



Department of Planning

Invitation to PhD defence

LABOURED LEARNING
INVESTIGATING CHALLENGED LOCALITIES
THROUGH A GEOGRAPHY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

By Karin Topsø Larsen



PHD

2017

Thursday, May 4th 2017 1-4 p.m.

Room A2-83.01 at Thorvaldsensvej 40, Frederiksberg C (IFRO)

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CRT
CENTRE for REGIONAL
& TOURISM RESEARCH

LABOURED LEARNING: INVESTIGATING CHALLENGED LOCALITIES THROUGH A GEOGRAPHY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

PhD Committee:

Professor Lars Bo Henriksen, Aalborg University (Chairman)
Professor Gry Paulgaard, The Arctic University of Norway
Professor Christian Helms Jørgensen, Roskilde University

Supervisors:

Associate Professor Enza Lissandrello, Aalborg University
Previous Professor Anne Lorentzen, Aalborg University (until 31.10.14)

Moderator:

Professor Susse Georg, Institute for Planning, Aalborg University

The PhD defense is open to the public

Centre for Regional and Tourism Research will host a reception after the defence at Rolighedsvej 25, building A in the ground floor cantina: building 3-60.

[Click here to sign up for the PhD defense and/or reception](#)

Karin Topsø Larsen's thesis investigates the Danish Vocational Education and Training (VET) system and the implications of its spatial provision structures for the development of challenged localities. This is a field in need of attention as different locations in Denmark increasingly face disparate development trajectories. It is especially relevant to investigate the vocational education system as the unsatisfied demand for vocationally educated labour is increasing, thus making access to qualified labour more difficult in already challenged labour markets.

The study is based on an interdisciplinary approach and uses mixed methods and is comprised of four major analyses: 1) a theoretical analysis that frames the research project and seeks to improve our theoretical understanding of education geographies in relation to processes of uneven development; 2) A spatio-temporal analysis of the development of the VET system seen from a multidimensional and multi-scalar approach that examines how shifts in dominant production paradigms, governance structures, socio-spatial student intake and mobility demands within the VET education system shape current provision structures;

3) A register-data based analysis of young VET students' geographical movements through the VET system in the years 2000-2012 depending on their vocational and residential choices; and finally 4) A narrative interview-based analysis of young VET students' spatio-vocational orientation preferences as they transition into and through the VET system.

The study challenges simplistic notions of distance-to-education as a satisfactory explanation for differentiated education attainment amongst youth who have grown up in peripheralised localities. Instead, through combining multidisciplinary analyses, the study suggests more complex explanations linked to causes and effects of the provision structures of the current VET system, resulting in the demand for a high degree of vocational and supra-local orientation capacity among students. In its current provision structure, the VET system works against national education policy goals that stress the need for more vocationally educated labour. If such policy goals are to be met, attention needs to be given to the young VET students who are challenged in orientating themselves spatio-vocationally beyond often limited local provision opportunities.