

University of Groningen

The Presence and Spatial Distribution Of International Knowledge Workers and Students in the Netherlands

Pellenbarg, Piet H.; Van Steen, Paul J. M.

Published in:
Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie

DOI:
[10.1111/tesg.12162](https://doi.org/10.1111/tesg.12162)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2015

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
Pellenbarg, P. H., & Van Steen, P. J. M. (2015). The Presence and Spatial Distribution Of International Knowledge Workers and Students in the Netherlands. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 106(4), 499-502. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tesg.12162>

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

THE NETHERLANDS IN MAPS

THE PRESENCE AND SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF INTERNATIONAL KNOWLEDGE WORKERS AND STUDENTS IN THE NETHERLANDS

PIET H. PELLENBARG & PAUL J.M. VAN STEEN

Faculty of Spatial Sciences, University of Groningen, PO Box 800, 9700, AV, Groningen, the Netherlands. E-mails: p.h.pellenbarg@rug.nl & p.j.m.van.steen@rug.nl

INTRODUCTION

In the first map and article in this years' series of *The Netherlands in Maps* we discussed the obvious relation between 'multicultural society' and the growth of international migration. Numerically, the map we showed of the foreign born population in the Netherlands was heavily dominated by the three largest groups of foreign born Dutch residents, with a background from Turkey, Morocco and Surinam (Pellenbarg & Van Steen 2015). Especially the first two categories, descending from the influx of 'guest labourers' in the 1960s and 1970s, on average are still characterized by medium to low education and income levels. Part of the present day stream of international migrants however is of a totally different kind and origin, and typically shows the opposite characteristics: high incomes and/or high education levels. In this fourth issue of the 2015 *Netherlands in Maps* series we highlight this particular category of migrants, who usually come for a more temporary stay: international 'knowledge workers' and students. This is a rather diverse group, but nevertheless shows some common characteristics that are also found in many other developed countries. Raspe *et al.* (2014) recently published a study revealing many facts and figures on highly educated immigrants in the Netherlands. They quote Mahroum (2000) who identifies

five sub-categories of highly educated international migrants: (i) 'accidental tourists', (ii) 'economy-class passengers', (iii) 'explorers', (iv) 'pilgrims' and (v) 'passengers'. These terms, respectively, stand for (i) business managers who are sent out by their company for a shorter or longer stay in a foreign subsidiary, (ii) technicians and engineers travelling to those countries where their skills are most appreciated and rewarded, (iii) innovative entrepreneurs looking for cross-border market chances, (iv) reputed academics and scientists moving to and from renowned international centers of research and teaching, and (v) students riding the waves of international scientific exchange programmes.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

At first sight, the group of international students appears the most easy one to grasp in a map picture, because they are naturally tied to the limited number of university locations (13) in the Netherlands, and should be neatly recorded in the university registration systems. Reality is a bit more unruly, because different sources produce different figures. The Union of Dutch Universities counted 30,291 foreign degree-seeking students in 2013/2014, which is 12.2 per cent of all (248,280) students registered at Dutch universities in that year (VSNU 2015). These numbers are gradually increasing.

The largest groups are coming from Germany (circa 3,000) and China (circa 1,000) followed by the UK, Italy and Greece. Economics and business is the most favorite programme for the foreign students. A combination of other sources (such as foreign students service NUFFIC, scholarship administrator DUO, and the university websites) enables the construction of a survey per university in 2011 (Table 1). Next-to-border location clearly is an advantage for attracting German students. This is especially true for Maastricht, and to a lesser extent for Enschede and Groningen. Delft has a high score due to its position of being the most prestigious technical university. Wageningen is internationally attractive as a specialised centre of education and research in the fields of agriculture and food. The Erasmus university of Rotterdam is relatively strong because of its specialization in economics and business, popular among foreign students.

INTERNATIONAL KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

The group of highly skilled international migrants or 'knowledge workers', corresponding roughly with Mahroum's (2000) categories 1, 2, 3 and 4, is more difficult to grasp from existing statistical sources. In Raspe *et al.*'s (2014) stock-taking of this group for the Neth-

erlands they developed an income-based definition, which is also used for the map in this paper. Workers of foreign origin are reckoned to be knowledge workers if they work in professions with an average annual gross salary exceeding €50,183, which is the threshold to be eligible for the Dutch fiscal compensation for 'knowledge migrants'. For the Netherlands as a whole this means that there are 100,000 foreign knowledge workers (in a total of 600,000 foreign workers), representing 1.5 per cent of the Dutch labour force (Raspe *et al.* 2014). As the map shows, this percentage is below 1 per cent in most municipalities, and only in a few exceptional cases significantly higher, in the order of 4-7 per cent. The top values (6-7%) are found in the municipalities of Amstelveen and Wassenaar, where knowledge workers find high quality residential areas close by respectively, the national capital (Amsterdam) and government (The Hague). The other three cases, in the 4-6 per cent category, are all university cities: Amsterdam, Delft and Wageningen, and the same is true for four of the five cities in the subtop category (2-4%) where we find Groningen, Eindhoven, Maastricht and Leiden. The Hague is also in this group, not surprising for the national capital, hosting a subcampus of Leiden University, and being the location of a number of prestigious international (legal) institutions. On the 'around average' level of

Table 1. *Foreign students at Dutch Universities, 2011.*

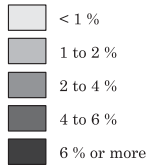
University	All students	Foreign students	% Foreign students
Amsterdam UvA	31,123	2,213	7.1
Utrecht	30,152	1,648	5.5
Groningen	30,041	2,710	9.0
Rotterdam	24,678	2,418	9.8
Amsterdam VU	24,517	1,052	4.3
Leiden	23,007	1,223	5.3
Nijmegen	18,891	1,612	8.5
Delft	18,781	2,981	15.9
Maastricht	15,924	6,670	41.9
Tilburg	12,599	1,222	9.7
Enschede	9,161	1,664	18.2
Wageningen	8,814	1,654	18.8
Eindhoven	8,211	707	8.6
Total	255,899	27,774	10.9

Source : Nuffic (2012).

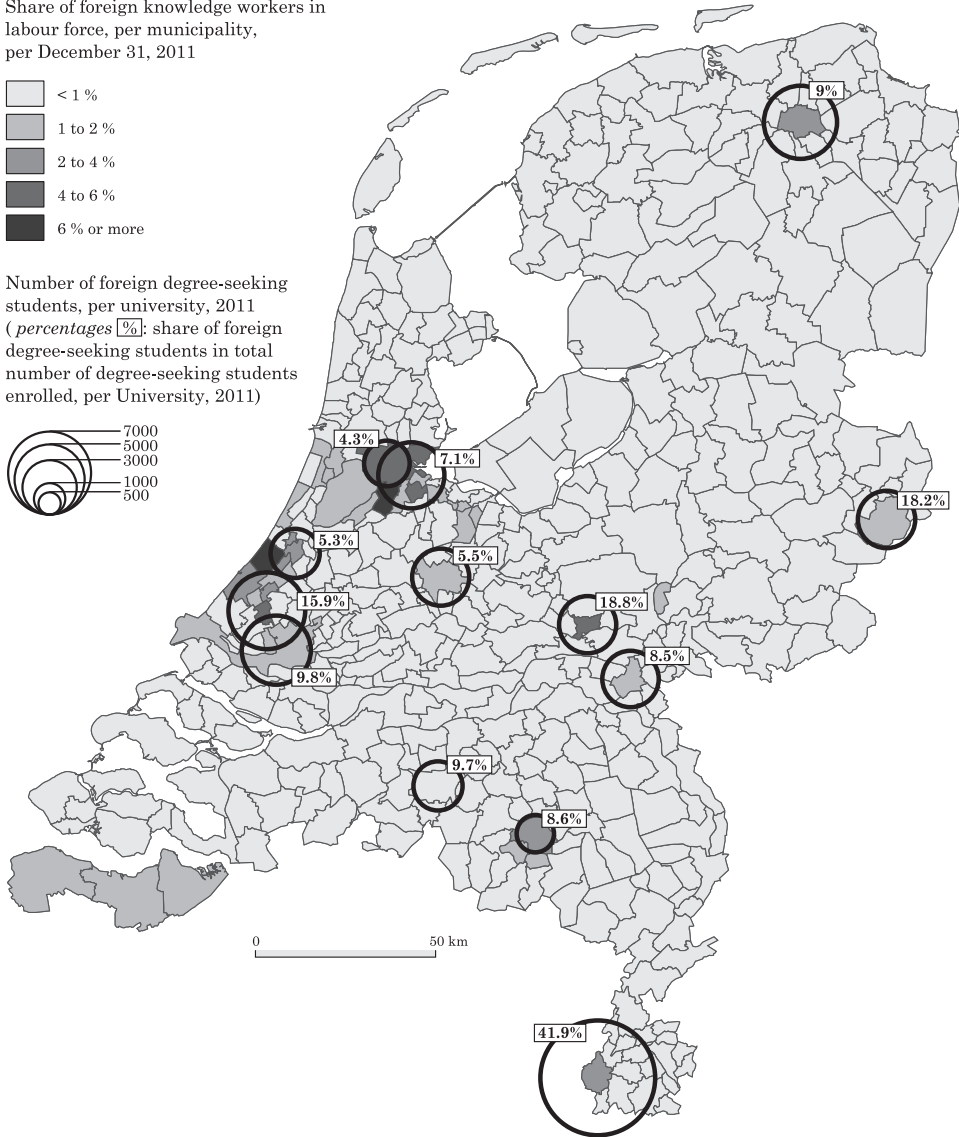
THE NETHERLANDS IN MAPS
Multicultural Society (Part 4)

FOREIGN KNOWLEDGE WORKERS AND STUDENTS

Share of foreign knowledge workers in labour force, per municipality, per December 31, 2011



Number of foreign degree-seeking students, per university, 2011
(percentages [%]: share of foreign degree-seeking students in total number of degree-seeking students enrolled, per University, 2011)



Source: Raspe et al., Nuffic

© 2015 P.H. Pellenburg & P.J.M. van Steen
Faculty of Spatial Sciences; University of Groningen
Tijdschrift voor Econ. en Soc. Geografie; 106(2015)4

1–2 per cent, four more university cities join up: Enschede, Nijmegen, Utrecht and Rotterdam. In the Rotterdam case, the high ranking will no doubt be supported by the presence of international firms. But on the whole there is a very strong similarity between the location patterns of the foreign knowledge workers group and the group of international students. Only a small number of non-university suburban municipalities appear in the ‘around average’ group, most of them in the Randstad North wing. Zeeuws Vlaanderen (the southernmost part of the province of Zeeland in the Southwest) stands out as an exceptional case, resting on foreign knowledge workers in the local chemical industry, presumably many of them being of Belgian origin.

Compared to the larger groups of Dutch residents with a foreign origin that we mapped in *TESG* 2015/1, the cultural impact of foreign students and knowledge workers will be small, in view of their small numbers and the temporary character of their (individual) stay. One undeniable effect of their growing presence is the use of English as a teaching and conversation language in the university lecture rooms as well on the work

floor of high tech firms. And probably Dutch cities with an overrepresentation of foreign knowledge workers and students – who are also consumers – will demonstrate a somewhat stronger ‘international feel’ in various components of everyday life, such as shops, restaurants, and cultural facilities.

REFERENCES

- MAHROUM, S. (2000) Highly Skilled Globetrotters: Mapping the International Migration of Human Capital. *R&D Management* 30, pp. 23–31.
- NUFFIC (2012) *Mobiliteit in Beeld*. The Hague: Nuffic.
- PELLENBARG, P.H. & P.J.M. VAN STEEN (2015) The Foreign Born Population of the Netherlands. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 106, pp. 130–132.
- RASPE, O., S. GROOT, S. BOSCHMAN, P. BECKERS, B. SLEUTJENS, W. BOTERMAN & G. VAN GESSEL (2014) *Buitenlandse kenniswerkers in Nederland*. The Hague: PBL (Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving/Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency).
- VSNU (2015) *Studentenaantallen Nederlandse Universiteiten, per 1-10-2014*. Available at <www.vsnu.nl>. Accessed on 20 April 2015.