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Three conceptions of the changing relations between education and work.

- Linking education and work in the sociology of work
- The functionalist conception - *and its weaknesses*
- The institutionalists: *social and political interest matter*
- Cultural conceptions: *Sense making in cultural worlds*
- Summing up - and some short conclusions



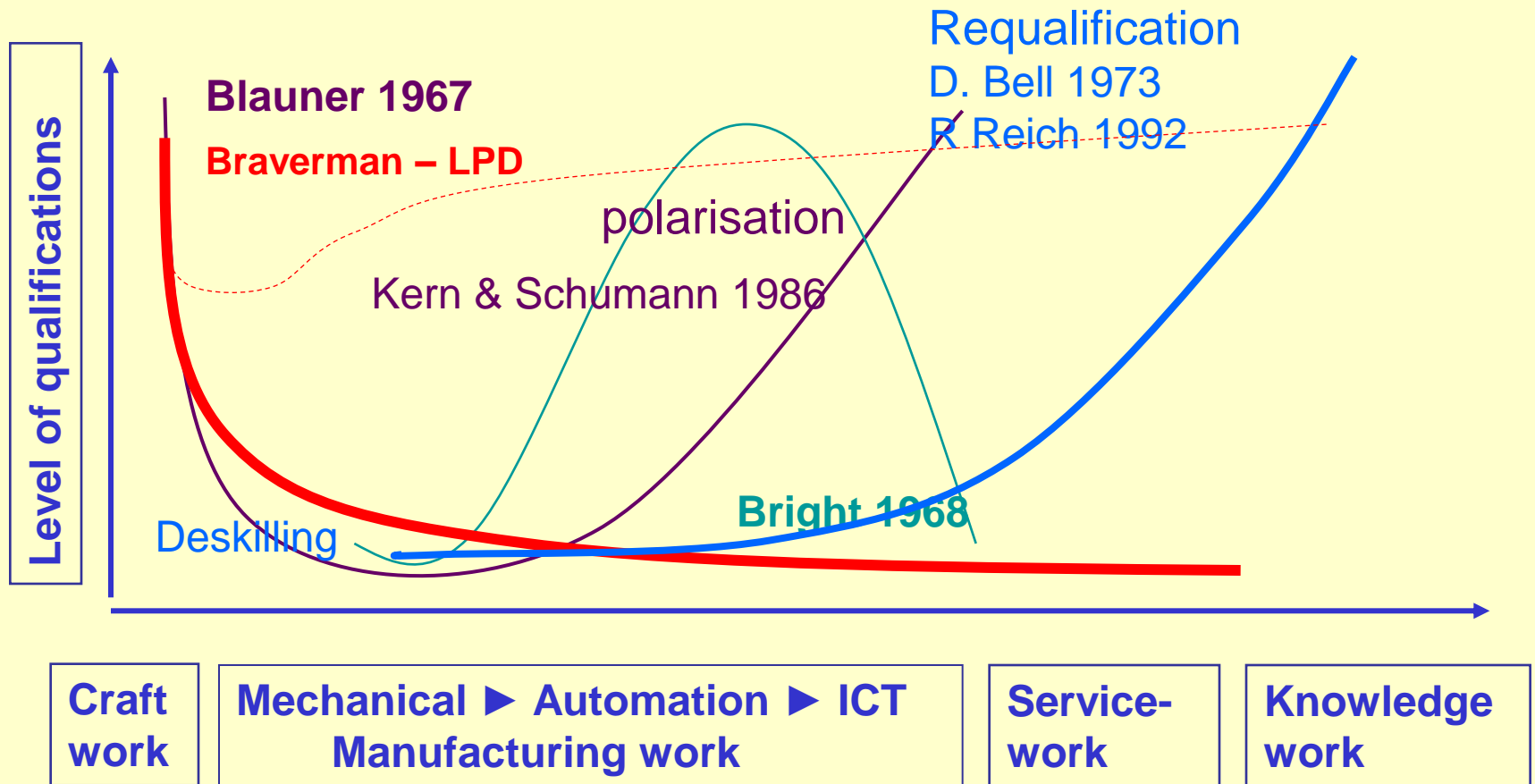
Dominant discourses of education and work

- Globalisation: education must be governed by the economic imperatives of competitiveness.
- Knowledge society: higher levels of education and qualifications will enable us to survive by working smarter – not harder.
- Employability: education should have as its primary aim to lead to employment – and adapt to the requirements of work and production.
- Education should be adapted to the requirements of the world of work.

But what are the requirements of work?



Qualifications and the development of work 1



Idealised historical development

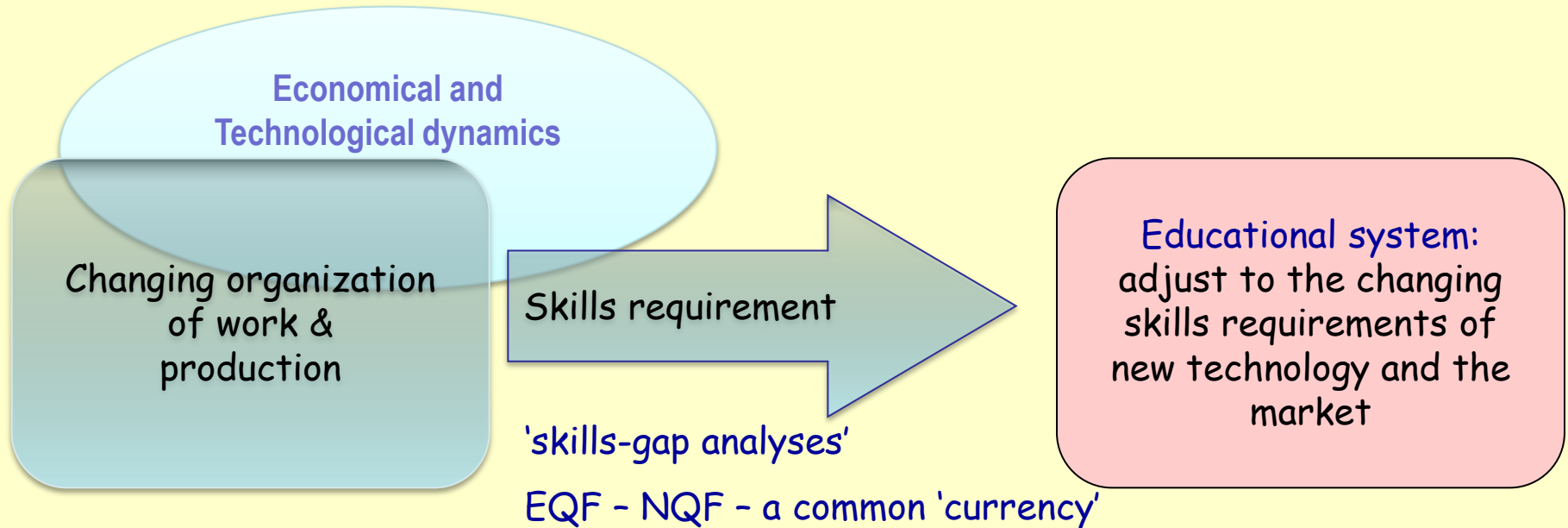


Deficits of traditional sociology of work and qualifications

- Deterministic conception of the connection of technology and qualifications
- Little interest in the process of developing qualifications (learning) – or the personal dimension of qualifications
- Little interest in the institutional architecture around the production of qualifications
- Little interest in the role of politics, power and culture
- - but lives on in the current functionalist conceptions of the relation between education and work



The functionalist one-way relation between education and work



Education and training as means to adapt labour to the requirements of work

- *but how are these requirements defined?*

- Specific work task: *Scientific management* (Taylorism)
- Signals of the market: *wages and unemployment*
- Individual company: *market led training systems*
- An abstract market: *European Qualifications Framework*
- Occupational selfgovernance: *profiles of vocations* (*Occupations*)



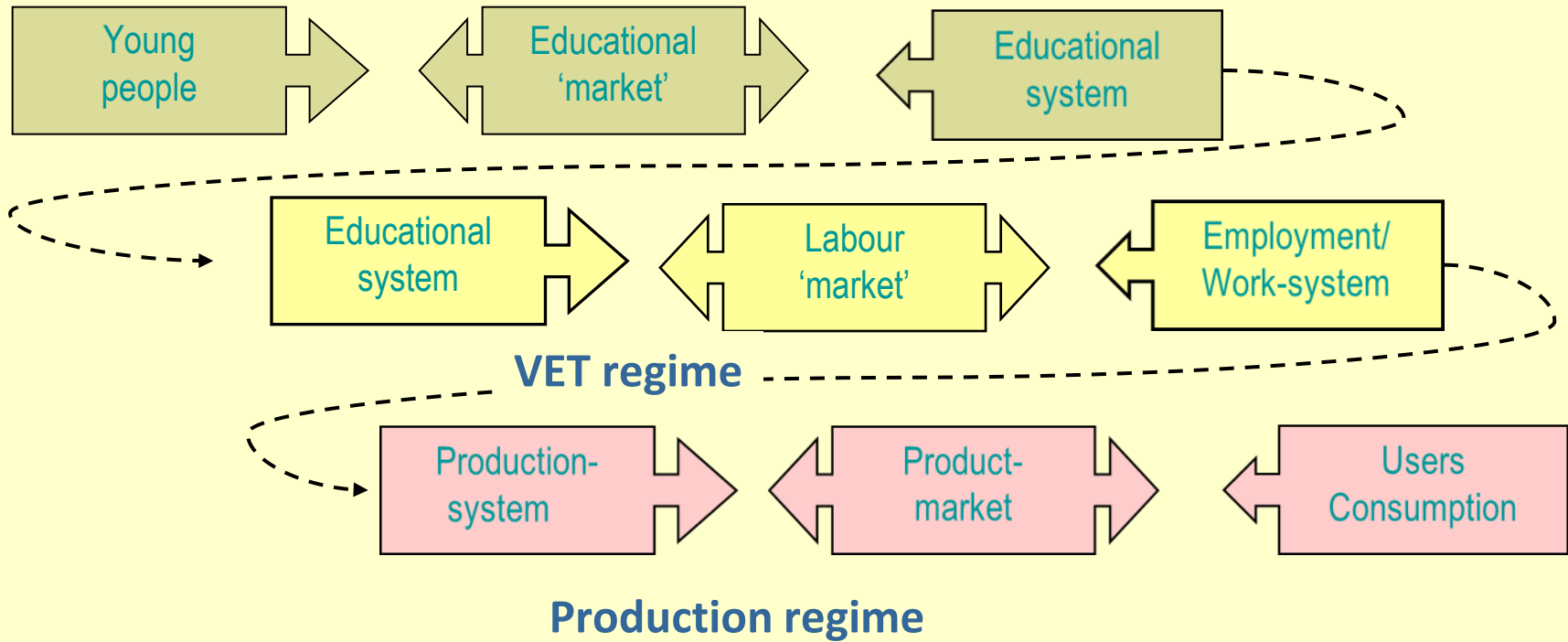
Weaknesses of the functionalist linkage of education and work

1. **Adaptation:** looking for deficits - not resources
2. **Technocratic:** skills are required by technologies and organisations
- not by learners/employees
3. **Separation** of education and training
3. **Hides power relations**
5. **The Taylorist tradition:**
- fragmented - not holistic, vocational
6. **Backward looking:** only the skills requirements detected
7. **Reduced flexibility** due to specific skills (not broad occupational)
8. **Result in a low skills regime** (Soskice & Hall)



The complex chain of interaction between education and work

Cultural worlds



Educational institutions in a field of tensions:

- Between demand from the **labour market** and demands from **young people**
- And contradictory demands of policy makers:
employability, citizenship, social integration, competitiveness, etc.



The institutional embeddedness of the relations between education and work

- *history and politics matter*

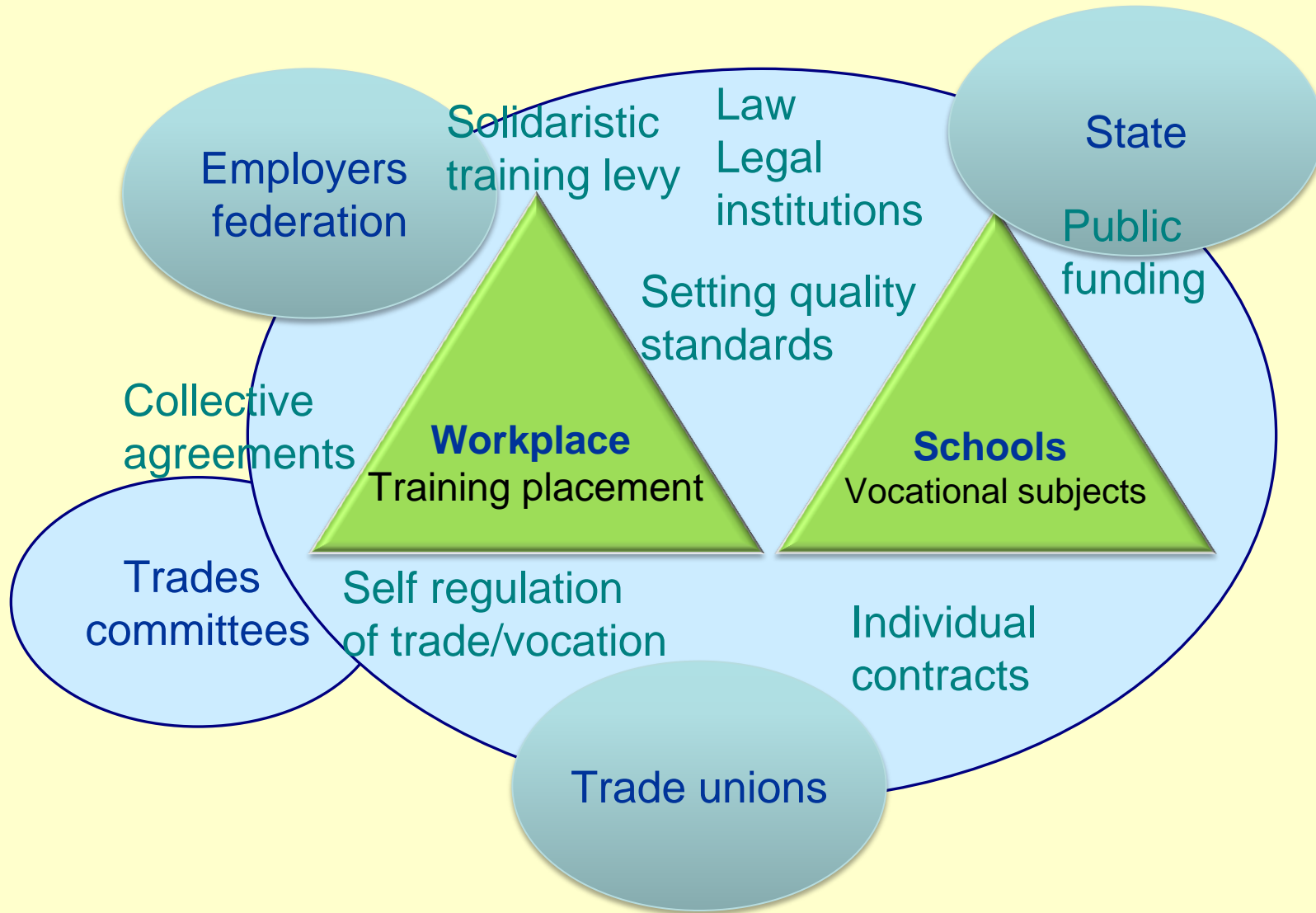


Divergent institutional architecture – or VET regimes

- Institutional complementarity
- Path dependency – critical junctures in history
- Cross class alliances (Thelen 2004)
- An arena for struggles over diverging social interests



Corporatist regulation of the relations between education and work



Diverging skills regimes in Europe:

The market model (England) or based on the vocational model (Germany/NL).

“.. we can distinguish between multi-dimensional competence development in Germany and the Netherlands, and the functionalist-behaviourist Anglo-Saxon model dominant in England”.

“ The multi-dimensional competence-approach is based on a model of the active employee taking an active role in constructing knowledge.

Competence is understood as the ability to deal with complex work situations, drawing on multiple resources that the employee brings to the workplace.

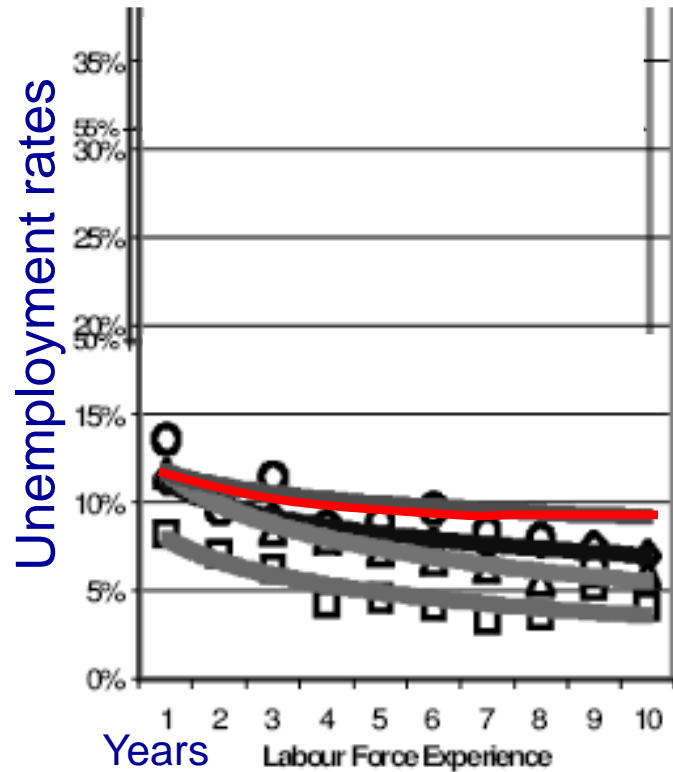
Thus, competence is a holistic notion, relating to the whole person and including different dimensions (for instance, occupational, personal and inter-personal).” (p 552).

This is contrasted with the fragmented and narrow conception of skills in the market model

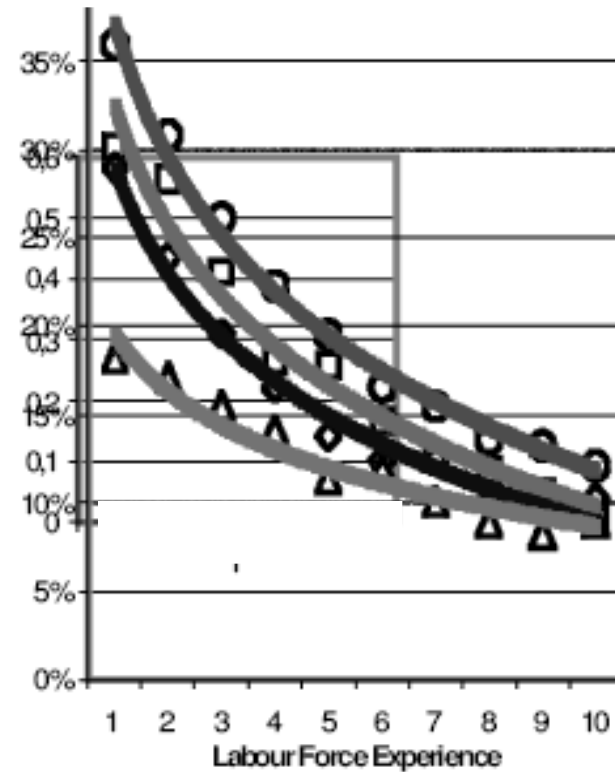
Brockmann, Michaela, Clarke, Linda and Winch, Christopher(2008) 'Knowledge, skills, competence: European divergences in vocational education and training (VET)—the English, German and Dutch cases', *Oxford Review of Education*, 34: 5, 547 — 567



Occupational Labour Markets



Internal Labour Markets

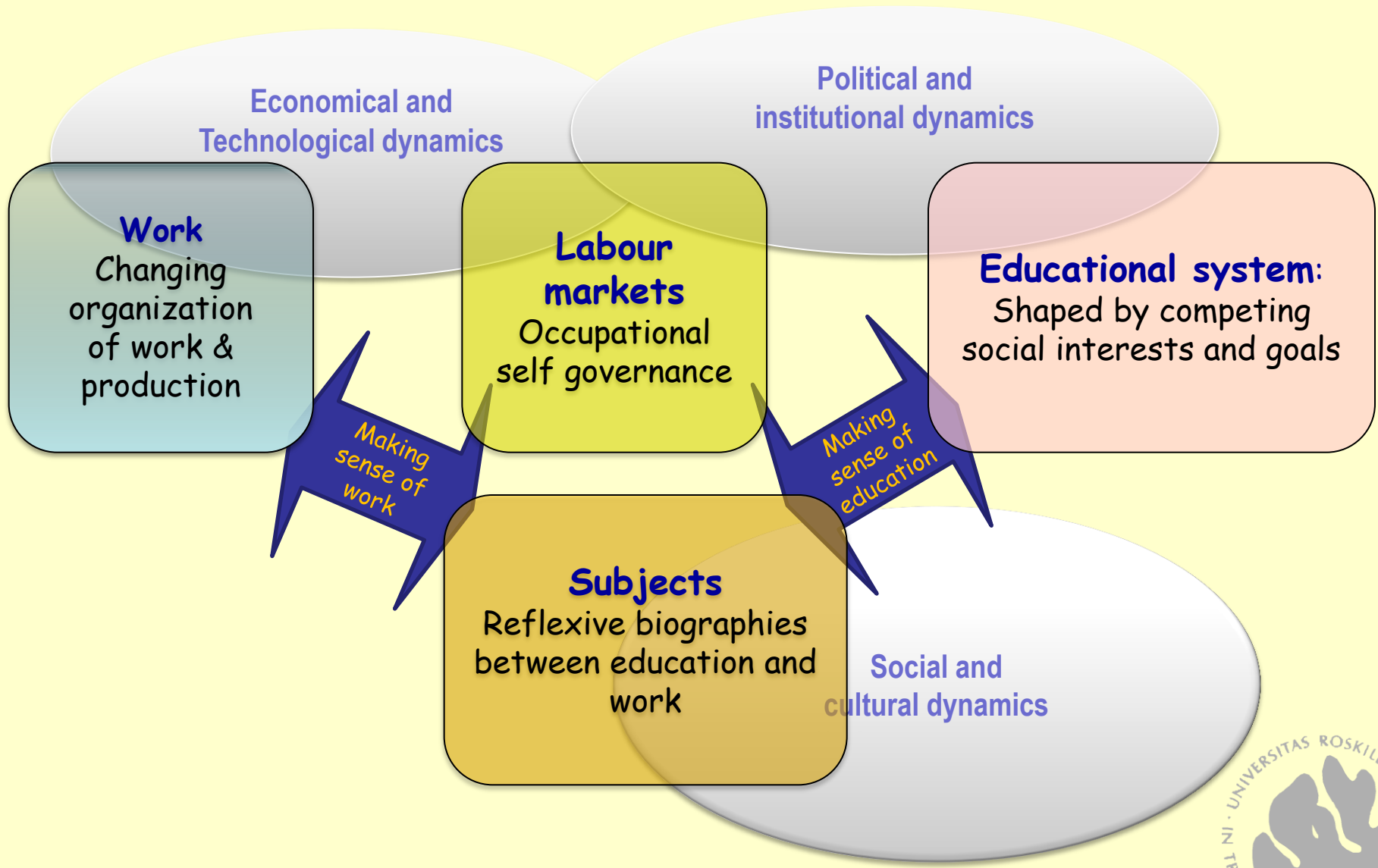


Unemployment and Labour force experience on occupational and internal Labour Markets

M. Gangl: European Patterns of Labour Market Entry, *European Societies*, 3(4) 2001: p 471–94



The meaning of education and work in the lives of young people



How young people connect education and work in their transitions

- Navigating in cultural worlds of youth cultures, consumption, media, etc
- Handling multiple choices in conditions of risks
 - - many options, limited transparency and uncertain outcomes
- Result in prolonged and complex transitions from education to work
- Shaped by *imagined futures*: hopes, dreams and personal interests
- Images offered by vocations/occupations provide 'signposts'
 - - vocations are often well known images of work identities
- And contribute to smooth transitions to work



Three conceptions of the relation between education and work

	What is the motive power behind changes in work organization?	What is the relation between education and work
Technical-economic conception	Technological and economical developments are conceived of like forces of nature, which select the most favorable form of work organization – a universal ' <i>best practice</i> '	The function of TVET is to adapt the competencies of the work force to the 'objective' needs of the economy
Political-institutional conception	Changes are caused by social agents pursuing their interests and struggling over power, control and status. Social institutions mediate and regulate conflicting social interests and to promote negotiation and cooperation.	The relation between education and work is embedded in specific institutional configurations or national models.
Cultural conception	Changes are caused by shifts in cultural norms and values related to new forms of socialization to work life Changes are related to cultural modernization, reflexivity and individualization.	Education and work are conceived of as Life worlds and arenas for construction of meaning related to biographicity and formation of identity of individuals and social groups.



Three conceptions of the relation between education and work

Conception ►	1. Techno-economical	2. Political-institutional	3. Cultural
Conception of qualifications	Functional skills related to jobs/tasks	Multi-dimensional competences related to vocations (yrke)	Meaningful actions. Identities - imagined futures
Metaphor	Organism / Machine	Arena for struggles (<i>contested terrain</i>)	Story – narrative – image
Media for linking education and work	Signals of the market	Corporatist institutions	Narratives
Theoretical approaches	Positivist Neoclassic economic theory	Historical institutionalism 'Labour Process Theory' Social constructivism	Interpretative Cultural studies Hermeneutics
Epistemological interests	Verify objective causal relations ('laws')	Explain collective actors strategies and intentions	Understand the meaning of human agency
Variants	Functionalism and rationalism	Consensus oriented and conflict oriented	Culturalism and Voluntarism
Driving forces linking education and work	Technological innovations and market forces	Struggles, negotiations and alliances between actors. Regulating institutions	Sense making of people: quest for meaning, identity and recognition

Concluding points!

- The dominant functionalist conception of the relations between education and work should be challenged.
- When applied in policy making it may lead to low and narrow skills and bad jobs.
- Institutional regimes based on vocations/occupations provides a surplus of skills - and multi-dimensional qualification profiles.
- EQF promotes a market based model (NVQ) of connecting education and work into a '*common currency*' for qualifications.
- There is no '*common currency*' - the different VET regimes connect education and work in different ways:
 - Functional requirements of companies (market model)
 - Lengths of formal education (Statist model)
 - Negotiations between social partners around vocations/occupations (corporatist model)

Thank you for your attention

