



Bridging Research Praxes Across Pluralities of Knowledge

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Abstract

How can researchers working both within and external to academia in all disciplines and areas of research recognize knowledge produced in other spheres and engage more ethically and collaboratively with that knowledge and those who create and circulate it? This was the central question behind the Bridging Research Praxes Across Pluralities of Knowledge conference held at Linköping University in Sweden and on Zoom in April 2022. At the heart of the conference was the recognition that searching for answers to this question cannot be left to arbitrary and haphazard engagements and encounters but must be motivated, reflected on, and formulated clearly in ongoing discussions. This special issue of Culture Unbound continues the discussions begun at the conference. Both the conference and this special issue have served as a platform for researchers to engage in open dialogue about the challenges and opportunities of bridging research and praxes across pluralities of knowledge. Organized around three principal areas of discussion – research ethics and shared authority, citizen science/research, and metrics, value, and recognition – the conference involved researchers working both within academia and outside of the academy (such as journalists, artists, practitioners, etc.) and from a variety of disciplines, research fields, and geographical locations, with one or two moderators. Working from videos and transcripts from the conference, some of the conference participants have reflected and written on the discussions started at the conference in the contributions published in this issue. Through the unique format of this issue, the contributions reflect the continued discussions and collaboration that have taken place as other contributors have read and commented on others' contributions.

Keywords: research ethics, shared authority, knowledge circulation, collaboration

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Introduction to “Bridging Research Praxes Across Pluralities of Knowledge”

This is not an Onion: Ongoing Dialogue as Layers that Envelop and Enhance Research

Victoria Van Orden Martínez

Most people will be familiar with the metaphor of the onion, which tells us that layers must be peeled away to reveal the core or heart of an issue. This extended article works in the opposite way, by starting with an issue – really, quite a few issues – and adding layers that reveal the complexity of the issues and the importance of engaging in dialogue about them. The core issue here is the question of how researchers and practitioners within and outside of academia can better engage in open dialogue about the challenges and opportunities of bridging research praxes across pluralities of knowledge. Among the related issues and concerns that spring from this central issue are research ethics and shared authority, metrics, value, recognition, and citizen science and research.

In other words, at least as I see it, research is not just about research. It is also and perhaps at times even more about how we as researchers engage with other researchers, especially those who work in different locations and with distinct practices, and with one another’s research processes and output. This is a process without an end, with layers being added all the time. Dialogue makes these layers visible, helping us to become more aware not only of our research praxes and those of others but also of how we can build bridges in and through our pluralities of knowledge. This was the idea behind the conference *Bridging Research Praxes Across Pluralities of Knowledge: Interdisciplinary Dialogues on Ethics, Collaboration, and Knowledge Production*, which was held April 26-28, 2022, using a hybrid format that was hosted in person at Linköping University’s Campus Norrköping in Sweden and online via Zoom, which allowed for wider participation.

Building Bridges

The 25 panelists who participated in the conference were academics, artists, journalists, and independent researchers, among others, working in a variety of professional ‘locations’ such as universities, museums, archives, libraries, preservation trusts, and community and advocacy organizations. In addition to their professional locations, they also joined from a variety of geographical locations, including North and Latin America, Denmark, Sweden, and the UK. [These individuals participated in one or more of five panels moderated by Ph.D. candidates and faculty from Linköping University: one on Metrics, Value, and](#)

[Recognition, two on Research Ethics and Shared Authority, one on Citizen Science/Research, and a final open discussion panel.](#) ↓

The key to these panels was dialogue. Accordingly, although the panelists all submitted some sort of proposal to participate in the conference, they were not expected to make formal presentations, PowerPoints, or present prepared papers at the conference. What the panelists brought and contributed to the conference was their experience bridging research praxes across pluralities of knowledge. Why and how they have built and/or are building these bridges, what they have learned and continue to learn, and so forth, were all potential conversation points to engage with others to further build upon these processes. The idea was to have spontaneous discussions around the principal area of the panel in which the panelists would draw on their own experiences and relate these with others on the panel. The discussions could include the following:

- Synergies and divergences in good research practice.
- Problematizing the obstacles to knowledge circulation between academic and other researchers.
- How and when ethical violations take place.
- How knowledge that is produced through different praxes and based on different metrics can be handled with respect and proper attribution.
- How open, critical discussion of research between academic and non-academic researchers could improve the quality and accessibility of the knowledge each produces, and potentially advance research in specific fields.

Some of the panelists joined as individuals while others joined as [‘pairs’](#) and even a large [research group](#) – people who have in the past or are now working together on projects, or who just wanted to participate together. Otherwise, there was no specific connection between the panelists, whom we placed in panels based on their expressed interest in one of the specific categories. We did not ask them to prepare anything in advance, least of all coordinating together as a panel. At the beginning of each panel, the moderator introduced the topic and invited each panelist to give a brief introduction of themselves, their background, and their reason for wanting to participate in the conference. The moderator then helped to start the dialogue and helped to keep it going if necessary. Each panel was followed by a question-and-answer session, which engaged the audiences onsite and online.

Adding Layers

The conference was always intended as just one layer of dialogue on these topics. It was neither the first nor the last layer. Not the first because everyone who participated brought their prior experiences and knowledge with them. Not the last because they would take the dialogues from the conference with them into their future work. Moreover, from its inception, the conference was designed to be followed by a special issue in *Culture Unbound*, for which I was the Editorial Assistant at the time. In this role, I was aware of a special issue – or, rather, what we might call an extended article – in production for *Culture Unbound* that utilized a [hypertextual, dialogic, and collaborative publishing track](#). Coordinating this was then-Executive Editor Per Israelson, who along with then-Editor-in-Chief Jesper Olsson and the *Culture Unbound* Editorial Board agreed with me that this same technology would be a great way to produce the special issue for the conference.

[Inspired](#) by digital media scholar [Janneke Adema's book, *Living Books: Experiments in the Posthumanities*](#) – in particular the chapter “Publishing as a Relational Practice,” I envisioned the special issue/extended article as an experiment not only in journal publishing but also in the way we perform our scholarly practices to “allow for alternative, more ethical, critical, and responsible forms of research to emerge” (Adema 2021:159). The conference was video recorded and the videos were made available after the conference for the panelists to openly share and distribute. [In addition, transcripts were made of the panel discussions and these have served as an important part of creating this work since they allowed the contributors to read and reflect on the dialogic exchanges for their written contributions.](#)

Drawing inspiration from *Living Books* and the examples of “experiments with openness in digital publishing” Janneke highlights in it (168), that the panelists received the full transcript of their respective panels and, through collaborative and constructive engagement, wrote what I have called ‘remix and reflect’ documents on not only the dialogue itself but also on the processes around the dialogue. The objective was not to produce – or reproduce the idea of – knowledge as a product but rather to exemplify how knowledge is a process or, more correctly, processes. Although I, the guest editor, provided suggestions, parameters for length, etc., for the result, how this manifested with the panelists would be the product of their collaborative processes. Similarly, peer review was not undertaken in a traditional academic or ‘scientific’ sense, but in the sense of “peer-to-peer review” (Adema 171) by the panelists themselves as a ‘collaborative community’ (Adema 167-173). [A key motivator for taking this approach is the recognition that not](#)

[all research praxes involve a formal process of academic peer review but rather utilize other forms of review and mediation. Furthermore, I felt it went against the whole concept of bridging research praxes to force an academic practice on non-academic researchers and practitioners.](#)💬

The final results of this process – in the form of the four contributions – make the different dialogic layers visible to the reader. Some of the contributions reflect more mediation than others. Many of these mediations can be seen in this document through what might be described as layered textual interactions. As you read through the issue, you will notice hyperlinks and other indicators of additional content and context. Some of these are embedded in the document and others take you to external links. The idea is to give readers an idea of how a work such as this is always a process. As the number of final contributions indicates, not all of the 25 panelists contributed to this issue. In total, three panelist ‘pairs’ and one research group contributed, bringing the total number of panelists involved in this issue to 12. [However, because the contributions are based on the panel discussions and the transcripts of those panels, all panel participants are present in this article in the sense that were part of the dialogues that are reflected in the contributions](#) ↓💬

Each contribution is ‘final’ insofar as it is being published as-is. However, each is really at a different stage of a development process that could continue. For example, some of the contributors were unable to respond to the peer-to-peer review comments due to interventions caused by life and its many demands as well as, sadly, the death of a loved one. At times it seems that research and the associated demands of this work can overshadow our shared humanity and the fact that we all face difficulties and challenges – both related and unrelated to our professional work – that affect our ability to meet deadlines and/or perform as others might expect of us. But if we are honest with ourselves, we know that very few of us are doing work that will cause the world to fall apart if we miss a deadline or fail to produce our very best work every time. Life and death and their obligations and ramifications have their place and the reality is they need to have priority over our work, not the other way around. Accordingly, our research praxes involve how we deal with other researchers and their research and how we deal with other researchers as human beings. As Marian Barnes and Tula Brannelly remind us, “Research praxis is about the processes of doing research together and the decisions that lead to actions, inactions and reactions, demonstrating responsibility and responding to others” (Barnes & Brannelly 2022: 93). The contributions thus reflect not only written and spoken dialogues but also dialogues that cannot be read or seen but are vitally important to how we

react to and interact with our own and others' work; namely, that human beings are behind it and thus our responses should be as respectful and caring as they would if we were face to face with them.

The Personal

This brings me to why the conference was held in the first place. For me, it has always been, most fundamentally, about ethics, particularly research ethics. Before I entered academia in 2019, I was a “non-academic” researcher and writer. My master’s degree was achieved long ago and far away from Sweden in the US and not in the discipline of history. After that, I spent many years conducting historical research and writing popular and popular science articles on historical subjects, always with the idea of one day pursuing a Ph.D. After my husband, our two young children, and I settled in Sweden, the time was right to actively search for a Ph.D. position. I was ready and I felt that nearly two decades of experience as a historical researcher and writer would recommend me well.

My optimism was promptly replaced with the reality that to some in academia, this experience was not sufficient. Fortunately, I encountered others who saw things differently. And so, eventually, I made it to Linköping University. Initially, this experience was somewhat destabilizing. There were times even after starting my Ph.D. work that I felt self-conscious about my ‘non-academic’ background, as if it were a liability. With time, however, I began to see that my experiences were a strength. Even better, I got out of my head and looked at the diverse locations and experiences of the many brilliant people around me and realized what I now appreciate as the obvious: that the diversity in all our experiences, knowledge, and practices is what makes us better at our work, whatever it is and wherever we conduct it.

The knowledge we have gained from our myriad experiences is put to its best use when it moves across boundaries, when it is challenged, and when we are challenged not to be too comfortable in our knowledge and practices. But what I think is often missing is dialogue between researchers and others working in the same or similar areas but in different locations. Dialogues that demonstrate respect for and appreciation of different knowledge and practices. One of my favorite quotes from Haitian-American anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s book, *Silencing the Past*, which is featured in the conference description, is “history has many hearths and academics are not the sole history teachers in the land” (Trouillot 2015: 20).

It is a statement that raises the question of how researchers working both within

and external to academia in all disciplines and areas of research can not only recognize that knowledge is produced at different hearths, but also engage more ethically and collaboratively with what is produced in these different locations. Recognizing that searching for answers to this question cannot be left to arbitrary and haphazard engagements and encounters, but must be motivated, reflected on, and formulated clearly, I had the idea for a conference designed as a platform for researchers to engage in open dialogue about the challenges and opportunities of bridging research praxes across pluralities of knowledge.

Luckily, I happen to work within a department, [the Department of Culture and Society \(Tema Q\)](#) 🌐, at Linköping University where this idea found resonance. With alacrity, the head of the department, [Bodil Axelsson](#) 🗨️, offered funding for the initiative, and further support was given by [Eva Hemmungs Wirtén](#) 🗨️ and her initiative [COMPASS, a Research Hub on Knowledge Circulation](#) 🌐, as well as by [LiU Humanities](#) 🌐. [Per-Anders Forstorp](#) 🗨️ was asked to help me with the organization of the conference, and I feel exceptionally fortunate for this pairing, as Peppe (as he is more fondly known) was not only supportive but also empowering and encouraging. A host of other individuals also helped make the conference possible, including Tema Q administrator, Ulrika Sund, who gave me guidance and support in so many ways, the Linköping University Communications and IT departments, and my colleagues at Linköping University, who have provided ideas, inspiration, and support, and some of whom are actively participating as moderators and panelists. All of these individuals truly reflected the ethics of sharing and collaboration that have motivated the conference and this special issue/article.

Of course, the production of this published work is also thanks to generous funding provided by *Culture Unbound* and *COMPASS* and the collaborative efforts of both the former editorial team of *Culture Unbound*, including Per Israelson and Jesper Olsson, who supported the idea at its inception, and the current editorial team, consisting of Editor-in-Chief Eva Hemmungs Wirtén, Executive Editor Polina Ignatova, and Editorial Assistant Sebastian Rozenberg. You all have made this a seamless process and I am very grateful to you.

Finally, I want to thank all the panelists and attendees at the conference and those who contributed to this work for your willingness to step out of norms and do something a little bit differently. It has been a tremendous learning experience for me in every possible way and I could not have asked for a better group of people to work with.

Framing Essay

Eva Hemmungs Wirtén

How can we understand the concept of “bridging” in relation to our work as scholars? As a structure built over a chasm separating two different fields of research? The abutments on each side need to be secured, and need to hold, so that the deck, in turn, can provide a safe passageway to the other side.

As they do for those traversing the Brooklyn Bridge in the 1890s [Fig. 1]👍. We see two women in the center of the photo, a man in dungarees to the left, and what looks like two men in bowler hats, perhaps clerks, to the right. They’re moving purposefully towards the camera, but we don’t know where they are coming from or where they’re headed. The point of origin and the point of arrival is unknown to us. Maybe it’s just business as usual, maybe it’s Sunday, maybe it’s the first time one of them ventures into New York City. That unknown has so far been close, but very far away, nonetheless. But now there’s a passage across.



The web is filled with images of bridges as aesthetic wonders defying gravity. One of them is “The Twist” in Kistefos, Norway [Fig. 2]👍, described on its website as a combined gallery, bridge, and sculpture. These usages make it a symbol, an embodiment of the many purposes for which a building can be used, a meeting place that offers a physical room for the kind of interaction that the Bridging Research Praxes workshop is dedicated to. I found “The Twist” on a list compiled by *Architectural Digest*, comprising old and new architectural masterpieces, all of them impressive feats of engineering as well as seducing edifices in their beautiful gravity-defying lines. Stone, wood, concrete, regardless of material the result was that of at least two knowledges (the engineer and the architect) with long histories. Striking about many of these examples, and indeed also about “The Twist,” is that such photos tend to be absent of people,



making the bridge into an ornament, a jewel that seems to exist somehow suspended in the air.

Bridges are part of the built environment. But they are also immaterial, part of knowledge infrastructures that are informational, embedded, and database-dependent, the engineering of which is just as crucial as the one we associate with the handling of stone or concrete. As crucial as sound abutments are to physical bridges, as crucial are they in an informational setting such as the one we live in today. But both require people to work. People passing across, people enabling connection and exchange and dialogue about what it means to be involved in and committed to knowledge work, work that is somehow anchored in our respective practices but that is always also in motion.

This special issue comes from a workshop organized in collaboration with [COMPASS: a Research Hub on Knowledge Circulation](#) at Linköping University focusing on how the creation and circulation of knowledge are enabled and disabled. While the centrality of the text remains paramount in the dissemination of knowledge, COMPASS nonetheless recognizes that the material and mediated conditions for knowledge circulation are currently in a state of transformation. Impacted by changes both within and outside academia, knowledge travels in many ways: in bodies and objects, through performances and exhibitions, in spoken and recorded form. COMPASS therefore seeks to bridge between the multiplicity of forms and the multiplicity of norms: from artisanal knowledge guilds to non-disclosure agreements, from shrink-wrap clicking to open access, forms, and norms of knowledge co-exist not only in various materialities but also in various regulatory practices.

Again, people make all of this happen. First and foremost, the organizers of the workshop, Victoria Martínez and Per-Anders Forstorp, but *Culture Unbound*, COMPASS, *Tema Kultur och samhälle* (Tema Q) have supported the Bridging Research Praxes workshop because we all believe in creating new bridges that support and foster interdisciplinary dialogue, a core value fundamentally dependent on a plurality of voices, a plurality that in turn needs to be built, or built for. Transposing the workshop into text translates the event into a new format that adds to what happened as the participants met in the room, either in the conference room or on Zoom is such a new bridge.

The Dialectic of Academic Practices: A Reflection by *Self* to Bridge the Praxes

[Alia Amir](#) ↓ and [Rizwan-ul Huq](#) ↓

In this remix and reflect essay, we, Rizwan-ul Huq and Alia Amir will reflect on our shared academic practices. Firstly, a brief introduction to our academic profile, thereafter, we reflect on our collaboration on the panel on [‘Metrics, Value and Recognition.’](#) ↓

[Reflect and Remix outcome from the panel on ‘Metrics, Value and Recognition’ as part of Linköping University’s symposium on Bridging Research Praxes Across Pluralities of Knowledge, draft 1, November 15, 2022]

Alia and Rizwan have created a productive professional relationship since 2011 when Rizwan joined Linköping University as an MA student of the Department of Culture and Communication, and Alia was a Ph.D. candidate at that time. Since then, they have collaborated on teaching, data collection, conference and panel presentations, seminar organization, research grants, and publications. Their collaborations and discussions have been creative and supportive of their research environments. While both of them share the research focus of classroom interaction in bilingual contexts for their Ph.D.s, Rizwan is primarily a social interactional researcher whose work is still growing and promising for micro-interactional studies with multimodality in focus. Alia is primarily an academic as well with an interactionist degree but who also contributes to community engagement with cultural and linguistic projects focusing on particular minorities in Sweden and Europe.

[As academics originally from the global south, we both come from unique ethnic and linguistic backgrounds in the Swedish context. In addition, we are both insiders and outsiders in the so-called ‘ivory towers’ in Sweden. As Ph.D.s from a Swedish university in classroom interaction, we are insiders & build on the ‘knowledge production’ workflow of our predecessors in our departments of our alma maters. As South Asians, we are one of the minorities in Swedish academia, and hence, the metaphorical ‘other’ 🗨️. With this knowledge about ‘self’ at the intersections of ethnicity, race, religion, gender, and sexuality, we engage, critically examine, and reflect upon our knowledge production in the ecological landscape of knowledge production. Our co-creation of knowledge is informed by our personal experiences, education, and ancestral history as well as being people of color from two former British colonies, namely, Pakistan and Bangladesh, we discern the value in our collaboration as well as by contributing to the wider global](#)

academia and our sub-disciplines. Academia is often under pressure and stuck in the maelstrom of peer-reviewed publishing annually - we heartily welcome the creative initiative by the organizers of Bridging Research Praxes Across Pluralities of Knowledge.

While we navigate the contemporary ideas put forth in the universe by - the *self* and the *other* (Taylor, 1977) 🗨️, we acknowledge the fluidity of the aforementioned binaries - and other binaries that we come across as academics and as subjects of contemporary society. We fully acknowledge that the boundaries of the self and the other merge and disappear when the other becomes the self and the self becomes the other - just like the foci of our independent research projects about language alternation in bilingual contexts where the boundaries of language A and B are often hard to tell, where the speaker and interlocutors can sometimes *mark* a word as 'the other' from language B when speaking language A, and at other times, our research participants blend words from languages A, B, C etc. without marking any of the words as - the other.

[For our collaboration for the panel entitled Metrics, Value, and Recognition, the motivation was primarily the three keywords of the panel which as academic researchers and teachers in precarious positions we often face, one way or the other 🗨️.](#)

As linguists, we are aware and acknowledge the vitality of semantic precision and accuracy. At the same time, we also recognize the tensions and gatekeeping enforced by the members of the epistemic community through their languaging practices. Also, as members of the interactional linguistic community who produce knowledge in the sub-discipline of interactional linguistics, we do value - *the metrics and the recognition* of the cutting-edge growing body of research in the science of talking-interaction. The aforementioned subdiscipline which is our home base of research is an empirical form of research that is bounded by the recognized standards of measurement, and its typical methods of practice. While some of its methods of practice have evolved and changed over time because of the advancement in technology and better resources available for this kind of research. For example, the norm now is video-collected data whereas formerly the data used to be audio-collected. This, in turn, has created hierarchies within this specific epistemic community of knowledge. On the other hand, we as academic practitioners see the value and benefits of research about human multimodal interaction, in particular, in novice and emerging contexts in the post-modern world, for example, online teaching, gaming interaction, etc.

In our knowledge production as well as in our teaching practices, we enforce certain metrics, for example, when teaching and supervising academic essays of

students. Rizwan and Alia's teaching practices are bound to their context, that is, a formal English linguistics classroom in an institute of higher education where pluralities of knowledge production exist but at the same time the binaries of oral and written production are safeguarded by traditional modes of metrics. In our teaching, we often inherit courses, which have been planned and laid out by our predecessors. While there is the benefit of saving time, as well as gaining from the experience of predecessors, it leaves little space for creativity and our contribution to the course design. Not only do we find a gap between our research and teaching practices, but we also often find that the actual actors who can benefit from research do not get to know about the research findings. It was these discussions that led us to contemplate how to reach the wider society in creative ways and disseminate knowledge beyond journal publications. We haven't reached our goals yet but hopefully, in the future, we can be more creative in reaching out to the various sectors of society and not be bound by the traditional cycle of publications.

We have also been reflective about where we present our research findings to break free from the bubbles and absorb the knowledge in differing epistemological spaces. We've tried to be reflective and we have tried to bridge the various research practices within our discipline by presenting in different sub-disciplines of education and linguistics. To conclude, we echo the words of Rabindranath Tagore (1912) in *Gitanjali* and the dialectic of academic practices:

The time that my journey takes is long and the way of it is long.
I came out on the chariot of the first gleam of light, and pursued my voyage through the wildernesses of worlds leaving my track on many a star and planet. It is the most distant course that comes nearest to thyself, and that training is the most intricate which leads to the utter simplicity of a tune.
The traveller has to knock at every alien door to come to his own, and one has to wander through all the outer worlds to reach the innermost shrine at the end.

As in Hegel's philosophy, our dialectical engagement with academia is – to some extent recycling *with différance* (Anward, 2014) of former crystallized practices, while at the same time we initiate and produce new praxes and co-create new contexts. According to Derrida, *différance* is the dynamic notion of difference (Derrida, 1967), which stresses that a novice aspect emerges at each creation of a new use in a new situation. Nevertheless, all our praxes are *context-renewing* and at the same time are tied to specific contexts and hence are context-bound (Seedhouse, 2004: 7). Similarly, our dialogue – and the dialectic *with* our academic practices continues through our collaboration, through this hybrid conference

panel, as well as through our creative way of publishing in a very unique and non-traditional academic style in this special issue of *Culture Unbound*.

In closing this short reflection, we may ask, what is the normative, traditional way of dialogue in academia? Whose praxes? Whose metrics? Whose values? [In a world and academia based on colonial practices, are we building upon giants upon giants of colonized practices - or are we free to generate and create novel and new ways of doing being academics?](#) 

Shared Authority and Research Ethics at The Wiener Holocaust Library

[Elise Bath](#) ↓, International Tracing Service Archive Team Manager

[Christine Schmidt](#) ↓, Deputy Director and Head of Research

We are pleased to contribute a short, informal reflective piece on our research work at The Wiener Holocaust Library (WHL) in London based on our participation in the Research Ethics and Shared Authority panel at the Bridging Research Praxes for Culture Unbound. We are both working in ‘academic-adjacent’ or ‘para-academic’ roles at the WHL, and our work together on the research teams involves collaboration, co-curation, interpretation, and other work with diverse stakeholders who have different connections to the focus of our work. Therefore, we felt it would be particularly relevant for us to participate and join in discussions about shared authority and our developing policies and practices with regard to our understanding of research ethics. The Holocaust period has deep and penetrating repercussions into the present, and as we work in an institution that is a charity, open to all, and that has a robust public-facing events and research, we also [hoped to learn from others at the conference](#) 🗨️. [One of the aspects that was most useful at the conference was the honest exchange about what constitutes ‘research’ and how non-higher education institutions can interact effectively with those based at universities to share authority.](#) 🗨️

To begin, a short introduction to the WHL’s work and mission helps set further context for our work and practice. The WHL, located in Central London, is the oldest institution collecting continuously about the Nazi period and the Holocaust since the 1930s. The WHL grew out of the work conducted by Dr. Alfred Wiener, who was a German Jew highly attuned to the rise in antisemitism in the 1920s and 1930s in Germany – and he and colleagues began to collect and disseminate information to subvert the activities of the Nazis and their supporters. Out of necessity, their work moved first to the Netherlands, and on the eve of the war, to London, where they continued to collect evidence from the Nazi period to investigate Nazi war crimes and advance research within the field of contemporary history. The work of the Library has always rested on its collections – we hold approximately 70,000 books and pamphlets; 45,000 photographs; and 3,000 periodical titles, 1 million press cuttings, and many other types of collections – such as games, ephemera, artworks, and audiovisual materials. This doesn’t include our vast digital collections, including the 30 million documents of The International Tracing Service (now called the Arolsen Archives), which we have in full digital access at the Library. 🗨️

• The initial foundations of our collections rested on the kinds of material Wiener and colleagues began to collect to undermine the Nazis, such as antisemitic tracts and right-wing pamphlets, as well as eye-witness accounts attesting to the persecution and crimes committed against Jews and others targeted by the Nazis. Many of the first employees of the Library were German-speaking Jewish refugees from the Reich, and after the war, those who survived the onslaught on the Continent also joined the staff and circles within which the Library worked. The changing face of Holocaust studies and research, the place of the Holocaust and its memory in Britain, and the users of the Library have since shaped the collections. These have come to include some 2,000 document collections, including many collections deriving from personal family collections from refugees and survivors themselves and their descendants. Today, we receive some 70 personal document collections as donations each year – these can range from one or two folders to several boxes. Coupled with our family research support program through our ITS collection, these have helped transform the Library not only into a center for support, development, and dissemination of scholarly research but also as a safe repository and place of community for those personally affected by the events of the Holocaust and its aftermath. Our most recent exhibition, [Holocaust Letters](#) 🌐, which Christine co-curated with a doctoral student named Sandra Lipner, highlights the intersections, which are not always but sometimes adversarial or conflicting, between academic and personal interest in the Holocaust, and different types of knowledge. The exhibition developed from a long-standing partnership with the Holocaust Research Institute, based at Royal Holloway, University of London, a partnership that aims to bridge the gap between scholarly research and wider knowledge about the Holocaust and Genocide, called [The Holocaust and Genocide Research Partnership](#) 🌐. [The HGRP focuses its activities on the nexus between these different publics, with an aim to bring them together in conversation, rather than relying on academics to ‘inform’ the wider public\(s\). Activities like the Letters exhibition and our ITS Research support expanded throughout the UK in our Recovery and Repair](#) 🌐 [program, probe multi-directional conversations between scholars, heritage practitioners, archivists, and those with personal connections to the period](#) 🌐. [These various efforts are important to us as they are deliberate attempts to bring together diverse audiences. Rather than having our outreach efforts funneled into various silos based on what we perceive to be a particular audience’s needs, we are deliberately aiming to collapse those boundaries. The Recovery and Repair program is a particularly good example of these efforts, bringing together family researchers, academics, and heritage professionals into the same spaces for collaboration and discussion](#) 🌐.

This connection between diverse audiences means that for us at the Library, the

ethics of research practice and shared authority are both of primary concern. The questions our panel discussed about the situational aspect of our work, the particularly sensitive nature of the topic, mediation of the past for families and our role in that, and the power structures inherent in archives – are all aspects that frame our daily activities and practice.

Communicating research with families of victims of Nazi persecution is an area of our work that throws these issues into particularly sharp relief. Elise heads the ITS Team, which works closely with people trying to find out what happened to their relatives in the Holocaust. The team uses the ITS Archive (now called the Arolsen Archives) to carry out research into individuals' experiences of Nazi persecution and then communicates the results of that research to the enquirers. These enquirers are often Holocaust survivors, or the children of victims and refugees; people for whom this history is very close, very personal, and with the potential to be deeply fraught. Often research uncovers potentially distressing information of an unexpected kind: abandoned families, collaboration, and sexual violence. A vital part of the ITS Team's work then, is to consider the potential emotional impact of their research, a task to which team members devote a great deal of time and energy. This can manifest in various ways. On a practical level, for example, the Library has recently designated a small private room as being specifically for ITS work so that enquirers can discuss potentially fraught and painful family histories in private. ITS Team members can also offer follow-up discussions upon completion of the research to ensure the enquirers fully understand the material they have been sent, and that they feel they have had the opportunity to ask as many questions as they would like.

Our panel discussed the perceived contradiction between detached, scholarly research and factoring in the potential emotional impact of the work in its communication. The ITS Team at the WHL very much sees the positionality of our researchers, and their recognition of the emotional aspects of this work (both for the enquirers and for themselves), as not only inevitable but as an enhancement to our offering. The ITS Team considers itself to have a duty of care towards enquirers. By actively considering the emotional aspects of the work and its potentially upsetting impact, and by harnessing our emotional responses to the research, the importance of taking great care in how we communicate our findings becomes clear. 🍷

Of course, The ITS Team is deeply aware of the potentially upsetting nature of the information we find, but, of course, we do not censor or withhold any information. We cannot decide what aspects of our findings we communicate,

only the manner in which we do so. The team has developed various strategies to make sure the enquirers' potentially negative emotional response to the research is not exacerbated by our style of communication. This includes techniques such as layering information by hiding graphic details behind a link an enquirer can click if/when they feel prepared, or by arranging phone calls or in-person meetings to answer questions an enquirer may have. [We have no interest in being gatekeepers of knowledge, in deciding how much information a person should know.](#) Developing a person-centered, trauma-informed archival practice, which prioritizes robust research and the emotional heft of the work equally, has become an ethical imperative for the team, and has led to the development of strong and trusting relationships with enquirers. Not only are we trusted to carry out rigorous research to the best of our abilities, but we are also trusted to communicate and relate to enquirers in an emotionally-aware, and kind manner.

We can take this approach because we are a small, responsive team that works on only a small number of cases at a time. This allows us to assess what enquirers need and how we can best deliver that on a case-by-case basis. Indeed, one advantage of the WHL generally is that it is a small charity, which means the cooperation between our engagement, research, and collections teams is quite close, and the practices among these teams can help inform each other. Our cataloging and thesaurus terms are constantly under review, and we have had staff-wide discussions about needed revisions for inclusivity and to reflect a more contemporary understanding of nuances and sensitivities. Some of our structures and terms have been legacies of the 'archival practices' of our earlier days when well-intentioned people who were not professional archivists handled the material and cataloged it to make it accessible. It is only since the 1990s that we have had a professional archivist (and now the team has expanded), so we work to update our catalog as much as possible.

[The Library is in the midst of articulating its new research strategy, and we will draw from these experiences and make connections to feminist theory that values and positions embodied knowledge alongside other forms of knowledge more traditionally accepted within academic research.](#)

Another area where shared authority/research ethics practice comes up in our work is through our exhibitions. In exhibitions Christine has recently co-curated with partners, who are both academic but also have personal connections to the Holocaust, [she has examined the curatorial voice and interpretation within the exhibition's display and tries to lay this bare for visitors.](#) This acknowledges to visitors that they are experiencing curators' interpretations rather than unmediated

history (if there is such a thing). This became particularly relevant in the Holocaust Letters exhibition when we used personal correspondence, likely never intended for wider consumption, to explore early Holocaust knowledge creation and the agency of the letter writers in disseminating the knowledge they had developed. By co-curating a selection of panels with donors/lenders to the exhibition, and welcoming their input into the exhibition from its early stages, the curators hoped that the role of those who safeguarded the material evidence of the past and who are keepers of family knowledge about the letter writers found ample space in the exhibition, even where this may contradict the curators' interpretations. The process is ongoing, as those who contributed to the exhibition meet family and friends in the space and connect with others who embark on the personal journey of family research. The curators, too, continue to reflect on the exhibition as a space for community and interpretation. This is again facilitated, in part, by the size of the institution and the scope of its exhibitions program, which is dynamic, iterative, and small enough to facilitate interpersonal relationships throughout its conception and curation.

We both felt that the dialogue fostered by the *Research Ethics and Shared Authority* panel at the *Bridging Research Praxes* conference was a terrific and unusual opportunity to take a step back and reflect on our research practices at the WHL and to learn from others who produce and practice research in different ways and multiple contexts. [We welcome feedback on this piece to keep the conversation going!](#) 💬

Reflecting on Shared Practice: Academia and Curatorship

[Juilee Decker](#) ↓ and [Barbara Wood](#) ↓

[Reflect and Remix outcome from the panel on ‘Metrics, Value and Recognition’ as part of Linköping University’s symposium on Bridging Research Praxes Across Pluralities of Knowledge, draft 1, October 1, 2022/October 17, 2022]

Although they have never met in person, Juilee and Barbara have created a productive professional relationship which has resulted in several publications that focus on very current heritage issues. This has been largely through the medium of [Collections Journal](#) 🗨️ which Juilee edits. The dialogue that they share has been both supportive and creative. Barbara is a practitioner who also works in academia, publishing, and teaching. Juilee is Programme Director and hence primarily an academic but one who also maintains the skills of applied practice as she works in exhibition production and community engagement. Both meet in the rarely occupied space between academia and [practice](#) 🗨️.

* * *

For our particular collaboration, we come from different places and work within the other: our collaboration [is experimental, perhaps, but it’s truly part of a workflow](#) 🗨️. We are neither solely academics nor practitioners, instead, we work in the liminal spaces between both worlds, as well as at the margins. We see the value in our collaboration as a method, as a way of building knowledge, together.

Our collaboration was the impetus for contributing to the conversations during our session on ‘Metrics, Value and Recognition’ where we were party to metaphors of bridges, elephants, and cul-de-sacs. The bridge represents a pathway of connection: through ways of working, as practitioners, academics, and scholars across a range of fields. The elephant represents the whole, fullness of an idea, issue, or context—the proclaimed designation of “interdisciplinarity” that carves, ever more deeply, the ingrained ways of each discipline, thereby preventing individuals from being fully aware of others’ presence—as if they are all feasting on a big elephant simultaneously, without the ability to view one another from beyond the curves of the carcass. The cul-de-sac represents a looped action, perhaps with only delivery and receipt, lacking fuller engagement. Building upon these metaphors, we see value in bridging while avoiding elephants and finding more fulfillment than a mere cul-de-sac might provide.

We share our expertise and seek to support one another in our different areas of work - we can share knowledge, experience, and skills. [Is our way of working a manner of seeking, together, both of us, normativity in the post-praxis academy and/or heritage/museum sector—where praxis is expected, side by side, as part of the academy and vice-versa? They co-exist and inform one another and are equal collaborators](#)🗨️.

Is such a collaboration (among and between) academic practitioners [normative?](#)🗨️
Is such a methodology adopted and accepted in a localized environment, as in our journal collaborations, even if that is not the case across all environments? If our working collaboration is not repeatable, as universally true circumstances, then their designation as normative is aspirational, as well as constructed.

Museums and public collections are perhaps more familiar and experienced in creating partnerships and networks to deliver their purpose. Exhibitions, public programs, and heritage-based projects draw in individuals and organizations to share knowledge, reach new [audiences](#)🗨️ and partners, and extend the value of activity. Often reliant on grant funding which requires the building of partnerships, those in such applied practice have an experience of collaboration that has matured over time and is demonstrably effective.

Reflecting on the collaboration between such applied practice and academia, the relationship is not always so clear. In this situation, relationships can still feel [transactional](#)🗨️ rather than co-created, short-term rather than a long-term and ongoing association with the potential to change and develop, and functional rather than creative and developmental. However, both spheres have much to offer the other and for many, such professional relationships are in the earliest stages. What we can say, based on our individual and shared experience of practice, is that there is an extensive opportunity but we note the importance of identifying the form, relationship, extent, and expectation of shared working. The space between academia and practice is in many ways still responsive primarily to the immediate needs of partners and to the direction required by [funders](#)🗨️. The ingredient that will allow a different depth of relationship and shared working is time. The example of museums and their partners demonstrates that shared practice has become normative but this is very different from the situation of 20 or 30 years ago. [Time allows the growth of confidence and the acquisition of the skills that support collaboration](#)🗨️.

To what end do we seek collaboration as normative? According to *New York Times* columnist [David Brooks, we navigate the world around and seek relationships:](#)🗨️

‘we are formed by relationship, we are nourished by relationship, and we long for relationship. Life is not a solitary journey. It is building a home together. It is a process of being formed by attachments and then forming attachments in turn. It is a great chain of generations passing down gifts to one another’ (Brooks 2019: 300). How does such a view pertain to work and, in particular, to the work of museums, historic houses, and spaces that present cultural heritage?

Brooks claims the central journey for people in moving from the phases of their lives—which he calls the first and second mountains, respectively—demonstrates the move from self to service. He calls for balance, remarking that the relationist [museum] doesn’t walk away from capitalist [meritocracy](#) but, rather ‘balances that worldview with a countervailing ethos that supplements, corrects, and ennobles’ (Brooks 2019: 301, 304).

Can our work, in community and collaboration, be such a space that balances our perspectives, that brings balance to our communities by committing to their community, however, defined, and making that community the center of their [lives](#)? [Our own shared experience demonstrates that this is possible as](#) does our individual experience of creating academic work with practitioner and community partners and conversely drawing academic colleagues into applied and community work. Are we, perhaps, taking cues from an emeritus scholar of museum studies and heritage practices, Stephen Weil, who proposed that people become the focus of museums, rather than [objects](#)? Are we, too, in our research practice and scholarship moving away from ‘being about something’ and toward ‘being for somebody’ (Weil 1999: 229-258)?

In our work, we try not to be overly concerned [about metrics, value, and recognition](#)—although, in different ways, our institutions [are](#). Juilee in particular is interested in cultivating community, convening, and collaboration. However, work that centers and anchors such approaches often do not yield the metrics, value, and recognition that other forms of scholarship may. Thus, work may appear more valuable than other forms of production. Barbara’s experience has varied depending on the organization for which she is working. When in local authority museums or heritage projects, the relationships built, the networks made, and the partnerships created including with academics, were not only key measures but often required evidence to access funding and consequently to demonstrate value and successful delivery. For her current employer, the development of shared research space with academics has become critical as the National Trust has recently achieved IRO (Independent Research Organisation) status. [This means that it can be operated similarly to research bodies such as universities or national museums.](#)

Our own shared practice has sometimes meant working beyond temporary measures and interests. While individually we try to retain sight of separate institutional values, including merit and recognition, we can find that our most productive activity has happened beyond our everyday work and the expectations of our organizations. Our experience is that individuals do connect and make things happen. Equally, heritage projects and community activity are a space where practice and academia find a productive and shared environment where partners can meaningfully contribute. However, while for some heritage-based organizations such as museums this can be normative, for all in our sector there is much work to do before this shared space is fully formed, long-term, and valued in ways that our employers will always be able to recognize.

[Starescheski, amongst others, embraced the democratization of authority and we can read this as the sharing of practice amongst professionals, practitioners, academics, communities, and individuals but he also demonstrates that ‘... shared authority is inherently fragile’ \(Starecheski 2017: 379\). Cline recognises the obstacles inherent in seeking to share such authority \(or practice\) too widely ‘...delivering shared authorship is hard enough, promising shared authority is, though worthy, often to invite doom’ \(Cline 2017: 373\).](#)

The opportunity to come together as part of the Linköping conference, illuminating other personal and professional experiences, in many ways suggested that this situation is universal—perhaps not an unexpected finding. What the conference did also do though was demonstrate not only the value of finding shared practice space but that a collaborative way of working is not necessarily uncommon. How it becomes normative, particularly perhaps within the sphere of academia, remains a question.

Between research and practice. Balancing between research on, with, and for participation

[Louise Ejgod Hansen](#) in collaboration with [Birgit Eriksson](#), [Rachel Faulkner](#), [Karen Nordentoft](#), [Trine Sørensen](#), and [Anders Nordberg Sejerøe](#) ↓

[Read the “Reply to Peers” preface written by Louise Ejgod Hansen](#) 🗨️. This article presents reflections on different aspects of the participatory research project DELTAG (PARTICIPATE) conducted in Denmark in 2019-2023. DELTAG aims to study participation in cultural centers in Denmark through participatory research methods. The article does not present the results of DELTAG but reflects on some of the core values and challenges of researching in close collaboration between academics and practitioners. The reflections and perspectives originate from presentations and contributions from both academic and practice-based co-researchers from the project. The material in the article stems from the conference *Bridging research and praxes* and the purpose is to add further reflections on the approach to, as well as the consequences, values, and challenges of, how we bridged research and practice in DELTAG. One of the core points appearing during the conference is that the outcome and value of the project differs depending on the perspective and that this multiplicity is not a problem or a mistake, but a precondition that needs to be accepted and tackled in a dialogical and ideally non-hierarchical way. The article is divided into the following themes: Different perspectives on data, time, workload, and value, the value of DELTAG from different perspectives and shared authority. Before presenting and discussing these themes, DELTAG and the co-contributors are presented and the process of and format for this article is introduced.

Presentation of DELTAG and the co-researchers

DELTAG is a research and development project where we bridged research and practice. It is a partnership between the Association of Cultural Centers in Denmark (Kulturhusene i Danmark) and Aarhus University. The core of the project has been to involve people from cultural centers and other cultural institutions as co-researchers so that we together could create knowledge *on* participation and citizen engagement *through* participatory research methods 🗨️. The co-researchers have been using a variety of methods: visual mapping, document analysis, observation interviews, and ethnography in their own cultural center on the processes of participation. Altogether 28 co-researchers have contributed to the data gathering and analysis in DELTAG.

Three of the co-researchers participated in the *Bridging research and praxes* conference and are thus also co-contributors to this article. They are: Rachel

Faulkner, Trine Sørensen og Anders Nordberg Sejerøe. The three co-researchers participated in *Bridging research and praxes* together with the three academic researchers engaged in DELTAG: Karen Nordentoft, Birgit Eriksson, and Louise Ejgod Hansen, from the School of Communication and Culture at Aarhus University.

As this article is written based on interview transcripts from the conference, several different voices express their experiences and perspectives. It has been the intention of this article neither to merge these perspectives into one unison voice nor to keep them as statements attributed to individuals. By including several perspectives and making these perspectives clear and distinct during the analysis, we hope to be able to show and reflect on some of the dilemmas of a participatory, collective research project.

The relevance of DELTAG

[\[Read the Peer-to-Peer review discussion in this section\]](#)💡

At the cultural centers, DELTAG is seen as a part of a longer process. Many of them have just started and continue with the tools from DELTAG to work better and have a better understanding of participation. Transformation is thus an ongoing process of reflecting on their practices how people use the public spaces in the cultural centres and what it means to be relevant in the future. The aim is to continue to be relevant as a public house for people in local communities. The ambition of DELTAG was to create a process, in which the co-researchers would strengthen a sense of participant agency through the research activities so that they could develop their cultural institutions. The co-researchers were also agents that could help the academic researchers raise the question of participation, which is also about inclusion, exclusion, empowerment, co-decision, et cetera, as a collective issue. Apart from cultural centers, several other cultural institutions participated in DELTAG; among them quite a few public libraries. They together with culture houses the most widespread cultural institution in Denmark, present in every municipality and almost every small town💡. Their agenda is to remain relevant locally, and the libraries are undergoing a change in these years formerly the collection of books and other materials were the most important part of the library, but now this has changed. Participating in DELTAG contributed to understanding this transformation and the new role in which the facilitation and engagement of people are central.

The co-researchers were looking at their places and their own houses, and could also use the other co-researchers as well as the academic researchers to make

room for reflection on who is coming in their houses and why are they different from this house and who is not coming. As one co-researcher describes it:

Normally we presume that we understand our audience, but to have this role as an ethnographer in our praxis has enabled us to have these external eyes on our practice. And you also asked about whether culture is decoded, but I think one of the learnings was that it is not only a question of programming, but also of how we present it to the people, how we communicate, how the interior and the buildings are designed. Looking at everything with open eyes again and listening to, what they were saying was a valuable part of the project.

An example of the use of the methods in DELTAG is how several co-researchers examined the shared reading events taking place at many libraries. In the shared reading groups, people meet once a month and discuss a book. One of the co-researchers observed one meeting where a group of women met for a little less than two hours. By being an observer, the co-researcher learned about the different roles within the groups and how they had prepared, and how they also were performing for each other. One participant had prepared the meeting and how to discuss the book in a dialogical way, addressing other topics as well. Afterward, the co-researcher did short interviews with three of the participants individually and got a lot of insight into the reasons they had for being a part of this group. The result was an enhanced understanding of the importance of the culture center as a neutral space in which the participants were not private. The purpose of shared reading was not looking for friends, but for a personal relationship with other locals, they could share the reading experience with, maybe for many years. The data-gathering process gave insight into the form and value of the shared reading group, showing that there was much more at stake here than just five women meeting and discussing books. This broadened the understanding of the reading groups and of the importance of facilitating and hosting these meetings. Another example of how the co-researchers used the methods was a visual mapping done by another co-researcher who involved their colleagues in making the mapping. They ended up spending several days mapping the cultural center, and the process brought to light that they did not agree upon how to make a visual representation of their cultural center. The process made them debate who the most important stakeholders and user groups were and how are the resources distributed between various groups also addressing the question of inclusion and exclusion and dependencies. In this way, they used the method to negotiate very different understandings of their own center that they were not aware of.

Data creation and the value of data

[Read the Peer-to-Peer review discussion in this section] 

The process of creating data as described above was an important element of DELTAG. An interesting transformation happens in a data-gathering process engaging both practices and research. During this process, ordinary objects and everyday practices like a document or experiencing an event are transformed into data and become part of a research process. At some point, an object is framed as data included in a research process, but at other times, it is a poster on a wall. The creation of data in DELTAG meant that objects, conversations, and events were seen in another way, and becoming data meant that new values were assigned to them. The value of data was one of the core values of DELTAG, as it was a cornerstone in the co-researching process. The data had value for the co-researchers as well as the academic researcher, but the value and purpose of data creation and use of data were not the same from different perspectives.

From an academic perspective, data was included in academic knowledge production and publication, thus in a relatively traditional academic publishing process. From this perspective, a reoccurring discussion in DELTAG has been about the quality of data and thus its value in an academic context. Participatory data are messy, different people in different institutional contexts have gathered them making different choices along the way. Data is thus not as systematic as the academic researchers would dream of, and of course, that is also an obstacle. [For example, when our co-researchers have done observations, they write extremely differently, of different lengths, and in their analysis, they also write quite differently](#) . It is important not to look at this just as a problem or a source of error but as a quality. When immersing into this data set, it becomes clear that the data set contains different perspectives and voices in a way that helps us as academics to reflect on the impossibilities and limitations of thinking about data gathering as a process in which the personality and the experience of the data gatherer always both influence and enrich the data.

Another perspective on the messiness and variety of data is that data has also been gathered to improve one's practice in the cultural center. The selection of data has thus been decided upon based on this purpose as well. An example is the method of document analysis; each of the co-researchers picked ten documents e.g., an annual report, a program, a physical poster hanging on the wall in the cultural center, etc. Through the process of choosing those documents, they became data and were looked upon as data that could be analyzed by the academic researchers focusing on e.g., the institutional framing of participation,

but also by the co-researchers at the cultural centers in ways that transformed back into actions in the cultural centers. For instance, signs on the door included as data in the document analysis, made the co-researchers acknowledge that their communication focused on what was not allowed, which made them find other ways to communicate.

The two perspectives need to co-exist in a project like DELTAG. This also means that the academics had to find ways to deal with e.g., interview data with the super positive user of the cultural center telling a narrative about how fantastic everything is. From a traditional academic perspective, this type of data would be considered biased and approached critically. However, doing so would potentially undermine the intention of the co-researcher who can use these data to legitimize their practice and document the value of their work. To deal with this, both practitioners and academics needed to engage in a dialog where the practitioners acknowledge the value of a more critical perspective and academics acknowledge that it is fair, even important, that cultural centers engage in DELTAG to legitimize themselves. Our shared experience was that positive self-representation was not dominant in the data and that the co-researchers appreciated the dialog about challenges and failures for the learning potential of this . Balancing this with the need, especially in the publications, to demonstrate the value of the cultural centers in a way that could also legitimize them, the academic participants took care to understand and acknowledge the need for legitimization as a fair use of data and an inherent part of the process of exchanging knowledge.

Time, workload, and value

The creation of an extensive set of data is a core value of DELTAG, but it was also a time-consuming and demanding task for the co-researchers. For this reason, all participants must profit from the process of data creation. The balancing of the different outcomes touches upon an important aspect of participatory research, that of the relation between free and paid labor. In DELTAG the co-researchers were not paid for their work in the project while the academic researchers were a part of their obligations as paid university employees. However, most of the co-researchers were employed at the cultural centers, and for the ones that were not themselves senior managers, the senior management of the center approved before the project started that they could participate as a part of their job, having allocated enough time to be able to do so. However, a few of the co-researchers were from volunteer-run cultural centers and thus were not paid for their participation. Looking at the composition of the group of co-researchers, the fact that many of the co-researchers that dropped out of the project came from small cultural centers, some of which were run by volunteers, we should have made a

differentiation that allowed us to compensate these co-researchers for their time in the project.

Another aspect of the time invested in the project is also the value from the perspective of the individual co-researcher. Many of them have experienced that the opportunity to learn and immerse oneself in important and relevant aspects of one's practice was rewarding. The co-researchers were given the opportunity to develop skills in e.g. data gathering and analysis and a better understanding of their practice of facilitation participation. Despite that, time was an issue for the co-researchers. After the initial excitement of getting the toolbox on how to conduct a good interview about participation, how to make observations, how to analyze documents etc., they were ready to conduct research in their cultural centres. And then time became an issue because it had to be balanced with other tasks. Most of them managed, but they were introduced to quite an elaborate kind of work that they were expected to put into the project, and some of the co-researchers did not gather all the data types or all the data that was a part of the methodology. Part of that was covid-19 that challenged the data collection process, but more importantly, this is the reality of cultural professionals. Even though the matching of expectations was clear from the start, unforeseen obstacles, other time-consuming tasks and just the reality of their everyday job made it challenging. Adjusting the time frame and acknowledging the need to adjust the data-gathering process, perhaps gathering less data or gathering data in forms that did not match the schemes and frameworks introduced by the academics, became part of the process, and because of these adjustments, a high number of co-researchers managed to contribute to the shared data collection.

[One of the dilemmas of engaging non-academics in academic work is whether this is an exploitation by the academic team of the co-researchers as free labor](#)🗨️.

This is an important debate in academia. Being a partnership from the outside, DELTAG was initiated to benefit both partners with the Association of Cultural Centres in Denmark as an initiator of the project. In retrospect, it can honestly be said that it has not been less working intensely for academic researchers to partner up with the co-researchers in a participatory research project. On one hand, more data has been gathered in the project; much more than the academic team would ever be able to gather themselves. In that way, it is about time and resources. On the other hand, the process of developing the methodology and analyzing the data has not been less time-consuming or more cost-efficient than in 'ordinary' research projects. Time has also been spent on other things, like a lot of meetings, coordination, networking, and knowledge dissemination; activities that are important elements in a partnership and a collaborative process. Based on

the experiences of DELTAG, the idea of exploiting citizens as free labor to generate data that they cannot afford to gather themselves should never be the reason to engage in participatory research projects. Data gathered via participatory methods has the value of being enriched by the co-researcher, engaged in the cultural centers with a lot of expert knowledge about these places. They have an important role as knowledge providers and co-creators. This also gives the academics an obligation to include and accept their agendas, for instance, some of them focused on inclusion/exclusion, and some of them focused on other things. In this way, it was also about co-creation as being in the project together, which also included developing affective ties to each other and friendships and all these ‘complicated’ and time-consuming things making it fun, rewarding, and demanding at the same time.

The value of DELTAG from different perspectives

There is no doubt that the value of participating in a research project differs depending on the perspective. This does not mean that one perspective is more important than the other, but that it is important to understand the different perspectives and create opportunities for the realization of the creation of value from different perspectives. All the co-researchers were practitioners who beforehand had a great understanding of the value of what they were doing and were highly committed to what they were doing. They knew their practice was valuable, but during the process, they also reflected on their practice, shared this with us and each other, and related it to the typology of forms and values. The academic researchers also shared our interpretation of the values as feedback to them in a way that aimed to be useful for them in the development of their existing practice.

Some of the co-researchers worked strategically with participation and citizen engagement, and DELTAG became one aspect of the process to enhance and strengthen the collaboration with civil society and their organizations. For these co-researchers, it was nice to be part of a research project, but the value was not to contribute to research. They had their own agenda for participating in DELTAG and as it was stated by one of them, it was “just lucky that we were such a good match”.

This was also a learning for the academic team. In academia, we tend to see the academic hierarchy as the most important in the world and academic results can be used in a variety of ways. It is important to understand that there are many hierarchies, and the academic one is not necessarily the most important for people who are involved in our research. And this is very important for

academics to remember. That does not mean that we should not try to change the hierarchies in academia and try to challenge the gatekeepers. But when we engage in processes of creating impact and in collaborations with practice, we need to understand, that we meet other more important values.

Shared authority 🗨️

A very broad variety of people working in cultural centers have been co-researchers in DELTAG including people with a university degree, but also artists and people with vocational education. When practitioners engage in a project with three academics, they might as it was formulated by one of the co-researchers be “a little bit in awe and think that they are the smarter of us”. Some of the co-researchers have expressed that at the beginning of the process, they experienced a hierarchy, but also that during the process, we succeeded in creating a much more equal balance with a shared authority in this project, despite the built-in hierarchy from the outset. One way in which it has become clear that not only the academic knowledge has had value in DELTAG is how the co-researchers express their appreciation of the network activities in the project. These have been organized without the academics and a lot of the gain from DELTAG has come from the dialog and reflection together with the other co-researchers.

All the co-researchers from the cultural centers were asked to write their analysis of the data gathered in their center and then the report was written by we three academics. So the analyses created by the co-researchers were used in the report, but not directly and that is an issue that we have discussed afterwards, that this is an important aspect of sharing authority when it comes to publishing texts. But coming back to the point that there are different values and hierarchies at play, publication is only one outcome. There are different stakes in such a project and other ways of using the data and the knowledge production, which means that our co-researchers also take over some of the academic knowledge and use it in their context and in situations that the academics do not control. Our experience is that the key element in shared authority is not to co-decide or co-author everything. It is to understand and respect and give room for different interests and different ways in which you want to use the data and the knowledge. Regarding publications, we have not only published the reports, which has been the responsibility of the academics. As a part of the project, there is also a guide which was made by four of the co-researchers in collaboration with two of the academics 🗨️. In a project like DELTAG, there are different voices, and this is the voice of the co-researchers making this guide for the sector, for other people in cultural centers who want to try the methods and work with this conceptual framework for participation in cultural centers. This is one example of a way in which shared authority in this project is also about having

access to and using different channels, different voices, and formats.

From a co-researcher perspective, the abuse of attribution by the academic partners is a risk: they do all the work and then the academic researchers take all the credit. Apart from being very aware of this in DELTAG, we also experienced that the question of credit abuse is more complex than simply crediting all contributors for everything. It is also a question of looking at credit from different perspectives. The co-researchers did not come into DELTAG as academic researchers to get credit for the research; they joined as practitioners for other reasons. As one of the co-researchers formulates it, they are likely to look at credit in a different way linking credit to recognition of the value of the work that they are doing rather than for the research. The research aspect of it is a way for them to get value and recognition for the work. They were not necessarily there to be credited as academic researchers, and though they are credited in some of the academic outputs of the project, that is not necessarily their main interest. They were much more interested in what they could learn from this project and how both the network of practitioners could support the development of their professional practice and how they could use the research more broadly to get more value and recognition for the work they are doing. This might enable them to e.g. have a better narrative to tell the local authority, to get them to support the work and understand the value of it. This aspect of legitimization is part of a larger cultural policy perspective, in which funders define value in numbers: how many people have participated. DELTAG provided what many of the co-researchers saw as a useful, alternative definition of value focusing on the meaning and value of the lives of the people that are participating. This was the form of value and credit of this project that was far more important for the co-researchers than credit for contributing to academic publications.

The question of sharing authority and giving credit is thus not just about acknowledging the workload, but it is also about acknowledging that there are multiple purposes involved in these collaborative processes. DELTAG has aimed to be less one-directional than other collaborations between research and practice 🗨️. In many cases, these partnerships are either commissioned research where people from practice, come to academics because they wanted something from academia, pay for it and the academics deliver. There might also be an academic output, but that is secondary. The other way around, academics use case studies, coming to practice to study something because of their research purposes. The way of balancing and negotiating and discussing and fighting over the various interests and values of a project like DELTAG is the fun of it and one of the values of it. In this process, it is important to acknowledge the

different values and the different purposes of being involved in these processes.

Outro

One of the questions addressed during the conference was whether the experiences, methods, and conceptual framework from DELTAG are of transnational relevance. DELTAG builds on a European project RECCORD that included cultural centers in Europe from Kyiv to England, Spain, Greece, and Bulgaria. Some of the findings from that project were similar to what was discovered in the Danish project, and some were diverse. But one of the things that is transnationally relevant is the five methods: visual mapping, observations, interviews, autoethnographies, and document analysis. These are methods that people in the institutions can use both on their institutions and – as it was done in RECCORD – on exchange in other cultural centers where they studied another institution and then reflected on the similarities and differences in comparison with the center, the co-researcher came from. In both projects, the co-researchers have created these networks of people. As it has become clear through the conference and this textual remix of the conference contributions the important relationship in DELTAG is not just the relationship between the academic researcher and the co-researcher, it is also a local, national, and transnational network of co-researchers.

Authors' bios

Alia Amir is a Research Associate at SOAS, University of London. She is a linguist who has worked on topics ranging from British Indian English policy and discourse to how language policing was enforced in an English class in interaction in the Swedish context. Her areas of research are at the cross-section of interactional linguistics and applied linguistics including classroom interaction, language policy, English as a Foreign Language (EFL)/English as a Second Language (ESL), English in Sweden, and to some extent Turkey and Pakistan. Her current research focus is on interaction in online classes, children's online gaming, and the linguistic landscape of Sweden. She trains pre-service English teachers and lectures on English in the classroom in Sweden. [↑ p.11](#)

Elise Bath works at the Wiener Holocaust Library in London, where she manages the International Tracing Service (ITS) Digital archive, which contains over 30 million documents related to the experiences of over 17.5 million people affected by Nazi persecution. A great deal of her time is spent using the archive to trace what happened to individual victims of Nazi persecution, usually on behalf of their families. [↑ p.15](#)

Juilee Decker is a professor of history who directs an undergraduate museum studies degree program in the USA. Her background is in art history, having taken her training at an academic program affiliated with the Cleveland Museum of Art. Since earning her degrees, Decker has pursued site-based and object-based public engagement projects. Her research centers questions around constructions of knowledge—from the history and function of museums from monuments and memorials to visitor experiences with technology in museums. [↑ p.20](#)

Birgit Eriksson has done extensive research on participation including the precursor of DELTAG, RECCORD, and the ongoing project *CraftWork: Creative, institutional, and social potentials in new forms of participation at art museums* done in collaboration with the Danish museum Trapholt. [↑ p.24](#)

Rachel Faulkner was during DELTAG the co-director of a participatory arts organization called Culture Shift which is based in Billund, Denmark, a very small, rural Danish community. Due to being the home base of Lego, the well-known multinational corporation, the community has a massive international population and huge cultural diversity. Culture Shift aims to bridge this cultural diversity within the community. [↑ p.24](#)

Louise Ejgod Hansen has been engaged in several collaborations between research and practice including the research-based evaluation of European Capital of Culture Aarhus 2017. Her main research areas include empirical audience and user studies and cultural policy research. [↑ p.24](#)

Eva Hemmungs Wirtén is Professor of Mediated Culture at the Department of Culture and Society, Linköping University, Sweden, and has written extensively on the cultural history of international copyright, the public domain, and, more recently, on patents as documents. [↑ p.24](#)

Rizwan-ul Huq is an Assistant Professor Department of Education and Foreign Languages, Sakarya University, Turkey. He is a social interactional researcher who completed his PhD in Educational Practice from Linköping University (2021). Dr Huq's PhD dissertation is an investigation of bilingual instruction in Bangladeshi schools which contributes to the growing literature on social interaction in bilingual classrooms and the wider field of bilingual and multilingual pedagogy. Dr Huq's PhD is a pioneering interactional work in the context of Bangladesh. His research also informs code-switching and classroom interaction research. [↑ p.11](#)

Victoria Van Orden Martínez is a historian at Linköping University in Sweden, where her recent research has focused on how survivors of Nazi persecution who came to Sweden as refugees were involved in various sociohistorical processes during the post-war period, with a focus on women and the role of gender and other differences. She is a former Editorial Assistant of *Culture Unbound*.

Karen Nordentoft is a PhD scholar who before returning to Aarhus University and academia, had been a practitioner in cultural life for many years. She has been doing arts management and being employed in various projects as a project manager, and as a teacher and has been engaged in local cultural policy. [↑ p.24](#)

Christine Schmidt is a historian of the Holocaust, with a passion for and commitment to public history, archives, and cultural heritage. She works as Deputy Director and Head of Research at The Wiener Holocaust Library, London, where she oversees academic programming and research initiatives, curates exhibitions, and develops research partnerships. [↑ p.15](#)

Anders Nordberg Sejerøe works at the Department of Culture and Leisure in the municipality of Holbæk as a part of the public library. Here, his job is to strengthen the dialog and communication between the municipality, citizens, and civil society. The public library functions as a cultural center, having rooms for participatory activities and the library has as a strategic aim to enhance and strengthen collaboration with civil society and their organizations. [↑ p.24](#)

Trine Sørensen works at Godsbanen, the cultural production center in Aarhus as a PR and communications manager and coordinator and curator of their professional performing arts residents' program. [↑ p.24](#)

Barbara Wood is a museum and heritage professional in the UK. Her background is in archaeology, historic site development, arts, and museums. She now works as a Cultural Heritage Curator for the National Trust, an organization working with historic properties, collections, and landscapes across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. She is a collections and interpretation specialist. Her academic work beyond collections has focussed on the concepts of power and authority in heritage and the idea of authenticity. [↑ p.20](#)

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Appendix I: Original CFP

BRIDGING RESEARCH PRAXES ACROSS PLURALITIES OF KNOWLEDGE

**Interdisciplinary dialogues on ethics, collaboration,
and knowledge production**

April 26-28, 2022

Linköping University, Sweden (Campus Norrköping & Zoom)

We invite you to participate in a hybrid (Zoom and IRL) interdisciplinary and international conference hosted and funded by COMPASS, Tema Q, and LiU Humanities, at Linköping University in Norrköping, Sweden. This will be a global/local event and international participants are invited to attend either in person or via Zoom.

Different research praxes: Haitian-American anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot, citing French historian Marc Ferro writes, “history has many hearths and academics are not the sole history teachers in the land.” It is a statement that raises the question of how researchers working both within and external to academia in all disciplines and areas of research can not only recognize that knowledge is produced at different hearths, but also engage more ethically and collaboratively with what is produced in these different locations? Recognizing that searching for answers to this question cannot be left to arbitrary and haphazard engagements and encounters, but must be motivated, reflected on, and formulated clearly, this conference is designed as a platform for researchers to engage in open dialogue about the challenges and opportunities of bridging research and praxes across pluralities of knowledge.

Content and format: The conference is organized around three principal areas of discussion – research ethics and shared authority, citizen science/research, and metrics, value, and recognition. Each of these three areas will be the subject of a dedicated dialogue session involving researchers working within academia and an equal number of researchers working outside the academy from a variety of disciplines, research fields, and geographical locations, with one or two moderators. The discussions could include the following:

- synergies and divergences in good research practice,
- problematizes the obstacles to knowledge circulation between academic and other researchers
- how and when violations take place

- how knowledge that is produced through different praxes and based on different metrics can be handled with respect and proper attribution
- how open, critical discussion of research between academic and non-academic researchers could improve the quality and accessibility of the knowledge each produces and potentially advance research in specific fields.
- Etc.

Invitation to contribute: We invite you to contribute to this conference by proposing a dialogue with a partner (a researcher from outside of academia if you are an academic, and vice-versa) in your field of research. This could be someone you have already worked with or someone you would like to engage in productive conversation with among others. By researchers working outside of academia, we mean a person who is, for example, a writer, an investigative journalist, a documentary filmmaker, or an artist who makes an important contribution to an area of study. If you do not have a suggestion of a dialogue partner, but would still like to participate, we may be able to locate someone. **If you are interested, please email Victoria Van Orden Martínez (victoria.martinez@liu.se) and/or Per-Anders Forstorp (per-anders.forstorp@liu.se) no later than February 21, 2022, with a short description of how you and your dialogue partner would like to participate and what area of discussion you would like to participate in (i.e., research ethics and shared authority, citizen science/research, or metrics, value, and recognition.**

International Exposure and Publication in *Culture Unbound*: As a hybrid conference involving participants from around the world, the seminar series would have international exposure through a LiU webpage and LiU Communications support, social media networks, and a special issue of the open-access, peer-reviewed journal *Culture Unbound* will be produced in coordination with the conference, utilizing the journal's hypertextual, dialogic, and collaborative publishing track. Although *Culture Unbound* is an academic journal, this particular format of publication will enable the special issue to use a more collaborative approach that respects both academic and non-academic praxes. Video of the sessions will be available to the participants to share and distribute.

Travel and expenses: Participants, moderators, and invited attendees are invited to attend in person or by Zoom. Unfortunately, no financial allowances can be made for travel and accommodations, and participants will not be remunerated for participation.

Appendix II: Conference Program [↑ p.6](#)

Schedule for Bridging Research Praxes Across Pluralities of Knowledge Conference

April 26-28, 2022.

Held on Zoom and onsite at Linköping University's *Campus Norrköping* (Norrköping, Sweden), Lecture Hall K3, Kåkenhus building.

TUESDAY, APRIL 26TH

13:00 – Conference opening

13:15 – Introduction

Victoria (Tori) Van Orden Martínez, PhD candidate, Division of Culture, Society, Design and Media (KSFM), Linköping University. Additional comments by Per-Anders Forstorp, Professor, KSFM.

14:00 – Framing talk

Eva Hemmungs Wirtén, Professor in Mediated Culture, KSFM, Linköping University.

14:30 – Break

15:00 – Panel: Metrics, Value, and Recognition

Moderator: Asher Goldstein, PhD candidate, Division of Migration, Ethnicity and Society (REMESO), Linköping University. [↑ p.11](#)

Participants:

Rachel Gardiner Faulkner, Co-Director, Culture Shift

Louise Ejgod Hansen, Associate Professor, Aarhus University

Peter Vig, Educator/Independent researcher

Tomas Kertész, Independent researcher

Juilee Decker, Rochester Institute of Technology/Collections journal

Barbara Wood, Curator, National Trust, UK

Alia Amir, Senior Lecturer, Linköping University

Rizwan-ul Huq, Senior Lecturer, Mid-Sweden University. [↑ p.4](#)

16:15 – Audience questions/discussion

16:45 – Closing remarks

17:00 – End of the day

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27TH

13:00 – Brief opening remarks

13:15 – Framing talk

Magnus Linton, author and journalist.

13:45 – Panel: Research Ethics and Shared Authority 1

Moderator: Bodil Axelsson, Professor, Division of Culture, Society, Design and Media (KSFM), Linköping University.

Participants:

Christopher Thompson, Post-Doctoral Researcher, Malmö University

Christine Schmidt, Deputy Director and Head of Research, The Wiener Holocaust Library

Elise Bath, Senior International Tracing Service Archive Team Manager, The Wiener Holocaust Library

Karen Nordentoft, PhD Stipend, Aarhus University

Trine Sørensen, Communication Manager and Curator, Godsbanen Aarhus.

15:00 – Audience questions/discussion

15:30 – Break

16:00 – Panel: Research Ethics and Shared Authority 2

Moderator: Olga Zabalueva, PhD candidate, KSFM, Linköping University

Participants:

Sandra Gruner-Domic, Social Anthropologist

Katia Orantes, Journalist

Megan Baker, Research Associate, Historic Preservation Department, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Jennifer P. Byram, Research Associate, Historic Preservation Department, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

17:00 – Audience questions/discussion

17:45 – Closing comments

18:00 – End of the day

THURSDAY, APRIL 28TH

13:00 – Brief opening remarks

13:15 – Panel: Citizen Science/Research

Moderator: Claudia Tazreiter, Professor, Division of Migration, Ethnicity and Society (REMESO), Linköping University.

Participants:

Birgit Eriksson, Professor, Aarhus University

Mie Hein Jørgensen, Project Manager, INSP Roskilde

Anders Nordberg Sejerøe, Community and Development Manager, Holbæk Libraries

Stefan Jonsson, Professor, Linköping University

Anna Ådahl, Artist

Britta Geschwind, Post-Doctoral Researcher, Lund University

Florence Fröhlig, Senior Lecturer, Södertörn University

14:30 – Audience questions/discussion

15:00 – Break

15:15 – ‘Bonus’ mixed panel (Additional panel with any participants who want to engage further with a mixed group; advance notice is not necessary, but is helpful).

Moderator: Andreas Larsson, PhD candidate, Division of Learning, Aesthetics, Natural Science (LEN), Linköping University

Participants already interested:

Christopher Thompson, Malmö University

Juilee Decker, Rochester (New York) Institute of Technology/Collections journal

Barbara Wood, National Trust, UK

Armando Perla, Chief Curator, Toronto History Museums at the City of Toronto

16:30 – Closing comments

17:00 – End of the conference