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Migration and Social Transformation in a Small Frisian Town: The Case of Bolsward, the Netherlands

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Abstract

This paper explores processes of migration to and from Bolsward – a small agro-industrial town in the Dutch province of Friesland – with an emphasis on the post-WWII period. While prewar patterns of in- and out-migration were primarily intra-provincial, after 1945 migration became increasingly inter-provincial and, to some extent, international. Out-migrants from Bolsward were partly replaced by unskilled agricultural labourers from surrounding rural areas who lost their employment through agricultural mechanisation and found work in the growing industrial and construction sectors in town. When that labour supply dried up during the 1960s, this led to the recruitment of Turkish ‘guestworkers’. From the late 1950s, a second type of in-migrant, belonging to a high-skilled, often non-Frisian professional class, migrated to Bolsward to fill positions in local government and education. Four interacting social transformation processes explain these changing migration patterns: (1) industrialisation, (2) agricultural mechanisation, (3) state/educational expansion and (4) a broader change in life aspirations and ideas of the ‘good life’. Because of a process of replacement migration from Bolsward’s rural hinterlands, out-migration did not lead to population decline. Concurrently, new economic and educational opportunities arose that matched the life aspirations of town dwellers and agricultural workers from the hinterlands, giving rise to an increase in ‘voluntary immobility’ from the 1960s onwards. This case study highlights the vital ‘linking’ role that small towns and rural areas play in the hierarchical, multi-layered geographical structure of migration systems. It shows that much out-migration from rural areas is directed not to big cities but, rather, to smaller urban areas located in their direct vicinity and that migration from such rural towns is often directed to medium-sized urban settlements rather than to big cities. The analysis also shows that social transformation does not necessarily lead to large-scale out-migration when local opportunities expand simultaneously.

Keywords: migration transition, social transformation, replacement migration, industrialisation, agricultural mechanisation, education, the Netherlands

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1. Introduction

Bolsward is a small rural town in the Dutch province of Friesland, located in an area where agriculture and dairy farming were the economic mainstays of the local population. Over the 1945–1970 period Bolsward, as well as its hinterland, experienced profound processes of social change that turned it into a medium-sized urban area with a growing industrial sector. This study explores how these processes of social transformation affected mobility patterns in Bolsward between 1945 and 1970. In particular, it explores migration out of Bolsward to national and international destinations and the migration of people from surrounding rural areas (Bolsward's 'hinterland') to Bolsward in pursuit of newly emerging employment opportunities in the industrial and service sectors. In so doing, this study explores the phenomenon of 'replacement migration' – a process in which labour-market positions vacated by out-migrants are filled by in-migrants – in an area that falls between the 'rural' and the 'urban'. This paper reveals how processes of (replacement) migration took shape in Bolsward and shows the mechanisms that help to explain it. Moreover, this study illustrates the role that small towns and replacement migration can play within larger migration systems. In this way, it fills an important gap in the migration literature that generally focuses on the level of countries and big cities and largely ignores the function of smaller places in national and international mobility systems.

In the 1945–1970 period, Bolsward's population grew from 7,300 to 10,000. This population increase is mainly explained by natural growth although, in the 1960s, slightly positive net migration also contributed. However, the low net migration conceals strong underlying dynamics of simultaneously occurring in- and out-migration. As agriculture in Bolsward's hinterlands quickly mechanised and industries expanded, in-migration from the rural hinterlands accelerated. At the same time, many of Bolsward's inhabitants began to migrate out of the town and over longer distances for labour and education – largely directed at towns and cities in and outside Friesland. Limited emigration to Canada and other international destinations also occurred. It is striking that the volumes of in- and out-migration were of the same magnitude and occurred in parallel. This raises questions on the socio-economic backgrounds of these in- and out-migrants as well as their migration motivation. We observe a shift in the relative importance of inter-provincial out-migration and emigration to international destinations in the late 1940s and the 1950s, while in-migration from rural hinterlands and migration from other Dutch provinces peaked in the 1960s. Processes of industrialisation and cultural change triggered by the Second World War and the enlisting of young men into the Dutch army during the Indonesian War of Independence, motivated many to leave Bolsward from the late 1940s. Over the same period, the town itself developed more urban-industrial characteristics through the establishment of a new service-sector economy and industrial development, which attracted in-migrants from surrounding villages.

Thus, Bolsward experienced its own economic transformation through industrial and service-sector growth within a somewhat peripheral part of the Netherlands. The phenomenon of replacement migration resonates with the insight that rural-urban migration processes often follow a multi-layered geographical structure as part of broader urban hierarchies more or less fitting in with central place theory (see Christaller 1933). Migrants from the agricultural hinterlands move to smaller towns to fill vacant or newly created jobs in the expanding industrial sector, while the residents of those towns find new opportunities in towns and cities higher up in the urban hierarchy and leave labour gaps behind, creating a process of 'replacement' that was already identified by the earliest migration scholars (Hägerstrand 1957; Ravenstein 1885; see also Conway 1980). We can define replacement migration as a process in which migrants from semi-peripheral areas move to expanding central areas, while the

employment gaps they leave behind are filled by migrants from more remote areas (de Haas et al. 2020a)

To explain shifting mobility patterns and replacement migration in the postwar period, this paper applies a social transformation framework (de Haas, Castles and Miller 2020b) to analyse Bolsward's 'mobility transition' (Zelinsky 1971), as this allows us to simultaneously analyse different but interdependent forms of migration within one explanatory framework. Zelinsky, who pioneered mobility transition theory, hypothesised that there are patterned macro-level relations between demographic change and (economic) modernisation on the one hand and mobility patterns on the other. However, migration is not only the outflow of demographic or economic factors but is also shaped by changing cultural ideas of the 'good life' (Mabogunje 1970), state formation and educational expansion (de Haas 2010; Schewel and Franssen 2018; Skeldon 1997) as well as infrastructure and transport development (de Haas 2007, 2010). The social transformation framework therefore complements Zelinsky's mobility transition model by pointing to important cultural, political and technological transitions that accompany demographic and economic change. This approach enables us to detect fundamental changes in the social structure of Bolsward over the period of study and how this shaped people's livelihoods, aspirations and migration patterns accordingly.

The following research questions structured the inquiry into social transformation and migration in Bolsward:

- How did mobility patterns change in Bolsward between 1945 and 1970 in terms of direction, geographical reach and the characteristics of migrants?
- What fundamental social transformations occurred in Bolsward and its hinterland during this period and how did they affect the livelihoods of the local population?
- How can shifting mobility patterns be explained in relation to broader processes of social transformation taking place in and outside Bolsward?

Based on in-depth interviews, archival research and demographic and migration data, this case study finds that industrialisation, combined with agricultural mechanisation, educational expansion and concomitant changes in life aspirations, created the conditions for limited but significant economic growth in this small town which, as a regional migration 'interface', therefore allowed it to retain relatively stable population levels during a time of significant social change. It was both a small industrial hub that attracted workers and an area that provided labour for larger industrial areas in other parts of the Netherlands. However, such processes of replacement migration did not continue indefinitely but were, rather, characteristics for this particular post-war transition phase during which Bolsward's mobility transition reached its peak. This study also finds that, as local opportunities have expanded within Bolsward since the 1960s, fewer and fewer people felt the need to leave, giving rise to greater 'voluntary immobility' (Carling 2002) and population retention within the town.

The following sections elaborate a theoretical framework and a methodological justification. This will be followed by a short historical overview of Bolsward and its population and an analysis of the general migration trends that affected this town and its agrarian hinterland. The remainder of the paper analyses the important processes of social transformation that took place over this period – that is, industrialisation and agricultural mechanisation, state expansion and rising levels of formal education – and how people adjusted their mobility patterns accordingly.

2. Theoretical perspectives: finding explanations for replacement migration

In the context of this study, ‘replacement migration’ refers to a multi-layered hierarchical process in which people from semi-peripheral urban areas like Bolsward move to more-central industrial areas, while people from more-peripheral rural hinterlands fill the employment gaps left behind. The result of these processes is that population losses by out-migration are partly or entirely substituted by functionally related in-migration. This is a different usage from that found in some current academic and policy literature, where replacement migration can refer to the potential of international migration to partly offset population ageing and the decline of the labour force at the national level (Bijak, Kupiszewska and Kupiszewski 2008; Billari and Dalla-Zuanna 2011; Saczuk 2013; UNPD 2001).

To make sense of the patterns of replacement migration identified in Bolsward this paper will elaborate on and deepen the insights of earlier migration theories, starting with E.G. Ravenstein (1885: 183), widely considered the founder of migration studies. Ravenstein, in his study of internal migration patterns in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century, described a process which he identified as ‘migration by stages.’ Ravenstein showed that, in the context of industrialisation, most migrants do *not* migrate over long distances from rural villages to large cities. Rather, most migration takes place through a series of step-wise migrations, which radiate out from major industrial hubs. As Ravenstein (1885: 199) explains:

The inhabitants of the county immediately surrounding a town of rapid growth, flock into it, the gaps thus left in the rural population are filled up by migrants from more remote districts, until the attractive force of one of our rapidly growing cities makes its influence felt, step by step, to the most remote corner of the kingdom.

This illustrates the geographical structure of rural-urban migration, as populations of rural areas and towns leave gaps in local labour markets and are replaced by hinterland populations. This observation suggests that replacement migration may be a fundamental part of rural-urban migration patterns. Small towns, located between rural and large industrial areas, form an essential link in these migration patterns. Replacement migration is a similar concept to ‘migration by stages’ (Ravenstein 1885: 183) and ‘step-wise migration’ (Conway 1980) but differs in that migration by stages often refers to the several migrations undertaken by a single individual or generation over time. Such step-wise migration processes are well known and have been observed for historical and contemporary internal and international migrations (see Paul 2011), whereas replacement migration looks at the way in which in-migration from peripheral hinterlands to semi-peripheral towns is interrelated with out-migration from these towns to more central (industrial) areas. This shows the need to study entire mobility systems in order to understand the nature and function of different, even counterpoising migration flows.

Later migration scholars confirmed Ravenstein’s initial insights. Hägerstrand (1957: 54–65), a Swedish geographer who studied the migration patterns of rural parishes and towns in Sweden, also found that most inhabitants of rural parishes migrated locally to small centres of industry, while the inhabitants of urban centres moved towards cities and towns further away. Migrants from urban centres were being replaced by rural migrants, showing the interdependency between these two migration currents. Where Ravenstein (1885: 199) argued that the distance between out-migration areas and the industrial cities is crucial in explaining patterns of step-wise migration, Hägerstrand (1957) suggests that migration patterns are primarily to be explained by economic opportunities and other ‘external factors’, including density of population, distance and migration costs.

Later, ‘transition theories’ brought a new level of theorisation to some of the processes identified by Ravenstein and Hägerstrand. The pioneer of these theories, Wilbur Zelinsky (1971) hypothesised a general increase in various forms of human mobility over several stages of the ‘vital transition’, a term he used to characterise the demographic and economic changes characteristic of modernisation processes. The main focus for Zelinsky was on relating the demographic transition and rapid agricultural transformations and industrialisation to changing and non-linear mobility patterns (see Zelinsky 1971; de Haas 2010). Related to this study, Zelinsky suggests that, as countries begin to modernise, they see ‘a great shaking loose of migrants from the countryside’ (1971: 236), giving rise to large-scale movements from the countryside to the cities, at the same time that emigration increases to foreign destinations (1971: 230). Zelinsky suggests that, initially, potential migrants have four options: ‘cities in the native country; cities in alien lands with an expanding economy; rural settlement frontier...; and the pioneer zone in a hospitable foreign country’ (1971: 236). These categories capture a range of internal and international options which potential migrants can pursue. However, by implicitly suggesting that people move straight from the village to the city, Zelinsky ignored earlier insights by Ravenstein and Hägerstrand about the hierarchical geographical structure of migration patterns and the vital role of smaller places as ‘migration interfaces’. There are many kinds of ‘cities in the native country’ and, as this paper will show, small rural towns can be the destination for some while, for others, it is the place which they leave in pursuit of better work elsewhere.

The main critiques of early versions of transition theory focus on the deterministic assumptions underlying this approach, as such models seem to present only one general macro-level path through the mobility transition (de Haas 2010). Within this transition, rural to urban migration in times of industrialisation is presumed to be directed at large and rapidly urbanising areas. The role of small urban centres in periods of industrialisation is a largely overlooked area, in migration transition theories as well as in migration research more generally. Also, studies into rural industrialisation mainly seem to focus on the effect of economic change and economic policies on migration, while omitting the effects of broader economic, political and cultural changes on migration (Liang, Por Chen and Gu 2002). The case of the small urban town of Bolsward and the second wave of industrialisation and urban growth it went through over the twentieth century presents an opportunity to examine the mobility effects of social transformations in small towns that seem to fall in between the categories of ‘rural’ and ‘urban’ and that slowly move up in urban and migration hierarchies. Internal migration is often framed as either being rural to urban or urban to rural but the story is more complex, as rural places urbanise and categories become more ambiguous (see Hochstadt 1981).

3. Methodology

To gain insight into how processes of social transformation developed and shaped migration to and from Bolsward, this paper analyses various combined macro-level and micro-level data, including population register data ranging from 1880–1970, official employment statistics at several points in time (1930, 1947 and 1968), socio-economic reports and (auto-)biographical material. Interviews with three (local) historians also contributed to the resulting insights on social change. The study focused on the 1945–1970 period, as it was particularly during the postwar decades that Bolsward went through a rapid transition from a predominantly rural-agrarian and traditional town to a much more diversified economy along with rapid socio-cultural change. To gain more detailed insight into how these social transformations affected Bolsward’s residents in terms of their aspirations and migration behaviour over the period of study, I conducted 26 interviews. These included questions on family (migration) history, employment and educational history and the opportunities for the respondent and his or her

family, religious life, perceptions of social change and migration, hopes and wishes for the future at different points in time and (im)mobility experiences and broader life aspirations.

The interviewees were found by way of a multi-entry snowball sampling technique. Several key informants such as former teachers, clergymen and local historians with knowledge of and a central role in the population made access possible to a wide variety of informants. Through these initial contacts further informants were identified and contacted. The goal of the sample was to cover variation in experiences of social change and migration. The sample therefore included eight intra-provincial in-migrants, three inter-provincial in-migrants, four inter-provincial out-migrants, eight non-migrants, two former emigrants who returned and one international immigrant. Furthermore, respondents were selected to ensure sufficient diversity in terms of several distinguishing characteristics, including age, socio-economic position, occupation, educational level, religious or political affiliation, gender and personal migration experiences (see Appendix I). Permanent out-migrants were not included in this sample for practical reasons. This gap has been partly compensated for by including returning international emigrants in the sample and interview questions on the migration behaviour of siblings, friends and acquaintances. The majority of the interviews¹ were conducted in Frisian – the native language of many respondents – and took place in their homes to ensure a familiar environment. As a native Frisian, I could easily relate to the inhabitants of Bolsward, in terms of both culture and language.

4. Brief social and migration history before 1945

Bolsward is located in a largely agricultural region that specialised primarily in the production of dairy products. Until WWII, many inhabitants relied heavily on employment in agricultural processing industries set up around the turn of the century where dairy from the surrounding villages in Bolsward's rural hinterland was processed. In addition, the local economy was built around the service function it had for the surrounding catchment area. The production and maintenance of inland shipping vessels for fuel transport, the production of agricultural machinery, farms in the hinterland, a coffee-roasting factory, artisan shops, retailers and department stores provided additional employment for its population, while a small professional sector of clergy, civil servants, teachers and lawyers was also present.

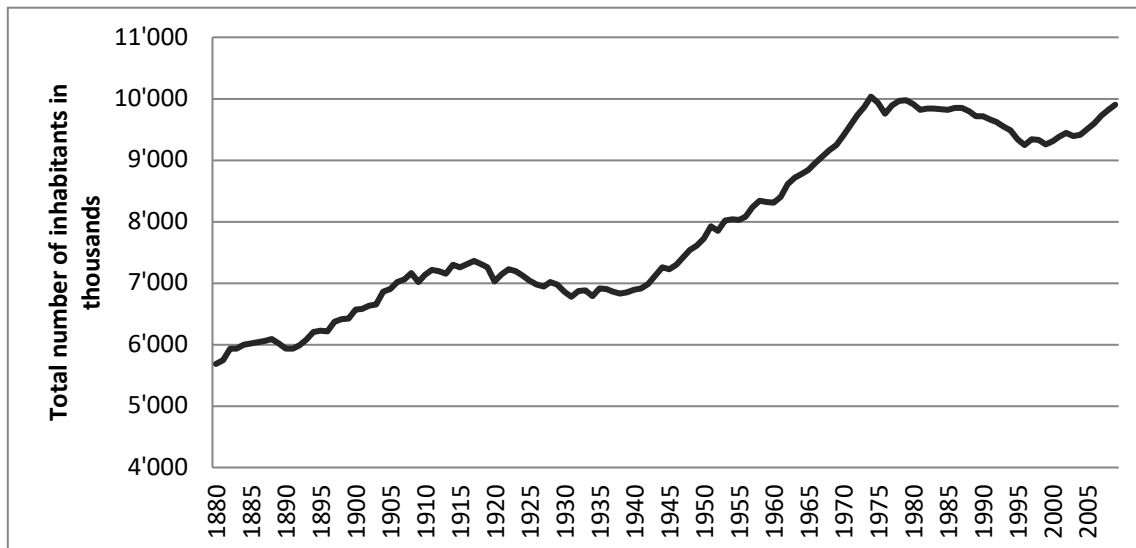
Due to the presence of several industries that were part of the agro-industrial system of the region, Bolsward's population had relatively high living standards and saw minimal unemployment amongst its population in the first two decades of the twentieth century. After the stagnation of industrial expansion from the 1920s onwards and the Depression of the 1930s, living standards quickly deteriorated. Many residents were deprived of a stable income and often had to rely on charity provided by churches. Others joined the increasing number of street vendors and fuel salesmen after they lost their stable employment. These crisis years were particularly harsh for day labourers in the construction and retail sectors as these professions relied the most heavily on the business cycle.

Farmers in the surrounding agricultural areas employed some residents from the town as workers although they mostly employed those living in the numerous small villages in the surrounding agrarian area. The majority of people living in these villages worked in agriculture, primarily as farm labourers or as (tenant) farmers. Most farmers had tenancy contracts with absentee landlords or churches as the landowners, while only a small number of wealthier farmers owned their own farms and land. The economic crisis of the 1930s also led to the high

¹ The interviews and secondary material were coded using ATLAS.ti. I used a bottom-up coding structure in which I worked up from detailed codes that stayed close to what respondents told me. Additionally, I created groups of codes based on the dimensions and sub-dimensions of social transformation identified by the MADE project (de Haas et al. 2020b).

unemployment of land labourers as farms went bankrupt or faced high tenancy costs. Still, farmers and their families were often better equipped to adapt to the economic crisis than land labourers, who were amongst the first to be laid off in times of crisis, while farmers' children could take over work from agricultural labourers.

Figure 1. The population of Bolsward between 1880 and 2010



Sources: Centraal Bureau Statistiek ‘CBS Rapportage gemeente Bolsward 1880–1965’; Centraal Bureau Statistiek Statline (2019)

Educational opportunities in Bolsward lagged behind other Frisian towns. The large majority of the generation growing up before the Second World War only followed primary education. Opportunities for secondary schooling could only be found elsewhere, with the closest school for secondary education being 10 kilometres away in Sneek. Moreover, schooling was too costly for most people and the possibilities to go there were limited. Many people could not afford a bicycle or a daily tram ticket between Bolsward and Sneek and their labour was often needed on the farm or at home. Bolsward thus had a relatively high proportion of workers without formal training, although there were opportunities to become an apprentice with local companies. The possibility of achieving social mobility through schooling was therefore limited but it often also did not fit within the aspirations of most people, which were more focused on work. In addition, as a quite religious and traditional community, women in particular were expected to marry early and only received a limited amount of education.

Bolsward and its hinterland had experienced different types of migration before the Second World War. Archival migration data suggest that, between 1880 and 1945, emigration to the United States was relatively limited in magnitude compared to migration to other places within Friesland and the Netherlands. Most of those who left Bolsward migrated to large industrial cities (especially to Amsterdam) in the western provinces of Noord- and Zuid-Holland or sought employment opportunities in other Frisian towns between 1880 and 1930. In the rural municipalities around Bolsward, the situation is quite different. Especially from the municipality of Wonseradeel, located west of Bolsward (see Figure 5), where arable farming (as opposed to dairy production in other rural municipalities) was dominant, many emigrated directly to the United States in reaction to the international agricultural crisis between 1878 and 1900 and up until the 1930s (see also Frieswijk 1998; Galema 1996) – which clearly defies the model of step-wise migration. These areas were hit the hardest by plummeting crop-prices during the global economic crisis of the 1930s, while dairy farmers in the grassland areas in the eastern municipalities of Hennaarderadeel and Wymbritseradeel faced more-modest price

declines. Agricultural workers from the arable farming areas fell back to marginal subsistence farming, while workers from the grasslands could more easily adjust by finding employment in the upcoming dairy industry in towns such as Bolsward. During these crisis years, out-migration volumes declined as employment in industrial work in the western provinces decreased. At the same time, opportunities for emigration for agriculture to North America diminished. Emigration to the United States had already decreased from 1921 due to the strict immigration quotas (Obdeijn and Schrover 2008). People from the hinterlands who might have migrated to these destinations now stayed put or sought opportunities in Bolsward.

Figure 2. Marktstraat, Bolsward, in the 1930s²



5. The post-WWII diversification in the migration trend

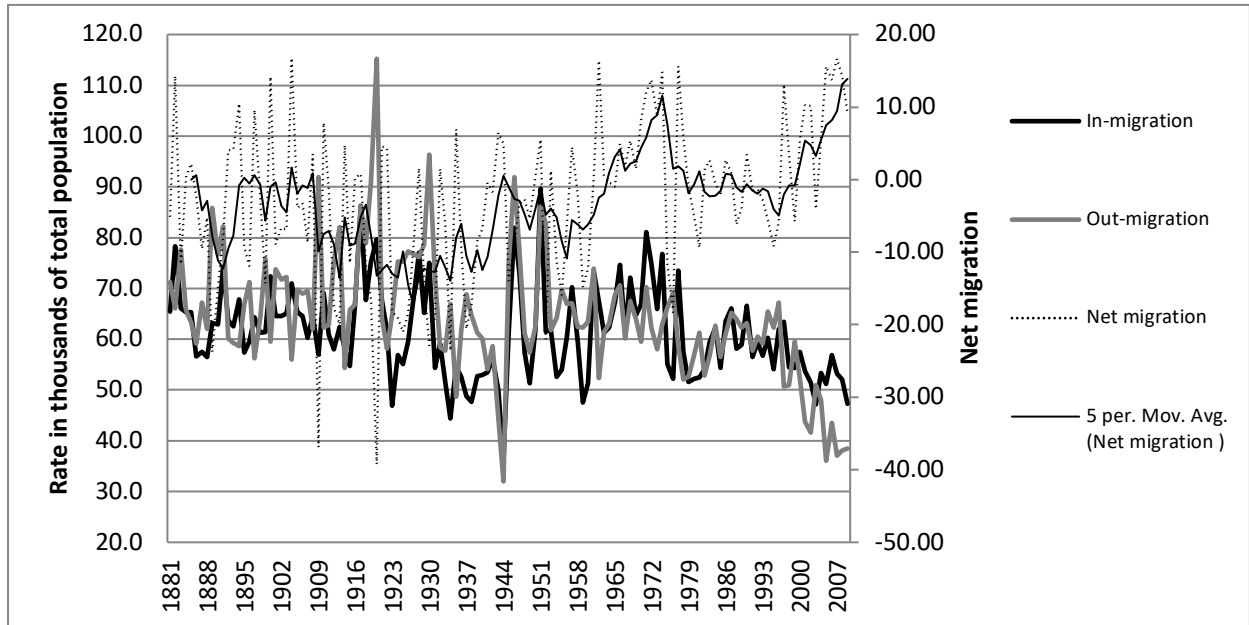
In the period between 1945 and 1970, Bolsward experienced an increase in the overall volume of in- and out-migration and the emergence of new migration destinations. In the first decade after the Second World War, migration rose across the board, while international emigration showed a notable increase between 1946 and 1962 (see Figures 3 and 4), which stands in stark contrast to lower out-migration during the crisis years and the war. The post-WWII decades were characterised by a remarkable trend in replacement migration, in which rising out-migration is largely compensated for by in-migration from rural areas filling vacant and new employment opportunities in industry and government (see Figure 3). More importantly, Figure 3 also reveals that net migration was just negative during the 1950s while, in the 1960s and early 1970s, net migration was slightly positive, suggesting that fewer people chose to leave Bolsward and more people migrated towards the town.

The following paragraphs analyse three forms of migration from and to Bolsward during this period in further detail: (i) *Frisian migration*, which captures intra-provincial

² Oud Bolsward. Marktstraat. Retrieved from <http://fotos.serc.nl/friesland/bolsward/bolsward-54016/>

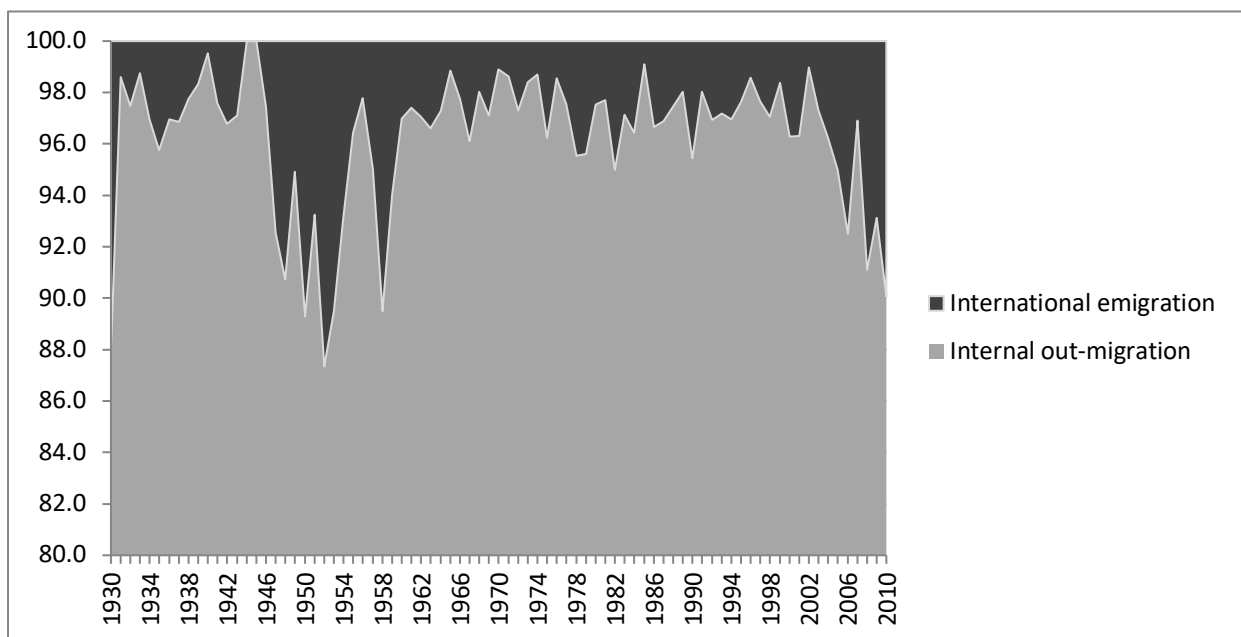
migration, (ii) *national migration*, which zooms in on inter-provincial movement and (iii) *international migration*, which focuses on both emigration and immigration.

Figure 3. In and out-migration rates of Bolsward between 1880 and 2010, internal and international migration



Sources: Centraal Bureau Statistiek; ‘CBS rapportage Bolsward 1880–1965’; Centraal Bureau Statistiek Statline (2019).

Figure 4. Proportional distribution of internal and international migration in Bolsward between 1930 and 2010



Sources: Centraal Bureau Statistiek ‘CBS Rapportage Bolsward 1880–1965’; Overzicht van de ingekomen en vertrokken personen sedert 1930; Centraal Bureau Statistiek Binnenlandse migratie naar richting 1948–1964 Gemeente Bolsward; Centraal Bureau Statistiek Statline (2019).

5.1 Frisian migration

During the three postwar decades, the out-migration of Bolsward residents to other places within the Friesland province created labour gaps and vacancies in Bolsward's industrial sector. At the same time, the geographical direction of out-migration underwent some fluctuation as well as more structural changes. Directly after the war, over half of all out-migrants moved to destinations within Friesland. This share of intra-Frisian migration dropped to a third in the 1950s and recovered to nearly half in the mid-1960s. Furthermore, the direction of these migrations changed compared to prewar patterns; while rural areas declined in importance as destinations because of the declining demand for farm workers as a result of agricultural mechanisation, larger urban centres such Sneek (located 10 km east of Bolsward) took up a growing share of Bolsward's out-migrants, while the Frisian capital of Leeuwarden and large industrial cities in Noord-Holland (Amsterdam) declined in relative importance. This 'decentralisation' of internal migration over these three decades can be explained by the fact that, during this period, industrialisation developed particularly rapidly in small and medium-sized towns within rural areas. Out-migration to rural areas still happened but at lower rates than before the war. Some larger villages, such as Witmarsum, in Bolsward's vicinity, for example, experienced industrial growth and possibilities for artisanship. At the same time, more-traditional forms of marriage migration to and from surrounding rural areas continued. Such marriages often took place within the same religious and social groups. Bolsward was characterised by strong religious divisions – namely Catholic, Dutch Reformed and several other Protestant denominations – as well as a partly non-religious emerging labour class working in sectors such as construction and local dairy industries.

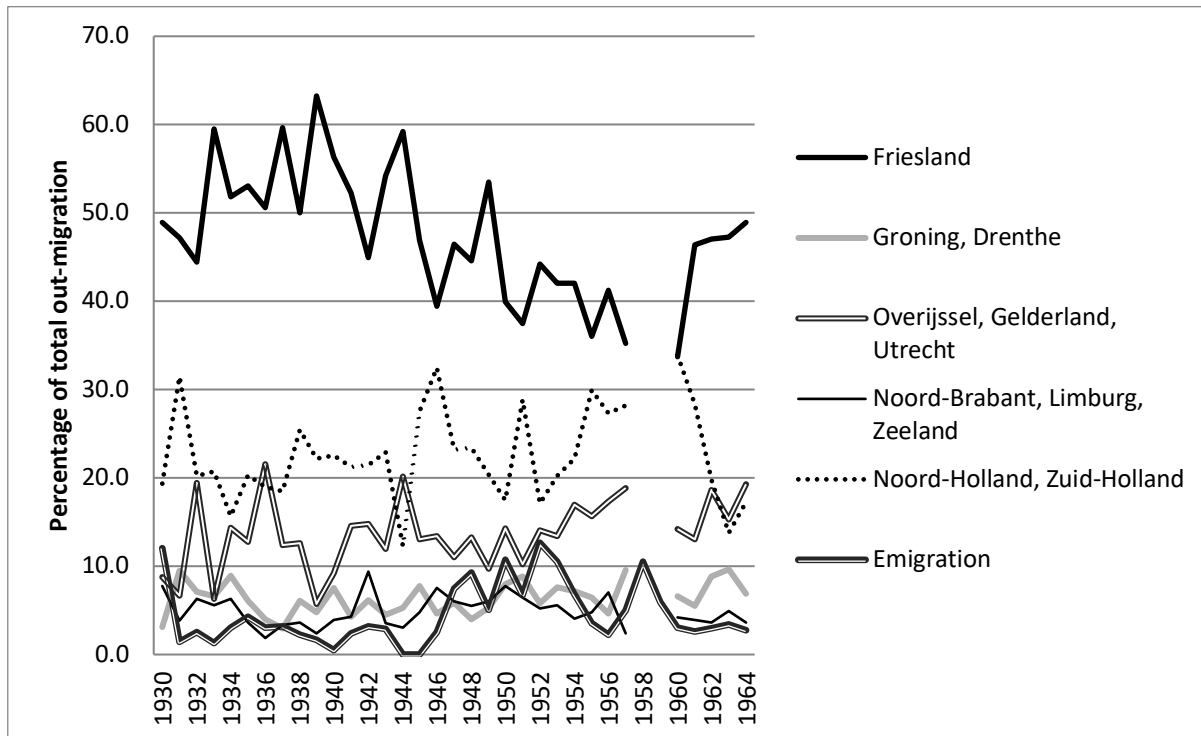
The labour gaps in Bolsward's economy created by out-migration were largely filled by intra-provincial in-migrants between 1945 and 1970. Continuous labour demand fuelled the on-going flow of replacement migrants to Bolsward. Approximately 60 per cent of all in-migrants came from (rural areas) within Friesland. Almost all of these intra-Frisian replacement migrants originated from the rural hinterlands of Bolsward³ with the three surrounding municipalities of Wonseradeel, Wymbritseradeel and Hennaarderadeel making up the largest proportion of these migrants (see Figure 5). This group of intra-regional immigrants consists primarily of former agricultural workers and farmers as well as marriage migrants from nearby rural areas.

³ Centraal Bureau Statistiek 'Binnenlandse migratie naar richting 1948–1957'; Centraal Bureau Statistiek 'Binnenlandse migratie naar richting 1960–1964'.

Figure 5. Local map of interprovincial migration between 1945 and 1970



Figure 6. Destination areas of Bolsward’s out-migrants between 1930 and 1964⁴



Sources: ‘Overzicht van de vertrokken personen uit de Gemeente Bolsward’; Centraal Bureau Statistiek ‘Interne migratie naar richting; Centraal Bureau Statistiek Statline (2019).

5.2 Inter-provincial migration

Between 1946 and 1960, people migrating out of Bolsward started to increasingly move to destinations outside of the province. This inter-provincial migration out of Bolsward mainly consisted of factory workers and former entrepreneurs and workers in the retail sector,⁵ was initially mainly directed to areas in the industrialised heartland of the Netherlands (Noord-Holland and Zuid-Holland) and consisted mainly of low-skilled industrial workers (see also Lukkes 1964). Migration towards the western provinces made up approximately 20–30 per cent of annual out-flows and peaked in the late 1950s (see Figures 6 and 7).

While most of this migration was driven by the search for more attractive and remunerative industrial jobs, temporary or permanent migration towards other provinces for reasons of education as well as jobs in administrative functions also increased after the war and especially from the late 1950s onwards, with rapid economic growth in Holland signifying new opportunities for youth and young adults. However, this was only a temporary phase, as provincial out-migration started to slow down over the 1960s, corresponding to the renewed interest in intra-provincial migration destinations. While, during the interbellum, overseas

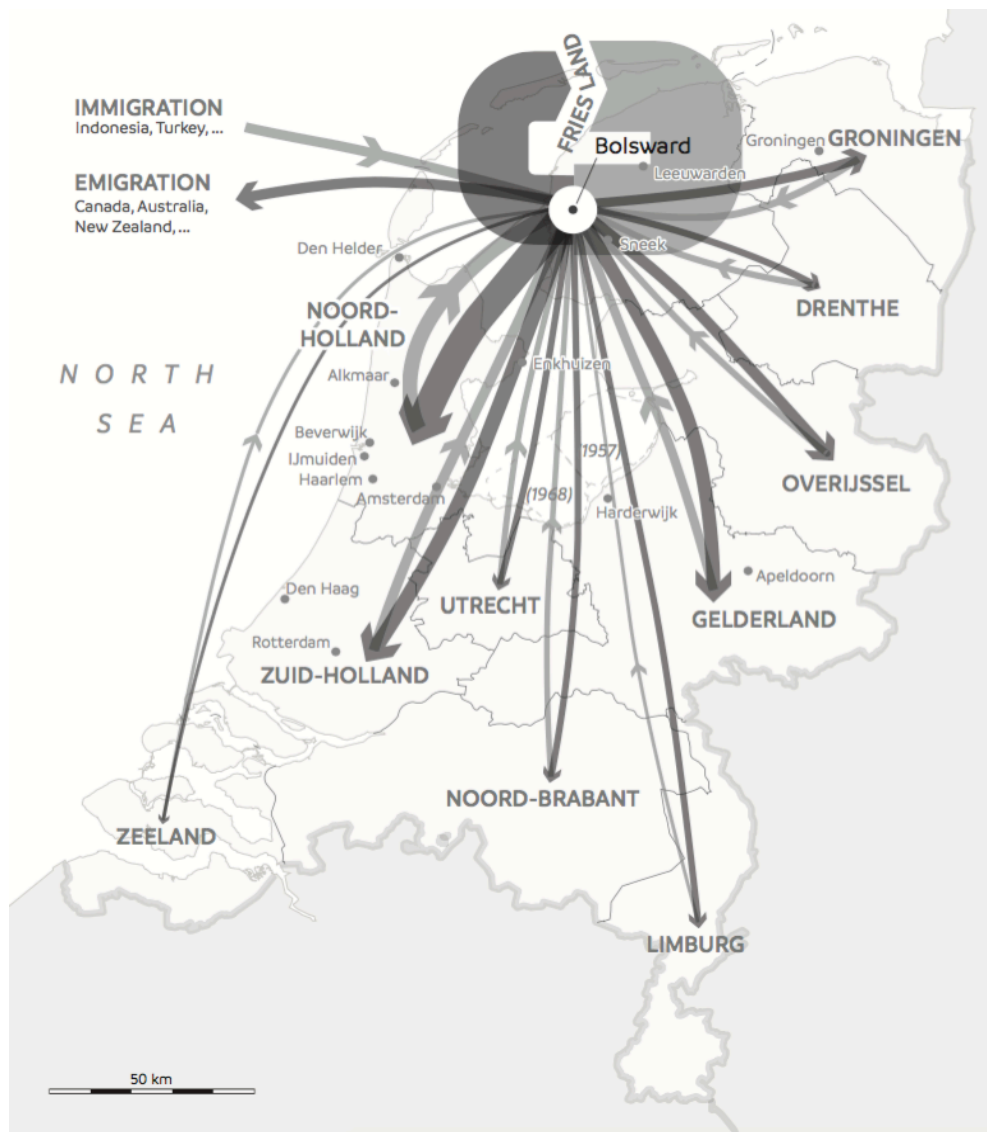
⁴ This figure shows the proportional distribution of the destination areas of out-migrants from Bolsward. Each line shows the percentage of Bolsward’s out-migrants to the six destination categories between 1930 and 1965. The 11 Dutch provinces are divided into four inter-provincial migration areas: North (Groningen and Drenthe), East (Gelderland, Overijssel and Utrecht), South (Noord-Brabant, Limburg and Zeeland) and West (Noord-Holland and Zuid-Holland). Frisian intra-provincial migration and international emigration are distinct categories. The percentual decrease in 1951 is due to the influx of repatriates from the Dutch East Indies.

⁵ These people were predominantly employed as or by small bakers, butchers, fuel salesmen or in similar occupations. Postwar economic changes made these sectors less and less viable, as will be discussed in further detail in Section 6.2.

migration had largely ceased, there was a temporary resurgence of emigration in the postwar decades. Yet inter-provincial migration would increasingly substitute for international migration from the 1950s onward, as people found more and more opportunities within the Netherlands.

Although replacement migration from the surrounding villages and other forms of Frisian in-migration accounted for the vast majority of new residents, professionals (such as teachers, government administrators and clergy) from outside Friesland started to arrive in Bolsward in ever-greater numbers from the late 1940s onwards. These higher-skilled migrants primarily came from the western provinces and formed a counter-stream of predominantly manual workers from Bolsward drawn by more-attractive labour conditions in the same western provinces. In terms of volume, this stream of in-migrants is relatively stable and shows no significant fluctuation in the entire case-study period. Although relatively small in size, this influx of non-Frisian people *fan bûten* (from outside), as we will see, would have major effects in accelerating broader, already ongoing processes of socio-cultural change away from small-town community life focused on family and religion.

Figure 7. Origin and destination areas of Bolsward’s migration between 1945 and 1964



Sources: ‘Overzicht van de vertrokken personen uit de Gemeente Bolsward’; Centraal Bureau Statistiek ‘Interne migratie naar richting; Centraal Bureau Statistiek Statline (2019).

5.3 International migration

In the immediate postwar years and up to the early 1960s, international emigration started to re-emerge in Bolsward after having been almost absent since the 1930s' Depression years. In the rural villages surrounding Bolsward, the international out-migration of redundant farmers and farm workers was a common phenomenon, as those who wanted to continue their agricultural livelihoods and lifestyles saw agricultural opportunities in Canada and, to a lesser extent, in the United States, where agricultural land was still available in abundance. Compared to its surrounding rural hinterland, however, migration from Bolsward to overseas destinations remained relatively low and never reached more than 10 per cent of total out-migration from the town. The minority of out-migrants who *did* decide to emigrate chose destinations in Canada and the United States, particularly where Frisian communities were already present, while some others also migrated to Australia and New Zealand.

The destination choice often reflected the level of skills which people had, their contacts at overseas destinations (in the case of the United States, a sponsor) and financial means. Emigration was often undertaken by entire families or single young men. Women generally emigrated only in the context of family migration. Only one of my female informants – who lives in Bolsward now but was born in the village of Tjerkwerd (6 kilometres from Bolsward) – made the long journey to Canada alone, although she returned after six months as her mother and brother insisted she should return to help on the farm back in Tjerkwerd. Some people migrated to Germany and France, often to work in agriculture and mining. However, most of these European emigrants returned to their families in Bolsward after short periods of time. While some emigrants returned from Canada after unsuccessful attempts to settle, most migration seems to have been permanent as interviews with residents do not reveal much information on returns.⁶ In the postwar decades, Bolsward would also be confronted with a totally new influx of immigrants from non-European countries. International immigration was an entirely new phenomenon in Bolsward when several families of colonial 'repatriates' from the former Dutch East Indies settled in Bolsward in the early 1950s after Indonesia had achieved independence (Obdeijn and Schrover 2008). A second wave of immigration occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s when a few dozen Turkish labour migrants came to Bolsward from other areas in the Netherlands to work in the dairy and other industries. Their families often came to join them permanently after a few years, thus forming a small but thriving Turkish community. This was part of the broader transition of the Netherlands from a country of net emigration to one of net immigration. Industries started to recruit Turkish workers because the supply of rural workers from surrounding villages had dried up. Falling birth rates, increasing education and improved living standards explain that fewer and fewer local workers were willing to pick up these jobs.

The co-existence of these multiple internal and international migration flows from and to Bolsward highlights the complex, geographically layered and socially differentiated structure of local migration systems. This defies the simple classification of places as being of either out- or in-migration. Out-migration often consisted of former retail workers, industrial labourers and people moving for educational purposes, while in-migration consisted of former farmers, former agricultural labourers from the hinterlands and professionals from other provinces, as well as a limited but significant immigration of colonial 'repatriates' and Turkish migrant workers and their families. The following section explains the drivers of these

⁶ However, this can also represent a gap in the data collection as other studies indicate approximately 30 per cent of Dutch international emigrants returned to the Netherlands (Ellich and Blauw 1981; Obdeijn and Schrover 2008).

migration trends, with a particular focus on achieving a better understanding of the process of replacement migration.

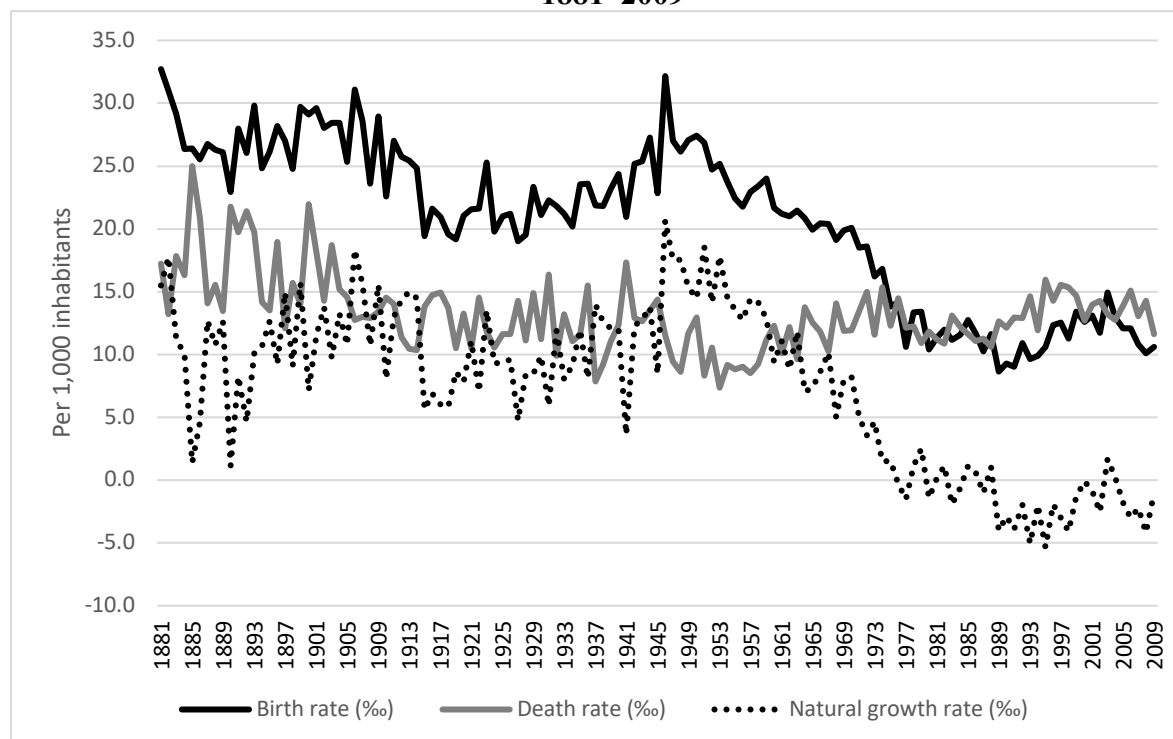
6. Social transformation and migration diversification

To explain the migration trends identified above, this section explores the most important social transformations that affected the lives and livelihoods of people living in and around Bolsward over this period: (1) agricultural mechanisation, (2) industrialisation, (3) state and educational expansion, and (4) changing life aspirations. While these four fundamental change processes primarily seem to reflect economic and educational change, these changes – as we will see – are closely and reciprocally linked to fundamental changes in culture and ideas of the ‘good life’ which have, in their mutual interaction, reshaped migration decision-making and migration patterns.

6.1 The post-war social structure and emigration

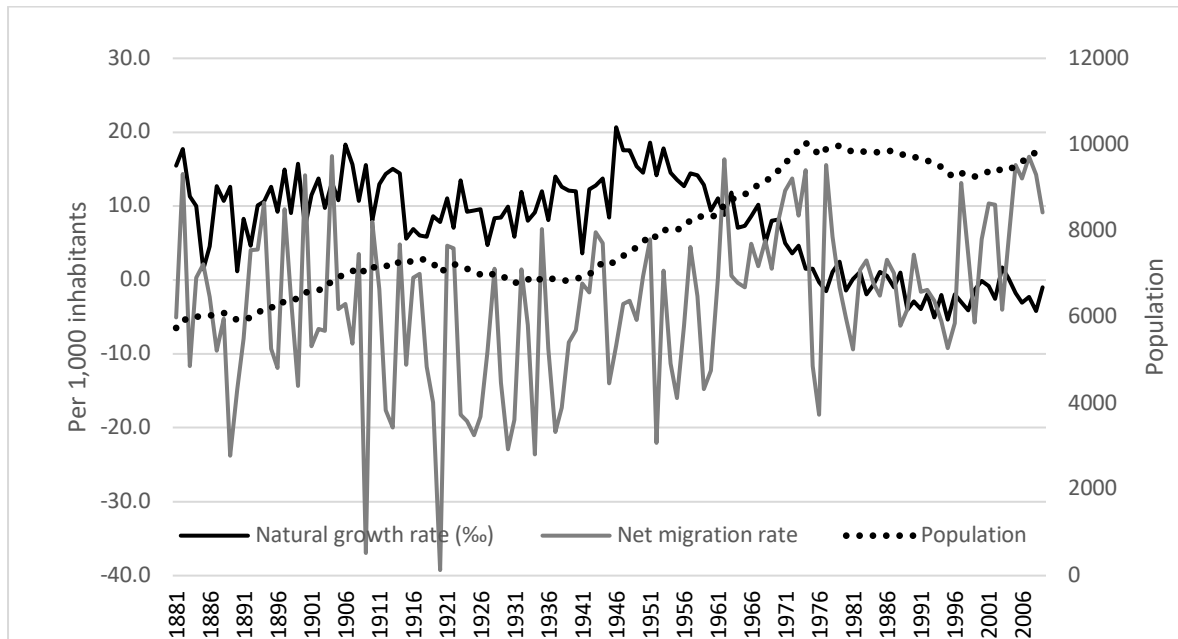
From 1900 up to the Second World War, the population of Bolsward was relatively stable at around 7,000 residents, as high birth rates were compensated for by death rates and negative net migration (see Figures 8 and 9). After the war, the population increased steadily to a peak of 10,000 people in 1975. This quick expansion was mainly due to high natural population growth during the postwar ‘baby boom’ phase and supplemented by in-migration in the 1960s and early 1970s (see Figure 8). However, birth rates started to fall rapidly from the late 1940s to stabilise at similar levels as death rates from the mid-1970s. This concluded Bolsward’s demographic transition. As Figure 9 shows, in the postwar decades in-migration started to play an increasingly important role in explaining the town’s population growth.

Figure 8. Bolsward’s demographic transition: birth, death and natural increase rates 1881–2009



Sources: Centraal Bureau Statistiek ‘CBS Rapportage Bolsward 1880-1965’; Centraal Bureau Statistiek Statline (2019).

Figure 9. Natural growth rate (births and deaths) and population size, 1881–2009



Sources: Centraal Bureau Statistiek ‘CBS rapportage Bolsward 1880-1965’; Centraal Bureau Statistiek Statline 2019.

Five years of war and the ensuing social transformations had fundamental migration consequences for Bolsward, both directly and indirectly. During the war, children fleeing famine in the big cities of Holland and warfare in the south found refuge in Bolsward. During the last year of and directly after the war, they began returning to their places of origin. More importantly, around 150 men who were sent to Nazi Germany as forced labourers returned to Bolsward. These forced labourers felt unappreciated and were discriminated against by people who said that they should have refused the so-called *Arbeitseinsatz* (labour effort) in Nazi Germany. Some of these returnees had lost a feeling of connection to Bolsward, no longer felt at home and were amongst the first to emigrate, many of them already in 1946. Similarly, many young men who were enlisted in the Dutch army to fight during the Indonesian War of Independence (1945–1949) returned to Bolsward but felt misunderstood and under-appreciated and could not re-adjust. They had experienced the world outside Bolsward and developed a new outlook on life and therefore often developed migration aspirations. As a consequence, many migrated to New Zealand or Canada, either directly or upon return.

This postwar emigration was part of a national trend in which the Dutch government encouraged emigration to Canada, Australia and New Zealand. This fitted within overall government views that the Netherlands was overpopulated and could therefore not offer sufficient prospects in a war-ravaged economy. This prompted the Dutch government to set up assisted emigration programmes to relieve poverty (Obdeijn and Schrover 2008). In addition to fears of over-population, in the Netherlands in general and also in Bolsward, the immediate post-WWII years were fraught with perceptions of economic uncertainty. In this atmosphere, rebuilding the national economy did not happen as quickly as hoped and many goods, including food, remained scarce for several years. Many had been already disillusioned in the 1930s’ crisis years and therefore lost hope of a speedy recovery after the war and ceased to believe that a better life would come any time soon. Additionally, some of the population – in particular in Orthodox Protestant groups – feared a Third World War and the possible Soviet take-over of Western Europe, which spurred unease about the future.

This combination of factors led to a resurgence in emigration. While there had been some emigration to North America around the turn of the twentieth century, overseas emigration had slowed down in the 1920s as a consequence of growing economic opportunities in Dutch cities and came to a standstill in the 1930s because of the international economic crisis and an overall climate of protectionism and nationalism. However, in the years immediately after the war, emigration re-emerged as an option for those who could not envision building a future in Bolsward or Friesland. Increased post-WWII emigration became a national trend but, according to several interviewees, housing shortages in Bolsward were one important push factor there. While employees of Bolsward's expanding factories were often privileged, as employers provided company housing, other young men and women who wanted to start building an independent life often had to resort to living in a shed behind their parents' house in the absence of sufficient public and otherwise affordable housing in the postwar years when the town's population increased rapidly.

In hindsight, this increasing emigration was only a temporary flare-up. Two decades afterwards, overseas emigration became insignificant, with those moving out of Bolsward preferring internal destinations once again. This suggests a general preference to stay close to home and, if possible, within Friesland. As mentioned above, even if people migrated overseas, this was often with the aim of maintaining a farming lifestyle, whilst emigrants preferred to settle in places in Canada and the United States where Frisian communities had already been established. This exemplifies the important role of cultural factors and subjective ideas about the 'good life' in shaping people's preferences and migration trajectories.

6.2 Changes in aspirations and the local economic structure in Bolsward

Despite this relatively brief increase in emigration, out-migration in the late 1950s and early 1960s remained primarily directed towards destinations within Friesland (see Section 5 or Figure 7) and industrial areas in the western provinces of Noord Holland and Zuid Holland. As part of a broader process of economic restructuring after the war, many small business-owners, retailers, artisans and employees struggled to adapt to the new circumstances and, in particular, to the process of economic upscaling in which small department stores and an emerging supermarket sector started to outcompete small entrepreneurs such as petty traders, grocery stores, bakers, butchers and other specialist stores. The increasing government regulation of labour conditions also made it more and more difficult for small entrepreneurs to informally employ workers, which was another factor that drove them out of business.

This entailed a rapid decrease in the number of enterprises in Bolsward. An informant, recalling this process, said that there was no need for 'six butchers, six bakers or six fuel salesmen' any more. However, new possibilities for work opened up in industry, government, schools and within larger retail companies in town. As a result, people increasingly left self-employment and started to work for a wage. While some of these small business-owners chose to adapt to the new economic reality in Bolsward after the war by either upscaling or closing their business and starting to work for a wage, others chose to leave, responding to bad economic forecasts and pessimism about recovery. In parallel, educational levels⁷ rose simultaneously; due to the establishment of the *Lagere Technische School* (LTS, a vocational training school) in 1947 and a secondary school for lower preparatory education (MULO), residents in town who had been educated there could migrate more easily. The new skills they had acquired through formal education made people more prone to migration as their possibilities of and aspirations to find a (skilled) job in industry or in the public sector increased.

⁷ For more information on educational institutions see Section 6.3.

Those who had been employed in industrial jobs in Bolsward also migrated, the most often to factories in Frisian towns nearby and to medium-sized industrial areas in western parts of the Netherlands – where industry was more diverse and higher wages were paid – such as in the large steel mills (Koninklijke Hoogovens) near Beverwijk en IJmuiden (Noord-Holland). Other important industrial destinations included Alkmaar in Noord-Holland and Rotterdam in Zuid-Holland (see Figure 7). The level of skills and experience these potential migrants had was crucial in shaping their capacity to migrate and the chance of success in finding a job elsewhere. This was also the case for international emigration, as skilled agrarian workers were more eligible for admission in countries like Canada. Some urban residents learnt new professional skills in order to emigrate, as destination countries like Canada imposed entry requirements on emigrants: people employable in agriculture were often preferred and applicants had to undergo a strict physical test (Koops 2010; van Faassen 2014). An acquaintance of one of my respondents, previously employed as a day labourer in shipyards in Bolsward, for example, became a milker (of cows) so that he could qualify for emigration.

These types of migration had a strong male bias. In the 1950s, women migrated primarily with their spouses or for marriage. The temporary regional or local migration of (teenage) women for domestic work to Bolsward and to the surrounding villages (for example, to Nijland) and farms that had occurred before the war would rapidly disappear after the war. This was related to decreasing poverty, increasing female education and the introduction of labour-saving electrical household appliances. In the 1960s, some single women began moving away from Bolsward for education and skilled labour but these flows were still marginal, as traditional gender norms would remain strong in Bolsward until the 1970s. Some young women would find jobs in the retail sector or other less-skilled service jobs but, upon marriage, the large majority of women would stop working, commensurate with their new status as housewives and mothers—a pattern which would only start to change from the early 1970s onwards.

The employment gaps left behind by out-migrants who left for Frisian and inter-provincial destinations were primarily filled by in-migrants from the countryside (see Section 5 or Figure 7). Residents of Bolsward's surrounding agricultural areas came to Bolsward in a process of replacement migration over the entire case-study period but at an accelerated rate from the late 1950s to the mid-1960s, as economic and technological changes reduced opportunities for agricultural employment. Practices such as milking, mowing, sowing and harvesting, which were labour-intensive and provided employment to many (day) labourers – often living on the farm or in a nearby farm cottage – were increasingly becoming mechanised. Already in the early-twentieth century, hand-mowing was replaced by mowing machines, which had made seasonal labourers (*hannekemaaiers*) largely redundant. After the war, machines started to replace other labour-intensive agricultural work like ploughing, sowing and reaping (Van der Poel 1983). The large-scale introduction of tractors, increasing scale of production and decreasing numbers of farms intensified and accelerated these shifts.

This quick and drastic transition to mechanised agriculture was stimulated by the Marshall Plan from the United States, a major aid package and capital investment in postwar recovery in Europe. One of the main objectives was to intensify and mechanise agricultural production (Griffiths 1997). The number of farms decreased by approximately 35 per cent in the adjacent municipalities of Wonseradeel and Wymbritseradeel⁸ while their size increased quickly as ongoing innovation and mechanisation initiated by Marshall Aid required a dramatic increase in the amount of land needed per farmer (Inklaar 1997). To this end, machinery and knowledge of more efficient production methods were made available to farmers and land was reallocated to increase the size of agrarian plots (a policy called *ruilverkaveling*).

⁸ Census data from 1947 and 1971.

This resulted in a yearly productivity growth of nearly 4 per cent (van den Noort 1972). These developments initially mainly affected the arable farming areas located north-west of Bolsward, as this sector is more labour-intensive. In the areas where dairy farming was predominant, the introduction of milking machines⁹ in the early 1950s meant that only one milker, instead of three, was needed to milk 30 cows. Data on agricultural employment in the surrounding municipalities show a dramatic decimation of the agricultural labour force. In the municipality of Wonseradeel, employment in agriculture decreased by almost 80 per cent, while the municipality of Wymbritseradeel lost almost 70 per cent of its agricultural employment in the two postwar decades alone. This was a radical change, considering the fact that, in 1947, over 50 per cent of total employment within both municipalities was still in the agricultural sector.¹⁰ Employment for inland shippers, who transported products like peat or milk from farm to factory by a network of waterways, also became increasingly obsolete when paved roads replaced the old dirt tracks. However, new employment opportunities as truck-drivers emerged at the same time.

Figure 10. Dairy transport around Wommels in the late 1960s¹¹



Interviews revealed a strong *farming culture* in the hinterlands of Bolsward. Some labourers and many farmers' sons still aspired to become farmers but found it increasingly difficult to do so in Friesland. As families were still quite large in the 1950s and 1960s, it was often only the oldest son of a farmer who had the possibility to take over the (tenant) farm. Younger sons and agricultural workers who had a strong desire to continue in agriculture had to find new opportunities elsewhere. Several of them migrated to Canada, while a few others

⁹ The number of milking machines in the Netherlands increased from 3,835 in 1950 to 38,658 in 1970. The number of tractors rose from 24,534 to 81,733 in the same years (Van der Poel 1983: 283).

¹⁰ Census data from 1947 and 1971.

¹¹ Sjoerd Andringa, from Museum It Tsiispakhûs, retrieved from: <https://www.oudezee.nl/nl/locaties/2241402744/museum-it-tsiispakhus-2>

explored opportunities in Germany and France. Many others adapted locally, either through pursuing higher levels of education or by taking on employment as unskilled workers in industries or construction located in small towns such as Bolsward. For the (aspiring) farmers who did end up working in Bolsward's industries, this adaptation process was often harsh. They had very strong emotional connections to the land which their families had cultivated and the farm they had built up often over generations. Many of these men were quite reluctant to leave the open countryside behind and work in industry or, as expressed by an interviewee, to 'work between four walls'. For some, another difficulty of working in a factory was the need to interact with many more people than previously on the farm. The wife (Respondent 22) of one of these former farmers described her husband's experience of transition as follows:

'It [work at the Hollandia factory] drove me crazy', he said. He came from the countryside and then you are locked up in the factory. The first few weeks were quite hard to deal with. Normally you would only see no-one but the baker and the postman, as neighbours were far away as well, and there you were, between four walls.

For some landless farm workers who lived on the farm or in a farm cottage, the loss of work also meant the loss of a place to live. Those who lost their job often had no other choice than to migrate.

Many of these now-redundant farm workers, who lacked any skills beyond farm work, came to Bolsward after the Second World War. Many moved directly from the countryside and found vacant unskilled jobs left behind by out-migrants in the growing industrial and construction sectors of the 1950s and 1960s. In addition, young men from the countryside who used to go into agricultural work right after or even during their primary school years now had a greater opportunity to go to secondary school, including a vocational training school and a junior high school which opened in Bolsward in the 1950s (see Section 6.3). Industrial development was a driving force behind the opening of these new educational institutions. Before the war, heads of industry had already complained about the lack of skilled workers in Bolsward (Hendriks and Monter 1948). This further encouraged migration to Bolsward because, after leaving school, they could now join the industrial workforce or construction companies as skilled labourers. These two groups largely replaced the population who had moved away from Bolsward.

The transition to other forms of employment in industry and construction happened gradually. This means that in-migrants from the countryside did not always directly fill vacant employment positions left by out-migrants, as new employment opportunities also emerged as part of the increase in factory and other urban-based jobs. This was part of a larger second industrial revolution in the Netherlands, as the country was able to quickly expand its industrial sector as a result of several economic treaties within the-then European Economic Community (EEC), which ensured that trade was not hampered by high import tariffs between participating countries and created new export possibilities (see van Zanden). Factories in Bolsward – like the dairy-processing factories *KNM (1882)* *Hollandia (1894)* and *Hollandsche Melk Suiker fabriek (HMS) (1913)*, the coffee-roasting factory *De Drie Mollen*,¹² a factory for agricultural machinery, an industrial baker and an industrial washing company [Florence, established in 1913] – expanded in this period and provided growing labour opportunities for skilled and unskilled workers. Dutch industry also saw a qualitative shift towards metalworks in the 1950s. As wages were higher in this sector, many inter-provincial out-migrants went to steel mills in the western provinces of Noord- and Zuid-Holland and some positions in this heavy industry became vacant. In Bolsward itself, however, the food-processing industry also expanded

¹² Established in 1841 as tea company. In 1920 it turned into a coffee-roasting factory.

significantly, even if at a slightly slower pace than in the entire province of Friesland. Industrial employment in Bolsward almost doubled from 463 in 1947 to 751 full-time jobs in 1968. While the bulk of this growth took place in the dairy industry, labour demand also increased in the industrial washing company and the coffee factory.

Figure 10. Hollandsche Melk Suiker fabriek, Bolsward¹³



My analysis shows that the transition into other types of employment was less difficult for former farm workers as their agricultural aspirations were not as strong as that of former independent farmers. Apart from the absence of a strong farming culture, industrial work generally offered better wages and working conditions for poor farm workers. As a result, ideas about what constitutes ‘good’ work quickly started to change. The fact that wages were rising rapidly, working hours were significantly shorter, a pension was provided and the working week was shortened from six to five days all facilitated the cultural adjustment to factory work, even for the more-reluctant farm workers. As farm work was demanding and badly paid, farm workers did not see the shift to factory work as degrading (see also ter Heide 1965). In general, they gladly left behind harsh conditions, long hours and insecurity. As a former factory worker (Respondent 8) recalls:

Those land labourers withdrew from the countryside. If you worked with men who had to work outside in this bad weather (cold, rain, wind) and harvest Brussel sprouts... they thought the factories were divine. Except during summer.

More and more farm workers were also drawn to work in construction. The construction sector boomed from the mid-1950s in Bolsward and in the Netherlands more generally. In Bolsward, local construction companies carried out three major social and public housing projects in the 1950s (Plan Noord) and 1960s (Parkplan) – outside the ancient city walls which enclose the

¹³ Stichting Bolswards Historie. Hollandse Melk Suiker fabriek. Retrieved from <https://www.stichtingbolswardshistorie.nl/archief/hms-fabriek-2/>. Accessed 22 September 2020.

historical city centre – which helped to ease the pressure on the local housing market.¹⁴ For former agricultural workers who could not get used to factory work or did not aspire to it at all, the construction sector offered an alternative, as it allowed them to ‘work in the open air’ rather than in hot and cramped factories. An intrinsic preference for working outside can thus partly explain why some chose employment in the construction sector and others in local industry. This proves that the various ideas of what constitutes the ‘good life’ thus have a strong cultural dimension and are often shaped by former livelihoods and work experiences.

6.3 Education, state expansion and life aspirations

Educational and state expansion had various and somewhat ambiguous effects on migration patterns in Bolsward. On the one hand, the expansion created a greater demand for professionals to live and work in Bolsward as teachers and civil servants. On the other, increasing education changed the life and work aspirations of local Bolsward residents, which often encouraged them to pursue higher education or find suitable work elsewhere. Between 1947 and 1968, the number of jobs in education and local government rose from 264 to 620. Improved welfare provisions and the establishment of an increasing number of secondary schools enabled Bolsward’s youth to pursue further education there which, in the longer term, also brought new employment opportunities in industry and the (public) service sector within reach of an increasing share of Bolsward’s native population.

Directly after the war, about 50 per cent of Frisians had followed some form of secondary education. This share had increased to 93 per cent by 1973 (Frieswijk 1998). Initially, the lack of secondary schools was a real obstacle to achieving a better education. One informant (Resident 3) explained, after having been asked whether he had wanted to attend secondary school:

Yes, but it was not available here. They [educational institutions] all came after the war. Those kids had already finished primary school and they had to do something. It was possible [in Sneek for example], to go to MULO or HBS but that was too expensive. Those old folks could not afford that. So, everyone born before 1930–1935 did not have it easy with respect to schools. We were lucky that the school for home economics, the lower vocational school and the MULO came, so everyone could educate themselves further after primary school.

Although not everyone could afford it or saw the necessity of secondary schooling, these new educational institutions in Bolsward increased the potential for social mobility (see Table 1). This particularly applied to the *Hogere Burgerschool* (HBS, a higher civic school comparable to senior high school), which was established in 1955, a type of secondary education that prepared pupils for a higher vocational or university education. This opened up an entirely new perspective for families in terms of their children’s future. It also coincided with interrelated cultural and economic shifts. Before the war, in a context of high poverty, job insecurity and a lack of social security, many parents saw earning money and acquiring concrete skills as a more reliable, secure option for their children rather than continuing secondary school, while others could simply not afford it or thought schooling was not meant for their social class. A former primary school teacher explained these sentiments:

¹⁴ <https://www.bolsward.nl/wonen-werken/buurten>. Accessed 22 September 2020).

[...] you should be happy to be working, keep calm; that is already good enough. Just find work in retail or trade and let others do the learning. That was a strong sentiment at that time.

Table 1. Schools for secondary and tertiary education in Bolsward¹⁵

| School | Abbreviation | Year of establishment | Level |
|---|--------------|-----------------------|---|
| <i>Hogere Zuivelschool Bolsward</i> | * | 1904 | Tertiary: technical collage/school for dairy industry management |
| <i>Christelijke Huishoudschool Ninenhove (Protestant)</i> | * | 1931 | Secondary: vocational training school (for girls) (domestic science school) |
| <i>Lagere Technische School</i> | LTS | 1947 | Secondary: vocational training school (for boys) |
| <i>Openbare MULO Bolsward</i> | MULO | * | Secondary: lower preparatory education (comparable to junior high school) |
| <i>Hogere Burgerschool Jan Brugmancollege (Catholic)</i> | HBS | 1955 | Secondary: higher preparatory education (comparable to senior high school) |

Nevertheless, these attitudes changed quickly after the war as educational aspirations rose. This is reflected in the fact that the lower vocational training school and the MULO were attended by many locals. New professions became available and new paths for social mobility opened up for skilled workers from the vocational school and for administrative personnel from MULO. A qualitative shift in industrial employment was also well under way as an increase in factory employment was accounted for by administrative and managing positions (ETIF 1967). This increased the aspiration to stay in Bolsward for a growing share of the local population.

Schooling also had a significant effect on the general life aspirations of pupils but, as these shifted so, too, did work opportunities within Bolsward and the hinterland. People dreamed less and less of becoming a farmer and aspirations for technical work and administrative positions increased. Many of these new aspirations could be realised in Bolsward, though not for all. For women, in particular, new opportunities for schooling made it possible to aspire to and realise a new kind of life. Yet migration to another province was often necessary as tertiary training was not available in Bolsward. One woman (Respondent 15) explained that she wanted to work herself up through further schooling and could not do so by staying in Bolsward.

While my parents had no wish to leave Bolsward, I always thought I would not stay here. I wanted a job. In former times you would go into domestic work after primary school, but I did not want that, I wanted to work. I had finished the MULO and could go to an in-house training trajectory at a nursing home. I wanted to work myself up. I could not stay [in Bolsward] because what will you become? Work in a shop your entire life? I did not want that.

¹⁵ After the War, a public, a Catholic and a Protestant Christian MULO (lower-secondary preparatory education) were also established. The exact dates of their foundation are unknown.

The introduction of new forms of schooling added to these changing ideas of what was considered to be ‘good’ work and what consisted of a ‘good life’. While, for some, increased education meant the possibility to take on skilled jobs in Bolsward, for others it instilled a desire to pursue higher education and to live and work in larger cities. Educational expansion thus had ambiguous effects on migration aspirations and trajectories. After having finished secondary school, more and more people wanting to pursue tertiary training in the western provinces in order to work in professions such as the police or teaching thus had that possibility.

The establishment of the new educational institutions introduced above not only had effects on out-migration patterns and non-mobility. It also meant that new patterns of in-migration developed. In the postwar years, Bolsward saw a new professional class of teachers, clergy and government workers moving into town. Because of its status as a Catholic enclave in a predominantly Protestant region, Bolsward boasted the only Catholic secondary school in Friesland. This drew in pupils from all over the province who would live in church-run boarding houses, while the school recruited (Catholic) teachers from all over the country. In addition to primary and secondary schools, between 1904 and 1990 Bolsward was home to the *Rijkshogeschool voor Levensmiddelentechnologie* (University of Applied Sciences for food technology and management); originally named the *Hogere Zuivelschool Bolsward* (Higher Dairy School), it attracted a small class of professionals such as lecturers, technical staff and students.

The growth of government bureaucracies and the introduction of schools for secondary education thus created a new demand for highly skilled professionals. Because of the low educational level of local populations, Bolsward initially mainly recruited such higher-skilled workers from outside the province in order to facilitate educational expansion. ‘A lot – almost all of them’ – came from outside Friesland, a former teacher told me. While some teachers had pre-existing connections to Friesland through family or occupational networks, they did not come from one particular region, although many were recruited from the western provinces of the Netherlands. For the newly set up Catholic secondary school and the existing Catholic primary school, however, teachers were mainly recruited from the Catholic provinces in the south of the Netherlands. The in-migration of teachers and other highly skilled workers and their families diversified the structure of the local population, which changed and accelerated the influx of ideas and values in Bolsward. This played a direct role in the cultural change in this rural town, a shift away from the traditional lifestyles centred around family, religion and dairy farming, decreasing family sizes and the increasing education and labour-market participation of women from the 1970s.

6.4 Social transformation and immobility

The combination of profound economic, cultural, demographic, political and technological transformations – which all happened within the span of one generation – not only shaped patterns of in- and out-migration but also had a significant effect on people’s aspirations and ability to stay in Bolsward. Several informants reported that living standards in Bolsward increased rapidly during this period as the result of national economic growth and state-provided social security. Better transport possibilities, the expansion of private car ownership – particularly since the late 1960s – as well as public and company transport alongside the construction of new neighbourhoods outside the traditional city walls made it possible for more people to realise their rapidly changing life aspiration while remaining in Bolsward.

Many people across the social classes were inclined to stay in Bolsward. From the early 1960s onwards, the postwar pattern of net out-migration reversed into a pattern of net in-migration. Because of the expansion of occupational opportunities described above, the desire

to migrate away to meet new work aspirations was increasingly replaced with the availability of relatively well-paid work in Bolsward or its surrounding areas. The steady increase in educational attainment and employment opportunities within local government, construction and industry took away the necessity to migrate. Most of those who stayed in Bolsward were ‘voluntarily immobile’ – that is, happy to stay there. The most important reasons to stay can be found in the cultural dimension: being close to family, friends and church, deeply felt emotional connections to the area and loyalty towards employers, as Informant 9 explains:

No I did not want to leave. You're part of the inventory. If you are content somewhere, if you look at it correctly [you don't leave]. You also do not walk away from your wife if all is well.

For some people, even the idea of moving away from Friesland and Bolsward was overwhelming in itself and did not even cross their minds as they felt that they ‘had a comfortable life’ in Bolsward. One informant had wanted to migrate but was prevented from doing so by family pressure, obligations to help out on the family farm and the need to care for her parents. ‘Involuntary immobility’ (Carling 2002) occurred occasionally in Bolsward but most of the non-migrants happily stayed behind.

Thus, as a consequence, while Bolsward changed into a town with positive net in-migration, the underlying mobility patterns changed in character. International emigration and inter-provincial migration would increasingly give way to in-migration and immobility due economic growth, rising wages and social security. Another major factor that contributed to immobility and people’s ability to stay was the ability – from the early 1960s onwards – to commute to work (or school) over longer distances due to expanding car ownership, public transport and improvements in provincial and national road infrastructure. Due to this infrastructural development and the wider availability of public transport and private vehicles, commuting for work also became more common in the 1960s. A women (Respondent 7) who, after finishing MULO, started working as an administrative employee in a factory in Joure (25 kms from Bolsward) recalls:

We went to work, as our Willem worked there as well, together with several other people from Bolsward. We took the bus that passed through the town. Most of them went to Douwe Egberts (coffee-roasting factory) in the town of Joure and came back in the evening. Douwe Egberts even had its own buses to pick people up from the surrounding areas.

This further slowed down out-migration rates and increased aspirations to stay, as it was increasingly possible to access employment opportunities elsewhere while residing in Bolsward.

Figure 11. Marktstraat, Bolsward in the 1960s¹⁶



7. Conclusion

This paper has examined how a period of drastic social transformation altered livelihoods and reshaped mobility systems in complex but clearly patterned ways. The analysis has highlighted important variations in the nature and sequencing of the different migration flows to and from Bolsward as part of much larger, interlocking mobility systems in the postwar period. For example, relatively high levels of out-migration from both Bolsward and the surrounding rural areas to inter-provincial and international destinations preceded a period of replacement migration, which then resulted in slight net in-migration. As this paper has shown, the most important social changes that shaped these trends were: 1) agricultural mechanisation, 2) industrial developments in Bolsward and the region, 3) state and educational expansion and 4) changing life aspirations away from agrarian lifestyles.

Between 1945 and 1960, out-migration increased to industrial areas in the western provinces of Noord-Holland and Zuid-Holland as these regions went through a period of fast economic recovery and industrial expansion at the same time as Bolsward's population was rapidly rising. However, interprovincial destinations would diversify as migrations were no longer primarily directed towards large cities (particularly Amsterdam) – as was the case in the early twentieth century – and most growth began to be concentrated in smaller cities. This was part of a national pattern of more-decentralised industrial and urban growth. The improving skills of local workers was an important capabilities-enhancing factor facilitating migration to these destinations in the western provinces. Bolsward residents with higher skill levels could more easily migrate towards the west and take advantage of the higher wages offered there. During the same period the vacancies left by these out-migrants were filled by local migrants from surrounding agrarian areas who, in the majority, were former agricultural workers or

¹⁶ Oud Bolsward. Marktstraat. Retrieved from <http://fotos.searc.nl/friesland/bolsward/bolsward-54015/>

farmers. While people from Bolsward left to pick up industrial jobs in the cities of Holland and elsewhere, former farm workers from surrounding villages filled the industrial vacancies in Bolsward left open by out-migration to the western provinces. This pattern of replacement migration created a functional interlinkage between patterns of out- and in-migration, with Bolsward functioning as a 'migration interface'.

At the same time, although limited in numbers compared to internal migration, some farmers resisted adjusting to urban jobs and urban life and instead endeavored to emigrate to Canada or the United States in an attempt to establish a farm and continue their agricultural lifestyles and farmers' culture. In addition, young men from Bolsward who were sent to Nazi Germany as forced labourers during WWII or who were drafted into the Dutch army during the Indonesian War of Independence often failed to readjust after their return and were amongst the first to leave for North America, Australia or New Zealand. At the same time, Indonesian independence led to the settlement of 'repatriates' from Indonesia in the first tumultuous decade after WWII.

From the late 1950s, the out-migration of workers from Bolsward to industrial areas decreased as the living standards and employment opportunities in Bolsward improved. Meanwhile, the potential for the rural-to-urban migration of farm workers from surrounding rural areas into Bolsward also decreased. This heralded a diversification of in-migration into Bolsward, along with a temporary increase in the immigration of professional workers from other parts of the Netherlands who were attracted by job creation as a consequence of the expansion of government services and educational institutions. At the same time, better road infrastructure, public transport and increased car ownership allowed an increasing number of Bolswardians to remain living there whilst working elsewhere in the province. It also allowed the inhabitants of surrounding villages to commute to Bolsward (by bike, car or bus) for work – also decreasing the need to relocate.

At the same time, Bolsward's regional economic function was consolidated because of the closure of small shops and services in surrounding villages, which created jobs within the town. Local adaptation to a new social structure became ever more possible for both Bolsward's residents and people from the countryside. Bolsward urbanised even further and was able to sustain more people in a wider range of professions, while the regional labour market became more accessible than ever before through greater transport infrastructure and a rise in professional skills. These combined processes contributed to an overall decrease in levels of out- and in-migration from Bolsward from the 1970s onward, marking the end of the postwar mobility transition. Alongside a process of population ageing, more and more people preferred to stay and non-migratory mobility (commuting, shopping) increasingly substituted for rural-to-urban migration.

These migration patterns and the sequencing of migration phases largely confirm the patterns originally detected by Ravenstein (1885) and Hägerstrand (1957), which suggests that rural populations prefer to migrate over shorter distances and towards urban centres in their immediate surroundings, while urban residents tend to migrate over longer distances. An important exception to this rule is emigration to Canada and the United States, with farmers moving directly from rural areas to overseas destinations – a trend also noted by Hägerstrand (1957) in Sweden. These emigrants did not become part of the influx of replacement migrants, who mainly consisted of former farm workers who took up industrial and construction jobs in Bolsward.

In this regard, a strong 'farmer's culture' was an important factor shaping emigration after the war. Agricultural mechanisation and increasing scales of production drove more and more farmers out of business and made agricultural workers increasingly redundant. Many farmers wanted to continue farming and it was they and their sons who were the most likely to migrate to Canada, so that they could continue agricultural work and the agricultural lifestyles

to which they were strongly attached. This shows how cultural factors shape the ways in people can adapt to economic and technological change (mechanisation) that undermine agrarian employment in quite diverse ways, either through local adaptation, rural-to-urban migration or international migration. Unlike farmers, most former agricultural workers and their children, for whom agrarian life was much harsher in terms of pay and working conditions, were more susceptible to developing new, urban lifestyles outside farming. This instilled new desires to work in factories and construction, prompting them to move to Bolsward. While dreams of owning a farm and working outside remained strong initially, eventually new ideas about what constitutes ‘good work’ took hold. For them, regular employment in a factory was a clear improvement on farm work. Cultural shifts influenced the migration destinations of agricultural workers as better working conditions, hours and wages, combined with the new aspirations promoted by formal schooling, pushed many former agricultural workers to pursue work in the industrial and service sectors located in Bolsward.

Although increasing aspirations are usually connected to more migration, the analysis also highlighted that social transformations such as improved education and changing life aspirations do not necessarily lead to more migration. The case of Bolsward exemplifies that economic development and increased social security can have a tempering effect on the migration dreams of residents in small rural towns in later stages of social transformation associated with industrialising societies. In fact, this seems to largely confirm Zelinsky’s (1971) prediction that, in ‘super-advanced’ post-transition societies, non-migratory mobility such as commuting and technology would substitute for migration, leading to overall decreases in migration levels in post-transition societies.

These patterns also highlight the intermediate position of small towns such as Bolsward in much larger mobility systems in times of industrialisation. The analyses resonate with Skeldon’s (1997) global model of ‘development tiers’, which divides world regions into development areas (or tiers) and shows that each tier, ranging from core to periphery, has distinct migration patterns. Industrialised areas are initially centralised around large cities and are supplied with labour from reserve areas in their direct hinterland. With further economic development, industrialisation decentralises and the labour reserve areas shift accordingly. For example, Skeldon suggests that migrants with higher skill levels from labour frontier areas (areas that provide a labour reserve for economic core areas) with medium levels of development tend to move to core areas with high levels of industrialisation, while these gaps are filled by unskilled migrants from their own hinterlands (Skeldon 1997).

The Bolsward case shows that a similar logic applies at a smaller scale. Within the Netherlands, there were differentiated levels of development post-WWII which had important effects on regional migration trends. As the economic core areas expanded after the war, Bolsward became part of this economic system. Resonating with central place theory (Christaller 1933), this created a hierarchy of settlements in which the attractiveness of a city or town was determined by its level of services and industry. Bolsward simultaneously fulfilled a role of labour reserve area for the industrial western provinces of the Netherlands and of a central place in its own region, attracting both former agricultural labourers from the surrounding rural areas as well as skilled professionals from further away. More generally, this illustrates that industrialisation is not only a centralising but also a decentralising process, in which rural towns such as Bolsward experience their own industrialisation and urbanisation process, albeit on a smaller scale.

While much work on rural-to-urban migration and the so-called ‘rural exodus’ (see Deschacht and Winter 2015) suggests an inevitable loss of population from rural areas to large industrial cities, this paper has shown that the real story is often much more complex. Mobility transitions as described by Zelinsky (1971) often exhibit a large degree of variation within countries and even within largely rural provinces like Friesland. While peripheral areas and

smaller rural places may lose some of their population during periods of rapid social transformation, this is not necessarily the case for small urban centres such as Bolsward, which fulfil an important function as regional economic centres as well as migration hubs. This study has demonstrated this hierarchical nature of these rural migration patterns. With out-migrants from Bolsward often seeking inter-provincial destinations in the expanding industrial sector in the west or to larger urban centres in Friesland such as Sneek, rural migrants from the hinterlands tended to move over a relatively short distance to Bolsward. Both groups of migrants thus moved up in the urban hierarchy but at different levels. Small rural towns like Bolsward can thus be seen as a crucial ‘middle space’ in urban hierarchies within larger migration systems.

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APPENDIX 1. Overview of respondent characteristics

| No. | Gender | Year of birth | Migrant category | Year of migration | Religion/political affiliation | Social class | Education | Occupation |
|-----|--------|---------------|---|-------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|--|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Female | 1938 | Inter-provincial in-migrant | 1963 | None | Middle | MULO/teacher training secondary school | High-school teacher |
| 2 | Female | 1927 | Non-migrant | * | Roman Catholic | Middle | MULO | Housewife/ medical analyst |
| 3 | Male | 1947 | Intra-provincial in-migrant | 1962 | Dutch Reformed | Working | Vocational education | Industrial worker |
| 4 | Male | 1936 | Non-migrant | * | Dutch Reformed | Middle | Agricultural education | Farmer |
| 5 | Female | 1940 | Emigrant/return migrant | 1960 | Dutch Reformed | Working | School for home economics | Housewife |
| 6 | Female | 1924 | Intra-provincial in-migrant | 1946 | Socialist | Working | Primary school | Cleaner |
| 7 | Female | 1941 | Non-migrant | * | Roman Catholic | Working | MULO | Housewife |
| 8 | Male | 1943 | Non-migrant | * | Dutch Reformed | Working | Primary school | Industrial labourer |
| 9 | Male | 1937 | Intra-provincial in-migrant | 1960 | Orthodox Reformed | Working | Vocational education | Agricultural/ industrial worker |
| 10 | Male | 1935 | Inter-provincial in-migrant | 1962 | Roman Catholic | Middle | Teacher training secondary school | High-school teacher |
| 11 | Female | 1926 | Inter-provincial out-migrant/ return migrant | 1946 | Roman Catholic | Working | Primary school | Domestic worker/ housewife |
| 12 | Female | 1929 | Inter-provincial out-migrant | 1961 | Dutch Reformed | Working | Primary school | Seamstress/ housewife |
| 13 | Male | 1926 | Intra-provincial in-migrant | 1952 | Orthodox Reformed | Working | Primary school | Agricultural worker |
| 14 | Male | 1936 | Intra-provincial in-migrant | 1962 | Roman Catholic | Middle | Teacher training primary school | Primary school director/teacher |
| 15 | Female | 1920 | Inter-provincial out-migrant/ return migrant | 1949/1970 | Dutch Reformed | Working | MULO | Nurse |
| 16 | Female | 1930 | Inter-provincial out-migrant/ return migrant | 1938/1939 | Socialist | Working | MULO | Housewife |
| 17 | Female | | Inter-provincial in-migrant | 1959 | Dutch Reformed | Middle | Teacher training | Teacher, school for home economics |
| 18 | Male | 1934 | Non-migrant | * | Socialist | Working | MULO | Shipyards worker |
| 19 | Male | 1921 | Non-migrant | * | Dutch Reformed | Working | Primary school | Farmer |
| 20 | Female | 1938 | Emigrant/return migrant | 1953/1958 | Roman Catholic | Working | Primary school | Housewife |
| 21 | Male | 1956 | Immigrant from Turkey | 1974 | Islam | Working | Primary school | Industrial worker |
| 22 | Female | 1936 | Inter-provincial in-migrant | 1958 | Orthodox Reformed | Working | Primary school | Shop assistant/cleaner |
| 23 | Male | 1943 | Non-migrant | * | Dutch Reformed | Middle | Agricultural education | Farmer |
| 24 | Male | 1940 | Non-migrant | * | Socialist | Working | MULO | Truck driver |
| 25 | Male | 1932 | Intra-provincial in-migrant | | Socialist | Working | Vocational education | Industrial worker |