

Citizenship 3.0

Towards a new understanding of the role of citizens in our 21st-century society

Date: Friday 13 March 2015, 9.30 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

Venue: Royal Academy, The Trippenhuis Building, Kloveniersburgwal 29, 1011 JV Amsterdam

[\(route description\)](#)

The Citizenship 3.0 Project

The vitality and sustainability of institutions are under constant pressure in a globalising world. This calls not only for changes within these institutions but also for new roles for citizens.

In a series of seminars organised as part of the Citizenship 3.0 Project, Utrecht University's interdisciplinary research group 'Institutions: Understanding the Dynamics of Open Societies' critically addressed the new functions, roles and challenges facing citizens in the 21st century in terms of the response to the many problems they are facing (e.g. poverty, unemployment, housing issues, the decline in welfare, socio-economic difficulties, the financial crisis, the global environmental crisis) and the development of political, social and economic democracy. The seminars were organised in cooperation with and under the aegis of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) in Amsterdam.

Each seminar was designed as a multidisciplinary event and concentrated on a different dimension of Citizenship 3.0, i.e. Cooperation, Participation, and Governance. The focus of the first dimension, Cooperation, was the growing prevalence of informal, horizontal forms of cooperation by active, self-organising citizens who seek to promote the collective interests of participants in the absence of any government intervention. The Participation dimension focused on the new and increasingly direct ways in which groups of citizens are participating in democratic processes with a view to influencing government policies to further their interests. The Governance dimension focused on the growing role of citizens, whether individually or collectively, in protecting or promoting public interests in a more institutionalised manner.

The Final Conference

At the Final Conference of the Citizenship 3.0 Project, entitled *Towards a new understanding of the role of citizens in our 21st-century society*, leading scholars will discuss how to conceptualise and investigate various forms of self-organisation, participation and governance by citizens. The final conference will bring together experts from different disciplines and interested citizens. The conference will be held at the historical premises of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences in Amsterdam on 13 March 2015.

This final conference will explore the fundamental implications of the change from a representative democracy towards new forms of cooperation, democracy and governance with entirely different contours and dynamics. The ideas of participative and deliberative democracy and governance are not new. In the past few years we have seen a rise in the number of practical initiatives aimed at achieving cooperation between individual citizens and participation in democratic decision-making and governance, as well as the success of these initiatives. In consequence, many big issues, including poverty reduction and global warming, have been put on the agenda not by political parties, elections, legislatures or governments, but mainly by power-monitoring individuals, networks and organisations. The aim of the



conference is to discuss the development of self-organisation by citizens, political participation and participatory governance as tools to investigate new roles for citizens and governments.

However, these new forms of cooperation, participation democracy and participatory governance raise several questions that relate to the future of democracy and governance and their significance in that context. What new forms of deliberation and democratic engagement do we see emerging and what broader social and political implications do they have? In what ways do new forms of cooperation, participation and governance by citizens undermine or strengthen social cohesion and social integration? Do they constitute a risk to attempts by government to protect fundamental rights and combat social inequalities? How are relationships within civil society changing and what implications does this have for how citizens relate to government?

These and other questions will be clustered into three sessions during the day featuring panels with a keynote speaker and a convenor and a debate between the participants and the speakers.

The focus of the first session will be how, as 'big government' continues its steady downsizing in the Western world, cooperating citizens seeking to attain their goals without government intervention can give shape to self-organisation. Is the current growth of such citizen initiatives, which target collective action through self-organisation, a sustained trend or merely a passing hype in the free market society? What are the threats and opportunities associated with such initiatives, which are often temporary and 'single-issue' in nature, in a time also characterised by individualism? Is self-organisation possible without any form of state intervention or is some form of recognition or facilitation (subsidies or abolishment of obstructive laws, policies and procedures) by formal institutions crucial?

The second session will focus on democratic fatigue in industrialised democracies, along with the evolution towards new forms of participation democracy. Citizens no longer see voting as a way of influencing democratic governance. Political parties and legislatures are losing their grip on politics. The system of representative democracy appears to be ineffective in accomplishing the central ideals of democratic politics: facilitating active political involvement of the citizenry, forging political consensus through dialogue, devising and implementing public policies that ground a productive economy and healthy society. But the decline in voter turnout has been accompanied by a new surge of democratic activity in recent years: citizens are moving from a 'polarised' form of democratic politics to more scattered forms of what is called 'participation democracy' or even 'deliberative democracy', as different forms of more interactive democracies.

The focus of the third session will be how participatory governance by cooperating citizens and other non-state actors can be shaped into an emerging model of societal guidance that lies beyond state government in that it involves both a bigger role for civil society institutions and greater reliance on deliberative, as opposed to representative, democracy. There is a clear trend away from government as the dominant institution in societal guidance toward a greater role for civil society institutions – such as NGOs, foundations, networks controlled by civil society actors, and various forms of self-regulation – in shaping public policy, providing public goods and services, and securing the rule of law.

Organisation

The organising committee for this conference consists of Prof. Antoine Buyse, Dr Liesbeth Enneking, Prof. Ivo Giesen, Dr Evelien de Kezel and Prof. Maarten Prak of Utrecht University. They are all involved in the University's Strategic Research Theme 'Institutions: Understanding the Dynamics of Open Societies', a programme of Utrecht-based researchers concerned with the ways in which humans organise their social lives through institutional arrangements. The programme seeks to understand these institutional arrangements theoretically and empirically, in both their historical development and contemporary forms. The outcomes of this research have significant policy implications in such areas as the creation of citizenship, economic institutions, corporate governance and European Law.



Programme

9.30 a.m.– 10.00 a.m.	Welcome
10.00 a.m. – 10.10 a.m.	Opening – Professor Maarten Prak, Utrecht (Chair)
10.10 a.m. – 11.50 a.m.	Cluster 1: Cooperation Keynote Speaker – Professor Mark Franklin, Massachusetts Institute of Technology/EUI Convenor – Dr Imrat Verhoeven, Amsterdam Discussion
12 noon – 1.00 p.m.	Lunch
1.00 p.m. - 2.00 p.m.	Cluster 2: Participation Keynote Speaker – Professor Jan van Deth, Mannheim Convenor – Professor Rudy Andeweg, Leiden Discussion
2.40 p.m. – 3.10 p.m.	Coffee / Tea
3.10 p.m. – 4.50 p.m.	Cluster 3: Governance Keynote Speaker – Professor Henk Kummeling, Utrecht/Electoral Council Convenor – Professor Tine De Moor, Utrecht Discussion
4.50 p.m.– 5.00 p.m.	Closing statements – Professor Maarten Prak, Utrecht (Chair)
5.00 p.m. - 6.00 p.m.	Drinks
6.00 p.m.	Speakers Dinner