

TVET in the Czech Republic: Case study of change in a peripheral region

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Czechia : Background

- Long tradition of professional and vocational education
- German-like apprenticeship model with shared responsibility of state and employers
- Affected by Communist economic and social policies, drifted to state-borne IVET provision already in 1980s. The government as the key actor of IVET policy has been rather ineffective since the 1990s.
- As a result, IVET is mainly school-based and rather fragmented, significant regional and sectoral differences in quality and availability of educational institutions, with some peripheral areas being most disadvantaged.
- Still, very large share of Czech secondary students (now 70%) has entered and graduated from professional/technical or vocational tracks

Macro story of IVET: „least change“

- “Of all the East Central European countries, the Czech Republic experienced **the least change** in the structure of its training system” Šćepanović (2020).
- The slow development of the macrostructure, paradoxically, due to the emergence of a number of successful local partnerships or new schools, when companies or non-profit organizations took up education in their own hands and lost interest in systemic reforms.

Different narratives

- „National" skill building system is the result of interaction of actors at various levels or places - transnational, national, and local, with different patterns in different sectors etc.
- A nation state may not be the (only) important unit of analysis. This is even more so in the Czechia, with extreme decentralisation and the high level of autonomy granted to individual schools. Similar pattern of large academic autonomy features the tertiary education.

Research Design: Country case study with embedded units of analysis

MACRO narrative: the transformation of national skill building system (laws, policies)

MEZO/ MICRO narrative: development of IVET school landscape within an area

NANO narrative: qualitative longitudinal study of approx. 20 students in different IVET programs

Levels	Places /sites	
Supra:	EU / ESF OECD	Transnational companies, e.g. Volkswagen
Macro:	Gov/ment	Employers and their organisations
Mezzo/ micro:	Describing the different localities (core/periphery) and individual organizations/schools	
Nano:	Perspectives of individual students (not included in this presentation)	

Theoretical Frame:

Neo-endogenous theory of local development

Coordination at multiple levels by multiple actors including state, private, and local, to build capacity.

Local development depends on the construction and mobilization of networks of actors and resources from both within and outside a locality. Besides, we argue that analysis should take into account youth perspectives and input, including the understanding of how youth aspirations and identities are embedded within the specificities of place/region.

SELECTED RESULTS

Late socialist reforms (1980s) of curriculum

- The boundaries between curriculum of technical/professional schools and vocational schools became blurred, with some vocational schools having a lot of theoretical subjects.
- Special four-year vocational programs entitled their graduates to access to university and provided the firms highly qualified blue-collar workforce.
- Concurrently, academic school curriculum put an emphasis on STEM subjects and quasi-TVET was also introduced in general secondary track) in accordance with the requirement of polytechnization of unified education applied in Soviet block.

Late socialist reforms (1980s) of qualifications system

- The number of vocational qualifications was reduced to 148.
- The technical/professional qualifications completed by a *matura* diploma were also reduced to 62.
- Besides, following the requests of major state-owned companies, 48 newly created four-year programs provided dual qualifications - both a high school diploma and an apprenticeship certificate.
- So, there were together (in ISCED 3a + 3c) around 260 qualifications (without general and arts programs).

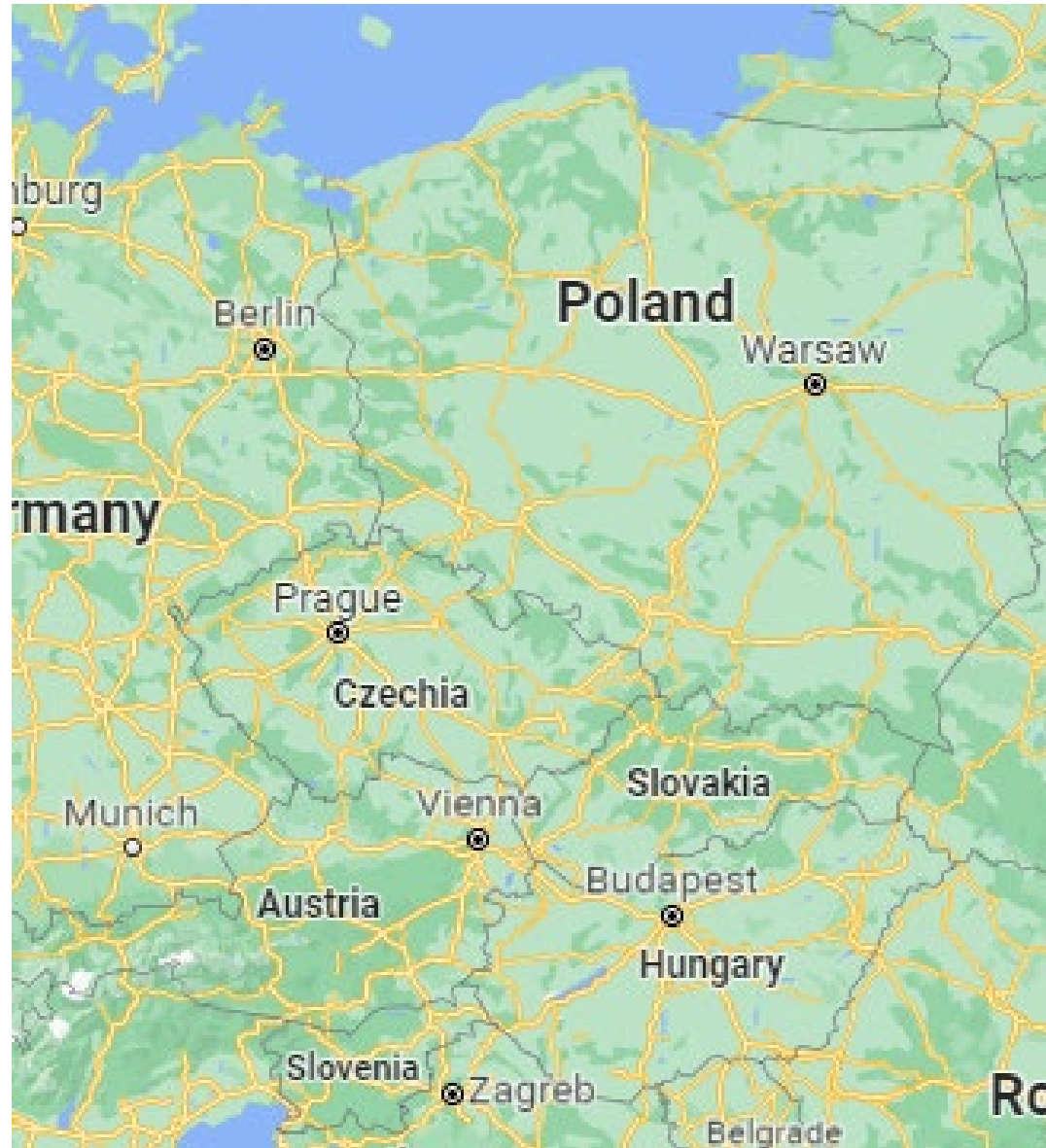
Qualification: Post-socialist transformation

- Source: Federičová, M. (2021). *Country case study Czechia*. The future of vocational education and training in Europe. Work assignment 2.

Track	1998	2003	2008	2016	2019
ISCED 3C*(C+D+J)	14	11	7	7	7
ISCED 3C(E+H)	289	249	186	111	109
ISCED 3A(L0+M)	376	324	281	108	110
ISCED 4A(L5)	109	72	42	25	24
ISCED 5B(Nk)	6	5	4	9	5
ALL	794	661	520	266	255

- Class sizes dropped and costs skyrocketed. Some schools opened new programs without having adequate personal or material resources.
- Despite all these negatives, such development probably could not be avoided. It can be said that for the next twenty-five years, the Czech education system has been trying to deal with the problem of qualification framework.

A post-soc/Visegrad region



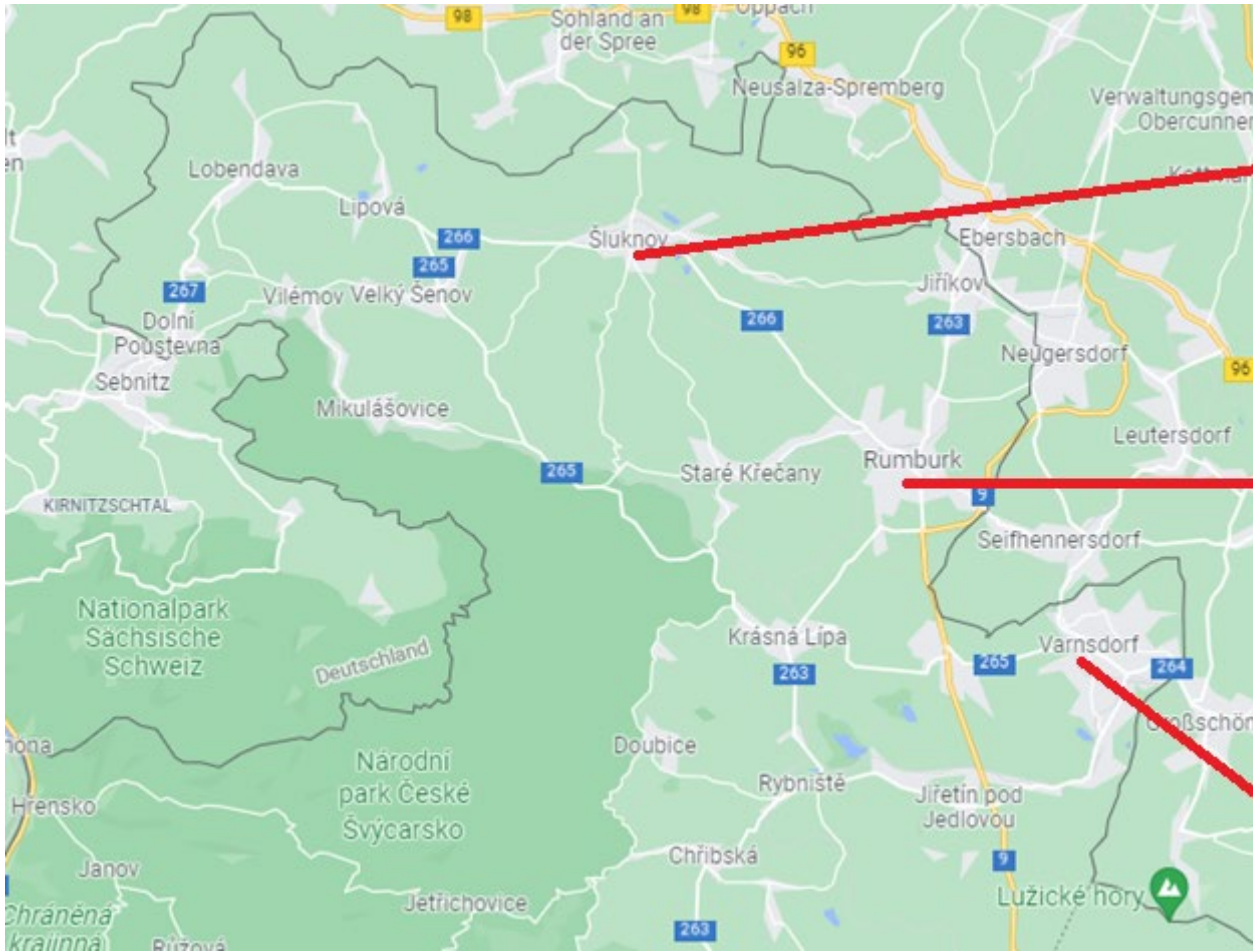
Zooming to a single country



TVET schools in Šluknov Hook in 1980s

Fields of training	Company operating the school	Site of school
<i>production of decorative objects / artificial flowers</i>	Centroflor / Jablonecká bižuterie	Dolní Poustevna
printing	Polygrafia	Rumburk
farming / agriculture	NA	Šluknov
forestry CVET programs	Státní lesy	Šluknov
energy distribution technologies	České energetické závody	Varnsdorf
mechanical engineering	TOS	Varnsdorf
textile technologies	Elite	Varnsdorf
textile technologies	Velveta	Varnsdorf
telecommunications	Správa pošt a telekomunikací	Varnsdorf
construction / roadbuilding	Silnice n. p.	Zahrady / Krásná Lípa

Zooming in to single area and looking at the individual schools here



Forestry school of Šluknov



Before 1989: one qualification / one level of programme:
Advanced Forestry – students from whole Bohemia

Today: diverse programmes / fields of training



Secondary technical school Varnsdorf



- Brand new private school founded and operated by local engineering company



- Despite the existence of traditional state-run school with very similar profile in the same small town

Suggested explanations of (macro) stability of IVET

Structure of labour market – many jobs in traditional industrial sectors (automotive...)

Cognitive/cultural - intergenerational educational reproduction: typical family aspirations still upper secondary VET

Change at local level - emerging new types of schools/institutions/partnerships

Conclusions

In terms of the **macro** system, the Czech skill formation has changed relatively little.

But if we look at the level of the **micro/meso** system of individual schools and their regional landscapes, we see a fundamental restructuring and **emerging new institutional patterns**.

The same is true for level of tracks (general, technical, and vocational) vs. level of programs/qualifications, or curricula.

We illustrate this by combining the different levels of analysis: national, regional, and individual.

Conclusions

- It is good to look at different levels of the system as well as analyze trends on different time scales.
- Has it also come time for a new evaluation of the development of educational systems in the Soviet bloc, which would help to better understand the problems of the post-socialist transformation?

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