Social Pedagogy
A Literature Review

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1. Literature Review

The literature review will briefly discuss the main points examined in each of the items in the bibliography. It is made up mostly of articles and reports written in the English language. Due to the language restriction, it was impossible to find original documents by the primary theorists in Nordic countries. Instead, articles were used that referred to the origins of social pedagogy in these countries, and linked theories and or practices from continental Europe with practices in Britain.

The 28 items have been arranged into 4 major categories:

- ➢ **General** provides a brief overview. Items in this category cover a wide range of topics relevant to the enquirer.
- ➢ **Historical context** covers the origins and development of social pedagogy on continental Europe up to the current situation. More often than not these texts compare practices in those countries with past and present developments in the UK. For this reason material discussing the first practitioners of social pedagogy in the UK is included in this section.
- ➢ **Current Practice** is by far the largest category and has been subdivided into residential care, education and young offenders. An additional subsection deals with texts on social pedagogy in Scotland.
- ➢ **SOS Kinderdorf** is covered in a separate section as it does not fit into any of the other categories and was included in the enquiry after the original areas of interest had been established.

1.1 General

Items under this heading were selected because they cover the topic on a broad scope, ranging from the historical development, to current practice, to the general principles of social pedagogy.

Cameron and Moss are two key authors in the field. In their book [2] they provide an overview of theory, principles and practice of social pedagogy. They cover the development in Europe, the relationships with individuals, groups, and society, and look at the work that is

done with children and young people in a variety of settings. Cousse et al. [**3**] touch on the same aspects, looking at the historical context in Germany, current developments in the UK and the potential of social pedagogy within the context of social work.

Barker [**1**] analyses the *Every Child Matters* programme in relation to the wider social context for children, with a consideration of inter-professional issues. He gives an overview of the recent history, current position, and main trends of the specific professions and considers the opportunities and challenges presented by the current agenda.

1.2 Historical Context

Social pedagogy had its beginnings in the 19th century in Germany. Other countries on continental Europe adapted and added to initial theories and practices to fit their cultural background, making it difficult to provide a unifying image. However, most theories have been influenced by the French theorist Émile Durkheim and the German philosopher and pedagogue, Paul Natorp.

Hämäläinen [**5**] and Lorenz [**10**] provide an excellent overview on the background of social pedagogy. Hämäläinen's article discusses the theory and shows how initial theorists influenced each other. Lorenz complements Hämäläinen's work by providing a practical outlook. He further covers the rise of social pedagogy as an academic discipline and the growing interest of the modern nation state in providing universal compulsory schooling. Jarning [**8**] adds to this by looking at the main theorists of the early 20th century and the changes in schooling, theories, and the provision of training that have occurred since.

The above items focus on the continent and mention UK practices mostly to illustrate the differences. The following articles are concerned with the UK development, although they, too, mention the historical background of social pedagogy to put that development in context. Walter Lorenz's second article, *Paradigms and Politics*, [**9**] links the work of the Charity Organisation Society, founded in 1869 in England, to the Elberfeld System in Germany. He shows how the two initially similar systems parted ways and discusses the changes in social pedagogy in Germany caused by WWII against the backdrop of Britain. In this context he raises a concern for the lack of theory in Britain and concludes that parallels and differences

to the social pedagogy paradigm need to be analysed against the background of the respective relationship to social policy.

Jackson [7] is less concerned with policy. He examines the now global Camphill Movement which was founded by Dr Karl Koenig, a Viennese physician, who established a school for children in need of special care near Aberdeen in 1940. Koenig took a holistic approach to the child and based his principles on the Moravian Brethren whose teaching already encompassed the mind, body and spirit of the individual. He intended the schools he established to be "integrated communities in which the children and staff lived together and shared their lives in such a way as to foster mutual help and understanding". (p. 96)

Higham [6] links these older developments to the present by looking at the changing model of social work in the UK from the 1970s onwards. She discusses the introduction of a personal advisor, whose role is comparable to that of a Sozialpädagoge (social pedagogue) on continental Europe. Anderson [4], who discusses the role of the social pedagogue in the UK after WWII until today, can be read in conjunction with Higham. He discusses how the role evolved from the first characterisation provided by Haydn Davies Jones in 1981 to current research done by the Thomas Coram Research Unit, all of which see the social pedagogue as somebody who lives and works with families and engages with the child.

1.3 Current Practice

Current Practice forms the main part of the literature review. Items in this section raise questions on the position of social pedagogy and how it could be improved. It includes evaluations of pilot programmes and discussions on the challenges of implementing models and principles of social pedagogy in the current UK social care system. Additionally, it contains guides on good practice, often including comments by young people who receive social care. Finally, the section includes material on the political and cultural challenges practitioners face. It has been subdivided into individual areas of practice, such as residential care and education, with a separate section for practice in Scotland.

1.3.1 Residential Care

Cameron's article [15] provides a valuable summary of what has changed in the field in recent years. Her attention lies on the common language social pedagogy gives to practitioners. It

provides guidelines and a way of thinking that requires a cultural shift, especially when it comes to the practice of risk-taking which is at odds with the priority that is given to health and safety.

The Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care's A-Z guide [**13**] is an excellent resource to gain insight into a variety of issues concerning residential care, from adolescent development to health care. Reflecting on ten years of experience, this collection of articles offers guidelines of good practice, made especially valuable by the fact that they reflect on issues young people raised regarding the services they received. It is made additionally helpful because each topic includes a list for further reading.

Berridge et al. [**11**] provide an evaluation of a two-year pilot programme started by the government with the aim to raise standards and improve the outcomes of residential child care. By looking at thirty care homes in the UK and gathering the views of children and practitioners, the project compared "the effectiveness of three different methods of implementing social pedagogy [and] the quality of care and outcomes for children and young people placed in homes served by social pedagogues with those for children in comparison homes which do not" (p. 11). Implications of shifting residential care from social work to social education are considered and with it the question whether or not social pedagogy would provide for all aspects that the current system lacks.

A Study of the Regulations of Outdoor Play [**17**] refers back to the practice of risk-taking. It discusses the often strict rules and regulations that children in residential care have to follow, whenever they play outside. While children are keen and staff facilitates outdoor activities, organisational policies of risk aversion often prove to be a barrier. Assessing the current situation, the authors provide a number of recommendations to ensure children in care can lead an active life without stigma. Among these is the need to acknowledge the "role of activities in healthy child development" (p. 9). Eichsteller and Holthoff [**16**] build on this recommendation, discussing not only the importance of activities, but of taking risks. They claim that children will only develop risk competence if they are allowed to take risks and argue that learning to assess situations will not only assist in the children's personal development, but eventually lead to fewer accidents. It is the pedagogue's role to distinguish between acceptable risks and unacceptable risks and to create "supportive and nurturing situations that allow for the right amount of risk" so children can make their own experiences.

While the above material focuses on practice, the following items look at social pedagogy from the point of view of the practitioner.

In her article *Social pedagogy and the children's workforce* [14], Cameron touches on similar issues as her more recent article and reflects on the need for proper training for those professionals who work with children. She observes that the professions and the necessary training come together in the social pedagogue. By examining three studies involving practitioners and students in the UK and Denmark she concludes that "the principles of social pedagogy should be incorporated into training and qualifications at all levels of the young people's workforce to support the integration of practice and practitioners". She sees the challenges this change in training brings with it but also provides suggestions on how they might be overcome.

One of these training programmes is that on inter-professional practice [18], conducted on the Orkneys. This programme, organised by Thempra, was conducted with 18 people. It worked towards a collaborative approach between staff from education and social services. This report discusses the programme itself and the overwhelmingly positive impact the training had on participants and practices.

Borchert and Ellis [12] discuss a new training project they would like to set up. It is a programme developed to assist adults in becoming "well-rounded, confident and independent". Using the head, hand and heart principles of social pedagogy, this project aims to assist adults with regards to parenting and education, which, together with aspirations, so the authors claim, form the basis for a healthy development. The project awaits funding.

1.3.2 Education

Siraj-Blatchford et al. [21] elaborate on the findings of the Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) study. This qualitative study found that pre-school education has a positive, long-lasting effect on children. Parents involved in their children's learning further enhanced this effect. The authors briefly discuss the results of the study before looking at how EPPE has changed policy and legislation.

Kyriacou's works are more concerned with the role of social pedagogy for the teacher. In her first article [19] she suggests that in order to take a holistic approach to the child and consider their problems both within school and without five key dimensions need to be considered. These are care and welfare, inclusion, socialisation, academic support, and social education. In this context she discusses the challenges for the teaching profession and potential changes that might occur. The second article [20] builds on these issues for the profession and compares practice in Norway with practice in the UK, which is only beginning to see aspects of social pedagogy. She discusses the possibility of teachers working with other professionals, as well as the potential need to provide education in social pedagogy for all teachers and professionals working with children.

1.3.3 Young Offenders

A number of articles were found on the topic of improving care for young offenders in general, but Prior and Manson's article [22] was the only one focusing specifically on the provision for young offenders in the UK. They discuss the importance of an open relationship with these people and the need for empathy. Their research is based on a literature review and evidence-based practice from a number of fields.

1.3.4 Scotland

Brodie et al. [23] offer an excellent historical overview of the situation in Scotland from 1966 to the publication of *Changing Lives*, a review of social work in Scotland in 2006. Arguing the Scottish welfare system is distinct from those in the UK, the authors discuss the sources and consequences of change in Scottish social work with a focus on the state sector. They conclude that new definitions offered in *Changing Lives* depart from earlier aspirations but also serve as an opportunity for social workers to re-examine their professionalism.

Clark and Smith [24] are also concerned with the *Changing Lives* report, which they deconstruct and criticise. They argue that it not only failed to provide a sustained analysis of the problems the profession is faced with, but also see it as a government tool to reassert control by reshaping expectations, rather than offering a substantive reform of services.

Smith and Whyte [26] offer a possible solution to this issue. They suggest linking current practice with the social education model proposed in the Kilbrandon Report of 1964. This

would position historical traditions of social welfare within current practice. The holistic approach to society and education in particular, which has existed in Scottish welfare throughout its history, they argue, will allow Scotland to join the mainstream of continental practice.

Finally, the report by the Securing Our Future Initiative [25] looks at a specific area of welfare, secure care estates. These provide for those who need care for their own safety and those who present a risk for others. The report discusses the current situation of residential child care, with particular regard to secure care estates, legislation and policies. It provides recommendations for the future, such as early and effective intervention, health and wellbeing, and targeted reduction in the capacity of the secure estate.

1.4 SOS Kinderdorf

SOS Kinderdorf (SOS Children's Villages) adheres to the Guidlines for the *Alternative Care of Children* [27] by the United Nations. They support and strengthen families and offer foster care which provides a stable family environment for children in need. They further work with schools to advocate a holistic approach to education, provide access to health services, and protect children from all forms of abuse, abandonment, exploitation, violence and discrimination.[28]

2. Conclusion

Social pedagogy has been criticised as an under-theorised field in the UK [9]. Current practice shows that an effort is made to broaden the initially narrow definition within the UK context and with it increase and improve practice. While the above collection is only indicative of the amount of information available, it provides a good overview of the main theorists and practitioners of social pedagogy. A mind map was drawn up, linking them together. It focuses on the original influences and only lists key practitioners today, as they are frequently associated with an organisation like Celcis or the Thomas Coram Institute.
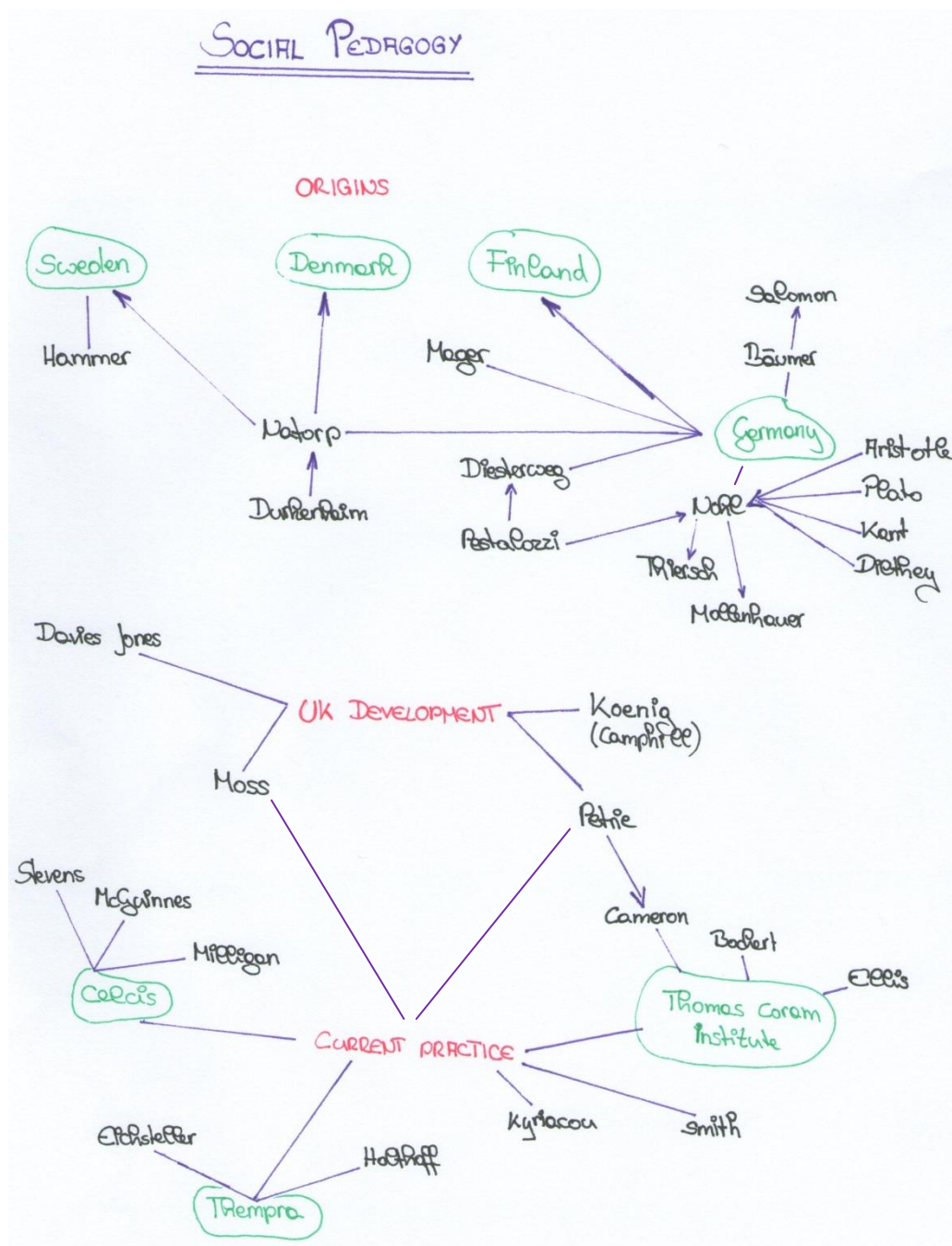
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