

Secondary education and its impact on the perceived livability and regional identity: a case study of North-Groningen, 1945-1985.

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Abstract:

Incorporating elements from both history and cultural geography, this paper focuses on and explores how secondary education in the rural region of North-Groningen, the Netherlands has changed over time between the 1950s and the 1990s. In many Dutch rural regions after World War Two secondary education became increasingly accessible for rural youth. This occurred as a result of the development of national institutional factors, like extended compulsory school attendance, child allowance and, later on, the Dutch Secondary Education Act of 1963. On a more regional level the development of educational facilities, like the development of technical schools and domestic science schools, were a contributing factor to the advancement of a region. Based on quantitative and qualitative data, such as in-depth interviews with representatives of schools, reunion books and minutes, this paper analyses the school developments in North-Groningen in relation to the concepts of livability and regional identity. The analysis shows that governmental intervention, which from 1968 onwards resulted in an increase in scale of educational facilities, started to change the educational geography of North-Groningen. The presence of schools did not contribute to a regional North-Groningen identity, because the schools operated on a local scale instead of regional.

Introduction

Until World War Two full-time employment was an important factor in the lives of rural youth aged 12 till 18 years. Currently, however, education is considered to be more important in their lives.¹ Originated from the late 19th and early 20th century, in the post-war period the importance of full-time employment decreased while at the same time the importance of secondary education increased.² Meanwhile, more attention was paid to education by national governments, local governments and pressure groups. This because education have been approached as a means to increase the standard of living.³

In this paper is analyzed how the changing secondary education is connected to a perceived livability and regional identity. To analyze this a case-study is carried out in North-Groningen, a region in the Northern part of the Netherlands. The research question of this paper is: how is the presence of secondary education in a rural region related to the perceived standard of living and the regional identity in this region? To analyze this the paper focuses on the North-Groningen schools and their development over time. The school is considered as an institute which transfers knowledge, skills and values and norms to the North-Groningen rural youth.⁴ Different explanatory variables are

¹ McGrath, 'A Problem of Resources'.

² Stearns, *Childhood in World History*, p. 99; Boekholt and de Booy, *Geschiedenis van de School*, p. 259.

³ Boekholt and Booy, *Geschiedenis van de School*, p. 258; Dodde, *Het Nederlandse Onderwijs*, p. 138.

⁴ Bax, *Modernization and Cleavage*, p. 118.

researched, such as national institutional variables and local demographic, social and economic variables.

In this paper the term secondary education is used in its present day meaning: education given after primary school for 12 till 18 years old youth.⁵ As becomes clear from the research question two concepts are important in this paper: livability and regional identity.⁶ The meaning given to these concepts can change over time and can be different for various actors. Livability is conceptualized as the value given to the relative living standards of North-Groningen. For example, in the 1950s education was considered by sociologists as an important determinant of the perceived livability.⁷ For rural education, distance and the related accessibility of education are regarded as important determinants in the perceived livability. Regional identity is conceptualized as the perception which inhabitants of North-Groningen attach to their region. The region is thus conceptualized as a social construct.⁸

Education in relation to the rural community

In 1958 the Dutch sociologist Colijn discussed the standard of living in rural villages. In his article he related the livability of a village to the presence of facilities, such as schools, shopkeepers, residences, churches and community centres.⁹ The Dutch sociographer Constandse also perceived education as one of the essential facilities for a liveable village. In his more nuanced view he stated that when a rural school wanted to educate at the same level of quality as an urban school, it needed to have an appropriate number of pupils.¹⁰ The Dutch sociologist Groot focused in his dissertation on the changing service function of lower education in rural villages in The Netherlands in the period 1949-1970. He presented a small decline in the number of schools and concluded that this had to do with the important meaning given to education and the symbolic function of the school in a community.¹¹ Especially in rural villages, schools have broader informational, emotional, material and social functions.¹²

Currently, livability is not only perceived as the facilities present. It also has to do with community life. Therefore, for example, not only the presence of a school as a facility has impact, but also the teachers who are employed at the school. In the pre-war period, they were seen as key figures in the social life of a community.¹³ A teacher was educated and had social status. Because of modernization the social supporting role of a schoolteacher decreased. Rural inhabitants became educated as well and were less dependent on the skills of the local teacher. However, Groot and de Groot concluded that local communities in Groningen in the mid 1970s still expected the teacher to fulfill

⁵ In historical perspective the term secondary education is used for pre-university education. For a Dutch explanation see: Mandemakers, 'Gymnasiaal en Middelbaar Onderwijs,' p. 19.

⁶ In this paper, the concepts of livability and standard of living are the same, both refer to the Dutch term *leefbaarheid*.

⁷ Colijn, 'Island in the Sun'.

⁸ Paasi, 'The Resurgence of the 'Region'', p. 133.

⁹ Colijn, 'Island in the Sun'.

¹⁰ Constandse, *Het Dorp*, p. 266.

¹¹ Groot, *Kleine Plattelandskernen*, p. 97-104. See also: Groot and de Groot, *De Kleine Dorpen in Groningen*.

¹² Kearns et al., 'The status quo is not an option'.

¹³ van der Wal, *Opvattingen en Rolverwachtingen*.

communal positions.¹⁴ In more recent literature the teacher is still perceived as a local key figure, who is often involved in local activities.¹⁵ Therefore, not only the presence of a school is perceived as important to livability but the people employed at the school are perceived as important to the maintenance of livability.

The main function of a school is to provide education for the youth. After 1945 the government related modernization to education. It expected the youth to adopt modern society first and education was a way to accomplish this and simultaneously to improve possibilities for rural youth. However, the provision of education in rural regions can never meet the same levels of provision in urban regions.¹⁶ This is primarily caused by low numbers of pupils in rural regions, as a result there can not be the same number of different schools. Because of this, rural youth almost never has the same close geographic proximity to education as urban youth.¹⁷ Since the 1970s this even increased due to centralisation processes, which resulted in school mergers and closure downs.¹⁸ The poor geographic proximity of facilities in rural regions causes a general restricted choice for rural youth. The restricted choice and the restricted resources are the main reasons for rural out-migration of youth.¹⁹

The choice of education is often made by the pupil's parents.²⁰ Parents do account it for as a complex process because of the various factors involved.²¹ For example: capabilities of the pupil, the recommendation of the primary school, the pupils' social, religious, and financial background, and the accessibility and image of the schools. Some parents have one dominant factor which influences the choice and others have a combination of factors.²² As discussed before, in the case of rural regions, choice can become restricted due to geographical proximity.

In literature, educational choice and the impact of social background are considered to be related.²³ In the post-war period the national government perceived education as a means to increase the possibilities of youth of *all* social backgrounds. Before that, secondary education was mainly for the elite.²⁴ In contrast to the ideal perception of the government Ball, Bowe and Gewirtz presented an 'account of class related patterns of schooling'.²⁵ They concluded that for the working class educational choices were dominated by the practical and the immediate. For example, the presence of public transport. The middle class chose by the ideal and the advantages; the imagination of the parents of the child to become a dentist. Despite criticism on their methodology,²⁶ the impact of social background is by other studies acknowledged.²⁷ Other studies have

¹⁴ Groot and de Groot, *De Kleine Dorpen in Groningen*.

¹⁵ Tricker and Mills, 'Education Services'; Ribchester and Edwards, 'The Centre and the Local'.

¹⁶ Constandse, *Het Dorp*.

¹⁷ Tricker and Mills, 'Education Services'.

¹⁸ Ribchester and Edwards, 'The Centre and the Local'.

¹⁹ Auclair and Vanoni, 'The Attractiveness', p. 103; McGrath, 'A Problem of Resources'.

²⁰ Vincent, 'Social Class'.

²¹ Ball, Bowe and Gewirtz, 'Circuits of Schooling', p.53.

²² Walker and Clark, 'Parental Choice', p. 7.

²³ See: Ball, Bowe, and Gewirtz, 'Circuits of Schooling'; Vincent, 'Social Class'; Walker and Clark, 'Parental Choice'.

²⁴ Goodman, 'Social Change'.

²⁵ Ball, Bowe and Gewirtz, 'Circuits of Schooling', p. 52.

²⁶ Tooley, 'On School Choice'.

²⁷ See: Vincent, 'Social Class'; Walker and Clark, 'Parental Choice'.

related the social background to the origins of the parents, natives or migrants.²⁸ The differences between the discussed groups appear in the different meanings and emotions they attach to education and the school of their choice.

Meanings and values which are attached to a school are connected to the identity of a school. Therefore the identity of a school is in all cases a decisive factor of choice. The identity of a school is based on different variables, like religion, level of the school and the geographical location. Because of the location of a school, the school can function as a regional institution. It means that a school can contribute to regional identification processes; for example by teaching the local dialect and create collective memories about the region. The geographer Paasi regards the interaction and networking of such institutions as the most important aspect of the representation of a region.²⁹ Interaction and networking of actor groups can increase the presence of a particular regional identity. The creation of a regional identity always has a particular goal.³⁰

Methodology

The focus of this paper is on secondary schools in the region North-Groningen. Therefore, a research is conducted among the past and present secondary schools *in* the region North-Groningen. By focusing on the schools, it becomes clear what their function in society is and how they contribute to the perceptions of livability and regional identity. The focus on schools and the specific region can be approached as a constraint. They are not the only institutions which have an impact and there are also schools outside the region which are attended by North-Groningen pupils. However, the focus on the North-Groningen schools can provide an insight in their function, place and role in the whole process of development of livability and regional identity.



Figure 1: The region of North-Groningen, indicated with the red dotted line.

²⁸ Walker and Clark, 'Parental Choice'; Groot and de Groot, *De Kleine Dorpen in Groningen*.

²⁹ Paasi, 'The Resurgence of the 'Region''.

³⁰ Simon, *Ruimte voor Identiteit*, p. 22.

North-Groningen is located in the Northern part of the Netherlands and is in this paper approached as the region which consists of the present-day municipalities: Bedum, De Marne, Eemsmond, Loppersum, Ten Boer and Winsum. In figure 1 the geographical location of the region is indicated with a red dotted line. The black lines are the two railroads in North-Groningen. In order to provide a picture as complete as possible, the paper draws upon analyses of various types of data: quantitative data, secondary data and oral history interviews. Each of the types of data have their constraints. The combination of the three can help to overcome these constraints.

Descriptive analysis is used to provide a context for the educational development over time. Various kinds of quantitative data are used, such as the composition of the North-Groningen population, the numbers of pupils per school and per type of education. A constraint of this data is, that it does not cover the whole period and all schools.³¹ One of the reasons is that Statistics Netherlands used different counting methods in different periods and used different regions. Therefore, the quantitative data is somewhat fragmented.

Another source is secondary data: such as school reunion books, annual reports and minutes of schools. Reunion books are published for different schools in the region North-Groningen. The target group of these books is alumni, which has consequences for the focus of the books. The books focus is on the history of the school and therefore deal with changes and events concerning the particular school. Through close reading the reunion books can provide insight in the school's history and identity. Additionally, minutes and annual reports from different schools are used. They give an overview of what is going on at the particular school in that specific period. They provide a source for detailed information about pupils, teachers, board, and the network of the school.

The third source used is oral history interviews with former teachers and headmasters of secondary schools in North-Groningen. The eleven interviews were semi-structured and focused on pupils, teachers, board, region and identity of the school. The interviews provided the involved people the opportunity to tell their personal stories and formulate their experiences in their own words.³² The personal stories of respondents who were professionally involved in education are the central part of this paper. To analyze the interviews, the text analysis programme MaxQDA 2010 was used to code text fragments from the interviews. Owing to their semi-structured nature, it was possible to compare the interviews with respect to the various themes discussed. To gain in-depth insight on the different subjects, the interviews were also approached qualitatively through close reading.

In the next section the Dutch educational system will be explained. In the following of the paper the case study is presented. This is done by discussing the situation in North-Groningen in two time periods: 1945 until 1968 and 1968 until 1985. In 1968 a new Secondary Education Act was implemented which reformed the whole secondary educational system. Besides the national institutional development the local demographic, social and economic developments are discussed. In the end a conclusion is drawn.

³¹ Wolthuis, *Lower Technical Education*.

³² Thompson, 'The Voice of the Past', p. 26.

Secondary education in the Netherlands: the rural situation.

Since the late 19th and early 20th century, the Dutch national government had already paid attention at secondary education, but after 1945 secondary educational possibilities improved. In the post-war reconstruction the government increasingly focused on education as a means to improve prosperity.³³ The government financed, formulated requirements concerning the teaching programs, developed legal measures and facilitated improvement for school attendance, like an increase in the number of years of compulsory education and the abolition of tuition.³⁴ Summarized, it had a facilitating role and additionally had the final responsibility over schools and their level of quality.³⁵ A stimulating atmosphere was tried to create by the government, this in order to improve and develop educational facilities by local initiatives in their regions all over the country.

In rural regions many local initiatives were expanded which resulted in the foundation of mainly professional schools. The main goal of these foundations was to make education accessible for rural youth.³⁶ In the post-war period the rural environment changed: less agricultural employment, a growing demand for qualified agricultural workers and a negative image for employment in agriculture. Therefore, an increasing demand for education was noticeable in rural regions. Because of post-war national economic reconstruction industrialization was stimulated in specific regions. The result was a growing demand for qualified technical workers, which resulted in an expansion of lower technical schools (LTS). In general, this expansion of technical schools was initiated locally, for example by representatives from manufacturing industries.³⁷ From a national perspective the industrialisation policy of the 1940s and the 1950s stimulated and facilitated the development of technical education even further. Technical education was founded especially for working class boys. For working class girls the housekeeping schools and the rural counterpart agricultural housekeeping schools (LHNO) became the standard.³⁸

Besides the professional education, the general education developed in rural regions as well in the post-war period. In the Netherlands different types of general education can be distinguished; the two years course of continued primary education (VGLO), the four years course of extended primary education (ULO), the five years course of the secondary school for girls (MMS) and the five years course of the modern grammar school (HBS), and the six years course of the classical school (gymnasium). The presence and expansion of these schools differs per region.

In the post-war period, the Dutch society, including its educational system, has been pillarized. Education was based on principal grounds and religion was an important environmental factor.³⁹ Therefore, in addition to the distinction discussed above the educational system can be classified into two other groups; various denominational

³³ Boekholt and Booy, *Geschiedenis van de School*, p. 258.

³⁴ Dodde, *Het Nederlandse Onderwijs*, p. 138; Wolthuis, *Lower Technical Education*, p. 204; Bax, *Modernization and Cleavage*, p. 118.

³⁵ van der Ploeg, *The Expansion*, p. 21.

³⁶ van der Woude, *Op Goede Gronden*, p. 286. The abbreviation between the brackets is the Dutch abbreviation for this type of education.

³⁷ Wolthuis, *Lower Technical Education*, p. 200.

³⁸ van der Burg, *Een Half Miljoen Boerinnen*; van der Woude, *Op Goede Gronden*, p. 82.

³⁹ Wolthuis, *Lower Technical Education*, p. 240.

institutions and the public non-denominational educational system.⁴⁰ The two have different authorities; denominational schools have a private board and non-denominational schools are administered by the municipality or Dutch national government. However, this does not mean that the government has no influence on denominational schools. Since 1920 all schools received equal subsidies from the government. Since then, an increase in denominational schools can be noticed. This mainly applies to general education schools, because they were regarded as more dependent on denomination than professional education.⁴¹

One of the major changes concerning education nationally has been the adaption of the Dutch Secondary Education Act in 1963. The implementation of this Act, which is better known as the Secondary Education Act, was realized in 1968. As a result of more than 70 years of educational reforms the complete secondary education system was transformed. The different types of secondary education were until 1963 provided by four different laws, which originate from 1863, 1876, 1919 and 1920.⁴² One of the main thoughts of the Act was uniformity in education: every pupil should have a general education program and should have the possibility to switch between different types. To fit this purpose, the former categorical education system was not appropriate. The old system also encouraged an educational choice based on social background. In the 1960s and 1970s the government was concerned about this social inequality.⁴³ Pupils should have the possibilities to use their capacities in the best way, no matter their social background.

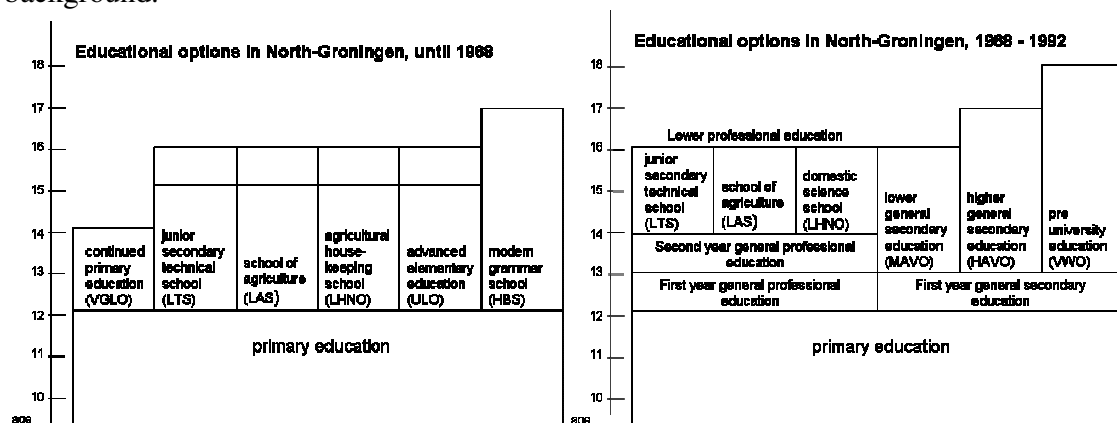


Figure 2: Overview of the different educational options in North-Groningen.

Source: in adapted form from Boekholt (1987), p. 264 and 288.

ULO and MULO are regarded as the same type of education.

As a result of the Act, professional education needed to pay more attention to general subjects, such as Dutch, English and German languages, mathematics, physics and chemistry. Practical training became less important for professional education, but instead it became based upon practical thinking. To accomplish these ideas in secondary education, a first general year was set up. This intermediate year enabled easier transfers

⁴⁰ Bax, *Modernization and Cleavage*, p. 117.

⁴¹ Wolthuis, *Lower Technical Education*, p. 208-209.

⁴² Ibid., p. 202.

⁴³ Boekholt and Booy, *Geschiedenis van de School*, p. 263.

between various types of secondary education. The professional educational program consisted for almost 70 percent of general education and 30 percent professional education.⁴⁴ For schools, the consequence was that teachers had to be retrained to be able to teach new courses, or new subject teachers had to be recruited. Because of the focus on more general education, the specialties of these schools became less clear. This resulted in less popularity among new pupils, which had results for the total number of pupils per school.⁴⁵

For general education schools the Act also resulted in a new educational system and new names for the education types. In figure 2 an overview is given. The VGLO and MMS disappeared. The ULO changed into the MAVO, the lower general secondary education, with a four years course. The HBS was split up into the HAVO, higher general secondary education, with a five years course and the VWO, pre university education, with a six years course. The gymnasium remained almost the same. As a result, most schools changed in character. The MAVO, for example, became a school for preparing pupils for secondary professional education, instead of a final stage in the education of pupils.⁴⁶

Besides the changes in the educational program discussed above, the government pursued a centralization policy for the schools: less authority for schools and more direct control of the central government.⁴⁷ Besides the Act, the government tried to remove financial restrictions by providing support for pupils.⁴⁸ From 1968 onwards, the use of the CITO-test increased. This is a tool to test the level of primary school pupils and serves as an indication for the future level of secondary education.⁴⁹ Over time, it became one of the most important tools for determining school choice.

Small islands in North-Groningen, 1945-1968

In the post-war period inhabitants of North-Groningen were concerned about the future livability of the region. By initiative of a pressure group, *Stichting Noord-Groningen*, a research was conducted and in 1959 a report entitled *Threatened Existence* (Bedreigd Bestaan) was published.⁵⁰ The title assumed an alarming future for the region North-Groningen and was derived from one of the main concerns; the alarming out-migration of youth. Although the report tried to give a picture of North-Groningen as complete as possible, little attention was paid to education. In a monograph of *Threatened Existence*, Sauer discussed that since the end of the 19th century the working class group became increasingly educated and they perceived education as a way to escape employment in the low valued agriculture.⁵¹ *Threatened Existence* concluded that educational possibilities in North-Groningen should be expanded.⁵² However, no further details were given about how to accomplish this.

⁴⁴ Goudswaard, *Agrarisch Onderwijs*, p. 248.

⁴⁵ Wolhuis, *Lower Technical Education*.

⁴⁶ Boekholt and Booy, *Geschiedenis van de School*, p. 287.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 289.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 260.

⁴⁹ Karstanje, 'Onderwijsondersteuning', p. 135 and 149.

⁵⁰ Bouman, *Bedreigd Bestaan*.

⁵¹ Sauer, *Onderzoek naar de Culturele Situatie*, p. 3.

⁵² Bouman, *Bedreigd Bestaan*, p. 228-229.

The population of North-Groningen

The main concern in North-Groningen was population decline. A closer look at the absolute number of inhabitants, presented in figure 3, shows that it is mainly the age group 15 till 64 which decreased. As a result of the sources available in figure 3 the municipalities of Zuidhorn, Aduard, Oldehove and Grijskerk are included as well. Therefore, the total number of inhabitants is different as compared to figure 7. Figure 3 shows that the age group 0 till 14 declined slightly after 1950 and the age group 65 and older increased. If the age group 0 till 14 is taken as an indication of potential pupils, it can be concluded that the number of potential pupils changed only a little in the 1950-1958-1966 period.

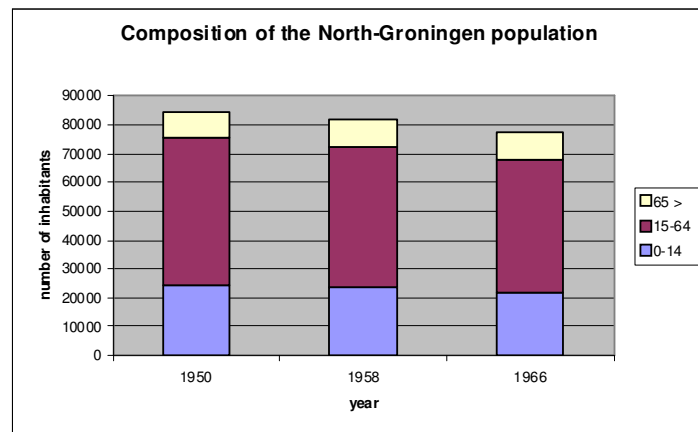


Figure 3: Composition of the North-Groningen population, 1950-1966
Source: *Bedreigd Bestaan* (1959) and *Zakboek van het Noorden* (1967).

However, a closer look at the regional situation shows differences between municipalities. In figure 4 the situation in 1962 is presented. The regional average of 0 till 14 years old is in that year 28 percent. The municipalities of Middelstum and Bedum show a percentage of more than 31 percent and the municipality of Usquert shows a percentage of 22,5 percent. The municipality of Kloosterburen, North-West Groningen, has a relative high number of 0 till 14 years old. This can be related to the Roman Catholic background of the municipality. Roman Catholics are regarded to have a higher birthrate in this period.⁵³ In general the municipalities close by the city of Groningen have a higher percentage of 0 till 14 years old as compared to municipalities further away.

⁵³ Knippenberg, *De Religieuze Kaart*, p. 171.

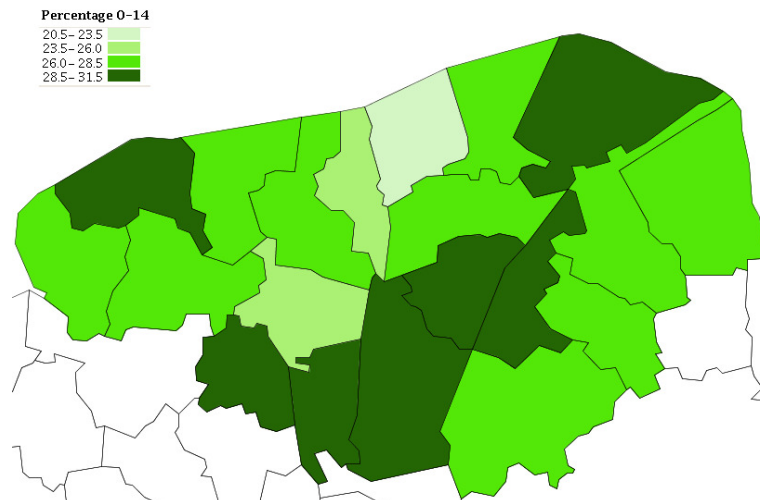


Figure 4: Percentage of 0 till 14 years old per municipality, 1961.
Source: *Zakboek van het Noorden* (1962).

One of the reasons why in *Threatened Existence* little attention is paid to education, is because the educational situation did not cause concerns. By founding several general and professional schools in the period 1947 till 1954 the educational provision reached its peak. See appendix 1 and 2 for details. The large supply of secondary schools was the result of various regional and local initiatives.

Professional education: LAS, LHNO and LTS.

Regional initiatives came from the provincial Groningen branches of national agricultural pressure groups. These were the *Groninger Maatschappij van Landbouw* (Groningen association of agriculture) and the denominational counterpart *Christelijke Boeren en Tuinders Bond* (CBTB, the denominational farmers and gardeners union). Although they aimed for more, their initiatives resulted in one school of agriculture (LAS) in Winsum and four LHNO schools. The LAS was founded by the CBTB and aimed at the denominational agricultural population of North-Groningen. As spoken at the 10th anniversary in 1950: 'May in the future the school be a blessing for many more young people of agricultural birth or with agricultural blood.'⁵⁴ The LHNO schools were less oriented on agricultural pupils, but on rural girls in general. Their main goal was to provide farms with well educated servants. Because of modernization, this goal was soon superseded. Nevertheless, the agricultural interests remained present. For example in the board was always a farmer's wife included to take care of the interests of the local farmers.⁵⁵ However, the LHNO in North-Groningen did not become the school for rural girls, as van der Woude concluded for rural regions in general.⁵⁶ Instead the ULO did, as becomes clear later on in this paper.

In a region known for its agriculture, the presence of only one LAS is remarkable. This is partly explained by the foundation of two technical schools in the region. These

⁵⁴ 'Moge zij [de school] in de toekomst nog vele jongelingen, van boerenafkomst of met boerenbloed tot zegen zijn.' 50 Jaar C.L.A.S. Winsum (Gn) 1939-1989, p. 8.

⁵⁵ Interview respondent 1.

⁵⁶ van der Woude, *Op Goede Gronden*, p. 286.

were initiatives from local pressure groups in cooperation with municipalities. The initiatives served two main purposes: educate local youth and stimulate the foundation of manufacturing industries. The foundation of the LTS schools resulted in an increase of 13-17 year old boys who attended a LTS: from 5,9 percent in 1949 to 13,5 in 1955.⁵⁷ One of the reasons for this increase is the accessibility of a LTS within a distance of 10 kilometer all over North-Groningen. However, as is shown in figure 5, the highest growth is concentrated in two areas. One growth area is concentrated around the LTS in Uithuizen. As the annual report of 1955 shows, the LTS pupils originated mainly from close by municipalities.⁵⁸ However, the LTS in Wehe den Hoorn shows a different picture. The municipality of Leens, in which the LTS Wehe den Hoorn is located, has a low number of LTS pupils, it decreased from 3,9 percent in 1949 to 2,5 in 1955. One of the explanations could be the small size of the LTS. In 1955 the school had only 74 pupils, whereas Uithuizen had 201 pupils. Because of the regional character of the school, pupils could come mainly from the surrounding municipalities. The working population of Leens shows the same structure as the surrounding municipalities.⁵⁹ It remains somewhat unclear why the number of LTS pupils in Leens did not develop in the same way as in surrounding municipalities.

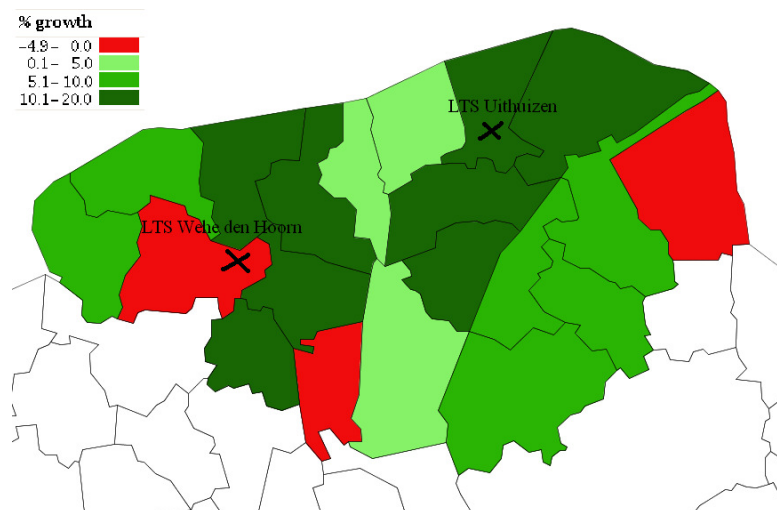


Figure 5: Growth of 13 till 17 years old LTS pupils in percentage per municipality, 1949-1955. Source: NETO (1955).

The second goal of the LTS turned out to be more complicated: it proved to be difficult to attract new manufacturing industries. The case of the LTS in Uithuizen clearly demonstrates this. In 1955 the annual minutes warned for the future: *'The cooperation with the department of employment was excellent, the result was that all graduated pupils soon found employment. However, will this be the case in the future, more industries need to settle down in this region to employ the growing number of certificated pupils.'*⁶⁰ A few years later the urgency is even stronger: *'It is absolutely necessary for this region*

⁵⁷ NETO, 'Lager Nijverheidsonderwijs'.

⁵⁸ Brinkman and Gorter, *Jaarverslag 1955*.

⁵⁹ CBS, *Beroepsbevolking*.

⁶⁰ Brinkman and Gorter, *Jaarverslag 1955*, p. 10.

that some industries will settle down.'⁶¹ In that period, there is not much employment for graduated pupils in the region and it strengthens the necessity to migrate. As a result the LTS had a more social task: educate rural youth in order to provide them a good future if they migrate.⁶² Because of the restricted foundation of new manufacturing industries, the LTS in Uithuizen concentrated on small local industries and the agricultural sector. This was done by offering more agricultural subjects, such as a course for agricultural machines mechanics. Additionally, local industrial relations were tightened through company visits and internships for pupils. The LTS searched for its position and function in North-Groningen as it was detached from the local opportunities which the region had to offer. It turned out that the environment had a stronger impact on the school than the school had on the environment. The power of the school to create a regional identity was not strong enough to have impact.

In conclusion, the LTS tried to increase local livability by attracting manufacturing industries and creating industrial employment. However, it turned out that the school did not succeed in this goal. Therefore the local employment possibilities for the pupils were still mainly in agriculture. Related is the impact of the LTS school on the perceived regional identity. The school could not create a regional identity positive for manufacturing industries. The regional identity remained based on agriculture and the school had to adapt to this identity. One of the reasons why the LTS could not change the regional identity is that the scale they were operating on was too local.

General education: ULO, HBS and VGLO.

Like professional education, the general education schools are also founded and maintained by various initiatives. In North-Groningen ULOs were mainly founded by local initiatives of primary school boards.⁶³ Because of the effects of pillarization on primary education, it is also an important determinant for the ULOs. The differences are noticeable, amongst other things, by the origin of the schools. The denominational ULOs were founded by local protestant associations and non-denominational ULOs by the municipality. As a result of the local initiatives, almost all the villages that in 1960 were larger than 1500 inhabitants had an ULO. See figure 5. The denominational distinction was much more present as compared to professional education.

The ULOs all had their own service areas. The impact of denomination in North-Groningen is shown by the provision of denominational compared to non-denominational ULOs, as shown in figure 5. The perceived importance and role of the ULOs can be explained by a statement of the former mayor of Bedum, J.N. Spoelstra: *'The ULO functions as a continuation of the family.'*⁶⁴ The mayor indirectly referred to the central idea of education: teaching values and norms and therefore provide the shared understandings, traditions and ideals. In the 1950s and 1960s, many North-Groningen people related their values and norms to the principle grounds of religion. Therefore, it is not surprising that an important environmental factor for school choice is religion.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Brinkman and Gorter, *Jaarverslag 1958*, p. 9.

⁶² NETO, 'Lager Nijverheidsonderwijs'.

⁶³ See the following reunion books: Duinkerken, de Jong and Visser, *Christelijk Onderwijs in Ulrum 1870-1990*; Pastoor et al., *125 Jaar Christelijk Onderwijs Middelstum*.

⁶⁴ Groninger Regional Archives (GRA), 1171-85 Artikelen betreffende de opening van de gereformeerde MULO te Bedum.

⁶⁵ Wolthuis, *Lower Technical Education*, p. 240.

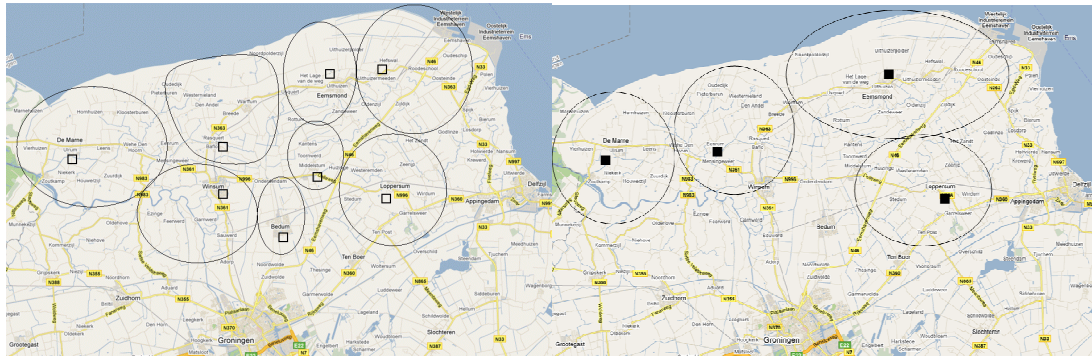


Figure 6: The service areas of denominational, left, and non-denominational ULOs in 1959.

The ULO schools, both denominational and non-denominational, can be approached as small islands in the bounded spaces of their service areas. In figure 6 this is demonstrated. The ULOs clearly functioned for the local community. The need to cooperate and to network with other schools was not present. Especially between schools from different denominations there was virtually no contact. Even located in the same village, or in the same street, as was the case in Loppersum, there was no contact.⁶⁶ The ULOs mainly kept a close contact with the primary school of their origin and the primary schools which provided their potential pupils. When reflecting Paasi's thoughts of institutional shaping of a regional identity,⁶⁷ there is no creation of a North-Groningen identity by the ULOs. The ULOs in North-Groningen focused too much on their local service areas. As an institution they had the possibilities and power to create a North-Groningen identity by interaction and networking. However, for the ULOs there was no need to create a common North-Groningen agenda in this period. The ULOs only needed to attract pupils from their own local service areas.

In North-Groningen is one state school, the HBS in Warffum. It was the only school that did not immediately join in the growth of pupils in North-Groningen. The North-Groningen percentage of HBS pupils of 0,54 percent lags behind the national average of 0,91 percent in 1950.⁶⁸ One of the reasons is the strong position and popularity of the ULOs.⁶⁹ This caused potential HBS pupils to attend the ULO instead of the HBS. Besides that, the regional increase in pupils was mainly based on increased school attendance of working class children. In North-Groningen the agricultural past created a social hierarchical structure based on three social groups: farmers, middle class and working class. Therefore the reputation of the HBS as being a school for well-to-do farmers, was a disadvantage for attracting working class pupils. At the 80th anniversary of the HBS in 1948 it is proudly underlined that four generations of various farm families have attended the school.⁷⁰ If a pupil wanted to attend a HBS in North-Groningen the only option was the



HET HOGELAND COLLEGE

Figure 7: Logo of the former HBS in the 1990s.

Source: Hillenga (2008), 151.

⁶⁶ Interviews respondents 2 and 11.

⁶⁷ Paasi, 'The Resurgence of the 'Region'', p. 135.

⁶⁸ Bakema, *RHBS Warffum 1868-1968*, p. 90.

⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 90; Hillenga, *Naar één School*, p. 118.

⁷⁰ Bakema, *RHBS Warffum 1868-1968*, p. 88.

HBS in Warffum. Otherwise the pupil needed to go to the city of Groningen, Appingedam or Delfzijl. Because of this position the school served a larger area as compared to the ULOs. Therefore, the HBS in Warffum can be regarded as a more regional school. The school it selves carries out a more regional identity as well. For example the logo in figure 7, which is created in the 1990s. It shows the shape of North-Groningen with blue of the sea and yellow of cornfields. The logo refers to the agricultural activities in the area even though the school does not have connections with agriculture at that time. It turned out that the agricultural past of the region and the school are closely connected.

Next to the protestant and non-denominational pillar, a small Roman Catholic pillar was present in North-Groningen, especially in the village of Kloosterburen. From 1945 until 1968, Kloosterburen had a Roman Catholic VGLO led by nuns. In the municipality of Kloosterburen almost 50 percent of the inhabitants called themselves Roman Catholic in 1960.⁷¹ If the Roman Catholic pupils wanted to attend a Roman Catholic school they had to attend the VGLO or commute thirty kilometers to the city of Groningen. The small number of VGLO pupils, an average of 40 pupils per year,⁷² shows that many Kloosterburen pupils chose to attend another school, either Roman Catholic in Groningen or one of the more accessible non-Roman Catholic schools in the region.⁷³ Because of the Secondary Education Act, the small number of pupils and the declining number of nuns in the convent the school closed in 1968. This closure was by the inhabitants of Kloosterburen not considered as a big loss.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, because of the restricted provision of Roman Catholic education in North-Groningen the Roman Catholic pillar is the first to loosen up the pillarization of the educational system.

Another religious group in North-Groningen which does not take part in the protestant pillar is a orthodox reformed group. In 1960 almost 5 percent of the North-Groningen inhabitants considered themselves as member of this group; while the Dutch average was 1 percent.⁷⁵ In 1944 they seceded from the reformed church and developed, amongst other things, their own educational facilities.⁷⁶ No secondary schools were founded in North-Groningen. Nevertheless, the orthodox Reformed pupils went to denominational Orthodox Reformed secondary schools in the city of Groningen and in the village of Zuidhorn. Despite, the restricted provision of Orthodox Reformed education the group hold tight to their own education. To improve accessibility and reach all the potential pupils the schools provided private transport.⁷⁷ In the period after 1968, when the competition for pupils increased, the provision of private transport in general turned out to be a good means to attract pupils.

The islands are slowly connecting, 1968 – 1985.

It has become clear how the educational system functioned in North-Groningen from 1945 until 1968. In 1968 the system changed because of the Secondary Education Act. The government considered the Act as the crowning glory of its educational reforms.

⁷¹ CBS, *Kerkelijke Gezindte*.

⁷² *Kloosterburen beziet Zichzelf*.

⁷³ Interview respondent 6.

⁷⁴ Interview respondent 6.

⁷⁵ CBS, *Kerkelijke Gezindte*.

⁷⁶ Knippenberg, *De Religieuze Kaart*, p. 101.

⁷⁷ Interviews respondents 5, 6 and 7.

However, the respondents in this study see the Act as the beginning of the decline of the educational provision in North-Groningen. On the one hand, the Act marked the moment from which on the up-scaling of educational facilities became noticeable. *‘Actually, the merger wave started by that Secondary Education Act in 1968.’*⁷⁸ Until the mid 1980s, however, little changed in the provision of schools in North-Groningen. On the other hand, the quality of education was perceived as declining because of the Act. Underlying these two views was the fact that the autonomy of the schools decreased and the respondents did not perceive this as a positive development either.

The population of North-Groningen

One of the main thoughts behind the increased government intervention was savings. Generally small schools are relative expensive for the state.⁷⁹ The government assumed that rural population decline would continue and that it would have consequences for the number of pupils. A closer look at the composition of the North-Groningen population, presented in figure 8, shows that the population decline continued until 1972. However, from that moment on the North-Groningen population increased until the end of the period investigated. Regarding the 0 till 14 year-olds, 1971 can be recognized as a turning point: in that year the decrease in numbers changed to an increase. The increase did not last long, from 1978 onwards it decreased again.

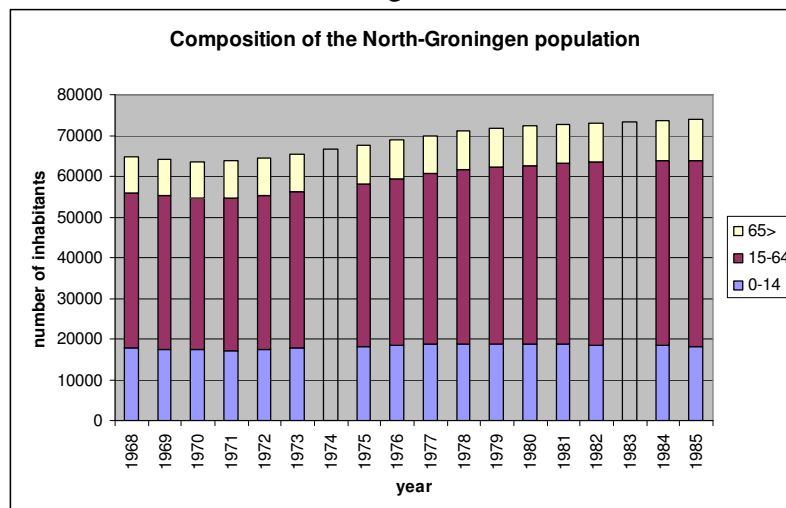


Figure 8: Composition of the population of North-Groningen between 1968 and 1985.

Source: *Zakboek van het Noorden* (1962-1983) and *Statistisch Jaarboek voor het Noorden* (1985-1986).

The years 1984-1985 are interpolated, the original data of those years was divided in groups of 0-19 and 20-64 years instead of 0-14 and 15-64 years.

In figure 9 the regional situation of youth in 1982 is presented in more detail. Noticeable is the high percentage of young people in the municipality of Winsum. This municipality had 29,6 percent of 0 till 14 years in 1982. Winsum was appointed by the national government as a regional center of growth and as a result residential areas were developed in the 1970s. The increase of re-urbanization resulted in many young families which moved to Winsum. The same accounts for the village of Bedum. Related to the

⁷⁸ 'Die fusiegolf is eigenlijk begonnen in 1968, met die Mammoet wet' (respondent 4).

⁷⁹ Tricker and Mills, 'Education Services', p. 49.

young populations of Winsum and Bedum is the growth of the MAVOs in Bedum and Winsum, as is shown in figure 10. The municipalities of Ten Boer and Ezinge also took advantage of re-urbanization. As a result the population of municipalities close by the city of Groningen are relative young. Compared to the situation in 1961, figure 4, the situation in 1982 shows a lower percentage of young North-Groningen inhabitants. The differences between municipalities have increased and especially the population of coastal municipalities has become older. For example, the percentage of 0 till 14 years old in Kloosterburen decreased from 30,5 percent in 1961 to 21 percent in 1982.

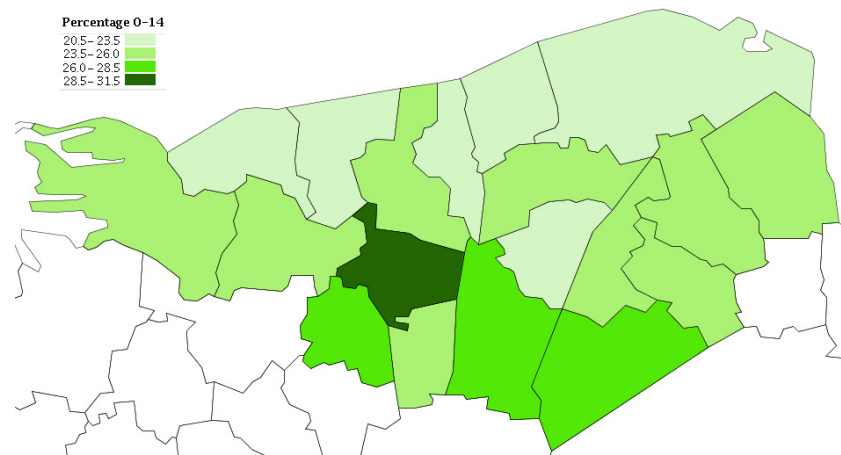


Figure 9: Percentage of 0 till 14 years old youth per municipality in 1982.

Source: *Zakboek van het Noorden* (1983).

Professional education towards more general education: LAS, LTS and LHNO

In the 1960s-1970s the agrarian sector in North-Groningen was in decline. As a result the LAS school experienced also a decline in the number of pupils.⁸⁰ Because of the increased national governmental involvement the rules for financial support were accentuated and the number of pupils became important. Therefore, the original focus on agricultural pupils needed adjustment and the school tried to accomplish this by setting up a cooperation with the MAVOs in Winsum and Baflo. This cooperation would mean that the LAS would provide more general education as directed by the national government. The school would lose its agricultural identity. However, the cooperation did not work out, partly because the LAS was under supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture and the MAVOs under that of the Ministry of Education. In the end, the dependency on the Ministry of Agriculture has been the rescue for the LAS. The Ministry financed the school more than the Ministry of Education did for other schools in North-Groningen.⁸¹ For example, the LAS was provided with better equipment in the instruction rooms.⁸² Besides that the school transformed its character from a specific agricultural oriented school towards a more general school with a green caretaking character. The related promotion attracted many pupils from all over North-Groningen. A factor that contributes to this is the private bus system which was set up to increase the accessibility of the school. As a result, from 1975 the school started to grow again and girls also

⁸⁰ *50 Jaar C.L.A.S. Winsum (Gn) 1939-1989*, p. 48.

⁸¹ Interview respondent 1.

⁸² Interviews respondents 1, 2 and 7

started to attend the school.⁸³ It turned out to be a success, although under a different name, *Groene School* (Green School) the LAS still exists.

Because of the Secondary Education Act, the LTS schools in North-Groningen also had to develop into more general schools, even though they already incorporated a transitional year in their program. However, generally it is assumed that the generalization of education and the increased mechanization caused a split in the provision of education and demand of the industrial sector. As a result the impact of the LTS in the secondary education system decreased slowly.⁸⁴ The LTS in Uithuizen confirms this trend, the number of pupils decreased after 1968 and no industries of importance developed in North-Groningen. The school build on its connections with the region. Especially, the position of the headmaster was important. The headmaster maintained relations with different parties, such as primary school headmasters and private enterprises in the region. As a result, pupils did small jobs for the community, such as painting the local football canteen.⁸⁵ The relations maintained were of significance for the school and its relation with the service area.

The LHNO schools also had such a network to provide the school with pupils. The LHNO schools had an advisory committee in which, amongst others, the wives of primary school headmasters were present. This had everything to do with bounding. It worked because the LHNO school in Warffum had pupils from Roodeschool, for whom the MAVO in Uithuizen was closer by.⁸⁶ Over time, the competition between schools became stronger. In professional education, from 1975 onwards, the LHNO and LTS schools increasingly competed with the LAS. The LAS had good financial support of the Ministry of Agriculture and the LAS knew how to attract pupils. The improved position of the LAS and the decreased positions of the LTS and LHNO can be related to a general trend: due to increased competition the image of a school became increasingly important. Over time, however, a lot of strategies proved fruitless as the schools could not survive on their own and more mutual cooperation was needed.

General education: MAVO, HAVO and VWO.

The cooperation processes and increased competition between schools described in the preceding section can also be distinguished for general education. Although cooperation was still based on denomination, MAVO subject teachers made a first attempt towards more mutual cooperation, by discussing and developing new education methods together.⁸⁷ The necessity of cooperation for survival of a MAVO also became clear in 1968. However, it lasted until the mid 1980s before it became unavoidable. By then the national governmental involvement reinforced the rules for financial support. Financial support became in a great extent related to the number of pupils. Figure 9 illustrates how the number of pupils for some selected MAVO schools developed from 1968 until 1983. The MAVO in Loppersum shows the general trend for the MAVO schools in North-Groningen. A little decrease until 1969 and after an increase until 1979 a slow decrease until 1983. However, three schools show different patterns.

⁸³ 50 Jaar C.L.A.S. Winsum (Gn) 1939-1989.

⁸⁴ Wolthuis, *Lower Technical Education*.

⁸⁵ Interview respondent 7.

⁸⁶ Interview respondent 1.

⁸⁷ Interviews respondents 3 and 5.

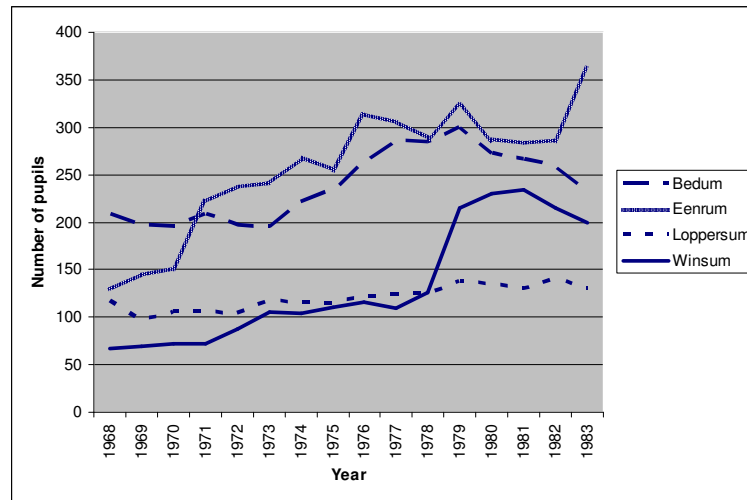


Figure 10: Some MAVOs in North-Groningen and their numbers of pupils.

Source: Ministerie van Onderwijs en Wetenschappen and Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (1969-1984).

The MAVO in Eenrum, see figure 10, increased significantly from 1970 onwards. However, the population distribution of the municipality of Eenrum does not show the same trend. The increase of 1970 had everything to do with the closure of the non-denominational MAVO in Ulrum. The pupils chose to attend the school in Eenrum, which is ten kilometers away, instead of the denominational MAVO in Ulrum. Denomination was more important as proximity in those days. Besides that the growth is caused by the appointment of a new headmaster in school year 1970-1971. This man was ambitious and his intention was to make the school as large as possible.⁸⁸ He was the first who acknowledged the increased importance of the image of a school regarding school choice and who applied promotional activities as a way of attracting new pupils from outside the original service area. The headmaster also persuaded parents, who intended to send their child to the LHNO or LTS, to send them to the MAVO for a better future. Especially the high number of girls at the MAVO of Eenrum can be seen as an effect of this approach. Although the MAVO increased tremendously in size, the pupil increases from 1976 and 1983 are misleading. In 1976 the MAVO merged into a comprehensive school with the LTS and LHNO in Wehe den Hoorn. Although, the numbers of pupils of the LHNO and LTS are not included, the first general year pupils of the LHNO and LTS are. In the 1982 the comprehensive school merged with the LHNO in Warffum.

The MAVOs in Bedum and Winsum increased significantly as well. In both cases the development of the schools is related to the development of the local population. In figure 9 is shown that the municipalities of Winsum and Bedum have a relative high number of 0 till 14 years old. The large increase of the MAVO in Winsum in 1979 is also the result of a school merger with the MAVO of Baflo. The school merger is the direct result of an increased mutual contact among schools.

At first sight it could be concluded that there is no strong development towards higher levels of education in North-Groningen. A closer look at the data shows that the general trend of increasing attendance of higher levels of education is noticeable in

⁸⁸ Interview respondent 1.

North-Groningen as well.⁸⁹ Figure 11 shows that the total number of MAVO pupils slightly increases until 1977, almost similar to the total number of 0 till 14 years in the region. The main reason is the good accessibility of the MAVOs and the lack of accessible denominational higher secondary education in the region. The expectation that the increased mobility should result in more school attendance in the cities of Groningen, Appingedam and Delfzijl turned out to be false. Nevertheless, the non-denominational HAVO and VWO in Warffum showed an increase of 244 pupils in 1968 to 573 pupils in 1983.⁹⁰ Professional education on the other hand shows a decrease, with the exception of the LAS above discussed. Despite its promotional activities, it did not attract pupils from the MAVOs until the 1980s. However, after 1985, when the school was located in a new building the number of pupils increased strongly and it became a competitor for the MAVOs as well.⁹¹ In general can be concluded that, although slightly, a change is noticeable in the level of education of the North-Groningen youth, especially the non-denominational youth.

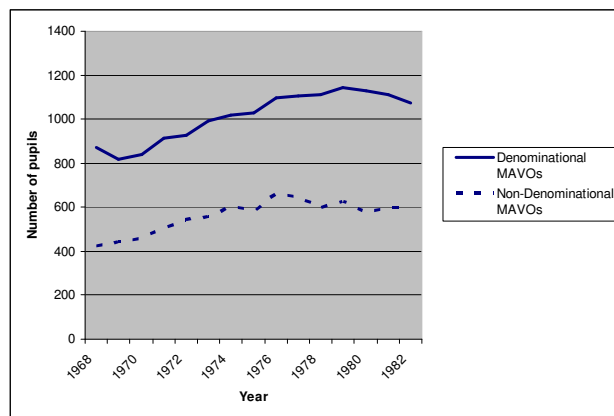


Figure 11: Total number of denominational and non-denomination MAVO pupils in North-Groningen. Source: Ministerie van Onderwijs en Wetenschappen and CBS (1969-1984).

As discussed before, school choice in North-Groningen was dependent on religion. Because many denominational MAVOs were present and no denominational HAVO, most pupils went to the MAVO. At the end of the 1960s the representatives of MAVOs noticed this as an educational deprivation for denominational education in North-Groningen. Despite the awareness of the consequences for their own schools and the negative image of the HAVO, the representatives have tried to found a denominational HAVO in Winsum. The main thought behind this initiative was to provide denominational education close by. Winsum was chosen because of the good accessibility, it is connected by rail, see figure 1. After consulting the former State Secretary of Education, J.H. Grosheide, approval was given on the condition that they worked out a good plan. Grosheide was known for his denominational background and the value he attached to education. However, for some reason, the MAVO headmaster in

⁸⁹ About the general trend see: van der Ploeg, *The Expansion*, p. 64.

⁹⁰ Ministerie van O en W and CBS, *Lijst van Scholen 1969-1972*; Ministerie van O en W and CBS, *Lijst van Scholen 1980-1984*.

⁹¹ *50 Jaar C.L.A.S. Winsum (Gn) 1939-1989*; interview respondent 1.

Winsum hesitated to do much and the initiative developed slowly.⁹² Too slowly, because after Grosheide left in 1971, the ministries support disappeared.⁹³ As a result no denominational HAVO was founded in North-Groningen. Denominational pupils who wanted to attend the HAVO had to choose between the non-denominational schools in Warffum or Appingedam or the denominational schools in Groningen or Delfzijl. However, most denominational pupils attended the denominational MAVOs.

Class and denomination

*'When you had such a little school, everything was about the pupils. If there are no pupils, there is no need for teachers either. So it has to do with your job, it is very important.'*⁹⁴ As the quote illustrates pupils are the most important determinant for the existence of schools. Of course, some schools had side activities, such as providing courses for adult education. In the paper became clear that changes occurred in the educational system in North-Groningen. Related to these changes are the increased possibilities regarding the school choice of pupils. The text analysis of the interviews demonstrates that according to the respondents the most important aspect of school choice is the impact of the parents. This outcome corresponds to the literature.⁹⁵ Additionally, school choice is in literature often related to social class. The analysis does not explicitly show this relation. The respondents do mention it but most of them want to make clear that all social classes attended their school. For the respondents social class is not an issue and they indicated that it was not an issue at their schools either.

More important for the respondents is the impact of denomination. One respondent who moved from the western part of the Netherlands to the Northern province of Groningen in the 1970s mentioned: *'It was like 20 years back in time.'*⁹⁶ He mainly referred to the impact of the church on that particular school. The quote makes clear the impact of denomination was strong in the North-Groningen compared to the Western part of the Netherlands. Throughout the paper, it becomes clear that the North-Groningen educational system is divided in a denominational and a non-denominational part. This denominational distinction is one of the main reasons why there were so many schools in North-Groningen until 1985. The respondents relate denomination to the board, the primary schools, the service area and most strongly to accessibility. In figure 6 is represented how the ULOs were spread over North-Groningen in order to be accessible for the rural youth. Generally it is assumed that the impact of religion on educational choice declined in the minds of the Dutch population since the 1960s.⁹⁷ This could be the case for the North-Groningen population as well. However, the provision of education in North-Groningen continued to be dependent on denomination. The number of pupils of denominational schools did not show a decrease compared to the number of non-denominational number of pupils. This becomes clear in figure 11. It lasted until 1989

⁹² Interview respondent 4.

⁹³ Mertens and Paardekooper, 'Het Ministerie van Onderwijs'.

⁹⁴ "Alles draaide als je zo'n kleine school hebt, alles draait om leerlingen, als de leerlingen er niet zijn, dan hoeft de leraar er ook niet te zijn. Dus dat heeft met je baan te maken. Dus dat is heel erg belangrijk" (respondent 7).

⁹⁵ Vincent, 'Social Class'; Walker and Clark, 'Parental Choice'.

⁹⁶ 'Hier was 20 jaar terug in de tijd, wat ik hier mee maakte' (interview respondent 6).

⁹⁷ Bax, *Modernization and Cleavage*; Walker and Clark, 'Parental Choice', p. 148.

before the first school merger occurred between two different denominational schools and it was a major event.⁹⁸

Conclusion

This paper discussed a broad spectrum of different issues related to secondary education and rural regions. The main thought behind all these issues is the explanation of the impact of secondary education on the perceived standard of living and the regional identity. To analyze this the paper focuses on the case region of North-Groningen, the Netherlands and the secondary schools in the region in the period 1945 until 1985. Various sources are used for this research: quantitative data, secondary data and oral history interviews. Although this paper is situated within a North-Groningen context, the issues presented are relevant for a wider international rural context.

The explanatory variables for secondary education in North-Groningen are divided in national institutional variables and local variables. National institutional variables, such as education policies, do explain the development of the North-Groningen educational system. Besides the national variables local variables do explain some developments as well. Especially local initiatives and the economic structure of North-Groningen explained for example the foundation of schools. The religious context of North-Groningen played an important role regarding the geography of education. The impact of population development and the increased mobility do have less impact on the geography of schools and school attendance.

The geography of schools is in this paper related to livability and regional identity. Regarding livability villages in North-Groningen mainly focused on providing a local service level after World War Two. As the sociologists of that time discussed,⁹⁹ the livability of a village was strongly related to an appropriate service level. Therefore, villages wanted to provide as much facilities as possible. Concerning education, the result was the founding of many small schools all over North-Groningen. In the discussed time period the provision of schools declined a little, despite the increased contact among schools and the declining role of professional education. The thought of linking livability to the present service level remained important for the North-Groningen villages in the whole period.

In order to provide a livable region, the schools only focused on their small region and own denomination in order to attract pupils, or in the case of the professional school also to attract industries. The North-Groningen schools did not develop a common agenda, or a 'cognitive map' of the North-Groningen region, which is by Paasi regarded as a step in institutional shaping of a regional identity.¹⁰⁰ The school did not have a common goal. It can be concluded, that it turned out that schools did not have a direct impact on the perceived North-Groningen regional identity. In the case of general education denomination was important, the schools strengthened the present denominational distinction. Considering professional education, the foundation of the LTS schools did not transform the agricultural identity into a more industrial identity. Naturally, more factors played a role but as one of the main goals of establishing the

⁹⁸ de Heer, 'De Wijmers in Perspectief'; interviews respondents 2 and 11.

⁹⁹ Colijn, 'Island in the Sun'; Constandse, *Het Dorp*; Groot, *Kleine Plattelandskernen*; Groot and de Groot, *De Kleine Dorpen in Groningen*.

¹⁰⁰ Paasi, 'The Resurgence of the 'Region''.

technical school it failed. In turn the regional characteristics and related identity had a greater impact on the schools. The educational provision in North-Groningen was established because of the needs of local interest groups in North-Groningen. Therefore, the schools mainly enhanced the regional characteristics already existing.

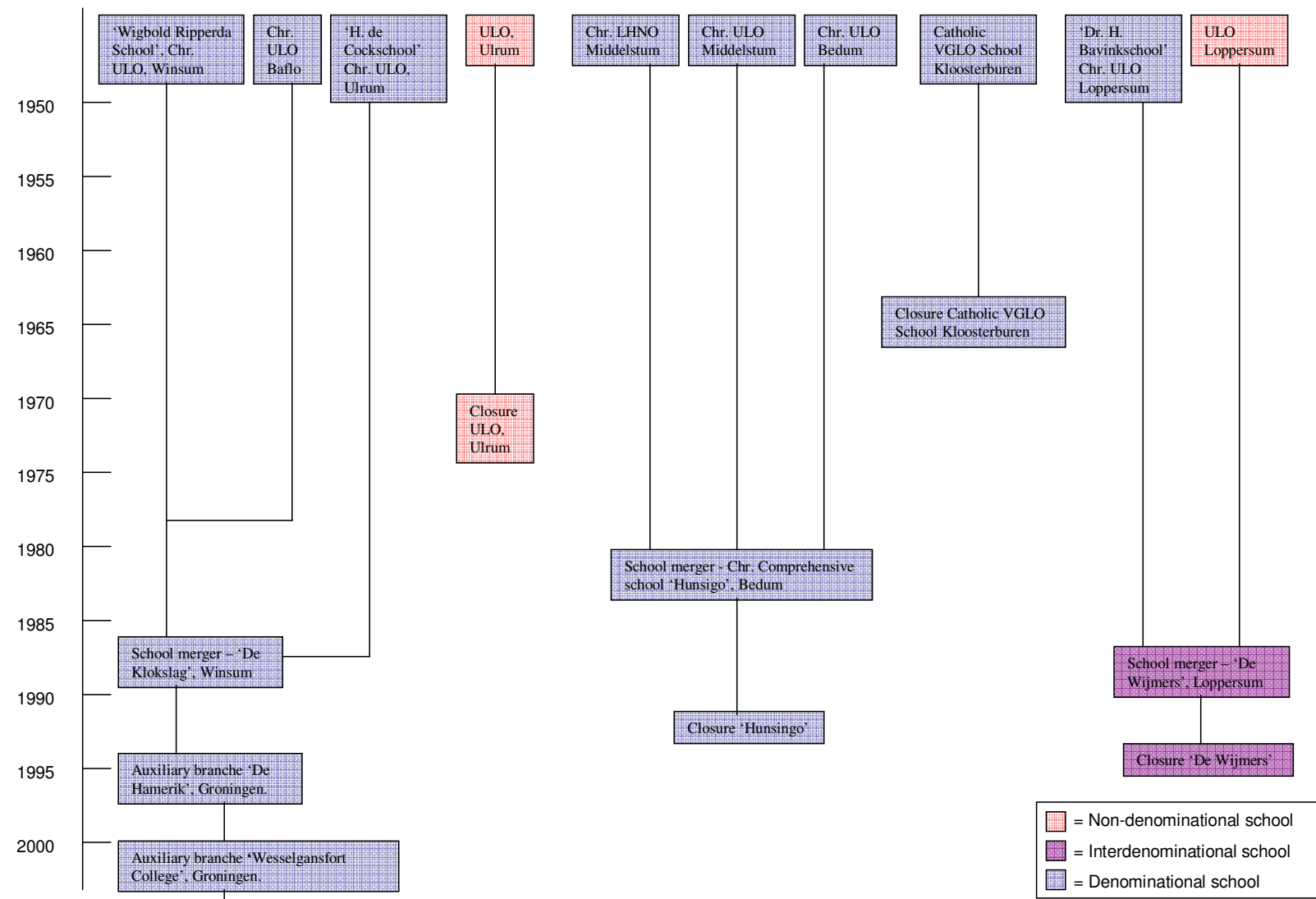
This paper focuses on schools in the region of North-Groningen. To get more insight in regional identity it is recommended to study the relations with schools outside the region as well. The focus on schools shows the ongoing processes from one-side. By investigating from another side, like the pupils or the municipalities, more insight can be obtained in the process.

Over time, the North-Groningen society changed and the educational system changed too. An important national institutional change was the Secondary Education Act of 1968. The impact of the national government increased and as a result the schools in the region were increasingly forced to cooperate. Besides this national institutional impact a local impact can be distinguished. The schools in North-Groningen were mainly focused on their own interests and own small regions. Therefore the local economic and social variables turned out to be important for the educational development. In general can be concluded that the educational geography of North-Groningen did not change in a great extend in the researched period. The schools remained focused on their own local service areas. As a result livability was still perceived as the present service level and a common North-Groningen regional identity was not represented by secondary schools.

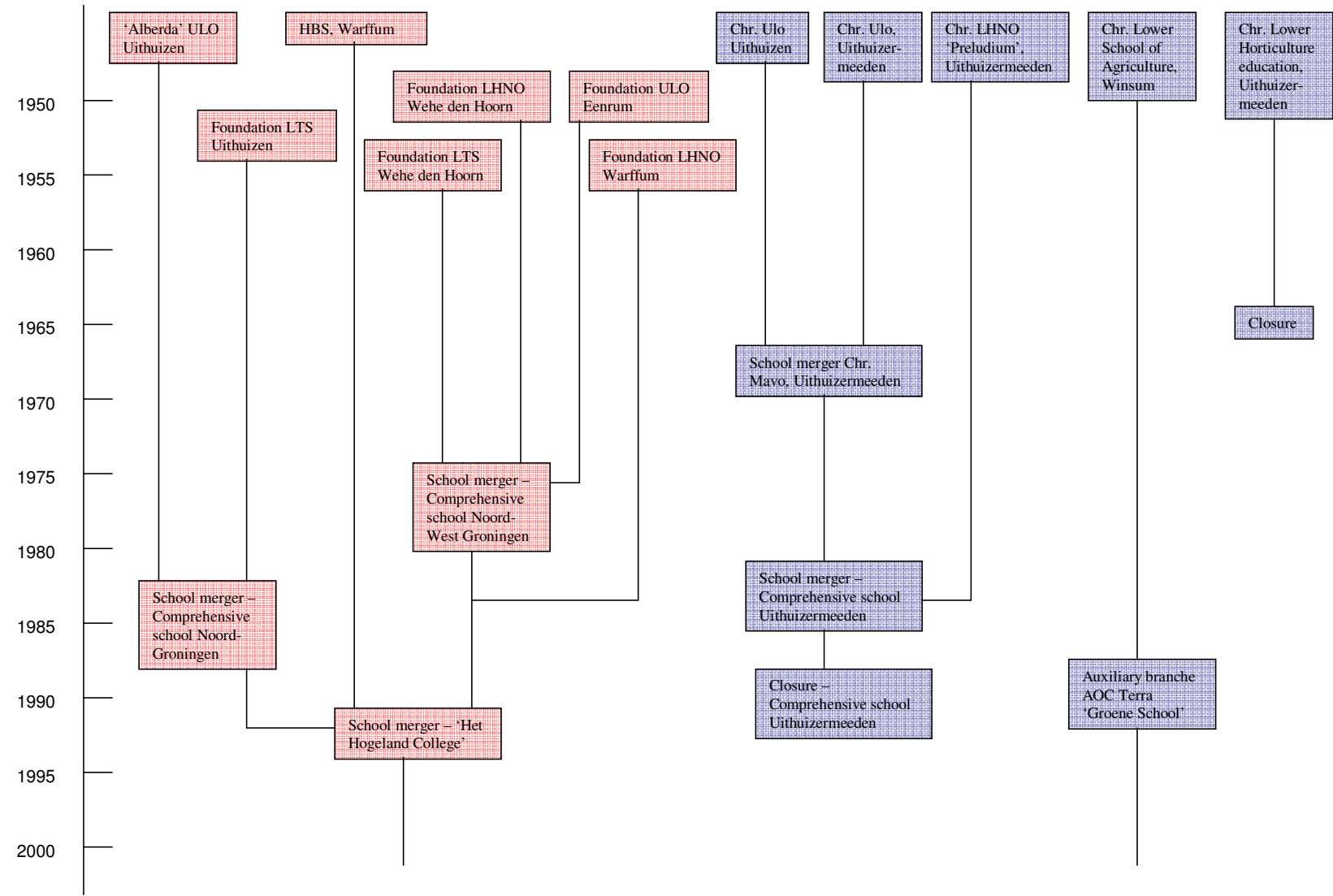
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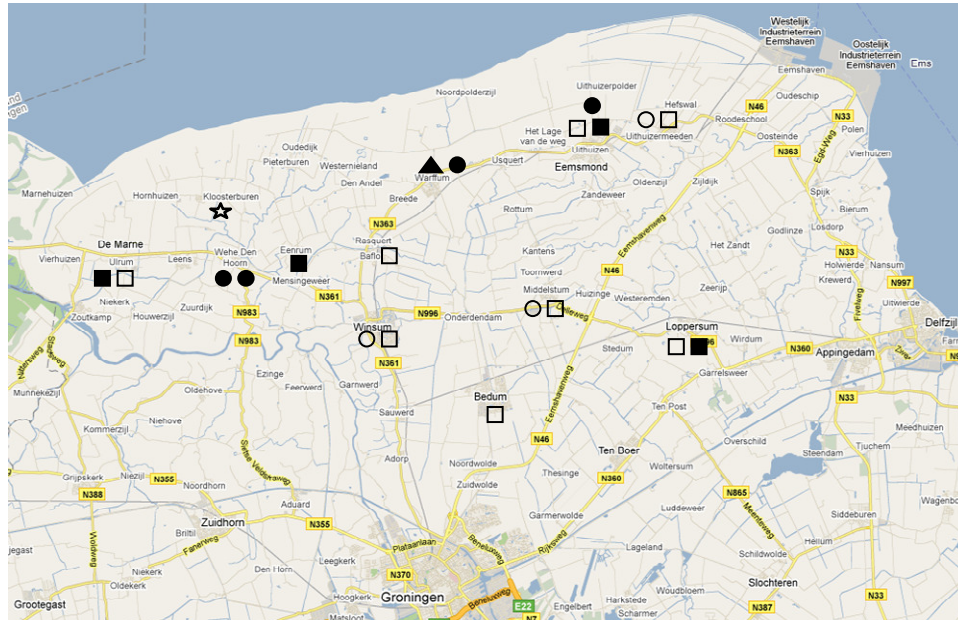


Appendix 1: Schools in North-Groningen and their relations from 1945 until 2000.

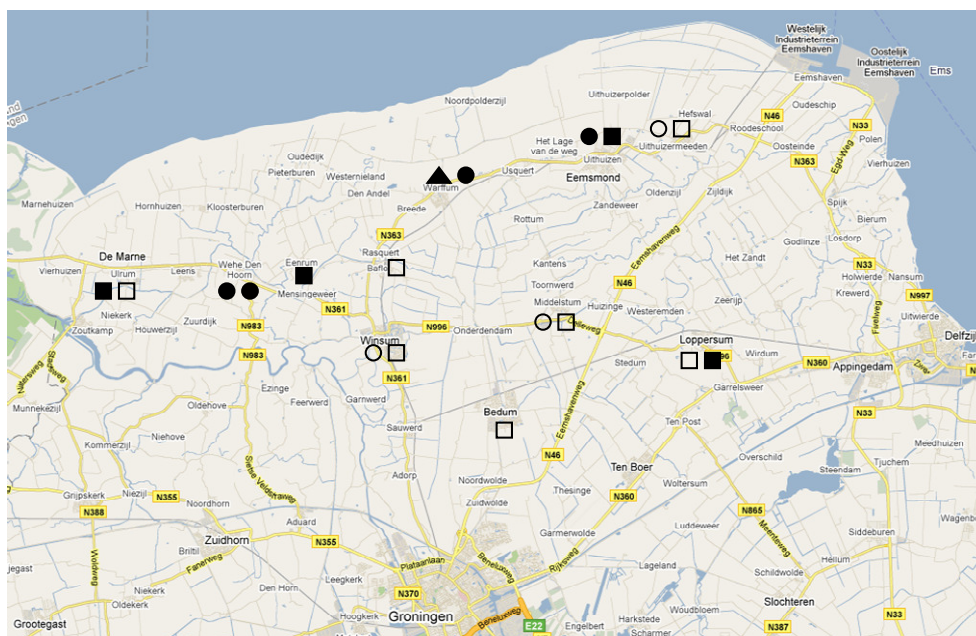


Appendix 2: Geography of schools in North-Groningen, 1959, 1968 and 1985.

1959



1968



The map shows the Eemshaven area with the proposed railway route highlighted in black. The route starts at Eemshaven, goes through Eemmond, Wierum, and Bedum, and then continues towards Slochteren. Key locations marked include Eemshaven, Eemmond, Wierum, Bedum, Slochteren, and various smaller towns like De Marne, Wierum, and Bedum. The map also shows the Ems river, the Eemshaven harbor, and the Eemshaven railway station. The proposed route is shown as a black line with black squares and circles indicating stations. The map includes labels for various roads, rivers, and towns.

☆ = Denominational continued primary school
 □ = Denominational advanced primary school
 ■ = Non-denominational advanced primary school
 ○ = Denominational professional school
 ● = Non-denominational professional school
 ▲ = Non-denominational former Dutch Highschool for
 the 12- 18 year age group
 ↔ = Cooperation between these schools