

RENDERING INVISIBLE CITIZEN SCIENCE PRACTICES VISIBLE

Bálint Balázs – ESSRG

CESIS, June 4th, 2018



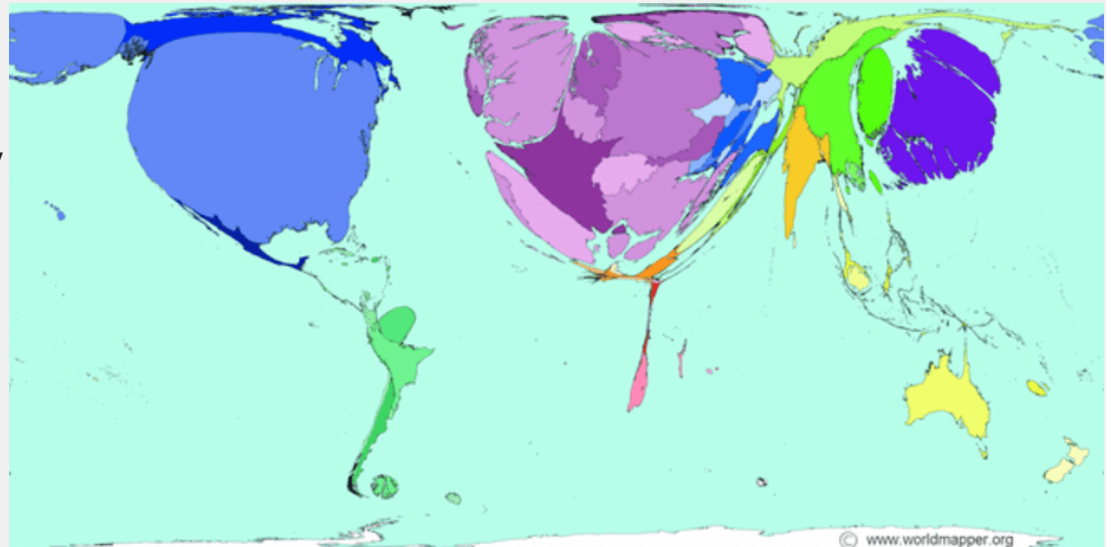
Multiple levels of invisibility

- **1st level:** Scientific articles tended to hide (in their keywords, titles or abstracts) the fact that non-scientists participated in (or meaningfully contributed to) research
 - Cooper et al. (2014) The Invisible Prevalence of Citizen Science in Global Research: Migratory Birds and Climate Change
- **2nd level:** Environmental focus and potentials
 - Knowledge co-creation and participation, SSH
- **3rd level:** Explicit CS often coined marginal, actually existing is undefined
 - MoRRI indicators, Mejlgaard et al (2018)

Unequal knowledge production

- A specific form of PPSR – multiple ways of engaging public perspectives and knowledge in scientific discourse and policy-making (Irwin 1995)

- Role and location of science in society
 - Science communication
 - Science's role in policy-making
 - Institutions for public involvement



Silences in CEE countries

*„The field of citizen science is very **new and niche**. Only very few would be interested in such issues. On a wider scale, people are not familiar with CS. We are not even trying to translate the term, but people are still gradually getting interested.” – **Greenpeace activist***

*„Citizen science **will only work if** the datagathering, management and presenting platform is well designed, and linked to an interest in data usage (...) in case of soil moisturing it would take some years...” – **Grow Obs.***



Discourse on the apparent divide

	West	East
Term first used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • from 1990ies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late (or no) adoption of the concept
Number of projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • well-known projects, listed in catalogues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardly visible initiatives; devoid of practices • Emergent forms of CS • Lack of explosive growth
Published articles referring to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2019 GS finds 1800 • celebrated, mediatized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0
Members of ECSA in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • few
Other PPSR practices are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • few, voluntary based

Reconceptualisation: „Invisible” Citizen Science

- **Invisibility as a manifestation**
- How to record the absence?
- What is a replacement for CS in these contexts?
- Rendering the actual volunteer and hobby practices visible - „**unused citizen science**”
- what kind of knowledge is provided? SSH – „**citizen social science**”
- reacting to the lack of government activity in a special area of knowledge – „**substitute knowledge production**”
- specific kind of knowledges not produced by the state/academia: „**undone science**”



Initial successes in CEE countries

- **quality of communication** around issues and international recognition
- citizens and NGOs linked through **platforms** that are managed by professional scientists (data gathering and presenting platforms are the real bottlenecks: though-going, slow, low-quality)
- **database** under the auspices of a research group - sustainability and survival is an issue
- **citizens** would like to download, share and curate data
- **cultural change** in countries where democracy means a short and recent (and questionable) experience, active citizenship has limited tradition, citizen participation is not institutionalized
- **MAKING VISIBLE CITIZEN SCIENCE**

[@GROWobservatory](#) workshop in Budapest generates food [#citizenscience](#) communities without tech fix [#FOOD2030EU](#)



More successes to come

- Initiatives **do not explicitly start as citizen science** but could be later turned into one. Applications linked to SSH never considered themselves citizen science.
- Good quality amateur and old private photos from people or institutions made publicly available. It enriches your view of the city and the city life in a particular neighbourhood. A common digital heritage and great **research opportunities** for professionals.

● <https://www.facebook.com/fortegoapp/>





Probléma bejelentése



Általános információk



PROBLÉMA KATEGÓRIÁJA

PROBLÉMA TÁRGYA

PROBLÉMA LEÍRÁSA

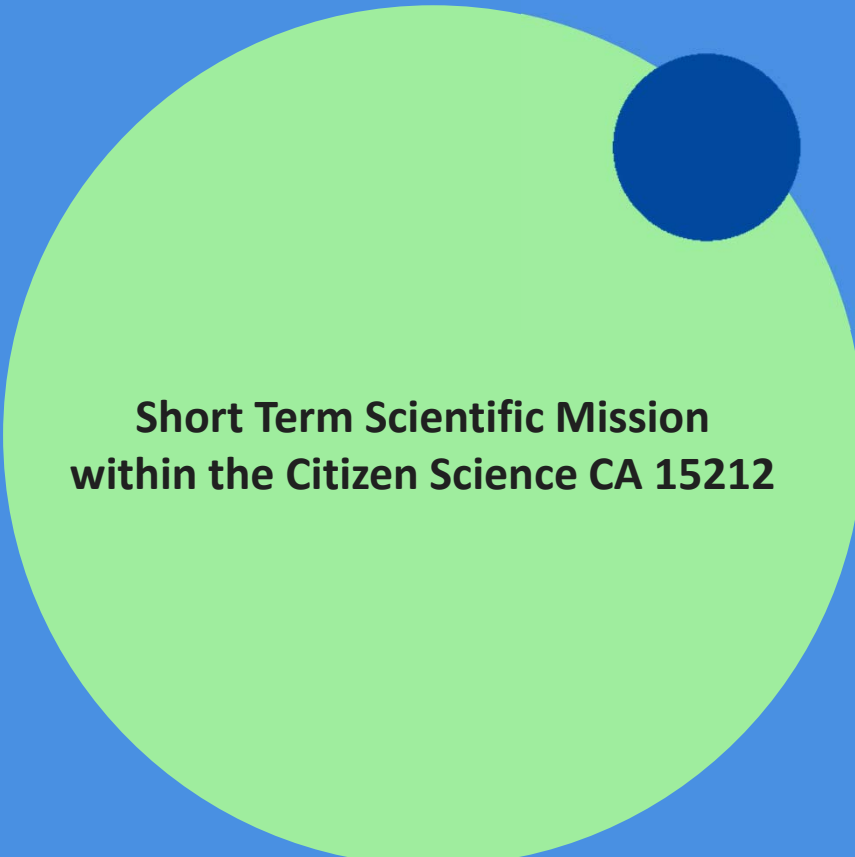


- Budapest and a dozen of other cities
- 10-50 reports per day (2017: 8627)
- Circa 7000 registered
- Focus group with most active users
- 20 volunteers: website maintenance, issue-handling among stakeholders
- 2012-2019: 22.000 problems solved

Fix my food system

CS on the challenges of urban
food infrastructure

- unhealthy street food vendors
- advertisements in public places (hospital, sports facilities, schools)



**Short Term Scientific Mission
within the Citizen Science CA 15212**





substitute for
missing capacities
on the government
side



provide **evidence**
base for policy
change



self-expression,
agency in a non-
radical way



collectives, instead
of individualizing
responsibility



go beyond the
dissatisfaction with
the existing
conditions,
empowering
arenas



play and revolt,
bottom-up
engagement;
grassrooting



can be dispersed
and **expanded** to
other contexts

@Balint_ESSRG

● **ESSRG**

@Balint_ESSRG

balazs.balint@essrg.hu

