

RURAL CHALLENGES IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN DENMARK



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BACKGROUND- THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM (VET) IN DK

- High demand for vocationally educated people on labour markets in rural districts
- High drop out rates in VET: lack of apprenticeships
- Poor local provision in rural areas
- Extremely high mobility demands

The Blame game in policy discourse:

- VET Reform 2015 - 'better' students then apprenticeships
- Some youth are not mobile enough

- Youth education in Denmark
- 16/17-19 approx.

Academic track/ gymnasium

Basic
1

Basic
2

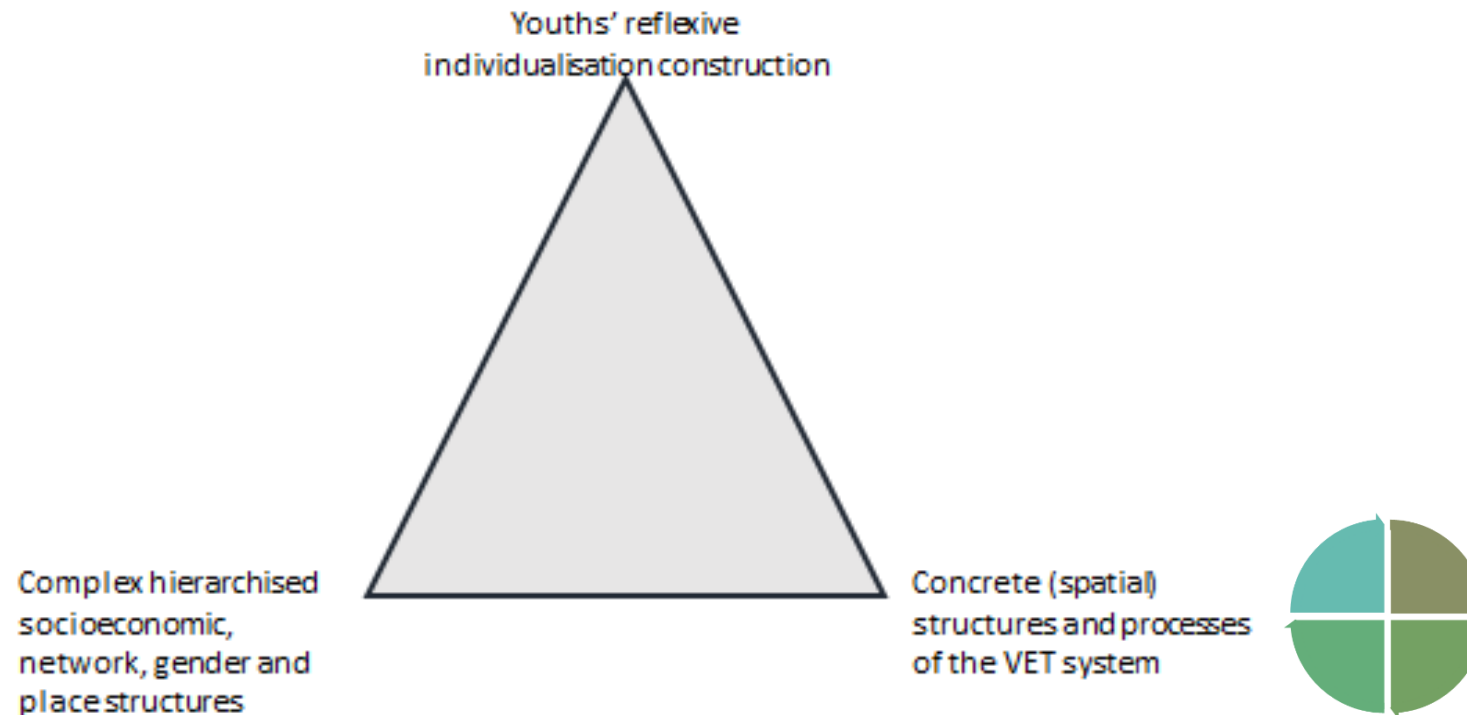
Main/
apprenticeship

UNDERSTANDING SOCIO-SPATIAL PROCESSES IN EDUCATION: A RURAL PERSPECTIVE

- Controlling flows of students through infrastructure
- Education systems have built-in transition imperatives – both in time and space
- Education systems shape mobility patterns 60/40 & 80/20
- National education planning has been spatially blind

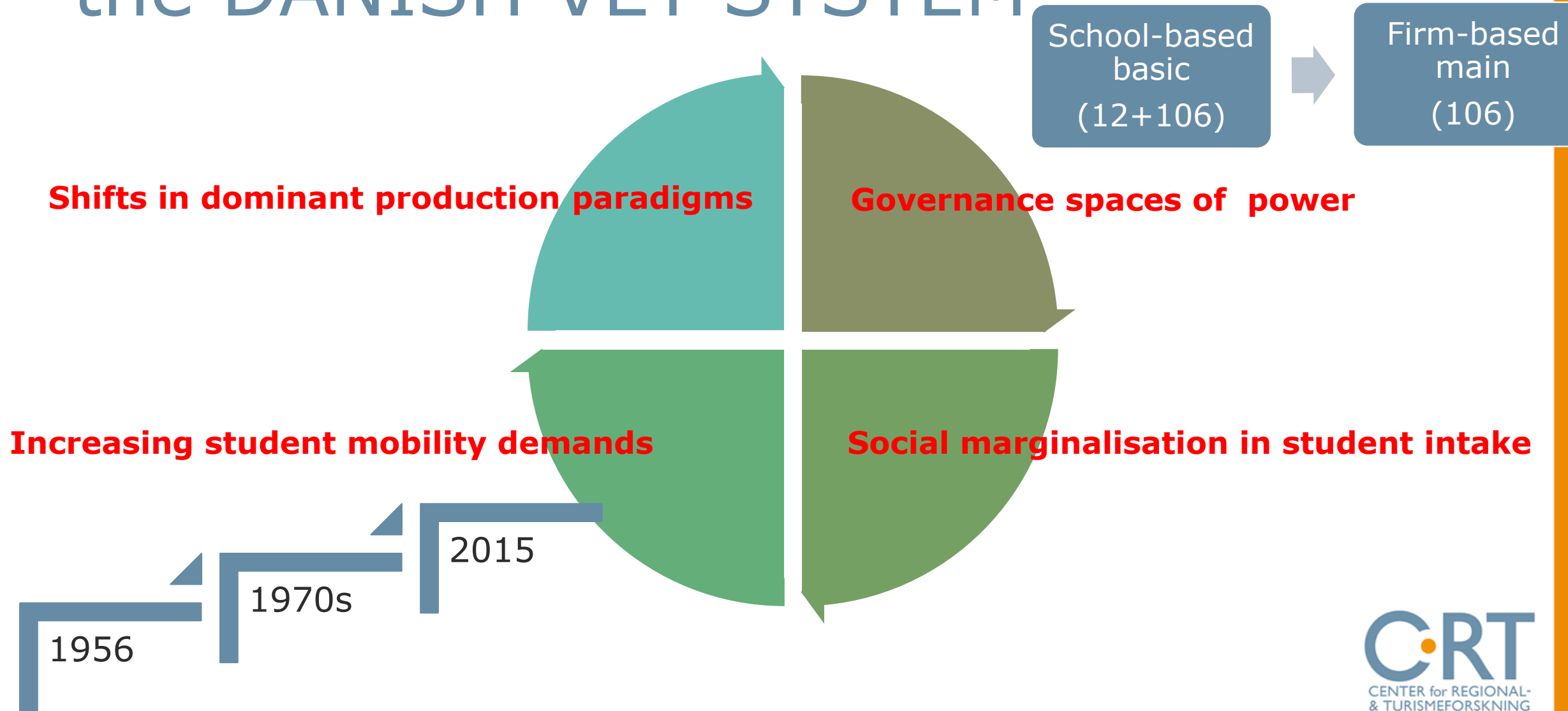


STUDYING CONCRETE OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES AND MOBILITY IMPERATIVES IN TRANSITION PHASES



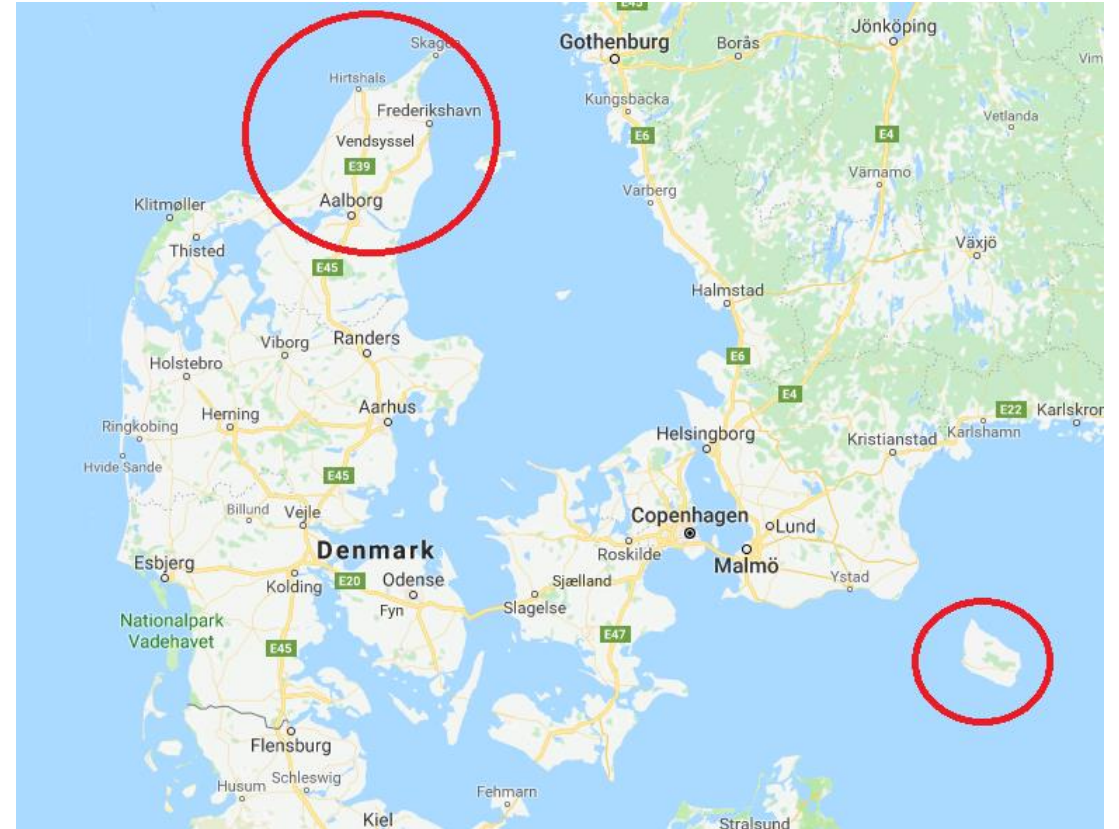
Based on Evans, 2007

Challenges within and surrounding the DANISH VET SYSTEM

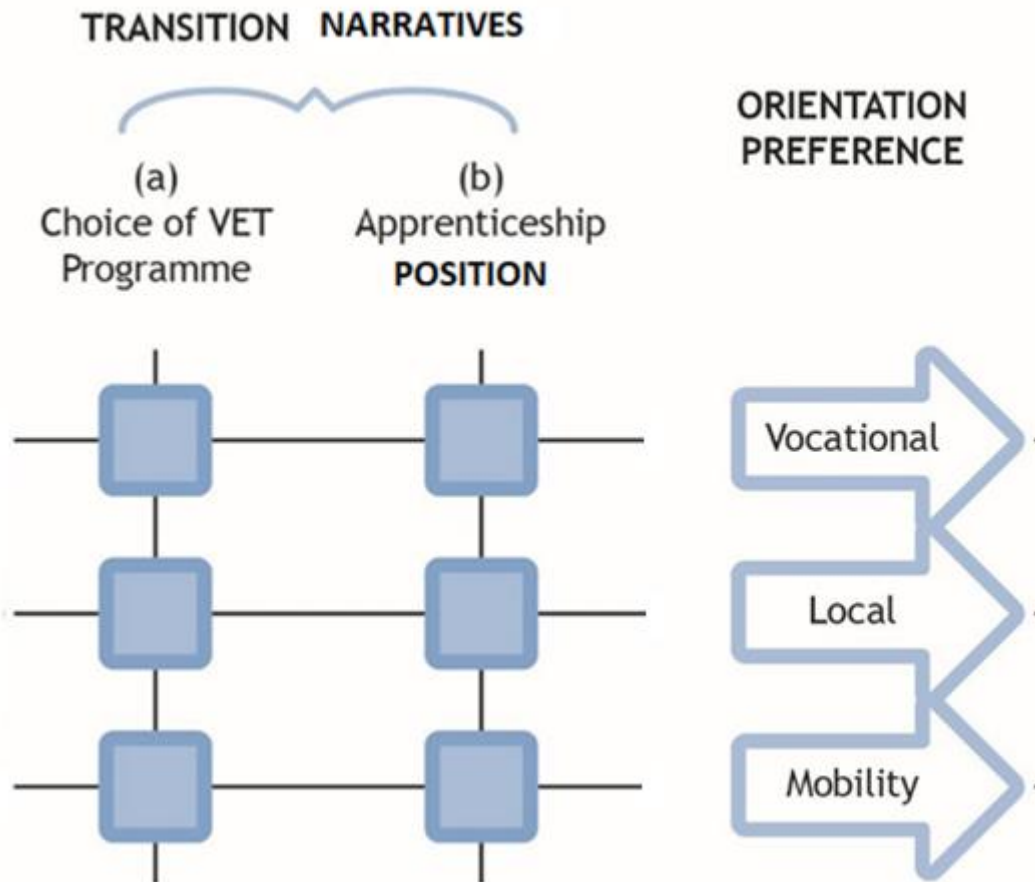


Analysis based on qualitative interviews

- 23 interviews amongst 17-22 years old
- As close to major VET transition as possible
- Life biographies = narratives
- in 3 rural municipalities
- both genders, across many VET programmes
- Both local and non-local
- Many sources: schools, local youth counselors, networks and snowballing.
- Exploratory

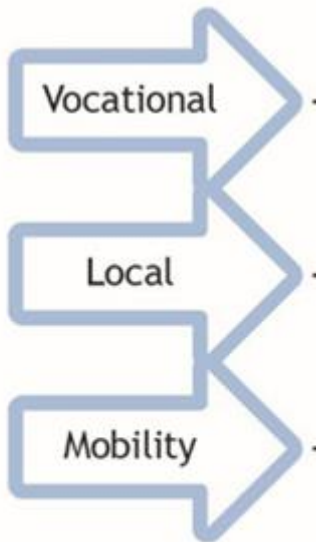


THREE SPATIALIZED ORIENTATION PREFERENCES DISPLAYED BY VET STUDENTS - FINDINGS



DISPLAY A VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION PREFERENCE

ORIENTATION PREFERENCE

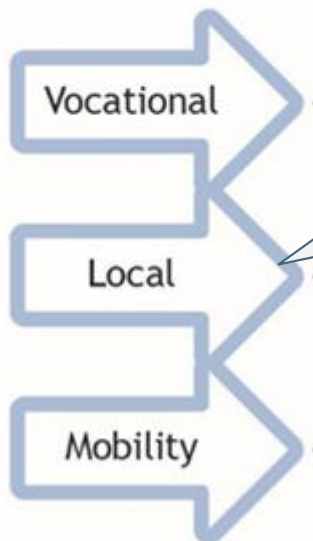


I didn't want to be welding all day, and my level of precision wasn't so good. Instead I wanted to design, but still based on metalwork. (Industrial technical programme, 19 yrs.)

- Vocationally they orientate themselves widely (supra-locally)
- Active Basic programme strategy
- Active apprenticeship strategy
- Do not want to move, but will do so if necessary

DISPLAY A LOCAL ORIENTATION PREFERENCE

ORIENTATION PREFERENCE

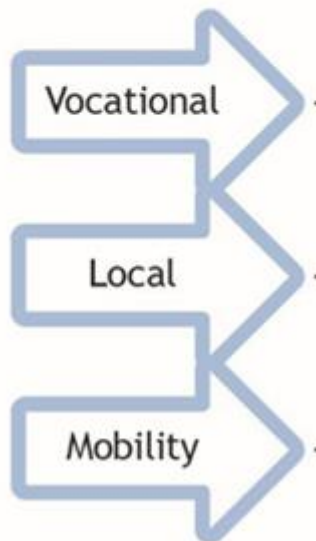


I don't know, I was told it was possible to start as a child care assistant here in town, and I thought – yeah, I like children, that could be good. So I quit retail and applied for this instead (Child care, 19 yrs.)

- Attempt to find the `right` VET programme, but lack knowledge about themselves and about what a trade is
- Some display a conscious local orientation preference
- Some display de facto local orientation preference
- Passive Basic programme + apprenticeship strategy (`crossing my fingers`, `if I'm lucky`)

DISPLAY A MOBILITY ORIENTATION PREFERENCE

ORIENTATION PREFERENCE



Want to use this transition as an opportunity to move out, not urbanisation imperative

- But also active basic programme strategy
- Active apprenticeship strategy, but very dependant
- Although they want to move, they face many challenges in new place (loneliness, independence -money, food, transport)
- But also 1 case of `lost in transition` (must be embedded in vocation)

I was so tired of my friends, I was in the wrong crowd. My relationship with my parents was really bad. So I thought: I need to leave and do things right.
(Hairdresser, 19 yrs.)

Conclusions and PERSPECTIVES

The effects of this are:

1. For those who are embedded /identify with a vocation, the VET functions as a mobility platform
2. socio-vocationally challenged students depend on local education provision structures. They are unable to `tap into´ VET opportunities outside local area.
3. Socially uneven patterns of exclusion and inclusion, which have negative effects on the development trajectories of already challenged localities outside urban areas.

The VET system should:

- Give young people more time for vocational identification process
- Strengthen vocational socialization processes during compulsory schooling
- Recognise that transition demand is spatial: Strengthen the capacities of local education institutions to function as supra-local orientation platforms for vocational identity formation



THANK YOU!