

Policies of school-to-work transitions and VET in Sweden, Denmark and Finland

Jørgensen, Christian Helms; Lundahl , Lisbeth ; Järvinen, Tero

Publication date:
2017

Document Version
Other version

Citation for published version (APA):
Jørgensen, C. H., Lundahl , L., & Järvinen, T. (2017). *Policies of school-to-work transitions and VET in Sweden, Denmark and Finland*. Paper presented at 45th Congress of the Nordic Educational Research Association (NERA), Copenhagen, Denmark.

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain.
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal.

Take down policy

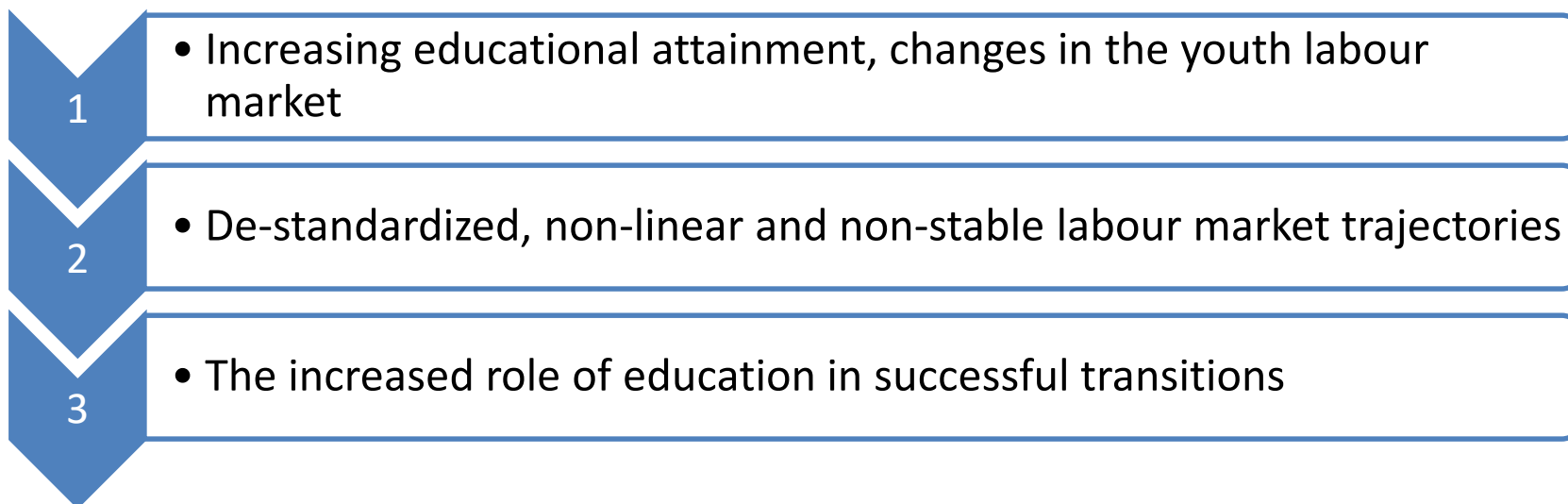
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact rucforsk@ruc.dk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Policies of school-to-work transitions and VET in Sweden, Denmark and Finland

**Christian Helms Jørgensen, Tero Järvinen and
Lisbeth Lundahl**

NERA 2017, Copenhagen, Denmark, 23-25 March

Background: changes in school-to-work transitions



The weakening labour market and societal status of low-educated young people and young adults



Early school leavers and NEETs as special target groups of European and Nordic youth and labour market policies



Establishment of national and local transition policies

Lack of comparative studies

Why to compare Nordic countries?

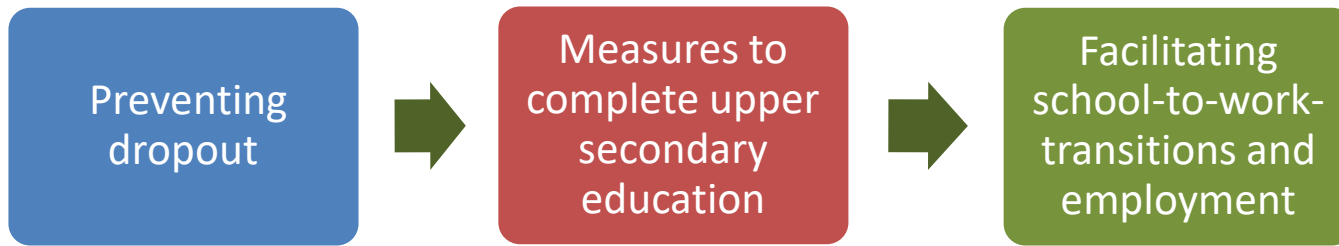
- 1. While sharing similar histories of welfare and educational policies, it seems that Nordic countries have embarked on different routes in this respect
- 2. While in many studies similarities between Nordic countries, in terms of youth transitions and educational equality have been found (e.g. Iannelli & Smyth 2008; Eurofound 2014); previous studies have also revealed differences within the Nordic countries in many aspects of education (e.g. Lundahl 2012; Bäckman et al. 2015; Yoon & Järvinen 2016).



Is it still justified to speak of a common Nordic regime of youth transitions, as suggested by Walther (2006)?

The objective and method of the study

- The objective of the study is to compare Swedish, Danish and Finnish school-to-work transition policies with special emphasis on NEETs, dropout and VET by utilizing a modified definition of transition policies by Eurofound (2012):



- Policy documents and programmes, statistics, previous studies of the authors

Policy contexts

	Sweden	Denmark	Finland
Level of marketization	Highly marketized education system concerning both basic and upper secondary education, the significant role of private schools	Moderate marketization: A 'free' training market for apprenticeships, VET under corporatist control and state control of vocational schools.	Low to moderate marketization, local public school markets, almost non-existence of private schools
Upper secondary education, VET	Comprehensive post-compulsory education, school-based VET targeted at young people under 20	Strong tracking and weak connections between general and vocational education, modernised version of apprenticeship training	Non-comprehensive post-compulsory education, high attractiveness of school-based VET targeted also at adults
Critical transition points	1) From lower to upper secondary education, 2) from upper secondary education to work or further education	1) From lower to upper secondary education, 2) from the initial school-based course in the VET-system to an apprenticeship in a company	1) From lower to upper secondary education, 2) from VET to employment

Comparison Preventing dropout

- Special needs education offered in- or outside ordinary schools
- Bridges from lower to upper secondary education:
 - Preparatory and introductory programmes (Fi: 2%, Se: 28%)
 - Extra tenth grade in compulsory school (Fi, Dk)
 - Strengthening of educational guidance
- Special training programmes to re-integrate dropouts (Fi, Dk)

Comparison Completion of education

- Shifting policy measures to reduce dropout (Se, Dk)
- ‘Second chances’ offered in adult education
- Validation of prior learning (Fi, Dk)
- *Activation*: Active labour market policies
 - Supporting employability has priority over social benefits
 - Tightening of the conditions for receiving benefits
- Activation in education increase the risk of dropout Fi, Dk

Comparison supporting transition to employment

- Emphasis on employability in upper secondary education
- Inclusion of more work-based training/internships in VET
- *'Youth guarantees'* in Se, Fi focus on employment/internships
- *'Educational guarantee'* in Dk focus on training placements
- Supporting transitions to employment in (Dk) or after VET (Fi, Se)
- The *'guarantees'* have limited effects for most disadvantaged youth

Conclusion

- The concepts 'Nordic, universalistic transition regime' partly misleading,
- Steps from *welfare* towards workfare regimes
- Shift from priority on *citizenship* to *employability*
- Emphasis on choice and institutional individualisation of pathways
- Responsibilisation of young people – also for transition failures!
- Increasing use of coercive measures and punishments

Conclusion

- Differences between the three Nordic transition regimes
- State-led and school-based VET-systems (Fi, Se):
 - strong institutional support for the completion of USED,
 - high risks in the transition to employment.
- Corporatist work-based VET-system (Dk)
 - high risks of dropping out of USED,
 - strong institutional support for the transition to employment.

Thanks for your attention