

The social cultural reality of the Euregion Meuse Rhine

Dr. Nol Reverda

ITEM/Neimed/Zuyd Hogeschool

Contents

In advance:

- Focus of “Op zoek naar de Euregio-factor”: similarities and differences in health and life expectation in EMR

Additional: can we identify the EMR as a socialcultural reality?

- Three obstacles:
 - History: the rise of nationstates in the 19^{de} century
 - Demography: population decline in South-Limburg, not in the other composing parts of the EMR
 - Sociology: identification of social structural dependencies and collective consciousness?

Scenario's

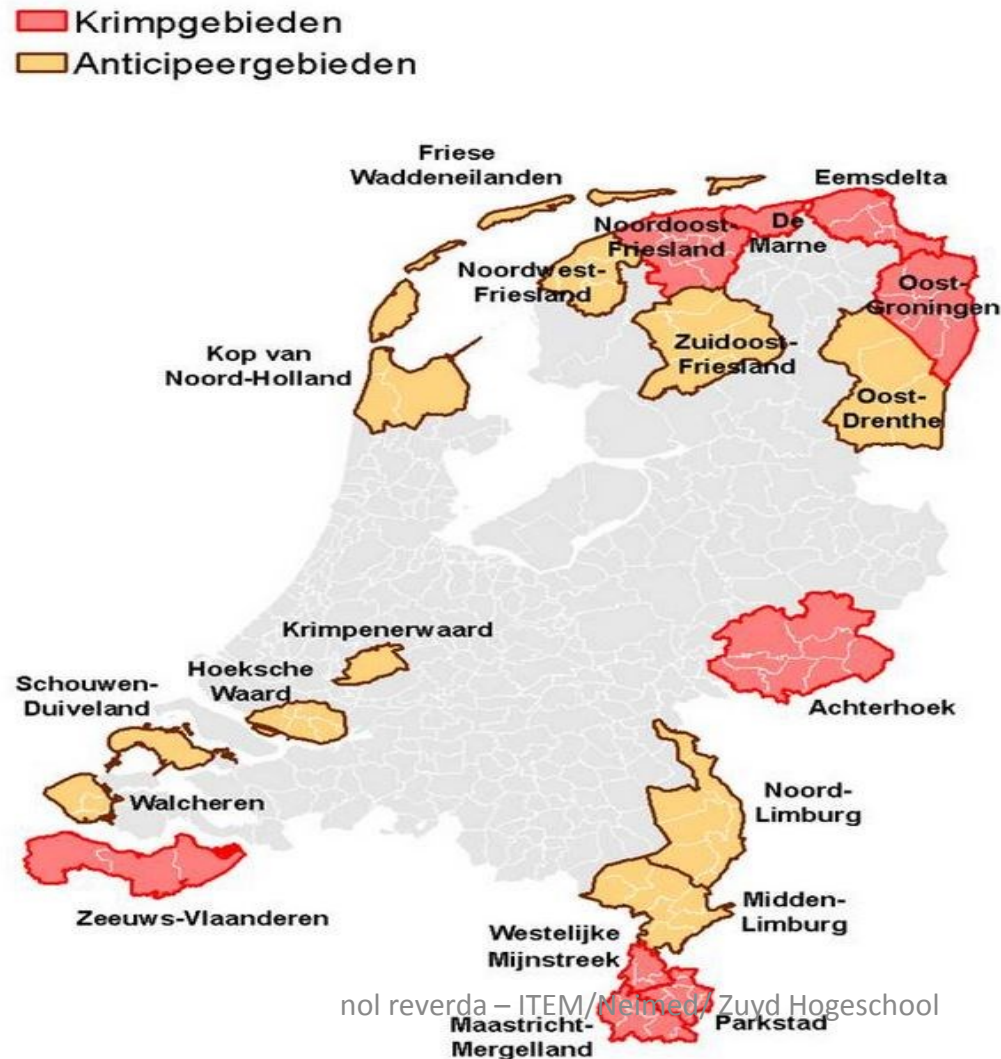
The rise of the Nationstate: Language, Culture and Identity



Some results of nationstate building

- Competitive relations between countries:
 - The biggest, the strongest, the best...sometimes ending up in conflicts and severe wars (WW1, WW2)
- Stereotyping of citizens: the typical German, Belgian, Dutch...
- Olympic Games and World Championship football, athletics...
- National art and galleries

Demography: Randstad and “Randland”: population decline in South Limburg

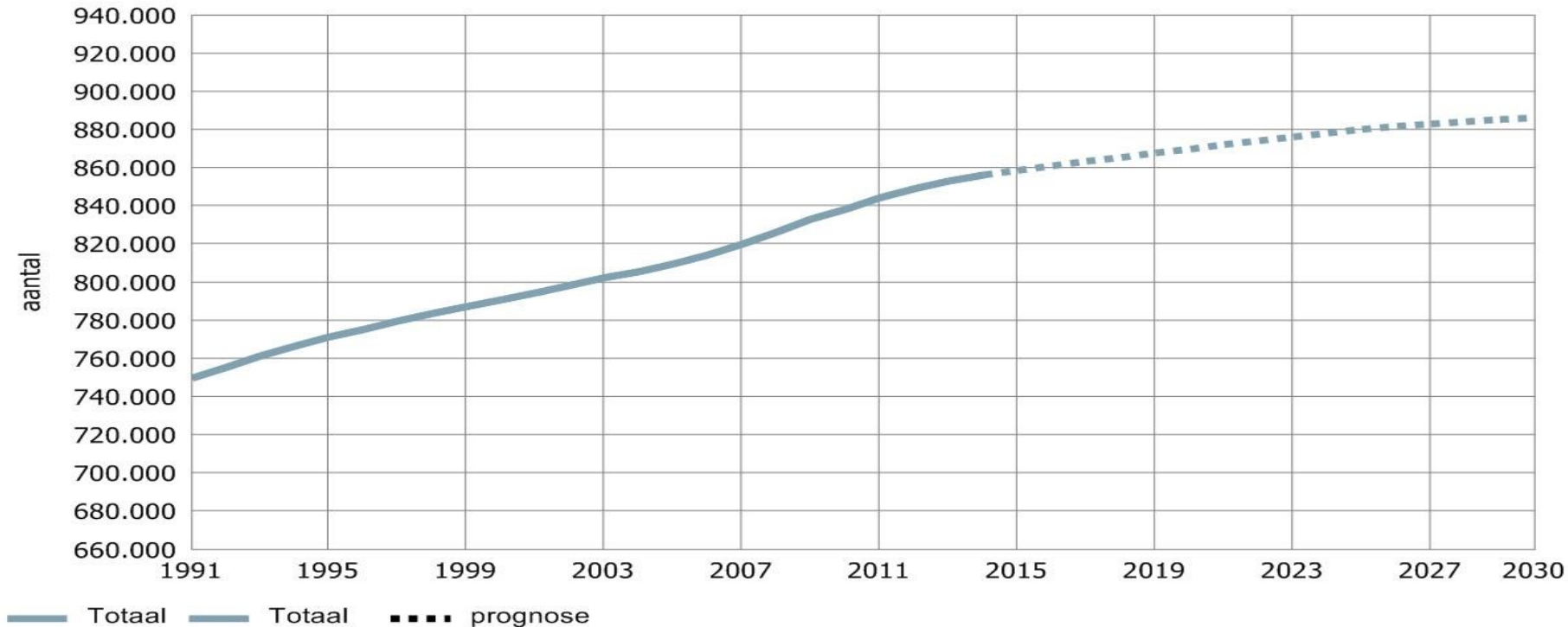


Demography: Euregion Maas-Rijn

- Population growth in Aken, Luik and Belgian Limburg
- Population decline in South Limburg, the Netherlands

Demography: Prognosis population Belgian Limburg

**Evolutie en verwachte evolutie van de totale bevolking [aantal] 1991-2030
Limburg**



Bronnen: Algemene Directie Statistiek - Statistics Belgium - Dienst Demografie, Studiedienst van de Vlaamse Regering - Bevolkingsprojecties

Verwerking: provincie Limburg - Directie Mens - Steunpunt Sociale Planning

Demography: Maastricht, Sittard-Geleen and Heerlen

	0 -20	20 - 65	65 en ouder	totaal
2014	56 18%	187 62%	61 20%	304 100%
2040	48 18%	142 52%	84 30%	274
2050	41 16%	136 54%	76 30%	253 100%

The Euregion Maas Rijn: a social cultural reality?

Core questions of sociology:

Social structures: do we need each other to survive, what kind of 'dependences' can be identified?

Cultural:

- EMR: shared perspectives, values, norms – in short, a collective consciousness?
- EMR: providing meaning to every day life?
- EMR: frame of reference for behavior and identity?
- EMR: intensive actual interactions –bridging social capital?

Conclusion: EMR is social culturally a *construction, not a society* - *Er zijn nog altijd grenzen* (v. Beek, 1996)

But: you can make out of a construction a society: see the development of the Nationstate

Scenarios

First scenario:

- Euregion is solution for demographic, economic and social problems of South Limburg – no balance, one-sides, poor marriage

Second scenario:

- More and more intensive economic, social and cultural cooperation – make common projects visible and clarify the added value
- Shared (Euregional) investments (f.i. “Kennis-as”-projects)
- Euregional e-citizenship/e-residence (see Estonia)
- Meer koeienpaadjes!!!

Thanks for your attention!