



# Genomics & Society A Dutch Research Programme

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**Society**&GENOMICS  
Centre for Society and Genomics



# Mission Statement

The Centre for Society & Genomics' mission is to be a leading centre for understanding and stimulating the interaction between society and genomics, both nationally and internationally.



# The Centre for Society & Genomics

- Funded by the Netherlands Genomics Initiative (NGI)
- NGI Infrastructure: 5 centres of excellence, 2 Tech. Clusters, 4 Innovative clusters.
- 8 mill. Euro: 2004 – 2008
- 20 research projects (health, food/plants and industrial genomics).
- Seminars, meetings, internat. conference
- Societal Communication & Education programme



- The methodological set-up of research projects guarantees researchers spend 25% of their time, energy and effort on societal interaction and debate.



- Good science was constantly at risk of being contaminated, even overwhelmed, by a surfeit of contexts.

(Nowotny 2000. p.6)



# Socially robust Knowledge

1. Is valid not only inside but also outside laboratories
2. This validity is achieved through involving an extended group of experts, including 'lay experts'.
3. Since society is not only an addressee of science but an active partner participating in the production of 'social knowledge', such knowledge is less likely to be contested.

(Nowotny 2000, p.10)



# Science & Society

1. Public Understanding of Science
2. From deficit to dialogue
3. Moving engagement upstream

(Willsdon & Willis 2004)





# CSG's research Projects

- Behavioural genetics: Alcoholism
- Health Card: obesity
- Genetic Screening
- Interactive scenario's to articulate the future of public health.
- Responsible scientists
- Challenging the Stereotypes
- Public Perception, Trust and Responsibility
- Plant genomics and the food chain



# Methods/Tools

- Focus groups
- Interactive or Constructive TA
- Stakeholder dialogue
- Web/internet dialogue
- Citizens jury
- Consensus conferences



# (Societal) Actors

- Non-governmental organisations (NGO's)
- Patients, consumers citizens
- Researchers
- Industry
- Policy makers
- etc



# *Socially Robust?*



# Project: Public Perceptions, Trust & Responsibility

- Societal Panel: 500 individuals
- Longitudinal
- Combining cognitive, values and behaviour.
- Case: apple



# Questions

- The role of the panel
  - consultant, partner, informant, research object, critic, adviser?
  - Boundary between dissemination, interaction and observation?
- If we intervene in a process, how do we define it as solid science? (will peers and reviewers still be interested?)
- Output is input? Data is relevant to whom? What to do with the results?



# Project: Interactive Scenario's

- Interactive scenario to define the future of preventive medicine
- Bringing together different actors & different stories
- Mobilisation of expectations (next step into sociology of expectation).



# Questions

- What to do with the input from those with whom we interact? (collective learning curve).
  - Consensus or agonistic model?
- Role of researcher (in constructing future of preventive medicine)?





# Engaging with scientists (webster 05)

Captive	Science is 'value-neutral' in their creation but problem causing in their effects	Social order through science
Hostile	Science disturbs traditional relationships	Dis-order through science
Embedded	Contingency of boundaries requires new forms of accountability	Social re-ordering through science

# Captive

- Public is object
- Input stakeholders is used to improve science communication.
- Results of interaction do not change the production of knowledge.
- Researchers claim they do what they were always doing..

# Embedded

- Public is engaging subject
- Input stakeholders is part of mutual responsibility of science and society
- Results are used to transform the production of knowledge itself.
- Researchers find it difficult to fulfil the ambition of societal interaction.



# What is Interaction? (engaging the public)

- Informing
- Generating Enthusiasm
- Raising awareness
- Convincing
- Deliberating
- Studying
- Consulting
- Questioning

