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Book review: Jacob Kornbeck (Ed.) & Niel Rosendal Jensen (Ed.) (2009) **The diversity of social pedagogy in Europe**. Studies in comparative Social Pedagogies and International Social Work and Social Policy, Vol. VII. Europaischer HochschulVerlag

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This is an essential book to catch up on the current state of Social Pedagogy in Europe. Rosendal and Kornbeck have coordinated the works of a whole series of authors from different European countries who reflect on the state of social pedagogy in their respective countries. They also pose and analyse specific cases of social pedagogy. Obviously, not all European countries are included in the book but the editors in order to compile the articles used the criterion of having countries where social pedagogy has a long tradition and others where it has begun to develop in recent years. Germany and UK are respectively the most representative examples of both extremes.

As the authors point out in the introduction, this book attempts to fill a gap in the literature on social work and social action. At the time of publication, there was no other book in English that showed comparatively developments and applications taking place in different European countries in the field of Social Pedagogy and the social and educational work. The book also seeks two objectives in relation to countries with great social pedagogical tradition and countries with little social pedagogical tradition. It seeks to show how what has been constructed in the first ones can help the second ones to see the possibilities and potential of social pedagogy. It's about seeing how the latter countries configure support, so that the former countries see new perspectives and approaches of socio-pedagogical work not covered so far.

Social pedagogy is a highly complex theoretical and practical field, which is subject to multiple and varied interpretations not only between countries and traditions but also within the very national contexts. The book's title is no accident. It shows, from its formulation, how the authors interpret the field of social pedagogy. The diversity of areas for action and of conceptual, methodological, intervention, and research approaches will be one of the most representative characteristics of social pedagogy.

The book is organized into three blocks. The first one is a review of past and present through pictures of the status of social pedagogy in Germany, France, Sweden, and Poland. Beyond the

similarities and differences of social pedagogy in each country, from my point of view, the most remarkable points of these chapters are three. First, the ways in which social pedagogy is related to social work, which differ depending on countries and traditions. Today, this is a not well-solved issue at the theoretical level or at the academic or professional level. Second, the finding of the momentum that social pedagogy is experiencing in recent years in response to many of the problems that our societies are experiencing.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting the doubts about the use of the term social pedagogy in the French context, given their lack of tradition. Third, it is necessary to emphasize the multidisciplinary approach of social pedagogy as one that may prove more productive today.

The second section entitled Current problems: case study consists of three case studies in which some current issues in youth work and how social pedagogy deals with such problems are presented. The first one raises the social educational work with youth at risk (offenders, culturally diverse young people, and vulnerable young people). The second study presents the evolution of working with young offenders in Germany throughout the twentieth century. The third one explains the social educational work through sport with institutionalized children and youth. The cases were taken from the Germanic and Danish contexts. The authors point out that it was not about showing the whole field of practice, but about seeing how social pedagogy constructs its discourses and methodologies in practice in order to address current issues.

The third section is a glimpse into the future. Over the last decade from the Anglo-Saxon context, there has been an interest in social pedagogy regarded as a work perspective particularly suitable to act in residential centres for children and youth. The first chapter deals with this, i.e., with the importation of social pedagogy to the UK. After seeing the publications about it in recent years, the survival of social pedagogy in this context seems to be guaranteed. In the second chapter the authors ask the opposite, whether social pedagogy may eventually disappear in Germany. They base the answer to that question not only on the historical trajectory of appearances and disappearances of social pedagogy in that country but also on its relations of fusion or differentiation with social work.

In the following chapter, the question that structures the text refers to whether social pedagogy may or has to become an academic discipline in Denmark. The author shows how social pedagogy is integrated into social life through its relationship with social policy and social practices. The author concludes by posing the need for further theoretical development of social pedagogy from a multidisciplinary approach.

Finally, Kornbeck carries out a particularly interesting analysis on the presence of social pedagogy in Europe. He considers, among other things, how social pedagogy is viewed or interpreted by international associations of social educators and social workers. The analysis shows, once again, the disagreement about social pedagogy and shows the need to clarify at the theoretical and practical level the relations between social pedagogy and social work.

I think it should be noted that, beyond the imbalances between chapters, which is typical of the compilations of the works of different authors, the book is read well, is internally consistent and it is well configured. As I noted at the beginning, I think it is a very interesting material to know the questions and challenges that social pedagogy is raising in a world as diverse and as comprehensive and, at the same time, as local as the one we live in today. As noted by one of the authors in the book "*these are the exciting times for those who believe in social pedagogy*" (Kornbeck, p. 226).