

The future of Nordic vocational education and training
– trends and scenarios

- Dystopic and utopian scenarios
- Revisiting historical trends and counter-trends in Nordic VET
- How conceptualise changes in VET?
- Future trends and scenarios in Nordic VET



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Drivers for change – challenges for VET

- Changes of the international division of work :
 - outsourcing of low and mid-level skilled work.
- Technological change erodes the skill base of traditional occupations
- Immigration: high supply of low-wage, low-skilled workers:
 - decreasing employer engagement and VET less attractive for youth
- Globalisation: transnational corporations favour corporate training over vocational education.
- Academic drift of students' educational choices
 - *young people are voting with their feet – opt for higher education*



The future of Nordic vocational education and training

Scenario approach: examine historical trends, drivers and current challenges

Scenarios

- Continuous decline in enrolment and status → a residual programme – a ‘safety net’ for ‘weak learners’?
- Integration of vocational and general education makes VET fade away?
- Academic drift → VET becomes mainly preparatory for vocational HE?
- Growth of high-quality, sustainable production → revival of artisanship, modern crafts and craftsmanship?
- Disintegration of VET due to diversification, flexibilisation and individualisation?



Previous scenarios for the future of work and skills

Dystopian - pessimistic

> Degradation and deskilling of work and training.

- H Bravermann 1976: Taylorism erodes skilled work
- R Sennett 1998: Flexible capitalism erodes vocational identities
- G Standing 2011: Spreading of low-skilled, precarious work



Utopian - optimistic

> Upgrading and reskilling as a new opportunity

- Kern & Schumann, 1984 Reskilling opportunity – end of Taylorism
- Sabel & Piore, 1984 Flexible specialisation: revival of craft based work
- Gallie, D. (2011) Scandinavian reskilling



Research showed basic differences across countries – *no common scenarios*

→ Divergent '*skill formation regimes*'

Diversity of national models and trajectories

- Maurice & Silvestre, 1986 '*societal effects*' Germany/France
- Hall & Soskice, 2001 '*Varieties of capitalism*' LME, CME
- Thelen 2004, '*How institutions evolve*' *Path dependency*
- Busemeyer & Trampusch, 2001 '*collective skill formation*',
→ focus on path dependencies and institutional change!



Nordvet (2018) Future of VET in the Nordic countries.

- No uniform national models, but hybrids
- Examples of strong path dependency (ex. Denmark)
- Coexisting, contradictory development trends
- Change and internal diversity
- For example differences Construction and Health Care

→ but also common historical trends



Some common historical trends in Nordic VET

Period 1945 - 1990.

- Expansion of school-based VET
- Increasing separation of VET from working life.
- Standardisation of VET programmes across industries and regions
- Gradual de-specialisation of VET
- Expansion of role of the state in VET
- The transition from VET to working life postponed



- and counter-trends in Nordic VET

Period after 1990 *Counter-trends*

- De-standardisation, de-centralisation, diversification
- Marketisation, flexibilisation, individualisation
- Re-turn of VET work life: employability, reinventing apprenticeships
- Re-specialisation and vocationalisation
- General track expands – VET decreases in some countries

How to conceptualise changes in Nordic VET systems?



*Where are the Nordic VET systems going
in the collective skill formation framework?*

		Involvement of firms in VET	
		Low	High
Public commitment to VET	High	Statist skill formation system Sweden, Finland, Norway	Collective skill formation system Denmark
	Low	Liberal skill formation system UK, USA	Segmentalist skill formation system Japan

Bussemeyer, M.; Trampusch, C. (2012b). *The political economy of collective skill formation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.



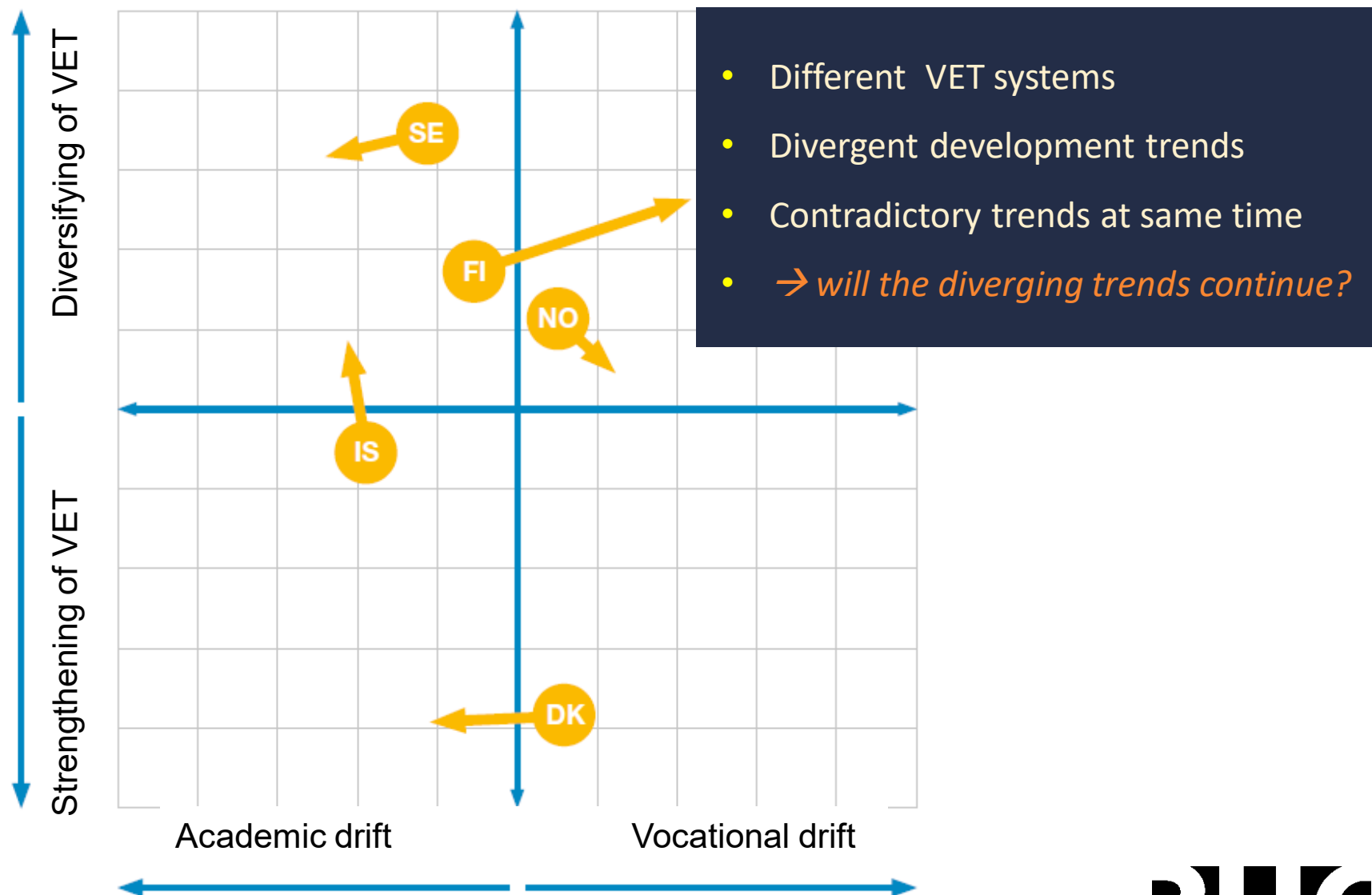
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Figure 16. Schematic representation of change in VET in northern Europe 1995-2015



Where are the different Nordic VET systems going?

Short break - 5 minutes - *think about it!*

After short break:

- Comments on the question



Three future challenges and scenarios for VET

- Vocational education without vocations?
- The connection of VET to working life
- Academisation and the connection of VET to higher education

End of the vocation (Beruf/Fach/Yrke)?

→ Historical trend – shifting ideal types →

Ideal types	Proud Craftsman →	Berufs-Fachmench Professional →	Self-Entrepreneur 'Artist-businessman'
Location	Local town – region	Nation	Global world
Learning culture	Imitation Informal learning	Formal training and education	Self-organised learning
Ethos	Solidarity Proficiency	Loyalty Correctness	Creativity Innovation

Philipp Gonon, *Vom ehrbaren Handwerker zum innovativen Self-Entrepreneur*
- Modernisierung der Berufsbildung anhand idealtypischer Leitfiguren

Bertelsmann Stiftung



Vocational education without vocations?

- Vocational identity replaced by multi-skilled '*Self-Entrepreneur*'
- Specific vocational skills replaced by generic, personal and general skills.
- Flexibilisation of occupational work and erosion of job demarcations
- Shift from occupational to functional organisation of production process
- Modularisation and individualisation of the vocational programmes

→ Erosion of the vocation challenges the esteem of VET

- The attractiveness of VET is linked to *becoming* and *belonging*
- **Becoming**: acquiring a vocational identity
- **Belonging**: participating in a vocational/professional community

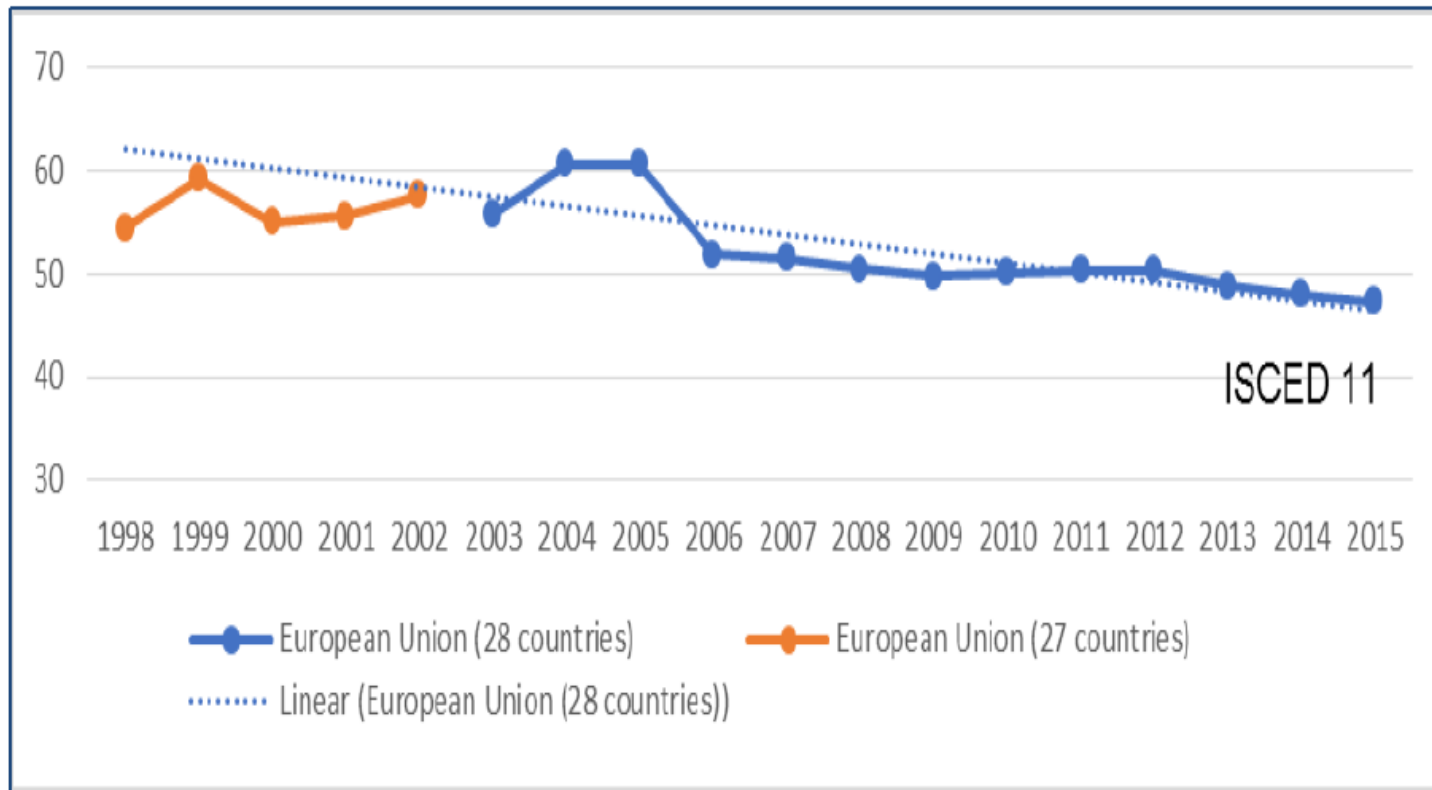


The future connection of VET to working life?

- Can employers provide enough high-quality training opportunities?
- Training in companies becomes more specialised – not broad occupational?
- Can companies offer 3-year contracts in more volatile markets?
- Does high-quality, high-value, Just-in-Time production have room for the training of young people?
- Are global corporations committed to *vocational* training– not *corporate*?
- Will employers prefer HE graduates over graduates from VET in knowledge-intensive production?

Academic drift and declining enrolment in VET – relative to general upper secondary education

Figure 1. **Enrolment in VET at upper secondary level (ISCED level 3) as a share of total enrolment in upper secondary education, 1998-2015, %**



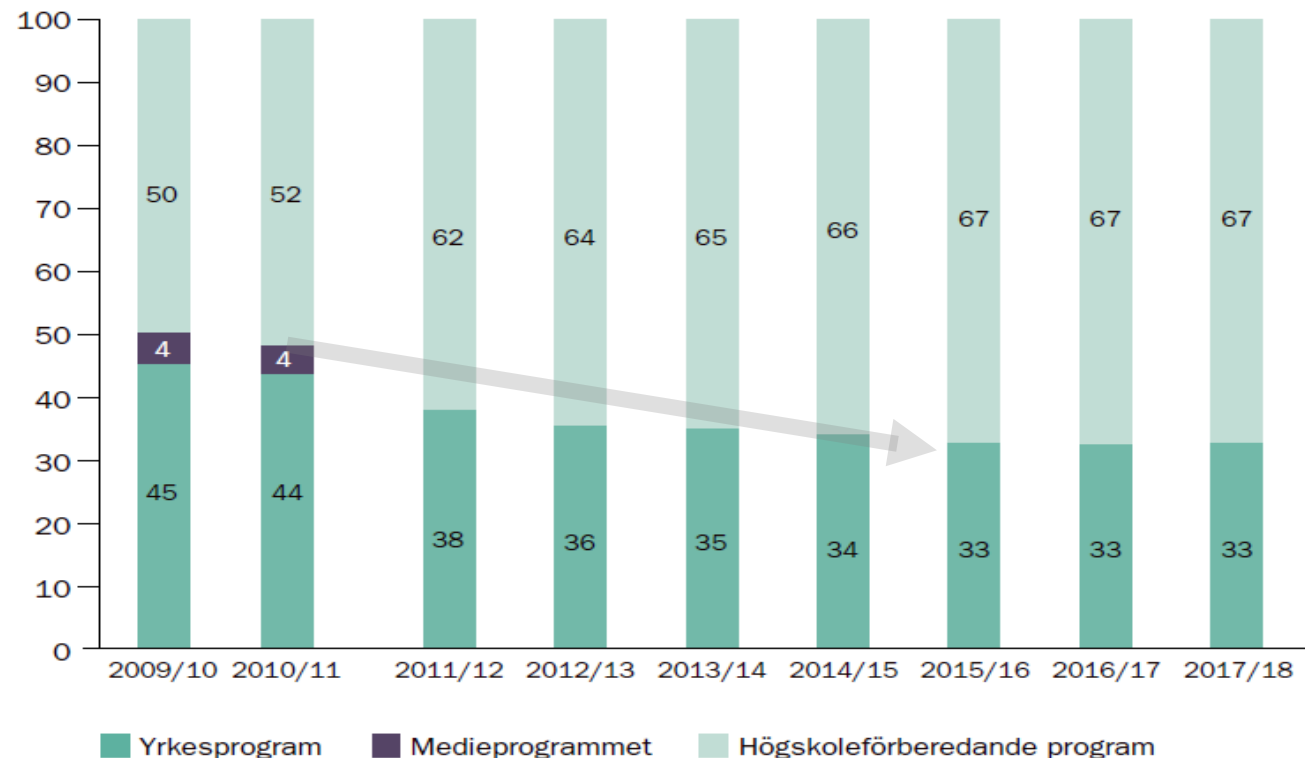
Source: Eurostat ([educ_ipart_s]) and [educ_uoe_enrs05].

Cedefop (2018). Volume 4 *Changing patterns of enrolment The changing nature and role of vocational education and training in europe.*

Academic drift and declining enrolment in VET

– relative to general upper secondary education

Diagram 2.2. Andel (procent) av eleverna i år 1 på gymnasieskolans nationella program läsåren 2009/10–2017/18.*



* Läsåret 2011/12 infördes Gy2011. I diagrammet räknas riksrekryterande utbildningar som yrkesprogram. I högskoleförberedande program ingår IB och Waldorf. Medieprogrammet särredovisas. Specialutformade program utan anknytning till ett nationellt program har exkluderats.

Skolverket 2018 *Samlad redovisning och analys inom yrkesutbildningsområdet*

Academic drift and declining enrolment in VET

– relative to general upper secondary education

Similar trend in **Denmark** : Completion of VET declined

1985: 44 %

2018: 27 % of youth cohort

VET in **Finland** has increased enrolment

partly by providing access to the Universities of Applied Science (AMK)

VET in **Norway** recruit 46 % of a youth cohort

– but many shift to the general track

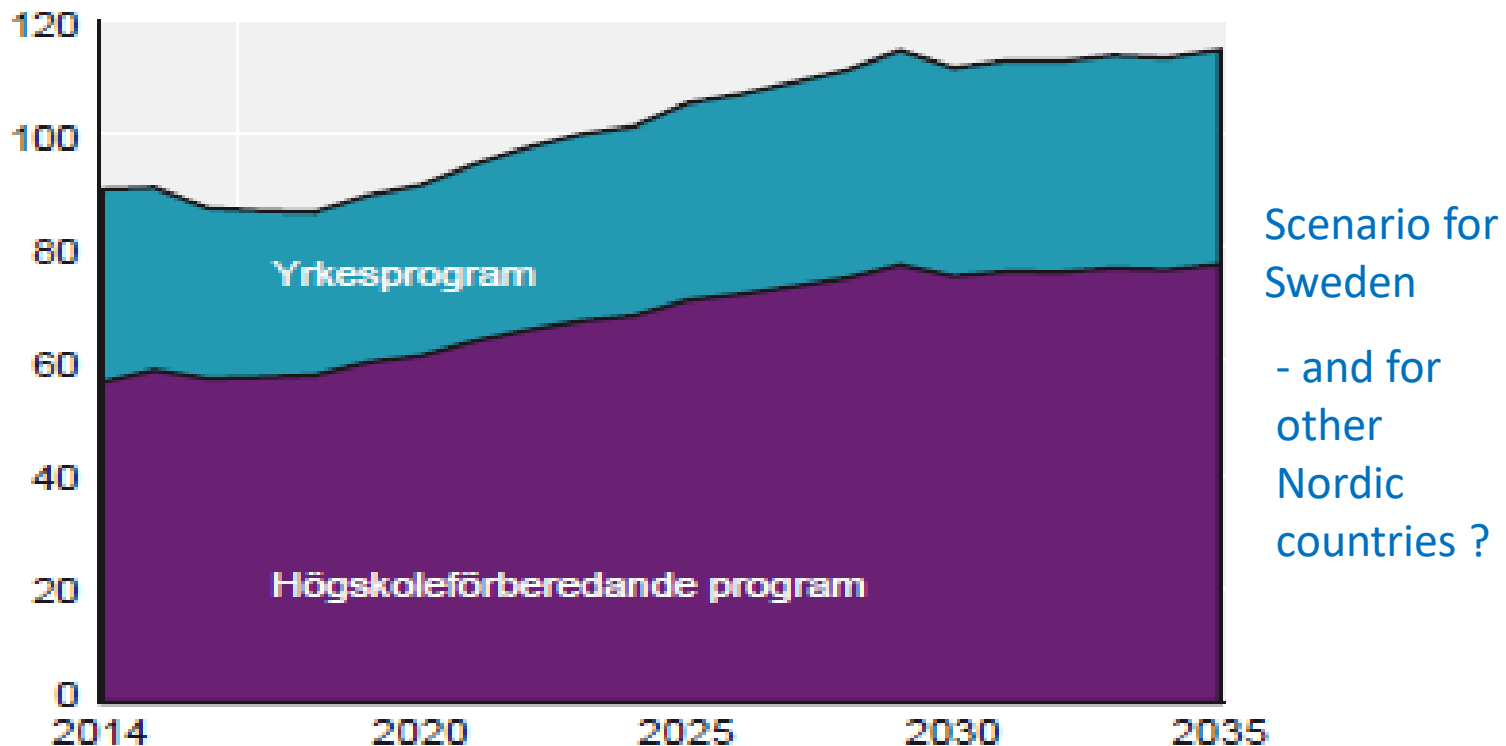
The 2012 youth cohort starting VET in Norway

- Five years later:
- 34% completed with vocational certificate (+ 10% still in education)
 - 30% completed with HE eligibility
 - 27 % had dropped out or not completed

(NOU 2018: 15; p. 137)

Academic drift and declining enrolment in VET – relative to general upper secondary education

Avgångna med gymnasial kompetens från gymnasieskolans nationella program. Åren 2014-2035 Prognos från år 2017



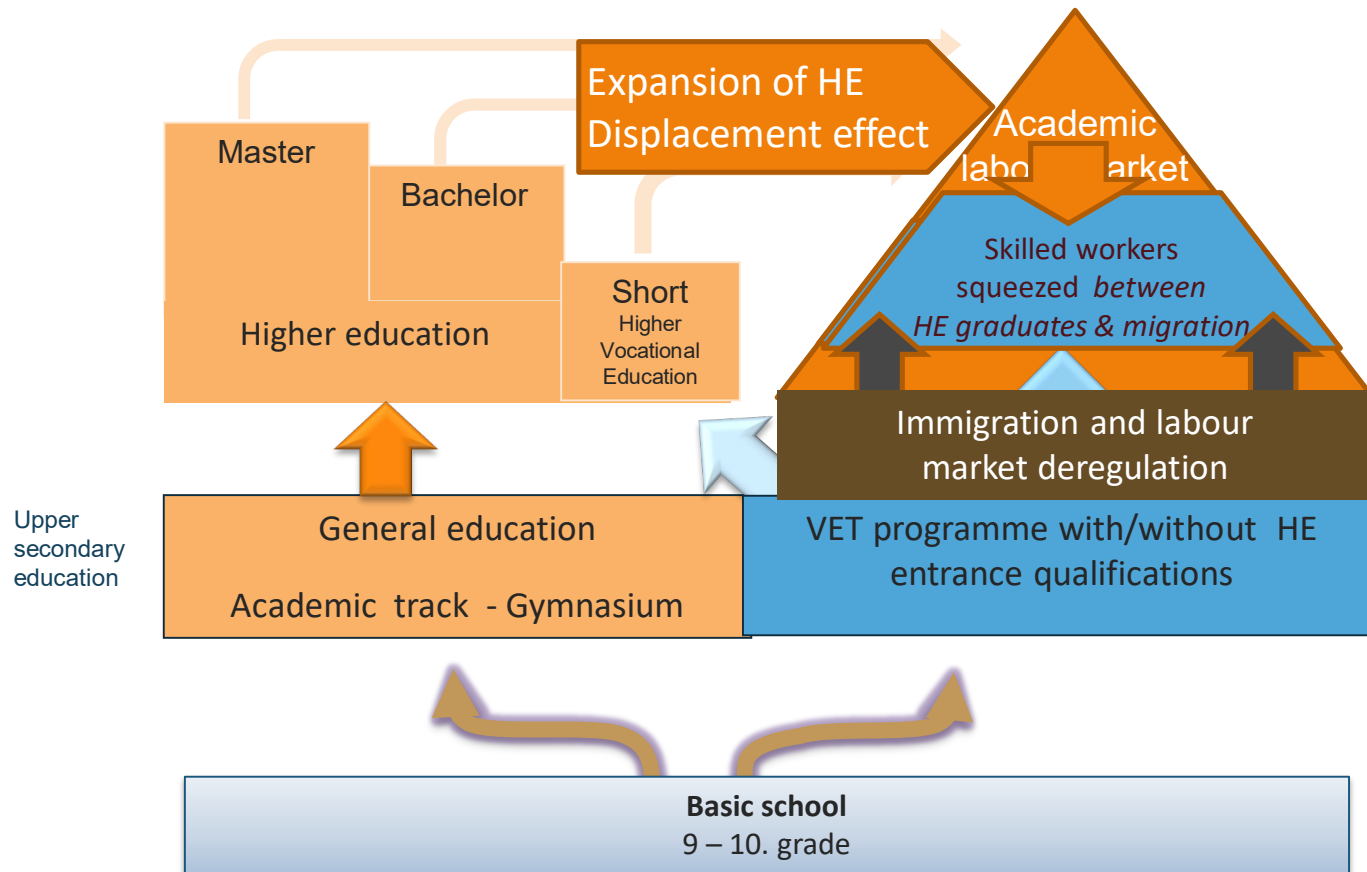
Källa: Prognosinstitutet, SCB

Statistiska centralbyrån 2017 *Trends and Forecasts - outlook to year 2035*

Academic drift and declining enrolment in VET

- Young people are voting with their feet
 - increasingly they prefer general education over VET
- VET becomes a pathway (shortcut?) to higher vocational education
- VET is expanding at post-secondary level: UAS/AMK, YH, Fagskole, EA
- Graduates from VET continue in higher vocational education, because employment is unattractive in some sectors (Construction, Health Care).
- Career opportunities in the labour market of VET graduates decreases due to high supply of HE graduates (stratification, 'glass ceilings').
- VET becomes post-secondary programme for graduates from general upper secondary education (Gymnasiums)

VET squeezed between HE graduates and low-skilled immigration



Utopian-optimistic scenario for Nordic VET

- *by managing dilemmas and balancing contradictory interests*

