Call for abstracts and panels - VSR Conference 2024

The VSR Annual Conference will be hosted this year by the Montaigne Centre for Rule of Law and the Administration of Justice and the School of Law of Utrecht University. It will take place on **January 18-19, 2024** in **Utrecht**, The Netherlands.

The VSR, the Dutch-Flemish Law and Society Association, has existed since 1980 and is an association for researchers and practicing lawyers who themselves conduct research in the field of the empirical workings of law or are interested in it. During our annual two-day conference researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds (sociologists of law, legal anthropologists, legal psychologists, public administration experts and criminologists) present their findings. See the VSR website for more details about its structure and goals.

The theme for this year's annual conference is: **Building Bridges.**

Research on law and society has flourished the last decades and has been recognized as a key factor to face many ongoing and current challenges. Law and society research has for instance focused on access to law for decades, and more recently on how to learn from the *Toeslagenaffaire*, creating new and/or more effective court procedures.

Law and society research can therefore be considered an important bridge: bridging on the one hand, (current) developments in society, and on the other hand, legal norms (governing these developments).

Prof. Kees van den Bos will be the keynote speaker of the conference. In his presentation, he will focus on how research on perceived procedural justice may provide a bridge for current problems in society. To this end, he will use insights that follow from his latest book, *The fair process effect*, to explore how treating people in genuinely fair and just ways may help to prevent issues of unwarranted distrust, heightened polarization and unfounded conspiracy thoughts.

Building bridges

During the conference, our aim is to focus on three types of 'bridges' in the discipline of law and society and to reflect: are they (still) sufficiently stable, can we reach both sides?

First, we identify law and society research as *a bridge in finding solutions* for current societal problems. Examples are law and society research on polarization, increasing inequalities, but also on climate change and digitalization. Researching these issues within their context, allows for a deeper understanding and for creating effective (and sustainable) solutions.

Second, law and society research creates *an interdisciplinary bridge*, connecting the worlds of law and other disciplines, such has sociology, psychology, criminology and anthropology. Combining different research methods, can provide insights in the (often complex) realities of law. For example, regarding (meaningful) compensation mechanisms for victims or challenges for ethical behavior of legal practitioners.

Third, considering the relevance of research on law and society *for* society, academic debates have emerged about how to communicate research in such a way that it reaches all members of society (*bridging academic input/impact and society*). For instance, how to include input of respondents in academic research and legal education? Particularly, how do we include members of society, that might be more difficult to reach?

During the conference we aim to explore these three bridges, and push current debates further on societal problems, research methods and input/impact of academic research and education.

Call for abstracts and panels

On 18-19 January 2024, there will be four blocks of three parallel panel sessions. We invite researchers to submit individual papers or panels. When submitting a paper or panel, please indicate in which 'bridge' you think your research fits best.

- For submitting an individual **paper**, we would ask you to submit a title and an abstract (max. 200 words).
- For **panel** submissions, we would ask you to submit the title of the panel session, who would chair the panel and (at least) 3 abstracts of participants (max. 3 x 200 words).

The deadline for submitting paper and panels is **December 1, 2023**. Papers and panels can be submitted by sending an email to: montaignecentrum@uu.nl. It is also possible to write your abstract (and to present your paper) in Dutch. You will be informed about your submission December 11, 2023 the latest.

Registration

The registration invite for the VSR Annual Conference 2024 will follow in the upcoming weeks. A more detailed program of the conference will follow once paper and panel submissions are closed. The registration link will include the option to sign up for the conference dinner on January 18, 2024.