Met opgeheven hoofd

Hurenkamp, M.E.A.

Summary

Met opgeheven hoofd (With your head held high)

This book is about the question why the idea of citizenship, after it emerged in the Netherlands, has remained rather conventional (or 'burgerlijk'), with its meaning closer to petty bourgeois than to self-conscious public behavior. And about the question what the consequences of this are for practices of citizenship.

Citizenship is about the rights and duties that go with belonging to a community. I combine four substudies to be able to analyze what the current situation in the Netherlands is in this regard.

One substudy is about the way we have talked about citizenship in the public arena. If newspapers deal with citizenship, how do they do that? Is citizenship being used as a way to talk about politics and political parties, or about the rights and duties of citizens, or about values and norms? A second substudy focuses on the way citizenship takes form in practice. To which degree, and especially in which form, are the inhabitants of the Netherlands prepared to devote themselves to the public cause? And do they then act completely on their own, or do they consciously turn to the world of policy and governance? A third substudy is concerned with the way citizens talk about the cultural aspects of citizenship. If the inhabitants of the Netherlands have to choose between loving their city or loving their country, what do they say? If we talk about the rituals that are part of the community, and the parties we celebrate, what do they bother about? Do their ways of reasoning match with the conventional nature of citizenship? And a fourth substudy is about the hope and expectations of citizens with regard to their society. If the inhabitants of our country speak out about what makes them furious and happy, what do they say? What is the social analysis that people make when you let them free to tell their own story? And, also in this respect, do these ways of reasoning match with the conventional nature of citizenship?

I look at the same phenomenon from four separate angles, at the attempts to make something out of citizenship, and at the degree in which that citizenship frees itself from the conventional.

The answer to the first question is that there was a certain degree of overlap between the idea of citizenship and 'burgerlijk' or petty bourgeois behaviour, since as a policy instrument it was used in two ways: in the first place to create order, and not (or much less) to sustain difference. Citizenship in terms of policy meant: to love the Netherlands and Dutch history, and the culture which is dominant here. It also meant: to love democracy, the right to vote and the freedom of speech. But citizenship emphasized an emotional dedication, rather than what it actually means to dis-agree and to exchange views with strangers.

Worries about globalization play a big role in this respect. The individual character of the Netherlands is under pressure, due to the internationalization of the economy and culture. In the best case this brings us prosperity, but in the worst case alienation and unbridgeable differences between cultures, neighborhoods and districts. Citizenship is the means to surmount too big differences. By knowing that your rights and duties are connected to the law and customs of the country where you live, you prove to be a good citizen. Not by putting down your own demands, but by adjusting yourself. That way you contribute to the social order.

In the second place citizenship was used as a policy instrument to limit the costs of the welfare state, not (or much less) to renew citizens rights. The emergence of citizenship as a policy goal precedes participative society. But it matches seamlessly with the argument that people should expect less from the state and put their shoulders to the wheel themselves. They should ask less for care, and offer more help – to fellow humans, to neighbors, to their district.

The propelling force here is the observation that emancipation has succeeded, perhaps even too much. In recent decades cultural changes, started by social movements, have provided room to decide for yourself what kind of education you wanted to follow or what kind of work you wanted to do. Social arrangements guaranteed did not have to beg. It became easier to live on your own and to choose a partner of your own taste. But the question is whether people really became 'different' because of this individualization. We do not really behave less predictable than before, but in general we

experience more freedom, perhaps even too much. Perhaps we only have eyes for ourselves and for buying stuff.

This is where modern citizenship comes in. It emphasizes that emancipation does not only bring rights, but duties as well. People have to complain less and do more by themselves. They have to try and keep their jobs, or find new ones, even if there are no regular jobs anymore. They have to arrange for and offer care themselves, even if it is for their mother who lives far away. They have to save for their own retirement. They have to choose for an optimal trajectory through the educational institutions, and possibly take on debts to facilitate that. To sum up, they have to carry more responsibility.

When we talked about citizenship the last few years, it was about adjustment and responsibility, and about proper behavior. But both in theory and in practice there is a not-conventional side to citizenship, which concerns the nourishing of individuality, of freedom of expression, and of debates on knife's edge. In French you would say: this is the *citoyen*, who does not let himself be duped by the authorities and if necessary sends the king to the gallows, and who considers himself equal to all his fellow citizens, because it says so in the law. Good citizenship is being able to put your fellow citizens in their place, enjoying the differences of opinion that occur when all people share their own views about the common good, and being able to start all over again if this fails.

In the Netherlands policy and politics have sent citizenship in another direction, that of the *bourgeois* or the settled citizen. This citizen does not avoid responsibility and is more virtuous and thrifty than critical, and prepared to deliver the authorities from trouble, by doing his or her best for participative society, by internalizing the values and norms of the country where he or she lives, and by being ready.

What are the consequences of this? That was the second question I posed myself.

The answer is that two consequences became visible. The first consequence is that we see that we are nourishing a practice of active citizenship around 'light communities', and that society mainly favors locally organized clubs and networks, which are determined by the freedom to step in and out. In these 'light communities' a form of individualism flourishes, which

has next to nothing to do with consumerism or other negative associations that you can also witness in science with a less robust societal inclination.

Usually socially rather than politically engaged people devote themselves willingly to the causes of others, but only if they can put some creativity in, if they can grow in it or learn from it, and if they can direct their efforts somewhat according to their own wishes. A couple travels to Kenia or Ghana and decides to collect footballshirts for the boys in that one village; some local residents maintain a phoneline for lonely people; the mother of a child in a wheelchair organizes dance nights for people in wheelchairs; an enthusiastic badminton-player organizes a tournament for students every year. There are hundreds of thousands of these initiatives, and in all of these the notion is very much alive that citizenship is indeed a social, thoughtful and ultimately bourgeois activity. It is more likely that these are people that usually agree with the authorities than people that challenge them.

However, these communities do not form spontaneously. Contrary to what we may think, these active citizens can be dependent upon the willingness of the local authorities or the local business community to cooperate a little bit. Without that one computer as a gift, without a fire permit or without a visit of an alderman, the fun can wear off fast, and then the community will prove to be too light. But this is a sidestep.

There is a more important shadow side to communities lite as well. And that is the second consequence of the fairly conventional interpretation of citizenship, which is about public clumsiness. The strong emphasis on the responsibility of the individual complicates active citizenship on a larger scale. In communities that you cannot choose for or that you cannot access or leave at will – the nation state, your work, the economy – citizenship will not blossom so easily. 'Do it yourself' is the assignment that goes with modern citizenship, which is very enjoyable for anyone who is able to. But in cultural or economic conflicts an assignment like this does not mean very much. When you struggle with the authorities or your employer, out of dissatisfaction with the distribution of wealth in your country or firm, this kind of assignment offers no way out. That was shown in the substudies that I did in the shadow of light communities.

'Do it yourself' appears to be difficult for people who are just about

able to maintain themselves in a social workspace, or who – for whatever reason – have two children from two fathers at their nineteenth, or who are given jobs without ever speaking to the management that decides about these jobs. They prefer to be helped and seem to be embarrassed about that. This is also true for people who experience the freedom of Dutch culture as a pressure, because they do not love alcohol or do not care about Pentecost, and prefer their own parties. Or for people who hate meetings and deliberations, because they feel that others are always on top of them.

The struggle with the prescription to do everything on your own and to be independent, feels heavy for this kind of people and does not lead to solidarity. In all of these instances power plays an important role, and conventional citizenship is not very aware of the fact that some people are always the boss or try to be the boss, and that there are places where there is no community, or where the community is very heavy instead of light.

Modern citizenship: you can use it to make people equal or to pay your debts to the welfare state, which is quite something in itself. Anil Ramdas describes how he, after arriving from Surinam, expressly wants to become a citizen, with a terraced house and a car in front of it. In that sense, even conventional citizenship can be an ideal - but with angriness as a forgotten quality. To do something about injustice you usually need collective action, or legislation. Individual responsibility is not enough.

As an instrument for social change citizenship does not come up to the mark. Therefore, for the book title I have reached back to an expression which was used by the former secretary of Welfare, Public Health and Culture, Marga Klompé: Met opgeheven hoofd (With your head held high). At the beginning of the sixties, in the previous century, she used this expression to convey the ideal that every citizen could ask for social help, with his or her head held high. Because modern people are not just policy subjects or even serfs, but individuals with their own plans.

Vertaald door Menno Grootveld.

Verantwoording

Dit boek herneemt punten die ik eerder maakte, alleen of met anderen.

....

H1 | *Burgerschap als voortzetting van de gemeenschap met individuele middelen*
....

Becker, F., M. Hurenkamp & P. Scheffer (red.) (2011) *Onszelf blijven.*
H.B. Wiardi Beckman. Baanbreker van de moderne sociaaldemocratie.
Bert Bakker: Amsterdam

Hurenkamp, M. & E. Tonkens (2011) *De onbeholpen samenleving.*
Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam

Hurenkamp, M. , E. Tonkens & J.W. Duyvendak (2012) *Crafting citizen-*
ship. Negotiating tensions in modern society. Palgrave MacMillan,
Londen

....

H2 | *Tussen willen en kunnen*
....

Hurenkamp, M. (2013) 'Meer samenleving voor minder geld', in: *S&D* (11),
pp. 19-24

Hurenkamp, M. (2011) 'Politieke dieren', in: *Beleid en Maatschappij*, (4), p. 88

....

H3 | *De veerkracht van het burgerlijk karakter van burgerschap*
....

Hurenkamp, M. & E. Tonkens (2008). *Wat vinden burgers zelf van burger-*
schap? Burgers aan het woord over binding, loyaliteit en sociale cohesie.
Nicis, Den Haag

Hurenkamp, M., E. Tonkens & J.W. Duyvendak (2006) *Wat burgers*
bezielt Nicis, Den Haag

Hurenkamp, M., E. Tonkens & J.W. Duyvendak (2011) 'Locally produced, nationally contested. Citizenship in the Netherlands' *Citizenship studies* (15-2), pp. 205-225

....

H4 | *Lichte gemeenschappen*

....

Duyvendak J.W. & M. Hurenkamp (red.) (2004) *Kiezen voor de kudde. Lichte gemeenschappen en de nieuwe meerderheid.* Van Gennep, Amsterdam

Hurenkamp, M. & Tonkens, E. (2008). *Wat vinden burgers zelf van burgerschap? Burgers aan het woord over binding, loyaliteit en sociale cohesie.* Nicis, Den Haag

Hurenkamp, M. (2009) 'Organize liberal, think conservative. Citizenship in communities light' in: J.W. Duyvendak, F. Hendriks & M. Van Niekerk (Eds.) *City in Sight. Dutch dealings with urban change.* Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, pp. 141-159

Hurenkamp, M. & M. Rooduijn (2009) 'Kleinschalige burgerinitiatieven in perspectief' in: P. Dekker & J. de Hart (red.) *Vrijwilligerswerk in meervoud* SCP: Den Haag, pp. 197-215

Wilde, M. de, M. Hurenkamp, & E. Tonkens (2014) 'Flexible relations, frail contacts and failing demands: How community groups and local institutions interact in local governance in the Netherlands' *Urban Studies* 51(16), pp. 3365-3382

Hurenkamp, M. (2008) 'Zelffelicitaties op het middenveld' in: M. Gesthuizen en Peter Tammes (red.) *De sterke kanten van Nederland*, SCP, Den Haag, pp. 12-16

Hurenkamp, M. & E. Tonkens (2011) *De onbeholpen samenleving.* Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam

Hurenkamp, M., E. Tonkens & J.W. Duyvendak (2012) *Crafting citizenship. Negotiating tensions in modern society.* Palgrave MacMillan, Londen

··

H5 | *In de schaduw van lichte gemeenschappen*

··

Duyvendak, J.W., M. Hurenkamp & E. Tonkens, (2010) 'The culturalisa-
tion of citizenship' in S. Reich & A. Chebel d'Appollonia (red.).
*Managing etnic diversity after 9-11. Managing Integration, Security
and Civil Liberties.* Rutgers University Press, New York, pp. 223-253

··

H6 | *Liever op vakantie dan op verkiezingen*

··

Hurenkamp, M. & M. Sie Dhian Ho (2013) *Vooruit. De verzwegen politiek
van het dagelijks leven.* Van Gennep, Amsterdam

··

H7 | *Met opgeheven hoofd*

··

Hurenkamp, M. & J.W. Duyvendak (2008). 'De zware plicht van de lichte
gemeenschap' *Krisis. Journal for Continental Philosophy* 28 (1), pp. 1-14
Hurenkamp, M. (2009), 'De angst om voor zwak te worden versleten',
in *S&D* (11), pp. 71-75
Hurenkamp, M. & M. Kremer (2006) 'Eigen verantwoordelijkheid maakt
al te lichte gemeenschappen' in F. Becker & M. Hurenkamp (red.)
Vier jaar Balkenende. Mets en Schilt, Amsterdam, pp. 123-134
Hurenkamp, M. & M. Kremer (red.) (2005) *Vrijheid verplicht. Over tevre-
denheid en de grenzen van keuzevrijheid.* Van Gennep, Amsterdam
Becker, F. & M. Hurenkamp. (2014) (red.) *De gelukkige onderneming.
Arbeidsverhoudingen voor de 21ste eeuw.* Van Gennep, Amsterdam
Tonkens, E., M. Trappenburg, M. Hurenkamp & J. Verhoeven (2015)
*Montessori-democratie. Spanningen tussen burgerparticipatie en
de lokale politiek.* Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam
Hurenkamp, M. (2015) 'Vrijheid is alles maar alleen is het niks'
in: R. Cuperus & M. Hurenkamp (red.) *Omstreden vrijheid.*
Van Gennep, Amsterdam, pp. 253-272