

Contemporary Challenges: ✧ Citizen Science ✨ in the Humanities and Social Sciences

ORGANIZERS:

Research Center of Contemporary Challenges, Faculty
of Humanities and Social Science, University of Pécs

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

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DATE:

2ND - 3RD DECEMBER

LOCATION: PÉCS,
PTE UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY AND
KNOWLEDGE CENTRE

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH



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**Contemporary Challenges:
Citizen Science in the Humanities and Social Sciences**
International Conference organised by
Research Center for Contemporary Challenges
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Pécs

Date: December 2-3, 2024

Location: Pécs, University of Pécs, University Library and Knowledge Centre,
Universitas utca 2/A

While most citizen science projects are conducted within the disciplinary frameworks of the natural sciences, the humanities and social sciences also have the potential to achieve valuable results in this area, through their own methodological and theoretical spectrums. This is precisely because their investigations help better understand “the human” (society, culture, and humanity itself), thereby enriching the possible research directions with new approaches and perspectives (see Tauginienė et al. 2020). Recently, numerous interdisciplinary CS projects have been initiated both nationally and internationally within the humanities and social sciences, raising not only new results but also methodological and theoretical questions.

The conference will primarily consider the applicability of CS methods within the humanities and social sciences, exploring the antecedents, challenges, and opportunities of this research paradigm, the boundaries of science, and the crossing of these boundaries. The conference welcomes the presentation of new CS research results and ongoing projects. We also aim to engage in meaningful discussions about the benefits and drawbacks of lay sciences, opportunities for civil-scientific cooperation, and the errors of professional research. For example, in the fields of ethnography and cultural anthropology, there is a long tradition of actively involving laypeople or the subjects of research. Since the inception of ethnography, amateur collectors have had their section within the Hungarian Ethnographic Society. Internationally, public/engaged anthropology or participatory action research is particularly committed to addressing citizens' issues and effectively conveying anthropological knowledge to them. The relationship between the researcher and the researched has been a subject of reflection for decades, with numerous collaborative methods used across various anthropological fields. The boundaries of knowledge have long been debated, often considered permeable and context-specific.

Further topics: The meaning of data differs across disciplines, and different types of data are needed. It is completely different when relying on the principle of statistical representation, assuming that a randomly selected sample allows for extrapolation to the entire population, compared to experimenting with broader interpretations of local phenomena, processes, and structures based on theoretical reproduction. How can different disciplines utilise the results of citizen science, create and examine data, and what types of data are needed?

Considering that interdisciplinarity has a strong tradition in the field of CS sciences, we are also curious about how different disciplines can use and complement each other's results, and how qualitative and quantitative methods can support each other.

Day 1 – Monday – 2nd of December 2024.

12:30 – 13:00 – Registration & Arrival

13:00 – 13:30 – Welcoming speeches & conference program

Judit Farkas (Associate professor, University of Pécs, Hungary)

Beatrix Lábadi (Vice-dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Pécs, Hungary)

Alexandra Czeglédi (PhD student, University of Pécs, Researcher, ESSRG, Hungary)

Host of the day: Balázs Arató (Library manager, Benedek Ferenc Library of the Faculties of Law and Economics, University of Pécs, Hungary)

13:30 – 14:00 – Collaboration, participatory data collection and long-term action research in a Hungarian village. The case of Kóspallag

Pál Géza Balogh (Assistant professor, University of Pécs, Hungary)

Abstract: In my presentation, I will present an action research process that has been going on since 2017, with the main focus on the creation of a village museum and its associated archive, which will present local history and knowledge and serve as a place of local memory. The broader social aim is to build a self-aware and self-determined local community. To achieve this, we are creating a place that this community can claim as its own and occupy together, and we conduct a continuous, long-term research using a variety of ethnographic methods, with the increasing involvement of the local population. In this presentation, I will review the various activities undertaken to achieve these objectives, describe the groups of participants (different sections of village society and external researchers involved from time to time), their levels and modes of participation, and the research methods used. I highlight the varied difficulties and challenges, both in terms of data collection and community development, funding and the motivation of volunteers.

14:00 – 14:30 – Citizen science and decolonial thinking: A collaborative linguistic ethnographic project for social justice

János Imre Heltai (Associate professor, KRE, Hungary)

Eszter Tarsoly (Associate professor, UCL, UK, Researcher, KRE, Hungary)

Abstract: Participatory or collaborative research has been applied in health and social research for decades. In linguistics, it was boosted thanks to decolonial thinking, as their shared endeavours include relinquishing power and redistributing resources. In this presentation, I share insights from a collaborative linguistic ethnographic project carried out in a town in Hungary. Collaborative linguistic ethnography aimed at decolonising social

relations and redistributing power is usually bipartite, based on collaboration between members of marginalized communities and socially prestigious academic participants. But our project is tripartite in that it is based on the collaboration of mostly Budapest-based academic researchers, local members of a racialized group (Romani-Hungarian bilingual speakers), and local members of the unmarked majority. The project's aim is to publish a linguistic ethnographic journal written and edited collaboratively. Based on the experiences of the first issue of the journal entitled *Duj dzséne – Ketten* ('two together' in Romani and Hungarian, respectively), in this presentation I explore how racialised and marginalised co-researchers relate to the collaborative work and whether they feel comfortable to express their own views, thus contributing to develop a journal which brings new perspectives and genres to linguistic ethnographic research.

14:30 –15:00 – ‘Every citizen is a reporter’ – dilemmas around citizen journalism

Rita Glózer (Associate professor, University of Pécs, Hungary)

Abstract: In the late 1990s, with the advent of blogs and other online publishing services, the phenomenon we call citizen journalism emerged. Although definitions vary, it is mostly understood as the practice of online news production and dissemination by semi-amateur journalists, often associated with the terms participatory journalism, citizen witnessing, accidental journalism, and grassroots journalism. Popular culture scholars welcome it as part of a broader participatory culture, seen as democratic and progressive, along with other forms of user-generated content production and distribution. Journalism and news media researchers, however, see it as a phenomenon accompanying the general crisis in journalism and blame it on a lack of professionalism and ethical standards. Moreover, with the recent proliferation of social media, the boundaries of citizen journalism are becoming blurred, as citizen journalists have to make their voices heard among many other types of semi-amateur content creators (influencers, etc.) in an increasingly commercialised and platformized media environment. In my presentation, I will take stock of the benefits and risks of citizen journalism as they appear in disciplines that approach it from different perspectives.

15:00 – 15:30 – Enhancing environmental values through experiential learning methods – a participatory study in school gardens

Kármén Czett (Researcher, ESSRG, Hungary)

Abstract: Children are particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of the current environmental, economic and health crises. Experiential learning is needed to cultivate both a heightened affinity between children and nature and to nurture their overall well-being. However, the current body of knowledge is insufficient about the impact of various participatory teaching methods on children's environmental values. As part of the EU-funded PLANET4B project, the transformative potential of Hungarian biodiversity education is being

assessed through a critical systemic analysis, key informant interviews, and various participatory methods applied in classrooms and school gardens. Our analysis of 16 expert interviews pointed out the paradox of Hungarian environmental education, with the curriculum placing increasing emphasis on ecological issues, whilst the centralised education system is constantly restricting flexibility and freedom of choice. Consequently, our study is focusing on the possible ways of transformative change in Hungarian biodiversity education and the impact of certain experiential learning methods. We have established partnerships with public schools that have school gardens, where we investigate the garden's impact on the personal, the organisational and the system level. We also bring a participatory theatre play to high schools and an interactive class to primary schools, both focusing on biodiversity. Our fieldwork is exploring these initiatives through a variety of research methods – participant observation, questionnaires, group discussions, photovoice – and reinforces that biodiversity-focused experiential learning initiatives not only enhance cognitive skills, but also positively influence students' relational values towards their peers, teachers, and the natural environment. School gardens and participatory theatres showed a strong potential for transforming students' perceptions and relationships to nature by creating safe spaces where criticism towards the current socio-economic system can emerge and emotions can be lived. At the same time, we observed positive changes in the schools' physical environment (e.g. enhanced biodiversity), teaching practices (e.g. more collaborative tools) and activities (e.g. community-building events in connection to school gardens). However, the assessed approaches tend to be embedded in the existing system rather than provoking a substantial change in it.

15:30 – 16:00 – Coffee break

16:00 – 16:30 – The kitchen work of collaborative research: Recipes for emancipatory practices

Luca Sára Bródy (Researcher, HUN-REN KRTK, Hungary)

Abstract: Wicked problems that collective actors struggle with, such as the housing crisis, food sovereignty, climate breakdown, or de-democratization, require collaborative and transformative knowledge production to be solved. Despite the long tradition of qualitative research inquiry and participatory approaches in social sciences, issues concerning participatory and collaborative methodologies in research are often put at the bottom of the knowledge hierarchy in studies on social movements and civil societies. We propose the metaphor of 'kitchen-work' to focus our attention on how the cooking of collaborative research with collective actors is done, how 'recipes' are created together and how they can be used together aiming for a more equitable society. The metaphor illustrates methodological approaches where preparatory, relational and often invisible work is done in

research with collective actors, requiring skills, time, care and engagement, functioning as a contrast to conventional research methodologies. It also draws attention to the common categorisation of participatory approaches – relegated to the often neglected processual part of research, just as cooking (despite being vital in a household) is relegated to the rather invisible part of a house. Our aim is to demonstrate how we shift between methodological approaches when working together with contentious actors in our research. We argue that collaborative approaches to research and knowledge production can be both scientifically and socially rigorous. Using a classification of methodologies within, against and beyond academia (inspired by Bell and Pahl, 2018), we distinguish several methodological recipes for collaboration in research concerning collective actors, to give practical suggestions on how collaborative research projects could be ‘cooked’ together.

16:30 – 17:00 – Citizen Science and visual participatory action research

Márton Oblath (Assistant professor, ELTE, Hungary)

Day 2 – Tuesday – 3rd of December 2024.

9:00 – 9:10 – Registration & Arrival

9:10 – 9:20 – Welcome speeches

Judit Farkas (Professor, University of Pécs, Hungary)

Alexandra Czeglédi (PhD student, University of Pécs, Researcher, ESSRG, Hungary)

Host of the day: Alexandra Czeglédi (PhD student, University of Pécs, Researcher, ESSRG, Hungary)

9:20 – 11:00 – Keynote presentations and Roundtable Discussion on Citizen (Social) Science

9:20 – 9:40 – Reflections on Citizen Social Science As an Emerging Participatory Research Practice: Some Lessons from the “YouCount – Youth Citizen Science” project

György Pataki (Senior researcher, ESSRG, Hungary)

Abstract: Citizen science (CS) is particularly favoured by European research funding organisations due to the opportunities it offers to learn science and increase the scientific literacy of European citizens. Natural scientists all over the world see the potential of CS in collecting more data, beyond the capacity of contract researchers, as a large number of citizens get involved in scientific data collection and follow scientists' instructions on what data to collect and what kind of protocol to follow in order to ensure quality data for scientific analysis. This may sound as a very instrumental view of CS; change and learning is expected from the citizens participating in research, but science and research seem unchanged. However, when the term CS originally appeared a different potential was also seen by some scientists who were concerned with the social responsibility of science (scientists participate in civic issues) and the conventional knowledge generation process in science (whose knowledge counts?). CS has also been understood as a way of democratising knowledge production in society (public participation in research), as a way towards a more democratic governance of science and society (participatory democracy). These political and social responsibilities are particularly challenging when CS is applied by the social sciences and humanities (SSH), often mentioned as citizen social science (CSS). There may lie the transformative view of CS; science and research are also changed, new science-society relations are experimented with and institutionalised. Based on the experience gained in the YouCount (Youth Citizen Science) Horizon 2020 project (<https://www.youcountproject.eu/>), this contribution will reflect on CSS as an emerging participatory research practice. In

YouCount, researchers and young citizen scientists (YCS) worked together and collaborated with other relevant knowledge-holders in living lab settings in 10 European contexts in order to explore the lived social inclusion experience of young people at risk of social exclusion and derive insights for actionable knowledge for interventions (innovation) for policy and social change. Our focus will be on how research practices are challenged in a multi-actor co-creative setting (such as a living lab) and how the conventional research process is re-organised in CSS. Throughout, we will not lose sight of the long traditions of participatory research, primarily participatory action research (PAR) will serve as a mirror to highlight the characteristics of CSS.

9:40 – 10:00 – The Role of Universities in Building Resilience in Society through Citizen Science

Eglė Butkevičienė (full Professor and the Head of Committee for Political Science, Sociology and Public Governance Study Programs at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania, Visiting professor at the University of Central Florida (UCF), USA).

Abstract: In liberal democracies, scientific literacy plays an important role in shaping the political system, ensuring representation and maintaining social cohesion, which is crucial to building the conditions for a society's resilience to external and internal threats. Active, literate, informed citizens are willing to work together, make informed decisions and hold the government accountable. All this helps societies to better withstand and recover from crises. Thus, the role of universities in fostering open science and public participation in science is crucial for building societal resilience. The number of scientists and policy-makers still argue that universities are still too isolated from society and live in an “ivory tower” or became a commercialization machines. This situation is changing with adoption of open science perspective and emerging emphasis on public engagement in science on institutional, national and international levels. This presentation is focussed on insights about the role of university in fostering citizen participation in science and the transformational pathways that universities might take towards enhancing citizen science and participatory research approaches at the institution. The presentation also discusses barriers and facilitators of the citizen science as a new practice of public engagement in scientific research, and new trends in knowledge/data production at the higher education institution.

10:00 – 10:20 – (Re)planning a citizen social science project for and with Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals

Katerina Zourou (Senior researcher, Web2Learn, Greece)

Stefania Oikonomou (Researcher, Web2Learn, Greece)

Abstract: Citizen science (CS) is usually adopted by both researchers and communities for its transformative potential for increased scientific literacy, trust in science and social

engagement. Particularly in research for social inclusion and wellbeing, citizen social science (CSS) is approached as a promising field that connects CS to social phenomena with multiple benefits to society. Within this socially focused context, our talk critically approaches CS theory and participatory action research (PAR) to analyse and reflect on the impact of pursuing PAR-based CS and its consequences to the (re)planning of the project.

Thus, our presentation draws on experience and insights generated from a CS project with a group of 20 Greek Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) individuals who took part in four workshops from December 2023 to February 2024. Hence, the presentation aims to expand existing discussions and reflections on inclusion and accessibility as reflected in the (re)designing a PAR-based CS project with DHH individuals, offering insights that aim to be transferable, and so benefit future CS initiatives for social inclusion and empowerment.

10:20 – 10:40 – Citizen Science and ECSA Ambassadors

Marietta Le (Researcher, Citizen Science app developer, ECSA ambassador)

Abstract: The European Citizen Science Association (ECSA) is a membership organisation set up in 2014. ECSA's main goals are to increase the democratisation of science, encourage the growth of citizen science in Europe, and support the participation of the general public in research processes – across the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and the arts. To support the promotion of citizen science, in 2023, ECSA launched its first ambassador program with ambassadors in 28 countries. ECSA ambassadors connect with local projects, organise events, and promote an EU-wide network in their respective countries. The presentation showcases examples of ambassador initiatives from 2023, and welcomes ideas for collaboration with the Hungarian or other ECSA ambassadors.

10:40 – 11:00 – Q&A and reflection session with keynote speakers

11:00 – 11:30 – Coffee break

11:30 – 13:00 – 1st session: Citizen science and linguistics

Language matters in citizen science: Participatory hands-on workshop / Nyelvi részvétel a civil tudományban — Műhelyfoglalkozás

Csanád Bodó (Associate professor, ELTE, Hungary)

Petteri Laihonen (Senior Lecturer/HAS Distinguished Guest Researcher, JYU/ELTE, Finland/Hungary)

Gergely Szabó (Assistant professor, KRE; Researcher ELTE/HUN-REN Hungarian Research Centre for Linguistics, Hungary)

Abstract: Workshop plan: It is a recent development in linguistics to advocate for the involvement of speakers in the research process. The reasons for this advocacy can be multilayered: some argue for decolonisation, empowerment, inclusion, or democratisation of research as well as public engagement in science. What they all have in common is looking at language as an important factor in both (re)creating and fighting social inequalities, not necessarily acknowledged by other linguists or scholars in other fields. In the first part of the hands-on workshop, the organisers will provide a brief introduction to the few linguistic projects in Hungarian contexts that embraced a citizen science or participatory agenda. As representatives of sociolinguistics, a discipline celebrating linguistic diversity and multilingualism, the organisers do not follow an English-only policy in their workshop. Therefore, in the second and longer part, they will divide into three sub-workshops in different languages and in translanguaging mode. Laihonen will lead a data session based on iMovies recorded and edited by Moldavian (North-East Romania) multilingual youth. The data is predominantly Hungarian (more precisely, in the *Csángó* mode of speaking), but some English translations will be provided. Bodó will introduce collaborative writing, a technique of two or more authors creating a text together. As his focus is on the joint creation and not necessarily on the text itself, participants will be invited to make contributions in any language they prefer. Szabó will facilitate a discussion on the many layers of the Hungarian words *civil* and *részvétel* drawing on the own experiences of the participants. For this effort, he will draw on a method called 'language picnic' (*nyelvi piknik*) he developed to facilitate conversations on language issues with non-linguist citizens. As Szabó's topic is culture-specific, his programme will be more suitable for Hungarian speakers. While working with language matters in the workshop, we hope that participants will experience that language matters in citizen science.

13:00 – 14:00 – Lunchtime

14:00 – 15:30 – 2nd session: Citizen Social Science and participatory filmmaking in Siklósbodony

Dominika Ágoston (Young co-researcher, ESSRG, Hungary)

Kovács Melissza (Young co-researcher, ESSRG, Hungary)

Márton Oblath (Assistant professor, ELTE, Hungary)

Rebeka Simon (Co-researcher student, ELTE, Hungary)

Gina Bartáné Somogyi (Co-researcher, ESSRG, Hungary)

15:30 – 16:00 – Coffee break

16:00 – 17:30 – 3rd session: Moving away from a citizen science experiment: Agrobiodiversity through participatory research

Borbála Lipka (Researcher, ESSRG, Activist, Magház, Hungary)

Abstract: Agrobiodiversity is in the cross-section of human culture and nature – agriculture draws essential elements from both the natural and human world. Thus, agricultural biodiversity would provide an ideal ground to engage citizens in research and diversity management activities, yet we see relatively few examples of citizen science projects in this field. The failed experiment of a community variety testing system might shed light on some of the reasons behind this scarcity. In the first part of the workshop, the organisers will briefly present the story of the community variety testing project that was developed by Magház Association and ESSRG. The experiment lasted for almost 3 years and though the project itself has not survived the pilot period, it served as a lesson for the future. After the presentation, a discussion will be facilitated in order to draw some conclusions together and pinpoint some key factors that should be considered when planning a similar project.

In the second part of the workshop, the focus will be on research findings from the Planet4B EU project agrobiodiversity case. Depending on the level of knowledge and interests of the participants, we will discuss some of the following questions:

- What is agrobiodiversity and what is its relation to participatory research?
- Why is it important to engage citizens in research about agrobiodiversity?
- How can we come up with meaningful project ideas and how can we collect meaningful data?
- What are some of the challenges and risks in this field?

By the end of the workshop, participants will get an idea about the importance, potential and some of the challenges of agrobiodiversity as a topic in participatory research.

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