

# SPATIAL INJUSTICE IN THE DANISH VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

THE EFFECTS OF EDUCATION-INDUCED MOBILITY IMPERATIVES ON SOCIO-SPATIALLY DIFFERENTIATED OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES



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SESSION 2E/ HELSINKI 22.05.2018

# BACKGROUND

- Increased polarized development in urban and rural areas
- High demand for vocationally educated people on labour markets in rural districts

The VET system is challenged

- Low rate of young people who choose a VET programme vis-a-vis academic tracks
- High drop out rates in VET (lack of apprenticeships)
- Low local provision in rural areas (5-10 programmes)
- Extremely high mobility demands on young people

About the VET in Denmark:

- Entry after year 9 or 10
- 2 ½ year Basic programmes
  - 1 general
  - 1 specific (106 vocations)
- Transition into main programme
  - Apprenticeship position in firm
  - 1 Main programme (106 vocations)

The Blame game: from students to 'the system'

- VET Reform 2015 - 'better' students
- Some youth are not mobile enough
- **16, 17, 18 years old**

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- **THE SYSTEM:** What are the forces and structures in and around the VET system that condition the limited local provision of VET programmes?
- **EFFECTS ON YOUNG PEOPLE:** What are the effects of provision patterns and mobility imperatives on different young people from rural districts?
- In other words, for whom is it important that there is a local provision of VET programmes?



# ANALYTICAL FRAMING

Theoretical framing: The geography of education

Meusburger (1998): Bildungsgeographie:  
Education institutions and systems are not distributed equally across the physical landscape, and their effects are unequal across the social landscape. Differentiated opportunity structures.

Education field as potentially empowering  
(Thiem, 2009)

Processes of marginalisation and peripheralisation (Kühn, 2015)

Transition analysis and mobility imperatives

- Bounded agency (Evans, 2007) in education transitions
- Mobility imperatives (Farrugia, 2015)
- Motility (Kaufmann, 2004)

Methodological framing:  
Multimethod approach

- Spatio-temporal analysis of the development of the VET system – from industrial dominance to marginalized position vis-à-vis academic track
- Statistical analyses of student mobility trajectories related to specific education systems

Explorative: Qualitative  
Interview-based analysis of  
young VET students' transition  
biographies

# Challenges within and surrounding the DANISH VET SYSTEM



Shifts in dominant production paradigms

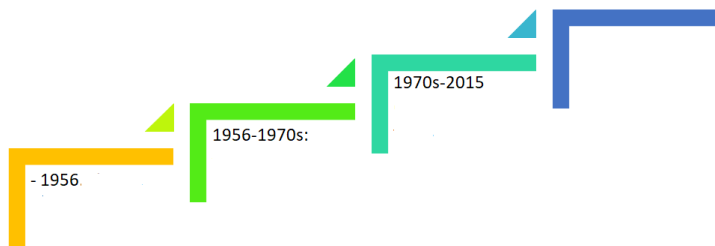
THE MARKETISATION OF EDUCATION

MIND THE GAP

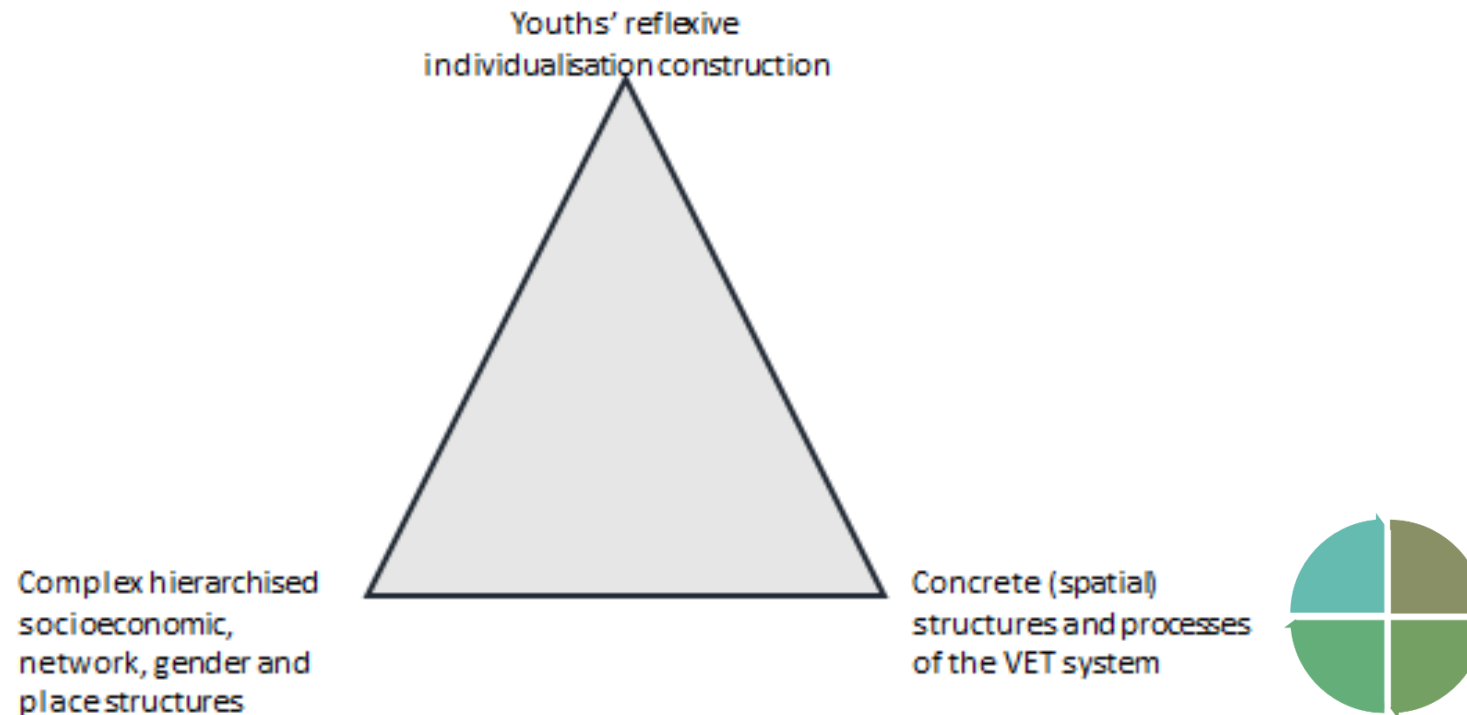
Governance spaces of power

Increasing student mobility demands

Social marginalisation in student intake

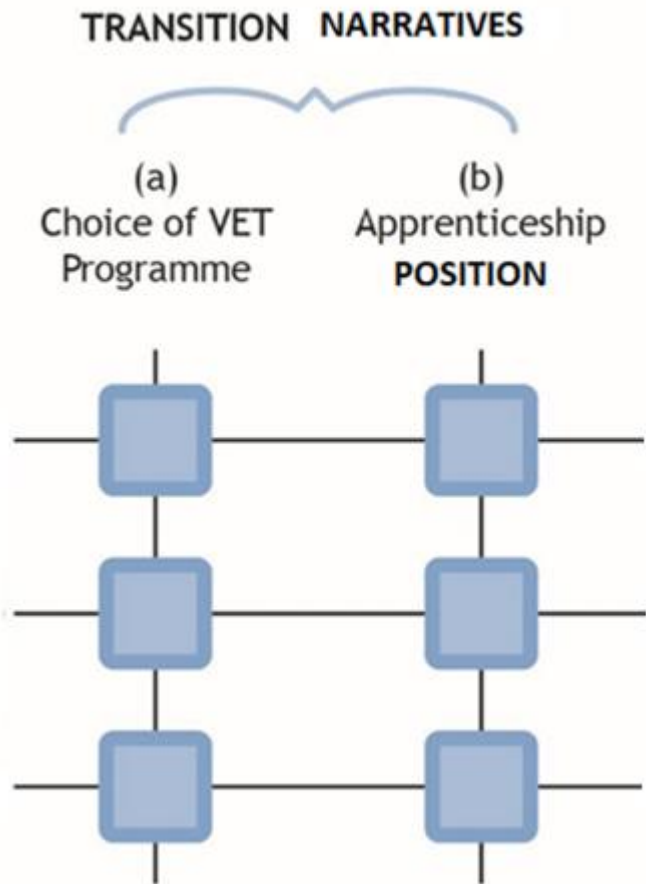


# STUDYING CONCRETE OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES AND MOBILITY IMPERATIVES IN TRANSITION PHASES

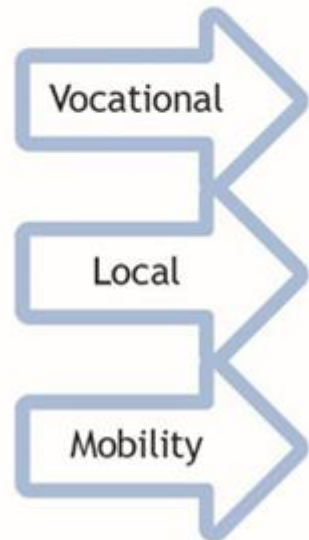


Based on Evans, 2007

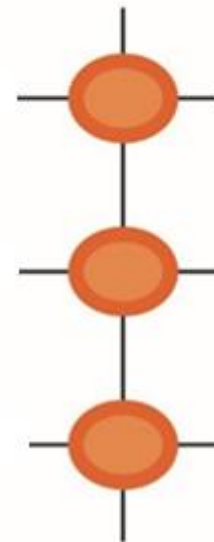
# THREE SPATIALIZED ORIENTATION PREFERENCES DISPLAYED BY VET STUDENTS



ORIENTATION PREFERENCE



SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND BIOGRAPHIC 'OCCURANCES'



# CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

The effects of limited local provision structures combined with high mobility demands are:

1. students from socio-vocationally 'strong' backgrounds are able to transition through the system – 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. The result is socio-spatially uneven patterns of exclusion and inclusion, which have negative effects on the development trajectories of already challenged localities outside urban areas.

Rather than focus on the mobility capacities of young students, the VET system should:

- Give young people some time for vocational socialisation
- Strengthen vocational socialization processes amongst students, during compulsory schooling and Basic programme
- Address transition & mobility imperative: Strengthen the capacities of local education institutions to function as platforms for vocational identity formation

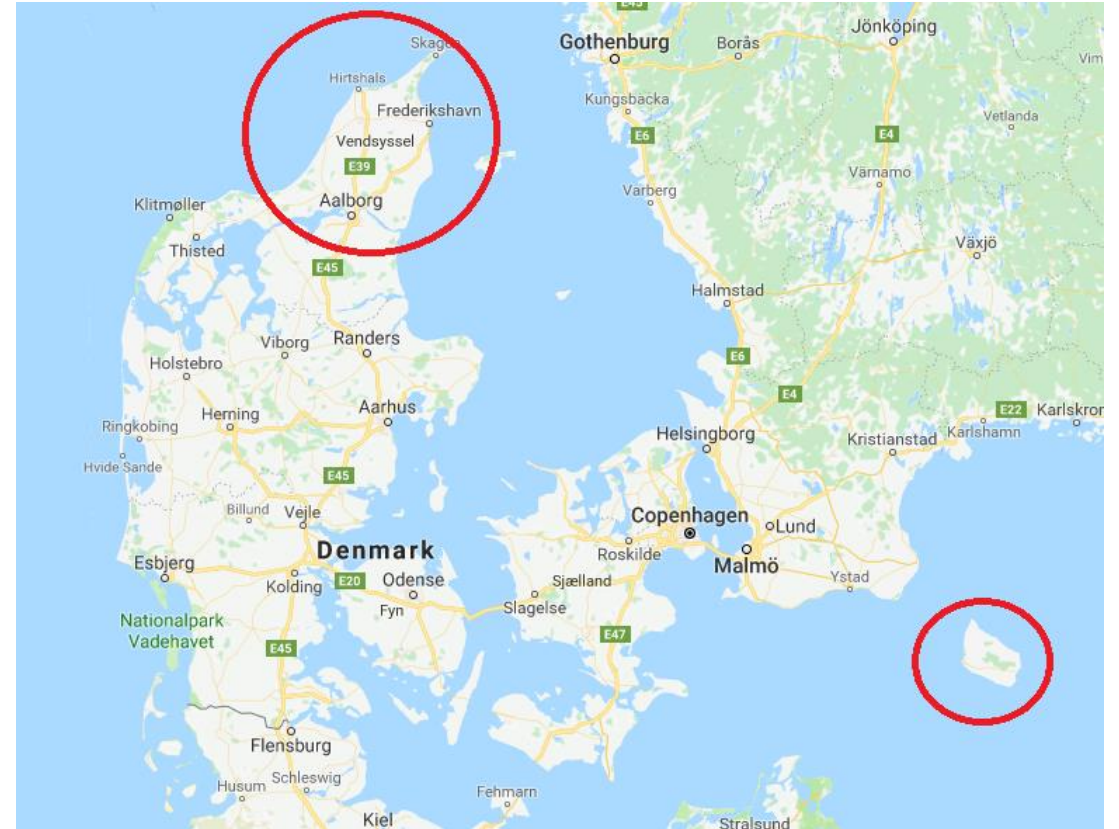




THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

# 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



# FINDINGS

<b>Displayed orientation preference</b>	<b>Basic programme strategy</b>	<b>Apprenticeship position strategy</b>	<b>Wish to move out?</b>	<b>Socio-vocational resources &amp; biographic prioritising</b>	<b>Challenged by</b>
<b>Vocational</b>	Active	Active	No, but mobility capacity increases	High	Structural stop and go in VET system
<b>Mobility</b>	Active & Passive	Active, but very dependant	Yes	Mixed to high	Lack of local networks in new place
<b>Deliberately local</b>	Active & Passive	Active, but limited	No	Mixed	Lack of local apprenticeships, stop and go
<b>De facto local</b>	Passive, several times	Passive and limited	Unclear, but do not move	Low	Lack of vocational embeddedness