Stuck or steady…..

Bleibeperspektiven in Europaischer Perspektive

„Die Bleibe kann ein Schlafplatz sein, ein bescheidenes Zimmer, eine Hütte, ein Haus. Die Bleibe ist das, wohin man zurückkehrt, um zu ruhen und neue Kräfte zu sammeln.”

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The context

(rural) areas with population decline

Low fertility + (out)migration

Dejuvenation + ageing populations
Europe
Netherlands

- Areas that have to anticipate on future population decline
- Areas that already experience population decline
Young adults

The general picture...

The other side of the coin
The countryside for children: Paradise!

- Safe, familiar, well-known
- Play outside
- ‘Social control’
The countryside for adolescents: BORING!

- Nothing to do
- No (night life) facilities
- Large distances

- Cozy, sociable, homey
- Safe
Solutions:

1. Create hang out places

2. Leave as soon as you can!

Haartsen & Strijker, 2010
The countryside: return later on?

› To the same village/region: example Noordoostpolder (NL), 25% of young adults (19-29) are return migrants. Main motives for return: friends, family, work and partner (Haartsen & Thissen, forthcoming)

› To another rural area: over 60% of the rural borns stay in a rural residential environment after leaving the parental home (up to age 40) (Feijten, Hooimeijer & Mulder, 2008)

› Newcomers can also be return to the rural migrants (Bijker, 2012)
But is this all.....?

- Strong focus on migration and movements: 50% of the total number of movements per year between municipalities is made by people aged 15-30 years.

- Question: how many of the 15-30 year olds make a move to another municipality?
% of the movements between municipalities of 15-30 year old people, compared to all 15-30 year olds in the Netherlands

So > 90% 15-30 year old STAYERS per year!!

Data: CBS Statline
% leavers 15-30 year in 2011

Data: CBS Statline
% of people that lives in same place as their great-grand parents

More stayers in:
1. regions with a strong identity: own dialect and culture
2. Protestant areas
Who stay?

- Those who will not follow ‘higher’ education?
- Those who can follow ‘higher’ education while living at home?

- Is it an ‘active’ decision? Or do they ‘just stay’?
- Staying = failure to leave? (NiLaoire, 1999)

- Do stayers have social capital?
- How do they use the local (village) community in daily life (work, relax, sport, recreation)?
- Where do they find a partner?
Why stay (or not)?

Why do some young adults decide to stay in rural areas, while others leave?

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What may play a role in staying? [1]

Socio-economic issues/Human capital theory:

migration to improve education and/or work possibilities

› Equal opportunities?
› Freedom of choice or (negative) sorting out?
What may play a role in staying? [2]

(Rural)Place

› Rural idyllic representations + actual experiences: the rural life style (Halfacree & Rivera, 2011)

› Anchors/bond/attachment home region?

› Place qualities, amenities
What may play a role in staying? [3]

Social networks
- Family and friends (ties)
- Family and community norms and values on staying; role-models in social network
What may play a role in staying? [4]

Personality

> Stereotypes of staying:
  - dynamic, successful, thrill seeking leavers
  - stable, security seeking, boring stayers

> Compare to success/failure dichotomy in return migration
Methods

› Semi-structured in-depth interviews (1 -1.5 hours)
› Snowball method (disadvantage: same group)

› Rural villages in province of Groningen
› 14 respondents
  7 stayers, 5 leavers and 2 return migrants
  education: VMBO/HBO; HBO/University; HBO
Education and employment

For leavers the main reason to leave/move to a city:
› "Yes... well, it was very annoying because I had to take the train from Winsum via Groningen to Zwolle. The train switch was not ideal. After a day at school you really don’t like that". Female leaver, 24

For stayers distance is no problem:
› "I decided not to move to Leeuwarden while .... yes.... It is only 1.5 hours travelling from here. So that is very feasible" Female stayer, 22
Differences leavers-stayers

Sense of place

Leavers:
› Functional arguments; other places better for education or work
› No negative feelings towards village, but they have experienced a shift of priorities: “There is much more diversity in the city ... more people, so you can have more diverse friends and do more different activities. That is what now appeals to me” Female leaver, 24

Stayers:
› Are emotionally attached to the village via social relations, senses of community belonging, the familiar environment with shared/collective memories
Social relations [1]

Leavers

“For those few times that I would want to go to [village] in the weekend, I can take the train or drive up and down. It is for my work much easier to live in town” Male leaver, 26

Stayers

“It is the social ties, isn’t it? Really all of my family lives here, even all my grandparents... yes, actually everyone lives here...” Female stayer, 25
Decisions can change:

“That I now want to leave it because I have the feeling my time here is running out... Most of my friends move elsewhere, for me that determines the standard.... Than all of a sudden I am abnormal if I stay here....

My girlfriend also lives in the city, she is in favor of leaving as well... She thinks stayers are a bit deplorable ... so I feel that staying would make me deplorable too ....” Male stayer-in-transition, 24
Personality

Leavers: search for the new

Stayers: favor the familiar environment

“I like it in [village]. I know everyone.... And I do not like new things at all, that is not something for me” Male stayer, 21

“My younger sister has left, she is a different type than I am.... I was very uncertain, that is why I stayed at [parental] home quite long, because I thought it all was very exiting and scary ... so I was safe at home. She is more outgoing.... Well, some things just happen as they do, they are not so much deliberate choices ...“ Female stayer, 29
Conclusion

› Rational leavers (functional choice) versus emotional stayers (place attachment and identify with village)?

› Yes to the stereotypes: adventurous and ambitious leavers versus stable and safe-playing stayers?

› Important role of type of personality?
Senior people

Decisions/options to stay depend on their access to facilities and services -> (car)mobility is critical

In the Netherlands:
Move towards larger villages or small towns:
- To live near facilities and services
- To move to retirement homes/nurseries

Changes in care: more focus on keeping people in their homes as long as possible (extramuralization)
Knowledge Network Population Decline North Netherlands

- Network with university of Groningen, universities of applied sciences, local and regional governments, SME’s, housing corporations, local action groups, etcetera’s
- Developed by University of Groningen and Hanzehogeschool, financed by the three northern provinces. One projectleader works on this for four years.
Aim and activities

- Aim: share and develop knowledge on how to deal with the consequences of population decline

- Four times a year, we organise ‘cafe’ meetings on a particular subject/problem. We share local solutions and discuss on success and failures

- See http://kknn.vanmeernaarbeter.nl/