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The long-term consequences of brain drain related to depopulation and social and territorial cohesion with a focus on the North of the Netherlands and a short comparison with Germany and Denmark

Presentation in the session 'Drivers and impacts of migration: new insights on the role of local labour markets, human capital, remote work, and (family) network' at the 62nd ERSA Congress, 31 August, Alicante, Spain.

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Outline

- Academic paper on request of the European Commission for a Communication on brain drain and challenges associated with population decline
- Location of areas with population decline
- Focus on the Netherlands with comparison to Germany (Stephan Brunow) and Denmark (Torben Dall Schmidt)
- Demographic, social and economic characteristics of the Dutch study region
- How is brain drain related to depopulation and social and territorial cohesion?
- Conclusions and Policy issues

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Trilateral Wadden Sea Region (WSR)

The map shows the North of the Netherlands, Denmark, and Germany. The study region is highlighted in green, covering parts of the North of the Netherlands and the German border area.

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Regions facing population decline subject to policy since 2014:

- a. Krimpgebieden:** 9 areas with expected strong decline of > 12,5% till 2040
- b. Anticipieergebieden:** 11 areas with moderate expected decline of > 2,5% till 2040

→ Policy on local facilities, not on brain drain

The map shows the Netherlands with regions facing population decline. Red areas are Krimpgebieden (strong decline) and yellow areas are Anticipieergebieden (moderate decline). The study region is highlighted in green.

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Characteristics of the Dutch study region

- Areas in the North and East near the coast and near the German border face population decline + aging in the past and predicted for the future especially till 2035, but also for 2050.
- Study region shows lower employment growth, lower participation rate, higher unemployment rate and lower levels of well-being, happiness and health and level of education is lower.
- NEXT: What are the underlying spatial mobility processes like brain drain **within** the region and **with other** regions?

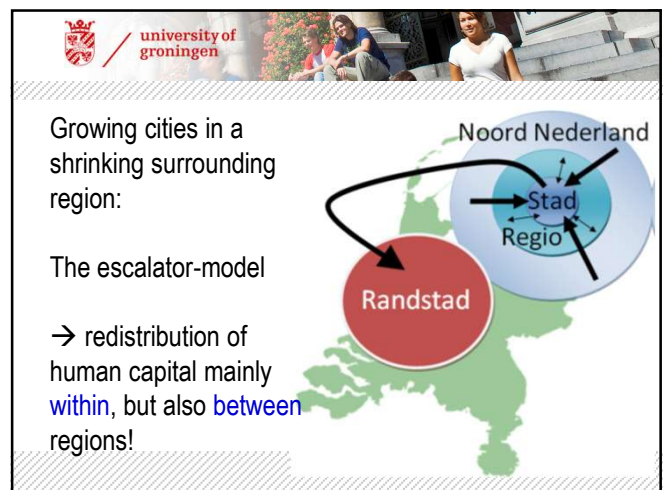
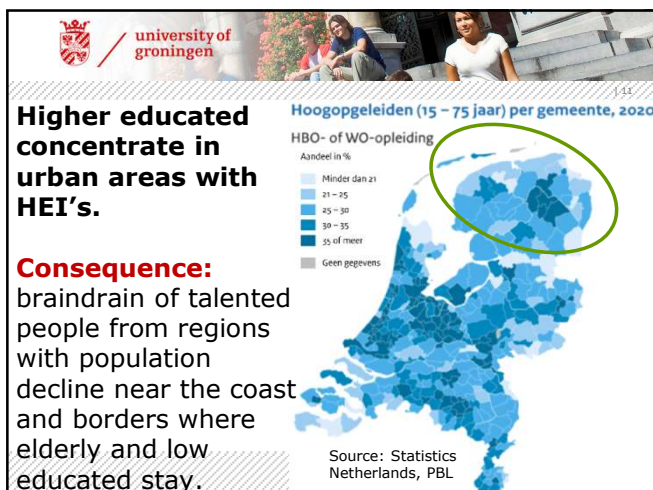
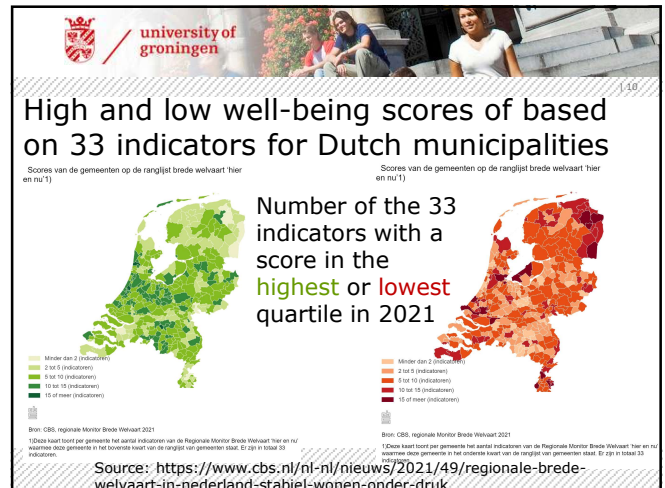
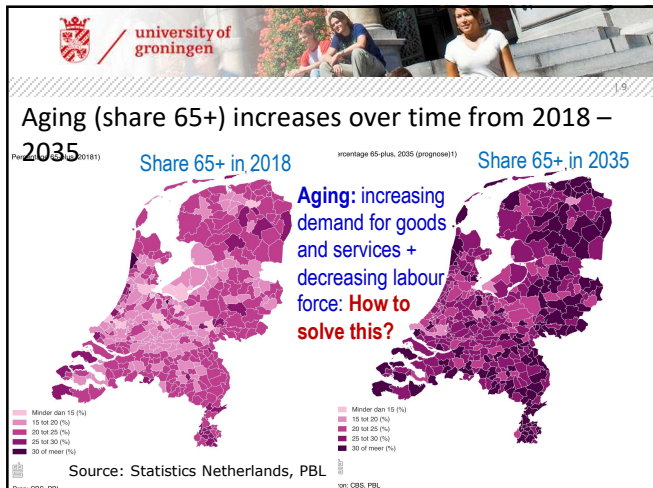
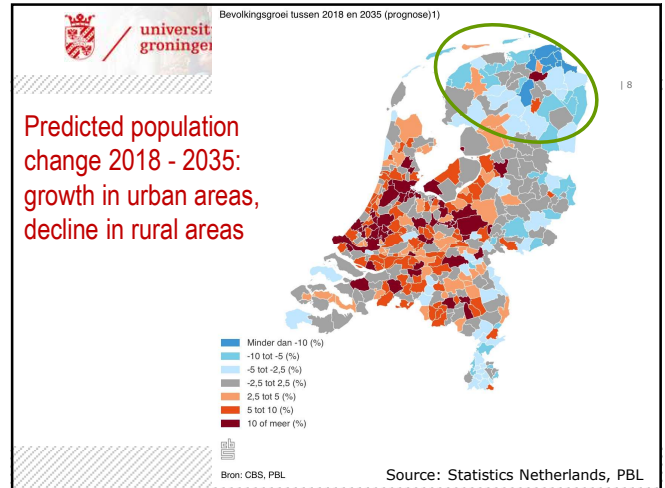
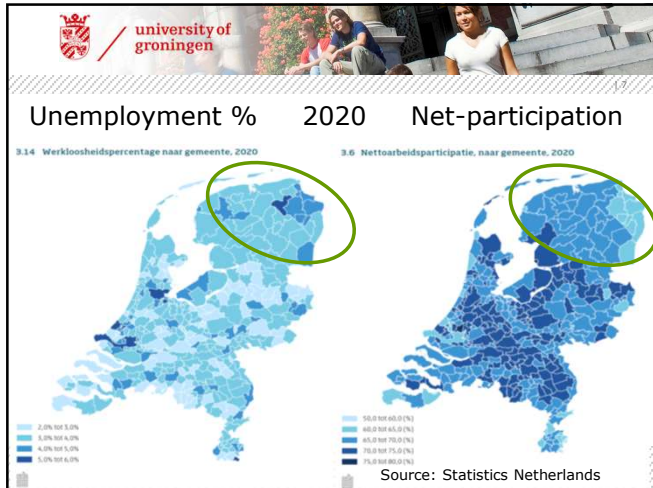
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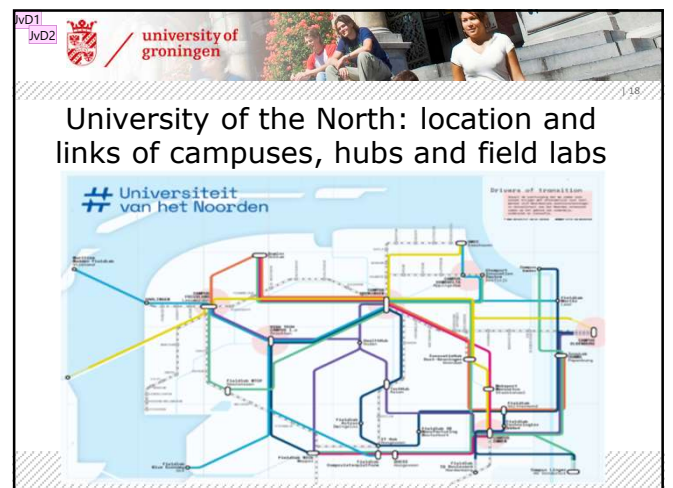
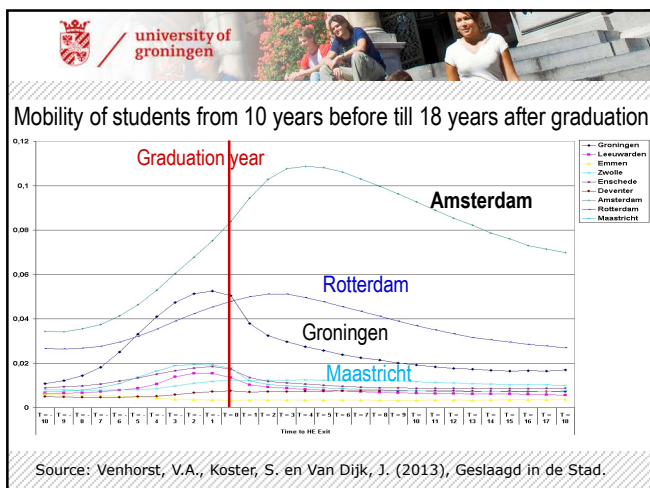
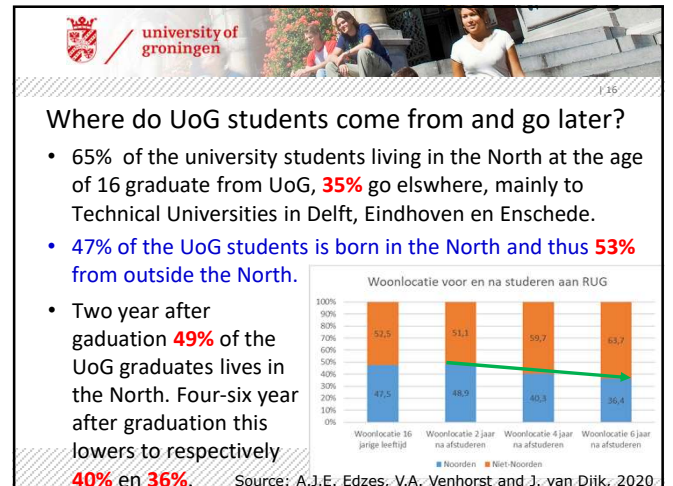
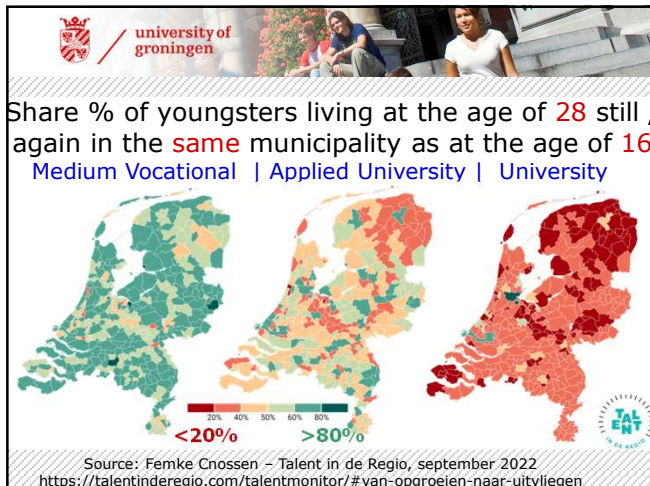
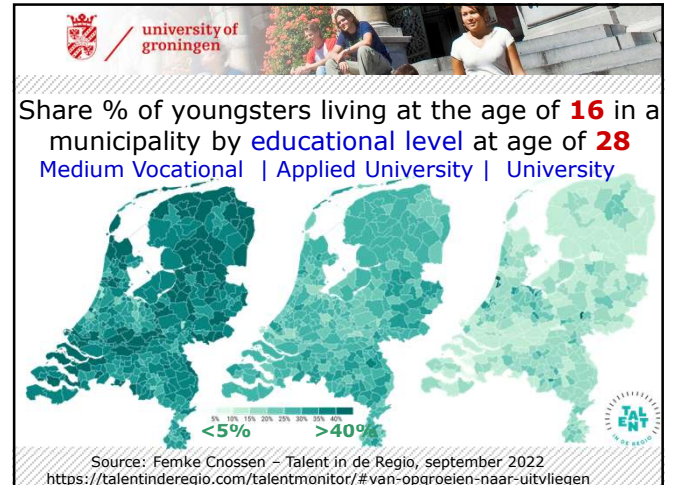
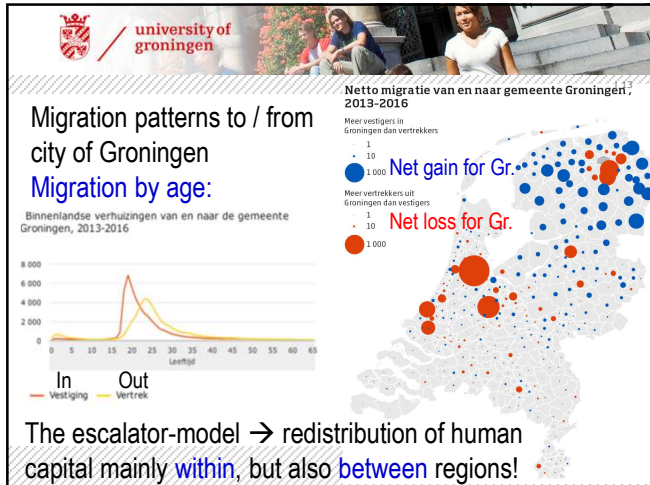
Change in employment by COROP region 1996-2020

→ growing regions are everywhere!

The map shows the Netherlands with change in employment by COROP region 1996-2020. Dark blue indicates growth, light blue indicates decline. The study region is highlighted in green.

Source: Lisa Nieuws, November 2021
Kaart 1. Groei banen per COROP-regio tussen 1996 en 2020







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Conclusions (1)

- **Regions with population decline** are located near the coast and the German border and have a long history of a lagging regional economy and show lower scores on employment growth, participation, well-being, health and higher unemployment rates and aging.
- **Brain drain occurs within the North:** the share of youngsters in the areas with population decline that obtain a degree in higher education is substantially lower and if they do a high share (up to 80%!) leaves the area and move to the urban areas in the North with HEI's and stay there or move on to the rest of the country. Those with roots in the North stay more.
- Similar patterns in Germany and Denmark



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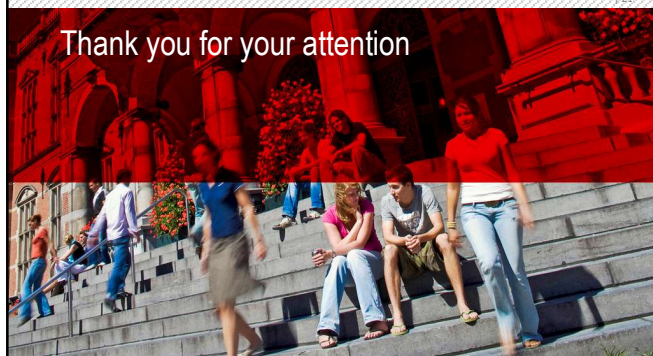
Conclusions (2)

- The University of Groningen attracts more than 50% from outside the area, but in 5-6 years after graduation more and more leave the region → **brain drain to other regions (or clean export product?)**
- Policies to keep graduates or let them return to area of origin are not successful. The result is less economic activity, well-being and innovation in declining areas.
- **Netherlands: new policy University of Groningen:** establishing of campuses, hubs and field labs in declining areas connecting staff/students to SME's.
- **Denmark:** relocating or downsizing of higher education programs from the main urban and education centers.
- **Germany:** no clear policy.



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Thank you for your attention



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