from a historical perspective. Familiarity with the contexts in which the two existing programs are embedded makes it easier to compare the

existing curricula and choose the elements that should be shared in our joint program.

Spanish and Russian Higher Education Schemes

Spain signed the Bologna declaration in 1999 together with another 28 European countries. Until 2006, there were two types of degrees: three-year 'diplomatura' or 'ingeniería técnica' that led to medium-level technical professions in fields such as social work, and four-, five- or six-year 'licenciatura' or 'ingeniería' that provided access to higher-level professions or academic disciplines and opened the path to a doctorate. Currently, the predominant scheme is 4+1, and Spanish universities prepare their bachelors ('graduado') in four years (some professions require five or six years) and masters in one year.

The Russian Federation joined the Bologna process of convergence in 2003 by adopting a declaration in which it committed itself implementing the basic principles of the Bologna process by 2010. Russia previously had universal degrees called 'diplom' that lasted for five years (occasionally six for some professions), and although it could have easily divided its degrees into a three-year bachelor's ('bachelor') and a two-year master's ('magistr'), its current scheme is 4+2.

Challenges for Spanish and Russian Master's Programs

Although in Spain the predominant scheme is currently 4+1, each university enjoys relative autonomy in defining its degrees and their durations, and a number of two-year master's degrees are also offered. While master's (in areas other than language study) aimed at local and Latin American students last for one year and are taught in Spanish, joint master's with foreign universities that are currently being taught and implemented are two years long and are generally taught in English. These programs are held by consortia of several European universities, and students in such programs are required to spend one year at their home institution and the other year at a partner university.

In Russia, the added sixth year and the fact that the resulting two-year master's degree has a cost similar to that of other European countries (Russian five-year degrees used to be free) cause students to look for master's degrees in universities other than their *alma mater*, including universities abroad. The resulting postgraduate students' reciprocal mobility causes universities to compete for students and question their existing programs and the original designs of their master's degrees while trying to incorporate foreign experiences. The

language of instruction is mainly Russian, although some subjects taught in English are currently being introduced primarily to foster international student mobility. There are some prestigious Russian universities that offer two-year dual master's programs with leading European universities under the same consortium scheme described above.

Student Mobility between Spain and Russia

The mobility of international students between the two countries, although facilitated by the inclusion of Russia and Spain in the Bologna process and the creation of the common European Higher Education Area, is still strongly limited. Undergraduate Spanish student exchanges are nearly exclusively limited to the area of developing language and intercultural competences for translation or teaching purposes (Kozlova 2010). Because Russia has until recently been excluded from Erasmus scheme funding, these students are the only ones who find their personal economic effort of stay in Russia justified. The inverse situation in which Russian undergraduate students go to Spain on exchange is limited because knowledge of Spanish is not at all common among Russian non-language students.

At the master's level, mobility within Spanish master's programs is more complicated than that at the undergraduate level partially because of the application of Bologna imperatives in this country. One problem is that the majority of master's programs in Spain last for only one year, which hinders student mobility within a particular master's program. The result is that the majority of Spanish master's programs are currently incompatible with the Russian programs that last for two years. Thus reciprocal mobility with Russia can only exist in two-year master's degrees that are taught in Spain under the consortium scheme. Here, the aforementioned language barrier arises again. This scheme necessarily requires that both universities offer at least some teaching in English and that students have a good command of this language, which is a problem that has not yet been solved in these two countries. The mobility of Spanish master's students is likely to increase after the 3+2 scheme is implemented in Spain beginning in 2016. This growth in mobility will most likely be associated with the use of English as the *lingua franca*.

Precedents

To the best of our knowledge, ours is the first attempt to establish a Russian-Spanish double degree in social work; thus, the relevant precedents include, on

the one hand, double and joint degrees between Spanish and Russian universities at the master's level and, on the other hand, international collaborations in the area of social work.

International Master's Degrees that have been Established between Spanish and Russian Universities

Notably, the collaboration between our countries in the area of education is still incipient. To illustrate this, of the ten dual master's programs that are being run at the Moscow State University of International Relations (MGIMO 2013) with leading European Universities, none is established in partnership with a Spanish university. However, there are examples of consortia in Erasmus Mundus, currently Erasmus+ program (European Commission 2015), that involve the participation of both Spanish and Russian universities as full partners. For example, the ERANET-MUNDUS (2011) coordinated by the University of Barcelona involved 10 EU and 8 Russian universities and offered a number of scholarships to master's students (30 in total, including 9 to EU and 21 to Russian students), although social work did not form a part of this academic offer. Additionally, the ERANET-MUNDUS did not seek to establish double, dual, or joint master's degrees between specific universities but rather a flexible mobility scheme. To our knowledge, the current collaborations between Russia and Spain in dual master's programs are limited to the ESCP Europe Business School consortium (ESCP 2013), which offers two-year master's degrees that include the possibility of spending one year on a Madrid campus (Universidad Carlos III) and another year in the Higher School of Economics in Moscow. If students find this scheme to be too expensive, there is an alternative 1-year master's program from the International Business School Alliance (IBSA 2014) in which students who wish to pursue a master's degree in the two countries can study for one semester at IBS-Moscow and another semester at the University of Valencia to obtain an international master's. Indeed, this type of master's is not a double/dual or joint master's degree; rather, it is a master's degree that is issued by one university that forms a part of the alliance that allows for student exchange at the master's level. Creating such an international master's can even be achieved without requiring students to spend a semester abroad but rather inviting visiting lecturers (the Master's in Political Science at UAB (UAB 2013) is an example of this type of scheme).

International Master's Degree in Social Work

Leaving aside Spanish-Russian collaboration and focusing instead on the area of Social Work, we managed to identify an approximate equivalent to our most ambitious objective. A university consortium called Barents Cross Border

University (BCBU 2013) provides opportunities for student mobility, particularly in practice training, and includes a common block of subjects. The main partners of this program are Lapland University in Finland and the Northern (Arctic) Federal University in Russia, and a number of other universities (one Finnish and six Russian) are associate partners. This program has the objective of creating cross-border learning environments between universities in Northern Finland and North-West Russia. The project has been funded by the Finnish State program on cooperation with neighboring areas. The curriculum of the International Master's in Comparative Social Work was developed collaboratively and comprises a block of 'international joint studies (80 ECTS)' and 'home university studies (40 ECTS)'. Although each university awards its own master's degree to the students registered at their institution (i.e., if they registered at Lapland University, they are awarded a Master's in Social Sciences, and if they registered at their Russian counterpart, they are awarded a Master's in Social Work), the graduates also receive a diploma supplement. If they wish, they can obtain a Double Master's in Comparative Social Work if they complete a total of 160 credits.

Summary of the Precedents

As we have observed from the experiences described above and summarized in Table 1, double/dual degrees are generally established in consortia that have at least two main partners and other universities that can either be full partners or associates. To enable students to target a specific degree, extra funding, either external (state funding for BCBU) or internal (higher fees and/or living expenses abroad paid by ESCP or IBSA students), needs to be provided. Another condition is that both universities must be interested in issuing corresponding degree certificates for either status or economic reasons.

Bilateral student mobility is generally taken for granted in joint programs. However, such mobility might be unequal between the countries (indeed, it is unequal in most Erasmus Mundus programs such as ERANET) and is limited to a single semester (IBSA) or not required at all because teaching staff exchange serves as an alternative (e.g., the Master in Political Science at UAB). Finally, while similarity in the interests of the participating institutions is a *sine qua non* condition, each institution is expected to provide its unique perspective on the discipline; for example, the Master's degree in Comparative Social Work (BCBU) emphasizes an improved understanding of national and global social work through a comparative approach to study. Additionally, students receive practice training in other countries (in the case of the BCBU, neighboring countries) that provides them with the opportunity to familiarize themselves with social work in different contexts and societies.

TABLE 1 *Summary of the precedents*

Spanish University	Russian University as its partner	MA degree type (double, joint or other)	MA degree duration	Time spent abroad	Specialization in Social Work
Universidad de Barcelona	8 Russian Universities	Erasmus Mundus (ERANET-MUNDUS)	2 years	1 year	–
Universidad Carlos III (Madrid)	HSE (Moscow)	Dual Master (Consortium ESCP)	2 years	1 year	–
Universidad de Valencia	IBS – Moscow	International Master (Consortium IBSA)	1 year	1 semester	–
–	BCBU (2 Finnish and 7 Russian universities)	Double Master's Degree (160 ECTS) or a National degree with a diploma supplement (120 ECTS)	2 years	Intensive season Schools or 1 year when opting for Double Degree	Yes

Working toward a Joint Program

The comparison of already existing master's programs, i.e., the Master's in Social Policies, Labor and Welfare taught at UAB and the Master's in Economics, Law, Organization and Management in Social Work taught at KNRTU, began by comparing the titles of their subjects/modules. Notably, in this step, few similarities were identified. To account for this difficulty, a comparative table with the partial coincidences between the subjects of the two programs was composed (published in Kupriyanov and Kozlova 2013). The first conclusion was that the Russian master's program included more theoretical disciplines than did the Spanish program. In contrast, the latter exhibited a practical approach based on the current problems of the society, such as the gender gap, unemployment and immigration (Valeyeva and Babiukh 2013: 5). Given

that the project received funding from the Russian state and mainly sought to train Russian professionals, one of the priorities of the new program was to maintain the following two theoretical blocks of subjects: the general science module, and professional cycle – fundamentals. Simultaneously, the problems of employment and immigration seemed especially relevant to the Russian counterpart, who expressed an interest in integrating the corresponding UAB courses into the new program. Notably, the Spanish subjects are generally between 10 and 12 credits, while the Russian subjects are traditionally more segmented. If a subject taught at UAB were to form a part of the new program addressed to Russian students, it would be necessary to reduce its workload to 6 ECTS. This condition suggested the possibility that Spanish lecturers could teach intensive courses to Russian students, which was later formed into a bilateral agreement on teaching staff exchange between our faculties. While the Spanish counterpart was not yet ready to create a new program for Spanish students, it was interested in receiving visiting lecturers from Russia to teach specific seminars worth up to 2 ECTS as a variable part of the existing program.

Developing a New Master's Program for Russian Students

The new program addressed to Russian master's students was titled 'Social Work in Industry', and once composed, its curriculum became the property of the Russian state with the possibility of being adopted by other Russian universities. The interest of the state in developing such a new program with international participation is due to the fact that social work is a young profession in Russia. Currently, in the Russian labor market, one can find social workers with a wide range of qualifications that span from medium-level professionals with two or three years of vocational training in social work through a bachelor's to specialists of social work (three to five years of training at the university) to masters of social work (six years at the university). This multiplicity of degrees causes certain difficulties for prospective employers. Compared to more basic levels, training for a master's in social work is characterized by a wider perspective on the aims and objectives of social work (Kupriyanov and Kozlova 2012). This perspective shifts the objective of social work from individuals in difficult life situations to companies' and institutions' employees and labor collectives. For this reason, there is currently in Russia a great demand for master's programs such as the 'Economics, Law, Management and Organization in Social Work', 'Social Work at an Industrial Enterprise' and 'Social Development of a Labor Collective'.

The Russian partner, who expressed interest in the existing Spanish subjects of unemployment and immigration, was primarily attracted by the related policies at institutions or enterprises, specifically the employment policies for

company staff and the integration of foreign workers. It was necessary to account for this difference in perspective while selecting the contents of these subjects, which had to be reduced from the existing 12 ECTS to 6 ECTS each. It was also vital for us to consider the context of each individual country because unemployment and labor force immigration and the very concept of 'social work' are strongly linked to the history, welfare contexts and predominant values of each individual country. Analysis of the context in which social work emerged and developed as a profession is closely related to the public policies implemented by the state.

Contrasting the Russian and Spanish Contexts

As we mentioned earlier, social work has hardly more than a 20-year history as a profession in Russia. Currently, the lack of experience perceived of Russian scholars in social work translates into their attempts to assimilate foreign experiences while trying to remain loyal to the pre-Soviet value of charity and beneficence traditions (Iarskaia 1995) that were strongly influenced by the Christian church. In this sense, Spain, which also has deeply rooted religious traditions of charity, exhibits similarities. In both Spain and Russia, the church and its members have for centuries felt responsible for the care and welfare of the underprivileged. In these two countries, scholars have faced the need to integrate foreign experience that is strongly marked by the existing Protestant tradition into social work. Indeed, the very objective of social work as a professional activity, i.e., the integration of a person into the society, is a Protestant concept (Shanin 1997). As such, this concept clashes with traditional Catholic and Orthodox ethos, particularly in relation to concept of charity (Méndez-Bonito Zorita 2005, Martínez-Brawley and Vázquez-Aguado 2008, Kupriyanov 2013). However, it still needs to be taken into account that the church has been much more omnipresent in Spanish society and has actively participated in the shaping of social workers' training in the 20th century (Hamburger, Sander and Wöbcke 2001, Gómez and Buendía 2009). In Spain, the majority of institutions that offer social work training have emerged as related to the church in the National Catholic State. In contrast, in Russia, the church has been separated from the state and its social policies for the majority of the 20th century, and this separation has left its imprint on the manner in which social work training is currently perceived.

Although at the end of the 19th century, particularly after serfs' emancipation in 1861, Russia experienced a great rise in courses, Sunday schools and departments that trained nurses, supervisors and educators in social charitable associations and private higher education institutions (Resanov 2011), the

evolution of the social worker as a professional was been interrupted by the drastic changes in the political and social atmosphere in 1917. Industrialization and urbanization at the turn of the century accentuated class differences, which elicited a social revolution. The newly created Ministry of State Assistance abolished the existing institutions of social help and redistributed existing funds to meet the needs that were determined by the new state policies (Firsov 1999). The very concept of 'assistance' was later removed and replaced by 'provision', which references what we currently understand as a social welfare system. Religious and beneficence organizations were relieved from this duty at the same time that 'charity' was defined as a 'concept characteristic of a class society' (Big Soviet Encyclopedia 1927, T.6, p. 466) and was no longer welcome in the new state that claimed itself to be classless. Because the state provided for citizens' needs, the very concept of professional 'social worker' was out of place. The profession had been inexistent for many decades until the whole state system collapsed accompanied by a rapid change in the value system of its citizens. After 1991, the former Soviet Union's citizens have experienced such a shock in losing their welfare security that this fact shifted their value emphasis towards the materialistic (Inglehart 2006: 133). The profession of social worker then re-emerged to assist those who failed to find their place in the new society characterized by 'survival' values.

In Spain, as in other European countries, by the end of the 19th century industrialization, capitalism and massive population movement into the cities created tension in the society that forced the Spanish government to begin implementing policies that 'could have an impact on the improvement and well-being of the working class' (Seguridad Social 2014). Since then, a series of acts have been passed and including the following: the Labor Accidents Act in 1900; Worker Retirement in 1919; Obligatory Maternity Insurance in 1923; Forced Unemployment Insurance in 1931; Medical Insurance in 1942; and Obligatory Old-Age and Disability Insurance in 1947. The very titles of some of these acts make refer to their 'obligatory' characters, the fact that reveals that developing social security met resistance both on the part of the employers and the employees. The lack of coverage was, in many cases, compensated for by mutual funds that were created by worker's associations. Social work emerged in Spain as a profession in 1934 in Barcelona. Although the Republican Spanish government made an additional step forward in labor legislation, it failed to establish universal social security coverage. The tension still existed in a society that needed to be regulated, and this tension laid the foundations for the emergence of social work as a profession. Understood as an instrument of 'containment, education and adjustment' (Báñez Tello 1997: 154, translation

ours), social work was primarily aimed at working with individuals who for some reason found themselves excluded from the society, and consequently from the existing social security. Although this charitable and philanthropic activity was initially voluntary and primarily performed by middle-class women who could afford to work without pay (Báñez Tello 2008), the training of corresponding professionals soon became the concern of the state. The School for Social Studies for Women was established in Barcelona, and in 1934, the first graduates of this school began their activities as professional social workers. Hamburger et al. (2001: 10) traced the origins of this school to the Catalan Women's Social Movement and referred to it as a branch of the Catholic 'School for Social Services' that was established in Brussels. After the fall of the Second Republic in 1939, the newly created National Catholic state confirmed its interest in this area by founding the 'School for Family and Social Education'. Five additional similar schools were established by National Catholicism by the mid-fifties, and by the end of sixties, there were 42, the majority of which were founded by the Church. In 1964, the state authorized the training of non-university officials called 'social assistants' in medium-level schools. Social work appeared as an undergraduate university three-year 'Diploma in Social Work' degree in 1983. A Master's in Social Work began in 2006-2007 with both national and international collaboration in mind and was closely related to the application of the Bologna imperatives (Vazquez-Aguado 2005: 244). The Doctorate in Social Work appeared in 2008 (Gómez and Buendía 2009).

Project Outcomes

Given that the Spanish training in social work has a much longer history than its Russian equivalent, it is understandable that it was mostly the Russian partner who was interested in acquiring Spanish experience and not the other way around. We identified a number of aspects that made the Spanish experience valuable to the Russian partner. First, the beneficence traditions of the churches in the two countries seemed to coincide until at least 1917, which created common ground between the manners in which social work is understood in the two countries. It helped the Russian scholars, backed by the Spanish experience of continuity, to imagine the lost link between charity traditions and social work. Second, after 1991, the social security systems of the two countries have been comparable. Public social security is not universal; rather, it coexists with institutions that offer private coverage, and some individuals require social assistance. Given that this situation is new for Russia, it is necessary that training in social work at the master's level incorporate the acquisition of some knowledge about the European social models, particularly in reference

to social and employment policies in the context of negotiated (and not state-imposed) labor conditions. Third, another common element shapes the current labor markets of both Russia and Spain, i.e., the arrival of immigrants from neighbor states looking for jobs. This situation represents another new challenge for Russian masters' of social work who will have to operate at the level of companies and institutions.

As a result of our project, we developed a study program (Table 2) for the new master's degree 'Social Work in Industry' that was aimed at Russian students and is currently being implemented at KNRTU.

TABLE 2 *The final study program of the 'Social Work in Industry' Master's degree*

Subject	ECTS
<i>General science module</i>	
Social culture	2
Contemporary philosophy and methodology of science	2
Foreign language for business purposes	2
Information technologies	2
<i>Variable part</i>	
Foreign language	4
Foreign language for professional purposes	3
History of trade unions and their activity	2
<i>Optional subjects</i>	
a) Employment policies in the countries of the European Union; ^[1]	6
b) Organization of human resources at an industrial enterprise	
a) Social responsibility and social accountability;	2
b) Professional deformation of social services managerial staff	
<i>Professional cycle</i>	
<i>Fundamentals</i>	
Pedagogy and psychology of higher education	2
Object- and subject-oriented case technologies in social work	2
Conceptual foundations of contemporary social state and social law	3
Theory and practice of social work management	2
Qualitology in social work	2

Subject	ECTS
<i>Variable part</i>	
Organization of in-company training at an industrial enterprise	3
Labor legislation and human resources documentation support at an industrial enterprise	2
Public relations, social image and publicity in the context of an industrial enterprise	3
<i>Optional subjects</i>	
a) Social law and labor relations; ^[2]	
b) Social security and safety at an industrial enterprise	6
a) Management of migration processes in labor sphere; ^[3]	
b) Social technologies in labor policy	6
a) Psychology of a labor collective;	
b) Psychology of religion and ethnos	2
[1] Corresponding to the UAB module 'Globalization and the European Social Model'. [2] Corresponding to the UAB module 'Social Law and Labor Relations Compared'. [3] Corresponding to the UAB module 'Migration Policies, Integration and Management of Religious Diversity'.	

This program includes three optional subjects that are taught in English by UAB lecturers. These subjects are based on the three UAB modules that were already taught as part of the Master's degree in Social Policies, Labor and Welfare that was coordinated by Prof. Antonio Martín. The new program contains jointly elaborated English-language teaching materials. The textbooks, which are entitled 'Comparison of Social Models in Europe: Social and Employment Policies' (118 pp.) and 'Labor Migration Management' (128 pp.), were edited in English and printed by the KNRTU publishing service and include detailed teaching programs and a selection of research articles authored by UAB lecturers. A bilateral agreement on teacher exchange was signed between our universities to allow for the teaching of these subjects in Russia by visiting lecturers from UAB. However, the availability of this option during each academic year is subject to additional funding that is required for teaching staff mobility, which is also the case for Russian lecturers who were invited to teach seminars in English as part of the existing UAB program.

Concluding Remarks

Ultimately, it was found unviable, at least at the moment, to establish a double degree program in social work between our universities. There were a number of obstacles that we could not overcome, the most important of which were the following:

- Unequal interest of the Russian and Spanish students in the study of social work in the other country due to the lack of a Russian social work training tradition;
- Reduced opportunity for Spanish student mobility within the short master's programs;
- Language barriers on both sides that would require the students and teachers to communicate in their non-native language;
- The lack of mobility grants between Spain and Russia.

Nonetheless, the experience gained in the process of developing a joint program was found to be very useful. First, this experience made it possible to take a fresh look at the social worker training of each country through outsider's eyes. It also allowed the detection of common elements and differences, the exchange of experiences and the enrichment of each program curriculum due to the addition of an intercultural perspective.

Although the effects of our project were unequal between the parts and mainly benefitted the Russian partner, the Spanish counterpart received the opportunity to host overseas lecturers to complement their program with short seminars taught in English. The project contributed to the dissemination of research performed by the UAB lecturers beyond European borders. Finally, the Spanish university expanded its international reach by signing a general collaboration agreement with a Russian university and later two specific agreements related to teacher exchange corresponding to this project and student exchange in the area of chemistry and bioscience, which is the strongest area of KNRTU. The lateral effects of our initiative with UAB remain to be evaluated.

The joint work experience also indicated the obstacles that stand in the way of international collaboration but are beginning to be resolved. The majority of the UAB and KNRTU lecturers demonstrated shortages of oral English communication skills and poor motivation to adapt their programs to foreign students. Both universities have recently begun implementing policies that aim to resolve the problem of the language barrier specifically by offering free

language courses to the staff and offering incentives for teaching subjects in English rather than in Spanish or Catalan.

To solve the problem of the current mismatch in the duration of the master's programs in Spain and abroad, which jeopardize our goal of developing a double degree for master's students, the Spanish government is now proposing a move toward two-year master's programs, which will most likely favor both teacher and student mobility. The other difference that we detected in the Russian and Spanish traditional workloads per subject turned out to be less problematic and was solved by selecting only the content that was relevant for each partner. The relevance and perceived usefulness of the program content in the new socio-cultural context was identified as a key issue in our experience of establishing an international degree.

If we were to answer the question posed in the title of the article, having to choose between the harmonization of standards in higher education at the global level and an alternative scenario, defined as a cultural fit, we would be more inclined to defend the latter. Not only does harmonization threaten the links with local cultures, it also ignores 'local conditions to which social work must respond' (Méndez-Bonito Zorita 2005: 226). Our experience demonstrated that, in practice, the process of establishing a joint degree between two specific institutions situated in different countries has little to do with global standards and a lot to do with cultural and institutional particularities. We are ready to accept that the societies are developing in a similar direction, enabling researchers to refer to the current change as post-modernization and to speak of global values. At the same time, as our research confirmed, there are considerable cultural gaps that we are generally not aware of until we find ourselves in between the two cultures facing the need to negotiate between them. We found such a gap in the curriculum share dedicated to gender equality, in the perspective adopted on immigration and, most notably, in the way curriculum is conceived and segmented. We have also learnt that negotiating between cultures, and working towards a joint degree program in particular, is impossible without a common goal and a shared interest, which needs to be complemented by favorable economic conditions and the geographical or historical context. For example, the fact that BCBU was more successful than us in establishing a double Master of Social Work has its explanation. First, Finland and Russia are neighboring countries, making travel more rational. It is well-known that Spain is an attractive tourist destination for many Russians, but travelling there on business only makes sense when travel expenses are covered by some financing institution, which is not sustainable in the long term. Second, both Finland and Russia were interested in the abovementioned double degree: Russia needs other countries' know-how in Social Work, and

Finland considers Russia its potential zone of influence, hence aimed Finnish funding. In contrast, Spain has similar grant programs addressed in Latin American countries, while Russia falls out of its zone of interest. This raises important questions about the nature and hierarchy of actors in international cooperation.

Still, as our research revealed, the societies of Spain and Russia do have a lot in common. Their social problems are often the same, although their interpretation and attitudes to these problems vary. Therefore, the solutions adopted in the two societies are different, and these differences end up affecting training Masters of Social Work. Although separated by distance, Spain and Russia have been in the past and currently are the countries in contact, which will surely facilitate collaboration and research in the medium and long terms.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Russian Ministry of Education and Science under Grant 14.B37.21.0280 and by the Department of Translation, Interpreting and East Asian Studies, UAB.

References

- Báñez Tello, T. 1997. "Género y trabajo social." [Gender and Social Work] *Acciones e Investigaciones Sociales* [Social Action and Research] 6: 152-188.
- Báñez Tello, T. 2008. "Social Work Education and Profession in Spain". *The Europe Institute for Social Work Berlin: Articles Forum* [online] Retrieved May 5, 2014 (<http://www.socialeurope.de/service/articles-forum.html>).
- BCBU (Barents Cross Border University). 2013. "Comparative Social Work Master's." Retrieved January 16, 2014 (http://www.ulapland.fi/InEnglish/Units/Faculty_of_Social_Sciences/Studies/Study_programmes/International_Masters's_degree_programmes/Comparative_Social_Work.iw3).
- ERANET-MUNDUS. 2011. *Eranet-Mundus: Euro-Russian Academic Network-Mundus*. Retrieved October 16, 2014 (<http://www.eranetmundus.ub.edu/>).
- ESCP Europe. 2013. *Dual Degrees*. Retrieved December 5, 2013 (<http://www.esceurope.eu/escp-europe-programmes/master-in-management/degree-awards/dual-degrees-master-in-management-escp-europe/>).
- European Commission. 2015. Erasmus+. Retrieved January 15, 2015 (http://ec.europa.eu/education/external-relation-programmes/mundus_en.htm).
- Firsov, M. V. 1999. *Istoriya sotzial'noy raboti v Rossii*. [History of Social Work in Russia] Moscow: Vlados.

- Gómez, F. and F. Buendía. 2009. "The Development of Social Work Education in Spain." *European Journal of Social Work* 12 (1): 113-117.
- Hamburger, Y. F., G. Sander and M. Wöbcke. 2001. *Social Work Education in Europe*. Retrieved May 5, 2015 (http://www.certs-europe.com/SITE_FRANCAIS/publications/swed-eur.pdf).
- Healy, L. M. 2007. "Universalism and Cultural Relativism in Social Work Ethics." *International Social Work* 50(1): 11-26.
- Hofstede, G. 2001. *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations across Nations*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Iarskaia, V. 1995. "Blagotvoritel'nost' i miloserdie kak soziokulturnye zennosti." [Beneficence and Charity as Socio-Cultural Values]. *Rossiiskii zhurnal sotsial'noy raboty* [Russian Journal of Social Work] 2: 27-35.
- IBSA (International Business School Alliance). 2014. *Master in International Management*. Retrieved October 16, 2014 (<http://www.mastersportal.eu/studies/24540/master-in-international-management.html>).
- Inglehart, R. 2006. "Mapping Global Values." *Comparative Sociology* 5(2-3): 115-136.
- Inglehart, R. and P. R. Abramson. 1994. "Economic Security and Value Change." *American Political Science Review* 88(2): 336-354.
- Inglehart, R. and W. E. Baker. 2000. "Modernization, Cultural Change and the Persistence of Traditional Values." *American Sociological Review* 65: 19-51.
- Knight, J. 2011. "Five Myths about Internationalization." *International Higher Education* 62: 14-15.
- Knight, J. 2013. The Changing Landscape of Higher Education Internationalization – for Better or Worse? *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education. Journal of the Association of University Administrators (AUA)* 17(3): 84-90.
- Kozlova, I. 2010. V Rossiyu po obmenu: motivatsiya i ozhidaniya ispanskikh studentov. [To Russia on Exchange: Expectations and Motivation of Spanish Students] Pp. 161-165 in *Sbornik materialov mezhdunarodnoy nauchnoprakticheskoy konferentsii Professional'no napravlennoe obuchenie russkomu yazyku inostrannykh grazhdan*. [Proceedings of International Conference on Professional Russian Language Training of Foreign Citizens], edited by A. N. Rementsov et al. Moscow: MADI (State Technological University).
- Kupriyanov, R. V. 2013. "Razvitie sotsial'noy raboty v Ispanii i Rossii." [Development of Social Work in Spain and Russia]. *Herald of Kazan Technological University* 4/2013: 367-373.
- Kupriyanov, R. and I. Kozlova. 2012. "Funktsional'nyy podkhod k mnogourovnevnoy podgotovke rabotnikov sotsial'noy sfery." [Functional Approach to the Gradual Training of Social Sphere Specialists] *Herald of Kazan Technological University* 16/2012: 220-224.

- Kupriyanov, R. and I. Kozlova. 2013. "Developing Double Degree Bilingual Master's Program 'Social Work in Industry.'" Pp. 633-635 in *Interactive Collaborative Learning (ICL)*, 2013 International Conference on ICL. Piscataway, NJ: IEEE. DOI: 10.1109/ICL.2013.6644669
- Kupriyanov, R. V., R. N. Zaripov, N. S. Valeyeva, E. R. Valeyeva, I. R. Zaripova and M. I. Nadeyeva. 2015. "The Main Directions of International Educational Integration: Potential Benefits and Risks of Reforming Professional Education." *Review of European Studies* 7(3): 305-312.
- Maringea, F., N. Foskett and S. Woodfield. 2013. "Emerging Internationalization Models in an Uneven Global Terrain: Findings from a Global Survey." *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education (Special Issue: Contemporary Issues on the Internationalization of Higher Education: Critical and Comparative Perspectives)* 43(1): 9-36.
- Martínez-Brawley, E. E. and O. Vázquez-Aguado. 2008. "The Professionalization of Spanish Social Work: Moving Closer to Europe or Away from its Root." *European Journal of Social Work* 11(1): 3-13.
- Méndez-Bonito Zorita, P. 2005. "The History of Social Work Education in Spain: Does Harmonization Make Sense?" *Portularia* 5(1): 223-237.
- Messelink, A. and J. D. Ten Thije. 2012. "Unity in Super-Diversity: European Capacity and Intercultural Inquisitiveness of the Erasmus Generation 2.0." *Dutch Journal of Applied Linguistics* 1(1): 80-101.
- Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte de España. 2012. *Comments of the National Report regarding the Bologna Process implementation 2009-2012 Spain*. Retrieved May 2, 2014 (http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/National%20reports/Spain_and_Annex.pdf).
- Minkov, M. and G. Hofstede. 2014. Clustering of 316 European Regions on Measures of Values. Do Europe's Countries Have National Cultures? *Cross-Cultural Research* 48(2): 144-176.
- MGIMO (Moscow State Institute of International Relations). 2013. *Double Degrees Masters Programs*. Retrieved January 5, 2014 (<http://ip.mgimo.ru/masters/Double-Degrees-Programs>).
- Resanov, S. 2011. *Osnovnye tendentsii professional'noy podgotovki kadrov dlya sfery obshchestvennogo prizreniya v Rossii vo vtoroy polovine XIX-nachale XX veka.* [Main Tendencies of Professional Staff Training for the Russian State Charity System in the Late 19th – Early 20th Century]. PhD dissertation, Department of Education, Kursk State University, Kursk.
- Rush, M. and M. Keenan. 2014. "The Social Politics of Social Work: Anti-Oppressive Social Work Dilemmas in Twenty-First-Century Welfare Regimes." *British Journal of Social Work* 44(6): 1436-1453.

- Schwartz, S. H. 1994. "Beyond Individualism/Collectivism: New Cultural Dimensions of Values." Pp. 85-119 in *Individualism and Collectivism: Theory, Method and Applications*, edited by U. Kim et al. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Schwartz, S. H. 2006. "A Theory of Cultural Value Orientations: Explication and Applications." *Comparative Sociology* 5(2-3): 137-182.
- Seguridad Social. 2014. *History of the Social Security*. Retrieved October 15, 2014 (http://www.seg-social.es/Internet_6/LaSeguridadSocial/HistoriadelSegurid47711/index.htm).
- Shanin, T. 1997. "Sozial'naya rabota kak kul'turny fenomen sovremennosti: novaya professiya i akademicheskaya disziplina v kontekste sozial'noy teorii i politicheskoy praktiki nashih dnei." [Social Work as a Cultural Phenomenon of Modernity: a New Profession and an Academic Discipline in the Context of Social Theory and Political Practice of Today] Pp. 18-43 in *Vzaimosvyaz' social'noy raboty i sozial'noy politiki*. [The Interrelation of Social Work and Social Policy], edited by S. Ramon. Moscow: Aspekt-Press.
- Tauch, C. and A. Rauhvargers. 2002. *Survey on Master Degrees and Joint Degrees in Europe*. Brussels: European University Association. Retrieved May 5, 2013 (http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/Survey_Master_Joint_degrees_en.1068806054837.pdf).
- Todorov, T. 2008. "European Identity." Translation by N. Bracher. *South Central Review* 25(3): 3-15.
- UAB. 2013. *Political Science Master*. Retrieved February 3, 2014 (<http://www.uab.es/servlet/Satellite/informacion-academica-de-los-masteres-oficiales/masteres-oficiales-en-ingles/informacion-general/ciencia-politica/-political-science-1096483199983.html?param1=1326193595698>).
- Valeyeva, E. and V. Babiukh. 2013. "Izuchenie problem sotsial'noy politiki Ispanii i Rossii v protsesse prepodavaniya pravovykh distsiplin studentam magistratury v ramkakh programmy dvoynykh diplomov." [A Study of Social Policy Problems in Spain and Russia in the Process of Teaching Law Disciplines to Master's Students of Double Degrees]. *Herald of Kazan Technological University* 1/2013: 301-306.
- Vázquez-Aguado, O. 2005. "El Espacio Europeo de Educación Superior y el Trabajo Social en España." [European Higher Education Area and Social Work in Spain] *Portularia* 5(1): 239-255.