Networked cultural production:
Filmmaking in the Wreckamovie community



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Abstract

This thesis challenges core assumptions associated with the peer production of culture using the web-based collaborative film production platform *Wreckamovie* to understand how peer production works in practice. Active cultural participation is a growing political priority for many governments and cultural bodies, but these priorities are often implemented without a basis in empirical evidence, making it necessary for rigorous scholarship to tackle emerging networked cultural production. Existing work portrays peer production efforts as unrealistically distinct from proprietary, market-based production, incorrectly suggesting that peer production allows distributed, non-monetarily motivated, collaboration between self-selected individuals in hierarchy-free communities. In overcoming these assumptions, this thesis contributes to the development of a consolidated theoretical framework encompassing the complicated and multifaceted nature of networked cultural production. This theoretical framing extends Bourdieu's theory of cultural production and reconciles it with Becker's *Art Worlds* framework, and further embeds and draws on Benkler's notion of commons-based peer production.

Concretely, this research tackles the emergence of new *collaborative* production models enabled by networked technologies, and theorizes the tensions and challenges characterizing such production forms. Secondly, this thesis redefines cultural participation and considers the divisions of labour in online filmmaking materializing from the interactions between professional and non-professional filmmakers. Finally, this study considers the social economies surrounding networked cultural production, including crowdfunding, and characterizes associated conversions of capital, such as the conversion of symbolic capital into financial capital.

Methodologically, this thesis employs an embedded case study strategy. It examines four feature film productions facilitated by the online platform Wreckamovie, as well as the online community within which these productions are embedded. The four production cases have completed all production stages, and have resulted in completed cultural goods during the course of data collection. This study's findings were derived from two and half years of participant observations, interviews with 29 Wreckamovie community and production members, and the examination of archived production-related discourses (2006-2013).

Ultimately, this study makes concrete proposals towards a theory of networked cultural production with clear policy implications.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

> I am predicting that communities of people [...] are going to come together to produce Hollywood and better quality film collaboratively, using large-scale CGI [Computer-Generated Imagery] [...], and these will become more popular than Hollywood. And they will be produced much like Wikipedia has been produced: at very low cost, with just a bit of facilitation from various services online. And it's going to destroy the business model of Hollywood.
>
> [Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales, 2012, 0:19]

1.1 Emerging models of networked cultural production

Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales' prediction that emerging models of networked cultural production will severely challenge the film industry's business model, as quoted above, resonates with a number of claims put forward in popular discourses in recent years. Tapscott & Williams (2006), for example, have argued that collaborative online practices associated with peer production will profoundly transform the creative industries. Shirky (2008) has similarly proposed that the internet has enabled the emergence of novel forms of organizational dynamics, operating outside of the logics of formal institutions, rendering the traditional distinction between professional and amateur content producers questionable. In academic discourses, these emerging changes in the relationships between non-professionals and institutionalized cultural producers, enabled by the widespread uptake of networked communications technologies, have fuelled a vast range of concepts and theorization across disciplines. Within the field of sociology, Castells (1996), for example,

coined the term *Network Society* to account for the social, political and cultural changes brought about by the uptake of networked technologies. In his later work, *Communication Power* (2009), Castells is even more explicit in ascribing influence to non-professional producers. Similarly, the influential law scholar Lessig (2008) argues that we have witnessed a paradigm shift, denoting a move from a *Read-Only* culture in which individuals merely consume culture, to a *Read-Write* culture in which passive consumption is replaced by active participation and co-production. Likewise, communication scholars Jenkins et al. (2006) suggest the notion of *participatory cultures* to account for changes in the patterns of cultural production and consumption.

There are several examples of manifestations of such emerging models of networked cultural production, as suggested in the literature above. In 2005, to give a concrete example, the Finnish feature length sci-fi parody *Star Wreck: In the Pirkinning* was released online under a creative commons license. Two years later, by the end of 2007, it had been downloaded 5 million times; 17,000 DVDs had been sold – the creators landed a distribution agreement with Universal Pictures – and the movie had been broadcast on Finnish, Belgian and Italian television (Lietsala & Sirkkunen, 2008). Behind this success, however, there was no professional production company. *Star Wreck: In the Pirkinning* was the culmination of seven years' work by five young Finnish amateurs in collaboration with an online community of 300 volunteers. With a total budget of a mere €15,000, partly crowd-funded, partly raised from student and unemployment benefits, the film could not have been produced had not the online community taken part in the entire production process (Lietsala & Sirkkunen, 2008). The online community contributed 3D modeling, acting, crew volunteering, and equipment lending amongst the range of contributions (Joutsen, Nieminen, Vuorensola, & Lekman, 2008). The effectiveness of their production model

subsequently, in 2008, led the production team to launch an online platform specifically designed to facilitate the peer production of film: wreckamovie.com.

Although the film industry has mostly acted antagonistically towards the internet and the social practices it facilitates (Currah, 2006), there is evidence to suggest that the formal film and TV industries are beginning to pay more attention to networked cultural artefacts produced by amateurs. For example, in 2010, the movie *Star Wars Uncut (www.starwarsuncut.com)* was the first user-generated production to win an *Emmy* award. *Star Wars Uncut* was a shot-for-shot remake of George Lucas' famous *Star Wars IV* (1977), comprising 473 individual fan made sequences of 15-second duration each, produced by volunteer online audiences.

Likewise, the film industry is increasingly giving attention to an emerging practice associated with networked cultural production aided by online communities, namely crowdfunding. Only a decade ago, industry players and major studios were considered powerful gatekeepers impossible to circumvent, ensuring high barriers to entry, not least because of the financial capital needed to produce and distribute feature films (e.g. Currah, 2003). Since the advent of dedicated online platforms facilitating crowdfunding processes, such as *Kickstarter* launched in 2008 and *IndieGoGo* launched in 2009, however, independent and amateur filmmakers have been able to raise significant financial means independent of production companies and national film funding agencies (Ordanini, Miceli, Pizzetti, & Parasuraman, 2011), disrupting the traditional value chain of the film industry (Braet & Spek, 2010). Following the global economic crisis in 2008, and the subsequent decline in public funding of culture, established industry players are also found to be increasingly turning to new funding practices enabled by online crowdfunding platforms (Sørensen, 2013). Yet, the uptake of crowdfunding practices does not significantly challenge

existing gatekeeping mechanisms of the formal film industry (Sørensen, 2012). Investigating the documentary film industry in the UK, drawing on interviews with independent film directors, formal content commissioners and broadcasting statistics, Sørensen (2012), concludes that the importance of traditional institutionalized cultural capital renders the impact of online distribution outlets and funding opportunities less pronounced.

As a general phenomenon, crowdfunding has experienced a steep interest and uptake. In 2012, the *MIT Technology Review* hailed crowdfunding as one of the ten breakthrough technologies of the year (MIT, 2012). In the MIT report, it was estimated that 10% of all US seed investment made in 2012 had been raised through the US-based crowdfunding platform *Kickstarter.* In an UK context, Nesta estimated that £120 million was raised in 2011 by means of crowdfunding (Nesta, 2013); a number which Nesta expects to grow to £15 billion annually over the coming years (Nesta, 2012). Due to the importance Nesta ascribes to crowdfunding, they commissioned three separate reports on the matter in 2012 alone, and further launched the first UK crowdfunding directory in May 2013.

In the scholarly literature, crowdfunding is increasingly suggested as a means to mitigate funding cuts, as well as a way to rescue increasingly challenged business models of the creative industries. For scientific research, for example, crowdfunding has been suggested as "a way of encouraging scientific transparency and public involvement […], fostering lasting ties between scientists and nonscientists." (Wheat, Wang, Byrnes, & Ranganathan, 2013, p. 72). Likewise, Kaplan (2013), in a *Nature* article, suggests crowdfunding as a way to secure further funding for existing research projects. Within traditional news media production, crowdfunding is argued to enable a financially sustainable model of production of news articles and investigative journalism (Aitamurto, 2011; Carvajal, García-Avilés, & González, 2012). Despite this widespread and diverse interests in crowdfunding, however, the drivers

and social practices surrounding crowdfunding efforts remain acutely under-researched, as noted by a smaller number of scholars who have engaged with studies on crowdfunding (e.g. Belleflamme, Lambert, & Schwienbacher, 2013; Burtch, Ghose, & Wattal, 2013; Lehner, 2013; Mollick, 2013; Ordanini et al., 2011).

Leaving financial aspects of networked cultural production aside, the networked information economy (Benkler, 2006), has equally altered the way cultural objects, including films, are being evaluated and legitimised. Professional cultural critics have long acted as cultural intermediaries, attributing symbolic value to certain kinds of artistic expressions (Blank, 2007; Bourdieu, 1984). In the context of the film industry, film critics have, amongst other things, borne direct influence on the revenue of these cultural goods. It has been established, for example, that traditional film reviews by professional film critics influence audiences' consumption practices; particularly positive reviews have been demonstrated to generate further box office revenue (Reinstein & Snyder, 2005). The online environment and the advent of user-generated reviews, however, significantly challenge the authority and influences of institutionalised cultural intermediaries. Verboord (2013), for instance, analyses online film reviews, finding that these peer production practices reconfigure the "hierarchical model of cultural evaluation" (p. 15). Related research has shown that positive film reviews authored by peer producers ultimately lead to higher box office revenue (Chintagunta, Gopinath, & Venkataraman, 2010; Dellarocas, Zhang, & Awad, 2007). Further, it has been demonstrated that the volume of online film peer reviews is also of importance, as it, too, bears a positive influence on the financial performance of feature films (Duan, Gu, & Whinston, 2008)[1].

[1] See De Maeyer (2012) for a review of research investigating impacts of online reviews on financial revenue of cultural goods in general.

Taken together, the literature and examples presented in the above point to the blurring of boundaries between formerly disparate aspects of cultural production: funding, evaluation, mediation and processes of actual production, all of which will be discussed in more detail in the context of this study. Further, we also see an increasing hybrid space emerging between the formal industry and peer produced culture. These changes in the constellations of cultural production are increasingly recognized, and given priority, in policy contexts.

1.2 Networked cultural production in policy contexts

Networked cultural production is increasingly forming part of the political agenda in many countries and regions. In an EU context, for instance, several initiatives and policies have been developed to further cultural participation. What is particularly interesting in the context of this thesis is the emphasis on and framing of cultural participation in EU policies, which increasingly emphasize participatory and co-creative aspects of cultural access and consumption (Tomka, 2013). The *European Union's Work Plan for Culture*, covering the period 2011-2014, for example, explicitly acknowledges that "digital technologies and social media […] allow people to be creators of culture", and further suggests that these practices may "have a revolutionary impact, blurring the boundaries between producers and consumers of culture" (OMC, 2012, p. 5). Audience building, hereunder co-creation practices, have become an explicit political priority under the *European Commission's* funding programme *Creative Europe*, which contributes to the larger *Europe 2020* strategy.

To inform these EU policies, several reports have been commissioned by the *European Commission*, focusing in particular on audience engagement and crowdfunding (for an analysis of the commissioned OMC (2012) report, see Tomka, 2013). One of these, the report *Audience building and the future Creative Europe Programme* (Bamford & Wimmer, 2012)

underlined how cultural participation "through new technology" is becoming "increasingly integrated into the daily life of people" (p. 7). Other grey literature, relevant for the discussion of networked cultural production, has been commissioned in the context of the *European Commission's European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World*. Here the phenomenon of crowdfunding has been central. In 2011, for example, the *Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission* (DG EAC), commissioned a report on crowdfunding, *Crowdfunding Schemes in Europe* (Röthler & Wenzlaff, 2011). The report clarified that the European creative and cultural industries are engaging with several approaches to crowdfunding, hereunder asking for donations, pre-selling products, getting loans, and offering investment opportunities. However, the report was primarily focused on the legal implications of crowdfunding, such as tax and credit regulations.

Since these reports were published, the concept of crowdfunding has been gaining further attention politically. In June 2013 alone, EU bodies hosted three separate crowdfunding workshops and meetings. One of these was the workshop *Crowdfunding: Untapping its potential, reducing the risks*, initiated by the *European Commission* under the *Digital Agenda for Europe* programme. The general gist of these initiatives, however, is related to investigating ways in which crowdfunding could serve as a means towards gaining a European competitive advantage in a global context; they seem less concerned by the social implications of such initiatives and practices. This focus is, arguably, steered by the general acknowledgment that the biggest barriers to increasing crowdfunding initiatives within EU are of regulatory character (Hanks, 2013).

The *European Commission's* focus on crowdfunding has been fuelled by regulatory initiatives introduced in the US. In April 2012, US president Obama signed the *JOBS (Jumpstart Our Business Startups) Act*, which contained a section specifically on crowdfunding. With this act,

crowdfunding practices became supported by regulatory frameworks; prior to the introduction of the JOBS Act “crowdfunding was for all practical purposes illegal under United States securities laws” (Stemler, 2013, p. 271).

These various legislative changes, and not least the EU policies concerned with promoting and insuring the increased uptake of networked cultural co-production, attest to the fact that there is an explicit political agenda related to identifying “innovative forms of […] developing cultural participation in the changing economic, technological, cultural and social setting of the new century” (Tomka, 2013, p. 6). These political priorities, in turn, make it acutely important to secure a solid scholarly evidence base of research investigating and theorising the phenomena of networked cultural production, acknowledging its position within increasingly blurred boundaries between formal and informal production models, its funding practices and social economies.

1.3 Networked technology - A blind spot in theories of cultural production

A discipline particularly well situated for theorizing networked cultural production is the sub-field of cultural sociology. Although its emergence can be traced back to the 1920s, it only gained wider recognition following the cultural turn of the 1960s (Inglis, Blaikie, & Wagner-Pacifici, 2007). The discipline of cultural sociology is characterized by a methodological and theoretical pluralism (Ibid.), yet a broad range of key thinkers associating themselves with this sub-discipline can reasonably be taken to share a central tenet: the questioning of the idea of the artistic genius. One proponent of this stance is Wolff (1993/1981), stating that the sociological study of culture rejects "the romantic and mystical notion of art as the creation of 'genius', transcending existence, society and time", and instead holds that culture is a "complex construction" that must "be seen as historical, situated and produced” (Wolff, 1993, p. 1). A similar sentiment underpins the “Production of

Culture Perspective" (Peterson & Anand, 2004; Peterson, 1976), albeit stressing institutional and structural aspects of cultural production (DiMaggio, 2000), rather than *the social* which stands central to, for example, Wolff (1993 [1981]) and Becker (2008 [1982]). Other key thinkers include Griswold (2013 [1994]), who argues that understanding cultural production necessitates an encompassing analysis of the multiplex relationships which exist between the social world, cultural objects, producers and audiences. Griswold coins her analytical apparatus *The Cultural Diamond,* alluding to her visual representation of these relations. Since the notion of the cultural diamond was proposed, Alexander (2003) has suggested the element of distribution to be added to the diamond.

Combined, these lines of thinking highlight that cultural production is the outcome of processes that are diverse and complex, but not mysterious. These processes cannot be fully apprehended without acknowledging their embedding in and mutual shaping of formal industries, technology, regulatory frameworks, consumption patterns and production practices. The question of technology, however, plays only a marginal role in these theoretical orientations. Granted, technology is acknowledged as a shaper of cultural production, for example, within "The Production of Culture Perspective" (Peterson & Anand, 2004; Peterson, 1976) . Here, though, technology is merely included in a heuristic of six facets influencing cultural production; there are no attempts at theorizing the particular implications of technological developments and emerging social participatory practices. Admittedly, the majority of the literature pre-dates the widespread uptake of the internet and networked ICTs, and can therefore not be critiqued on the basis of their lack of attention to it. Rather, these approaches to the study of cultural production can serve to guide contemporary attempts at theoretically placing the significance and influence of networked technology in contemporary cultural production. Nonetheless, the foci of contemporary debates within the field of cultural sociology suggest that there is a neglect of the question of

potential theoretical implications of networked technologies, and their significance for novel theorization.

A current debate, to give an example, was initiated by Born (2010) with her article "The Social and the Aesthetic: For a Post-Bourdieuian Theory of Cultural Production". In this publication, Born proposed a new methodical paradigm within cultural sociology, that of *post-positivist empiricism* (2010, p. 197). One of Born's key arguments was that an *explanatory* theory of cultural production would require a reinvention of "five key themes: aesthetics and the cultural object; agency and subjectivity; the place of institutions; history, temporality and change; and problems of value and judgement." (2010, p. 171). The question of networked technologies, however, did not form part of Born's framing of the requirements of an explanatory theory of cultural production. The same goes for the responses to this paradigm proposed by Born. Fuente (2010), for example, in his critique of Born, made an explicit plea for the acknowledgement of "theoretical and methodological pluralism" in cultural sociology (2010, p. 217). Others expressing more sympathy for Born's ideas, such as for example Straw (2010), sought to re-introduce, rather than reject, key tenets of Bourdieu's theories of cultural production (Bourdieu, 1993b) and consumption (Bourdieu, 1984). Prior (2011, 2013) was even more explicit in his questioning of the move towards a post-Bourdieuian sociology of culture, arguing for the qualities inherent in Bourdieu's work. Other contemporary debates addressing contemporary theoretical developments within the field of cultural sociology relate to the role of the *socio-material aspects* of cultural production (e.g. Strandvad, 2011, 2012).

In sum, the current scholarly debates unfolding within the field of cultural sociology are centred on issues related to the placing of the role of aesthetics, on agency, judgments of artistic value, and the material qualities of cultural objects in sociological theory. Moreover,

the debates are to a large degree framed as evaluations of Bourdieu's continuing theoretical significance for the field (c.f. Born, 2010; Fuente, 2010; Prior, 2011, 2013; Santoro, 2008, 2011; Straw, 2010). As such, this thesis contributes to these contemporary debates by making an explicit plea for the consideration of the theoretical implications of the seemingly neglected *networked* aspects of contemporary cultural production, building on, amongst other things, Bourdieu's theory of cultural production.

1.4 Related empirical research

While theoretical developments concerning networked cultural production have been limited, a vast body of scholarly research on peer production has been published over the last decade. This body of research, however, has almost exclusively investigated aspects of the production of encyclopedic content on Wikipedia, and on peer production efforts resulting in the creation of open source software. Cheliotis (2009) has argued that peer production processes differ significantly from domain to domain, and that it is therefore necessary to distinguish between peer production of *functional goods* and peer production of *cultural goods*. While such a distinction arguably rests on a somewhat narrow definition of culture, it is still helpful for categorizing the existing evidence base of research on peer production.

There is a vast body of empirical research that examines various aspects of peer produced *functional goods* in the form of open source software projects. A dominating theme in such research relates to individual motivations for participation in these projects (e.g. Fershtman & Gandal, 2007; Hars & Ou, 2002; Hertel, Niedner, & Herrmann, 2003; Krogh, Haefliger, Spaeth, & Wallin, 2012; Shah, 2006; Ye & Kishida, 2003). Another prominent theme in this strand of research examines the factors influencing the success of open source/FLOSS projects (e.g. Foushee et al., 2013; Midha & Palvia, 2012; Schweik, English, & Haire, 2009;

Sen, Singh, & Borle, 2012; Subramaniam, Sen, & Nelson, 2009). Sub-topics include analyses of the requirements for successful collaborations (Hemetsberger & Reinhardt, 2009), and factors determining sustained participation by collaborators (Fang & Neufeld, 2009). More recently, increasingly critically framed enquiries have been conducted. A growing number of scholars, for example, address gender bias within communities of software developers (Kuechler, Gilbertson, & Jensen, 2012; Nafus, 2012; Reagle, 2012). The economic implications of open source software products are also being addressed. Stam (2009), for instance, examines how peer production influences the financial performance of businesses involved in the distribution of open source software, and Hann, Roberts, & Slaughter (2013) study the subsequent financial benefits of the volunteering participants[2].

Wikipedia, an online freely editable encyclopedia which was initiated in 2001 and has grown to encompass 17 million articles visited by more than 400 million unique users per month (Lovink & Tkacz, 2011), has been equally subject to empirical, and steadily more critically framed, inquiry. In recent years, diverse research foci include the examination of the power dynamics between different groups of Wikipedians (Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil, Lee, Pang, & Kleinberg, 2012). Cross-cultural differences between Wikipedia language editions have also been addressed (Hara, Shachaf, & Hew, 2010), as have: the contribution patterns and trajectories of Wikipedia editors (Zhang, Prior, Levene, Mao, & Liere, 2012); co-authoring practices (Keegan, Gergle, & Contractor, 2012); governance mechanisms embedded in the socio-technical system of Wikipedia (Goldspink, 2010); and various biases embedded within Wikipedia, such as gender bias (Collier & Bear, 2012), cultural bias (Morgan, Mason, &

[2] For a review of empirical research on Free and Open-Source Software published between 1998 – 2009, see Crowston, Wei, Howison, & Wiggins (2012).

Nahon, 2012), and socio-technical bias (Greenstein & Zhu, 2012). Geiger (2011) highlights issues such as the increased role of algorithms in the authoring of Wikipedia content, Ford (2011) points to the underrepresentation of African Wikipedia editors, and Graham (2011) addresses *politics of exclusion*. Further, it has been noted that the professionalization of the Wikimedia Foundation has led it to become more similar to traditional formal organisations (Morell, 2011).

However, little rigorous empirical research has been performed on the peer production of cultural and artistic goods in the form of audiovisual objects. The most comprehensive research is found in Roig's (2008) PhD thesis on emerging collaborative models of film-production, published in Spanish only. Roig analysed archived forum posts from the early stages of a later stalled peer produced feature film, *A Swarm of Angels* (UK 2006-2008), triangulated with interviews with directors of other collaborative film projects, including *Star Wreck: In the Pirkinning*, the Finnish production ultimately leading to the launch of the Wreckamovie [WAM] platform. Cassarino & Geuna (2008; 2007) and Cassarino & Richter (2008), have published findings from research into the production of *A Swarm of Angels.* Cassarino & Geuna (2007) and Cassarino & Richter (2008) found that the governance model and IP rights management of peer produced film differed from those employed in the making of Wikipedia and open source software. Further Cassarino & Geuna (2008) employed an online survey of the top 5% (N=47) most active production members. Based on the 15 responses they received they concluded that participation was motivated by intrinsic values, and that monetary incentives had reverse effects on motivation. The research took into account only the preliminary phases of the production cycle.

The collaborative flash animation-making community platform newgrounds.com (which has approximately 2.5 million members as of August 2013), has been researched by Luther &

Bruckman (2010, 2011) and Luther et al. (2010; 2009). In their research, the particular focus is on the formation of leadership, and factors influencing the success and completion of peer produced flash animations. They, for example, found that flash projects were more likely to be completed if the leaders were very specific about the tasks they wanted done (Luther et al., 2009). Also, they concluded that only innovative projects were able to attract participants (Luther & Bruckman, 2011). None of these publications offered any thick description of the production process, however. Further, these flash animations were short videos, exclusively intended for online viewing.

Empirical research on any aspect of the Wreckamovie community is even more limited. Lietsala & Joutsen (2007) and Lietsala & Sirkkunen (2008) have provided evidence of incentives and motivations of contributors to the *Star Wreck* production's dedicated online community forum, forum.starwreck.com, from which early Wreckamovie members were recruited. Lietsala & Sirkkunen's (2008) primary modes of data collection were two online survey instruments (combined response N=111), and a small number (N=5) of semi-structured interviews. Of the online survey respondents, 75% indicated that they participated in the *Star Wreck* production because it "also always gave something in return" (2008, p. 114).

The existing research on any aspect of peer produced film is thus very limited in volume and scope. The studies outlined above have all taken more exploratory approaches, and have not sought to connect the analyses to rigorous theoretical frameworks related specifically to cultural production. Moreover, there is a clear tendency in this research to delimit the boundaries of the inquiries in accordance with the technological online platforms facilitating the peer efforts. Arguably, such boundary setting does not allow for a fuller understanding of the social processes and worlds the cultural peer productions are embedded within. Further,

the production of films, short films as well as feature films, are prolonged affairs, typically spanning years. None of the published research on peer produced films has examined the full production process, taking into account the particular dynamics and challenges associated with the different stages of pre-production, production, post-production and distribution. Research into production processes of traditional professional films highlights the importance of attending to the different stages of the production cycles as each phase pose different challenges. Strandvad (2011), for example, followed the early development of five film productions over a year, employing methods such as observation and qualitative interviews. She found that the pre-production phases were characterized by three generic moments: the material manifestation of the idea; the forming of emotional bonds between the producers involved; and the "postponement of closure" to further the collaboration (p. 291).

1.5 Research objectives & design

This research addresses the exigencies portrayed in the above. These include: Acknowledging the emergence of new production models arising alongside the uptake of networked technologies; recognizing the increased societal significance of cultural production, as rendered explicit by current policy making; re-defining cultural participation; identifying a general neglect in current scholarly debates theorizing cultural production from a sociological perspective; and, finally, discerning a gap in empirically informed literature on peer production, calling for further investigation of the particularities of peer produced goods other than software and encyclopedic knowledge. Bearing these complex exigencies in mind, this research project's primary objective is to provide substantial qualitative evidence illuminating the phenomenon of the peer production of cultural goods, in order to ultimately make proposals towards a theory of networked cultural production.

More concretely, this thesis investigates the peer production of feature films facilitated by the community manifesting around the online platform Wreckamovie; a platform specifically designed to foster and advance the peer production of audiovisual artefacts. The research employs an embedded case study design; the case at stake is defined as "film making in the Wreckamovie community", and the embedded cases are bounded by four separate productions facilitated by the Wreckamovie platform. The primary methods employed are participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The participant observation component has been comprehensive, and entailed a year of active participant observation, and 18 months moderate participant observation. As part of the data collection, 29 Wreckamovie community and production members have also been interviewed; many of which led to prolonged subsequent email conversations. Likewise, data informing this study includes a large amount of production-related discourses in the form of, for example, archived online fora content, the productions' social media engagement (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube), production websites, blogs, external media publications, etc. These discourses provide further evidence of the processes leading to the genesis of the Wreckamovie platform. Discourses collected span the period 2002-2013. During the course of this research project, all four embedded production cases have completed the production cycle; the findings presented thus take into account the entire production cycle of the four embedded Wreckamovie peer productions. Specifically, this research addresses the following research themes and research questions:

Research theme 1: The worlds and fields of Wreckamovie peer productions

RQ1: What characterizes the worlds and fields of Wreckamovie peer productions?

- Which positional struggles manifest, and how do these relate to the more collaborative, socio- relational aspects of the production processes?

Research theme 2: The division of labour in Wreckamovie peer productions

RQ2: Which conventions guide the division of labour in Wreckamovie, and how are these conceptualized and perceived?

- What are the implications of the introduction of non-professionals in the field of cultural production in the case of WAM peer productions?

Research theme 3: The social economies of Wreckamovie peer productions

RQ3: In which ways do alternative forms of capital manifest in the Wreckamovie peer productions, and what are the indications that the involved actors actively seek to convert these forms of capital into other forms of capital?

- What characterizes the dynamics and mechanisms enabling the conversion of one form of capital to another?

1.6 Thesis structure

Chapter two introduces the theoretical framework, a novel combination of three theories, two from cultural sociology (Bourdieu 1993, 1996; Becker 2008 [1982]) and one from economics (Benkler, 2006). This chapter presents each individual theory and then identifies the limitations of each through reviews of associated literature. The integrated theory and literature review directly motivates the research questions presented at the end of the chapter. Chapter three accounts for the research design and methodology; it accounts for the overall approach, data collection and analysis.

Chapter four is the first of the analysis chapters. It analyses the WAM community and the four embedded production cases through the lens of the concepts of art worlds and the field of cultural production. The four cases are analysed individually, chronologically accounting for all different stages of the production cycle for each case. This chapter addresses the

central aspects of RQ1. Chapter five is the second analysis chapter, presenting a cross-case analysis of the participatory patterns and priorities of the WAM labourers. This chapter addresses RQ2. Chapter Six analyses the wider social economies of the WAM productions, both the immediate WAM community networks and the extended online networks, including Facebook and other social media. It addresses these social economies by identifying processes of capital conversion; for example, the processes that allow social capital to be converted to symbolic capital and then to financial capital. This chapter addresses RQ3.

Chapter seven brings together the three analysis chapters in a synthesizing discussion along with the literature presented in Chapter Two. This chapter makes an incremental mapping of the findings onto an adjusted model of Bourdieu's field of cultural production. Chapter eight, based on the findings of the study, makes proposals towards a theory of networked cultural production. This chapter further makes some concrete policy recommendations in a European context and addresses the key limitations of the study.

Chapter 2
Theory and literature review

2.1 Introduction

This thesis is informed by three theoretical perspectives addressing complementary aspects of cultural production. The three theoretical lenses applied are those put forward by Bourdieu (1993b, 1996), Becker (2008 [1982]) and Benkler (2006). Bourdieu's publication *The Field of Cultural Production (1993)* is constituted of a collection of earlier essays published during the period 1968 – 1983, and while communicating his theory on cultural production, it is arguably less cohesive as a whole than *The Rules of Art (1996 [1993])*, which is generally considered to be a consolidation of Bourdieu's thinking on cultural production (e.g. Griswold, 1998; Hesmondhalgh, 2006; Maanen, 2009). In these works, Bourdieu articulates the properties and dynamics of cultural production and its fields. He argues how economic and social factors constrain the creation of cultural goods. In essence, Bourdieu seeks to make visible the hidden conditions shaping artists' practices and the artistic works they produce, highlighting the existence of perceptual struggles embedded in and influenced by political, economic and societal forces. These struggles include those over the legitimacy of particular genres, the value(s) of art, of consecration and of processes of autonomisation. Bourdieu's perspective places emphasis on more abstract higher-level structures and the relative distributions of cultural and economic capital across different positions within fields

of cultural production. As we will see in more detail below, however, this leaves limited analytical focus on the concrete production processes and the interactions between individuals involved in the production of any given cultural artefact.

Becker's framework of cultural production, conceptualized through his notion of "art worlds", on the other hand, focuses almost exclusively on visible traces of interactions and collaborations facilitating the production of culture. Like Bourdieu, Becker rejects the idea of the artistic genius, yet his framing of cultural production differs starkly from that of Bourdieu. Rather than abstract structure and antagonist forces, Becker highlights the role of established conventions for guiding the production of culture, and on the importance of specialised division of labour. Bourdieu and Becker's perspectives are, in fact, often perceived as irreconcilable due to the differences in their underlying epistemological stances. Maanen (2009), for example, categorizes Becker within the paradigm of symbolic interactionism, and Bourdieu in that of structuralism. Santoro (2011) is even more explicit in pointing out the differences between the two, arguing that Bourdieu and Becker represent "two different epistemological stances, interactionist and structuralist, which divide the field of sociology of the arts" (p. 18). Yet, Santoro acknowledges the affordances and strengths of each approach:

> While Becker focuses his approach on patterns of concrete, visible interactions, Bourdieu moves beyond interaction toward what he conceives of as the deeper and stronger structures […] While the first is appealing because of its empirical strength and anti-determinist posture, the second looks attractive exactly because it promises to go beyond the visible and to capture the hidden logics at work […]."
>
> (Santoro, 2011, p. 18)

These opposing approaches need to be integrated in order to more fully account for the practices and dynamics of contemporary networked cultural production in the case of the

Wreckamovie peer productions. Other scholars have similarly begun merging these approaches in applied research: Bottero and Crossley (2011), for instance, have proposed the method of social network analysis to bridge key aspects of Becker and Bourdieu's theoretical orientations. The merging of Bourdieu and Becker's perspectives will be further warranted in Section 2.5 justifying the concrete research questions.

The third theoretical lens informing this research is Benkler's (2006) more recent framework suggesting the emergence of a new model of cultural production, *commons-based peer production*. In *The Wealth of Networks*, Benkler accounts for the rise of a novel production model enabled by networked technologies in combination with changing social practices. He highlights the phenomenon of peer production's embedding in a particular societal context, that of the *networked information economy.* In contrast to Bourdieu and Becker, Benkler does not position his work within the field of cultural sociology. Rather, he aligns himself with the field of economics, explicitly stating that he is "operating in the domain of economics, rather than sociology" (2006, p. 16). Yet, Benkler, somewhat akin to Bourdieu, theorizes the genesis of production models as best understood in their relative opposition to established production models. In particular, Benkler's lens distinguishes itself in its explicit emphasis on the role of networked technologies in transforming the way culture is produced. Where Bourdieu and Becker are less concerned with accounting for the influences of technologies on cultural production, networked technologies are at the very core of Benkler's arguments.

In the following sections, these three theoretical orientations will be explained in more detail. When reviewing the works of Bourdieu, Becker and Benkler, their key concepts will be highlighted and defined, and central differences and similarities between the three theoretical lenses will be teased out. The concepts proposed by Bourdieu, Becker and

Benkler have directly informed the research questions of this inquiry, presented at the end of this chapter. Following the examination of each of the theoretical lenses, their limitations will be identified and discussed in the context of relevant literature.

2.2 Bourdieu's theory of cultural production

In *The Rules of Art* Bourdieu historically locates the emergence of two distinct artistic fields. He does so through an analysis of 19th century French writers and artists. Based on an rigorous examination of the French author Flaubert's novel *Sentimental Education* (and drawing on numerous other examples), he argues that Flaubert and his contemporaries found themselves in a state of "double refusal" (1996, p. 29) or "double rupture" (1996, pp. 77–81). This state was a consequence of recent major societal and political changes in France. A particularly transformative change was the rise of the bourgeois, marking a shift in the relationship between cultural producers and the dominant class. Hitherto, the dominating class had almost exclusively been constituted by the aristocracy, who had acted as art patrons, enabling the production of culture (1996, pp. 48–49). The rise of the new (dominated) class of the bourgeois, exerting direct political power, however, fuelled a new market-driven form of literary production. The bourgeois, for example, favoured, and thus promoted the production of, serialized novels rather than poetry, in accordance with their own cultural consumption preferences, mirroring their values (1996, pp. 48–50). In reaction to the bourgeois' consumption patterns, artists embraced contrasting value systems, those of the bohemian (1996, pp. 54-58). These value systems were "founded on the rejection of temporal satisfactions, worldly gratifications and the goals of ordinary action" (1996, p. 68). The two opposing value systems in turn resulted in the emergence of distinct fields of cultural production, the field of restricted (small-scale) cultural production and the field of large-scale cultural production. The sub-field of restricted cultural production, given its opposition to the bourgeois' market and consumption driven production, hailed the virtue of

autonomy. Likewise, it was characterized by self-awareness of artists, and was driven by internal competition for recognition and status (1996, p. 68). By associating themselves with the field of restricted production, artists thus freed themselves from the demands and cultural preferences of the bourgeois. In doing so, they detached themselves entirely from market-driven production, and rejected its significance for their practice (1996, p. 81). Combined, all these factors formed the genesis of a dualist structure of the field of cultural production (1996, p. 113-40).

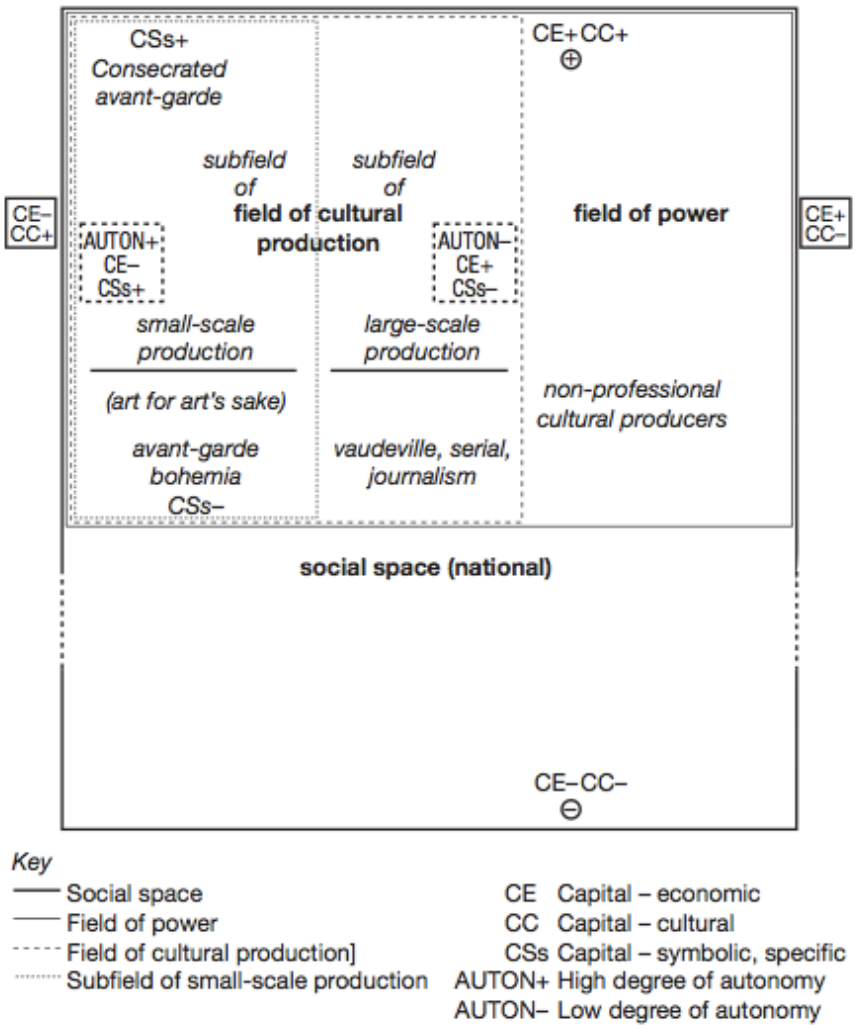


Figure 2.1: The field of cultural production in the field of power and social space [Source: Bourdieu (1996, p. 124)]

This dualist structure is most precisely illustrated in Bourdieu's model of *The field of cultural production in the field of power and in social space* (1996, p. 124, representing a more elaborate version of the model found in Bourdieu, 1993, p. 38), included above in Figure 2.1. In the following, I will discuss this figure in more detail as it distinctively explains key properties of Bourdieu's theory.

Examining Figure 2.1, the first thing to notice is that th*e field of cultural production* is embedded in the *field of power* which again is embedded in *social space*, seemingly defined by geographical boundaries (c.f. the explication of *social space* being denoted as *national*). The *field of cultural production* is then divided into two sub-fields: that of small-scale production (also described as 'restricted production'), and that of large-scale production. Bourdieu underlines, though, that the boundaries of these sub-fields are not rigid. Rather, they are "merely two poles, defined in and by their antagonistic relationship, of the same space" (1996, p. 120). The essence of this remark is consistent throughout Bourdieu's theory: any position, any genre, any level of capital or autonomy is relational; everything is defined by means of its relative, non-static, relationship to comparative properties of related manifestations associated with different positions in the field of cultural production.

To understand the differences between the value systems and drivers of the different positions in the fields of cultural production, it is necessary to attend to the various gradations of degrees of autonomy and levels of cultural, symbolic and economic capital. In Figure 2.1, these are illustrated using the following keys: CE (economic capital), CS (symbolic capital) and CC (cultural capital). The relative strength of these forms of capital is indicated by the signs plus ('+') and minus ('-'). Likewise, the relative degree of autonomy (indicated by the key 'AUTON') of the fields and the positions within them are indicated

using the same logic. When assessing the distribution of capital and autonomy of different positions of the fields, as outlined in Figure 2.1, it is worth remembering that Bourdieu is primarily concerned with the field of cultural production. The field of power is thus mainly illustrating the relative relationship between that and each of the sub-fields of cultural production. In the empirical cases discussed by Bourdieu in *The Rules of Art*, for example, the field of large-scale production is more closely connected to, and influenced by, the political elite, because of the bourgeois' dual role as policy-makers and consumers of certain cultural goods.

Examining the depiction of the two sub-fields in Figure 2.1, the restricted and the large-scale field of cultural production, it becomes clear that they, first and foremost, differ in two respects. Firstly, they differ in their degrees of autonomy (from the field of power, the market as well as artistically). Secondly, they differ in their relative levels of cultural and economic capital. These differences in distributions of capital and autonomy are explained by the different modus operandi of the two sub-fields of cultural production:

> These fields [of cultural production] are the site of the antagonistic coexistence of two modes of production and circulation obeying different inverse logics. At one pole [the field of restricted production] there is the anti-'economic' economy of pure art. […] This production […] is oriented to the accumulation of symbolic capital […]. At the other pole [the field of large-scale production], there is the 'economic' logic of the literary and artistic industries which, since they make the trade in cultural goods just another trade, confer priority on distribution, on immediate and temporary success.
>
> (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 142)

The two antagonistic fields also demark two distinct types of audiences and consumers. The field of large-scale production cater for a *"pre-existing demand* in *pre-existing forms"* (1996, p. 142 – emphasis in original) which is "destined for non-producers of cultural goods, 'the public at large'" (1993b, p. 115). The restricted field of production, however, only "have other producers for clients (who are also their direct competitors)" (1996, p. 217). Because

of these differences in audience orientations, positions within the field of large-scale productions are "*symbolically* excluded and discredited" (1996, p. 217 emphasis in original). This symbolic discretisation of positions in the large-scale field of cultural production is illustrated in Figure 2.1, indicating low levels of symbolic capital in this sub-field. That the field of large-scale production contains lower levels of symbolic capital, does not, however, denote high levels of symbolic capital across the field of restricted production. Not all positions in the sub-field of small-scale production imbue high levels of symbolic capital. We see this illustrated in Figure 2.1 in the vertical outer poles of the field of small-scale production, exemplified by the contrasting groups/positions of the *Consecrated avant-garde* and the *Avant-garde bohemia*. The uneven distribution of symbolic capital within the field of restricted production attests to a characterising feature of this sub-field: its inherent struggle manifesting in the competition for accumulating symbolic capital. The internal dynamics of the field of restricted production is governed by procedural struggles for legitimacy. Questions of legitimacy are framed by Bourdieu as processes of consecration intended to position artistic work within or in opposition to established genres, practices and conventions:

> Differences in the *degree of consecration* in fact separate *artistic generations* [...] between styles and lifestyles that are opposed to each other - as 'new' and 'old', original and 'outmoded'. These arbitrary dichotomies are often almost empty of meaning, but are [...] intended to produce the differences that they pretend to enunciate.
>
> (1996, p. 122 – emphasis in original)

Bourdieu thus argues that the struggles over legitimacy and consecration are arbitrary and perennial, and predominantly serve as a means of negotiating the distribution of field-specific symbolic capital amongst positions in the field of small-scale production. Consequently, the specific value of a given art work "is not [produced by] the artist but the field of production as a universe of belief" (1996, p. 229). According to Bourdieu, this

particular attribute demarcates the production of culture from the production of any other goods: "cultural production distinguishes itself from the production of the most common objects in that it must produce not only the object in its materiality, but also the value of this object, that is, the recognition of artistic legitimacy" (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 164).

2.2.1 Key concepts: habitus, field and capital

Bourdieu's main concepts underpinning his theory of cultural production are those of the *field*, *habitus* and *capital*; these three concepts are closely interrelated and interdependent (Bennett & Silva, 2011; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Swedberg, 2011). To build on the understanding of the concept of fields as discussed in the context of Figure 2.1, it is worth noticing that the concept of the 'field' is an encompassing theoretical device. That is, it can express large-scale as well as small-scale structures and entities. When discussing Bourdieu's (1997a, 2004) works on the economic field, Swedberg (2011), for example, notes that Bourdieu applies the concept of the 'field' to delimit the broader economic fields (firms, the state etc.) as well as individual firms (banks). Likewise, Maanen (2009) argues that fields can vary from the "very general, such as the level of the avant-garde or traditionalists, to the very detailed, such as the micro-level of the Dutch experimental flat-floor theatre of the 1990s" (p. 57). All fields, however narrowly or broadly they may be bounded, remain characterized by perpetual struggle, though. The generic structure of a field can thus be defined as "as a field of force and a field of struggle to transform these force relations" (Bourdieu, 2000b, p. 41 - in and translated by Pileggi & Patton, 2003, p. 317).

A complex aspect of Bourdieu's theory is his emphasis on *objective relations* determining the configuration of positions in any given field. As with many of his concepts, Bourdieu provides multiple complementary definitions across his authorship. The following quote expresses another of his definitions of the concept of the field. Here he stresses the objective

nature of relations between positions, and further implicitly point to the elasticity of the concept of positions:

> The field is a network of objective relations (of domination or subordination, of complementarity or antagonism, etc.) between positions – for example the position corresponding to a genre […]. Each position is objectively defined by its objective relationship with other positions […]. All positions depend, in their very existence, and in the determinations they impose on their occupants, on their actual and potential situation in the structure of the field – that is to say, in the structure and distribution of these kinds of capital (or of power) whose possession governs the obtaining of specific profits (such as literary prestige) put into play in the field.
>
> (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 231)

Bearing the above quote in mind, particularly the notion of the determinations which positions impose on field occupants, might lead one to accuse Bourdieu of divorcing individual agency from the production of cultural artefacts, and for underplaying the role that social relationships and networks play in the production of culture. Arguably, Bourdieu's framing of objective relations as yielding powers of determination through their imposing nature leaves little room for socio-relational forces. However, Bourdieu acknowledges that the artistic field "can only be appreciated through the properties of their occupants" (p. 231), which thus includes the social actors, and their habitus, actively involved in the 'game' of cultural production. In secondary literature, Bourdieu is equally recognised as a theorist who merges the social and the structural, despite his emphasis on objective relations. Born (2010), for example, explains that Bourdieu "gives due weight to the relational nature of the field and the competitive position-taking characteristic of actors engaged in cultural production (p. 177); Prior (2011) argues that "like Becker, […] Bourdieu puts art into a network of social relations' (p. 124).

Bourdieu's emphasis on the social is highlighted in *The Rules of Art*. Here, Bourdieu argues that while individual artists typically cannot, in isolation, by virtue of their habitus, enact

positional changes within a field, they may find themselves to be "durably fashioned" (2006, p. 232) by a particular field structure at a particular point in time. Other aspects of Bourdieu's writing similarly suggest that his predominantly structural theses are not excluding interactionist and socio-relational considerations *per se*. One of Bourdieu's oft-evoked metaphors, 'the game', for example, attests to some level of agency on the level of the individual cultural producers. The metaphor of 'the game' is often employed by Bourdieu (1984, 1993a, 1993b, 1996), also when framing the conditions of fields. The metaphor is significant as it attests to the existence of some level of subjective agency of individuals in any field. A delimited agency, that is, unfolding in and bounded by what Bourdieu labels the *space of possible*. The space of possible, again, is restricted by specific manifestations of habitus in conjunction with historically situated trajectories of position-takings in any particular field (Bourdieu, 1996, pp. 87–88, 128, and in particular p. 198). Although delimited, the more interactionist-oriented aspects of Bourdieu's writings nonetheless allow for individuals' aptitudes for playing the game to directly influence the structural and symbolic reconfigurations of a field. Amongst specific examples of such particularly skilled game-players, Bourdieu emphasizes the artist Marcel Duchamp, whom (at least temporarily), through artistic innovations, reconfigured the restricted field of production to his own benefit, symbolically as well as economically (see 19966, pp. 246-247). Bourdieu, for example, emphasises Duchamp's habitus, descending from a family of painters, allowing him to "move in the artistic field like a fish in water" (1996, p. 246). He underlines that Duchamp repeatedly breached conventions, and that this was the result "of conscious and well-equipped intention" (1996, p. 246). Most clearly, Bourdieu highlights Duchamp's agency when he attests that by knowing "the game to his finger-tips, he [Duchamp] produces objects whose production as works of art presupposes the production of the producer as artist: he invents the *ready-made"* (1996, p. 246 – emphasis in original).

Bourdieu's theory of cultural production thus locates artistic production in interplays between the structural and the social, notably addressed in his emphasis on the role of habitus. Bourdieu articulates this point most clearly in the following:

> The social determinisms of which the work of art bears the traces are exerted partly through the producer's habitus, referring back to the social conditions of his production as a social subject (family, etc.) and as a producer (schooling, professional contacts, etc.), and partly through the social demands and constraints inscribed in the position he occupies in a particular […] field of production […]. In short, the producer's habitus is never entirely the product of his position […]. Conversely, one can never move directly from the social characteristics of the producer – his social origin – to the characteristics of his product.
>
> (Bourdieu, 1993a, p. 141)

Having defined the concept of the field, and located the relationship between this and the concept of habitus, the concept of capital will be addressed. Bourdieu operates with numerous forms of capital across his works. In *The Field of Cultural Production* alone, eight discrete forms of capital are indexed, albeit never directly defined: Academic, linguistic, political, scientific, economic, educational, social, and symbolic. In *The Rules of Art*, however, Bourdieu attends less to describing and defining the various forms of capital; social capital, for example, is not addressed bar from brief mentions in two footnotes (1996, p. 288 note 64 and p. 361 note 65). Likewise, social capital is not included in Bourdieu's visual representation of the field of cultural production (Figure 2.1). As such, Bourdieu thus presupposes an understanding of the role and dynamics of social, cultural and economic capital as presented in *Distinction* and other works, such as his essay on "The Forms of Capital" (Bourdieu, 1997c). The latter presents the most clearly articulated definitions of Bourdieu's most often employed forms of capital - social, cultural and symbolic (symbolic capital is, however, only scarcely discussed in Bourdieu's essay).

In “The Forms of Capital”, Bourdieu (1997c) operates with three forms of cultural capital: embodied, objectified and institutionalised. Embodied cultural capital, as Bourdieu notes, “presupposes a process of embodiment, incorporation, which, insofar as it implies a labour of inculcation and assimilation, costs time, time which must be invested personally by the investor.” (1997c, p. 48). Embodied capital is therefore not something that can be transferred; embodied cultural capital must be earned by the individual through education or professional experience. Objectified cultural capital, on the other hand, can be acquired. Objectified cultural capital is the most intuitively comprehensible form of cultural capital: it is vested in tangible cultural objects such as books, films, and instruments (Bourdieu, 1997c). The value of objectified cultural capital, however, rests on the degree to which it is recognised and perceived by agents in any given field. Moreover, its actualised power is dependent on the degree to which it is actively evoked as an active means in the struggles unfolding within the fields of cultural production: “it should not be forgotten that it [objectified cultural capital] exists as symbolically and materially active, effective capital only insofar as it is appropriated by agents and implemented and invested as a weapon and a stake in the struggles which go on in the fields of cultural production […]” (Bourdieu, 1997c, p. 50). Bourdieu’s discussion of institutionalised cultural capital is primarily grounded in educational contexts; thus, it is primarily suggested to encompass the accreditation of a given individual’s educational merits and qualifications. Arguably, institutionalised cultural capital can, in accordance with Bourdieu’s framing, be taken to include a wider range of manifestations of external validation and accreditations by recognised bodies in the form of, for example, nominations for prizes or awards by esteemed film festival juries.

Social capital is defined by Bourdieu as the “aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network […] -- or in other words, to membership

in a group" (Bourdieu, 1997c, p. 51). This means that social capital, in contrast to for example embodied cultural capital, is not the property of the individual. Instead, social capital is a shared and distributed property, and its value is therefore dependant on the specific configuration and reach of the social network constellating it. Consequently, the power of social capital power rests on the degree to which a member of the group is able to "effectively mobilize [the social capital] and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed" by members of the network (Bourdieu, 1997c, p. 51).

Symbolic capital is less clearly or distinctly defined. Bourdieu writes in a footnote that it is "capital – in whatever form - insofar as it is represented, i.e., apprehended symbolically, in a relationship of knowledge […]."(Bourdieu, 1997c, p. 50). Elsewhere, symbolic capital is described as a credit, "which, under certain circumstances, and always in the long run, guarantees 'economic' profits." (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 75). These aspects of symbolic capital indicate two key aspects of Bourdieu's framing of alternative forms of capital. One, they are convertible, and two, they are all, to some extent, derived and dependent on economic capital (Bourdieu, 1997c, p. 54). The underlying relationship between alternative capital and economic capital, however, is masked. Individuals attempting to accumulate or convert alternative capital, must, according to Bourdieu, pretend to reject the calculative logic underpinning traditional economic transactions. Only then is alternative capital most powerful:

> Alternative capital "produce their most specific effects only to the extent that they conceal (not least from their possessors) the fact that economic capital is at their root [...]. The real logic of the functioning of capital, the conversions from one type to another, and the law of conversions which governs them cannot be understood unless two opposing but equally partial views are superseded: economism […] semiologism […]."
>
> (Bourdieu, 1997c, p. 54).

The quote above attests that actualised roles of alternative capital, and the dynamics between various forms of alternative capital and economic capital, are highly complex: These patterns of acquisition and conversions of capital can neither be understood by applying traditional economical perceptions of self-interestedness, nor by applying a wholly self-disinterested perspective. Bourdieu, however, does not prescribe an analytical alternative to those of *economism* and *semiologism*, but keeps it at the identification of the shortcoming of each approach for understanding the mechanisms enabling conversions from one form of capital to another. Bourdieu admits that the actual mechanisms enabling conversions of capital remain under-theorised (1993a, p. 34). Yet, this feature of the latent convertibility of capital stands at the core of Bourdieu's theory of cultural production, as discussed in the context of Figure 2.1.

2.2.2 Limitations identified through reviews of existing literature

Bourdieu's theory of cultural production has repeatedly proved its explanatory power (Fowler, 1997; Heise & Tudor, 2007; Prior, 2011) and is arguably superior to its alternatives (Fowler, 1997; Hesmondhalgh, 2006; Santoro, 2011). Yet, it is not without limitations. In his article "Bourdieu, the media and cultural production" Hesmondhalgh (2006) provides a convincing evaluation of the applicability of Bourdieu's theory on contemporary media production, resulting in the identification of several shortcomings. Hesmondhalgh, for example, rightly argues that Bourdieu in *The Rules of Art* neglects "the growth and expansion of the cultural industries" (2006, p. 219) taking place in the 20th century, which transformed the way mass culture was produced. Particularly because Bourdieu in *The Rules of Art* concerns himself with the historical development of artistic fields from the early 19th century until the 1970s, the lack of acknowledgement of, for example, the advent of the Hollywood studio system in the late 1920s, is argued to hinder Bourdieu from appreciating the "domination of cultural production by multinational entertainment corporations across

all cultural industries" (2006, p. 220)[3]. This includes the influence these forces bear on the conditions of the field of restricted cultural production (2006, p. 217). This neglect, Hesmondhalgh argues, comes "at some cost to his theory" (2006, p. 215), and particularly questions issues related to the distribution of autonomy in the field of large-scale production (2006, pp. 221-22). While Hesmondhalgh holds that the "division between large-scale and restricted production continues to makes sense as at least an initial organizing principle for thinking about the making of culture" (2006, p. 222), he argues, though, that a large portion of cultural production is "taking place on the boundaries between sub-fields of mass and restricted production" (2006, p. 222). Similar points are put forward by Fowler (1997, pp. 101–02). According to Hesmondhalgh and Fowler, Bourdieu is thus somewhat insensitive to the emergence of increasingly hybrid fields of cultural production, unfolding in the restricted and large-scale field at once. This is because Bourdieu perceives the field of large-scale production as homogeneous. A growing body of research, however, attests to its more heterogeneous and complex constellations (Fowler, 1997; Hesmondhalgh, 2006).

Another critique that can be raised against Bourdieu's theory of cultural production is his decoupling of non-professionals from the field of cultural production. As evident from Figure 2.1, non-professional cultural producers bear no influence at all on the field of cultural production. This facet of the theory can perhaps be partially explained by the less dominant role of amateurs in cultural production at the time of Bourdieu's writing. Yet, Bourdieu's contemporary Marxist communication scholars, such as Smythe (2012 [1981]), argued since the 1950s that audiences formed a crucial part of the ecologies of large-scale cultural production by means of the labour they performed through acts of cultural consumptions.

[3] For an overview of the organisational structure and development of the American film industry, see Christopherson & Storper, (1986).

More recently, since the development of the World Wide Web, and the increasing domestication of the internet since the mid-1990s, the roles of amateurs in cultural production have expanded profoundly, and come to include content creation. The barriers to production have dramatically lowered, altering the boundaries between amateur and professional content creators, even more so with the rise of participatory networked technologies that accelerated in from the mid-2000s (Meyer, 2010). The changes in the relationships between non-professionals and the field of cultural production, enabled by the widespread uptake of new communications technologies, have fuelled a vast range of concepts and theorization, as argued in Chapter 1.

Empirical research likewise attests to changes brought about by networked technologies in combination with new digital practices, and point to ways in which these changes have fuelled new businesses models within the cultural industries. Kleemann et al. (2008), for example, provide a range of concrete examples of how businesses have incorporated amateur workers into their product developments. These include the car manufacturer *Fiat* eliciting design input from online audiences. According to Kleemann et al. (2008), *Fiat's* call for contributions to the design development of the car model *Fiat 500* resulted in the submission of more than 170,000 design suggestions in just a few months (p. 12). Kleemann et al. thus conclude that consumers are "becoming more like co-workers who take over specific parts of a production process" (2008, p. 5). Similarly, Baym and Burnett's (2009) study on the collaborations between online audiences and independent Swedish musicians find that audiences and consumers take on roles and responsibilities that would otherwise "be considered professional labour when done by anyone at a major label, radio station, management company, or press outlet" (p. 441).

Emerging participatory practices, such as those described in the research above, seem to suggest that the role of social capital should be included in Bourdieu's theory of cultural production. Recall that Bourdieu in *The Rules of Art*, as well as in Figure 2.1, does not directly give way for social capital to influence the distribution of other forms of capital, or levels of autonomy. Sørensen's (2012) findings, presented in the article "Crowdsourcing and outsourcing: the impact of online funding and distribution on the documentary film industry in the UK", for example, indirectly allude to the role of social capital for increasing autonomy and raising economical capital. Sørensen presents qualitative data reporting on a number of documentary film productions which relied exclusively on crowdfunding and crowd-investment for the realisation of their production budgets. These financial set-ups allowed the directors of the documentaries large degrees of artistic freedom and autonomy. These levels of autonomy would likely not have been possible had the artists had to adhere to the authority and interests of executive producers, production companies or national funding agencies. These documentary productions would be placed in the field of large-scale production in Bourdieu's model, positions which would imbue low levels of autonomy. What Sørensen's and similar research thus suggest is that emerging social funding practices unfolding in networked contexts allow for higher degrees of autonomy to manifest within the field of large-scale cultural production, if the producers are able to activate and convert their social capital into financial capital. Finally, recent research suggests that the landscape of contemporary film production "upset the dual structure corresponding with Bourdieu's categorization of 'restricted' and 'large-scale' fields of cultural production" (Kersten & Verboord, 2013, p. 2), suggesting that a reconfiguration of Bourdieu's model of the field of cultural production is needed.

Having accounted for Bourdieu's central theses underpinning his theory of cultural production, and identified shortcomings of these through the review of relevant literature,

the discussion will move on to address Becker's framework accounting for cultural production. As was made evident in the discussion of Bourdieu, the social aspects of cultural production, while acknowledged, were to a lesser extent used to explain how cultural artefacts come into being. Because of the open, distributed and collaborative nature of peer production, socio-relational features are central for facilitating the production of culture. Because of Becker's strong emphasis on social networks, his framework can act as a compliment to Bourdieu's, and points to the importance of understanding the social dynamics underpinning cultural production.

2.3 Becker's "Art World" framework

In his work *Art Worlds,* Becker (2008 [1982]) set out a framework for explaining cultural production. A 25th anniversary edition was published in 2008, which included a preface by Becker in which he reflected on his work, its genesis and impact, as well as an epilogue in which Becker, in conversation with Pessin, discussed similarities and differences between his approach and that of Bourdieu. These additions to *Art Worlds* are valuable as they allow for interpretations of this approach and methodology to be informed by Becker's own reflections on a work that predates networked technologies, and thus, networked forms of cultural production.

In the preface, Becker describes how his research resulting in the publication *Art Worlds* was a deliberate break with his more educationally oriented research carried out in the late 1960s. Realizing that the sociology of art was an underdeveloped field, dominated by European thinkers emphasizing philosophical and aesthetic aspects of culture, he wanted to contribute with more empirically grounded approaches. As such, Becker was never trying to generate a comprehensive theory, but rather "a framework that would continue to generate

researchable ideas" (2008, p. xx). And most importantly, he was seeking to expand complexity: "Complexity was my goal, not generalizability." (Becker, 2008, p. xix)

Yet, the level of complexity Becker portrays in *Art Worlds* – at least compared to that found in Bourdieu's theory – is somewhat easily summarized: Art works are not "the products of individual makers, 'artists', who possesses a rare and special gift. They are, rather, joint products of all the people who cooperate via an art world's characteristic conventions to bring work like that into existence." (2008, p. 35). In framing the production of culture in such terms, Becker emphasizes the role of the division of individual and collective labour, the role of social networks and the interactions herein, and the importance of established, yet dynamic, conventions shaped collectively and historically. In what follows, I will account in more detail for these key concepts.

2.3.1 Key concepts: worlds, conventions and division of labour

For Becker, art products are, first and foremost, the outcome of joint collaborative activity, often involving a large number of people (2008, p. 1). Formal organizations, or even organizational structures, do not define art worlds (2008, p. 35). Instead, art worlds are defined by "all the people whose activities are necessary to the production" (2008, p. 34). Consequently, Becker argued, the produced work "always shows signs of that cooperation" (2008, p. 1). An important group of social actors in the production process is that of *support personnel*, which might include "those sweeping up the stage and bringing the coffee, stretching and priming the canvases and framing the finished painting, copy editing and proofreading." (2008, p. 4). What follows from Becker's emphasis on the role of support personnel, is the assumption that art "rests on an extensive division of labour" (2008, p. 13). The division of labour between artists and support personnel, however, is not stable, but changes over time. So does the status of "any particular activity" (2008, p. 17). To illustrate

these points, Becker points to examples of how changes in musical recording and sound mixing technologies altered the relationship between technicians and musicians (2008, p. 17-18). One of the concrete outcomes of this particular technological development was that rock musicians increasingly came to consider sound mixing part of their artistic practice (2008, p. 18).

Becker continuously underlines the importance of *conventions* for enabling the production of artistic works. Conventions guide and constrain the works, their materiality, their expressions and genres:

> People who cooperate to produce a work of art usually do not decide things afresh. Instead, they rely on earlier agreements now become customary, agreements that have become part of the conventional way of doing things in that art. […]. Conventions suggest the appropriate dimensions of a work, the proper length of a performance, the proper size and shape of a painting or sculpture. *Conventions regulate the relations between artists and audience, specifying the rights and obligations of both*.
>
> (Becker, 2008, p. 29 – my emphasis).

Conventions are acquired and embodied by individuals through learning processes. Becker explains that artists "learn other conventions – professional culture – in the course of training and as they participate in the day-to-day activities of the art world. Only people who participate regularly in those activities […] know that culture" (2008, p. 59). Conventions, as the quote above attests, are not only guiding the division of labour, but also the relationships between cultural producers and the people consuming the art works.

In the context of distinction between professional and non-professional cultural producers and art worlds, it is worth noticing that Becker devotes a chapter to discussing differences between what he labels 'integrated processionals' (professionals occupying art worlds), 'mavericks' (professional artists who do not, and will not, become part of a cultural canon),

'folk artists' (non-professional production, such as school plays, birthday songs and quilting) and 'naïve artists' (non-professional material art, e.g. painters who do not display knowledge of existing relevant conventions). What Becker concludes is that the key differences between these labour orientations lie not "in its surface appearance or sound, but in the relation between that work and work done by others more or less involved in some art world" (2008, p. 270). The boundaries Becker draws between these different forms of cultural production are important. In distinguishing between categories of artistic labour based on the degree to which they actively and explicitly seek to form part of, associate themselves with, and draw on related art worlds and their guiding conventions, Becker highlights intentionality as key determiner of the degree to which producers can be perceived as professionals. One might therefore not necessarily be able to distinguish cultural goods produced by integrated professionals from those produced by amateurs. Rather, the difference lies in the way the works relate to and draw on adjacent art worlds and conventions. In the discussion of the different orientations, Becker underlines that 'mavericks', 'naïve artists' and 'folk artists' experience difficulties getting their work distributed, yet, their motivation, as he further argues, is not as such to secure the widest possible audiences. It is then, in Becker's understanding, only those with social links to the established, or at last perceptibly bounded, art worlds that are able to mobilize the resources needed to gain attention and secure audiences.

Two further aspects of Becker's framework need highlighting: his emphasis on the importance of distribution, and the state's role in production processes. To address the aspect of distribution first: Becker is firm in his claim that distribution matters are central to artistic production. Distribution is what ensures economic sustainability for the individual artist(s), securing their sustained and continuous practice. Art worlds, Becker argues, "provide distribution systems which integrate artists into their society's economy, bringing

art works to publics which appreciate them and will pay enough so that the work can proceed." (2008, p. 93). This distribution and financial security can take the form of either self-support (e.g. artist financing their artistic activity by having day-jobs), through patronage or through public sales (2008, pp. 96-129).

As for the state's role in cultural production, Becker underlines that "the state always plays some role in the making of art works" (2008, p. 165). In particular, Becker highlights the role of the state in regulating IP rights and in facilitating the markets for artistic commodities. He writes that most "societies treat art as a commodity which can be bought and sold like any other commodity" (2008, p. 167). When arguing for the influence of regulation on production of art works, Becker points to Griswold's (1981) analysis of how American copyright laws in the 19th century influenced the genres evoked by contemporary American writers. In essence, Becker argues that the state "creates the framework of property rights within which artists get economic support and make reputations." (2008, p. 191). In acknowledging the role of the state enabling the building of artistic reputation, and in emphasizing economic capital, and thus commodification, as a prerequisite for sustained artistic production, Becker indirectly operate with concepts similar to those associated with Bourdieu's notion of alternative capital:

> The reputation of the artists and the work reinforce one another: we value more a work done by an artist we respect, just as we respect more an artist whose work we have admired. When the distribution of art involved the exchange of money, reputational value can be translated into financial value, so that the decision that a well-known and respected artist did not do a painting once attributed to him means that the painting loses value.
>
> (Becker, 2008, p. 23)

Within Becker's framework, individuals involved in cultural production oriented towards, and guided by conventions of, similar art worlds, are thus integrated professionals per definition. These art worlds are always embedded within and under the influence of

structures and juridical systems of the state, the field of power. The art worlds are financially sustained by, and thus dependent on, distribution systems, which in turn rely on the commodification of cultural artefacts for the circulation of economic means. The value of any given art product is to a large extent determined by reputation, by symbolic capital, enabling the conversion from this form of capital into economic capital. This brief summary of the key properties characterizing Becker's framing of generic art worlds serves to illustrate some of the similarities between his approach and that of Bourdieu.

2.3.2 Limitations identified through reviews of existing literature

The primary limitations of Becker's framework in the context of networked cultural production has to do with the way he frames categories of cultural producers, and his less critical approach to labour issues. As we have seen, Becker holds that only individuals engaged with cultural production orientated towards acknowledged art worlds are considered professionals; the *integrated professionals*. However, as was brought forward in the Section 2.2.2, contemporary digital practices render the distinction between professionals and amateurs somewhat arbitrary. These blurred boundaries between professional and amateur workers raise questions related to exploitation and ethics, particularly in contexts where amateurs take an active part in the production of cultural goods; when amateurs are de facto embedded in art worlds. These issues are actively debated in contemporary scholarly discussions on free labour; below I outline the key arguments brought forward.

The rise of participatory cultures and peer production has led scholars grounded in critical traditions to call for increased attention to questions of exploitation and digital labour (e.g. Arvidsson & Colleoni, 2012; Banks & Deuze, 2009; Fuchs, 2010; Kleemann et al., 2008). In fact, the debate was initiated already at the turn of the millennium with Terranova's (2000,

2004) argument that free labour forms an "important, and yet undervalued, force in advanced capitalist societies" (Terranova, 2000, p. 33). Fuchs (2010, 2012a, 2012b) is arguably more radical in his framing of the digital/free labour debate. He repeatedly challenges media and communication scholars to acknowledge the importance of reintroducing Marxist theory into the analysis of contemporary production practices. A fundamental aspect of Fuchs' argument is that user-generated content is "expropriated and exploited by capital to accumulate capital", which necessitates a rethinking of the concept of capital and class (Fuchs, 2010, p. 179). The users themselves, Fuchs argues, are driven to participate in content production in order to accumulate Bourdieuian social, cultural and symbolic capital (Fuchs, 2012b, p. 638). Another scholar advocating for an increased acknowledgement of the commodification of online participation is Goldberg (2011). He argues that commodification is taking place at the very "fundamental level – the level at which data is transmitted" (p. 739). The lack of acknowledgement of these matters, he argues, is upheld by "the false assertion that the transmission of data is free." (p. 745).

A 2013 special issue of the journal *Cultural Studies Review* focuses on the theme *Amateur Economies.* The issue brings forward examinations of contemporary discourses of the notion of the amateur (Hamilton, 2013), suggesting that the implied voluntary, affectively driven participation in various forms of cultural production may "serve as rhetorical cover for other modes of more ethically questionable work" (Hamilton, 2013, p. 188). Kennedy (2013) highlights other problematic aspects of amateur production in the context of the crowdsourcing of design. Her empirical study of professional designers' perception and responses to online design crowdsourcing marketplaces such as *99designs* suggests a number of dire consequences of the introduction of amateurs in the professional production context. Firstly, Kennedy argues, it alters designers "sense of their own professionalism" (p. 243), and "devalue their work" (Ibid.). For those amateurs who participate in these forms of

cultural production, Kennedy argues, the reality is that the pay is either absent or unethically low. Ultimately, Kennedy argues that the increased use of crowdsourcing models may bear direct influence on the already sacrificial work conditions characterizing labour within the creative industries (p. 245). In other words, Kennedy proposes that the question of digital and free labour should not only be considered from the view of the amateurs; it should also be framed in a way that allows for the potential and real consequences it bears on the professional cultural industries' labour force.

This stance bears some resemblance to Hesmondhalgh's (2010b) discussion on free labour and the creative industries. Hesmondhalgh suggests that the free labour debates, in some respects, have marginalised central concerns relating to the the labour conditions of professional workers. Hesmondhalgh & Baker (2008; 2011), Hesmondhalgh (2010a) and Banks & Hesmondhalgh (2009) have comprehensively examined the dispositions of professional cultural industry workers in the UK. Providing an analysis of what is found to be utopian discourses in cultural policies in the UK, Banks & Hesmondhalgh (2009), for example, review studies examining aspects of labour conditions of individuals formally engaged with cultural production. They find that the "creative workplaces are marked significantly by insecurity, inequality and exploitation (including self-exploitation)" (p. 415). The difficulties in securing jobs in creative industries, favouring project-based employment, have the consequence that integrated professionals involved are preoccupied with maximizing their chance for future employment. In their ethnographically informed study on the work condition experiences of workers involved in producing a popular television talent show, Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2008), for example, find that the reputation (and thus social capital) of past co-workers are crucial in securing future jobs.

Returning to the special issue on *Amateur Economies*, with the notion of social capital in mind, Fletcher & Lobato (2013) analyse a particular category of amateurs: non-professional musicians who are trying to break through professionally. In order to do so, the musicians take on strategically beneficial un-paid or under-paid work, which sometimes incur economic costs to or financial losses for the workers. Fletcher & Lobato thus points out that the digital/free labour debate, when focusing on exploitation, overlooks that "people engage in creative activities for a host of non-monetary reasons" (2013, p. 171). In their conclusion, they highlight that the notion of free labour is "complicated by the different forms of value they [workers] also trade in", such as cultural and social capital (2013, p. 171). Fletcher & Lobato (2013) therefore conclude that digital/free labour cannot be de facto defined based on the degree to which workers remain owners of the content they produce, but rather, that individual circumstance, concious choice and aspirations determine the degree to which labour can rightly be infered as being exploitative. Relatedly, Bauwens (2009a) acknowledges that peer production enables the creation of "a tremendous amount of free labour from which they [commercial entities] can benefit" (2009a, p. 126). By the same token, Bauwens argues that individuals are free to decide whether or not to participate, and workers retain their autonomy. In pointing to peer producers' autonomy, Bauwens (2009b) disagrees with Fuchs (2010, 2012a) conclusions that digital labour is involuntary and exploited by powerful commercial entities.

Fletcher & Lobato (2013) and Bauwens' (2009b) key points resonate well with central arguments presented in Hesmondhalgh (2010b) and Fish & Srinivasan (2012). Fish & Srinivasan oppose the dominating discourses polarizing matters of exploitation and deliberation: "Research on digital labour tends to fall into idealized, oppositional binaries that are judgmental rather than based on detailed analyses of the actual system or site", they write (2012, p. 137). Instead, they suggest, attention should be paid to "how labour is

capitalized and wealth is accumulated *at different points within the network*" (2012, p. 149 – my emphasis), thus adding macro-level analysis to Fletcher & Lobato's (2013) suggestion of micro-level analysis of various capital accumulations embedded in the trajectories of cultural creation. Likewise, Hesmondhalgh (2010b) questions the appropriateness of the emphasis on exploitation in digital labour debates. Firstly, as he notes, throughout history, un-paid workers have driven the majority of cultural production (2010b, p. 277). Moreover, he calls for reconsiderations of the rhetoric, allowing for more balanced granularity of the level of actualized exploitation. He, for example, asks: "are we really meant to see people who sit at their computers modifying code or typing out responses to TV shows as 'exploited' in the same way as those who endure appalling conditions and pay in Indonesian sweatshops?" (2010b, p. 271). Arvidsson & Colleoni's (2012) answer to that question would be an unambiguous 'no'. They highlight that exploitation has two facets, one political and one economic. The political "involves domination, or at least some form of compulsion. Individuals must be forced, in some way, to undertake the activity in which they are exploited" (p. 137). Banks & Deuze (2009), in their editorial to the *International Journal of Cultural Studies'* special issue on co-creative labour, relatedly argue that the key factor in determining the complicated ethical aspects of these collaborations between integrated professionals and amateur workers must entail "careful attention […] to how the participants themselves (both professional and non-professional, commercial and non-commercial) negotiate and navigate the meanings and possibilities of these emerging co-creative relationships" (2009, p. 419). Banks & Deuze (2009) note, however, that this is a non-trivial task as these emerging hybrids and collaborations "sit uncomfortably with our current understandings and theories of work and labour" (2009, p. 419).

Taken together, the literature discussing aspects of emerging hybrid constellations of collaborations between integrated professionals and amateur content creators highlights

shortcomings of Becker's art world framework. In particular, this body of research calls for re-considerations of the categories of cultural producers suggested by Becker. Likewise, it points the attention to the need for examining how cultural producers themselves perceive of their role in production processes, professionals as well as amateurs. Doing so will allow for more nuanced understandings of the drivers of networked cultural productions, and will aid in informing debates on the degree to which free labour is exploitative, and the degree to which such labour bears influence on the conditions of formally integrated professionals. Given the relative novelty of emerging models of networked cultural production, conventions guiding the division of labour, and thus the obligations of creators and audiences these dictate, have yet to solidify. Understanding differences in the perceptions and framings of labour are therefore necessary for identifying emerging conventions guiding the division of labour in hybrid networked production models.

Having accounted for Becker's art world framework, and identified limitations of the approach based on reviews of and findings in related literature, the discussion will move on to account for Benkler's conceptualization of cultural production. In contrast to both Bourdieu and Becker, Benkler is explicitly addressing cultural production as it emerges in the context of networked technologies. As such, therefore, Benkler's framing highlights the necessity of acknowledging that the advent and uptake of new technologies bear direct influence on the processes and dynamics shaping cultural production.

2.4 Benkler's notion of commons-based peer production

In *The Wealth of Networks*, Benkler (2006) describes the emergence of new "models of information and cultural production" (p. 32), contrasting those of the industrial age of the 20st century. In contrast to both Bourdieu and Becker, Benkler is very explicit in placing and assigning "a very significant role to technology" (2006, p. 16). Nonetheless, somewhat akin

to Bourdieu methodologically, Benkler traces the genesis of a determining rupture from a production model epitomized by the Hollywood model and the recording industry (2006, p. 275), to that of *commons-based peer production* afforded by what he labels the *networked information economy.* This new economy, according to Benkler, has become particularly dominant over the "the past decade and a half", rising alongside the uptake and development of networked technologies (2006, p. 1). It is difficult to overstate Benkler's emphasis on the transformative power vested in networked technologies. He claims that the "change brought about by the networked information environment is deep. It is structural." (2006, p. 1).

2.4.1 Key concepts: commons-based peer production, networked information economy

In Benkler's account of the rise of *commons-based peer production* in the *networked information economy*, the change in production forms has led to increased levels of cultural transparency, malleability, and foremost, of individual autonomy (2006, pp. 8-9). The increased autonomy is a direct consequence of the aforementioned structural technological changes: "The structure of our information environment is constitutive of our autonomy, not only functionally significant to it", Benkler argues (2006, p. 146). The autonomy manifests in the ease of creating and amending cultural content, and in distributing it to a wide audience (2006, p. 275). As in Becker, the question of distribution is thus central. The new economy has, according to Benkler, rendered distribution of "information or cultural goods" a "nonissue" (2006, p. 80). Principally, in combination with changes in economic organization and social practices, this new networked environment is argued to have "increased the role of nonmarket and nonproprietary production" of information and culture in society at large (2006, p. 2).

In a similar vein to Bourdieu's contrasting of the fields of small-scale and large-scale cultural production, Benkler describes two opposing modes of cultural production which are best understood in terms of their relative position to the market. The market-driven production is that which is epitomized by the Hollywood model and the recording industry (2006, p. 275). The non-market model is that of peer production, representing "a genuine discontinuity from the industrial information economy" (2006, p. 472). This discontinuity is the outcome of emerging social practices enabled by networked technologies, resulting in a particular form of production, commons-based peer production:

> […] the networked environment makes possible a new modality of organizing production: radically decentralized, collaborative, and nonproprietary; based on sharing resources and outputs among widely distributed, loosely connected individuals who cooperate with each other without relying on either market signals or managerial commands. This is what I call 'commons-based peer production'." (2006, p. 60).

Benkler explicitly uses the term 'commons-based' to highlight that "the inputs and outputs of the process are shared, *freely or conditionally*, in an institutional form that leaves them equally available for all to use as they choose at their individual discretion" (2006, p. 62 – my emphasis). As further clarification of Benkler's definition of peer production, it must be noted that "peer production […] refers to production systems that depend on individual action that is self-selected and decentralized, rather than hierarchically assigned" (2006, p. 62), and that under such conditions, any "production strategy that manages its inputs and outputs as commons locates that production modality outside the proprietary system, in a framework of social relations" (2006, p. 62). Benkler's definition of peer production above points to two central themes: the social economy of such forms of production; and the lowered barriers to participation. Throughout *The Wealth of Networks,* Benkler provides examples of increased participation in the production of cultural goods, individually as well as collectively (examples given include films, music, software, and encyclopedic knowledge).

The lowered barriers to participation are argued to be the result of changes in the distribution of the means for production in society (2006, p. 6). Benkler holds that the social economy of these novel forms of cultural production is detached from the logics of the 'price system' (2006, p. 63). In doing so, Benkler, like Bourdieu, deliberately breaks with traditional economists' assumed *homo economicus.* Benkler explicitly attacks this line of thinking, underlining that "this simple model underlying much of contemporary economics is wrong" (2006, p. 92).

Intentionally operating within an economics framework, Benkler admits that his stance on this matter is "quite radical", but acknowledges that it might be a "trivial observation outside the field of economics" (2006, p. 93). Arguably, Benkler's disciplinary bias hinders him from convincingly fleshing out the dynamics of the social economy of peer production. In what seems to be an attempt at overcoming this shortcoming, Benkler points somewhat vaguely to concepts of gift economies. It is clear from Benkler's acknowledgement section (2006, pp. ix –xii) that this body of literature has been suggested to him; he explicitly thanks a named individual for keeping his "feet to the fire on the relationship to the anthropology of gifts" (2006, p. xii). Although *The Wealth of Networks* does not provide any compelling evidence that Benkler has engaged critically or extensively with anthropologically informed literature on gift cultures, exchanges or economies, it is clear that Benkler considers gift cultures fundamental to the economies of peer production. This is most clearly expressed when he accuses anthropologists and mainstream economists alike for failing to acknowledge that gift economies are not at the periphery, but are, in fact, central to modern capitalist societies and peer production (2006, p. 116). What Benkler does do, however, is to frame the social economies of peer production within what he calls an *alternative institutional space*. This is a space "where human agents can act free of the particular constraints required for markets" (2006, p. 144).

Two further aspects of Benkler's portrait of a dual system of cultural production should be noted. One is that the industrial "proprietary, market-oriented" model and the networked "nonproprietary, nonmarket transactional" model predominantly coexist in a compartmentalized manner alongside one another (2006, p. 18). This leads to the second aspect: while Benkler does not directly pay attention to crossovers or hybrids between the two production forms, he does provide a short tentative discussion of how the emerging model, by the mere virtue of its existence, changes the fundamental conditions for the industrial model (2006, p. 122-27). In essence, he concludes that "social production is reshaping the market conditions under which businesses operate" (2006, p. 126).

Like Becker, Benkler accentuates the regulatory and juristic roles of the state in cultural production. The two, however, differ profoundly in the way they perceive of the implication of these. Becker, as we saw, was predominantly of the view that the regulatory frames assist in the forming of markets for cultural commodities, ultimately allowing for art worlds and individual artists to sustain themselves economically, assisted by distributions systems embedded within markets. Secondly, Becker emphasized how regulatory frameworks, and intellectual property rights management in particular, bear influence on which form of cultural content is produced (e.g. the choice of novel genres as demonstrated in Griswold (1981)).

Benkler, contrastingly, does not agree with the enabling nature of the state and regulatory frameworks. Quite the contrary: according to Benkler, these are antagonistic forces which severely restrict the production of culture: "For the most part [...] the state in both the United States and Europe has played a role in supporting the market-based industrial incumbents of the twentieth-century information production system *at the expense of the*

individuals who make up the emerging networked information economy." (2006, p. 21 – my emphasis). Benkler, not dissimilarly to Bourdieu's emphasis on symbolic struggle as the defining feature of any field, describes these antagonistic forces using the metaphor of 'battles'. Benkler does not stop at the level of the state. Strong forces in the cultural industries are equally guilty of restricting networked cultural production, he argues. In particular, he points to Hollywood, the film and the music industry when arguing for their antagonistic nature. Discussing enablers and constrainers of peer production, he for example highlights industry lobbyists' role in ensuring the passage of the *Digital Millennium Copyright Act* in the United States (2006, p. 25).

2.4.2 Limitations identified through reviews of existing literature

The overriding strength of Benkler's work lies in his insistence on the role of new technologies in the forming of new models of networked cultural production, driven by social economies. His concept of commons-based peer production defines key properties characterizing such forms of networked cultural production. Since the publishing of *The Wealth of Networks,* however, a growing body of evidence counters a number of the core assumptions underpinning his notion of peer production, including its detachment from the market and formal cultural industries. Other critiques that can rightly be put forward relate to Benkler's underdeveloped understanding of the dynamics of the social economies he portrays. In the following, the limitations of Benkler's framework will be discussed in relation to relevant literature.

A number of problems arise from research investigating dynamics in communities and networks of peer production. Contrary to Benkler's notion of the non-hierarchical, non-managerially dependent structure of peer production, Loubser's (2010) research on Wikipedia, for example, firmly validate the importance and prevalence of managerial activity

in peer production. In his quantitative study of Wikipedia, Loubser examined organisational mechanisms by analysing a data set comprising all logs of all actions taken in the entire English Wikipedia from 2001-2007. One of his main findings was that managerial control is essential for the success of any large-scale peer production. He further found that the level of managerial activity in Wikipedia was increasing on all fronts. This to the extent to which it might threaten to undermine the very goal of Wikipedia. Loubser argued that administrators were becoming bureaucrats "driven by incentives that are different from those who participate only as members of the mass peer production effort" (2010, p. 156).

Loubser's findings resonate with a number of studies (e.g. Luther et al., 2010; Niederer & van Dijck, 2010), and epitomize the critique raised by Kreiss, Finn, & Turner (2011). Kreiss et al. make a plea for new media scholars to revisit Weber, and thus to acknowledge the "complexity of the bureaucratic form" (2011, p. 247), which they argue, governs peer production, too. This point is particularly convincingly illustrated empirically in Halfaker, Geiger, Morgan, & Riedl's (2013) study on the rise and decline of Wikipedia contributors. Analysing the editing behaviour of 100,000 newcomers during the period 2001-2010 (randomly sampling 100 individuals per semester), they found that editor retention rates were dramatically lowering, and overall participation decreasing. They hypothesized a relationship between this decline in participation and the increased use of automated bots and algorithms for communicating with newcomers (and in particular: rejecting their contributions). Based on their quantitative analysis, Halfaker et al. concluded by harshly contrasting evolutionary changes in the dynamics guiding the division of labour in Wikipedia:

> Wikipedia has changed from the encyclopaedia that anyone can edit to the encyclopaedia that anyone who understands the norms, socializes himself or herself, dodges the impersonal wall of semi-automated rejection, and still wants to voluntarily contribute his or her time and energy can edit."
>
> (Halfaker, Geiger, Morgan, & Riedl, 2013, p. 683)

Halfaker et al's study is just one of many illustrating that the social economies of peer production are unstable, and their dynamics rest on more complex forms of gift economies than portrayed in Benkler's work. Benkler, however, is not alone in emphasising the role of gift economies in networked cultural production. The notions of gift economies and cultures are dominant in a large range of literature which theorize or empirically investigate the social dynamics of participatory cultural production (e.g. Barbrook, 2005; Baym, 2011; Bays & Mowbray, 1999; Bergquist & Ljungberg, 2001; Burnett, 2003, 2012; Giesler & Pohlmann, 2003; Hellekson, 2009; Lessig, 2008; Pearson, 2007; Skågeby, 2010; Zeitlyn, 2003). These framings of gift economies can, however, reasonably be accused of rendering the nature of gift cultures and economies somewhat simple, of neglecting lessons on the nature of the gift stemming from the anthropological literature over recent decades. The dynamics of gift exchanges and cultures in online contexts are arguably as complex as those of pre-capitalist societies and offline contexts. Anthropologists such as Mauss (1954) and Malinowski (1922) have verified that gift exchanges are highly complex phenomena, which are anything but disinterested. Malinowski, in his analysis of the Kula ring, showed how the gift exchanges, and the recirculation of armshells and necklaces, were acts of competition for prestige/symbolic capital, while serving as communication devices. Mauss, in his work on exchanges in 'Archaic' societies, similarly made it clear that "gift exchanges are often rooted in diverse social and economic objectives, such as bolstering the reputation of community leaders or expanding territorial jurisdiction" (McGoey, 2012, p. 193). Mauss (1954) juxtaposed gift and commodity exchanges, taking them as framers of two opposing societal models. Similar characterization and juxtaposition of commodities and gifts are found in Gregory (1982) and Osteen (2002).

In addition to this general neglect of the more complex aspects of the social dynamics of gift cultures and practices, there is a tendency to perceive of gifts in digital environments as exclusively forming non-rivalrous goods/gifts. Various portrayals of distinct online gift economies (e.g. Barbrook, 2005; Bauwens, 2009; Currah, 2007; Leyshon, 2003) are explicitly underpinned by this understanding of digital information as de facto being a non-rivalrous good (see also Slater's (2000) idea of the post-scarcity economy). However, *informational* non-rivalrous goods of the social online economy do not constitute the full spectrum of these economies. Increasingly, *virtual* (scarce) goods dominate the online sphere (Lehdonvirta & Castronova, forthcoming; Lehdonvirta & Ernkvist, 2011). Likewise, Benkler (2006) and others neglect that online spaces and goods imbue *material* cultures, too (Baker, 2012; Lehdonvirta, 2010). Moreover, in portrayals of gift economies underpinning networked culture, the juxtaposition of gifts and commodities is upheld.

The distinction between gift and commodity has had a lasting influence on the wider field of anthropological and economic sociological thinking (Appadurai, 1986). In parallel with the adherence to the dichotomy of the gift and commodity in major branches of anthropologist discourse, however, it is increasingly being suggested that such distinction is misleading. From the 1980s onward, a large body of literature rejects the idea of gifts and commodities as constituting two opposing constructs (e.g. Bird-David & Darr, 2009; Darr, 2003; Davis, 1996; Dolfsma, Eijk, & Jolink, 2009; Herrmann, 1997; Lapavitsas, 2004; Rus, 2008; Smart, 1993). Most notably is, perhaps, Appadurai (1986), contesting that "commodities are special kinds of manufactured goods (or services), which are associated only with capitalist modes of production and are thus to be found only where capitalism has penetrated" (p. 7). Rather, he suggests as a starting point that a commodity is "*any thing intended for exchange*" (p. 9 – italics in original). In lieu of an a priori definition of goods or transactions, based on whether they are part of a market-facilitated exchange, Appadurai argues that we need to analyse the

social situations artefacts are embedded in, in order to infer their meanings social significance (1986, p. 5). If we understand commodities in accordance with Appadurai and similar lines of thought, the social economies of networked cultural production widen significantly. In the context of Wreckamovie productions, such perception would, for example, entail acknowledging merchandise, physical DVD copies, etc., as part of the social fabric and gift economies aiding the networked cultural production.

Bell (1991), for example, allows us to employ such theoretical understanding of the gift, and thus, such analytical framing. He suggests commodity exchange to be a sub-set of gift giving. He argues that commodity exchange should be "seen as a special case of gift exchange", and thus consequently, that gift exchanges should not be understood within "the general framework of neoclassical exchange theory" (Bell, 1991, p. 156). In doing so, Bell points to the social relational contexts within which the commodities are embedded. Another related way of conceptualizing the relationship between gifts and commodities is found in Carrier (1991). He suggests that "gifts and commodities represent not exclusive categories, but poles defining a continuum" (Carrier, 1991, p. 132). The key argument presented by Carrier (1991) is that alienation and social obligation are neither a defining property of the gift nor the commodity; these are potentialities of both: "gift transactions contain an element of alienation and individualism, just as many commodity transactions are tinged by mutual obligation" (1991, p. 132).

As a final note on gift cultures and dynamics, their relationship to Bourdieuian concepts of alternative capital should be acknowledged. Silber (2009), for example, argues that gift exchanges are practices allowing for the conversion of other forms of capital into symbolic capital. Likewise, Dolfsma, Eijk, & Jolink (2009) argue that analysing gift cultures and exchanges allows for the understanding of the acquisition of social and symbolic capital,

which is otherwise 'black boxed'. As such, understanding the alternative economies enabling the Wreckamovie productions entails acknowledging the role gifts, and commodities, play in facilitating the conversion of alternative capital into financial capital. It is therefore not enough, as Benkler suggests, to frame peer production as operating within non-monetary driven economies.

A second limitation of Benkler's model of networked cultural production relates to his compartmentalizing of peer production in non-market driven spheres. This view of the mutually exclusive forms of market and non-market led production is mirrored in the majority of literature discussing peer production or large-scale collaborative online communities (e.g. Bauwens, 2009a; Meng & Wu, 2013). However, since 2008 there has been an increase in literature questioning this core assumption underpinning Benkler's portrayal of networked production. Bruns (2012), in fact, argues the opposite of Benkler, stating that the networked information economy is characterized by the occurrence of increasingly *hybrid* models of production and collaboration between formal industrial agents and individuals of the participatory cultures (pp. 826–27). Likewise, Lessig (2008), in his influential work, *Remix: Making art and commerce thrive in the hybrid economy*, devotes a third of his book to the discussion of economic aspects of online culture. He distinguishes between commercial economies and sharing economies, and argues that these "economies coexist. Indeed, they complement each other" (2008, p. 150). Ultimately, Lessig argues that a new economy is emerging, a hybrid, which he predict will come to dominate the networked information economy (2008, p. 177).

If we consider empirical work addressing the blurring boundaries between peer production and the market and formal cultural industries, we find a range of research which supports Lessig's (2008) and Bauwens' (2009b) claim that peer production should be seen as a

hybrid between commercial and sharing economies. Berdou (2011), in her qualitative study of open source communities, for example, demonstrates throughout her monograph that "forms of peer production are becoming intensively commercialized" (2011, p. 2). She draws on production examples such as the coding of the operating system Linux, around which a number of commercial entities have developed a large portfolio of products and services. In doing so, she demonstrates how volunteering peer producers collaborate with professional software developers employed by companies such as IBM.

Meng & Wu (2013), in their article "Commons/commodity: Peer production caught in the Web of the commercial market", equally allude to the diverse interests at stake in peer production. They examine a Chinese online community of subtitle translators, *Zimuzu.* They conclude that while the peer produced subtitles are not being sold, they are still embedded within a commercialized space. This is particularly manifested when the various groups of peer producers are competing for "advertising revenue needed to sustain their activities" (2013, p. 141). In essence, Meng & Wu suggest that "commons-based peer production is being integrated into business practices in ways that appear to reinforce rather than challenge the commodity model of information production" (2013, p. 127). Langlois & Elmer (2009) similarly point to the embeddedness of peer produced content in commodified online spaces. Analysing commercial uses of Wikipedia content, they conclude that "the earnest development of Wikipedia as a collaborative, global knowledge archive cannot escape the proprietary imperatives embedded in the web's networked architecture" (2009, p. 774).

Taken together, the literature discussed in this section problematizes Benkler's notion of non-hierarchal gift economies as drivers of the social dynamics of peer production. Moreover, it points to the necessity of including commodities in the analysis of the financial

and social economies of peer production. Relatedly, literature suggests that the distinction between non-marked based and market based models of cultural production are inadequate for accounting for the actual practices unfolding in networked forms of cultural production.

2.5 Justification of research questions

In the previous sections Bourdieu's theory of cultural production, Becker's Art World framework and Benkler's notion of the networked information economy enabling the emergence of peer production, have been examined in detail. Drawing on reviews of a large body of related literature, limitations of each of these theoretical orientations have been identified. This chapter has highlighted some of the key theoretical challenges that must be addressed in order to account for contemporary networked cultural production. As we have seen, none of the three theoretical orientations are able to fully explain the properties, patterns and practices of networked cultural production. The complexities outlined call for an equally sophisticated and multifaceted theoretical approach to the study of peer production in the Wreckamovie community. As a consequence, the research questions of this study are constructed in a way that gives due attention to key concepts presented across Bourdieu, Becker and Benkler's work. The research questions guiding this qualitative enquiry are thus directly informed by the theoretical lenses discussed in this chapter. Further, the research questions are refined though the review of relevant literature, pointing to under-researched themes as well as potential implications of the networked environment and participatory practices.

Overall, this research project addresses three overarching themes relating to networked cultural production: a) the dynamics of the Wreckamovie peer productions, conceptualized through the notions of 'art worlds' and 'fields' b) the division of labour, and the conventions guiding them, and c) the wider social economies facilitating and supporting the realization of

the peer produced films. In the following I present the concrete research questions, and justify each by pointing to the literature and concepts discussed in this chapter.

Research theme 1: The worlds and fields of Wreckamovie peer productions

RQ1: What characterizes the worlds and fields of Wreckamovie peer productions?

- Which positional struggles manifest, and how do these relate to the more collaborative, socio- relational aspects of the production processes?

The first theme concerns itself with the dynamics of the Wreckamovie productions. Informed by Bourdieu's notion of the fields of cultural production and Becker's concept of art worlds, it takes an integrated approach to understanding the complexities governing the realization of the Wreckamovie film productions. Bourdieu and Becker's approaches stand in stark contrast. Where Bourdieu's theory emphasizes how culture is shaped by a diverse set of forces, including objective and relative relations to other field positions, Becker's framework predominantly highlight socio-relational dynamics and the influence of established conventions. This research question thus indirectly questions the ability of any of the approaches in isolation to account for the dynamics of peer production, specifically in the case of the Wreckamovie productions. As per Benkler's definition of peer production, the Wreckamovie productions allow for low barriers to participation. Anyone can join these productions, and take an active role in their shaping. These self-selected individuals cooperate on a voluntary basis, seemingly without financial incentives, as Benkler highlights. Yet, Benkler and Becker in combination are insensitive to the external factors shaping the dynamics of these networked forms of cultural production, just as they give little attention to potential conflicts arising in the production of culture. Ultimately, by approaching the analysis of the dynamics of the Wreckamovie productions though a multifaceted lens, as suggested by this research question, this research seeks to unravel less obvious patterns

characterizing the Wreckamovie peer productions. It thus allows for more complex understandings of the dynamics of networked cultural production.

Research theme 2: The division of labour in Wreckamovie peer productions

RQ2: Which conventions guide the division of labour in Wreckamovie, and how are these conceptualized and perceived?

- What are the implications of the introduction of non-professionals in the field of cultural production in the case of WAM peer productions?

This research theme is informed by two central concepts of Becker's Art World framework: the importance of the division of labour and predominance of conventions for enabling the production of culture. Conventions are to a large degree setting out the roles, obligations and responsibilities of artists and audiences alike, according to Becker. In the contemporary context of participatory cultures, of co-production, crowdsourcing and crowdfunding, however, clearly defined conventions have yet to emerge and solidify. This was evident from the discussion of the limitations of Benkler's model of peer production, and in the discussion of debates on free labour. Although a growing body of empirical literature addresses aspects of the social and political dynamics of peer production, it remains to be determined which conventions guide such labour. The research reviewed on Wikipedia, for example, suggested that labour conventions are unstable, and further, that they might differ from domain to domain. We saw, for example, that in the case of the production of open source software, conventions supporting collaborations with integrated professionals and corporate entities had emerged. As for Becker's framework itself, the introduction of non-professionals in art worlds, may well challenge his categorization of cultural producers. Consequently, this research question is designed to allow for an analysis of how WAM workers and production members perceive of their roles in the production processes, and likewise, how this

influences the conventions guiding the labour efforts. Finally, the sub-question is informed by the discussion of the limitations of Bourdieu's theory of cultural production; notably, his decoupling of the non-professionals from the field of cultural production. As such, this research theme ultimately seeks to account for some of the theoretical implications of the increased tendency for non-professionals to form an integrated part of the production of culture.

Research theme 3: The social economies of Wreckamovie peer productions

RQ3: In which ways do alternative forms of capital manifest in the Wreckamovie peer productions, and what are the indications that the involved actors actively seek to convert these forms of capital into other forms of capital?

- What characterizes the dynamics and mechanisms enabling the conversion of one form of capital to another?

This research theme is informed by Bourdieu's emphasis on alternative capital as a key stake in the production of culture. Likewise, it is informed by the notion that alternative forms of capital are convertible into other forms of capital, including financial capital. The research question seeks to understand the relative roles and predominance of the different forms of alternative capital in the case of Wreckamovie peer productions. Equally, this research question seeks to analyse the degree to which Wreckamovie producers actively seek to convert alternative capital into financial capital. Such an analysis will render it visible whether the accumulation of alternative capital forms part of strategic pursuits deliberately aiming at increasing producers' ability to raise monetary funds. The analyses guided by this research question is informed by literature that expands notions of social economies, as discussed in the section identifying limitations of Benkler's work. As such, gift

economies and its potentially embedded trajectories of commodities, are taken to form part of the social economies of the Wreckamovie productions. Ultimately, this research question in concerned with understanding the under-researched dynamics characterising hybrids fields located between the fields of restricted and large-scale production. Also, it seeks to understand how alternative and financial capital is distributed within these positional spaces.

Taken together, the three research themes and associated research questions allow for a theoretically informed, holistic approach to the analysis of the Wreckamovie community and the productions it facilitates. By answering the research questions outlined above, this research will enable an evaluation of these existing theoretical models of cultural production. What is more, by interweaving concepts of Benkler and Becker into Bourdieu's theoretical lens, and by expanding it to include the observed practices and patterns presented in the analysis chapters, this research will contribute towards the initial development of a theory of networked cultural production.

Chapter 3

Research design and methodology

3.1 Overall approach to inquiry

Addressing the research themes and questions outlined in the previous chapter, this study adopts a holistic qualitative approach grounded in the interpretivist paradigm (Bryman, 2008). Within this orientation, this research project employs an embedded case study strategy informed by ethnographic methods. When framing this case study as being placed within an interpretive tradition, I lean on Sudweekks & Simoff's (1999) emphasis that such an approach is concerned with the researcher being "immersed in situations and allowing insights to emerge during the process of investigation" (p. 31). A consequence of this approach to inquiry is the researcher's influence on the data generated through direct interaction with the social world and her participants (Lapan et al., 2012). Taking the above into account, this study's research design, data collection methods and approach to data analysis will be discussed in detail in this chapter. This includes measures taken to ensure the ethical conduction of this research, as well as steps taken to ensure quality in this qualitative inquiry.

3.2 Research design

3.2.1 Embedded case study

This study takes on an embedded case study design. Yin (2002, p. 13) defines a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". For the study at hand, the case at large is defined as 'independent film-making in the Wreckamovie community', the phenomena being the peer production of feature-length films. The embedded cases are bounded by four specific productions facilitated by the Wreckamovie online platform. This case study analysis is facilitated by a "direct observer(s) in a single, natural setting that considers temporal and contextual aspects of the contemporary phenomenon under study, but without experimental controls or manipulations" (Meredith, 1998, pp. 442–3). In case study research, delimiting the object under investigation and drawing the boundaries of the study has been said to be "the single most defining characteristic" (Merriam, 1998, p. 27). To address how this case study has been delimited and bounded, a justification of the selection of the Wreckamovie platform and the embedded cases is offered below.

3.2.2 Justification of the selection of cases

The justification for the selection of cases for this study can be expressed in two stages. Firstly, there is the justification of the selection of the Wreckamovie platform as the case at large, next there is the selection of the specific embedded production cases. Both aspects will be addressed in the below.

The Wreckamovie platform

The Wreckamovie platform is the only existing online platform designed specifically to facilitate the wider peer production of films. Since 2006 there have been attempts at

designing online platforms that would enable the collaborative production of films by geographically distributed volunteers. *A Swarm of Angels* was the first of such attempts, empirically investigated by Cassarino & Richter (2008), Cassarino & Geuna (2007; 2008b) and Dutton (2008). The initiator of this production created a dedicated online forum to facilitate the collaborative writing of a film manuscript. The ambitious aim was to establish a community of 50,000 individuals actively involved in the production. However, in the end, a more modest 1,000 individuals signed up while the project was still going. *A Swarm of Angels* stalled in 2008, and the forum was subsequently taken down from the internet.

In the same timeframe, a number of individual film projects initiated the launch of online fora and websites intended to allow for the collaborative making of these productions. Examples included the project *opensourcecinema.org*, which invited online audiences to participate in the production of the documentary *RiP!: A Remix Manifesto* (2008). Following the completion of the movie, the site was closed down. Another example is the documentary *The Digital Tipping Point*, which has been in the making since 2007. The production website *digitaltippingpoint.com* contains a forum and wiki for production members, inviting online volunteers to take part in the creation of the production, explicitly promoting open source models of production. *Straycinema.org* is yet another initiative inviting online audiences to take part in the production of films. Launched in 2006, it publishes footage for volunteers to engage with collaboratively. The website contains no infrastructure for peer production processes more sophisticated than a forum for discussions. Further, none of the websites outlined above allow for anyone to create and initiate their own collaborative film projects.

In addition to the attempts at establishing online communities aiding specific film productions, there have also been attempts at creating dedicated platforms intended to facilitate the production of films. *Stroome.com* is one such initiative, launched in 2011 to

facilitate the collaborative online editing of audio-visual content. Following a short period of initial activity, the platform was taken down, and is officially undergoing further development at the time of writing (September 2013). Yet another platform is *Zeega*, launched in 2011 by Harvard University's *Berkman Center for Internet & Society,* intended to enable the production of interactive documentaries. Although the platform is promoted as a community platform, its features do not lend themselves to collaborative practices, as individual members cannot invite other members to take part in the making of their interactive film. A final example of a platform initiated to facilitate new film production models is *moviepals.org*, launched in 2008. It initially promoted an *Open Cinema Manifesto*, and later came to take the form of a social networking site for independent filmmakers. Today, the platform allows community members to pitch their ideas to other members, share information about auditions, or search for props and equipment; it does not, however, facilitate the actual production of films.

As the discussion of these initiatives launched to facilitate new collaborative forms of filmmaking attests, sustaining an online community's participation is non-trivial. The majority of websites and fora established, even those designed to facilitate a single production, have been taken down, stalled, or have yet to result in completed films. The various platforms described have experienced similar challenges. They have been taken down, or they have, as they went through architectural development phases, developed into less collaboratively oriented socio-technical systems.

In the context of the above-mentioned initiatives, the Wreckamovie platform stands out. It was launched in 2008, and soon grew to a community of more than 1,000 members. As described in the introduction chapter, the platform was launched by a group of Finnish amateur filmmakers, who had had prior experience with producing films aided by an online

community. Based on their experiences working with an online community, they wanted to design a socio-technical system that was specifically intended to facilitate the peer production of films. Their intention has materialized: Since its inception, the Wreckamovie platform has facilitated the production of a number of completed peer produced films. These productions have gone through the entire production cycle using the platform, from pre-production to production to post-production and distribution. To provide a context for the embedded cases and the wider analysis chapters, the key technological affordances and socio-technical features of the Wreckamovie platform will be described in the following sections. The term 'socio-technical' is borrowed from literature associated with the field of social informatics (e.g. Kling, Rosenbaum, & Sawyer, 2005; Meyer, 2007), particularly as conceptualized in the notion of Socio-Technical Interaction Networks (STINs) (Kling, McKim, & King, 2003) . This line of thinking approaches technological systems not as the outcome of technical designs, but as organisms that are equally shaped by the social actors using and developing them (Meyer, 2006).

Description of the affordances and socio-technical features of Wreckamovie

The Wreckamovie platform allows anyone with internet access to sign up to become a member, just as it allows any member to initiate a production, or to contribute to other members' productions. Each WAM production has its own space, enabling the production owners to publish specific jobs, called tasks, for the community members to contribute to. To better explain the infrastructure for participation facilitated by the WAM platform, the key features will be described and visualized by means of screenshots below.

WAM landing page

The WAM front page displays a list of the most recently published production tasks as well as a list of the most recent member contributions. It likewise invites audiences to browse the available WAM productions (see Figure 3.1 for screenshot of WAM landing page).



Figure 3.1: Screenshot of Wreckamovie landing page

From the front page, there are menu tabs linking to a full list of WAM productions, open production tasks, contributions made and a full list of WAM members. The most important pages, however, are the production areas.

Production areas

Each production created by a WAM member has its own space. The main production page displays a video teaser, or similar audio-visual content, promoting the production. From a menu tab under the video, the textual production synopsis can be accessed. The main production page also includes basic information about the production, such as the date it was initiated, the name of the director, producer, the production budget and IP license chosen (see Figure 3.2).



Figure 3.2: Screenshot showing example of a WAM production's main page

From the main production page, several production sub-areas can be accessed: a list of open and archived production tasks, a chronological list of all production activity, a list of production members, and the production's blog.

The task feature is one of the most important affordances of the Wreckamovie platform. Essentially, tasks are calls for participation in a particular production-related job. The concept of tasks can be interpreted in the broadest manner, and allows production owners to ask for input from community members for particular production jobs (see Figure 3.2 for a screenshot of a task area). Each task is described through its title name, and the task challenge is further expanded upon in a task description. Individual task pages display information about which member created the task, when it was created, the task deadline, and the number of member submissions.

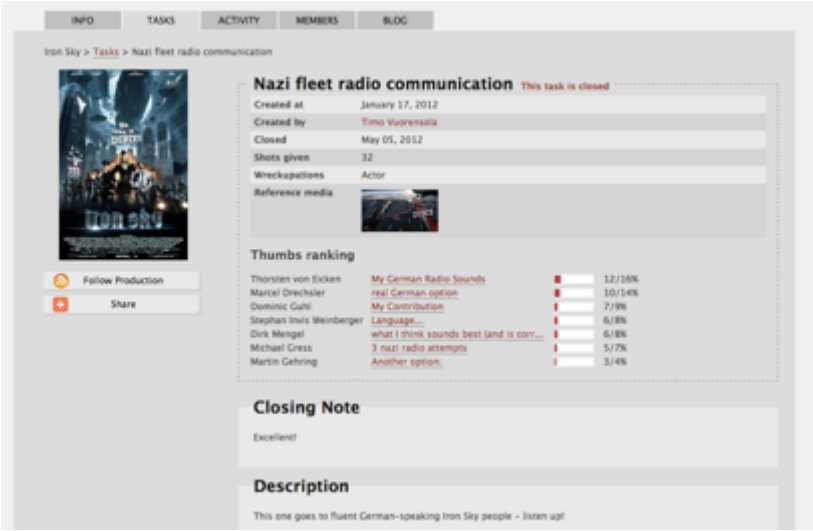


Figure 3.3: Screenshot exemplifying the WAM task feature

Once tasks have been fulfilled, the production owners can close the task, and write a closing remark. Task pages also list the most popular shots contributed by WAM production members in response to the call. This is done through a so-called thumbs ranking (see Figure 3.3). Any task response, so-called shots, published by members, can be given a 'thumbs up', a vote of approval, by anyone who clicks the thumb icon placed adjacent to each shot/contribution.

The WAM infrastructure allows anyone to comment on shots submitted in response to a task. This increases the participatory and interactive aspects of the WAM peer productions. Community members' contributions to the production tasks thus do not stand alone, but form part of a dialogue between production owner, contributor and the wider production member base. Figure 3.4 displays a screenshot of one of my shots to a production task, illustrating the commenting feature.



Figure 3.4:Screenshot of WAM member shot with comments

Member profiles

Each WAM member has a profile. This profile displays a range of information. First and foremost, profiles allow members to communicate about themselves in writing. WAM profiles also display information about when the member joined the platform, and when they were last logged in. Importantly, the profile lists the job titles to which the member wants to contribute his or her labour. Within the WAM platform, job titles are called *Wreckupations*, and each member is allowed to list three of such, for example, scriptwriter, director, animator, etc. The profile also lists the WAM productions the member has joined, and displays the number of individual karma points accrued under each production. It also displays the member's total number of karma points.

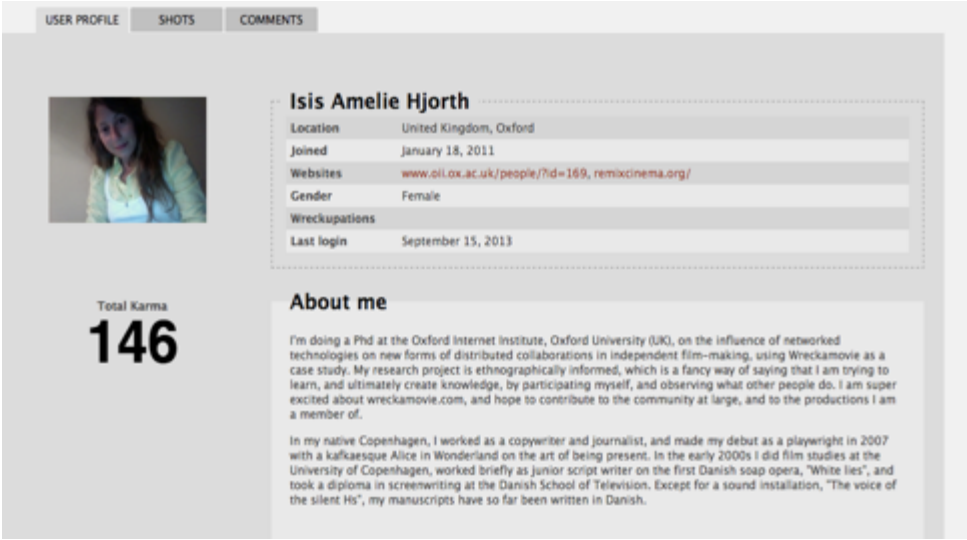


Figure 3.5: Screenshot of WAM profile

From member profiles, anyone can access a list of comments and shots contributed by the particular member. Figure 3.5 shows a screenshot of my WAM profile, illustrating the gist of the WAM profile pages.

The Karma feature

The karma feature is central to the socio-technical system of the Wreckamovie platform. It is the only explicit measure of member engagement, and takes a predominant role in organizing content published on the Wreckamovie platform. Karma points are displayed in a prominent position on individual WAM member pages, just as the full WAM member list and production member lists can be ranked by karma scores. The mechanisms of accruing karma points, however, are not made explicit, but are instead only vaguely indicated. On the platform's FAQ section, for example, it is underlined that karma is a measure of commitment, and depends on the number of thumbs-up one's submitted contributions generate:

> Karma is our way of measuring your devotion as a Wrecker. It's based on a super-secret formula created by a group of highly-skilled mathematicians and

> an army of overpaid consultants, and will never be revealed. Hint: it has something to do with thumb-ups.
>
> [WAM FAQs, "What is Karma?", 2009-2013]

Some karma points are generated automatically, however. If a WAM member joins a production and contributes a shot in response to a call, the member gains one karma point per shot. Then, if this content is given a thumbs-up, the member gains one additional karma point per thumbs-up. Further, when members post comments in response to other members' shots, one further karma point is generated. What this architectural design choice reveals is that the karma system is also a social feature, not exclusively an automated measure of participation. Karma points thus also indirectly communicate the level of social capital each member has in the community, and allude to the member's status in the WAM community. Moreover, the karma point system's architectural design allows for an estimation of the actual overall engagement by WAM members. A karma score of zero, for example, indicates that a member has never contributed any content on WAM.

The Wreckamovie member base and community

As of 12 September 2013, more than 11,000 individuals have actively signed up to become members of Wreckamovie, and more than 850 different projects have been initiated. However, as is often the case for online fora and platforms, only a small percentage of the member base can reasonably be defined as active. Of the current members, approximately 85% have a karma score of zero, and have thus never actively contributed to a production or published content on the platform. In fact, fewer than 360 individuals have a karma score of 20 or above. The 30 most active members, to give an indication of spread, have karma scores ranging from 414 to 5234 (as of 12 September 2013). Despite this relatively low percentage of active WAM members, the small group of active members forms a social community. These community members are actively participating in WAM productions, engaging with

discussions explicitly about the community, and arranging for offline meet-ups. The genesis of the Wreckamovie platform and the key community norms and values will be analysed in detail in Chapter 4.

Selection and description of the embedded production cases

The embedded cases are four film productions which are facilitated by the Wreckamovie platform. They have been chosen for two particular reasons: they have had a continuously active production member base, and they have resulted in actual finished cultural artefacts. The cases have been identified as active productions during the stage of passive online observations, taking place in the early stages of this research project (the different participant observation stages will be discussed later in this chapter).

At the early stages of this research project, several WAM production projects were shortlisted as potential embedded cases. Of these, six production cases were initially chosen, and followed though participant observations. However, three of these productions stalled during the data collection process. Mid-way through the data collection period, though, a new WAM production was identified. This production saw the collaboration between the producers of the observed stalled WAM projects. It was decided to include this production in the research. Doing so allowed me to participate actively in all stages of the production cycle, yielding further evidence of the processes enabling the peer production of movies in the Wreckamovie community. The four productions that were ultimately included in this study were chosen to allow for diversity in production budgets, member constellations, and genres.

Iron Sky

The first embedded case is the dark sci-fi comedy, *Iron Sky*, a story about Nazis living on the dark side of the moon. The Wreckamovie platform was initially intended to exclusively aid the production of this film, but early in the platform development phase, it was decided to allow for anyone to create productions, not only participate in this one production. The Finnish team behind the Wreckamovie platform and *Iron Sky* had previously produced a series of Star Trek parodies (1994-2005) with the aid of an online community. It was their experiences with creating these productions that led them to initiate the Wreckamovie platform. With the *Iron Sky* production, the creators make the shift from being amateur to professional filmmakers. When the production was initiated in 2006, it was expected to be a low budget feature film. Over the course of the six year production period, *Iron Sky* developed into a multi-national production with a budget of €7,5 million, of which €1 million was crowdfunded. *Iron Sky* is the flagship production on Wreckamovie, and its member base is by far the largest. *Iron Sky* was completed in 2012, and enjoyed cinematic release around the globe.

Star Wreck 2π: Full twist now!

The second embedded case is the fan movie *Star Wreck 2π*: Full twist now! As the title suggests, the *Iron Sky* team's previous films directly inspired this production. *Star Wreck 2π* was initiated in 2008 by two Swiss amateurs living in Norway and Germany, and was one of the first productions to be created on Wreckamovie. The production went through all production stages on Wreckamovie, and was completed in 2012. It was released online in early 2013.

Ice Guns

The third embedded case is *Ice Guns*, described by the WAM production owners as a post-apocalyptic spaghetti western. *Ice Guns* was launched on Wreckamovie in 2009, and quickly became one of the most active community productions. The production owners were German semi-professionals, with experience in professional film post-production work. On WAM, production members contributed towards all stages of the production cycle, enabling the production to be completed in a short time frame. *Ice Guns* was released freely online in November 2010. The distribution phase, however, did not develop as the producers had imagined, and resulted in prolonged production challenges. *Ice Guns* had a budget of €25,000, which the production owners covered by their personal savings.

Solar System 3D

The final embedded case is the production *Solar System 3D*, a documentary about the solar system, initiated by the director of *Ice Guns*. Leveraging freely licensed NASA photos and content, and building on the relationships and practices established in earlier WAM production collaborations, *Solar System* was produced in record time. It was launched on WAM in late 2011, and in just ten months, the production proceeded through its pre-production, production and post-production phases. The distribution phase, however, was postponed. It is expected that *Solar System* will be released on DVD in December 2013, after the *Solar System* producers landed a distribution agreement with Universal Pictures.

As indicated in the short descriptions of the embedded cases, these four Wreckamovie productions differ in their degree of professionalism, production trajectories and outcome. The diversity of the productions will be analysed in Chapter 4, which also illustrates the

productions' interrelation and shared embedding in the worlds and fields of the Wreckamovie community.

3.2.3 Chronological overview of research design and phases

According to Schofield (2002), a quality of ethnographically informed studies is that they allow for a form of generalizability which quantitative approaches cannot achieve. In particular, this is the outcome of such approaches' ability to render visible "where a particular phenomenon is in its life cycle and what the implications for this are for what is happening" (Schofield 2002, p.188). For this project, in particular, investigating processes of the peer production of feature length films, it is crucial to pay attention to the different phases of the production cycles, because each of these stages pose different challenges. Therefore, to answer the research questions put forward in Chapter 2 necessitates a sensitivity to the implications of the embedded Wreckamovie production cases' developments at the stages of pre-production, production, post-production and distribution. Figure 3.6 presents a visual, chronological overview of this study's overall research design as a timeline, above which the production stages of each of the embedded production cases are outlined individually. As will be highlighted throughout the analysis chapters (Chapter 4-6), these different stages have been taken into account in the analysis of the data. In addition to the outlining of the production stages, Figure 3.6 also depicts when this study's data was collected, and by which means. In what follows, the data collection process will be discussed in detail, referring back to this figure.

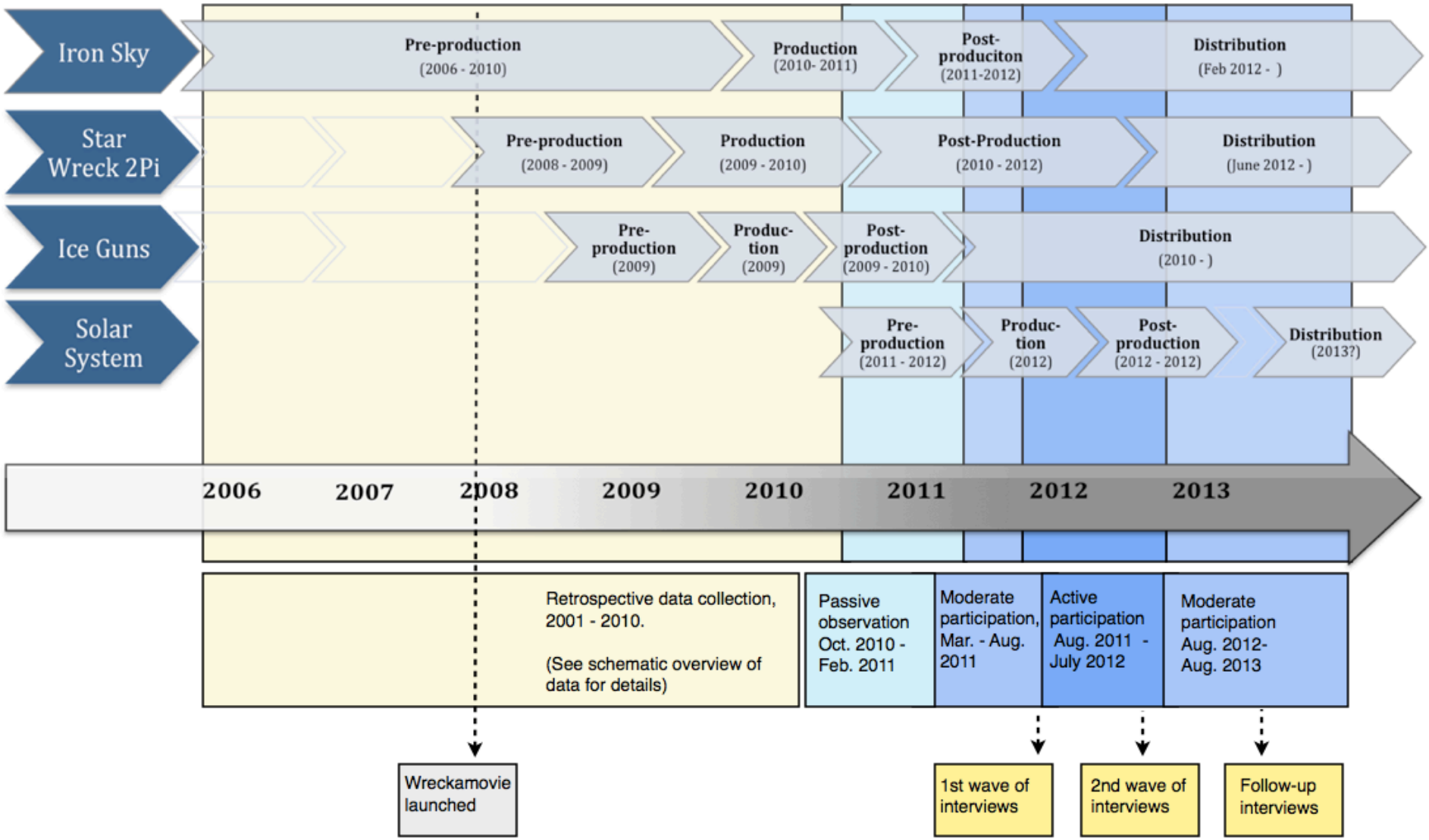


Figure 3.6: Chronological overview of research design

Figure 3.6: Chronological overview of research design

3.3 Data collection

As with most case studies, this research draws on multiple sources of data (Yin 2002, p. 83). The primary research methods employed are participant-observation, semi-structured interviews and analysis of production related online documents, artefacts and discourses. In this section, each of these data collection processes will be described. Firstly, my entry into the Wreckamovie community will be addressed, explaining the different stages and levels of participant observation carried out. Thereafter, the data generated through semi-structured interviews will be accounted for, hereunder the participant recruitment strategy, and the demographics of the interviewees. Finally, this section describes the strategy for collecting production discourses, and outlines the specific discourses that have been included in the data analysis.

3.3.1 Participant observation

In essence, ethnography "is a way of seeing through participants' eyes: a grounded approach that aims for a deep understanding of the cultural foundations of the group."(Hine 2000, p. 21). The researcher is the research instrument, and strives through participant observation to experience "embodied learning through being part of the situation" (Hine, 2008, p. 259). This description of embodied learning holds true for this research project: When I created a Wreckamovie profile, it marked my first entry into an online community of pure 'strangers'. I had never signed up to a public forum before, or contributed to online discussions. Except for the odd occasions I hid behind obscure personas, for example when authoring a blog on behalf of fictive characters of a theatrical performance I produced in 2007, I had been virtually silent. Between the mandatory departmental student online profile, and limited Facebook and LinkedIn profiles, my scene had been set for limited participatory online engagement. Wreckamovie was terrifying!

Prior to officially joining Wreckamovie by creating a profile, I had lurked around the platform for some months. This passive observation, as indicated in Figure 3.6, took place from October 2010 to January 2011. Lurking, as Hine (2008) notes "is a useful part of the virtual ethnographer's repertoire when [...] allows for a period of cultural familiarization in order to facilitate a relatively smooth entry into active participation." (2008, p. 262). The initial period of passive observation was instrumental in gaining some level of understanding of the socio-technical system, and for short-listing potential production cases that might serve as embedded cases of the case study. During this period, I browsed through the available productions on Wreckamovie, and began identifying which productions were successful in sustaining the participation of their production members.

Once I had arrived at initial readings of the system and the social practices embedded, I was ready to embark on overt participant observation by creating a visible profile. In the WAM profile, I included a photo and made use of my real name (as encouraged by the system, and practiced by the majority of members), included a link to my online departmental profile. Finally, I provided a profile text that was longer than average in order to communicate my dual role as participant and researcher:

> I'm doing a Phd at the Oxford Internet Institute, Oxford University (UK), on the influence of networked technologies on new forms of distributed collaborations in independent film-making, using Wreckamovie as a case study. My research project is ethnographically informed, which is a fancy way of saying that I am trying to learn, and ultimately create knowledge, by participating myself, and observing what other people do. I am super excited about wreckamovie.com, and hope to contribute to the community at large, and to the productions I am a member of.
>
> In my native Copenhagen, I worked as a copywriter and journalist, and made my debut as a playwright in 2007 with a kafkaesque Alice in Wonderland on the art of being present. In the early 2000s I did film studies at the University of Copenhagen, worked briefly as junior script writer on the first Danish soap opera, "White lies", and took a diploma in screenwriting at the Danish School of

> Television. Except for a sound installation, "The voice of the silent Hs", my manuscripts have so far been written in Danish.
>
> [Researcher WAM profile, 2011-2013]

To describe the different stages of the participant observations, DeWalt & DeWalt's (2011, p. 22-24) typology of participant observation is useful. With the creation of an online profile, I went from undertaking 'non-participation' to conducting 'moderate participation'. Moderate participation is described by DeWalt & DeWalt (2011) as entailing being "present at the scene of action" without more than occasional interactions with participants (p. 23). During this initial period of actual, albeit moderate, participation, I began joining productions and focused further on identifying active production members. This period ran for half a year, from February 2011 to August 2011, as indicated in Figure 3.6. While I was frequently observing activity on Wreckamovie during this period, I was still not contributing actively to any of the productions or community discussions. I began contacting the production owners of the WAM productions shortlisted, as well as the key community moderators and platform owners, and engaged in email exchanges and initial informal interviews. During this period, I ensured the support and participation of these individuals. As part of these initial stakeholder negotiations, I arranged for an 8-week field visit to Finland, commencing in early August 2011.

Embarking on the field visit in Finland denoted the next stage of the participant observations. While in Finland, I contributed my first shot to a Wreckamovie production. From August 2012 to August 2013, as illustrated in Figure 3.6, I carried out active participant observations. Early in this period, during the field visit in Finland, I visited the *Iron Sky* team's two production offices, and carried out face-to-face interviews with Wreckamovie members, geographically dispersed across Finland (the interview process will be described in section 3.3.2.). During this phase, as my understanding of the community

and its culture(s) grew, and as I contributed more content on Wreckamovie, and built up further rapport with my participants, I became increasingly active. Carrying out active participant observation requires of the researcher that she "engage[s] in almost everything that other people are doing as a means of trying to learn the cultural rules for behavior." (p. 24). During the yearlong period of active participant observations, I earned "active membership", which entails taking on roles equivalent to those of the core members (Adler & Adler, 1987).

During this phase, I kept up-to-date with the developments of the selected productions on Wreckamovie, and took an active part in contributing to production tasks. Likewise, I engaged in discussions about other production members' submissions, and contributed to non-production related discussions in the Wreckamovie community threads. Back-stage, I communicated via email with many WAM production owners and members (see Table 3.1 for details), just as I observed other production-related online spheres, such as production Facebook groups, YouTube channels etc. Further, in this period, I took on several production-related jobs. For the *Solar System* production, for example, I edited the screenplay in several rounds. The script doctoring work required sustained daily engagement with the documentary's script over several weeks. The majority of this work happened outside of the Wreckamovie platform. When working on the script, I worked closely with the *Solar System* producer and three other production members. The collaboration was aided by the online applications Google Docs, Google chat, and via email. For Solar System, I also helped clean photos using features in Photoshop. *Solar System* was created using free images provided by NASA; these images of planetary phenomena, however, contained noise in the form of white stars, which had to be erased manually before the images could be further processed and used in the production. Other tasks I engaged

with online during this phase included carrying out audio test recordings, and the translations of the subtitles for the *Star Wreck 2π* production (the Danish subtitles).

Attesting to this phase of sustained active participation, resulting in community membership, is the karma points I have accrued. As of 12 September 2013 my karma score is 146, placing me as number 81 on the list of WAM members when sorted in accordance to highest karma level.

In addition to the active online participation, I also carried out offline participation. This included a second field visit to Finland towards the end of this stage, in July 2012. I was invited to participate, alongside other active WAM members, in a workshop arranged by the Wreckamovie platform owners. The workshop was hosted in conference facilities in a hotel in Tampere, and was concerned with discussion about the future development potentials for the Wreckamovie community and platform. In Finland, I also assisted the Swiss *Star Wreck 2π* directors in attracting audiences and documented the premiere of the film, taking place at the Sci-fi convention *Finncon*. Other offline participant observations included attending the premiere of *Iron Sky* in London in late May 2012. *Iron Sky* had only a brief theatrical release in the UK, and many fans therefore gathered on the day of the premiere. I hung around the only cinema in London screening the film, the Prince Charles Theatre, for seven hours, informally interviewing audiences attending the three screenings of the film.

The phase of active participant observations was replaced with a second phase of moderate participation, beginning in August 2012. As illustrated in Figure 6, this period marked a natural end of the active participation as all the embedded productions had been completed. *Iron Sky* premiered at the *Berlinale* in February 2012, but only reached non-festival audiences from April 2012 onwards. *Star Wreck 2π* had been completed, and entered its

early distribution phase in August 2012, just as *Solar System* was also completed. Finally, the distribution challenges experienced by the *Ice Guns* team (which will be discussed in the analysis presented in Chapter 4) came to some resolution. The second round of moderate participant observation thus emerged as a natural transition. This final stage of moderate participant observation ended, as illustrated in Figure 6, in August 2013. During this phase, I have continued to follow the developments of the productions' distribution phases, but have only occasionally logged onto Wreckamovie to contribute comments. Likewise, the correspondences with WAM members have decreased; I have, however, maintained contact with several WAM members and have engaged with them in follow-up interviews. As will become evident in this thesis' analysis chapters, the second stage of moderate participant observations has been very informative as the productions' trajectories continued to develop.

Documenting observations

Since the early entry into the field, I have been keeping fieldnotes. My approach to fieldnotes was inspired by Emerson et al.'s (2001) notion that fieldnotes "are a form of *representation*, that is, a way of reducing just-observed events, persons and places to written accounts"(p. 353). Since the majority of my observations have been carried out in an asynchronous online environment, the 'just-observed' should be understood as the point in time when I observe behaviour and actions, rather than the point in time in which they were uttered or unfolded.

When I interacted with production members on Wreckamovie, or when I submitted content to productions in response to calls for participation, or when commenting on other WAM members' contributions, I would write down fieldnotes subsequently. The same holds true for observations carried out in the wider online context of the production (See Table 3.2. for

the full range of online spheres observed for each production). To ensure a low barrier to note-taking, I embraced Lofland & Lofland's (1995) idea of fieldnotes being "behind the scenes" (p. 96) documents intended for no other than "the researcher herself as the future reader." (Emerson et al. 2001, p. 358). In many cases, the produced fieldnotes have been brief, but I have experienced that Schatzman, and Strauss (1973) are right in saying that even a "single word, even one merely descriptive of the dress of a person, or a particular word uttered by someone usually is enough to 'tip off' a string of images that afford substantial reconstruction of the observed scene" (p. 95). At other times, when embarrassed that my 'behind the scenes documents' were unpolished and fragmented, a reassurance provided by Hammersley & Atkinson's (2007) was comforting: Fieldnotes "cannot possibly provide a comprehensive record of the research setting. The ethnographer acquires a great deal of tacit knowledge than is ever contained in the written record." (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, p.185). The fieldnotes, however, have proved invaluable for the analysis of data. In particular, the fieldnotes informed the on-going search for literature. Emerging themes, such as, for example, the importance of social capital, prompted me to consult literature that could aid in explaining the patterns observed through preliminary data analysis. Ultimately, this iterative process led to the identification of a suitable complementary theoretical framework, as presented in Chapter 2.

3.3.2 Qualitative interviews

The main quality of semi-structured interviews is that they allow for the generation of the type of data that "provides access to the meanings people attribute to their experiences and social worlds" (Miller & Glassner, 1997, p. 100). In this study, the semi-structured interviews enabled more nuanced understandings of the participating WAM production and community members' own experiences and framings of their role in the community, and the production processes they took part in.

Over the course of the data collection period, 29 WAM members have been interviewed. Of these, eleven of the semi-structured interviews formed one-off interactions. For the remaining 18, the interview conversations stretched over long periods of time, and took place in several different contexts. Many included follow-up interviews on- or off-line, conducted variously in email conversations, interactions on WAM, or on Facebook. The overview of participants presented in Table 3.1 provides a schematic overview of the WAM participants who have given their consent to take part in this study. It includes their name (aliases), their WAM karma level, their geographical location, the month and year they joined the Wreckamovie platform, which of the embedded production cases they have participated in and if they have participated in the WAM community production. The overview also specifies if a research participant has been actively involved in the development of the Wreckamovie platform. Further, the overview specifies the level and form of interactions I have had with each participant: the number, duration and medium of interviews; the number of email exchanges; and additional interaction in other online spheres and offline contexts. Finally, brief comments are provided on research participants who are either producers/core team members of the embedded cases, or are amongst the top 20 most active WAM members, as measured through levels of karma. Table 3.1 thus provides a general measure of the volume of data generated through interviews. More concretely, 47 hours of interview recordings have been transcribed, and I have engaged with 181 email exchanges/conversations with the 29 research participants combined.

As Table 3.1 illustrates, the WAM research participants have been distributed as follows across the embedded production cases: 25 participants have participated in the production of *Iron Sky*; 10 of the interviewed participants have participated in the making of *Star Wreck 2π*; 9 in the making of *Ice Guns*, and finally 11 of the interviewed participating WAM

members have formed part of the *Solar System* production. Of the 29 interviewed individuals, 21 have actively participated in the Wreckamovie community production, indicating that the majority of the participants have formed part of the smaller group of active WAM members. This aspect is further highlighted by the fact that 13 of the interviewees are amongst the top 20 most active WAM members [as per 20 September 2013]. Finally, seven of the participants have been directly involved in the development of the Wreckamovie platform.

This composition of interviewees is the outcome of a reflexive sampling strategy. As illustrated in *Figure 3.7: Chronological overview of data design*, more formal interviews were carried out in two waves. The first wave of interviews took place towards the end of the first phase of moderate participant observation. At this stage, I had gained familiarity with Wreckamovie, and had identified potential embedded cases, and key community members. In the first wave, a combined total of 14 WAM production leaders and Finnish WAM community members were interviewed. The majority of the first wave interviews took place in Finland in face-to-face settings, during an 8-week field visit, the first field visit. The field visit allowed me to make three visits to the *Iron Sky*/Wreckamovie owners' production companies, and thus, to start building up rapport. Having limited experiences with online communities, the interviews carried out face-to-face with *Iron Sky* and general WAM members made for an easier transition into the phase of active participant observation. For the general WAM members, a purposive sampling strategy was followed: WAM members who were very active, and WAM members who participated in the *Iron Sky* production, were interviewed. During the field visit, 16 WAM members were interviewed. The general WAM members were recruited to allow for geographical spread; this was to ensure further diversity. Figure 3.7 shows the geographical places where interviews were carried out during the first field visit.



Figure 3.7: Map showing the 7 cities visited during field trip to Finland, August - September 2011

Towards the end of the phase of active participant observation, the second wave of interviews was carried out. The sampling criteria were informed by my on-going analysis, and were intended to cover gaps in my understanding of Wreckamovie and the embedded production cases. In particular, I sought to interview people who had been involved in the development of the Wreckamovie platform. Further, I sought to ensure that there was more spread in the geographical composition of the research participants. In the second wave of interviews, 13 WAM members were interviewed. It was left to the participants' discretion whether they wanted to be interviewed via VoIP, chat message systems or via email/WAM messages. Of the 29 research participants, five participants preferred email interviews to synchronous interviews.

The interview guide informing initial interviews with research participants focused on the following themes:

- Participant background, including professional and educational experiences
- Trajectory of creative engagement, including filmmaking
- Entry into Wreckamovie
- Motivations for joining named productions

- Examples of specific contributions made to productions
- Interactions with other WAM members
- Interpretations of and attitudes towards the platform's key features
- Future aspirations

As illustrated in Table 3.1, the research participants differed in their engagement with Wreckamovie, just as they took on different roles. The interview instrument was adapted in accordance with the individual participants' engagement and roles. For example, as depicted in Table 3.1, seven of the participants had been directly involved in the development of the Wreckamovie platform. In interviews with these participants, a great emphasis was put on questions that related to the history of the platform's development, and the decision-making processes leading to particular architectural design choices. Likewise, in interviews with participants who had initiated productions on Wreckamovie, interview themes were expanded to include topics such as leadership and production member recruitment. Further, as illustrated in Figure 3.6, the interviews took place both immediately before the phase of active participant observation and towards the end of this stage. During this time period, I developed relationships with WAM members, and gained a better understanding of the production processes and cultures. The conversations that formed part of the second wave of interviews were informed by this understanding, and the interview instrument was therefore further refined and customized to the circumstances of the individual participant.

Table 3.1: Overview of research participants

Participant alias	Joined WAM	WAM karma	*Iron Sky*	*Star Wreck 2π*	*Ice Guns*	Solar System	WAM community production	WAM developer	Interviews = N	Email exchanges =N	Location	Comments (Incl. additional interaction)
Gerhard	**Mar 2009**	**5231**	**x**	**x**	**X**	**x**	**x**	**-**	**1 (Skype); dur. 93 min.**	**34**	**Germany**	***Ice Guns* and *Solar System* producer; Amongst the 10 most active WAM members. *Additional interaction: WAM***
Valentina	**May 2008**	**3596**	**x**	**x**	**X**	**x**	**x**	**-**	**-**	**5**	**Italy**	**Amongst the 10 most active WAM members. Preferred email interview. *Additional interaction: WAM***
Ferenc	**Jul 2009**	**3088**	**x**	**x**	**X**	**x**	**x**	**-**	**-**	**10**	**Hungary**	**Amongst the 10 most active WAM members. Preferred email interview. *Additional interaction: WAM***
Otto	**Sep 2008**	**1713**	**x**	**x**	**x**	**x**	**x**	**-**	**1 (face2face), dur. 274 min.**	**12**	**Finland**	**Amongst 10 most active WAM members. Additional interaction: Facebook; WAM; SW 2pi premiere; WAM workshop**
Joona	**Mar 2008**	**1583**	**x**	**x**	**X**	**-**	**x**	**-**	**1 (Skype); dur. 78 min.**	**3**	**Finland**	**Amongst the 10 most active WAM members. Additional interaction: Facebook; WAM**
Thierry	**Aug 2008**	**1422**	**x**	**x**	**X**	**x**	**x**	**-**	**3 (face2face; Skype); dur. 212 min.**	**12**	**Norway**	***Star Wreck 2π* producer/director. Additional interaction: Facebook; WAM; SW 2pi premiere; WAM workshop**
Aaro	**Aug 2009**	**1379**	**x**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**x**	**-**	**1 (face2face); dur. 184 min.**	**2**	**Finland**	**Amongst the 10 most active WAM members**
Luukas	**May 2008**	**1373**	**x**	**-**	**x**	**x**	**x**	**-**	**1 (face2face);**	**3**	**Finland**	**Amongst 10 most active WAM members. Additional interaction: WAM; Facebook**

Aleksi	**Dec 2009**	**744**	**-**	**-**	**x**	**x**	**x**	**-**	**4 (face2face; Skype); dur. 452 min.**	**39**	**Finland**	**Amongst the 20 most active WAM members. *Additional interaction: WAM; Facebook.***
Arianne	**Nov 2008**	**637**	**-**	**x**	**-**	**x**	**x**	**-**	**2 (Skype; face2face); dur. 174 min.**	**8**	**Switzerland**	***Star Wreck 2π* producer/director; amongst the 20 most active WAM members. *Additional interaction: WAM; Facebook; SW 2pi premier; WAM workshop.***
Onni	**May 2008**	**417**	**x**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**x**	**-**	**1 (face2face); dur. 82 min.**	**1**	**Finland**	**-**
Charles	**March 2010**	**317**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**x**	**x**	**-**	**-**	**6**	**UK**	**-**
Antto	**Feb 2008**	**203**	**x**	**x**	**X**	**-**	**x**	**x**	**1 (face2face); dur. 101 min.**	**1**	**Finland**	***Star Wreck* IV-VI screen writer; *Iron Sky* co-writer, and community manager. *Additional interaction: WAM; Facebook; SW 2pi premiere.***
Atte	**Feb 2008**	**203**	**x**	**x**	**-**	**-**	**x**	**x**	**2 (Skype, face-to-face); dur. 71 min**	**4**	**Finland**	***Star Wreck* co-director, co-producer and cast member; WAM architect. *Additional interaction: Facebook; SW 2pi premiere; WAM workshop.***
Kofido	**Sep 2009**	**202**	**x**	**x**	**-**	**x**	**x**	**-**	**1 (face2face); dur. 73 min.**	**1**	**Finland**	**Amongst the 20 most active WAM members**
Samuel	**Nov 2009**	**177**	**x**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**1 (face2face); dur. 184 min.**	**-**	**Finland**	**-**
Tianyi	**Aug 2008**	**142**	**x**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**x**	**x**	**1 (face2face); dur. 118 min.**	**2**	**Finland**	**-**
Tuukka	**March 2008**	**114**	**x**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**X**	**-**	**2 (face2face), dur. 372 min.**	**15**	**Finland**	**Additional interaction: Facebook; offline meeting.**
Hermanni	**Feb 2008**	**87**	**x**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**x**	**x**	**1 (Skype), dur. 56 min.**	**2**	**Finland**	**WAM programmer; student worker**
Matias	**Aug 2008**	**74**	**x**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**1 (face2face), dur. 59 min.**	**3**	**Finland**	**-**

Petja	**Feb 2008**	**37**	**x**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**x**	**x**	**1 (Skype), dur. 48 min.**	**4**	**Finland**	**CTO of WAM, WAM programmer. Additional interaction: Facebook; WAM workshop; SW 2pi premiere.**
Tom	**A 2012**	**17**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**x**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**1**	**France**	**-**
Vili	**Jun 2009**	**12**	**x**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**x**	**2 (face2face), dur. 65 min**	**3**	**Finland**	***Star Wreck* V-VI cast member; *Iron Sky* publicist. *Additional interaction: Facebook.***
Eetu	**Feb 2008**	**11**	**x**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**1 (face2face), dur. 20 min.**	**-**	**Finland**	**Professional *Iron Sky* producer**
Christian	**Feb 2008**	**4**	**x**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**x**	**x**	**1 (Skype); dur. 52 min.**	**2**	**USA**	***Iron Sky* seed funder; member of board of WAM.**
Dylan	**Mar 2012**	**4**	**x**	**-**	**-**	**x**	**-**	**-**	**1 (Skype), dur. 91 min**	**3**	**USA**	**-**
Riku	**May 2008**	**3**	**x**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**1 (face2face), dur. 47 min.**	**-**	**Finland**	***Iron Sky* Social Media Manager**
Total	**29 WAM mem-bers**		**25 *Iron Sky***	**10 Star Wreck 2pi**	**9 *Ice Guns***	**11 Solar System**	**21 WAM community production**	**7 WAM developer**	**32 Interviews**	**181 Email exchanges**		

3.3.3 Production discourses and documents

Informed by literature on ethnography in the virtual sphere, the boundaries of this study are not determined on the basis on the technological platform, Wreckamovie, facilitating the peer production of the embedded production cases *Iron Sky*, *Star Wreck 2π*, *Ice Guns* and Solar System. Hine (2005), for example, has argued convincingly that specific technologies "are not research sites in themselves" (p. 111). Therefore, this research draws on a comprehensive range of relevant Wreckamovie production discourses and documents from multiple online and offline sources. The data collection strategy for production-related online discourses has been collected by means of the strategies suggested by Larsen (2008) with his 'ethnography of networks' (p. 154), and through Beaulieu's (2005) conceptualization of hyperlinks as "readymade traces". In this way, the embedded production cases' wider online production spheres have been taken into account, and come to include, amongst other things: interactions in WAM production Facebook groups; discourses available on WAM productions' external websites; interactions and content from WAM productions' twitter accounts; videos on WAM production YouTube channels; etc., and hyperlinks posted in these. These strategies have formed part of the participant observation processes. These documents and discourses have been recorded using screen capture software throughout the data collection period. In addition to online discourses, participants have provided traditional documentary data in interviews or via email. These have included production manuscripts, synopses, animations in-progress, and PowerPoint presentations created by the *Iron Sky* team when they initially developed their idea of the Wreckamovie platform. Table 3.2 provides an overview of the discourses and data that has been included in the final data analysis.

Overview of documents and discourses included in the data analysis

PRODUCTION	DATA SOURCES	VOLUME	PUBLISHED
Iron Sky	Wreckamovie	70+ task descriptions; 1500+ posts; 3500+ comments; 1800+ member descriptions	2008 - 2013
	Wreckamovie hosted blog	25+ posts	2008 - 2012
	Twitter	800+ tweets	2010 - 2013
	Facebook group	5,000+ posts; 28,000+ comments	2009 - 2013
	Main production blog	200+ posts; 300+ comments	2006 - 2013
	Iron Sky website(s)	-	2002 - 2013
	Iron Sky YouTube channel	120+ videos	2006 - 2013
	Crowdfunding campaigns, external platforms	-	2011 - 2011
	Star Wreck forum content	150+ posts; 800+ comments	2002 - 2013
	External media coverage	100+ articles	2006 - 2013
Star Wreck 2 pi	Wreckamovie	50+ task descriptions; 215+ posts; 550+ comments; 70+ member descriptions	2008 - 2013
	Wreckamovie hosted blog	50+ posts	2008 - 2013
	Star Wreck 2 pi YouTube Channel	25+ videos	2009 - 2013
	Twitter	50+ tweets	2009 - 2013
Ice Guns	Wreckamovie production content	25+ task descriptions; 260+ posts; 1,200+ comments; 100+ member descriptions	2009 - 2013
	Wreckamovie hosted blog	95+ posts	2009- 2013
	External blog	10+ posts	2010 - 2011
	Facebook group	110+ posts; 240+ comments	
	Production website	-	2010 - 2011
	Twitter account	60+ tweets	2009 - 2011
	Ice Guns YouTube Chanel	5+ videos	2010 - 2011
	Crowdfunding campaigns, external platforms	-	2011 - 2011
Solar System	Wreckamovie	10 tasks descriptions; 100+ posts; 330+ comments; 25+ member descriptions	2011 - 2013
	Wreckamovie hosted blog	10+ posts	2011 - 2013
WAM community	Wreckamovie community related content	500+ posts; 1,300+ comments	2008 - 2013
	Wreckamovie blog	65+ posts	2008 - 2012

Table 3.2: Overview of discourses and documents included in the data analysis

3.4 Data analysis

The data analysis process of this study has been iterative. Embarking on the research, the initial observations were driven by assumptions guided by scholarly literature questioning aspects of Benkler's notion of commons-based peer production. Throughout the first three observation stages, fieldnotes have been driving the analytic process. An integrated email client and bibliography management software, *Zotero*, was used for creating annotated field notes, using tags and note functions. This tool was particularly suitable as it allowed for easy capturing of online content (including screen shots), and the subsequent annotation within the *Zotero* interface. These initial processes aligned with the notion of *first level coding* (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The codes and labels were applied to specific sections of the data, and were thus used to order and categorise the data as it was collected (Robson, 2002, p. 477). The codes were both developed deductively from initial theoretical propositions, and inductively from on-going hermeneutic readings of the data. This resulted in the development of various hierarchies of emerging themes, and the constant further probing of relevant academic literature. The ongoing reflections prompted by the revisiting of coded data, and further literature review, were documented in scattered memos, whose content grew more complex as the data analysis progressed (Richards, 2009). In addition to the field notes, recorded interviews were transcribed as they were carried out, and subsequently included in the ongoing analysis.[4]

Up until April 2013, mid-way through the second phase of the moderate participant observation, the analytical process seemed at times chaotic and somewhat frustrating. The identification of the suitability of the theoretical framing, as presented in the previous

[4] Professional transcribers located in the UK transcribed all the interviews. The particular service I made use of was chosen on the basis on its strict confidentiality measures, and ethical guidelines. The service, for example, provided a secure server for transferring the files to the transcribers, who had all signed non-disclosure and confidentiality contracts.

chapter, came as a revelation. From that point in time, the analytical process took a much more structured approach. Informed by the central theoretical concepts of Bourdieu, Becker and Benkler, combined with my growing understanding of the Wreckamovie platform and its practices and preliminary analyses, a comprehensive coding scheme was developed. This is included in Appendix A. To ensure a rigorous analysis, all my data was imported to the qualitative data analysis software NVivo. The overview of externally produced data included in the analysis, Table 3.2 gives an account of the data that was imported into NVivo, in addition to interview transcripts and notes. The final stage of the analytical process emerged in the writing-up process, and was directly guided by the annotated coded data snippets exported from NVivo to word processing software.

Throughout the analytical process, when developing codes and identifying themes, multiple sources of data and perspectives have been taken into account. This crystallization has been paramount for developing an increasingly complex theoretically and empirically grounded understanding of networked cultural production as it manifests in the Wreckamovie community and the embedded production cases. Further, analyses have been carried out across the individual embedded cases. This cross-case synthesis allows for more robust findings than would result from analysing only a single case (Yin 2002, p. 133).

3.5 Ensuring quality in qualitative inquiry

Since Lincoln & Guba (1985) proposed a new paradigm for validity in naturalistic research opposing positivistic logic, a diversity of alternative validity and reliability criteria have been proposed. This research is primarily informed by Tracy's (2010) *Eight Big-Tent Criteria* for quality in qualitative enquiry, which is summarized as entailing qualitative research to express (a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigor, (c) sincerity, (d) credibility, (e)

resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence. (Tracy, 2010, p. 839).

Addressing six of these in turn, this study is confronting an important and topical issue (criteria a), as accounted for in Chapter 1. As demonstrated in Section 3.3, this study draws on a complex and voluminous collection of data from multiple, related contexts, which have all been taken into account in the analytical process. Together, the data make up "a rich complexity of abundance" (Tracy, 2010, p. 841), thus partially ensuring rich rigor (criteria b). Providing further rigor is the diversity of theoretical lenses and constructs applied, as presented in Chapter 2. As Tracy explains: "a researcher with a head full of theories, and a case full of abundant data, is best prepared to see nuance and complexity." (Tracy, 2010, p. 841).

The third criteria, sincerity, relates partially to the concept of reflexivity, partially to the notion of transparency (as suggested by Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Sincerity, Tracy agues, can be achieved "through self-reflexivity, vulnerability, [and], honesty" (Tracy, 2010, p. 841), and concerns "the researcher's biases, goals, and foibles" (Tracy, 2010, p. 841). In particular, the reflexive account on my entry into the field (Section 3.3.1) highlighted the bias that shaped my approach to participant observation, including my lack of experiences with participating in online communities, and my prior professional experience, thus addressing criteria c. Further, the detailed account of data generated through interactions and interviews with WAM members (Section 3.3.1, Section 3.3.2, and Table 3.1), the discourses collected in production relevant online spheres (Table 3.2), and the description of the analytical process provided transparency (criteria c) in relation to the processes of data collection and data analysis.

The fourth quality criteria, credibility, can, according to Tracy, be ensured by means of, amongst other, thick descriptions, and multivocality (2010, pp. 843-44). A thick description

of the Wreckamovie community and the individual production cases are presented in Chapter 4, and serve as the wider context for the two subsequent analysis chapters. Further, throughout the three analysis chapters, the data warranting the findings is characterized by multivocality.

Other ways of ensuring credibility include carrying out member reflections. Member reflection entails allowing research participants to comment and reflect on a researcher's findings (Tracy 2010). The aim of member reflection is not to test whether findings are correct or true, but a means that enable "a reflexive *elaboration"* (Tracy 2010, p. 844 - italics in original). In the context of this research, member reflection has been employed in order to gauge the degree to which the findings resonated with the participants' own interpretations of the Wreckamovie community, and their engagement with the WAM productions. Concretely, in mid-August 2013, I shared the drafts of two analysis chapters (Chapter 4 and Chapter 5) with 22 of the interviewees (the Member Reflection Invitation is included in Appendix B). The two analysis chapters were chosen because they portray individuals, and the production practices of the four embedded WAM productions cases. The third analysis chapter, Chapter 6, is concerned with more abstract structures, and was therefore excluded from the member checking process. Of the 22 invitations sent out, 17 research participants responded within the given deadline, of these 11 participants made more specific comments. Uniformly, the participants expressed, directly or indirectly, that the analysis presented in the chapters resonated with their experiences. This resonance expressed thus corresponds with Tracy's fifth criteria (e). Below are illustrative excerpts from seven of these:

> Wow, it was a pretty cool feeling to have a "chapter" about yourself in a thesis :)) it´s like being a new molecule which is examined and described :))
>
> [Arianne, member checking response, 26 August 2013]

> I was hooked from start to finish. Well written ;) It (lol) makes me seem like a dreamer, though my motivations are very much rooted in reality. But whatever.

[Ferenc, member checking response, 2 September 2013]

> […] maybe I'll read the whole thing through some day as it looks very interesting. […] I found only one thing to fix, on page 29 […]. I remember the image and I felt the scale looking completely wrong due to unrealistic lighting.
>
> [Luukas, member checking response, 21 August 2013]

> It was nice to read so well written text […]. Reading the chapters brought back a lot of good memories.
>
> [Kofido, member checking response, 25 August 2013]

> I'm glad to see you've been able to weave a thread of story among all the respondents, it's been a really enjoyable ride […]. I know it must've been really difficult to keep all of those talking heads in your mind while composing everything. Good work!
>
> [Tianyi, member checking response, 2 September 2013]

> The sections, where I could find that person "Otto" who is representing me is quite accurate […]. I still think like that! It was nice to be able recognize the other people who have given interviews to you, those fake names could not hide the persons' identities from my recognition.
>
> [Otto, member checking response, 21 August 2013]

> Sadly, [my] stopmotion software is still unpublished. I lost motivation to finish it […]. Interesting that your research points out similar struggles in the WAM productions: lack of time/money especially in productions which aim for free distribution. That must be a universal issue for all indie projects...
>
> [Kofido, member checking response, 25 August 2013]

Overall, the outcome of the member checking process has provided further credibility to this study, and alluded to its ability to provide resonance. The final of Tracy's criteria, which will be addressed, is ethics (criteria g). The ethical considerations taken in this study will be separately addressed in the following section, using Tracy's (2010) distinction between situational and procedural ethics.

3.5.1 Ethical considerations

Situational ethics

What counts as public or private on the internet remains "blurred and contested" (Bryman, 2008:654). Hewson et al. (2003) for example, hold that data that have been made voluntarily and deliberately public online is ethically fine to use by researchers for research purposes without seeking informed consent from the users who have posted it. In contrast, Eynon et al. (2008, p. 30) underline the importance of enacting context sensibility when determining which ethical concerns should be addressed in any given case, as the online environment facilitates a multitude of different genres of social spaces. Eynon et al.'s (2008) perspective has informed this study's approach to research ethics.

In the context of this study, two overarching ethical challenges have had to be addressed:

1. How to balance issues of confidentiality and anonymity in research that portrays publicly available peer produced film's productions processes for productions that have excessive amounts of easily identifiable discourses published online.

2. How to use and portray data from the extended production networks' online spheres, such as Facebook, from which informed consent has not been granted by all individuals.

To address the first challenge: This study investigates the processes and dynamics of four peer produced films facilitated by a particular online platform. These films have all been publicly distributed and, as noted in Section 3.2.2.1, the Wreckamovie platform is the only currently existing online platform that is designed specifically to assist the peer production of film. If these productions and the Wreckamovie platform were to have been fully

anonymized it would have been impossible to carry out the research, as only the interview data could have been used. The rest of the data would thus only have been able to serve in informing the analysis, as using excerpts from it in the published research would have rendered the productions and community identifiable. From the outset of the study, it has therefore been decided, in discussion with the WAM platform and production owners, to make use of the real names of the productions and platform. During the member checking process, however, it was decided in conversation with one of the production owners to change the name of his production in order to make it less easily identifiable. The name of the third embedded case, *Ice Guns*, is thus an alias employed because the production at one stage faced potential allegations of copyright violations. These issues were later sorted out, but the participant and I both felt it was better to opt for this solution to minimize any potential reputational risks.

While the majority of the productions and the Wreckamovie platform have thus not been anonymized, research participants have been given an alias. By their very nature, digitally published discussions are traceable, and this anonymization should, therefore, not be taken to indicate that participants are unidentifiable. Rather, this step has been taken to reduce the discoverability of the identities of the individual research participants. Mayer-Schönberger (2011) has argued convincingly that the digital age poses significant challenges for *the virtue of forgetting*, as the publication's title states. The digital environment archives individuals' various traces, making them searchable, and, often undeletable. This new environment, Mayer-Schönberger (2011) argues, might severely affect our future selves, and result in, for example, psychological harm. This concern is particularly relevant in the context of the final destination of this thesis: The online repository *Oxford University Research Archive* (ORA).

Using aliases for the research participants ultimately ensures that this thesis will not show up in online search engine results if someone were to search for the names of any of the individuals who have taken part in this research. While the identities of those who have used their real name on their Wreckamovie profile can be found by copy-pasting presented quotes from online production spheres into a search engine, it requires that that person has accessed this thesis and subsequently put effort into identifying an individual. In the context of the ethical dilemma related to addressing questions of anonymity, it should be noted that the majority of the research participants have explicitly asked me to make use of their real name in the published research. As the analysis chapters will also attest to, the participants are digitally savvy, and further, many actively seek to promote themselves online. However, as it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that any potential risk associated with participating is minimized, I have advocated strongly for Mayer-Schönberger's (2011) points. The outcome of these negotiations has been that all participants except three have been anonymized in the sense that they are presented using aliases. During the member checking process, one of the three exempt participants for example wrote:

> On the anonymization, I'd prefer you to use my own name. What I discussed with you are my opinions and I stand behind them. [...] I understand though what your professor is saying, if words (or pictures) are set out carelessly it may cause psychological problems.

The second major ethical challenge of this research has been to determine how to handle data from the WAM productions' extended online networks (see Table 3.2 for details), from which informed consent has not been sought. This issue has in particular been relevant to consider in the context of *Iron Sky*'s large Facebook member base of 180,000+ individuals. All the online discourses included in the data analysis (Table 3.2.) have been collected from online spheres that are freely accessible by anyone. The accessibility of these discourses is, to a large extent, the outcome of deliberate decisions on the part of the production owners. A Facebook group, for example, can be made accessible only to members. Similarly, the designers of the Wreckamovie platform have in interviews explained that it was a deliberate

choice to make all content available for everyone, even non-members. Further, observations of activities in these online spheres have suggested that contributors do not perceive them as private spheres. Therefore, I have deemed it ethically acceptable to include some discourses from these spheres in the published research. Moreover, data from the extended production networks make up a minority of the data presented. Likewise, quotes from these spheres are never used to portray individuals or exceptions, but exclusively used to make evident clear patterns and themes in the data. To mirror this, quotes stemming from this subset of the data are presented using generic descriptions, such as "*Iron Sky* Facebook member".

The exception to the above is the inclusion of online discourses published by three *Iron Sky* core team members (the director, the GCI producer and the former merchandise officer). Due to their work schedules, it has been impossible to set up interviews with these individuals; they have, however, expressed their support in this research, and have been helpful in arranging interviews with their colleagues. Further, in interviews with the five other *Iron Sky* core team members, they have been mentioned repeatedly, as they have been formative in the production process. To provide a substantial analysis of the *Iron Sky* production, it was necessary to include online discourses published by these three individuals. While they are not formally participants, and thus not listed in Table 3.1, the director and GCI producer were encouraged to take part in the member checking process because of their relative prominence in the published research.

Procedural ethics

In addition to the situational ethical considerations, this study has adhered to the *procedural ethics* (Tracy 2010) specified by the University of Oxford's Central Ethical Committee. Before the first phase of moderate participant observation was initiated, the Central Ethical

Committee of my research institution granted the ethical approval of this research project. All research participants, when initially approached, were given the Research Information Sheet (included in Appendix C), explaining what this study is about, and why they were approached. Further formal procedures followed, ensuring that research participants had enough information to determine if they were willing to give their informed consent. The Consent Form (included in Appendix D) specified what participation would entail, how data was stored and handled, and that participation remained voluntary, making any participant free to withdraw from the study at any time. In more conversational manners, I have explained to all participants the motivation of the research, the methods and design, and have emphasized their rights, either through email exchanges or face-to-face. I have received written or digital consent from all participants listed in Table 3.1.

Chapter 4

The worlds and fields of WAM and its productions

4.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the first research theme, as outlined in chapter 2: the worlds and fields of Wreckamovie peer productions. The analysis is informed both by Bourdieu's notion of the fields of cultural production and Becker's concept of art worlds, integrating what are usually positioned as starkly opposed theories in order to understand the complex dynamics and tensions that govern WAM productions. This chapter also serves to set the wider context for the two following analysis chapters. The chapter first presents the WAM platform and its history, then introduces and analyses the four WAM productions individually, and concludes with a summary of findings.

4.2 The Wreckamovie platform and community

4.2.1 Genesis and development of the WAM platform

The initiators of the WAM platform were a small group of five Finnish amateur filmmakers who, to varying degrees, had been involved in the creation of a series of animated sci-fi fan-fiction parody productions from 1992 onwards. These six films were inspired by the Star Trek series (Paramount 1966-), an influence clearly communicated in the title of their short film series: *Star Wreck* (I-VI). The first five instalments were animated short films, which had all been completed within a year each. During the sixth production, as the uptake of the

internet spread in Finland, they began discussing their filmmaking projects online on bulletin boards and through chat channels (such as IRC).

The sixth instalment of the *Star Wreck* series, *Star Wreck: In the Pirkinning* (2005), marked a distinct turning point for the production team. The production developed into an ambitious feature-length film project that ended up taking seven years to complete (1998-2005); in addition, for the first time, the team did not exclusively rely on animations for this instalment. They took on acting roles themselves, and shot the film in front of a green screen to subsequently generate the set using CGI. The core production team went through an informal learning process during the production period of the sixth film; they went from their teens to their twenties and developed increasingly sophisticated film-making skills. As one of the core members (and later architect of the WAM platform), Oskari, puts it in an email following up on an interview: "The whole process was a practical film school where we taught ourselves lighting, shooting angles, editing, sound design, scripting, sketching, prop making, acting etc. to make a cooler looking film. We were becoming more and more professional all the time." [Oskari, email interview, 19 July 2012].

During this prolonged production period, the core creators reached out further to online audiences, first via a dedicated production website, and later, in 2002, via a dedicated *Star Wreck* forum (with both an English and Finnish section). This online forum grew steadily from 300 members in 2002 to more than 1,000 members by early 2005, six months before *Star Wreck*: *In the Pirkinning* was completed. In the time period between the online premiere of the movie and the launch of the Wreckamovie platform in 2008, the *Star Wreck* forum doubled in size, and thus had a member base of more than 2,000 individuals. During the production period of *Star Wreck: In the Pirkinning*, forum members contributed to the production by lending equipment, props and costume items, scouting locations, and in other practical ways. Some community members even contributed to the production financially.

In other words, the creators engaged in online conversations with, and received production input from, a growing base of *Star Wreck* community members, long before the terms crowdsourcing and crowdfunding were coined.

In 2005, *Star Wreck: In the Pirkinning* was released. It was released first to offline audiences at select screening venues in Finland, shortly thereafter to online followers who had pre-ordered the creators' self-distributed DVDs, and finally, one month later, in early October 2005, on the open internet. The movie was made freely available for download from the *Star Wreck* forum, and it was released under a Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivs-NonCommercial license. The movie immediately became an audience hit; more than 590.000 downloads were made from the forum website alone in the first six days following the online release [Mikko, director, *Star Wreck* forum post, 6 October 2005]. By December 2005, *Star Wreck*: *In the Pirkinning* had reportedly been downloaded more than 3,5 million times [Mikko, director, *Star Wreck* forum post, 23 December 2005], growing to more than 8 million downloads over the course of two years [Wreckamovie, "About" section, 2008-2013].

Following the free online release of *Star Wreck* VI, the team soon began receiving invitations to give talks about their participatory production process at technology conventions and academic conferences; during the period 2005-2008 the team gave numerous talks, documented on their production blog. Summing up one of these experiences, Mikko, explained the general gist of their talks: "[…] the topics were the same I'm quite used to: everyone can make films, nowadays everything is cross-platform, utilize your community, don't work with the old media industry, piracy is good, copyright is bad…" [*Star Wreck*/*Iron Sky* blog post, 23 October 2008]. In their conference and convention presentations, the core creators thus shared their production experiences as well as their visions for a new model of production, "a new movie making paradigm called internet movie making" [Atte, email

interview, 19 July 2012]. The core team had a genuine desire to legitimize and promote this production model that corresponded with their own production practices. Despite having proved in practice that the model could work (at least in the context of their project), and despite talking at conferences attended by communities of technologically savvy practitioners and academics, the core team was initially met with high levels of scepticism when presenting their visions. Describing the early Wreckamovie platform idea-development stage and vision, Atte, *Star Wreck* co-director and WAM co-founder and architect, highlighted the scepticism they met when presenting:

> Me and Mikko prepared a presentation to [a technology and academic conference] about how collaborative movie making was used in *Star Wreck*: In the Pirkinning. […] The fans/followers/collaborators form an on-line community with the film crew. Editing, funding, distribution etc. are done online though the community. Only the parts that really need physical presence, like shooting the material, would be done in a studio. When we presented our ideas to the media and internet savvy audience, we were met with lots of eye rolling, smirking and doubting questions.
>
> [Atte, email interview, 19 July 2012]

It was not only in technology circles that the core creators experienced problems gaining recognition. The professional film industry did not perceive the creators as professionals, and industry agents were therefore not taking them seriously. In an interview with Antto, one of the core creators, who had co-written *Star Wreck* VI and later came up with the idea for their next production, *Iron Sky*, the theme of exclusion came up again and again. He explained that those who had formal training dominated the close community that was the Finnish film scene. Or, as Bourdieu might put it, the industry and the national film funding bodies recognized only filmmakers with high levels of institutionalized cultural capital. Here Antto explains the attitude they were met with:

> We were total outsiders. […]. There were always people who took us seriously, […] fans and stuff. […]But let's say that there were as well… should I say all the professionals? Who really didn't see much worth in what we were doing. […] Some were quite direct about it. Some just went flat out and said "Okay, it's not a real film if it hasn't been shot on film" and stuff like that.
>
> [Antto, interview, September 15, 2011]

The experience of exclusion and lack of recognition fuelled their desire to gain legitimacy, both for themselves as increasingly professional filmmakers, and for the production model they believed in. One of the ways they sought to increase their legitimacy was to pursue the distribution of *Star Wreck* through traditional, legitimate, channels. They succeeded in having the movie aired on national TV channels in several European countries, including Italy and Holland. They also managed to negotiate a Nordic distribution agreement with an established distributor, Universal Pictures, in 2006 – after having offered the movie for free online for a year, and after having already sold a large number of their self-distributed DVDs. In 2009, another distribution agreement followed: The team entered into an agreement with Revolver Entertainment, who took on the DVD distribution of *Star Wreck* VI in the UK and the US.

To further their legitimacy, the team established a production company in 2006, *Energia Production*, and embarked on the pre-production stage of their next film production, *Iron Sky*. Moreover, they began working actively on realising their vision of an online platform facilitating the peer production of film. The first public announcement of the vision and platform was distributed in a press release, posted on the *Star Wreck* forum and on Energia Production's website. Under the headline "The *Star Wreck* production model goes global", the press release highlighted their perception of an increased discrepancy between the traditional film industry and emerging participatory online practices: "While Hollywood concentrates more and more on big budgets and ultra entertainment, the culture of filmmaking is progressing on the Internet", they wrote [*Star Wreck* forum, 13 October 2006]. This antagonistic stance towards the traditional film industry's production model was continuously highlighted in the team's communication about the Wreckamovie platform. In a forum post inviting the *Star Wreck* forum's community members to sign up to WAM alpha testers, the *Star Wreck* director and cast member, Mikko, for example, wrote:

"We believe that interesting quality content can be produced via collaboration over the Internet, where resources and talent are abundant, and intelligent distribution on the other end provides a real ecosystem for films" [*Star Wreck* forum post, 1 March 2008].

Their dichotomous portrayal of the contrasting models of the old-fashioned film industry and their innovative Wreckamovie production model, however, was more difficult to uphold in practice. During the Wreckamovie platform development, internal tensions arose in the process of deciding on the concrete business and production models to pursue and execute.

In early 2007, the Wreckamovie development team consisted of three of the core *Star Wreck* creators plus a Chief Technological Officer (CTO), a CEO and two board members. The board members were both serial entrepreneurs; the Finnish board member, Sakke, was involved in a number of start-ups in Helsinki, and the American board member, Christian, was successfully managing an independent online music label, promoting Creative Commons licensing. Christian, the American board member, had additionally provided seed funding to the team's new production, *Iron Sky*. The development team became increasingly polarized, disagreeing on whether they should aim for raising venture capital or ascribe to the do-it-yourself-attitude of the *Star Wreck* productions. The American board member explained this in a Skype interview:

> There was a split on the board trying to decide whether to go raise venture capital and do it the big American way, or whether they should save whatever money they had and do it on a shoestring budget.
>
> [Christian, Skype interview, 19 June 2012]

The American board member was adamant that Wreckamovie and *Iron Sky* should actively seek to challenge the tyranny of the traditional film industry, particularly the traditional modular distribution model that would see films premiering at different times in theatres, on DVDs and online. The board member therefore made a suggestion to the team:

> I had made a proposal to them where I would be, along with the fan-funding, the only funding for the film. This was a very specific arrangement I offered them. Which was: I would write a €1,000,000 check, and Mikko would make the film only with my money and fan-funding, and nobody else. And that the film would be simultaneously available on iTunes for sale at the same time it's being shown in theatres, and that you would be able to also stream it from the website.
>
> [Christian, Skype interview, 19 June 2012]

The core creators, however, fuelled by their desire to gain legitimacy, had meanwhile teamed up with a producer from an established Finnish film production company to ensure a more professional set-up for the *Iron Sky* production. They therefore rejected Christian's offer. Later, he amicably withdrew from the board. The remaining development team unsuccessfully continued to pursue professional funding for the Wreckamovie platform. According to interviews with four of the individuals involved in the Wreckamovie development, they ran out of financial capital within six months, and by December 2007 they could therefore no longer afford to pay the salaries of their CEO and the CTO, Petja. The CEO left the company, never to return, while the remaining team continued their work, pro-bono, on a more casual basis. Ultimately, the Wreckamovie platform was designed and developed singlehandedly by the core *Star Wreck* team with assistance from programming student workers recruited from a local university. The student workers' salaries were ensured when the *Star Wreck* platform won a €25,000 technology award (MindTrek Grand Prix Award) just as the platform went into public beta in October 2008.

4.2.2 Key community visions and values

From the launch of the Wreckamovie platform, the development team and owners were actively working to shape the community's norms and vision. The WAM development team actively promoted certain values in their interaction with WAM members. In particular, Sakke, the Finnish entrepreneur and WAM board member and co-owner, took on the role of WAM community manager; the *Star Wreck* core team was increasingly preoccupied with

producing *Iron Sky*. In reality, therefore, it was Sakke and the student WAM developers who maintained the platform and steered the community towards certain norms and visions: To promote and enable new production models that harnessed the affordances of networked technologies; a model that acknowledged the ability of online audiences to take an active part in the production of cultural artefacts. Ultimately, as it states in the WAM platform's 'about' section, the goal was to change "the whole chain of filmmaking" by "unleashing the creative potential of Internet communities".

The WAM vision thus expressed the founders' stance within the field of cultural production: their desire to maintain a position opposed to what is perceived as that occupied by established and dominant cultural industries in the field of large-scale production. The metaphor of Hollywood was a common trope used to explicitly steer the community towards this stance. On the contact section of the Wreckamovie platform, it is for example, humorously underlined that Wreckamovie is "headquartered at the center of the global Internet film world in Tampere, Finland and is located 8,858 km (5,504 miles) from Hollywood, California". Likewise, Atte, the *Star Wreck* co-producer/co-director and WAM architect, underlined this stance when responding to a WAM community member, who had expressed concern that his anime production might not fit with the WAM platform:

> Don't worry about presenting a niche production. In fact the more niche the better. Let the Hollywood handle the mainstream boom-booms. In the internet we can make what ever we want! -)
>
> [Atte, WAM community discussion, 8 August 2008]

Sakke, the active community moderator, was equally explicit in encouraging WAM production leaders to challenge existing industry dogma. To illustrate this, consider the following snippets posted by Sakke in response to various tasks and shots posted in the *Ice Guns* production:

> […] that would fit very well with what we are trying to do on Wreckamovie in general, ie leading edge productions that Hollywood can't do even if they had the money;-)
>
> [Sakke, *Ice Guns* WAM shot comment, 22 July 2009]

> […] Let's keep thinking about a good name for the genre and keep wrecking the Hollywood model while we are at it ;-)
>
> [Sakke, *Ice Guns* WAM shot comment, 1 August 2009]

> […] we position this as part of wrecking Hollywood, part of the revolution. Taking place all over the globe […]
>
> [Sakke, *Ice Guns* WAM blog comment, 17 November 2009]

In parallel with the active promotion of the vision within WAM, the development team also sought to promote their vision for a new film production model in offline contexts. Progress on that front was frequently communicated to the Wreckamovie community members. In a WAM community discussion, the *Star Wreck* VI/*Iron Sky* director and WAM developer, Mikko, for example, reported:

> Last week, I was handed an award in WT X:th Os International Film Festival on work we have been doing for free culture and introduction of the collaborative film production model to the world! […] Thanks again for everybody in the platform for helping us out with this big effort of trying to change the way films are made, seen and distributed in the future!
>
> [Mikko, WAM community discussion, 14 November 2008]

Below is another example attesting to the efforts the WAM development team put into gaining recognition for their production model. At the time the extract was written, the WAM development team were putting together a proposal for a panel talk at the high-profile film festival South by Southwest (USA). The extract was part of an appeal to WAM community members to vote for their proposal on the festival website, to increase the team's chances of being accepted. Again, the proposed talk frames the issue of production models dichotomously:

> SXSW is one of the most important events for us to attend next year and we submitted a wrecking proposal for their panel picker: "Can Collaborative Filmmaking Wreck Hollywood?"
>
> [Sakke, WAM production blog post, August 30, 2009]

Available data suggests that the Wreckamovie community members embraced and sought to further promote the developers vision of challenging the established film industry by producing film in a collaborative manner, facilitated by networked technologies, and the Wreckamovie platform in particular. In WAM community discussions, WAM members, for example, discussed how to communally gain more visibility: they created and posted YouTube videos explaining and advertising the WAM production model; they proposed the establishing of local offline networks of WAM ambassadors and evangelists. Further, WAM community members sought to increase the legitimacy of the production model and the Wreckamovie platform. To this end, they arranged for a Wikipedia entry to be authored, after having discussed issues relating which secondary sources would best serve to increase the credibility of the Wikipedia WAM article entry.

In addition to the shared vision, the WAM community embraced certain norms. These dictated that the WAM community believed in collaboration, sharing and inclusion, and in low barriers to participation and entry. Likewise, the community promoted the use of real names to enhance the level of interpersonal relationships, and sought to further strengthen these relationships in offline contexts. The following two examples illustrate the emphasis on the building and strengthening of community relationships. Sakke, WAM owner and community manager, repeatedly invited WAM members to meet with him when travelling abroad to promote WAM in various offline contexts:

> Will be in Stockholm for the SIME conference this week, Nov 11 and 12. If you are around, let me know and we can do some wrecking;-) Next week in Montreal Nov 17,18 and 19. Would love to meet local wreckers.
>
> [Sakke, WAM community discussion, 10 November 2009]

And:

> I will be at PICNIC in Amsterdam next week, just thought I'd check if any other Wreckers happen to be in the neighborhood. If you are, let me know and we could meet over a beer or two. Or five, I don't mind.
>
> [Sakke, WAM community, 17 September 2009]

This emphasis on face-to-face interaction built on practices established by the *Star Wreck* creators. From the early stages of the *Star Wreck* VI production period, the core team arranged meetings with followers and collaborators on a regular basis. The WAM community members equally embraced this norm, and, for example, arranged offline WAM festivals in Finland and Oslo. More than ten of the WAM community members interviewed for this project have highlighted these offline gatherings as important shapers of the community cohesion. The majority of the attendants travelled great distances in order to participate, some even from abroad. WAM community members ensured that anyone hindered in participating, could subsequently access videos, photos and other documentation from the events. Further, they ensured that non-participating Wreckamovie community members' productions were still promoted at the offline event.

Further attesting to the value of ensuring inclusion and low barriers to participation is the following remark by Sakke, posted in a WAM production set up to arrange a WAM community gathering in Oslo, Norway:

> [...] a good rule of thumb for all the events, no matter where they take place, would be to have them in English. [...] And let's also be clear that we don't want to have any distinction between new and old wreckers, everybody is welcome and the spirit of Wreckamovie is always one of maximum openness.
>
> [Sakke, task comment, WAM Wrecker's Ball, 10 June 2010]

This openness combined with the norms of sharing and supporting collaboration resulted in a community environment characterised by genuine relationships, and constructive interaction. In interviews, the vast majority of the WAM research participants have

highlighted the friendliness of the Wreckamovie community. Vili, *Star Wreck* cast member, and *Iron Sky* publicist, for example, noted the following:

> I've been working with net communities on gaming for a long time, and frankly that makes one a bit of a cynic about net communities, because people are horrible whiners and really cynical. […] I have never, literally without any kind of exception, worked with a net community that's this positive and productive and helpful.
>
> [Vili, *Star Wreck*/*Iron Sky* core team member, interview, 22 August 2011]

Similarly, Joona, an active WAM community member who has contributed to three of the four productions analysed in this study, said in an interview:

> The community is very, very positive, which is surprising. There's no hate […] and people comment really politely and expertly. And it's a surprisingly civilised conversation most of the time.
>
> [Joona, WAM member, interview, 22 May 2012]

As Joona, a large range of the WAM community members engaged with several productions, and engaged with further non-production related interactions in the WAM community discussion area. This interaction pattern was to a large degree facilitated by Sakke's active involvement and gentle community steering. Sakke kept an eye out on overall WAM participation, was quick in promoting new productions, and in celebrating milestones, for example, record setting karma points scores. The WAM member Gerhard, producer of *Ice Guns* and *Solar System*, and active member of a number of other WAM productions, was the first to reach a karma score of 1000. Sakke celebrated this in a community post:

> Gerhard has become the first Wrecker to reach the milestone of 1000 in Karma. This shouldn't come as a surprise to anybody who has been active here […]. From now on we'll refer to 1000 Karma [points] as 1 Gerhard ;-) Let's keep wrecking!
>
> [Sakke, WAM discussion, 18 August 2009]

In early 2011, however, the WAM development and community maintenance weakened. This was due to Sakke's commercial success elsewhere. On the side, Sakke had been developing mobile phone games, and one of these suddenly became one of the most

frequently downloaded mobile games ever. This sudden success left little time for Sakke to maintain his WAM moderation role, leaving it up to general WAM members to maintain the community cohesion. As we will see in the next chapter discussing WAM member orientations, the community continued to grow due to the relationships established, and because the responsibilities taken by a smaller group of very active community members. The lack of moderation, and the subsequent stalling of WAM development, did, however, generate frustrations in the WAM community. With only few exceptions, all WAM members interviewed have brought up issues related to the increasingly acute lack of maintenance and general support. Since late 2011, there has been a widespread and growing disappointment about these matters. A large portion of the community members had hoped, and expected, that the completion of the *Iron Sky* production would bring more active participation on Wreckamovie. As Gerhard puts it in a discussion taking place within the *Ice Guns* production:

> I had hoped that the release of the [*Iron Sky*] film would bring a huge boost in wreckers, because I thought the media would pick up on the fact that the guys didn't only use crowdsourcing, but also released their own friggin' platform for it!
>
> [Gerhard, *Ice Guns* task comment, 4 August 2012]

In interviews with WAM developers, it has transpired that the team continued to struggle with finding a way of financially sustaining the platform. There have been explicit attempts at raising funds, and of finding ways of developing a business model around the WAM platform. The WAM developers and owners, following the spirit of the community, have invited WAM members to be part of a process of rebranding and further developing the platform. For example, in January 2012, an email was sent out to all WAM members, inviting them to take part in a discussion about the future of WAM. Similarly, in July 2012, the most active WAM members were invited to participate in a workshop held at a hotel in Tampere, Finland. I attended this workshop, which was facilitated by the technology company Nokia's head of crowdsourcing, and attended by WAM developers, *Star Wreck*/*Iron Sky* core

members and WAM community members alike. The focus for the workshop was to brainstorm ways the platform could be further developed, grow, and ultimately, make money. Since then, the platform has remained the same, and there has been no further follow up on any of these issues. At the point of writing up this research, therefore, it remains uncertain what the future holds for the WAM platform. As we will see, though, for the time being at least, it continues to facilitate the peer production of culture.

4.3 The Wreckamovie production cases

The socio-technical system of Wreckamovie, has, as demonstrated in the analysis above, facilitated the emergence of a community pivoting around the online platform. The community largely appear to share the vision promoted by the Wreckamovie developers. Likewise, norms and values have evolved, embracing virtues of sharing, caring and collaborating. Within this shared value-system, however, quite different practices unfold. The Wreckamovie platform has facilitated the peer production of films that differ in genre, orientations, budgets and production practices. The following analysis of the four embedded productions, *Iron Sky*, *Star Wreck*: 2pi, *Ice Guns* and *Solar System* will vividly illustrate this diversity. The analyses of the productions are presented in chronological order, and serve to provide a thick description of the production processes, serving as the context for the subsequent analysis chapters. Central to the analyses are Bourdieu's portrayal of cultural production as illustrated in his metaphor of the field and its characterizing struggles, and Becker's concept of art worlds. In the individual analyses, the tensions between these opposing framings will be teased out.

4.3.1 *Iron Sky*



Figure 4.1: Iron Sky poster, printed with permission from copyright holder, source: http://www.ironsky.net/site/press/images/

The idea for *Iron Sky* was allegedly bred in a hot Finnish sauna in 2005. Antto, one of the core creators of *Star Wreck*, suggested to the team that their next movie should be about space-Nazis. The basic premise of the movie, the tag-line, would be: "In 1945 the Nazis went to the moon; in 2018 they're coming back!". At that point, the idea of producing this black comedy feature film seemed somewhat farfetched; never would they have imagined that *Iron Sky* would eventually turn into a star-studded, partially crowdfunded, €7 million international co-production, premiering seven years later, in February 2012, at one of the most esteemed film festivals in the world, the *Berlinale* in Berlin, Germany. When I met Antto in the office of Energia Production in Tampere during the later stage of the post-production period, he summed up the paradoxical nature of *Iron Sky* nicely:

> No one has really done anything like this before. At the same time it's kind of like a Hollywood film but it's also a really small film, it's a Finnish film, it's an internet film, it's a crowd source film; and all these have so different expectations.
>
> [Antto, interview 15 September 2011]

The quote points to the different forces shaping the *Iron Sky* production process, and indirectly points to some of the tensions that arose over the period from the inception of the idea to the theatrical world premiere in 2012. Following the release of *Star Wreck* VI, the core team's key priorities were to ensure financial sustainability and to establish themselves

as professionals within the field of large-scale cultural production. To that end, soon after having begun working more seriously on the *Iron Sky* script, they approached established Finnish film producers. One of them, the producer Eetu, whose production company had previously co-produced innovative feature films such as Lars Von Trier's *Dancer in the Dark* (Zentropa, 2000), was convinced about their potential:

> Santtu and Mikko came to me with the idea of *Iron Sky* […]. There was a treatment, like a 15 page written story, which made me laugh a lot, and also, I had been a little bit following the guys when doing the *Star Wreck*, and I thought it's really cool what they are doing from kind of an amateur basis.
>
> [Eetu, interview, 22 August 2011]

The partnership with the established producer Eetu marked a turning point for the core creators. With Eetu's network and expertise they were able to attract and take on-board one of the most successful Finnish Screen writers. In these early days of the pre-production period, however, most things were still uncertain. Particularly, it was uncertain that the team would be able to attract sufficient funding to embark on the actual production of *Iron Sky*. In order to attract funding, Eetu introduced the team to the traditional way of doing business in the film industry: going to film festivals, the European Film Market, and so forth. In May 2007, the team thus headed to Cannes film festival for the first time. In a blog post communicating their whereabouts, Mikko, the *Iron Sky* director, explained:

> Me and Santtu are about to head straight for the wolf's den – to the center of the international film industry: Cannes film festival. […] Our accreditations were turned down. We apparently are not real-enough filmmakers for those outrageous French bastards!
>
> [Mikko, *Star Wreck*/*Iron Sky* blog post, 15 May 2007]

As the above quote attests, the *Iron Sky* team still perceived of themselves as outsiders, and were also perceived as such by the industry, officially excluded by gatekeepers, denied accreditations. The professional world was initially somewhat baffling to the *Star Wreck* creators, and not what they had expected. Over the coming years, as they gained familiarity with professional practices unfolding at film festivals, they increasingly took on these

practices themselves. This is evident from the content of the large body of *Iron Sky* blog posts and video diaries communicating and reporting on their Cannes experiences from 2008 through 2013. As such, these blogs and videos display the teams' evolving trajectories as professional filmmakers. In one of those blog posts, Mikko later reflected on their initial entry into the field of large-scale cultural production:

> I was kinda shocked to find out the truth when I first visited Cannes in 2007 with *Iron Sky*. The basic structure is quite like going to a bar and trying to get laid. You put your best effort to look good and rich and well-doing as possible, meet a lot of people, drink a lot, and end up in someone's bed.
>
> [Mikko, *Star Wreck*/*Iron Sky* blog post, 7 February 2009]

Throughout the *Iron Sky* production period, despite becoming professionals, the team portrays and perceive of themselves as different from the more traditionally oriented film professionals. Their primary differences lie in the ways they interact with and form part of online cultures, which includes a sympathetic attitude towards piracy. As such, they remain loyal to the core values that underpinned their earlier amateur production processes: openness and sharing. This value system stands in stark contrast to the norms of the formal film industries, and the *Iron Sky* team continuously and explicitly advocated against the value chain of the cultural industries. Likewise, throughout the production period, they were quick in blogging about contemporary issues relating to the cultural industries' business models and IP rights management strategies. The below snippets from the *Iron Sky* blog provide examples of some of the team's commentaries on specific cases.

When a named company banned a fandom production infringing on their IP rights, Mikko wrote:

> One of the things today's company people should've learned is that you don't wanna be [an] asshole to your fans. Never. Ever. Because no matter how big a company you are, you don't want to end up in the same shithole as Metallica and others who've gotten the undivided hatred of the Internet folk on them […].
>
> [Mikko, *Iron Sky* blog post, 7 November 2007]

A couple of years later, when explaining an innovative model of music distribution, Mikko underlined:

> […] there are still millions of people in and outside the film and music industry really believing they can huff and puff the internet away and make it act the way the want to, and re-light their already-dying business model. Well fuck them […].
>
> [Mikko, *Iron Sky* blog, 9 February 2009]

In a similar fashion, the *Iron Sky* community manager Antto, in the context of discussing the digital rights management of a named PC game, wrote:

> You get the license to watch it if the DRM system works, if the publisher doesn't go out of business and if they don't think there were more than two people in the living room watching it. The bottom line: This is just is stupid, stupid, stupid, […] oh it hurts, stupid, stupid, please make the stupid stop […] And did I mention this is stupid?
>
> [Antto, *Iron Sky* blog post, 30 January 2009]

In interviews with core *Iron Sky* production team members it has been equally clear that they perceive of themselves as different from the traditional industry agents. They explicitly communicated that they believe in and care for online participatory cultures; that the fight for breaking with traditional production models of the cultural industries, hereunder the IP rights tyranny, was part of their mission. Therefore, they explained, they, for example, decided to publish the first *Iron Sky* teaser video under a Creative Commons licence, and actively encouraged the remixing of this content. Overall, they held little esteem for the film industry's lack of understanding of participatory online cultures and practices. The *Iron Sky* publicist, and former *Star Wreck* cast, Vili, for example, highlighted in an interview:

> We are talking about copyright and stuff in a bit of a different tone than most film makers, because we think it's great people see films, and you know, illegal downloading, it's sort of a cry of help from consumers whose needs aren't being met. […] My unfiltered opinion is that most of the movie industry understands fuck all about internet and anything to do with it. To the degree that is kind of sad, actually.
>
> [Vili, interview, 22 August 2011]

Antto, screenwriter of *Star Wreck* VI and initiator of the *Iron Sky* premise, underlined their own extensive online engagement; their habitus. Further, he emphasized that although he was now a professional, he continued to care greatly about challenging strict copyright regimes:

> I'm a filmmaker now, it's how I make my living; so obviously I want to see people pay for entertainment and art. But it's not the most important thing. I'd rather be a poor artist than live in a world which is controlled by very, very strict laws. […] It seems that much of the copyright policy that's been done in the last twenty years has been trying to put back together a burst balloon.
>
> [Antto, interview 15 September 2011]

While the core *Iron Sky* team was explicitly concerned about challenging the business model and dogma of the film industry, they were equally concerned about leveraging their position in the field of large-scale cultural production, of gaining reputable positions in the field. This concern is mirrored in the WAM tasks made available during the early stages of the pre-production phase. From when *Iron Sky* was launched as the first production on WAM on 8 February 2008, while the platform was still in its alpha phase, to February 2009, a year later, the ten tasks available for their, at the time, 1000+ *Iron Sky* WAM production members, predominantly related to marketing and PR work. At this stage, the core team was attempting to ensure traditional funding for the *Iron Sky* production, and therefore concentrated on promoting themselves and the *Iron Sky* video teaser.

The *Iron Sky* team soon succeeded in attracting funding from traditional sources. In Cannes, in May 2008, they negotiated the first distribution agreements with established distribution companies, securing the *Iron Sky* team pre-sale revenue that feed into the production budget. By February 2009, the *Iron Sky* team had further secured development funds from the national Finnish Film Council (€50,000) as well as the Nordic TV and Film Fund (€15,000). Over the next year and a half, according to the *Iron Sky* website, they secured a total of €6 million from traditional funding sources: from pre-sale, investments from co-

producers in Germany and Australia, and state funded agencies such as Hessen Film Invest (Germany) and Screen Queensland (Australia). In addition to the traditional funding sources, the *Iron Sky* production relied on financial capital accumulated by means of crowdfunding; they raised in the region of €650,000 from fans and followers. The crowdfunding initiatives will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6, analysing the dynamics of the social economies of the WAM productions.

Returning to the description of the *Iron Sky* production process: as more and more funding was raised, the core professional *Iron Sky* team expanded to include a social media manager (Riku, a Finnish TV-producer student, whom they had met at Cannes in 2008) and a publicist (Vili, former *Star Wreck* IV-V cast member). The team, correspondingly, further increased their level of online engagement. In addition to their *Star Wreck* forum, active blog, website and WAM engagement, they created separate photo and video blogs, began distributing newsletters to online subscribers (2-4 monthly), and increased their level of activity on their Facebook page, Twitter accounts and YouTube channel. In particular, the number of videos reporting on the *Iron Sky* production progress is impressive. Content on the *Iron Sky* YouTube channel, for example, includes 26 episodes of *Iron Sky Signals*, a well-produced and scripted 'behind the scenes'-series completed with intro-jingle and graphics (view count of 900,000+ as of 30 July 2013); 81 episodes of the *Iron Sky Director's Diary*, presenting raw and authentic diary-like materials recorded by Mikko (view count of 280,000+ as of 30 July 2013); and 7 episodes of the *Iron Sky CGI Diaries*, in which Santtu shares improvised stories from the animation and modelling department at Energia Productions (view count of 65,000+ as of 30 July 2013). The level of Facebook activity is even higher. As per 6 July 2013, the *Iron Sky* Facebook group contains 5174 posts, and the more than 183,000 *Iron Sky* Facebook members have contributed towards a total of 28,733 comments.

As the above outline of the *Iron Sky* online presence suggests, the core team had a very large and global base of fans and followers. In an interview with the social media manager, Riku, in the office of Blind Spot pictures in Helsinki, Finland, in August 2011, he estimated that they communicated with 300,000 individuals on a weekly basis. The geographical distribution of the *Iron Sky* fans, however, posed real challenges and tensions when *Iron Sky* had its first theatrical release. A large number of fans, having followed the production for years, assumed that the premiere date denoted a global premiere date; that the movie would be accessible online from that point in time. From the *Berlinale* premiere in February 2012 and the next eight months, countless comments on *Iron Sky*'s Facebook page attest to fans' confusion about accessibility. Unsurprisingly, the fans did not fully understand the complicated set-up characterising formal distribution agreements, resulting in a modular and prolonged theatrical release. Below are illustrative comments from *Iron Sky* Facebook members posted on the *Iron Sky* Facebook wall:

> I need to demand AGAIN: guys, I like you, and want to see the *Iron Sky* badly... But you are doing it wrong. […] You won't satisfy the viewers, your fans because of the crappy distribution. […]. I can congratulate for you of your success. But I actually hate you, for the disrespect of all of your less-lucky fans...
>
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook, Facebook member post, 24 April 2012]

> People in the USA are fast becoming disenchanted after the massive hype and build up all over the net […]! You should have got your worldwide distribution sorted out before release, now I hardly care if I see it or not!
>
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook fan, 11 May 2012]

> It's ridiculous to see a crowd funded movie being distributed through official (major distributor) channels. It's like giving us fans a major kick in the crapper, because we got the chance to DIRECTLY support you by sending money, only to get screwed over without a release.
>
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook fan, 4 May 2012]

The tensions that arose as a direct result of the *Iron Sky* core team's distribution agreements were never directly addressed in the core team's online communications. The distribution

setup was central for the *Iron Sky* team to gain legitimacy, and for ensuring a large production budget; it formed a cornerstone in their pursuing of enacting a change in the way they were perceived positioned in the field of cultural production.

Other conflicts that arose during the production process were given equally little front-stage acknowledgement. In all the online *Iron Sky* communications, the core team was careful to maintain their 'front-stage' intact. Although they shared raw behind-the-scene material, and were frank about many issues, the level of openness had its boundaries – any aspect that might otherwise decrease their levels of symbolic and cultural capital was left out. Never in the production period did they, for example, admit to a lowering of their artistic autonomy as a result of the move towards the field of large-scale production. However, maintaining and operating with the values of their *Star Wreck* legacy, embedded in the Wreckamovie community, while taking on practices associated with the field of large scale production, for example funding and distribution practices, was difficult, and at times contentious. This, in fact, proved so problematic that the core team subsequently changed their production strategies; explicitly seeking to detach themselves from the influences and forces shaping the field of large-scale production. For their upcoming production, a sequel to *Iron Sky*, they have thus decided to rely on their fans and followers alone for financing the film. In May 2013, initiating the pre-production stage of the *Iron Sky* sequel, they launched a crowdfunding campaign to raise funds for the early development stages. On the campaign description on Indiegogo, the *Iron Sky* team admits to having lost out on autonomy when producing *Iron Sky*:

> The story of *Iron Sky* continues, and this time, we want to be dependent on nobody but our fans, friends and followers out there. With *Iron Sky*, we spent all of our energy in trying to finance the film, forced to be doing bad deals and compromising a lot. We had to tweak the story to meet the needs of the financiers but still fight to keep the integrity of the story intact […]. We don't want to end up in these discussions again […].
>
> [*Iron Sky* – The Coming Race, Indiegogo campaign, 16 May 2013]

On WAM, the *Iron Sky* sequel was launched on 14 July 2013. In two weeks, it attracted 46 WAM production members, who are actively contributing to production tasks at the time of writing. This recent development adds further evidence to the contentious tensions that emerge in the sphere between the two antagonistic models of production: that of peer production and that of the formal industry. The different value systems inherent in each, corresponds with Bourdieu's portrayal of the different drivers of the fields of small-scale and large-scale cultural production.

As we have seen, the *Iron Sky* production operated in a hybrid field, equally shaped by the forces of the restricted and large-scale field of cultural production. The next production, in contrast, is an amateur production, created on a shoe-string budget, and more dependent on the Wreckamovie community members to take active part in the production of the film: *Star Wreck 2π*.

4.3.2 *Star Wreck 2π*: Full twist now!



Figure 4.2: Star Wreck 2pi poster. Printed with permission from copyright holder

Star Wreck 2π: *Full twist now!* (2012, 53 mins.) is an amateur fan movie produced by the Swiss siblings Thierry and Arianne. As the title suggests, the movie builds upon the *Star Wreck* universe, initiated by Santtu, *Iron Sky* core member, with his first *Star Wreck* instalment back in the early 1990s. Thierry had been following the *Star Wreck* series since the early 2000s, and had been active on the *Star Wreck* forum ever since. When Thierry

and Arianne had finished their first fan-movie in 2008, called *Verhäxt and Ufgspiesst*, a *Buffy the Vampire* parody, it therefore seemed like a logical next choice for them to produce a *Star Wreck* story. In interviews and face-to-face meetings with Arianne and Thierry, they repeatedly underlined that audio-visual content production had been an integrated part of their upbringing:

> We have made movies, me and my brother, with Super Eight cameras since we were ten and twelve years old or something [...]. My father is working in image technology so we have [...] never had trouble getting the equipment, actually.
>
> [Arianne, Skype interview, 5 May 2012]

As such, Thierry and Arianne had experience with amateur filmmaking; and TV-production too. Since the mid-2000s, Thierry had regularly been producing shorter features for a local TV-station. Despite their yearlong engagement with filmmaking, however, they had both decided to pursue professional careers outside of the film and media industry. Arianne, now in her late 20s, completed a PhD in chemistry in Switzerland in 2010, and went on to do a postdoc at a reputable research institution in Germany. Thierry, now in his early 30s, had completed a degree in electronic engineering, and subsequently took up a job as a hardware engineer in a leading broadcast technology company in Norway. Their ambitious careers, unsurprisingly, influenced and prolonged the *Star Wreck 2π* production process; they were only able to work evenings and on weekends. Likewise, they had other hobbies to attend to: cooking, stage fighting, writing (Arianne had, for example, published two fantasy novels during the course of her PhD), and playing the organ, just to name a few. As the production of *Star Wreck 2π* progressed, though, they had to put most of their other hobbies on hold.

Being a loyal *Star Wreck* fan, Thierry had sought Santtu's permission before he and Arianne embarked on their own *Star Wreck* production. To that end, Thierry had travelled from Switzerland to Tampere, Finland, in 2008, to meet with the core *Star Wreck* creators to discuss this idea. It was endorsed, and Santtu even agreed to share the files containing the

spaceship models from the *Star Wreck* production, and further, to provide feedback on the manuscript once written. The original *Star Wreck* team asked in return that Thierry and Arianne used their soon-to-be launched WAM platform for the collaborative facilitation the production. As a result, *Star Wreck 2π* was one of the first external productions to be featured on the WAM platform; it was launched on 5 November 2008.

Being one of only a few available productions on WAM at the time, the *Star Wreck 2π* production soon attracted close to 80 members. Over the course of the four-year production period, 38 members contributed towards 44 different production tasks. In the pre-production phase, from November 2008 to May 2009, the seven tasks available for WAM production members to participate in related to plot, dialogue and story development. The production period, running from May 2009 until November 2010, saw a larger number of tasks created. By far the most active tasks related to the design of the spaceships of the story's antagonist species, and to the planning and recruitment of helpers for offline shootings. The offline shootings were, as was the case with the original *Star Wreck* V-VI movies, shot with human actors in front of a green screen cloth. A significant number of *Star Wreck 2π*'s amateur actors were recruited through WAM. The rest of the actors were recruited through local Swiss online listings, or were academic colleagues of Arianne.

It was a logistical challenge arranging the shootings, given that Arianne and Thierry lived in different countries. In the end, Arianne did the majority of the shootings on her own, on weekends, often with one actor at a time, in a factory building owned by their parents. She also used her university laboratory as a location on a number of occasions, with ad hoc recruitment of colleagues. For larger, more comprehensive shoots, both Arianne and Thierry attended. Because of the international composition of the amateur cast, *Star Wreck 2π* ended up being a multi-language film. All actors spoke in their mother tongue, which

included Swiss German, Italian, Norwegian, English and Finnish; the WAM production members later translated the subtitles into seven different languages.

The most important shootings, however, took place at the *Iron Sky* core creators' office, at Energia Production in Tampere, Finland. These shootings took place in October 2009, and again in November 2010. In addition to Arianne and Thierry, many of the WAM production members travelled great distances, at their own expense, in order to be part of the shootings; one member, for example, travelled from the Netherlands, another from the UK. That the core *Iron Sky* team allowed the members of this fan production to use their office as a film studio attests to the level of their appreciation of and engagement with fans and collaborators. The *Iron Sky* team even allowed the WAM members to spend the night in the office, so that they would not have to incur accommodation costs; this was a gesture made in their acknowledgement of the financial challenges of amateur productions. Most importantly, three of the original *Star Wreck* main cast members – Mikko, Oskari and Santtu – agreed to re-enact their old characters in minor roles in the movie. Further, after the shootings were completed, Antto, scriptwriter of the original *Star Wreck* VI, and later *Iron Sky* community manager, gave the *Star Wreck 2π* production members an extensive guided tour of the various regional locations used in the original *Star Wreck* films. The visit of the *Star Wreck 2π* production team was later featured on the official *Iron Sky* blog:

> Couple of weeks ago a group of fans from all over Europe gathered at the Energia offices in Tampere. They were here to shoot a fan film of *Star Wreck* called *Star Wreck 2π*. The shoot was arranged by Swiss fans Thierry and Arianne on Wreckamovie. Mikko and Santtu reprised their roles [...] and all of us from Energia had a lot of fun.
>
> [Antto, *Iron Sky* blog post, 16 October 2009]

Thierry and Arianne likewise shared adventures from offline shootings, and later, from their home editing suites, in regular behind-the-scene video updates. These were posted on their YouTube channel, the *Star Wreck 2π* Facebook page, as well as in the production's blog on

WAM. They named this series the *InsideOut*, inspired by the original *Star Wreck* core team's early making-of series (no longer available). The first episode of *Star Wreck* 2π: *InsideOut* was published in July 2009; episode number 22, reporting on the Norwegian premiere of the movie, concluded the series in November 2012.

Returning to the production process: Once the majority of the offline shootings were carried out, the post-production period began; it stretched from mid-2010 until late July 2012, just in time for *Star Wreck 2π* to premiere at the sci-fi convention *Finncon* in Tampere. During the post-production phase, the WAM production members continued to take part in production tasks. Their contributions included: the design of spaceship interiors; submissions of background images; designs of the *Star Wreck 2π* film poster; translations of subtitles; and constructive feedback on Thierry and Arianne's work-in-progress. Despite the production members' participation, however, Thierry and Arianne were somewhat disappointed about the level of WAM engagement and the quality of the WAM submissions. For two years, for the entire post-production phase, Arianne and Thierry would spend every evening after work, alone, in front of their screens, Skype open, working together through the pile of production jobs that needed attention. They would edit the footage, create 3D animations, render scenes, do the 2D composition, create sound effects, write subtitles, etc. When they initially embarked on the *Star Wreck 2π* production, Arianne and Thierry had imagined that the online community would provide extensive help. They envisioned that this production, because of its collaborative, networked nature, combined with the large pre-existing *Star Wreck* fan base, would be a much more manageable workload than their previous film. In an interview with Arianne during the late stages of the post-production period, she reflected on their initial expectations for working with an online community:

> When I first heard of WAM, I thought "Oh cool, I can just give all the nasty jobs away and somebody will do it", but at the end I was disappointed, because it's maybe 0.5% of the work that was done by others, so it's very, very little. […] There was all this talk: "Yeah, we have this open movie platform and we have

> 100 people. Everybody will help you". But it's absolutely not true, you will not get that much help.
>
> [Arianne, Skype interview, 11 May 2012]

Thierry expressed an equal amount of disappointment towards the end of the post-production phase. Although he underlined that everyone who had contributed to the production would be credited in the end credits, he reserved a special mention for himself and Arianne:

> Me and my sister did 99.9% of the work. So we decided only to put our own names in the opening credits.
>
> [Thierry, Skype interview, 11 May 2012]

From an outside perspective, it seems fair to claim that Thierry and Arianne had closely mirrored and imitated practices of people they admired, who had succeeded: the original *Star Wreck* creators. They had engaged with online crowds, created modular tasks for anyone to contribute to, documented and communicated their whereabouts in regular video updates. The subject matter, they assumed, would be of great interest to the many other *Star Wreck* fans out-there. Still, when they compared their experiences with those of the *Star Wreck* creators, it did not measure up. They were also becoming increasingly frustrated about the discrepancies between the level of engagement in the *Iron Sky* WAM production and their own. Thierry and Arianne, for example, created a task similar to one available in the *Iron Sky* WAM production, calling for input to a fictional newspaper. Where the *Iron Sky* production received 15 shots in a day, they did not receive as much as one single shot during the eight-month period the task was open. In his frustration, Thierry suggested to me in an interview, that not everyone was fully aware of just how much professional labour went into ensuring that the *Iron Sky* online followers kept active and engaged:

> *Iron Sky* is a big production. Basically they have two people working only on managing all the social media to create some fuss. The time we spend on social media is time spent not working on the movie.
>
> [Thierry, Skype interview, 11 May 2012]

In hindsight, Thierry realised that their expectations for the production had been fuelled by mainstream media accounts portraying the endless possibilities of networked technologies for the collaborative production of art. Their expectations were also influenced by the many portrayals of successful crowdfunding campaigns, raising financial capital for film producers and music artists alike. He also realised that the landscape, the field, had changed rapidly over the previous years:

> All this peer production, social, collaborative making …- in the media you only hear about the successes. Then people say, oh, ... we will also go online and we will make one million. In reality 99.9% fails. […] It's because... there's just too many now, because when *Star Wreck* VI came out there was only that one […] And then people see... they just see *Iron Sky*, they made €1 million online. But I think they would never have made that million if they didn't already have six million in funding.
>
> [Thierry, Skype interview, 11 May 2012]

In a later comment to an *Ice Guns* production update, he further adds:

> I'm still sceptical about crowdsourcing; it only seems to work, if you already have a name.
>
> [Thierry, *Ice Guns* WAM comment, 10 August 2012]

A feeling of accomplishment on Thierry and Arianne's part, however, soon dwarfed these disappointments described. It was a great honour and proud moment for Thierry and Arianne when they premiered *Star Wreck 2π* in front of a 150 person audience attending the sci-fi convention *Finncon* in Tampere, Finland, on 19 July 2012. *Star Wreck 2π* was officially featured in the convention programme, and they had been given a full two-hour slot for the Q&A session and the virgin screening of *Star Wreck 2π*. I spent three days with Arianne and Thierry during their Tampere stay, and assisted in promoting their convention slot, recruiting further audience members, recording the sessions, and introducing them. They were clearly very proud of their production, which was also met with standing ovations. As the icing on the cake, a handful of people who had been involved in the original *Star Wreck* also attended the premiere, and Santtu even made a couple of concluding remarks following

the official screening. Following the offline premiere, Arianne and Thierry made *Star Wreck 2π* freely available online. As of 11 September 2013, it has been watched more than 10,000 times on YouTube. Meanwhile, Arianne and Thierry continue to be active on WAM.

4.3.3 *Ice Guns*

Ice Guns 3D (2010) is a feature length post-apocalyptic spaghetti western; the first production to successfully complete all production stages on the Wreckamovie platform. Gerhard, a Berlin-based German digital special effect producer in his early 30s, initiated the production on Wreckamovie in March 2009. Working professionally with film directors in post-production in his everyday life, Gerhard was growing increasingly dissatisfied with his lack of influence on the final film products. In parallel, he witnessed an increase in the number of large-scale productions that relied entirely on green screen technologies for the creation of their art direction and film sets. In particular, movies such as *Sin City* (2005) ignited his belief that it would be possible for him to create a visually engaging movie on a modest budget.

Prior to launching the production on Wreckamovie, Gerhard had teamed up with two long-term friends, who were also working professionally in the post-production industry in Berlin. Acknowledging that their primary competencies lay in the visual domain rather than in the storytelling department, they decided to draw heavily on an existing screenplay. Gerhard and his team had deliberately chosen this source of inspiration for one particular reason: it was listed as being in the public domain on various websites. They were therefore confident that they were free to build upon its narrative and dialogue without infringing on any copyrights. Initially, Gerhard did not have great expectations for the overall quality of *Ice Guns*: "when we started out we thought, jahh, this is going to be a crappy hobby production" [Gerhard, Skype audio interview, 11 July 2011]. Nevertheless, the level of

ambition for the *Ice Guns* production soon began to grow exponentially, propelled by the support of the Wreckamovie community, in combination with an increasingly professional cast of actors. The level of production support provided by WAM members was accelerated by Gerhard's own extensive engagement with the WAM community at large.

From its Wreckamovie launch, the *Ice Guns* production quickly became very active. By 22 April 2009, less than two months into its venture, it was featured as the most productive production on the Wreckamovie front page. In the pre-production phase, running from March to June 2009, there were only a few tasks available in the *Ice Guns* production for Wreckamovie production members to participate in. These tasks related to the story development, particularly to potential ways of accounting for the environmental and political causes of the post-apocalyptic ice age characterizing *Ice Guns*'s universe. In the pre-production period, the online activity was thus predominantly upheld by the core *Ice Guns* team's communications on auditioning and casting progress, and the comments and interactions these updates prompted amongst production members. Similar patterns characterize the even shorter production period. The *Ice Guns* footage was shot over a period of just 25 days with professional actors in front of a green screen in a studio in Berlin in June 2009. The post-production phase, in contrast, took twelve months to complete, and ran from July 2009 to July 2010: First came the editing of the studio shot footage, the green screen material; next came the composing of backgrounds and layers, replacing the green screen backgrounds; followed by the production of various special effects and 3D models; sound design; colour-grading; and from early 2010, the manual composing of a 3D version of *Ice Guns*.

The post-production phase marked a period in which a high number of tasks were made available for the *Ice Guns* WAM production members to contribute to. During this period, the production member base grew from 16 individuals to 100+, of which 64 members gained

karma points by means of their active participation in the *Ice Guns* production. In other words, an unusually large percentage of members actively took part by contributing to or commenting on shots or production team updates. Member contributions to the 24 *Ice Guns* production tasks included the production and submission of photographs for background imagery; the design, animation and rendering of snow particles for use in image layering; the designing of the official *Ice Guns* film poster; the authoring of taglines, and on-going marketing advice. The work was substantial, and in some cases even led to individuals' transitions from being amateurs to becoming integrated professionals.

In June 2010, *Ice Guns* premiered. Like the *Star Wreck* creators before them, the *Ice Guns* team had decided on a modular distribution strategy. *Ice Guns* was thus first shown offline at a film festival, the *21st International Emden Film Festival* in Germany. The following month, it had its Finnish premiere at *Finncon* in Jyväskylä, hosting the Wreckamovie Festival organized by active community members. In August 2010, Gerhard himself travelled to Finland to screen *Ice Guns* at the technology convention Assembly in Helsinki (one of the *Star Wreck* creators' recurring presentation venues). Gerhard had been invited to give a talk on *Ice Guns*'s production process together with Luukas and Tuukka, two Finns he had come to meet and collaborate with through Wreckamovie. In parallel, the core *Ice Guns* team had submitted the movie to various other festivals and competitions. By late August 2010, this effort had already paid off: *Ice Guns* won its first prize, "Best International Film", at *The Yellow Fever International Film Festival* in Dublin, Ireland. The distribution phase was thus off to a great start, yielding promise for the positive audience reception of *Ice Guns*. The second leg of the distribution phase, starting in November 2010, saw *Ice Guns* released for free online on YouTube, VODO and other online hosting services. As the quotes below attest, spirits were high in these early days of the distribution stage - at this stage, the core team was blissfully unaware of the struggles they would be facing over the coming 12 months:

> 25,000 downloads on Vodo in just 24 hours - mindblowing 8D
>
> [*Ice Guns*, Tweet, 13 November 2010]

> Nice, 50,000 torrent downloads already!
>
> [*Ice Guns*, Facebook post, 13 November 2010]

> Yay, 100.000 downloads on VODO already! Next stop: a quarter million - keep spreading the word, people :D
>
> [*Ice Guns*, Facebook post, 22 November 2010]

> We've reached 100.000 views on YouTube! Put the almost 150.000 Vodo downloads on top and it's a quarter million - nice going, people!
>
> [*Ice Guns*, Facebook post, 15 December 2010]

The *Ice Guns* team continued to share their experiences related to their online distribution campaigns. Marking the half-year online distribution anniversary, the *Ice Guns* core team thus posted details about their financial gains and download counts. They did so in order to promote transparency: "While most people are kinda secretive about actual business figures from their web 2.0 endeavours, we totally let our pants down and talk in detail about our earnings and statistics." [Gerhard, *Ice Guns*, WAM blog post, 4 May 2011]. What at this point is slowly becoming evident, however, is that the team is experiencing severe difficulties in raising the 25,000 Euros they had put into making the movie. As the production had grown more and more ambitious, and the stakes arisen equally, the core team had spent all their savings on production related costs. Despite calling in all favours possible from professional offline contacts (for example when loaning equipment), and although everyone involved in the production on- and offline had worked for free, the core team had had to finance, for example, the purchasing of large green screen cloths; studio hiring; catering for the actors; and non-negligible amount of hard-drive storage. Making back those 25,000 Euros was an issue of ensuring sustainability, of allowing them to proceed with their next production, Vampire Princess 3D. The core *Ice Guns* team had already launched this new production on Wreckamovie in July 2010, coinciding with *Ice Guns*' offline premiere. As it were, they were

ready to move on to the next production, new adventures. Reflecting on this financial difficulty hindering them from pursuing their next production, Gerhard explained in August 2012:

> The intention was never to get rich, just to put ourselves on the map and hopefully find fellow-minded people to start the next production right away - the budget for that, we thought, would be the 25K that went into *Ice Guns* - because we surely would make that back. I mean come on, you've heard about all those free movies that made $1000s through donations and crowd funding, right?
>
> [Gerhard, *Ice Guns* WAM blog post, 9 August 2012]

The various strategies that went into trying to raise the 25,000 Euros will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, addressing the economies of WAM productions (RQ2). Here, to focus on the tensions between the worlds and fields of the WAM productions, I will only discuss the outcome of the attempts at regaining their invested savings of 25,000 Euros.

After eight months of focused *Ice Guns* online distribution and campaign efforts, the core team had only raised a fraction of their financial goal. This matter was having a deleterious influence on the relationship between the core creators, and financially impacted on their day-to-day lives. Increasingly frustrated that they were not able to proceed career-wise by embarking on their next production, long drained of any enthusiasm for *Ice Guns*, they decided to opt for a traditional distribution model. Referring to the *Star Wreck* VI distribution agreements with Universal Pictures and Revolver Entertainment, the *Ice Guns* core team had envisioned that they would be able to sell the distribution rights of *Ice Guns* 3D; after all, they had only made lower resolution and non-3D versions available online. They were therefore confident that fans would want to own a higher quality DVD version, just as they themselves bought 3D or Blue-Ray DVD versions of films they liked. The professional distribution companies, however, refused to enter into contractual agreements as long as *Ice Guns* was freely available online: “There were a lot of interested parties, but whenever they heard the film was already on the web, the backed out, claiming it was

worthless now. Welcome to the age of the internet, folks!" [Gerhard, *Ice Guns* WAM blog post, 9 August 2012].

The decision-making process resulting in the core team to ultimately opt for a traditional distribution model was taking place back-stage, without any involvement of the online community. Moreover, the decision was never publically communicated. Up until the decision of the professional distribution strategy was made, the *Ice Guns* production had been continuously active on Wreckamovie with tasks relating to, for example, ongoing PR, marketing, and subtitle translation. Likewise, the production saw activity generated from blog posts and updates from the core creators. When the decision to turn to the professional industry had been made back-stage, the WAM production activity stalled; it became entirely silent. The last production blog post, published on 4 July 2011, celebrated that *Ice Guns* had reached 300,000 views on YouTube, and that it had been accepted at the Almeria Western Festival later that year. Contrastingly, in an email 10 days after the publishing of this celebratory blog post on WAM, Gerhard described a grave production crisis taking place back-stage:

> On the *Ice Guns* front, there has been a major change yesterday […]. The quasi-failure of the crowd funding campaign has again strained our belief in the power of the web 2.0 quite a bit, so we thought we'd probably have to switch to the classical way of film selling [..]. We contacted the last remaining companies that have an interest in *Ice Guns* and […] they were insistent on the fact that the film can't be on YouTube […]. As always, I think these so-called professionals are terribly wrong, but for now, we decided that we had to abide. […] So we banned *Ice Guns* for most YouTube regions which is of course a very sad step to take. Well. It really ruined the whole day for me today, believe me =/
>
> [Gerhard, email interview, 15 July 2011]

Gerhard was split between wanting to embrace a *Star Wreck*-inspired model of production, and finding a sustainable way of ensuring his career progression, as well as ensuring basic day-to-day financial survival. Having exhausted all the networked, participatory and

collaborative strategies they could come up with, the core *Ice Guns* team expressed sincere regret that they feet forced into abiding by the traditional industry model, clashing with the openness of their production process, and their initial vision of contributing materially to free culture ideologies. As the quote above suggests, *Ice Guns* was now taken down from various hosting sites. I further observed that the external *Ice Guns* website was rearranged and most content deleted in that period, July-August 2011. In the months following the decision to opt for a traditional distribution model, I emailed regularly with Gerhard. The correspondence made it evident that this decision was weighing heavily on him, just as the lack of savings was a real challenge:

> As a freelancer, I pretty much have to take everything I can get... especially now, since my former employer is bankrupt and all my ex-colleagues will probably start flooding the local employment market starting September 1st =/
>
> [Gerhard, email interview, 7 August 2011]

A further low had still to come, though. In late August 2011, it dawned on the core team that their direct inspiration source, the public domain content guiding *Ice Guns*' storyline and dialogue, was anything but. In early September, Gerhard explained in an email:

> The last two weeks have been the most horrible (I think) in the whole life of *Ice Guns*. We had found a sales agent, and he swiftly made a deal with a German company, to pay us 20.500€ for the German distribution rights, excluding TV! When all that was left to do was to actually sign the papers, I made a kind of horrible discovery... against my belief that the screenplay we borrowed from is public domain world-wide, it turned out to be public domain only in the USA! And even worse, the rights to the film seem to belong to [named media mogul]!
>
> [Gerhard, email interview, 4 September 2011]

Somewhat surprisingly though, a couple of months later, the issue is resolved when Gerhard's sales agent found a distribution company willing to bear the risk. The core team opted for this solution, because, as Gerhard explained: "it feels like a rip-off, but I'm really fed up with all this business and I'm happy if there is at last some final conclusion. Putting

the film out for free would have meant another round of online promotions and I really have enough of *Ice Guns*" [Gerhard, email interview, 6 December 2011].

As indicated earlier, the decision to enter into distribution agreements with established industry players was never publicly communicated. For a year, from late July 2011 until late July 2012, no new content was published in the *Ice Guns* production on WAM. As such, everyone had moved on to new ventures, no questions asked. During this period, Gerhard's next project *Vampire Princess* had stalled, but he had initiated a new project, *Solar System 3D*, in late 2011, and continued to actively take part in other Wreckamovie member's productions. In August 2012, however, Gerhard returned to the *Ice Guns* production. When regular engagement was abandoned, a range of the production tasks were still listed as open; inviting contributions from WAM members. A newcomer had thus responded to a task, unaware that it was long overdue. This prompted Gerhard to close open production tasks, and reflect in public on the *Ice Guns* production and distribution process in task-closing comments and in a blog post. The post made it clear that distribution matters were now out of the hands of the core team, and that the *Ice Guns* DVDs had yet to be published. When reflecting on the process, Gerhard did not steer away from sensitive and problematic aspects. He, for example, wrote:

> Like the worst of all; I feel really bad for [...] the people who donated towards the crowdfunding and are still waiting on their rewards. But there's really not much I can do about that now. It's a really fucked-up situation.
>
> [Gerhard, *Ice Guns*, WAM blog post, 9 August 2012]

Gerhard's reflections on the production process further highlight some of the tensions involved in trying to enact positional changes within the field of cultural production. During the process of creating *Ice Guns*, ambitions grew. It became the goal to produce a professional-like quality movie; for the core team to position themselves within the field of

large-scale cultural production as fully fledged members. In other words, it had become the ambition for *Ice Guns* to challenge Hollywood, the vision inscribed by the WAM developers into the WAM community norms. Attempting to enact this change, however, came with a cost. The high-quality production look and feel, combined with a professional-looking website and well-produced behind-the scene videos, etc., inadvertently invited audiences to apply evaluation criteria corresponding with expectations for large-budget, traditionally produced content.

> Practically since day 1 of the release on VODO, the film appeared on all kinds of torrent sites with the tagline "Hollywood movie *Ice Guns* DVD rip". So people downloaded the 700MB, expected a blockbuster and instead got "the worst movie I've ever seen". Bummer.
>
> [Gerhard, *Ice Guns* WAM blog post, 9 August 2012]

> I'm getting the feeling that *Ice Guns* might seem a little "too professional" so people don't get that it's a "fan made" production almost like *Star Wreck*. Reading how aggressively some people are badmouthing the film, I really have no other explanation ^_^
>
> [Gerhard, *Ice Guns* WAM blog, 7 December 2010]

The following audience comment illustrates the kind of criticisms that were regularly posted on *Ice Guns*-related online hosting sites, such as YouTube and VODO, in the period it was available online:

> I found this production on VODO. I don't usually post on blogs but I had to comment on this one. Are you f**king serious? A plagiarised script and story line, self admitted use of public domain material to extend your production, absolutely terrible acting and filming, no continuity or original ideas.... Need I continue?
>
> [*Ice Guns* audience comment, 27 July 2010]

The harshness of some online audiences' comments stands in stark contrast with the continuously supportive appreciation expressed by WAM community and *Ice Guns* members. When the *Ice Guns* production became active again in August 2012, as a result of Gerhard's public reflections, members were quick in responding and providing

unconditional support. The following comment is thus indicative of the perception of the *Ice Guns* WAM members:

> I believe I may be speaking in the name of many other friends and fans when I wish to convey not only my appreciation, but also a big THANK YOU. Not only for your work on the movie and effort on WAM, but also for being willing to share so much information about your less pleasant whereabouts without whining and being strong enough to keep going one way or another no matter what huge wall you may have bumped against. :)
>
> [Valentina, *Ice Guns* member, 10 August 2012]

In November 2012, the *Ice Guns* production came full circle when the professionally distributed *Ice Guns* DVDs were made available for audiences to purchase in Germany and the Benelux countries. This development marked the final end of the *Ice Guns* production process, providing closure for everyone involved, and enabling the core team to fulfil the promises they had made to the smaller number of crowdfunding contributors. In the last blog post ever published in the *Ice Guns* production on WAM (as per July 2013), Gerhard wrote:

> […] we can finally send out the discs to the people who paid for them in our crowdfunding campaign. So everyone will have theirs for Christmas, isn't that nice ^_^ […] ps: Oh, and we don't get any money from disc sales... so don't bother buying them :P
>
> [Gerhard, *Ice Guns* WAM blog post, 22 November 2012]

Despite this overall happy ending, Gerhard was left with a bittersweet lingering feeling. Later email communication made it clear that the struggles he experienced with the *Ice Guns* production continued to haunt him. The lessons he learned made him slightly change his attitude towards participatory cultures, and also resulted in some changes of practices in his subsequent WAM production engagements; some of these will be discussed in the following section on *Solar System*. The blue note of Gerhard's memory should, however, be weighted against more objective success criteria. By most accounts, the *Ice Guns* production is remarkable. It was initiated as a low-ambition hobby project by a small group of visual effect artists, but grew in scope and ambition, not least because of its embedding in the

Wreckamovie community. Equally impressive was the level and extent of the sustained engagement of a large number of volunteers, of WAM production members, motivated by the genuine and constructive feedback they received from the more professional core team, when submitting content. These aspects will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

4.3.4 Solar System 3D



Figure 4.3: Solar System 3D *poster. Printed with permission from copyright holder*

Solar System 3D (SS3D) is a documentary about the solar system in four parts. It is, however, set in the year 2050 to allow for a more engaging narration of the story. The narrator is an astronaut based in an orbiting space station, and he is aided by a large number of land-going space rovers, called NOMADs, who are installed on all planets. Gerhard launched the production on WAM on 7 November 2011; it was explicitly initiated as a way of mitigating the lack of funds raised through the *Ice Guns* production, as the production's WAM synopsis underlined:

> Since we weren't able to get a satisfactory budget for Vampire Princess 3D through *Ice Guns*, we have started this intermediate project. So the goal - apart from having a lot of fun doing this production - is to gain more experience and in the best case, money for the Vampyre Princess.
>
> [SS3D WAM synopsis description, 7 November 2011]

The SS3D production is characterised by the leveraging of open licence content. Producing a high-quality educational production about space either requires access to existing material or very large production budgets. For SS3D, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) large, online open-access digital library of multimedia content was

invaluable. NASA allows the free use of any content in their large repository, including commercial use. The *Solar System* production is primarily composed of NASA produced images of space, planets and other astronomical objects. It was also initially one of NASA's high-resolution photos of a nebula, an interstellar dust cloud, which provided the inspiration for SS3D in the first place. Gerhard explained:

> I saw a screensaver showing Nebula images from NASA. […] I didn't know so many pictures from so many different nebulas existed. I thought these must be among the most beautiful things that exist in the universe. […] I realised that 3D can make extremely beautiful images even a tad more fascinating. So I […] thought, I should try and make those Nebulas into 3D images.
>
> [Gerhard, email interview, 2 July 2012]

The production process of SS3D was impressively short. It took a mere eight months from when the production was launched, still in the pre-production phase, until the final four episodes were edited, including GCI and effects, in mid-July 2012. The pre-production and production stages overlapped somewhat, attesting to the rapidness of the overall production process. On WAM, the production was very active throughout the period. Despite the production having less than 30 members, they were so active that *Solar System* by late February 2012 was the most active production on WAM. The entire production process was focused and progressive. This is mirrored in the relatively low number of tasks available for the members to participate in; over the course of the production period, a total of ten tasks were made available. These tasks, however, generated a large range of diverse content that fed directly into the production. The tasks, for example, asked for submissions of members' favourite planetary features (for improving the first draft of the scripts); for the modelling of the spaceship interiors; for Photoshop-cleaning of NASA images; for script doctoring of the four episodes; and for the composing of music for the SS3D sound track. The focused nature of the production also meant that the production was not promoted outside of the WAM platform. In contrast to the other productions described, *Solar System* did not have a Facebook page, YouTube presence, IMDb listing or similar.

Solar System also stood out from the other three productions in the way it directly built on the WAM community, and generated synergies between existing WAM productions. Because of Gerhard's sustained and deep engagement with the WAM community, he was aware that other productions had created content that might be re-usable for the SS3D production. One of these productions was *To Mars*, an animation short-film about a land-going space rover that was left abandoned on the planet Mars. The *To Mars* production had experienced difficulties in progressing in a timely manner. The production leader, Aleksi, a Finn in his late 20s, had had to put this and another production, *Materia 2*, on hold because it conflicted with his offline work and every-day life engagements. When I met with Aleksi in August 2011, he showed me his extensive library of stories, high-quality drawings, and 2D and 3D models; it was clear that he was a highly skilled artist. Amongst the items he was working on at the time was the space rover that was intended to feature in *To Mars*, the NOMAD (see Figure 4.5). Aleksi had earlier that year created a task on WAM asking for NOMAD design input from *To Mars* production members. In response to this call, the active WAM member, Ferenc, had submitted a detailed design specification for NOMAD (see Figure 4.4). In an email interview with Ferenc in late June 2012, he highlighted his NOMAD design specification as one of the WAM contributions he was most proud of. Aleksi was equally pleased:

> Actually I was amazed. I don't have any idea how long he [Ferenc] did spend on it but I think it was very fast in terms of putting a task and getting a response. And if you look, this is amazingly detailed. He has named every last bit of it. I only wanted like an image, but he went quite far with this. This actually helps out because giving like a purpose for all the things helps a lot while modelling them, giving them the necessary small things.
>
> [Aleksi, interview, 16 August 2011]

By the time Gerhard in November 2011 approached Aleksi to suggest that their productions collaborate, the *To Mars* production had stalled, and had officially been put on hold on WAM. For Aleksi, this suggestion for collaboration thus reignited his creative engagement; it

prompted him produce a finished model of NOMAD (see Figure 4.6). In an interview with Aleksi in May 2012, he underlined how the collaboration with *Solar System* had given him renewed motivation, and equally aided him in progressing on his work on *To Mars* production:

> It was very surprising turn of events with Gerhard coming in, and so that kind of boosted it [*To Mars*] a lot. […] It of course helps *To Mars* become more complete as the models have to progress, and have to work.
>
> [Aleksi, Skype interview, 25 May 2012]

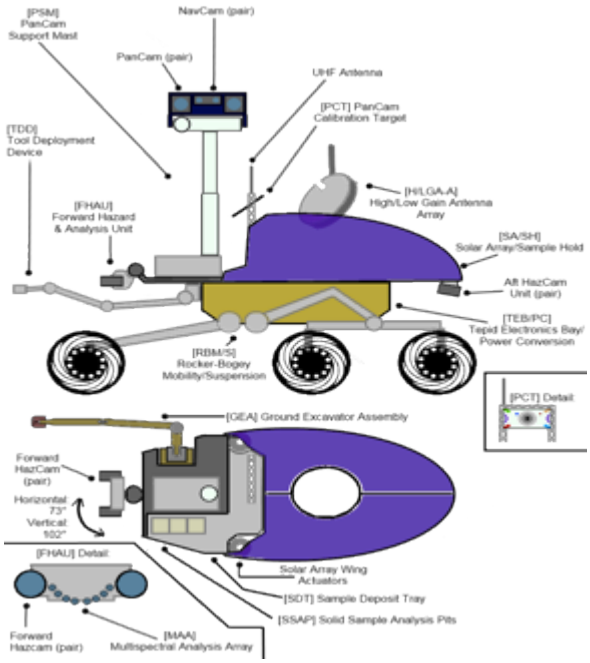


Figure 4.4: NOMAD design submitted to the To Mars *WAM production by member Ferenc (CC BY licence).*

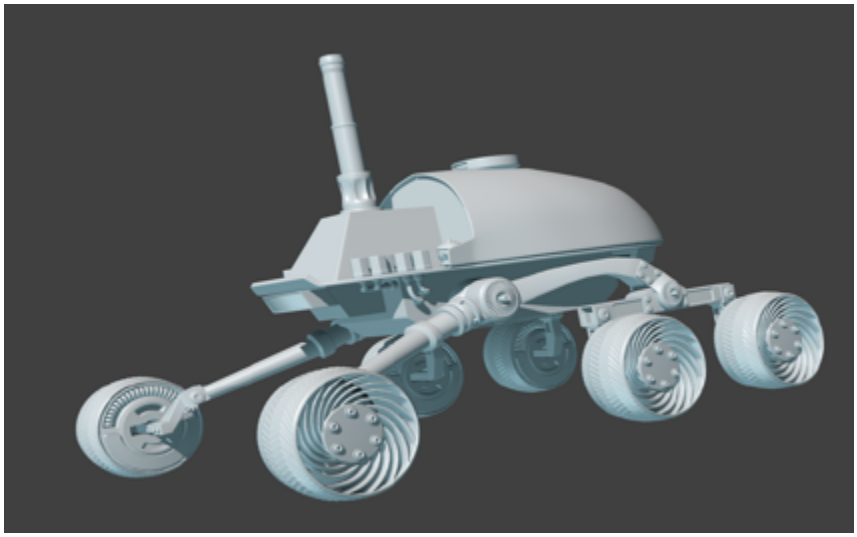


Figure 4.5: Aleksi's early work-in-progress on the NOMAD model (printed with permission)

It was satisfying for Aleksi to finish his NOMAD model, and it was invaluable for the progression of the *Solar System* production that this collaboration was successfully established. From February 2012 onwards, NOMAD became the mascot of the *Solar System* production. On WAM, Gerhard for example published postcards from NOMAD to the SS3D production members, as a way of illustrating the production progress (see Figure 4.7).

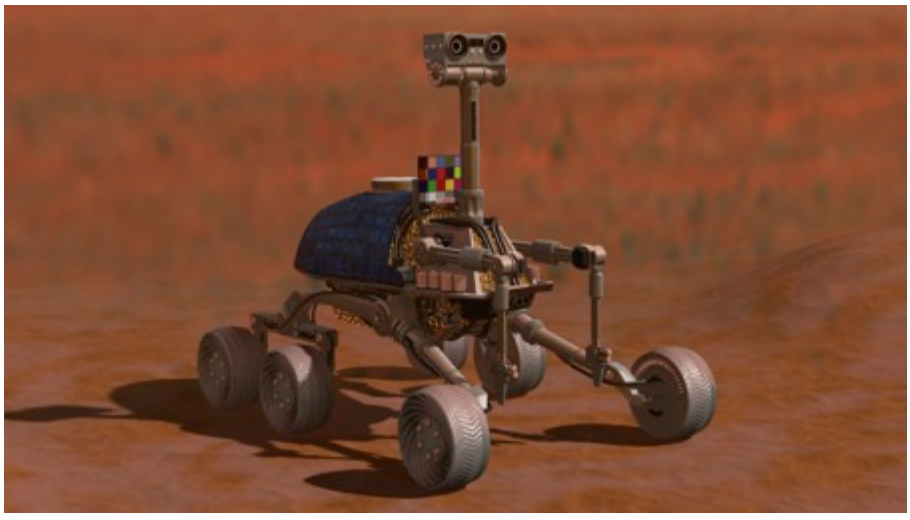


Figure 4.6 Aleksi's finished NOMAD model (printed with permission)

The evolution of the NOMAD character and model is just one example of how the SS3D production explicitly sought to harness its embedding in the larger community and network

of WAM productions. Additionally, Gerhard, for example, also reached out to the core producers of another WAM facilitated production, the web-series *Mission Backup Earth*. The outcome was that the production leaders of *Mission Backup Earth* provided models for *Solar System*'s space ship interiors. Likewise, other SS3D members, on their own initiative, provided links to potentially reusable content they have created in response to other WAM productions' tasks. These examples of synergies between individual productions illustrate that the WAM productions are not compartmentalised. Rather, they are embedded within a community of sharers, and further, in actively seeking collaboration between the productions, all partners may gain.



Figure 4.7: NOMAD postcard posted by Gerhard on WAM; printed with permission from copyright holder

Other patterns that set *Solar System 3D* apart from the other productions relate to the feedback and interaction practices unfolding between the core creator, Gerhard, and the ordinary production members. The majority of the ordinary production members had worked with Gerhard before in the context of other WAM productions. One of the SS3D members, Luukas, had for example played a crucial role in the production of *Ice Guns*, and had, as the direct outcome of his engagement, made the transition from being an amateur to becoming a professional 3D modeller (these developments will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, analysing WAM labour). Others, such as Thierry, the director of *Star Wreck 2π*, had meanwhile embarked on a new joint production with Gerhard, a

documentary production that would build on Thierry's extensive library of footages of Norwegian landscapes and Gerhard's 3D image-making skills. In other words: although new, less experienced WAM members also took active part in the creation of *Solar System*, the member base was primarily constituted by individuals who had already established collaborative practices. These pre-established relationships, combined with the ordinary members' increased professionalism, created an environment of mutual recognition. The ordinary members thus provided the same level of feedback on Gerhard's work-in-progress as he would on members' content submissions. By way of example, the below snippets portray illustrative feedback to a rendered image of the planet Neptune and its surroundings, shared by Gerhard in a production update:

> As an astronomy hobbyist & vfx artist must say the back lit part of Neptune does not work for me here. As normally the back side should be completely dark, now it feels more like Neptune is a small sphere floating on the surface of Triton from which it gets the additional bounced light to the back side too.
>
> [Luukas, SS3D WAM blog comment, 27 January 2012]

> […] the thing is a bit more complicated since the orbital plane is tilted by 30° compared to the Neptune equator, and Neptune is tilted by 28° compared to the ecliptic, which means that Triton axis is tilted by nearly 60° . (Earth is 23°)
>
> [Thierry, SSD3 WAM blog comment, 27 January 2012]

As indicated in the *Solar System* production synopsis, Gerhard was hoping to be able to gain financially from the production. Disappointed by the *Ice Guns* experiences, he did not make any promise that the final production would be freely available online. Doing so, he had learnt, would destroy any chances of a profitable distribution agreement. Since the majority of the SS3D production members were familiar with Gerhard's experiences, and sympathised with him, there were no objections raised. Accordingly, when Gerhard mid-way through the production period announced that he (and his offline *Ice Guns* collaborators) have landed a profitable distribution agreement, it only increased the

production members' motivation and active engagement. Gerhard was frank about the set-up:

> All right guys, time to step it up a couple notches - we found a company who are very interested to bring SS3D into stores - at least in Germany! Of course it's not guaranteed that it will make any money - but if it does, we get a 50% share and I think the fact alone that we don't have to take any risk ourselves is pretty sweet! So the only thing that stands between us and getting a 3D-Blu-ray of *Solar System 3D* into our sweaty hands is a shitload of work!
>
> [Gerhard, SS3D WAM blog, 25 April 2012]

Aided by the WAM members, and working around the clock offline, Gerhard managed to get the production done by late July 2012. In addition to his responsive engagement in tasks and discussions, Gerhard posted regular production updates. These included reports on the green screen studio shoots, filming the astronaut's dialogue, and the editing progress. In a concluding blog post, Gerhard announced that the job was done, and that he expected the DVDs to be out a couple of months later. The production members were quick in celebrating the milestone:

> Congratulations! I am excited to hear, that it has reached that level so quickly. Keep up the good work.
>
> Awesome! I can't wait to see it.
>
> Oi, great news. Excited to see final product.
>
> Great work everyone who was involved!
>
> [SS3D members, WAM blog post comments, 16-24 July 2012]

After this, the SS3D production was entirely silent on WAM for a year. Backstage, things were happening, though. Gerhard had found an additional production company that was interested in distributing *Solar System* – on the condition that it was quite extensively revised. The deal included a small advance-payment, which allowed Gerhard to professionally engage a number of people in the revision process. Mirroring the increased professionalization of a number of the WAM production members, Gerhard hired Finnish WAM members Aleksi and Luukas to carry out some of the work. By July 2013, however, a

full year after *Solar System* was proclaimed finished, the DVDs had still to be published, and Gerhard had still to receive any proceeds. The publishing of the DVDs remains the responsibility of the distribution company. Anything SS3D-related is thus long out of the hands and influence of Gerhard. Breaking the silence, Gerhard wrote in a, for the time being, concluding SS3D WAM blog post:

> I really hope that whatever has become of SS3D will be released on 3D Blu-ray before Christmas, and you will all be happy to see your names in the end credits, in spite of the fact that most of the original work had to be cut. But I think it will still be pretty cool.
>
> [Gerhard, SS3D WAM blog post, 31 July 2013]

At the time of writing, it thus remains uncertain what will become of the *Solar System* production; the production process has yet to come full circle.

4.4 Summary of findings

This chapter set out to draw the emerging contours of the world and fields of WAM and its productions. The analysis of the WAM community and production cases has provided rich evidence of the existence of a range of common properties of the worlds and fields across cases. To address the concept of 'worlds' first: The worlds of WAM productions are to a large extent bounded, socio-technically as well as in virtues, by the WAM platform. A platform steered by a certain set of values, particularly those of sharing and collaborating, and a specific vision: to challenge and transform the production model of the established film industry. These values and this vision transcend the production processes uniformly, allowing for anyone to become part of the worlds on a self-selected basis. The inhabitants of the worlds actively help and support each other; they promote each other's productions, and offer their labour when specific tasks need attention. Across the board, the worlds are characterised by high levels of communication of process. Because of the open nature of the productions, communication is key for sustaining participation and for strengthening

community cohesion. As we saw with *Iron Sky*, *Ice Guns* and *Solar System* 3D, however, the communication is filtered. For *Iron Sky* in particular, communication was restricted in order to protect their accrued symbolic capital; capital enabling the core team to attract and sustain funding.

The worlds are not without tensions, though. These tensions predominantly arise from a preoccupation with quantification. The socio-technical system promotes quantification through its karma points system; likewise, it awards high levels of shots and comments by giving active productions more visibility, e.g. on the WAM landing page. Although rarely explicitly addressed, many WAM members, including the WAM developers, perceive of the karma point system as a measure of social capital. The preoccupation with quantification also transpires from the widespread practice of perceiving of view counts, number of fans, production members, etc., as a measure of cultural capital. Further, the worlds, despite their emphasis on community, collective goals and solidarity, display competitiveness. The WAM productions, intertwined by member compositions and embedded within the same community, measure themselves against each other. These explicit benchmarking exercises create tensions, pointing to the uneven distribution of social, cultural, symbolic and financial capital amongst WAM community members. Why could the *Star Wreck 2π* creators not attract submissions to a task identical to a task offered in the *Iron Sky* production? Why was it impossible for the *Ice Guns* producers to convert social and cultural capital into financial capital, when the *Iron Sky* team had successfully managed to?

As we have seen, tensions arise uniformly when the fields of WAM productions intersect with the field of large-scale production, with the formal film industry. Across the cases of *Iron Sky*, *Ice Guns* and *Solar System*, the motivations behind initiating these cross-overs, and the strategies employed, remained the same: to gain access to financial capital by selling distribution rights. For *Iron Sky*, this decision to opt for traditional distribution agreements

was taken at a very early stage of the six-year long production period. It was motivated by their desire to gain legitimacy. However, years later, when *Iron Sky* had premiered, the core team increasingly began acknowledging the artistic cost of legitimacy in the field of large-scale cultural production: the decrease of autonomy. Further, the *Iron Sky* teams' extensive online communities and fans, who had been following the production process for years, realised late what the consequences of the core teams' collisions with the formal industry were. That a theatrical release entailed a modular and prolonged premiering of *Iron Sky*; that it excluded the possibility of a legal online screening or download. For *Ice Guns*, the cross-over of fields was not initiated lightly. The core creators felt forced into obeying to the value chain of the large-scale field of cultural production when they were not able to convert their alternative capital into financial capital. This experience in return led them to loose faith in the ability of the WAM field to enable financial sustainability.

In sum, this chapter has examined key characteristics of the worlds and fields of the WAM community and the four production cases, *Iron Sky*, *Star Wreck 2π*, *Ice Guns*, and Solar System. The chapter presented findings that demonstrated that the main struggles arising in the WAM productions processes primarily related to the antagonistic forces between two competing production models, that of peer production and that of the established film industry. Further, the analysis illustrated that the WAM production cases, despite forming part of a shared and collaboratively oriented art world, imbued differentiated levels of alternative capital. This uneven distribution of alternative capital within the WAM art world, we likewise saw, in return caused further tensions, resulting in some of the WAM producers to question the sustainability and feasibility of the production model actively promoted by the *Iron Sky* team, WAM platform owners and community managers.

Chapter 5
Conventions and perceptions of WAM labour

5.1 Introduction

Many contemporary theorists argue that the boundaries between professional and amateur cultural producers are increasingly blurring in the contemporary networked environment, as discussed in Chapter 1. This blurring of boundaries is recognized in policy discourses as well as in scholarly literature (e.g. Bauwens, 2009b; Castells, 2009; Lessig, 2008; Meyer, 2010; Schafer, 2011). Bourdieu's theory of cultural production, however, does not reflect this possibility: The non-professionals are divorced from the field of cultural production (c.f. Bourdieu, 1996, p. 124). This dichotomous framing of the professionals and non-professionals is also present in Benkler's work. His conceptualization of commons-based peer production is intrinsically defined on the basis of the dichotomy of professionals and amateurs. Peer production efforts are described as constellations of hierarchy-free communities of self-selected, geographically distributed volunteers working towards a shared goal. To move beyond this binary framing of labour, it is necessary to develop further refined categorizations of labour. Becker's Art World framework can serve to inform an approach to this. His key determining criteria applied in the categorization of artistic labour are not based on a distinguishing between non-professional and professional *per se,* but on the *orientation* of the individual workers. These orientations are characterized by their

shared conventions guiding the division of labour. Bearing this in mind, this chapter addresses the first research question posed under research theme two:

Research theme 2: The division of labour in WAM peer productions

RQ2: Which conventions guide the division of labour, and how are these conceptualized and perceived?

5.2 Labour conventions and perceptions shaped by orientations

To begin the analysis of the emerging conventions guiding the division of labour in the WAM productions, it is valuable to briefly revisit relevant aspects of Becker's Art World framework. A key aspect of Becker's descriptions of the Art World framework relates to the participating workers' orientations. Anyone who takes part in the production of a cultural artefact is a *de facto* integrated professional; this integrated professional is working within a set of established conventions guiding their practices as well as the material and aesthetic characteristic of the cultural artefact produced. The workers are part of this art world, which is oriented towards members of similar art worlds. In other words: The integrated professionals are intentionally maintaining their relationship with the wider art worlds through their labour activities. The integrated professionals are thus working towards producing artefacts that will form part of the ecologies of the wider cultural industries. Contrasting these integrated professionals, in Becker's account, are the other categories of cultural producers. Becker operates with three different groups of non-integrated professionals: mavericks, folk artists and naïve artists. What these groups of non-integrated professionals share, despite their differences, is their lack of orientation towards established art worlds, their ignorance of conventions. These non-integrated professionals are not producing culture to be consumed by external audiences as such. They create for the sake of creating.

In the case of WAM productions, however, these distinctions are difficult to uphold. In WAM, as the analysis presented in this chapter will demonstrate, orientations are not compartmentalized, as suggested by Becker's categorization of cultural producers. Because of the open nature of the WAM productions, allowing self-selected individuals to participate in the cultural production, as described by Benkler in his definition of peer production, it is impossible to rely on orientations for the bounding of art worlds. The co-existence of parallel labour orientations in the WAM productions is interesting because the productions' overall orientations otherwise are unified. As illustrated in the previous chapter, the *Iron Sky*, *Ice Guns*, *Star Wreck 2π* and *Solar System* productions all actively sought to be part of the field of large-scale cultural production. The core teams behind these productions uniformly tried to promote their productions to the largest audience possible; they employed strategies seeking to increase their legitimacy as cultural workers, and likewise, they sought to increase the perceived cultural capital of the final film products by promoting them in legitimizing venues such as film festivals, online encyclopaedias and movie databases. Even the fan film *Star Wreck 2π*, the least professional production in terms of production quality and member base, was created with an audience in mind: It was intended to build on existing relationships and harness the cultural capital of the *Star Wreck* films that went before.

Thus, it is clear that WAM productions are oriented towards the wider art worlds, since they were not created as art for art's sake. However, despite a uniform and shared orientation of the WAM projects at large, the orientations of the WAM production members are diverse. This is another way of saying that, although the WAM members are working towards shared goals, producing the projects they are members of, they do not share a uniform overall orientation. Rather, the WAM members have different motivations for participating in the cultural production processes; they are oriented towards different spheres. As a

consequence of these differences in orientations, the active WAM members perceive of and conceptualize WAM-related labour differently, corresponding to their individual orientation. These differences occur in spite of the clear divisions of labour suggested by the WAM platform's socio-technical system and architecture: When WAM members create a personal profile on the platform, they are allowed to pick three so-called *Wreckupations*, occupations they are looking to join. Likewise, when production leaders create a task for members to contribute to, they are prompted to specify which type of labour/occupation the task is calling for. These tasks are then pushed by the system to WAM members that have denoted those occupations as their work domains. Evidently, the WAM system is thus informed by established conventions of the art world that is the film industry: The wreckupation labels available are well-defined roles embedded in traditional models of film production. The wreckupations, for example, include job titles such as 3D artist, actor, concept/storyboard artist, and film editor. As I will demonstrate in the following, however, neither the overall orientation of the WAM productions, nor the established conventions denoting work titles and responsibilities, promoted by the WAM platform architecture, account for the WAM production members' conceptualization and perceptions of WAM labour. Instead, the heterogeneous composition of active WAM production members operate with differing orientations, which in return guide emerging conventions steering the division of labour is contrasting ways. Yet, these different orientations co-exists within the same art world, and work toward facilitating the embedding of the WAM productions in the larger art worlds, in the large-scale field of cultural production.

5.2.1 A typology of WAM orientations

In the following, a typology of WAM labour orientations will be presented. In what follows each of the five identified orientations will be analysed in detail: the aspirational orientation, the learning orientation, the community orientation, the ad-hoc orientation, and

finally the fandom orientation. The analysis of the individual orientations makes evident how they directly shape the way WAM production members conceptualize labour, including the conventions guiding them. The typology of orientations are described through portrayals of individual WAM members, and identified through recurring interaction patterns in the data.

The aspirational orientation

The aspirational orientation is characterized by an emphasis on outcome. The primary driver of WAM engagement of individuals with this orientation is to produce a tangible cultural artefact, a finished product. WAM members inclined towards the aspirational orientation set up their own productions with the aim of levering their position in the wider field of large-scale cultural production. To that end, they take on leadership roles, and act as decision-makers. They are ambitious about their projects, and actively seek to recruit WAM members that have skills complementing their own. Nevertheless, they generally welcome any WAM member on board their projects, and provide detailed and individual feedback to content or comments submitted. To a large extent, the aspirational individuals are mirroring established industry conventions relating to the division of labour, just as they follow conventions for distributing and communicating accreditation of labour. Because of this preoccupation with accreditation and professionalization they perceive the WAM platform's karma function as an important means of increasing WAM member credibility, and incentivizing participation. Individuals guided by the aspirational orientation are usually heavy users of the WAM platform; their engagement is substantive, continuous and characterized by patterns of responsiveness. To increase efficiency, however, they do not exclusively rely on the WAM platform for facilitating production-related labour. Once ordinary WAM members have been recruited and have proved their engagement in productions led by the aspirational orientation, they are invited back-stage. The back-stage

communication is, to a large extent, invisible to the ordinary WAM production members. On a number of occasions, back-stage communication has led to further professional collaborations between individuals inclined towards the aspirational orientation. In parallel, however, they continuously contribute to the WAM community at large, by engaging actively in WAM community related discussions, and frequently participate in a large number of WAM productions.

To illustrate, a good example of an aspirational participant is Aleksi. Aleksi, a Finn in his late 20s, has created stories as long as he can remember. He has an urge to do so, as he highlighted in an interview: "For some strange reason I need to tell stories. It's quite hard to describe why; if I sit somewhere, let's say on a bus, suddenly stories start coming from nowhere." [Aleksi, interview 15 August 2011]. Aleksi, however, has experienced many barriers hindering him from making the transition from amateur to professional content creator. These challenges should be understood in the context of his local environment and habitus: Aleksi grew up in Northern Lapland in a traditional reindeer herding family renowned for their herding skills. As he explained: "The rest of my family are reindeer herders except me. It's not like I have anything against that but I never had time or interest for it." [Alexi, interview 15 August 2011]. When I visited Aleksi in Lapland, northern Finland, in August 2011, it was clear that his ancestry was important to his self-identity.

Aleksi's interests in story telling and animation led him to pursue a vocational education in information technologies at a local educational institution in the early 2000s. Throughout his studies, and after the completion of his degree, he continued working on his own animation projects on the side. One of these resulted in the Creative Commons licenced (BY-NC-ND) 3-minute short film *Materia* (2010), an animation about dark forces infiltrating an extra-terrestrial mining plant. Motivated by the experiences with the *Materia* production, Aleksi found his way to WAM after hearing about it on an IRC chat channel. On WAM, he

initiated the production *Materia 2 – The Awakening*, and later, in early 2011, he launched another animation project, *To Mars*. Both projects, however, were later officially put on hold due to challenges arising in the production and pre-production phases. Challenges and tensions arose from Aleksi's offline responsibilities. These tensions primarily related to Aleksi's financial problems. In interviews, Aleksi made it clear that he was increasingly worried about ensuring financial stability, although financial capital was not an end goal in itself:

> […] the end goal it's of course to sort of make a self-sustaining system where I can get food and do stories […]. I don't actually want to make a lot of money, it's just to pay food with; […] so that's the end goal.
>
> [Aleksi, interview 15 August 2011]

A further barrier was that Aleksi was offline for long periods of time. Aleksi had acquired a small piece of land in Northern Lapland in the early 2000s, a gold mine. In the summer periods, the only time of the year this area of Lapland is physically accessible, Aleksi would spend all his time manually digging for gold, living in a basic but habitable shed he had built. The gold dust and gold nuggets he dug up were subsequently sold to gold miners for a profit. Aleksi found gold mining a welcoming complement to his screen based work, even if physically demanding:

> It's nice to have something to outbalance the computer stuff. I call it vacation even though it's very, very hard physical work. […] It's actually very remote; no telephones, no electricity, nothing actually; not even roads, so it's basically a wilderness.
>
> [Aleksi, interview 15 August 2011]

Apart from the periods where Aleksi went gold mining, he would be on WAM on a daily basis, and responded promptly to any comments or shots made by his WAM production members, or in other WAM productions he was a member of. Aleksi's perception of the division of labour, however, was shaped by his perception of his own role in the project. As an aspirational individual, he perceived of the karma function as key for incentivizing participation:

> If I see something I think is good, even if I don't have the same opinion but if it's professionally made or looks cool, then I'll thumb it because I think the project benefits from that, and for my own I pretty much thumb up every shot or comment. It gives people a sort of ego boost.
>
> [Aleksi, interview 15 August 2011]

Other WAM members were also steered by the aspirational orientation: Gerhard (producer of *Ice Guns* and Solar System) and Thierry (producer of *Star Wreck 2π*), both fall under this category. As we saw in the previous chapter, Gerhard was concerned with leveraging his position in the field of large-scale cultural production. For him, therefore, questions of accreditation and credibility were central. Within the WAM system, he saw the karma points as indicative of the participation, engagement and credibility of individual members. As a logical consequence of that view, he acted to ensure that members accrue karma points whenever they contribute to a production. Recall that karma points are awarded automatically when WAM members post a shot in a production they are members of, and when their submitted shots or posted comments are 'thumbed-up' by other members. In a WAM community and development-related discussion thread, Gerhard highlighted his view on karma points, and explicitly expressed his dissatisfaction with the existing design. He pointed out that WAM members are not able to give 'thumps-ups' votes to content published under WAM production blogs; the system only allows members to thumb-up shots or comments posted under production tasks. Gerhard wrote:

> I think it's totally inconsistent that people won't get Karma points for their news releases […]. For example this is really sad with Norwegian Ninja [WAM production], as they have great news articles and I'd really like to give credit for that!
>
> [Gerhard, WAM community thread discussion, 21 September 2009]

Likewise, when WAM community manager Sakke in a blog post introduces a new ranking feature, Gerhard protests. With this new feature, each WAM production task displayed a list of the most thumbed-up shots submitted in response to that particular call for

contributions. The WAM development team perceived this ranking feature as a way for production leaders to quickly determine which submitted WAM member shots were better. By the logic of the ranking feature, the thumbs-up feature would thus be reduced to a distributed quality measure. For Gerhard, the interpretation of the thumbs-up button is much richer than that; it is way of incentivizing and honouring participation. Gerhard points this out in a comment to the WAM development blog:

> As a notorious nitpicker I have to criticize though; I don't like it's [the shot ranking system] connected to the normal thumbs-up function. I think that button is also often used to acknowledge participation [...].
>
> [Gerhard, WAM community related discussion, 5 July 2010]

Gerhard's interpretation of karma points guides his practices for giving out thumb-ups and for steering and incentivizing participation in his WAM productions. Throughout the *Ice Guns* and *Solar System* productions, Gerhard actively encouraged contributors to ensure that they are awarded the karma points earned for their participation. The most active task of the *Ice Guns* production, for example, was a task that asked WAM members for photos of various city- and landscapes. The core *Ice Guns* team received 43 shots with submission of photos from 17 WAM members. Some of these members had not officially joined the production, yet still contributed. Gerhard and other core members therefore explicitly encouraged them to join the production:

> So thanks a lot Anne, don't forget to "join" *Ice Guns* to collect the Karma points you've earned for this post :-)
>
> [Gerhard, *Ice Guns*, shot comment, 4 August 2009]

> Hi Julius thanks for your photos! Why don't you join the *Ice Guns* production, then you will get the Karma points for it ;-D
>
> [Daniel, *Ice Guns*, shot comment, 23 August 2009]

Gerhard and his core team members likewise actively encourage WAM members to be generous in their thumbing-up. Daniel, assistant leader of *Ice Guns* and co-writer of the

manuscript for Solar System, for example, posts the following shot under the *Solar System* task "General Discussion"':

> I started by giving everyone a free round of thumbs-ups!!! Because I think everyone should be rewarded by submitting their idea. […] Only one thumbs-up for a shot is lame! It's not like you can buy something with your karma points but I think it's a currency of respect, so keep thumbing up guys! :-D
>
> [Daniel, *Solar System 3D*, task shot, 3 January 2012]

Further underlining the perceived value of karma points for increasing credibility, and incentivising sustained participation, is the fact that Gerhard encourages the posting of visible digital traces of contributions submitted outside of the WAM platform's interface. When WAM members submitted photos to the *Ice Guns* production to be used as background layering, Gerhard asked participants to upload the photos to a WAM-external server; this was because of file size uploading limitations of the WAM platform. Doing so, however, meant that the WAM members would not receive karma points automatically. Therefore, Gerhard asked submitters to duplicate their efforts by posting examples of photos they had shared through external servers. The same practice was enacted when Gerhard in a production update blog post called for further images:

> So if anyone else would like to contribute - the most urgently needed things are concrete structures, [and] a truck interior […]. Just PM me and I'll give you an FTP access. Don't forget to post some example images here though, so you can collect your much deserved Karma points ;D
>
> [Gerhard, *Solar System 3D* WAM blog post, 8 September 2009]

In addition to the internal system of accreditation and social capital, the karma point system, individuals operating within the aspirational orientation put great emphasis on external validation, cultural capital. These conventions are epitomized in the concept of end credits, naming the title and contributions of anyone involved in the production of the final cultural products. Naming and titling contributions is extremely important for the aspirational orientation. This is because these titles are recognizable outside of the narrow

circle of the WAM community; hence titles serve to increase the embodied cultural capital belonging to individual workers. In addition to the issue of end credits, members of the aspirational orientation continuously highlight the inclusion of the actualized labour on official listings of the productions on the online movie database, IMDb. Individuals steered by this orientation perceive this database as an important source of institutionalized cultural capital. The IMDb database embodies a virtual institution, bringing together industry agents, professional and amateur critics. The perception is that if your film is on IMDb, it is a real movie, co-existing with Hollywood blockbusters and indie films alike. The following examples illustrate this convention.

In the closing paragraph of a *Solar System* task description, "Hard Photoshop labor!", asking WAM members to manually remove pixels/stars from digital NASA images, Gerhard highlights that labour will be rewarded in the production's end credits and on IMDb:

> Thanks a lot in advance. I know it's not pretty [i.e. unexciting] work but the results will be great, and you will forever be remembered in the show's end credits (also on IMDb) :D
>
> [Gerhard, *Solar System 3D* task description, "Hard Photoshop Labor!", 7 May 2012]

Similarly, in the distribution phase of the *Ice Guns* production process, Gerhard underlines that even this late-stage PR work will be rewarded with external validation:

> […] if you want to join the *Ice Guns* ranks at the last minutes to make your names eternally chiselled into the credit roll of the first ever low-budget full green screen spaghetti western, check out these tasks.
>
> [Gerhard, *Ice Guns* WAM blog post, 4 January 2010]

Questions of accreditation were addressed by the core team throughout the *Ice Guns* production process. In one of the earliest tasks, for example, the special effect supervisor, Benjamin, underlined that, "Everyone who contributes to the finished film will be properly credited." [Benjamin, *Ice Guns* task description, 17 March 2009]. Also in the case of the *Solar System* production, end credits and IMDb listings were continuously mentioned, e.g.:

> ps: while we can't guarantee any monetary payments to our participants, at least it's definite that rather sooner than later, you'll hold the 3D-Blu-ray containing your work in your hands, and of course everyone will be properly credited and these credits will also appear on IMDb :D
>
> [Gerhard, SS3D WAM blog post, 25 April 2012]

In back-stage communication, issues of accreditation and titles are equally prominent. I experienced this first hand following an intense period of revision of the *Sola*r System screenplay in June 2012. In response to the WAM task "Script doctoring!", I worked closely with Gerhard and another active WAM production member, Charles, to edit the four episodes of the *Solar System* screenplays. Towards the end of the editing phase, Gerhard wrote the following in an email sent to Charles and me:

> And now for something completely different; credits. I was wondering if any of you want some specific credit in the production. Of course I'm going to list what everyone did anyway - for example "Roto Artist" for the star removal […] BUT if any of you have anything special that would help them in their career…? […] And also you have to tell me what we should best call your work on the script. I think co-author would be too much (if you insist though, even that's be fine by me) but I guess it should be "script consultant" […]?. What do you guys think?
>
> [Gerhard, email, 10 June 2012]

As the above excerpt attests, work titles denoting the division of labour are considered critical. Likewise, it highlights the care the aspirational put into accrediting all accomplished production jobs. Further, it unravels an underlying assumption of the aspirational: Namely, the assumption that other WAM production members share their motives of seeking to become professionals and to gain embodied cultural capital in the field of large-scale cultural production, the professional industry. Moreover, the excerpt also shows that the official division of labour contains some wriggle room; that additional titles can be awarded on a discretionary basis. In this case of title negotiation, the outcome was that Charles and I were accredited as 'script assistants'.

This form of back-stage communication is commonly initiated by the aspirational, as has become evident from interviews and participant observations. One person to often make use of back-channel interactions is Thierry, the *Star Wreck 2π* director. I experienced this when I worked on the Danish subtitles for *Star Wreck 2π*. In an interview, he was equally straightforward about his collaborative practices working with WAM members through VoIP applications and email clients:

> Wreckamovie... basically in the end we met some people there, and now we deal directly with them, not over Wreckamovie. So for example, for the [Finnish] translation of subtitles, I have a guy helping, and I just email him directly.
>
> [Thierry, Skype interview, 11 May 2012]

Although Thierry displays less concern about maintaining archived digital traces of all external labour on WAM, he and Arianne still ensured that these accomplished jobs were clearly communicated in *Star Wreck 2π* production content on WAM.

As a final note on the emerging practices guiding the division and perception of WAM production labour, it should be highlighted that the aspirational are careful to thank contributors in detail when closing open tasks. Consider, for example, the following closing comments:

> [...] our thanks go to all those who contributed, and of course everyone whose photos we used got credited in the end crawl for "digital photography" For now, let me give a special mention to some people - Joona for kicking it all off; Miguel for basically covering his whole home town; and Thierry for going out on several expeditions to get us some awesome "snow road" coverage. Last but not least is Claudine, who contributed so many photos that we will surely be using them in *Ice Guns* 2 and 3 as well ;D
> [Gerhard, closing comment; *Ice Guns* task:" YOUR Best Photos in ICE GUNS!", 7 June 2010]

These practices of continuously and deep engagement are in return fuelling the motivations of the learning oriented WAM members.

The Learning orientation

The learning orientation differentiates itself from the aspirational orientation in several ways. Individuals inclined towards this orientation are less concerned with the outcome of the cultural product *per se*, just as they often do not follow and participate in a production from start to finish. Typically, the learning-oriented participate on a more dispersed, ad-hoc basis, and offer their labour intermittently, in periods where they have fewer offline responsibilities. Compared to the aspirational, they tend to join a much larger number of WAM productions, mirroring their focus on tasks providing learning potential, rather than productions. As such, questions of accreditation of labour are not central to their motivation. Rather, they are concerned with learning and acquiring specific competencies. They therefore see WAM production tasks as an opportunity to improve their skills, and conceptualize the divisions of labour accordingly: their role is to submit content, the role of the production leaders is to provide constructive feedback on their work, which in return helps them improve their abilities. For the learning-oriented, therefore, the most attractive WAM productions are not necessarily the productions with the highest levels of professionally oriented members. Likewise, the high production quality of the final cultural outputs is not a motivational factor in itself. Instead, the learning-oriented are careful to choose WAM productions that align with their own level of ambition and existing skills. In synch with the learning-oriented individuals' conceptualization of labour, their perception of the karma system's importance is minimal.

Take Guillaume, for example, a Belgian university student in his early 20s pursuing a degree in history, who joined the WAM platform in March 2009, aged 17. He started joining online communities, including WAM, to improve his English language skills, as he explained in an email: "I had taken up the idea of ameliorating my English in my spare time, to raise my marks at school." [Guillaume, email, 5 July 2012]. While he initially only joined the *Iron Sky* production, he soon started focusing on other WAM productions as he found that the *Iron*

Sky production was too professional and therefore did not match his existing skill-level. His engagement with the WAM platform is extensive, although characterized by long periods of inactivity. Guillaume joined 52 productions, and has contributed with tasks and comments to 34 different productions, including *Iron Sky*, *Ice Guns* and the community discussion production, "Wreckamovie platform". As a result of his engagement, he is one of the overall most active members of the WAM community: He is ranked 17th in the karma score list visible on the WAM member list (his karma count is 850 as per 7 August 2013). Guillaume never actively sought to be a core, integrated member of the productions he participated in. In fact, he never considered it a real possibility. In the context of his learning driven motivation, Guillaume explains:

> Whereas professional or just mainstream production teams can meet […], this is by no means easy for an online community […]. A golden rule […] is that movies will only succeed if six to ten of the active production members live close to one another and are able to meet […]. Therefore someone like me, who lived in relative isolation regarding the rest of the website, was pinned down at school every week and had no money nor traveling experience getting deep into the production process was quite impossible.
>
> [Guillaume, email, 5 July 2012]

Mirroring Guillaume's educational emphasis, he does not perceive of the karma point system as determining credibility or seniority within the WAM community. His conceptualization of it displays a perception of karma as an external reward system designed to motivate learning:

> The only hierarchy that is visible is karma but it has no implications on behaviour or social standard, senior members with a high karma are essentially equal to new members with a low karma. I believe the karma is meant as a similar system as is used in primary schools to encourage the pupils to better themselves.
>
> [Guillaume, email, 5 July 2012]

Similarly to Guillaume, Finnish secondary school pupils and twin brothers Aaro and Samuel perceive WAM as a platform for learning. They joined the WAM platform in the fall of 2009 to improve their animation and drawing skills. They have both been extensively engaged

with WAM production since. Aaro, for example, has joined 30 productions, and has contributed to a total of 28 productions, including *Materia 2, Vampyre Princess 3D*, *Iron Sky*, *Star Wreck 2π*, and the community discussion production, "Wreckamovie platform". As a result, Aaro is currently ranked 9th on the WAM karma score list (as of 7 August 2013). When I interviewed Aaro and Samuel in their home in September 2011, they repeatedly brought up learning as a motivation for their WAM engagement. In particular Aaro was explicit in pointing to this:

> Wreckamovie it's like a school, but in school you get a job and you are told that you have to do this job. In Wreckamovie you set your own jobs, and when you get it done it's your own project […]. So I do movies in Wreckamovie to learn Blender [animation software] and 3D modelling.
>
> [Aaro, interview, 3 September 2011]

As with Guillaume, Aaro and Samuel are unmotivated by WAM productions they perceive to be too professional. In their opinion, the more professionally oriented productions tend to publish tasks that are too difficult. The few tasks of a reasonable level of difficulty that are published are too quickly solved. For Aaro and Samuel, this poses a problem as they are not necessarily regularly logged into the WAM platform; they have school and other hobbies to attend to, for example, table top and computer gaming, and rehearsing with their rock band. For the more professionally oriented projects, the focus is on steady progression, on accomplishing the goal of producing the movie. Describing their learning oriented approach to WAM engagement, Aaro explains:

> So if there are professionals in the movie it loses this kind of attitude quickly. […] Professionals like to make models really quickly […]. With the Leviathan [WAM project] I was able to help with the ship because the Swedish guy wasn't so active, so it was possible for us to keep track of which was the newest version and do our part.
>
> [Aaro, interview, 3 September 2011]

In a similar way to Guillaume, Aaro and Samuel do not perceive of the karma system as important. As such, they do not mention this feature when describing their WAM practices and engagement. When directly prompted in my interview with them, Aaro simply stated:

"The liking [thumbing-up of posted WAM content] isn't really so important here. I "like" when I remember to like."

Other learning-oriented individuals, who joined the WAM platform at a later life-stage than the students described above, conceptualize labour using different tropes than the school metaphors applied by Guillaume, Aaro and Samuel alike. Nonetheless, they too perceive of WAM as a sphere facilitating learning. Joona, for example, a Finnish university student in his late 20s, perceives WAM as a means for him to become better at graphic design:

> I'm a political science major and doing my Master's thesis at the moment. And I have no education in filmmaking, in graphic design, in art or anything like that, but art and graphic design have been hobbies. […] And for me, Wreckamovie has been really useful in a way that I've been able to design posters or logos and stuff like that, and been able to practise it at home […]. I've been able to keep the skills in Photoshop or in design active by doing stuff on Wreckamovie.
>
> [Joona, interview, 22 May 2012]

Joona's engagement in WAM productions has been substantive, but has, as was the case with the other learning-oriented participants, been characterised with longer periods of inactivity. Joona was one of the first people to join the WAM platform, in April 2008. Since, he has joined 26 WAM productions, and has actively contributed to 23 of these, including *Iron Sky*, *Ice Guns*, *Star Wreck 2π*, and the WAM community related production. He is ranked 7th on the WAM karma score list (with a karma count of 1583 as per 7 August 2013). For Joona, the primary motivation is receiving feedback on submitted work, as the following quotes attest:

> […] For me it was more important that the filmmakers were active in commenting stuff. If you put in a lot of effort you don't need it to be in the movie but you need some feedback, either from other fans or essentially from the filmmakers.

And:

> It really feels good when people give good feedback on your work. Sometimes they give really, really good suggestions of stuff you've never thought about before, and that broadens your horizons and lets you really use your imagination.

[Joona, interview, 22 May 2012]

The type of practices that incentivise Joona relate to the willingness and ability of production leaders, the aspirational, to engage critically and carefully with submitted content. Responsiveness is key. Joona has been highly content with his experience working with the aspirational:

> I think the main thing that has blown my mind in the productions is the professionalism of the filmmakers or the production leaders and their active participation. You can't just like dump a movie on Wreckamovie, leave it alone and expect people to participate, it is a social thing and the filmmakers need to be social as well.
>
> [Joona interview, 22 May 2012]

The feedback is thus what motivates Joona to keep engaging with WAM productions. Despite his high karma ranking, the concept of karma is not something he gives much attention, or ascribes value, to. When the karma function was discussed under a WAM platform production task, Joona explicitly underlined this view:

> I understand the current [karma] system is designed to motivate people to join productions, but I don't think it is the best way. I doubt many people are really after karma here. There's no real reward for gathering it.
>
> [Joona, WAM platform production comment, 24 October 2009]

Rather than karma, Joona sees labour rewards as the embodied capital he acquires by increasing his graphical design skill levels. The learning process, in his opinion, is further enhanced by the digitally archived traces of posts and comments on content submitted in response to the WAM production tasks' call for contributions. These archived interactions form a repository of useful knowledge. In contrast to the aspirational, Joona therefore does not engage with back-stage work or communication. In fact, doing so would, in his view, break with the norms: "It's kind of an unwritten rule on Wreckamovie that you keep the conversation on Wreckamovie", as he said in an interview.

By means of Joona's participation in WAM production tasks, he gained a higher level of skills, which, in return, has enabled him to take on small graphic freelance jobs outside of WAM-related contexts. Some of the film posters he created in response to WAM production tasks, for example, he is particularly proud of. He has included these in a growing online portfolio on his personal website, showcasing his graphic design and layout work. In an interview, Joona highlighted that his WAM work subsequently led to two paid jobs.

Another learning orientated WAM member is Onni, a Finn in his late 20s, who joined the WAM platform in May 2008 when the *Iron Sky* core team announced the platform on their *Star Wreck* forum. He currently has a karma score of 417, and is ranked number 29 on the overall karma score list. As an exception from the other learning-oriented, he did not join many WAM productions, but kept his engagement limited to the *Iron Sky* and the WAM platform productions. Albeit an *Iron Sky* fan, his WAM engagement was not steered by a desire to directly interact with the core team members; instead, he aimed to learn:

> I wanted to do something that I normally won't do and learn; learn something new. It was a win-win situation. Even if any of my ideas or my material won't make it to the movie, at least I learnt something, and got some skills that I didn't have beforehand. […] I liked to do it because I've learned something new.
>
> [Onni, interview, 6 September 2011]

For the *Iron Sky* production, he concentrated on tasks that challenged his image manipulation skills, and his fluency in various image processing software packages. His contributions included suggestions for *Iron Sky* t-shirt designs, and designs of visually engaging alphabet letter blocks for use in an *Iron Sky* movie scene showing young Moon Nazi pupils being taught in a class room environment. For the latter task, Onni revised his design over and over again, based on feedback from other community members: "I got some feedback and modified, tweaked the picture like ten times or something like that". As the *Iron Sky* production moved into the post-production phase, however, Onni became less

motivated because of the increased difficulty of tasks offered: "The tasks that are there [now], are something that I consider quite hard. Last month there was the design for an Indian spaceship." [Onni, interview, 6 September 2011]

Charles is another learning-oriented individuals who has explicitly experienced his skills improve as a direct outcome of their participation in WAM productions. Charles, an English university student in his early 20s, joined WAM in March 2010. He has contributed to six different WAM productions, including *Solar System 3D*, and currently ranks 38th on the karma score list (his karma score is 315 as per 7 August 2013). During the time Charles has been a WAM member, he has markedly increased his 3D animation skills. This outcome is the result of the high quality feedback he received on his work. Here Charles tells about his learning experience gained from working on a particular WAM production:

> I started producing 3D models for them along with some basic textures. This really helped me develop as they had professionals on the team to give me guidance on poly limits and the best methods of how to model and so forth. This really helped kickstart me to a decent level where I could actually start to not follow tutorials anymore.
>
> [Charles, interview, 3 August 2013]

Later on, in early 2013, Charles was recruited by an aspirational WAM member to serve as the assistant leader on a WAM sci-fi animation project, *The Origins*. This recruitment was the result of Charles' growing skills and visible ability to produce and manage complex modeling techniques.

Charles and Joona are not the only individuals to have directly benefitted from the learning they have acquired by means of their sustained WAM engagement. Another example is Luukas, a Finn in his early 30s, who works in a digital media centre located at a university 400 km north of Helsinki. In his everyday job he works as an editor of educational video content, a job he is increasingly bored with as it no longer challenges him professionally.

This had not always been the case; initially he enjoyed the job because it was a good learning experience: “I remember the first year on the job that I really enjoyed it a lot because there was so much to learn” [Luukas, interview, August 20, 2011]. Luukas signed up to WAM in May 2008, motivated by his desire to learn, and quickly became very involved in the community. He has joined 50 WAM productions, of which he has actively contributed to 19, including *Iron Sky*, *Ice Guns* and *Solar System*. Luukas continues to be one of the most active WAM members, and currently is ranked 10th on the karma score list (his karma score is 1367 as of 7 August 2013). When he began engaging with production tasks on WAM, he was still learning how to excel in modeling using the free source animation software Blender. The *Ice Guns* production, in particular, served to assist Luukas in increasing his animation skills. He more or less singlehandedly took on the task of creating and animating layers of snow and dust particles in various relevant *Ice Guns* scenes. To this *Ice Guns* WAM task, Luukas submitted 19 shots, and uploaded a total of 58 animation files; he worked intensively on this task for four months, from early January through April 2010. His shots to this task alone generated 163 comments, primarily concrete feedback from the core team and other production members. Below are excerpts from three illustrative feedback comments on Luukas’ uploaded animations provided by Gerhard:

> I think on principle the "fountain" is very good only as Joona stated it's a bit too excessive. Speaking numbers, I think it should only be 50-60% as high. The number of particles should be reduced to something like 30%.
>
> [Gerhard, *Ice Guns* task comment, 10 January 2010]

> Especially considering you having never done anything like this before, this result is pretty marvellous! I think the "floating" feeling is mainly caused by the shadow […]. If you move the shadow up so its level with the wheel or turn it off altogether, it should look better.
>
> [Gerhard, *Ice Guns* task comment, 18 April 2010]

> WEEEEEEEEEEEEeeeee..... AWESOME! Luukas for president!!! For me, this is another instant strike. I mean you *could* try to make the avalanche cloud like a third less high so it doesn't cover them up entirely (I'm thinking of the cut to the next shot) and also the shadow of that snow cloud could be 20-30% more transparent.

[Gerhard, *Ice Guns* task comment, 11 April 2010]

For Luukas, participating in the *Ice Guns* production was a turning point. Up until then, he had never thought that he would be able to be part of a professional-quality film production. When I met him in Kuopio, Finland, in August 2011, he talked at length about his *Ice Guns* engagement, and how surreal it had been for him to watch the final production. Reflecting on his entry into the WAM community and his steep learning curve, he explained that it was only very recently he had realized that he had become skilled enough to take on professional tasks:

> It hasn't been that long that I've been recognising myself as a person who could do something in the movies. I've always felt that the movie business and all the movie stuff is something really amazing and it's something too difficult or something that I can't be a part of.
>
> [Luukas, interview, August 20, 2011]

Luukas's WAM engagement and learning allowed him to develop into an integrated professional. A couple of months prior to my meeting with him in 2011, Luukas had set up a small company with two other Finnish WAM members he had come to know through his participation in WAM productions and through engagement with the online Blender community. Although he was still working full-time in his job editing and producing educational videos, he was also professionally engaged in animation production on the side. As noted in the previous chapter's description of the *Solar System* production process, Gerhard hired Luukas to work on the final version once the distribution agreement was settled.

The community orientation

The community-oriented WAM members are motivated by experiences of belonging, by developing friendship ties maintained by working towards a common goal. Individuals steered towards this orientation engage with WAM productions in a different way than those oriented towards learning. Rather than choosing to participate in WAM productions based on the types of tasks available, they choose productions that provide sustained interactivity, close-knit communities and appropriately-minded production leaders. The community-oriented participants tend to follow closely and contribute to a large number of productions throughout the production phases, and do not limit themselves to contributing to tasks that correspond with their official *wreckupations*. They engage with a diverse set of tasks. Additionally, their interaction patterns are characterised by a more multi-directional approach. In other words: They do not, as such, discriminate against ordinary members, but interact equally with production leaders/assistants, and ordinary WAM production members. They are quick in responding to any content posted in the WAM productions they are members of, not only to content posted by high ranking or leading WAM members. The community-oriented are somewhat hostile towards the WAM karma system. Although they hold some of the highest karma scores, they are against the quantitative and evaluative nature of the platform's karma distribution system. The community-oriented have played a key role in ensuring and maintaining active participation on WAM, and many have additionally been instrumental in organising offline community gatherings.

Valentina, for example, an Italian WAM member in her late 20s, was one of the first to join the WAM platform, after having read about it in an online forum in early 2008. She has joined 32 different WAM productions, of which she has actively contributed to 28, including *Iron Sky*, *Ice Guns*, *Star Wreck 2π*, and *Solar System*. She ranks second on the list of WAM member's karma score, and currently holds a karma score of 3556 (as of 7 August 2013). From an early stage of her WAM engagement, Valentina was eager to meet other WAM

community members in person. To that end, she, for example, travelled to Finland to be part of the *Star Wreck 2π* shootings in Tampere in late 2009. These face-to-face interactions led to the development of closer interpersonal friendships with other WAM members, which, in return, fuelled her motivation to further intensify her level of commitment to WAM productions. To put it differently, Valentina was not per se interested in creating feature films or animations, she was interested in being part of a community:

> The platform is nothing but a structure, whereas the inhabitants are what make the difference. When a strong community is created, it is able to outlast the platform, because friends choose to stick around with friends. […] Movie-making by itself has never been what I pursued […]. When in 2009 I participated in a *Star Wreck 2π* shooting, meeting a number of wreckers in real life increased my interest in the activity […]. Also, that gave me a will to join as many real life events as I could ever since, which of course means I met more and more people in real life, and cared about the platform more and more. ;)
>
> [Valentina, email interview, 12 July 2012]

Arianne, the co-director of the *Star Wreck 2π* production, is similarly concerned with the community, and values the friendships her interaction with other WAM members has enabled. Like Valentina, Arianne highlights the role that offline face-to-face meetings have had on the community spirit. Discussing the *Star Wreck 2π* shootings in Finland in 2009, and the work she and other WAM members carried out together, she emphasizes the bonds created:

> It's very difficult to explain it. I never experienced this feeling of community before. It's a special kind of feeling that comes when you are all working together […]. And it's such close relations you develop. You didn't know them before. But now we have our own group and we have stayed actually together since.
>
> [Arianne, interview, 12 May 2012]

Returning to Valentina's strong emphasis on community it is clear that it makes her conceptualise labour as the willingness to help. This willingness of WAM members to help is conditional, however, and depends on the attitude of the aspirational participants, of

production leaders and assistants. Without mutual recognition and respect between leaders and WAM production members, without interpersonal relationships, contributing to tasks would be the same as working for free, in Valentina's opinion. The aspirational therefore need to share the values of the community oriented; they need to be capable of finding joy in providing help to others, otherwise their productions will fail:

> Becoming part of a community, though, is very simple: "wanting to be a part of it" and "enjoying helping each other" […]. And that's also where one sees the good production leaders and assistants, at least in my opinion. Those are the ones capable of establishing a dialogue with the community, "coming down" to their level or, even better, joining it rather than feeling "above" it at all. After all, who would want to work for free for someone who just "expects" them to do it? […] It won't come as a surprise, then, that often the "silly" productions that take themselves too seriously (and whose leaders do not care about "joining" the community) do not get anywhere at all.
>
> [Valentina, email interview, 12 July 2012]

Ferenc, another community oriented WAM member, who prefers not to have too much descriptive information disclosed in this thesis, shares Valentina's conceptualization of work as help. He has joined 30 different WAM productions, but has contributed to a much larger number of WAM productions without officially joining the productions. In total, Ferenc has contributed to more than 65 productions since he joined WAM in July 2009. His extensive, continuing and sustained WAM engagement has ranked him 4th on the WAM member karma score list; he currently holds a karma score of 2948 (as per 8 August 2013). To Ferenc, who is one of the few WAM members to use an alias rather than his real name on his WAM profile, helping and volunteering is a way of living. His profile picture thus depicts a logo rather than a photo of him; the logo states "I believe in a voluntary society". This sentiment also came across in my email interviews with Ferenc. Reflecting on his motivations for engaging with WAM, he pointed to a globally increasing trend of sharing. As such, Ferenc sees his WAM activities as a contribution to this larger movement:

> Why do we like helping other people? You can see it in the DIY-community, in the open-source community, in the various netlabels that release their music for free. People giving out information, sharing ideas, helping one another...

> […] This is the future.[…].This is much larger than just movies. And I'm right here, helping it along.
>
> [Ferenc, email interview, 13 May 2012]

Although Ferenc does not himself lead or initiate productions, he feels a great level of responsibility for ensuring that sufficient inspiration, material and suggestions are submitted in response to WAM task calls. In email correspondence, Ferenc explains that he would check up daily on new WAM tasks and comments, and that those task challenges would linger with him in the back of his mind throughout the day. He would subsequently post links to resources, e.g. online-hosted videos or images. Further, Ferenc would keep an eye out for the levels of activity across WAM productions; if he found any of them struggling to attract contributions to tasks, Ferenc would actively try to mitigate the lack of participation:

> If I notice a production is slowing down or hasn't had much input to progress, I will try to post different views, examples from nature/technology/art I find on the net, or whatever, to try to jump-start somebody else's ideas.
>
> [Ferenc, email interview, 30 July 2012]

It was a deliberate decision on Ferenc's part not to join productions he contributed to, unless directly asked to. His rationale for not doing so mirrored his perception of the karma point system, which he found misleading in its competitive quantification of participation. As the following quote attests, Ferenc was actively avoiding accruing karma points:

> In the beginning I didn't join any production and contributed anyways. On the urging of some members I did join, and was proud to have one of the lowest Karma scores on WAM. Eventually it picked up, but I don't really care. To me the [Wreckamovie] system is a way of showing support more than showing who's better. IMO the global Karma-counter is distracting in that way.
>
> [Ferenc, email interview, 30 July 2012]

In WAM community related discussion threads posted under the "Wreckamovie platform" production, Ferenc explicitly advocate for more careful interpretation of karma points. This happens in the context of Valentina suggesting the WAM developers to change the

wreckupation system and labels. On WAM, each member can only choose three *wreckupations* to appear on their profile pages, but as a community-oriented individual, Valentina wants to be able to list a much larger number of *wreckupations*. Valentina thus suggests that this feature could be available for power users, to be determined, for example, on the basis of combined calculations of members' activity levels and karma points. This short community discussion about *wreckupations*, and the responses and comments it generates, finely illustrates and portrays the differentiated conceptualization of labour of the community oriented and the learning oriented: Valentina perceives the narrowly defined division of labour, the job description and titles transferred from the established industry conventions as expressed thought the WAM's *wreckupation* functions, as inadequate. This conceptualization of the division of labour does not correspond with her perception of her multiplex roles in the WAM production cases. On the other hand, Aaro, whom we met in the previous section, one of the learning oriented participants, does not understand why the *wreckupation* system needs to be changed to allow for more than three official labour titles. As he says in the thread: "It's more than enough for me". Ferenc, on the contrary, shares Valentina's concerns about the system. For him, though, the problem is rather that none of the *wreckupation* labels accurately describes his work on the productions. Additionally, Ferenc is against a discrimination of WAM members based on their karma scores. Specifically, he is against distributing privileges, such as the ability to choose a larger number of *wreckupations*, based on activity and karma scores. As he says:

> […] who's to say that people without (or with low) Karma aren't power-users? Maybe most of their contributions sucked (or just didn't fit the premises), so what?
>
> [Ferenc, WAM platform discussion thread, 10 October 2010]

It is a clear trend that the community-oriented individuals are sceptical about the karma point system. In interviews, they continuously highlight the lack of importance of karma points and thumbing-up practices and rankings. Kofido, for example, a Finnish WAM

member in his mid-30s, is motivated by meeting people that share ideas and attitudes. He joined the WAM platform in September 2009, and has participated in a number of offline WAM tasks and gatherings, including the *Iron Sky* teaser shootings, the *Star Wreck 2π* shootings, and the WAM festival. On WAM, he has joined 13 productions, and has contributed actively to 11 different productions. He currently has 202 karma points, and is ranked 90th on the WAM member list when sorted in accordance with karma levels (as per 8 August 2013). In May 2010, Kofido also created a production of his own, the 2-minute short film *Rust Sky*, a parody closely mimicking the *Iron Sky* teaser video. Although he received some help from other WAM members in this production, he primarily created it himself. This was not least in order to be able to surprise the other WAM community members, as he underlined in an interview. *Rust Sky* was, as such, a gift to the community, given in the hope they would appreciate it, and thereby strengthen the communal spirit. Discussing karma, Kofido underlines that is much less important to him than the experiences of like-mindedness that arise in interactions with other WAM members:

> It's not just about getting thumbs-ups, but it's seeing that other people are on the same line, like, thinking the same way, yeah, which is the way it should go. So I think that is the really rewarding thing for me, instead of getting those thumbs-ups.
>
> [Kofido, interview, 6 September 2011]

Otto, a Finnish WAM member in his late 50s, is even more explicit in his refusal to recognize the importance of the karma point system. Despite being one of the most active members of the WAM community at large, he does not care about his ranking whatsoever. Otto joined WAM in October 2008, and has since joined 24 different productions, and has contributed more than 400 comments and 150 shots to 28 different productions. Currently, he ranks 6th on the list of karma scores; he has 1713 karma points (as of 8 August 2013). On karma, Otto says:

> I don't check it. I don't like to check it. I know that there is that system that will create karma when you do something. […] I don't know what the formula

> is. I don't care about that karma. I like to be there. Karma is not the reason why I am there.
>
> [Otto, interview, 21 August 2011]

Otto has a long history of making friends online; as a computer programmer, he had started communicating online with strangers in the early 1990s. Over the last 20 years, Otto estimates that he has made close to 100 friends online, through bulletin boards focusing on movies, music, programming and gardening. He is currently working as a project manager at an educational technologies group at a Finnish University. He is married with three children, and finds time for his WAM engagement between his paid work and other hobbies, including choir singing, acting, and biking. When I visited Otto in his home in August 2011, he talked at length and in detail about a large number of WAM productions and WAM members. It was very clear that he was committed to the WAM community; he recalled specific details and stories about all the productions he had been part of. For Otto, taking active part in productions on WAM is crucial:

> Yes, that's not enough [to lurk]. You must be active there. […] Interactivity creates interactivity; that I have seen. I have been quite active.
>
> [Otto, interview, 21 August 2011]

In return, as an outcome of the interaction with other WAM members, you gain genuine friendships, as Otto highlights:

> When you have been so active in creating the production then you get committed to that more and more. You are feeling that you belong to that group creating the movie. […] We become friends and we get committed to each other and the group. The group spirit grows. […] That is what Wreckamovie is all about. Sharing and caring, enthusiasm to movies and filmmaking. "Movie club 2.0."
>
> [Otto, interview, 21 August 2011]

For Otto, there is a great difference between being an actively participating member of the WAM community and contributing financially to the production. Although he had bought

the *Iron Sky* core team's self-distributed DVD back in 2005, he had not since purchased merchandise or contributed to any crowdfunding efforts of WAM productions:

> I bought earlier a *Star Wreck* film, [...] but after that I have not bought yet anything, and I have not been involved in any crowd funding. I like to be a crowd sourcing guy, one who likes to give my intellectual things to that project, my ideas.
>
> [Otto, interview, 21 August 2011]

In other words: Otto draws clear distinctions between crowdsourcing and crowdfunding; between immaterial capital and financial capital.

The ad hoc orientation

As opposed to the community orientation, the ad-hoc-oriented individuals are primarily concerned with solving specific problems and getting jobs done. Rather than engaging deeply with the WAM community, they perceive of the platform as a resource pool allowing for efficient crowdsourcing of ideas and content. Professional industry workers, including the *Iron Sky* core team, belong primarily to this category. The interaction patterns of the ad hoc oriented participants are characterized by long periods of absence; they predominately log-in on WAM when they have a particular task they want done, or to check up on WAM members' shots submitted in response to their task calls. Another characteristic is that the ad hoc oriented tend to engage little with each submitted shot. Whereas the aspirational tend to comment on the vast majority of shots submitted, and provide feedback, the ad hoc oriented tend to only provide general feedback on the outcome of the task at large. Additionally, they rely on the thumbing-up function for filtering submitted content, and for quality assurance. Although the ad hoc oriented are concerned about accrediting WAM labour, their interaction patterns make them less able to easily self-identify contributions.

Through my observations of WAM activity, it has become evident that the *Iron Sky* core team has been engaged with WAM on an uneven basis. On WAM, the *Iron Sky* production has thirteen production leaders/assistant leaders, of which I have interviewed or interacted with nine. None of the production leaders or assistants has been regularly active during my period of observation (January 2011 – June 2013); with a few exceptions, they had had periods of nine months or more WAM inactivity. Although WAM member profiles do not display a calculation of the number of shots and tasks the member has contributed, it is possible to manually calculate these numbers. A member's list of posted shots and comments are publically accessible on their WAM profile. For the core *Iron Sky* team, the overall level of activity is extremely low. Taken together, the *Iron Sky* publicist, the main producer, the social media manager, the CGI supervisor, and the community manager have contributed a total of 91 comments and 33 shots over the 5-year production period. The *Iron Sky* director has, in comparison, been much more active and has, for example, also contributed 75 shots to other WAM productions. For the *Iron Sky* production, he has made 225 comments. Taking the overall size of the *Iron Sky* production into account, this level of activity is still low on a per-task basis compared to that of aspirational, educational and community oriented WAM members.

In interviews with members of the core *Iron Sky* team, some of explanations for these interaction patterns became more clear. As described in the analysis of the *Iron Sky* production process, the core creators engaged with a large range of online platforms for the communication of *Iron Sky*, and for the engagement with fans and followers (website, blog, YouTube, WAM, Twitter, *Star Wreck* forum, Facebook). Over time, the number of followers and community members grew to a size that made intimate dialogues with individuals less and less manageable. On WAM alone, *Iron Sky* grew to have 2800+ WAM production members, of which 720 contributed to the production by submitting content in response to task calls, or by commenting on other production members' contributions. The task

"General Discussion", where WAM production members typically submitted general ideas for the production, received more than 400 shots; and another four tasks, for example, received 100+ shot submissions. Even with a Social Media Manager, a publicist (former *Star Wreck* cast), and a community manager (former *Star Wreck* screen writer), working professionally on managing *Iron Sky*'s online communities and audience interactions, the sheer volume of individuals become overwhelming. In an interview with the community manager, Antto, he described the dilemma, and explained the difficulties in maintaining close relationships with larger number of online collaborators across platforms:

> Someone said that people have an inbuilt limit of 300 friends. I think [...] that is about the amount of people you can follow in a meaningful way. For example, in Twitter when we followed 100 – 300 people, we could have conversations with them and actually got to know a few new people from there [...]. The problem is that when a community grows, [...] then it starts to become more superficial.
>
> [Antto, interview 15 September 2011]

Likewise, he expressed wanting to spend more time proactively engaging with the various *Iron Sky* communities, including the WAM member group, but that it was difficult to balance that with other aspects of his work responsibilities. About his WAM and other *Iron Sky* community engagement, he says:

> I would like to spend most of my waking hours doing that, but the truth is as much as I like doing that, a lot of the work we need to do is doing stuff like developing the website and this season doing graphic presentations, gathering statistics. [...] but it would actually benefit if we would have more time for it.
>
> [Antto, interview 15 September 2011]

In interviews, Riku, the social media manager, and Vili, the publicist, also openly admitted that they did not spend much time on WAM. When I met with Vili at Blind Spot Production's office in Helsinki in August 2011, he had very recently launched a task in *Iron Sky*'s WAM production; in that task, he was asking for suggestions for titles for a book on the *Iron Sky* production process which they considered publishing. I was following the online task

activities at the time, and had also published a shot with suggestions myself. Vili pointed to this task when talking about ways the *Iron Sky* team was engaging with WAM; although, when probed, it was evident that he was not aware of the details of the shots submitted by WAM production members. As he said:

> I do a seagull in there so I just fly over and drop something in there and maybe float back later, see what happens, so I don't actually spend that much time. Yeah.
>
> [Vili, interview, 22 August 2011]

Yet, the reason for the ad hoc orientation patterns of the *Iron Sky* core team is not only down to the somewhat unmanageable community size, lack of attention or conflicting work responsibilities. Their interaction patterns are equally shaped by their perception of the division of labour. For the *Iron Sky* team, their various online communities are not as such necessarily invited to be part of the production of the final cultural artefact, but the world around it. A common trope, uttered in interviews as well as on a number of forums including the *Star Wreck* forum, is that of the benevolent dictator. The professional *Iron Sky* team operates with a stricter hierarchy, and, likewise, with less openness in accepting input to story-lines and similar. In an interview with Antto, discussing collaborative production and crowdsourcing, he underlined that creating a film is different from creating other cultural artefacts by means of peer production. The quote below summarizes the *Iron Sky*'s core team's overall approach to their WAM engagement:

> Wikipedia is an easy example because it's a collection of information, but a film would need to be a coherent work. You cannot take a bunch of people and put them together and expect something coherent to come and certainly not with a single voice and a single message. […] I think that crowdsourcing something artistic needs to be more of a dictatorship […]. For example, *Iron Sky* we've been very, very tight-lipped about what the actual plot […]. But at the same time we've been asking a lot of things from our fans about the world, the visuals, technology, things like that which are more about the padding around.
>
> [Antto, interview 15 September 2011]

An illustrative example of work outsourced to the WAM production members was highlighted by Vili. He described this task as an impulsive, experimental, idea: to arrange a fan gathering in Berlin during the *Berlinale* film festival. In order to arrange this meeting, the core team posted a task on WAM, and with the help from production members, they managed to secure a free location and recruit participants:

> We went to Berlin, the film festival, and somebody [in the core team] floated an idea, like hey, let's arrange a fan meeting. And this was also a test how all this could work […]. So we put something up in a blog and Wreckamovie, like hey, we want to have a fan meeting, we need a place, we can't pay much or anything for it and so on. It took half an hour of actual work time for us to get a really kick arse place […]. We got something like, 70 people, like without even advertising it really, and it turned out great, you know.
>
> [Vili, interview, 22 August 2011]

As the quote above attests, the ad hoc orientation is also steered towards the maximizing of output and the minimizing of effort. To that end, the *Iron Sky* core team, in contrast to those with an aspirational orientation, do not engage individually with all shots given in response to their tasks.

That the WAM *Iron Sky* production members are predominantly invited to participate in the more peripheral aspects of the *Iron Sky* production, the "padding around", is evident from the tasks available for the WAM members to participate in. Over the five year production period, the core team created a total of 74 *Iron Sky* WAM tasks. Of these, 20 tasks related to PR and marketing (including merchandise); another 12 tasks related to material support, such as specific equipment or venues; 21 tasks called for background research or reference materials; and only 16 tasks were calling for submissions intended to be included in the actual movie (5 tasks fall outside of these categories). Of the 16 tasks asking for contributions intended to form part of the movie, four tasks were about creating individual audio recordings. For those tasks, WAM members were, for instance, asked to record themselves saying, "who are you", in their mother tongue. Another four tasks directly

relating to the production were on the graphic design of movie posters and Nazi-inspired classroom alphabet letters. A further five tasks called for animations of, predominantly, spaceships. This brief listing of the types of WAM tasks available in the *Iron Sky* production is intended to underline the ad-hoc nature of the tasks. Also, as indicated, the tasks are focusing on crowdsourcing, on getting materials from individuals.

As mentioned in the opening description of the ad hoc orientation, the tendency is to provide a general, rather than an individual, level of feedback on task submissions. Whereas those with an aspirational orientation, as we saw in the section on the learning oriented, provide detailed, constructive feedback on an ongoing responsive basis, when content is posted, be it shots or comments, the ad hoc orientated tend to not provide detailed feedback on submitted designs or ideas. Instead, they provide superficial feedback on the overall outcome of the task at large. For the ad hoc oriented, feedback equals the action of thanking participants for their efforts. To provide further evidence to these descriptions: Of the 73 closed *Iron Sky* WAM tasks, 13 were closed without any closing comments. Of the tasks that were given closing comments, only 12 directed thanks to named individuals. The vast majority, 49 of the tasks, were shorter general comments thanking WAM members for their efforts. For example, a task asking for suggestions for rap songs for the *Iron Sky* soundtrack received 43 shots; the closing comment reads:

> Thanks a lot for great suggestions, people! One of these songs will hopefully end up on our film - it's a big hunt for rights and so many things will affect it, but at least we have a nice shopping list at our hands here :)
> [*Iron Sky*, closing comment; Task: "Rap Anthems", 24 August 2010]

Another task, asking WAM members to come up with jokes about Moon Nazis, received 65 shots, triggering the following closing comment:

> Awesome and fun stuff here! Thanks for these!
> [*Iron Sky*, closing comment; Task: "Moon Nazi Jokes", 9 May 2009]

Yet another task, asking for reference material from existing feature films and TV-series showing air or space battles, received 31 shots, prompting this closing comment:

> I think we have big enough of reference library here! Thanks for this, I'll be checkin' em out! (And some I have already).
> [*Iron Sky*, closing comment; Task: "Reference films / TV", 25 November 2009]

Another example attesting to the briefness of the closing comments is the following; the feedback given to a full 272 shots that were submitted in response to the core team's call for *Iron Sky* taglines:

> Wonderful taglines! We'll be seeing these in the future in our marketing!
> [*Iron Sky*, closing comment; Task: "*Iron Sky* tagline", 25 November 2009]

Additionally attesting to the practices of the ad hoc individuals' emphasis on efficiency is the occurrence of generic closing comments. Of the 49 tasks containing general closing comments, the following exact wording was used eight times:

> Thanks *everyone* for great shots and comments! We've had so far very good ideas, and will start designing the Earth Fleet ships based on your ideas. We're going to need further assistance later on, and we'll put more specific tasks as we move along. Great stuff!
> [*Iron Sky*, closing comment; various tasks, 25 November 2010]

Apart from two longer closing comments, thanking individual WAM production members in detail for specific content, the few more substantial closing comments tend to be those associated with tasks where the submitted content ended up not being used. To illustrate this point, consider the closing comment of the final of three tasks asking members to design alphabet letters:

> Thanks a lot for everyone for participating on the task; unfortunately, we didn't get every letter [of the alphabet] through the task, and although we did get most, we were unable to use the exact submissions in the film. We did use the stylistic ideas, but had to unify them and have an artist re-draw them to be able to get what we needed in right schedule. So the task didn't go to waste, but wasn't possible to use it in the current form. Thanks a lot for everyone participating.

[*Iron Sky*, closing comment; task: "Alphabets according to the Moon Nazis, part 3", 7 February 2010]

The ad hoc oriented individual's crowdsourcing practices portrayed above, perhaps unsurprisingly, leave the *Iron Sky* core team some challenges when it comes to determining accreditation for the movie's end credits. Like the aspirational orientation, accreditation is given consideration by the ad hoc oriented group. The latter group does not, however, pay much attention to accreditation on a regular, ongoing basis. Only two *Iron Sky* task descriptions explicitly state that labour will be rewarded by means of inclusion in the end credits. The only other mentioning of accreditation in task descriptions is found in a task asking for audio recordings; here, it is underlined that inclusion in end credits cannot be guaranteed because the external deadline for submission of end credits has expired. Those exceptions aside, questions of accreditation for labour are not evoked as incentives when tasks are initiated, or in general communication to WAM production members. Nevertheless, the core *Iron Sky* team expresses its determination to honour WAM participation. To that end, as *Iron Sky*'s post-production phase is nearing its end in the fall of 2011, Antto sends out an email to the production's WAM members, which includes the following:

> Did you participate in making *Iron Sky*? We are right now composing the end credits of *Iron Sky*, and want to double-check we have everyone's names who participated in the production listed, and everyone who deserves a credit, gets it. While we are going through your contributions from Wreckamovie we do recommend filling out the form so we can triple-check everything.
>
> [Antto, WAM email to all *Iron Sky* members, 11 October 2011]

This approach to determining co-authorship and contributions differs from that of the aspirational participants. Where the aspirational participants, because of their responsive and sustained engagement with their production WAM members, are aware of exactly who has carried out which tasks, the ad hoc oriented rely on participating WAM members to actively and explicitly claim accreditation. As we will see below, this approach resulted in

some confusion amongst WAM production members, and might have resulted in contributors being left out of the end credits. In Antto's email above, a link to an *Iron Sky* blog post is included. Below is an excerpt from the linked blog post content:

> This is an open call to **everyone** who has participated in the production in **any way** – no matter if you were an actor, an extra, did some work over at Wreckamovie (that ended up on the movie), participated via Skype, eMail… please, **fill up this form**.
>
> [Mikko, *Iron Sky* blog post, 11 October 2011]

As the above and Antto's email underline, the *Iron Sky* team only ascribes official value to WAM submissions that ended up being used in the movie. Antto's email is indirect about this, stating "everyone who deserves a credit". Mikko's blog post explicitly states that only the submitters of WAM content that was directly used in the production will be honoured in the end credits, that is, will be awarded recognizable embodied cultural capital. Because of the *Iron Sky* team's WAM interaction and feedback practices, WAM production members, however, have little way of knowing more specifically if, or to which degree, their submitted content was put to use. This experienced uncertainty is evident from comments posted in response to the blog posts quoted above. A range of comments from WAM members explicitly express insecurity about whether their submitted content was used, whether it was useful. Likewise, a few of these comments indicate some level of dissatisfaction with the core team's lack of responsiveness on WAM. The following comments to the open call for accreditation, posted by six different WAM members (non-research participants), are illustrative of these sentiments:

> - I would have loved to have participated in the production somehow, but never received any feedback…
>
> - How could I know? I contributed with some translations on the [WAM] site, but have no way of knowing if they ended up being used :) Credits would be nice though :)
>
> - I gave some suggestions for Earth's defence, don't know if they made it into the movie, but here it is [link to WAM entry]

> - Wish I had… :(Just suggested some things and offered my incredible *cough* talents, but you didn't want me! :'(….beside that…. all is good. :)
>
> - I attempted to help, but I received no communications for my offers to do so over on Wreckamovie. so, nope, not in the credits. too bad, I've worked on films for 12 years in CG…
>
> - I provided from my own personal online research, background into Moon Nazis as the concept originates in actual Neo Nazi propaganda, and pitched story ideas inspired therefrom. Do let me know if anything I contributed was ever actually put to use in the film.

The WAM member comments indicate that there is some level of discrepancy between the labour expectations of the participants and the level of feedback and communication of the core *Iron Sky* team. It likewise shows that questions of accreditation are central to some of the *Iron Sky* WAM production members, and that they care about the work they have put into the *Iron Sky* tasks. In the end, a relatively low number of the 2800+ *Iron Sky* WAM members were named in the theatrical version of *Iron Sky*'s end credits: Under the headline "Special thanks to worldwide *Iron Sky* WAM community", 66 individuals were named.

This pattern of the ad hoc orientation has also not gone unnoticed by more active WAM community members. The topic is somewhat sensitive, though. After all, the *Iron Sky* core team created and owns WAM; *Iron Sky* is the flag-ship production on the platform, and the majority of the more active community members have followed the team since their *Star Wreck* days. Yet, in many interviews with WAM members, more or less subtle hints about their interaction patterns have been made. Here one example:

> If you look at, for example, *Iron Sky* it's not like they really use Wreckamovie. Of course they've used for some simple tasks but it's more like the last minute effort than actually using it.
>
> [Tuukka, interview, 1 September 2012]

Likewise, the patterns are one a few occasions highlighted in WAM community related discussion thread. For example, when discussing ways of interacting on WAM, and of

sustaining participation, the ad hoc orientation's interaction patterns are addressed as "the strange style of communication with *Iron Sky*, where one shot after the other is fired into the dark void of space without ever being heard of again ;-)" [Gerhard, WAM community discussion thread, 31 January 2010]. Having manually counted the number of *Iron Sky* task shots that have failed in generating comments from production owners/leaders or WAM production members, the trend is clear. Of the total 2522 shots submitted to the 74 *Iron Sky* tasks, 1097 shots (43%) have zero comments.

The Fandom orientation

In essence, the fandom orientation is driven by admiration for a specific group of artists. Amongst the WAM production cases studied in this research, the *Iron Sky* production is the only one to have a large number of fandom oriented WAM members. This should come as no surprise, given their *Star Wreck* legacy as established in chapter 4, and further, their sophisticated online communication strategies unfolded throughout the production phases. The fandom oriented individuals do not, as such, play any greater role in realizing the production of the outcome, of the final artefact. They do, however, play a crucial role in the WAM economies at large, as I will demonstrate in the next chapter. Because of the somewhat limited role of the fandom oriented group, combined with their relatively low level of overall interactive WAM engagement, I will provide a slightly shorter analysis of their conceptualization and interpretation of labour.

As indicated in the earlier description of the available *Iron Sky* WAM tasks, the ability for fandom oriented participants to contribute or shape the cultural product is limited. The fandom oriented individuals offer their help in order to build up a closer and public affiliation with the core creators. There is a general tendency for this group to member many fewer productions than the aspirational, the community and the learning oriented;

many fandom oriented members exclusively contribute to the *Iron Sky* production. Likewise, they are much less likely to comment on other production members' contributions. These practices create a pattern of relatively low use of the thumbing-up function amongst the fandom oriented. They tend to use the thumbing-up function less as a social gesture, and more as a means of indicating to the core creators that they perceive of certain content as high quality that should be considered for inclusion in the final production.

To provide some measure of the predominance of the fandom oriented in the *Iron Sky* WAM member base, it is worth dwelling briefly on the motivational statements given by the WAM production members when joining specific WAM productions. These brief motivational statements are visible under each WAM production's member lists. The *Iron Sky* WAM production currently has 2806 members (as of 8 August 2013). Of these, 1865 *Iron Sky* WAM production members have provided a brief statement expressing their motivation for joining the production. At large, there are seven different motivations present in that data:

- Professional or quasi-professional cultural industry workers wanting to participate
- Sci-fi fans loving all things sci-fi regardless of context or creators
- General movie enthusiasts interested in following the process
- People motivated by the open source/peer production approach
- WW2 / alternate history hobbyists interested in scientific aspects of the storyline
- *Star Wreck* fans joining because of their fascination with the core team
- *Iron Sky* admirers liking the actual content; teaser/storyline/concept art

The latter two categories, those who can be said to fall under the fandom orientation, make up around half of the *Iron Sky* WAM member base (of those who have indicated their motivation explicitly). Here are a few illustrative member motivations:

> I am a humble admirer of Starwreck -team and am happy if I can do my part in helping in that new task, "Ironsky".
>
> I've been following your work since starwreck 5 began production.
>
> I've been a fan of the *Star Wreck* movies and would be interested in making an even better flick with that team.
>
> I'm a big fan of In the Pirkinning and would be extremely interested in taking part in *Iron Sky*.
>
> I have followed (I'm a fan) the Wreck-productions for a long time and I'm really interested (really excited) about this new one.

The level of fandom should not be neglected. In interviews with WAM members I met similar levels of enthusiasms for the *Iron Sky* creators and the *Iron Sky* production. One had, for example, purchased no fewer than ten copies of *Star Wreck* VI (gifts for friends); another still had the old *Iron Sky* poster on his door:

> When the *Star Wreck* film came, I was one of the first ones to buy it. And also I bought all these t-shirts and CD's and, you know, the sound track. I have a poster, like, old poster, really old, like from years before the film was completed, still [hanging] on my door.
>
> [Tianyi, *Iron Sky* WAM member, interview, 17 September 2011]

Matias, a long-time *Star Wreck* fan who had been active on the *Star Wreck* forum for many years, explained how he experienced WAM as a platform for interaction. It was clear that he perceived WAM as more serious venue than the *Star Wreck* forum. To him, good behaviour in WAM entailed a practice of keeping conversation to a minimum, of being concise and to the point. These interpretations of the division of labour may be part of the explanation of the interaction patterns of the fandom oriented individuals. In respect of the seriousness of the *Iron Sky* production, they operate with different conventions from the other types of orientations. Consider Matias's interpretation of WAM and the *Iron Sky* production:

> It's of course a different purpose in that the other [*Star Wreck*] forum was just for discussion for discussion's sake. Wreckamovie actually has a goal, to make

> a movie. So I would of course try to be even more focused and even more on topic. Only if I had something to say I would say it, but I would try to say it in as crystalized a form as possible.
>
> [Matias, interview, 17 September 2011]

Matias' interpretation of karma and the activity of thumbing-up submitted content is also different from those of the aspirational, the community and learning orientations. Talking about his *Iron Sky* engagement, and the karma function, he underlined that he gave only a few thumbs-up, and only to high quality content. In other words, in his interpretation of karma, the function serves as a quality assurer. If members only thump-up content of high quality, the core team will be able to more easily identify it, and also, they would know what content the fans wanted to see in the final output. Matias said about his karma giving practice:

> Well I could thumb it, but only if it was a really good idea. So I use it basically that something I would like to see in the finished film, that was basically my idea of how I used the karma button.
>
> [Matias, interview, 17 September 2011]

Onni expressed a similar interpretation of karma, underlining that he restricted his karma awarding to tasks he had also submitted shots to himself:

> I gave points mainly in the same tasks that I did myself; if there was a good shirt design or alphabet design or some general ideas that were good […]. I don't give that many points, I got quite a high bar […]. I only give to those designs that I thought was good. The idea behind the image needed to be good and the actual work would have to look good.
>
> [Onni, interview, 6 September 2011]

As such, the fandom oriented do not perceive of the karma system as serving a social function, but as a means of communicating their evaluation of submitted content to the core creators.

5.3 Summary of findings

The worlds of the WAM productions encompass a range of different WAM member orientations. These orientations differ starkly in the ways they conceptualize WAM work, leading to co-existing and diverse sets of conventions guiding the division of labour. The aspirational participants, driven by their motivation to enact field-positional change, and their goal of generating cultural capital, to a large extent follow established industry conventions guiding the division of labour. Questions of accreditation are central, and the aspirational orientation takes care in ensuring adequate accreditation for any contributing WAM members in end credits. Likewise, they seek to establish and share institutionalized cultural capital by rewarding labour officially in online IMDb listings. In extension of this preoccupation with accreditation, they perceive of the karma system as important in recognizing labour within the WAM community. To this end, they actively encourage production contributors to ensure that their work is awarded with their earned karma points. The aspirational participants actively use the thumps-up function to recognize contributions. Their recognition, however, is not limited to indications of approval. They engage deeply with submitted content, and provide constructive feedback to individual WAM members. Once collaborative relationships are established, the aspirational often make use of back-stage communication.

The learning oriented individuals possess different motivations for participating; they seek to enhance their skills within a certain, bounded domain. Therefore, they seek tasks across a larger range of WAM productions. They are not preoccupied with contributing to the final cultural output per se; instead, they are concerned about the embodied cultural capital they gain though their learning processes. They are not motivated by the promise of end credits, or by the level of professionalism of a given production, but by the constructive feedback they receive from social production leaders. When supported, learning oriented participants

contribute high quality content that feeds into WAM productions; they thus play a key role in facilitating the production of outputs.

The community oriented participants share a focus on sociality and experiences of belonging. They are the most active WAM group, and loyally follow a large number of productions throughout their production periods. They take on the most diverse forms of tasks of all orientations, and find the *wreckupation* system, officially demarking divisions of labour, limited and inadequate. To community-oriented individuals, WAM at large is not about creating culture per se, or about increasing individual levels of competences, it is about making friends and creating a supportive environment. Although they indirectly recognize that are providing labour, they frame their work as the helping out of friends. Their focus is as much on the stories of the individual WAM members as it is on the productions. Although members of this group hold high levels of karma, they are somewhat hostile to the karma point system's quantitative and evaluative nature.

In contrast, the ad hoc orientation perceives the WAM community as a resource pool. They primarily use WAM as a crowdsourcing platform for more peripheral production related tasks. Their engagement is characterized by long periods of inactivity; they are active when a particular task needs to be executed, or when checking up on submitted content. Where the aspirational participants engage individually with submitted content, the ad hoc orientation tends to provide limited feedback on task submissions. Instead, they tend to communicate general remarks when closing production tasks. These general remarks are predominantly characterized by brief thanks directed to the submitters at large. The ad hoc oriented are concerned about accreditation of labour, although their practices for recognizing work differ from those of the aspirational individuals. Because of their interaction patterns, identifying contributors is more challenging, and they therefore invite WAM members to actively claim accreditation.

Finally, the fandom oriented individuals are motivated by the possibility to directly interact with filmmakers they admire. They tend to participate in a low number of WAM productions, and comment less on other WAM members' shots and comments. They perceive of the WAM platform as a serious sphere for production, and therefore restrict themselves in what they post. They do not care, as such, about karma, which they perceive as a quality measure rather than a social function. In reality, this WAM group plays a limited role in the actual production of the cultural artefact. They do, however, form a cornerstone in the economies of the WAM productions at large, as we will see in the next chapter.

In sum, building on Becker's conceptualization of art world inhabitants as being defined by their shared orientation, this chapter demonstrated that in the WAM productions there is not one unifying homogenous set of conventions guiding the division of labour. By analysing drivers and perceptions of WAM engagement by individual production members across the four production cases, five distinct labour orientations were identified. The presentation of the typology of WAM labour orientations demonstrated that the WAM art world inhabitants conceptualized their engagement in contrasting ways, resulting in equally differentiated practices and values. The orientations, in turn, bore influence on what WAM production members perceived as incentivizing participation. The learning oriented individuals, for example, were primarily concerned with accruing embodied cultural capital, whereas the aspirational individuals were oriented towards the accumulation of symbolic and institutionalized cultural capital. This typology is essential in understanding the dynamics of WAM productions.

Chapter 6
Conversion of capital in WAM productions

6.1 Introduction

In scholarly literature, networked participatory practices are often accounted for by drawing on the concept of gift economies (e.g. Barbrook, 2005; Baym, 2011; Bays & Mowbray, 1999; Bergquist & Ljungberg, 2001; Burnett, 2003, 2012; Giesler & Pohlmann, 2003; Hellekson, 2009; Lessig, 2008; Pearson, 2007; Skågeby, 2010; Zeitlyn, 2003). This is the case for Benkler (2006) too, as discussed in Chapter 2. Throughout *The Wealth of Networks,* Benkler alludes to the importance of gift economies, which, he argues, are not peripheral to but at the very centre of modern capitalist societies (p. 116). Despite Benkler's emphasis on the importance of recognizing gift economies as drivers of networked cultural production, and peer production in particular, his work neglects that gift economies are upheld by complex social dynamics.

As such, Bourdieu's notion of alternative capital can serve as an analytical lens through which the social economies of the WAM productions can be approached. This will enable more refined analyses of the social dynamics of the WAM production processes, moving beyond a simplified notion of gift economies. Flows and conversions of alternative capital have been argued to constitute gift cultures (Dolfsma et al., 2009; Silber, 2009), and therefore, analysing these will enable a more nuanced picture. What is worth keeping in

mind, though, is that Bourdieu in his publications theorizing cultural production attends to alternative capital in a somewhat restricted fashion: He exclusively frames the social economies of cultural production in terms of struggles over capital. Bourdieu, for example, described the relationship between the *consecrated avant-garde* and the *bohemian avant-garde,* in the field of small-scale productions, as centred around fights for accumulations of symbolic capital, around legitimation processes. This is to say that Bourdieu did not consider social economies to play a facilitating and enabling role in cultural production. Instead, these economies were portrayed as solely driving competitiveness over a certain form of capital between antagonistic positions within either the subfield of large-scale or small-scale production. As discussed in Chapter 2, in *The Rules of Art* and *The Field of Cultural Production* Bourdieu concerns himself little with defining and accounting for the various forms of capital he otherwise operates with in the context of, amongst other things, this theory of cultural consumption (Bourdieu, 1984). In *The Rules of Art*, Bourdieu, for example, social capital was not addressed aside from brief mentions in two footnotes (Bourdieu, 1996 p. 288 note 64 and p. 361 note 65). Still, the concept of alternative capital is central to Bourdieu's theory of cultural production; most prominently, the concepts are evoked to explain the drivers of and stakes of the fields. While Bourdieu thus does not as such comprehensively connect his theory of cultural production to his conceptualizations of alternative capital, and their latent convertibility, as presented in other works (e.g. Bourdieu, 1984, 1993a, 1997c), I argue that doing so allows for the identification of central processes shaping and challenging the WAM productions' realizations. Therefore, this chapter analyses the social economies of the WAM productions by examining the flows of alternative and financial capital as they manifest in conversion processes involving the WAM producers, production members and the wider production network. In doing so, this chapter addresses research theme three, the social economies of WAM productions, and its associated research questions:

RQ3: In which ways do alternative forms of capital manifest in the WAM peer productions, and what are the indications that the involved actors actively seek to convert these forms of capital into other forms of capital?

- What characterizes the dynamics and mechanisms enabling the conversion of one form of capital to another?

The analysis of the WAM production cases' social economies, presented in this chapter, distinguishes between *direct* and *indirect* conversions of alternative capital. I define *direct* conversions as processes that require a WAM production community member to make a *financial transaction* in the traditional economic sense. Direct conversions of alternative capital are thus processes that primarily relate to the concept of crowdfunding. As noted in the opening thesis chapter, the concept of crowdfunding has gained pronounced attention by policy-makers since the early 2010s. The policy focus, however, focuses on the regulatory aspects of crowdfunding, not the social implications. Meanwhile, in academic literature, several scholars call for research on the social aspects of crowdfunding practices (e.g. Belleflamme et al., 2013; Burtch et al., 2013; Lehner, 2013; Ordanini et al., 2011). It is explicitly recognized that "even basic academic knowledge of the dynamics of crowdfunding is lacking" (Mollick, 2013, p. 1). Because of this acute lack of rigorous evidence on crowdfunding, as embedded in social economies, and due to the increased importance of crowdfunding in policy contexts, the analysis of direct conversion processes takes some precedence in this chapter.

Next, the chapter presents an analysis of the *indirect* conversions of alternative capital as they manifest in the WAM productions. I define *indirect* conversions as processes that require a WAM production community member to make a *social gesture* rather than a *financial transaction*. Indirect conversions can also be distinguished from direct conversions by the specific sphere they are influenced by, as will be accounted for below. Such spheres

are socio-technical spaces of the networked information economy, as described by Benkler (2006, p. 3).

6.2 Direct conversion of alternative capital

The following analysis of *direct* conversion mechanisms provides a comprehensive analysis of the *Iron Sky* production's crowdfunding strategies. Of the four production cases, two productions actively sought to enable the direct conversion of alternative capital: *Iron Sky* and *Ice Guns*. The *Iron Sky* production engaged extensively with crowdfunding activities over the entire production period of seven years. However, the *Ice Guns* production only did so in a limited fashion for a shorter period of time. The *Ice Guns* production primarily relied on indirect conversion of capital. Their limited engagement with direct conversions will therefore be addressed in the context of indirect conversion, to make clearer their reliance on these processes.

Concretely, the analysis presented in section 6.2 will first give an account of the overall importance of the direct conversion of alternative capital for the *Iron Sky* team. Following this, the various crowdfunding activities initiated by the *Iron Sky* team are discussed. Finally, the analysis will focus on the production community members' perception of these crowdfunding initiatives.

6.2.1 *Iron Sky*

The *Iron Sky* production team initiated an extensive portfolio of activities seeking to convert alternative capital to financial capital throughout the production period. In the early stages of the pre-production phases, during 2006-2009, these activities were primarily focused on strengthening the social relationships between the core creators and their fans and

contributors, but were not an integral part of the external communication strategy. In a 2007-09 version of the *Iron Sky* website, for example, the core team highlighted that donating financially to the production would "make the film belong as much to you as to us" [*Iron Sky* website, 14 March 2007]. Relatedly, to further strengthen the sense of community amongst contributing funders and the core team, prior to the launch of the Wreckamovie platform, the *Iron Sky* team created a virtual space on their main website for donors "intended to bring all the participants together under one roof" [*Iron Sky* website, 14 March 2007].

However, from January 2010 onwards, during the late stages of the pre-production phase, the *Iron Sky* team began actively promoting and communicating their non-traditional funding strategies externally. These non-traditional funding activities, which will be discussed in detail in the next section, were grouped together under an easily communicable narrative, selling the story of the core team's ability to convert alternative capital into financial capital. This narrative emphasized and celebrated the fact that online crowds and audiences had voluntarily contributed financially to the *Iron Sky* production budget. To lobby for this narrative, a comprehensively re-designed *Iron Sky* website launched in January 2010, included a section dedicated to funding matters. This section reported in writing, as well as visually, on the production team's progress towards their crowdfunding efforts. Figure 6.1 depicts the *Iron Sky* website's visual representation of the outcome of their crowdfunding activities as of 30 September 2010; at that point in time, the team had raised €341,800 of their target of €900,000. The visual representation of the outcome of the crowdfunding efforts was regularly updated in the period running from early 2010 up until the first theatrical release of *Iron Sky* in April 2012. The last visually communicated report shared on the website suggested that a final amount of €686,270 was raised by means of crowdfunding; this figure has not been updated since the spring of 2012 [as of 1 September 2013].

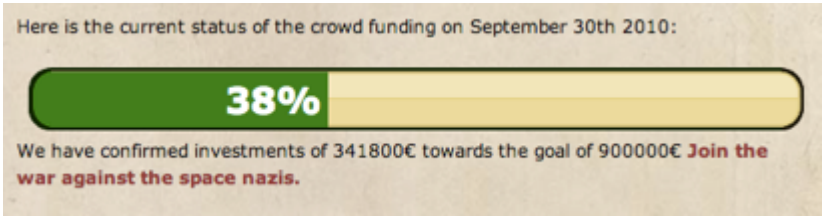


Figure 6.1: Iron Sky *crowdfunding status, 30 September 2010, Source:* Iron Sky *website*

An interesting aspect of these direct conversion outcomes is that their value exceeds the amount of financial capital raised: The financial capital raised by crowdfunding also serves as an important source of symbolic capital. While the actual financial capital raised is important for realizing the production budget, these means are most powerful and valuable as a communicable symbolic asset. The content of a large range of international media publications, including film industry trade press magazines, reporting on the *Iron Sky* production, attest to this claim. In media portrayals, however, the actual amount of capital raised is rounded up to a more immediately comprehensible number: The story of a full €1 million (often also reported as $1 million) crowdfunded means is the most evoked narrative in externally produced portrayals of the *Iron Sky* production. The below quotes are illustrative of the sentiments put forward in publications such as *The Hollywood Reporter*, *Time Magazine*, and *Variety*:

> *Iron Sky* […] has been generating headlines and online buzz for years. A good portion of the hype is due to how the film was funded: About $1 million of the $10 million budget came through fans' online donations, or so-called crowd funding.
>
> [*The Hollywood Reporter*, 15 February 2012]

> *Iron Sky*'s total budget is around $11 million, mostly funded by European production deals. But fans have kicked in over $1 million in cash […].
>
> [*Time Magazine*, 26 October 2011]

> The most expensive film ever to come out of Finland, "*Iron Sky*" never would have gotten made without $1 million contributed by online fans, many of whom have been tracking the project since its inception.
>
> [*Variety*, 6 February 2012]

> The most remarkable aspect of *Iron Sky* is that it was made for a budget of only 7 million ($9 million), 1 million being raised by "crowd funding".
>
> [Australian Financial Review, May 12, 2012]

This narrative of *Iron Sky* online fans contributing €1 million towards the production budget, a story promoted by the core team and media alike, understates the complexity of the crowdfunding efforts undertaken by the *Iron Sky* team. This narrative reduces these complexities by indirectly communicating that the crowdfunding activities formed a unified, singular process. In reality, it was quite the contrary: the crowdfunded outcome was the result of six years' worth of actively promoting a diverse portfolio of activities initiated to raise financial capital. In the following section, an overview and discussion of these activities is provided.

Overview of activities initiated to convert capital

Some of the *Iron Sky* production's funding strategies were already initiated in the *Star Wreck* VI production phase, namely, the selling of merchandise. In 2003, the team launched a simple one-page sub-website from which *Star Wreck* t-shirts could be purchased by both local (Finnish) and international *Star Wreck* forum members. Three years later, in 2006, when the *Iron Sky* team formed their production company, Energia Productions, and established a physical office in the city of Tampere, they also created a small merchandise shop in a corner of these premises, manned from 9 am – 5pm on weekdays. With the official initiation of the *Iron Sky* pre-production phase in 2006, the *Iron Sky* team expanded the range of merchandise available in their offline shop and their new online shop. Over the

period from 2006 – 2013 (current) the team continuously experimented with new types of merchandise, ranging from mugs, mouse pads, toothbrushes, *Iron Sky* dog tags, pens, and posters to garments such as hoodies and t-shirts. Following the cinematic release of *Iron Sky*, merchandise on sale came to include content driven goods such as an *Iron Sky* board game and *Iron Sky* PC console game.

In August 2008, the *Iron Sky* team introduced a novel form of goods for sale: *War Bonds*, priced at €50. Anyone buying a War Bond would receive a signed A4 sized poster, described as "an official certificate of your bragging rights for having supported *Iron Sky*!"[5]. The War Bond package also included a DVD containing extra behind-the-scenes materials, and an *Iron Sky* dog tag (See Figure 6.2 for illustration of package content). While the package thus included material goods, the primary good promoted was the symbolic value of the immaterial support inherent in the idea of these fictional bonds.



Figure 6.2: Illustration of War Bond content, Source: Iron Sky *Flickr account, CC BY-NC 2.0 licence*

[5] War Bond description, *Iron Sky* store, 16 February 2011

In June 2010, the *Iron Sky* team also initiated the pre-ordering facility of an *Iron Sky* Collector's Edition DVD set. This Collector's Edition was thus made available for purchase two years prior to the actual release of the DVDs included in the package; these would not become available until the autumn of 2012. The box set was available at a price of €300, and included a signed Blu-ray and DVD release of *Iron Sky*, as well as a making-of documentary, a certificate of support (War Bond) and a ticket to the *Iron Sky* premiere. Two years after the launch of the Collector's Edition, in May 2012, the box set was heavily re-promoted by the *Iron Sky* team on their Facebook page. After that, it was deliberately made unavailable for future purchases.

In addition to the material goods outlined above, the *Iron Sky* team also created scarce digital goods for fans and contributors to access in exchange for a financial donation of €1 or greater. Access to these goods, via a feature called *Sneak Peak*, was introduced in November 2010, as the *Iron Sky* production entered its production phase. *Sneak Peak* was a service accessible by members only. Members were those individuals who had signed up though the *Iron Sky* website, and had made a financial donation. *Sneak Peak* allowed members access to exclusive content. Specifically, members were able to follow the step-wise production of the opening sequence, the first five minutes of the final theatrical version of *Iron Sky*. *Sneak Peak* also granted access to the manuscript of the opening sequence, the animatic of it, the first rough cut of the green screen footage, various stages of the CGI work, and the final version of the opening sequence four months prior to the first official theatrical release (April 2012). The pay-walled *Sneak Peak* section of the website doubled as a private space, in which the *Iron Sky* core team asked for advice from *Sneak Peak* members on matters such as how to improve the final trailer, which theatrical poster design to choose, and what to call an upcoming extended DVD version of *Iron Sky*. The donation function of the *Sneak Peak* service replaced a previous donation function that was in place on an earlier instalment of the *Iron Sky* website from 2006-2009. As mentioned, the core team, when

asking fans to donate financial capital, underlined that doing so would "make the film belong as much to you as to us".

In April 2011, the *Iron Sky* team also initiated a more traditional crowdfunding campaign, using a dedicated crowdfunding platform. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the *Iron Sky* team had exceeded their production budget during their shootings in Germany and Australia (November 2010 through February 2011). In a blog post published in April 2011, the director Mikko explained the situation and their strategy as follows:

> We need to fill a gap in our funding […] we went over budget during the shoot because of weather conditions. […] I've launched *Iron Sky* on 9 different crowdfunding platforms […]. And as a rabbit in the race, we're simultaneously benchmarking the results with *Iron Sky*'s own crowdfunding sources – the Store, the War Bonds, [and the] Sneak Peek […].
>
> [Mikko, *Iron Sky* blog post, 1 April 2011]

The campaign was framed by the core creators as fulfilling a dual role: to help them secure a gap in the *Iron Sky* budget, and to generate useful know-how to be shared with their online community as well as other filmmakers:

> I'm simultaneously gathering information to write a comprehensive study on crowd financing using the internet communities and available platforms, which I will publish later this year for all the filmmakers out there interested on crowdfunding to read!
>
> [Mikko, *Iron Sky* blog post, 1 April 2011]

The *Iron Sky* team shared their experiences with testing out these online crowdfunding platforms in blog posts. They were honest about the fact that the externally hosted crowdfunding campaigns proved less successful than they had hoped. By the end of the 60 day crowdfunding campaign the *Iron Sky* team had raised less than €4,000 of the target of €300,000 [*Iron Sky* blog post, 14 July 2011]. Likewise, they made it clear that their own crowdfunding initiatives seemed better able to raise financial capital. Reporting on the financial outcome of the first week of the external crowdfunding campaigns, Mikko

explained that the team had raised €2,697 through the various crowdfunding platforms, whereas they had made an almost equal "€2,111 during the same time". This revenue had come from sales from the *Iron Sky* merchandise shop, the *Sneak Peak* service and the War Bonds [*Iron Sky* blog post, 12 April 2011]. This almost equal revenue is even more pronounced when it is taken into account that the merchandise goods, the War Bonds and the *Sneak Peak* service were not explicitly promoted or campaigned during that period.

The available data on the *Iron Sky* team's crowdfunding strategies thus suggests that the more traditional crowdfunding initiatives, using dedicated online platforms, were less successful in generating financial means than the crowdfunding activities initiated by the *Iron Sky* team internally. According to the data available, the donation gallery on the earlier instalment of the *Iron Sky* website, combined with the outcome of the externally hosted crowdfunding campaign in 2001, raised less than €2000. Based on these numbers, it seems fair to conclude that the *Iron Sky* merchandise, the War Bonds and the *Sneak Peak* function were driving the direct conversion of alternative capital. This finding corresponds with findings presented in a recent study (Belleflamme et al., 2013). This study concluded that entrepreneurs seeking to raise financial capital by means of crowdfunding are able to design better reward and incentive systems, meeting the needs of the donors, if they do not make use of standardized online crowdfunding platforms.

Throughout the production period, the *Iron Sky* team was deliberately experimenting with different approaches to crowdfunding. They did so in order to meet the needs of the diverse population of fans:

> Much of this is testing what are the best ways to do crowdfunding. […]. Right now we are working with mostly traditional film funding and trying to find ways people can contribute. […] We're trying to offer different options for different people.
>
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook post, 17 June 2010]

This exploration of crowdfunding initiatives, however, was guided by an overarching strategy; the team was not merely testing out initiatives. The overarching strategy was related to how the *Iron Sky* team sought to market themselves. In an interview with the *Iron Sky* community manager, Antto, he explained that they deliberately promoted themselves in a different manner than other filmmakers. Rather than looking to the film industry for inspiration, they looked to the music industry:

> I think one of the most important pieces of the [*Iron Sky* marketing] strategy comes from Mikko. It was back in 2005, we were setting up the [production] company and he said "Okay, […] we want to make Energia kind of like a rock band and do the marketing like that" […]. We're still more looking at how bands do [marketing] stuff than other films.
>
> [Antto, interview, September 15, 2011]

The *Iron Sky* team is thus inspired by how fans follow musicians over the entire course of their artistic career; these fans are loyal to the artists, rather than to the specific albums produced. When the *Iron Sky* team thus initiates activities to raise financial means, they do so in ways they believe strengthen the on-going relationship between them and their community. The *Iron Sky* team therefore internally conceptualizes their funding activities as a unified process of relationship building.

Another implication of the *Iron Sky*'s internal conceptualization of their funding activities is that they perceive all crowdfunded means raised as feeding into the same ecosystem. This idea of the production as an ecosystem was also underpinning the former *Star Wreck* cast member and *Iron Sky* publicist's framing of the various *Iron Sky* fundraising activities. For example, in an interview, he explained how revenue from the *Sneak Peak* service was used to cover catering expenses for WAM members and other fans that had volunteered as extras during shootings:

> We started this service [*Sneak Peak*] where you can pay one euro or more [...]. And from the proceeds of that we could pay for the food for the fan extras [at the shooting in Frankfurt in late 2010]. So it kind of all ties in.
>
> [Vili, interview, 22 August 2011]

Vili's comment that "it all ties in" underlines how the *Iron Sky* team perceives the financial ecosystem as an organism that is shared with the *Iron Sky* fans; the ecosystem of the production encompasses creators and community members alike.

Taken together, the discussion and overview of the *Iron Sky* crowdfunding activities suggests that the most successful initiatives were those that framed the financial transactions in ways that made the economic aspect less obvious. The more simple donation functions offered were very explicitly about raising capital; these were one-off interactions between the *Iron Sky* team and the transacting individuals. The *Iron Sky* teams merchandise store, the *Sneak Peak* service and the War Bonds, on the other hand, were equally about building relationships over the course of time through repeating interactions. This finding corresponds with Bourdieu's portrayal of the effectiveness of alternative capital. He highlights that they are most powerful when their relationship and dependence on financial capital is concealed (Bourdieu, 1997c, p. 54).

Further, the analysis of the *Iron Sky* team's crowdfunding strategy suggests that the initiatives yielded derived values, further capital. The narrative of the €1 million crowdfunded means is deliberately evoked by the *Iron Sky* team with the goal of emphasising field-specific symbolic capital: the proven ability to convert alternative capital to financial capital. This particular field-specific symbolic capital represent a recognisable currency in the formal film industry, as, for example, evident from the previous quotes from industry publications such as *The Hollywood Reporter*. As such, the crowdfunding strategy and its outcomes reconfigure the *Iron Sky* teams' position in the field of cultural production. It allows them to leverage their alternative capital within the art world of the WAM

productions, resulting in field-specific symbolic capital, which are recognised in the field of large-scale production. These symbolic capital, in return, feed into legitimisation processes furthering their recognition in the traditional film industry.

Having analysed the *Iron Sky* team's complex crowdfunding strategies, and their outcome, the analysis will now focus on how the wider production community members interpreted these crowdfunding initiatives.

6.2.2 Two different interpretations of the crowdfunding initiatives

The *Iron Sky* teams' crowdfunding initiatives were interpreted in differing ways by the wider production community members. To frame the analysis of these opposing interpretations of the crowdfunding strategies, it is worth revisiting key arguments put forward in literature discussing the relationships between gifts and commodities. Gift cultures are increasingly defined on the basis of the perceptions of the individuals operating within them. This change in the framing of gift cultures has to do with parallel changes in the perception of the differences and relationships between gifts and commodities. There is an increasing tendency to repudiate a dichotomous distinction between gifts and commodities (e.g. Appadurai, 1986; Bird-David & Darr, 2009; Darr, 2003; Davis, 1996; Dolfsma et al., 2009; Herrmann, 1997; Lapavitsas, 2004; Rus, 2008; Smart, 1993). Carrier (1991), for example, argued that rather than forming two opposing logics, gifts and commodities exist on a continuum, making it impossible to distinguish between gift and commodities based on a set of pre-identified properties of each. Rather, as Appadurai (1986) suggested, in order to determine which of the two categories any given object intended for exchange belongs to, one must attend to the dynamics of the social space in

which these exchanges unfold. Likewise, one must seek to understand the perception and motivational drivers of the individuals involved in the exchanges.

As evident from the discussion of the various crowdfunding activities initiated by the *Iron Sky* team, some of these activities could be perceived as the selling of commodities. Therefore, a crucial question is whether these crowdfunding activities are better thought of as social activities or as commercial transactions. The answer to this question rests, in accordance with the literature outlined above, on how the participating individuals interpret these activities. In the case of the *Iron Sky* crowdfunding strategy, as the analysis below will demonstrate, the same crowdfunding activities are interpreted as being part of two distinct categories: gift economies and consumer cultures. These two opposing interpretations result in different social dynamics, and have implications for the flows and exchanges of alternative and financial capital. In what follows next, these dynamics and their characterizing patterns will be analysed.

Dynamic 1: Gift cultures oriented towards the accumulation of symbolic capital

The first of the two interpretations of the *Iron Sky* team's attempts at converting alternative capital into financial capital corresponds with the team's own framing of the activities as strengthening the social relationship between them and the community members. The team conceptualized the crowdfunding activities as forming bonds between them and their fans and collaborators, bonds characterized by gift culture virtues such as support and mutual recognition. The conversion of capital is thus enabled by a shared experience of belonging to a gift economy.

The shared social space of the gift economy is established through repeated interactions in the *Iron Sky* team's various online outlets, interactions between the team and their extended

community members. This space is not one that is perceived as a commoditized space, despite the fact that financial transactions are taking place between the *Iron Sky* core team and community members. When commodities such as *Iron Sky* t-shirts are purchased, the purchasers view the act as a social gesture. An item of merchandise is thus not thought of as an inalienable object. Rather, the acts of exchange are seen as physical manifestations of the social relationship between the core creators and community members. As we saw in the previous section, only very few individuals made direct financial donations to the *Iron Sky* team. Whereas making a financial donation denotes only a single transaction at a particular time, buying wearable merchandise or becoming a member of *Sneak Peak* allows a community member to benefit from a more visible and long-lasting form of symbolic capital. A donor making a direct financial donation is prompted to think of it as an impersonal transaction, an expression of economic logic. Donations are per se about financial capital, whereas the other activities are masked behind material manifestations of symbolic value. To understand the dynamics of these conversion mechanisms, the driver of gift economies must be acknowledged:

> The gift economy […] is based on […] a refusal of the logic of the maximization of economic profit, i.e. of the spirit of calculation […]. It is organized with a view to the accumulation of symbolic capital.
>
> (Bourdieu, 1997b, p. 237)

To appreciate what enabled the development of the social space of the *Iron Sky* gift economy, the trajectory of the *Iron Sky* team's online community engagement must be taken into account. Recall from Chapter 4 that the team had established the infrastructure for an online community when producing *Star Wreck* VI (1998-2005): the *Star Wreck* online forum. The team had engaged extensively with this community during the *Star Wreck* production period, which consisted of more than 1800 individuals, when the *Iron Sky* production entered its pre-production phase in 2006. These community members were so eager for their relationships with the core team to manifest in physical, symbolic objects

that they themselves put forward the suggestion of producing t-shirts. One member, for example, suggested it as a way for the core team to raise funds for the purchase of further computational processing power. He wrote: "Maybe you could sell official *Star Wreck* T-shirts to raise money for Computer(s)? […] I for one would buy one or two." [Member, forum.starwreck.com, 3 October 2002]. At first, the *Iron Sky* team was hesitant; they were not convinced that they would be able to produce high quality t-shirts at an affordable price. In response to the above suggestion, the co-director and later WAM architect, Atte, wrote: "I looked into the shirt issue some time ago, but couldn't find a good offer between quality and price in the Tampere area." [Atte, *Star Wreck* forum post, 3 October 2002]. The fact that the community members were explicitly asking for merchandise underlines the symbolic value of these goods. The purchasing of t-shirts and other merchandise formed part of the social economies of the productions, and granted significant symbolic capital to the purchasers and *Iron Sky* team alike. The *Iron Sky* social media manager, Riku, in an interview, also highlighted the importance of these material manifestations for community members:

> It started […] at the same time, the traditional funding and crowdfunding. But the reason for that is the previous film, *Star Wreck*. Because that had a community already, and they had been ordering the *Star Wreck* t-shirts. And then they announced to the community that we are planning on making a film about Space Nazis, and would you be interested? And everybody said: of course we are, let's do it again! So we started selling *Iron Sky* t-shirts from the very first day.
>
> [Riku, interview, 8 September 2011]

The role the various t-shirts play in the communication between the core team and the community attests to the symbolic value of the *Iron Sky* commodities. These t-shirts are material objects in the physical world, symbolizing the social bond built up and maintained in the online production spheres, and denote group membership. To illustrate the symbolic capital vested in the t-shirts, consider the following examples. In an *Iron Sky* blog post entitled "A big happy family", former *Star Wreck* member, and *Iron Sky* shop manager Pasi, shares the story of his *Star Wreck* t-shirt wearing girlfriend entering a bar only to find the

bartender wearing an identical t-shirt. This story is used to establish that bearers of these t-shirts belong to the same clan, share a social world:

> The moral of the story: us Wreckies are all one big happy family. If you see anyone wearing the [*Star Wreck*/WAM] logo anywhere, go up to them to chat about our stuff. Heck, while you're at it, give 'em a hug for good measure.
> [Pasi, *Iron Sky* blog post, 7 September 2007]

Relatedly, the core team repeatedly wears their own t-shirts in the various videos and photos they share on their online communication channels. One episode of *Iron Sky Director's Diary* is entirely focused on the symbolic value of the t-shirts. Mikko and Santtu explain how they bought an old used *Iron Sky* t-shirt at a flea market while humorously describing the seller as a traitor [*Iron Sky Directors Diary*, video, 14 October 2010]. Giving up the t-shirt is thus perceived as leaving the community, of rejecting the symbolic capital vested in the material object.

As described in Bourdieu's definition of gift economies, gift cultures are "organized with a view to the accumulation of symbolic capital" (Bourdieu, 1997b, p. 237). For the *Iron Sky* contributors, symbolic capital is continuously awarded in the form of recognition from the *Iron Sky* core team. Throughout the *Iron Sky* production process, the team frames the purchasing of merchandise/commodities as a means of support, of mutual recognition and obligation. They repeatedly thank the community members for their trust and support in them. In another episode of Director's Diaries, Mikko, for example, explicitly thanks *Sneak Peak* members for their feedback on the *Iron Sky* trailer, and explains that they have changed it accordingly [*Iron Sky* Directors Diary, video, 13 May 2011].

This gift economy relies on virtues such as mutual trust and recognition. The community members who have purchased merchandise thus expect that in return that the core team should feel an obligation to share its artistic process and artefacts. Consider, for example, an

Iron Sky Facebook member's surprise that the expected mutual obligation has limits. Having bought a t-shirt, this member seems to expect that this support will be honoured further: "I bought a t-shirt and I have to pay to see 5 first min?" [*Iron Sky* Facebook fan, 29 May 2012]. Likewise, several *Sneak Peak* members and War Bond owners view the shared space of the gift culture as resting on mutual recognition. This recognition is expected to be honoured in the *Iron Sky* end credits:

> Hm, guess those who bought "war bonds" are not included in the [end] credits? shame :(
>
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook fan, 17 January 2013]

Other community members make similar comments expressing disappointment at the limitations of the mutual obligations implicitly expected. The *Iron Sky* team has to clarify what it sees as its obligations on several occasions. Here are two examples of the *Iron Sky* team's responses to comments expressing surprise that purchases, experienced as social gestures, are not officially recognized in the film's end credits:

> Sorry, sneak peek doesn't count. Mainly because we can't make the longest end titles in the world ;) But we thank you anyway!
>
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook comment, 11 October 2011]

> Unfortunately War Bonds don't count as [end] credit.
>
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook comment, 11 October 2011]

With the above analysis in mind, the conversion dynamics unfolding in this experienced space of gift cultures can be illustrated as shown in Figure 6.3. Below this figure will be explained in more detail:

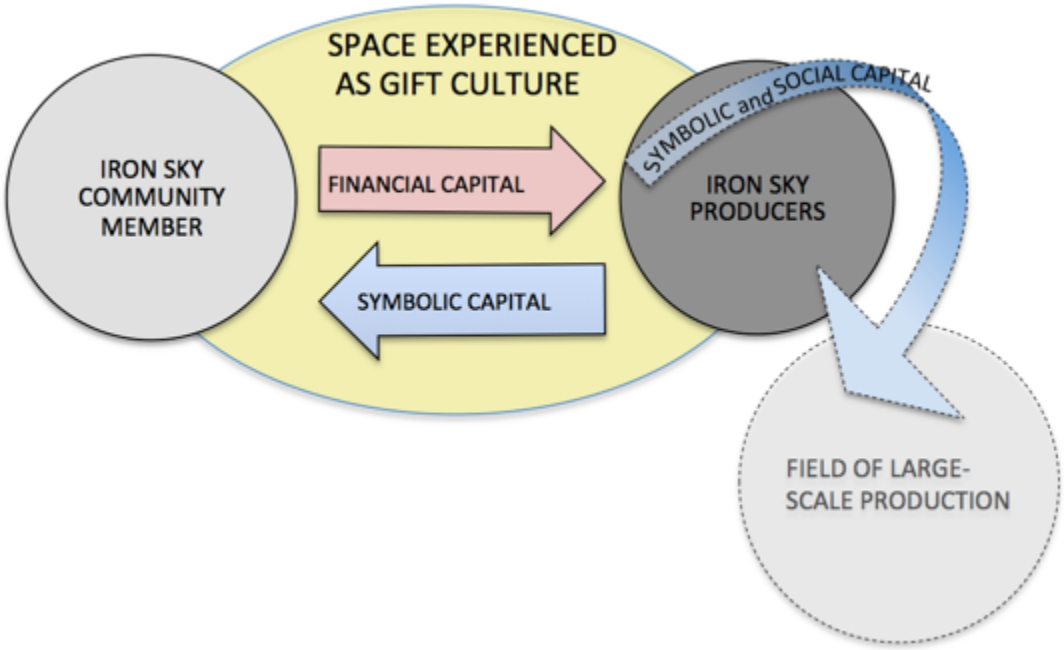


Figure 6.3: Direct conversion pattern 1 - Conversion mechanisms shaped by gift cultures

Figure 6.3 illustrates the mechanisms influencing the conversion practices in the social space of gift cultures. This social space, depicted in the figure in yellow, is upheld and facilitated by the shared experiences and interactions taking place in the various *Iron Sky*-related online platforms and channels. This social space has been established over a longer period of time, and encompasses a wide range of activities, including production-related tasks in WAM and the *Sneak Peak* space. The social space is thus not developed with the aim of generating financial capital. Hence, that financial transactions are taking place within this space does not detract from its main driver: the accumulation of symbolic capital though practices of gift giving (including WAM and fan labour).

In accordance with the key driver of this social space, the primary capital converted is that of symbolic capital. Because of the core *Iron Sky* team's levels of accrued symbolic capital within this community of gift culture, their various later fundraising activities are perceived as mechanisms enabling the transferral of symbolic capital from the core team to the *Iron*

Sky contributors. Within this particular social space, the diverse crowdfunding activities initiated by the *Iron Sky* team are thus not experienced as operating within the logic of economic calculations. Examining Figure 6.3 we see that the *Iron Sky*'s symbolic capital is converted to financial capital, c.f. the arrows between the two groups of individuals, the *Iron Sky* team and the community contributors. What we further see is that the contributors also benefit from this conversion of capital. In exchange for financial capital, the contributors accumulate symbolic capital themselves. They become part of the production; *Iron Sky* becomes a cultural object experienced as being of shared ownership, as expressed in the core team's promise that the "film belongs as much to you as to us" [*Iron Sky* website, 14 March 2007]. The contributors' symbolic capital is further strengthened and concretized as the core team repeatedly and publicly acknowledges the role of the contributors in their extensive online communications. Likewise, *Sneak Peak* members, by means of their €1+ donation, become insiders; they are given exclusive access to not only *Iron Sky* materials, but are invited to take part in decision-making processes. Similarly, recall that owners of War Bonds are officially awarded symbolic capital by means of their "bragging rights for having supported *Iron Sky*!" [War Bond description, *Iron Sky* store, 16 February 2011].

The last important aspect to take notice of in Figure 6.3 is that the conversions of symbolic capital to financial capital result in the further generation of symbolic and social capital by the *Iron Sky* team. This derived alternative capital is illustrated in the figure by the curved arrow leading from the *Iron Sky* team to the field of large-scale cultural production. These arrows indicate the by-products of these direct conversions of symbolic to financial capital in the social space of gift cultures: the further generation of symbolic and social capital belonging to the *Iron Sky* team, transcending the social space of gift cultures. The derived social and symbolic capital is thus effective as capital in the context of the formal film industry. In particular, the derived field-symbolic capital is a currency that is recognized by agents in the formal film industry and reported on in relevant media publications (as argued

in section 6.2.1.). This derived symbolic capital is a field-specific symbolic capital; they communicate the *Iron Sky* team's ability to convert alternative capital to financial capital by means of the community of voluntary production contributors established. These social capital, in their converted symbolic form, quantifies the production network through these conversion processes. When contributors sign up for the *Sneak Peak* membership, for example, the core team collects the members' email addresses, which allow them to send targeted emails (which they do on several occasions, for example, when arranging fan meetings). The same is the case for the *Iron Sky* newsletter, and the merchandise sales. These quantified measures of social capital are likewise recognizable in the field of large-scale production, and are actively used to convert alternative capital to financial capital. The importance and role of the derived social capital will be discussed further in this chapter's discussion of indirect conversion of capital.

In conclusion, the indirect conversion pattern presented in this section, portraying the conversion dynamics as influenced by the social space of gift culture, corresponds with the *Iron Sky* team's own framing and perception of their crowdfunding activities. In the following section, a complementary interpretation of the crowdfunding activities will be presented. This interpretation rests on a significantly different perception of the key driver of the conversion mechanisms: it is driven by and oriented towards the accumulation of objectified cultural capital, rather than symbolic capital.

Dynamic 2: Consumer cultures oriented towards the accumulation of objectified cultural capital

While some production community members interpret the *Iron Sky* team's crowdfunding activities as forming part of a gift culture, other members perceive them as activities

affording the accumulation of objectified cultural capital. They thus experience the space in which the conversions unfold as a space of consumption cultures and exchanges. One factor, in particular, distinguishes the space of gift cultures from the space of exchanges. As we saw in the discussion of the conversion dynamics associated with the space of gift culture, the social relationships between the *Iron Sky* core team and the contributors were central for the community members making financial transactions. The nurturing of this social bond was the central driver of the transactions, which, in turn, resulted in the accumulation of symbolic capital for all partners involved. In the space of consumption cultures, contrastingly, the contributors are not directly concerned with establishing symbolic connections with the *Iron Sky team*. Rather, these contributors seek to connect with the cultural artefact itself, the *Iron Sky feature film*. This is to say that the dynamics of this space do not permit the *Iron Sky* team to be viewed as similar to a rock band. Instead, contributors value the outcome of their work, to which they ascribe differentiated levels of objectified cultural capital.

The main implication of this change, from an emphasis on symbolic to objectified cultural capital, is that the conversion from alternative to financial capital rests on the degree to which the contributors agree with the merchandise and service prices set by the *Iron Sky* team. Whereas contributors operating within the social space of gift cultures never questioned the prices of *Iron Sky* merchandise, individuals perceiving the social space as one of exchanges repeatedly evaluate the price of the commodities against their individual perceptions of the value of the material goods. They measure their perception of the objectified cultural value of the objects or services against the sale prices. For the majority of the *Iron Sky* production period, the conversion mechanisms associated with the social space of gift cultures was most predominant. Although there are examples of contributors perceiving the space of conversions as one of exchanges in the production and post-production phases, these patterns become more dominant in the *Iron Sky* distribution

phase. Arguably, this is a natural outcome of the progression of the production phases: at the time of distribution there is an actual *completed artefact,* whereas before there was primarily a *process*.

This shift from *process*, embedded in gift cultures, to the existence of a completed cultural artefact significantly alters the dynamics of the conversion mechanisms. Following the cinematic release of *Iron Sky,* the social economies change, and come to be more widely framed as exchanges. The two social spheres, however, continue to co-exist, as will also be demonstrated below. The conversion dynamics of the social space of exchange culture is particularly evident from data from the *Iron Sky* Facebook page.

Alongside the prolonged global cinematic release of *Iron Sky,* starting in early 2012, the core team intensified their promotion of the *Iron Sky* merchandise, just as they did following the launch of *Star Wreck VI.* In the first half of 2013 alone, the core team posted 39 Facebook posts promoting their online store and products; this amounted to approximately 40% of the Facebook posts published by the team in that period. The composition of the audience for these communications, however, had changed. The *Iron Sky* Facebook member base grew by more than 100,000 members in the period from January 2012 to January 2013. For these newer fans, purchasing merchandise was not seen as socially honouring the core creators' symbolic capital; newer fans were not greatly concerned with forming part of the reciprocal social economy of the *Iron Sky* production. Likewise, developing social bonds with the team was not a strong motivation for newer fans: These contributors did not exclusively buy *Iron Sky* commodities in order to support the team members. Rather, evidence suggests that motivations were driven by the perceptions of the objectified cultural capital of the *Iron Sky* movie. To put it differently: a larger number of fans bought merchandise because they liked the movie, because they rated it highly, and thus ascribed it higher levels of objectified cultural capital. Objectified cultural capital had been transferred

from the cultural object of the movie to the materiality of merchandise such as t-shirts, and content such as DVDs.

The change from an emphasis on symbolic capital to an emphasis on objectified cultural capital is highlighted in contributors' reactions to the core team's intensified merchandise campaigns. The following example illustrates the rhetoric of these promotional efforts: "ACHTUNG! PRICE KRIEG continues! Here's some classic *Iron Sky* T-Shirts for you with a 40% discount!" [*Iron Sky* Facebook post, 19 April 2013]. In reaction to the multiple promotion campaigns, many fans explicitly communicate their dissatisfaction that they have recently bought the merchandise at full price. For example:

> Great, I have paid 27€ last week , very happy..... :(
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook fan, 20 January 2013]

> Seriously? I ordered it 2 weeks ago to the full price. Damn it.
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook fan, 18 March 2013]

What the quotes above indicate is that an item of merchandise is no longer perceived as an inalienable object. Earlier in the production, when the core team ran discounts in their store, no one complained that they had previously bought the same commodities at the full price. This was due to the objects being viewed as inalienable, loaded with mutual social recognition and obligation. As a consequence of this perception, the actual price paid was less important than the gesture of support. Increasingly, however, *Iron Sky* fans expressed their dissatisfaction with the merchandise prices, of t-shirts in particular:

> 27 €uro? Are you mad? [*Iron Sky* Facebook fan, 25 July 2012]

> 27 Euro?!? are you nuts?? [*Iron Sky* Facebook fan, 25 July 2012]

> Super pricey. [*Iron Sky* Facebook fan, 25 July 2012]

Meanwhile, however, the core team continued to view the merchandise as forming part of a social gift economy. In response to a fan complaining about having bought a t-shirt at full price, the *Iron Sky* team thus responded: "You double-did your part, then!" [*Iron Sky* Facebook comment, 18 March 2013]. Likewise, in response to Facebook fans' complaints about the prices of merchandise, the *Iron Sky* team insists that products should not be perceived of as commodities, but as a social gesture of support: "Hey, we have to get some dough to get DRUNK, it's *EXPENSIVE* here in Finland! Now dig out your wallets, people, it's a good deed :)" [*Iron Sky*, Facebook post 25 July 2012]. These responses correspond with the *Iron Sky* team's own framing of the various fundraising activities they initiated: declarations of support. Participation in such activities were depicted as a gesture of support, something that was repeatedly highlighted throughout the production period, though formulations such as:

> […] We try to make things as affordable as we can, but we know buying from us isn't bargain hunting, it's very much a show of support.
>
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook post, 19 January 2012]

> Our "bonds" are numbered sets of *Iron Sky* swag. […] You get a limited edition pack of *Iron Sky* stuff including […] our gratitude.
>
> [*Iron Sky* website, 31 October 2011]

Nevertheless, these appeals for support, strengthening the social relationship between the core creators and production contributors, repel those individuals who see the social space as one of exchanges. This becomes particularly evident in the context of the promotion of the €300 *Iron Sky* Collector's Edition, containing DVDs with the team's handwritten autographs included. Whereas contributors viewing the social space as one driven by gift cultures did not question the price, several contributors operating within a framework of exchange cultures explicitly question the price of this commodity. The latter do not think that the objectified cultural capital inherent in the product warrants the price of the box set:

> 300 euro piss right off are the disks gold plated? No film is worth that no matter how it was funded or where the cash goes.
>
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook fan, 29 May 2012]

> 300?? Is the box made of Panda´s =/ ??
>
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook fan, 29 May 2012]

> You've got to be kidding me. I'm sorry, but that's pathetic!
>
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook fan, 28 May 2012]

> 300 euros is too much for a collector's edition, even the whole James Bond series which has 22 Blu-ray films costs 127 euros.
>
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook fan, 28 May 2012]

The quotes above clearly exemplify how it is no longer the symbolic capital that is driving the conversion, but the perceived levels of objectified cultural capital inherent in the goods. The quote referring to another box set, the James Bond box set, illustrates how objectified capital is relative and can be measured against other cultural artefacts. This feature of objectified capital stands in stark contrast to symbolic capital. Symbolic capital's value rests in social relations, and is upheld by individuals' perception of the strength and mutual recognition of the bond connecting them, making symbolic capital non-comparable, non-benchmarkable. Consider, for example, how an individual operating within the social space of gift cultures defends the price of the Collector's Edition:

> I think the price is right for something special... it's a gift for the people who supported the film...
>
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook fan, 29 May 2012]

In the social space of exchange culture, however, the various *Iron Sky* goods are thus seen primarily as commodities, not gifts. They are therefore evaluated against their material and objectified qualities. Consider, for example, the following objection to the box set, put

forward by a purchaser who judges not the symbolic value of the Collector's Edition, but its material qualities:

> Well, I got my Limited Exclusive Collectors Edition [...] I'm disappointed about how loveless this Edition is. Yes, I got all what I should but are you serious to use a cheap cardboard slipcase for a 300€ Exclusive Collectors Edition?
>
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook fan, 5 November 2012]

The social space of exchange cultures is driven by objectified cultural capital. The degree to which conversion of alternative capital to financial capital is successful depends on the level of objectified cultural capital individuals ascribe to the material objects. As we have seen, many fans ascribed lower levels of objectified cultural capital than warranted by the goods' prices. Several examples, however, attest to fans ascribing high levels of objectified cultural capital. Consider, for example, the following comments, which highlight how the dynamics of the social space of exchange cultures has its focus on objectified cultural capital rather than symbolic:

> I as a collector of things completely understand the pricing considering that you hope to keep the item rare. If the movie becomes a cult classic, 20 to 30 years from now the special boxing autograph idea will have paid off.
>
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook fan, 28 May 2012]

> Come on people! If you are not so called "collectors", then piss off and go whining somewhere else! I bet you are not visiting art galleries either, as collectors? Or are you bitching there too, how can some painting be so freaking expensive?
>
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook fan, 29 May 2012]

Taking the above analysis into account, the conversion dynamics unfolding in the space of commodity and exchange cultures can be illustrated shown in Figure 6.4. Below this figure will be explained in more detail:

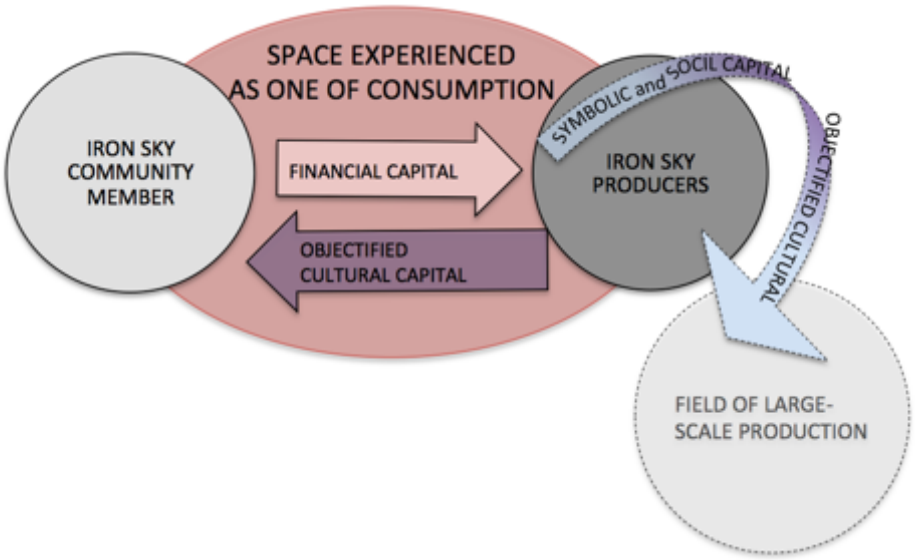


Figure 6.4: Direct conversion pattern 2 - Conversion mechanisms shaped by exchange and commodity cultures

Figure 6.4 illustrates the dynamics characterizing the conversion practices when the production community members interpret the space of financial transaction as embedded within a space of commodity and exchange cultures. This social space, depicted in the figure as the rose coloured area, is emerging around the cultural artefacts, the *Iron Sky* movie and content such as trailers and concept art work. In comparison to the social space of gift cultures, there are fewer shared norms setting out expectations related to mutual recognition and obligation. The focus is not on enabling the building of a shared social bond through reciprocal interaction and dialogue. Instead, this space allows for the co-existence of individual interpretations of the levels of objectified cultural capital of the various *Iron Sky* goods and services. This exchange culture, as the name suggests, views the key premise as of one of direct and instant reciprocation; a financial transaction is made, and a commodity received in return. The space of transaction is thus perceived as a commoditized space, despite operating with the same crowdfunding activities as in the social space of gift cultures, which were experienced as being non-commercial.

In accordance with the key driver of this space, the main alternative capital converted is that of objectified cultural capital. This capital is not a property of the *Iron Sky* team, but is vested in the cultural objects they have produced. It is transferred from the completed cultural artefact, and the various *Iron Sky* trailers, to its material representations in the forms of merchandise or DVD copies. Because the *Iron Sky* contributors, interpreting the space as one of exchanges, favour tangible objects over symbolic gestures, the conversion dynamics are profoundly different than those of the social space of gift cultures. As we saw, individuals operating within the space of exchanges were much more vocal in their critique of the prices set by the *Iron Sky* team when they experienced discrepancies between the level of objectified cultural capital they ascribed the cultural goods and the prices asked for the same goods.

The last important aspect to note in Figure 6.4 is that the conversions of objectified cultural capital to financial capital for the *Iron Sky* team result in the further accumulation of symbolic social capital and objectified cultural capital. This is illustrated in the figure by the curved arrows leading from the depiction of the *Iron Sky* team to the field of large-scale cultural production. These arrows indicate the by-products of these direct conversions of objectified cultural capital to financial capital in the space experienced as one of exchange cultures: the further generation of three different forms of alternative capital. This derived alternative capital transcends the social space of exchange cultures. As was the case with the conversions taking place in the social space of gift cultures, the derived alternative capital stemming from conversions in the space of exchange cultures, are effective as capital in other contexts. The figure illustrates that the conversion of capital from objectified cultural to financial yields further objectified cultural capital. Once high levels of objectified cultural capital have been established, which happens when larger quantities of exclusive goods such as the Collector's Edition have been purchased, it further increases the perceived value of these goods. Finally, the direct conversion dynamic illustrated in Figure 6.4 shows that

although symbolic capital is not a driver for financial donors in this space, actualized conversion processes nevertheless generate surplus symbolic capital for the *Iron Sky* team. This capital is then transferrable to other social arenas.

6.3 Indirect conversion of alternative capital across cases

The previous section was concerned with analysing direct conversions of capital, conversions from alternative capital to financial capital. These direct conversions entailed a financial transaction on the part of the community members. The analysis demonstrated that the dynamics shaping the conversion mechanisms were dependent on how the individuals making the financial transactions experienced the space within which these transactions were embedded. Two separate, yet co-existing, interpretations of spaces were identified: that of gift cultures and that of exchange and consumer cultures. These spaces, it was additionally concluded, were oriented towards the accumulation of differentiated forms of alternative capital. The social space of gift cultures was oriented towards the accumulation of symbolic capital, whereas that of consumer cultures was oriented towards objectified cultural capital. Finally, it was explained that the outcomes of any of these conversions were manifold. Regardless of the type of social space enabling conversions of alternative capital, the conversions yielded further derived capital in the form of either social, symbolic, objectified cultural or financial capital for the *Iron Sky* team.

In this section, indirect conversions of alternative capital will be analysed. In contrast to the direct conversion processes, indirect conversions are defined as processes, which rely on production community members to make a social gesture, rather than a financial transaction. Of the four embedded WAM production cases, three productions were actively trying to mobilize indirect conversion processes: *Iron Sky*, *Star Wreck 2π* and *Ice Guns*. The

following analysis of the manifestations of indirect conversions draws on data from all three productions; the patterns identified hold true for each of these. The fourth production, *Solar System*, however, did not promote or engage with indirect conversion processes. As was described in Chapter 4, Gerhard initiated this production with the aim of making revenue to mitigate the financial loss the *Ice Guns* production had caused him. As a consequence, the *Solar System* production was intentionally streamlined and focused on a rapid completion, building on the relationships established with Wreckamovie community members. Therefore, the *Solar System* production had no Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube presence, just as there was no production website or external blog (as also outlined in Table 3.2.). As such, the social economies of the *Solar System* production were much more limited than those of the other three.

As will be accounted for in the analysis, the indirect conversions differentiate themselves from the direct conversions, not only insofar as they rely on social gestures rather than financial transactions, but in the mark-up of the space in which they unfold. Whereas direct conversions take place in spaces primarily framed and interpreted by the transacting individuals, the indirect conversions are shaped by the properties of a particular space: the socio-technical space of the networked information economy, as described by Benkler.

What is particularly significant about the occurrences of indirect conversions of alternative capital in the WAM productions is that they are enabled by social capital. This is interesting because social capital is not considered to form a stake in Bourdieu's theory of cultural production. Recall that Bourdieu only associates symbolic and cultural capital with the struggles taking place within fields of cultural production. As discussed in the literature review, however, evidence is increasingly indicating that social capital might play a key role in networked forms of cultural production. In the context of the WAM productions, as will be demonstrated below, social capital is arguably one of the most prominent forms for

capital at stake. Social capital becomes a key stake in the field of WAM productions because the networked information economy makes social capital an increasingly quantifiable, malleable and visible asset. Figure 6.6 presented below illustrates the identified indirect conversion patterns harnessing the properties of social capital in the socio-technical space of the networked information economy.

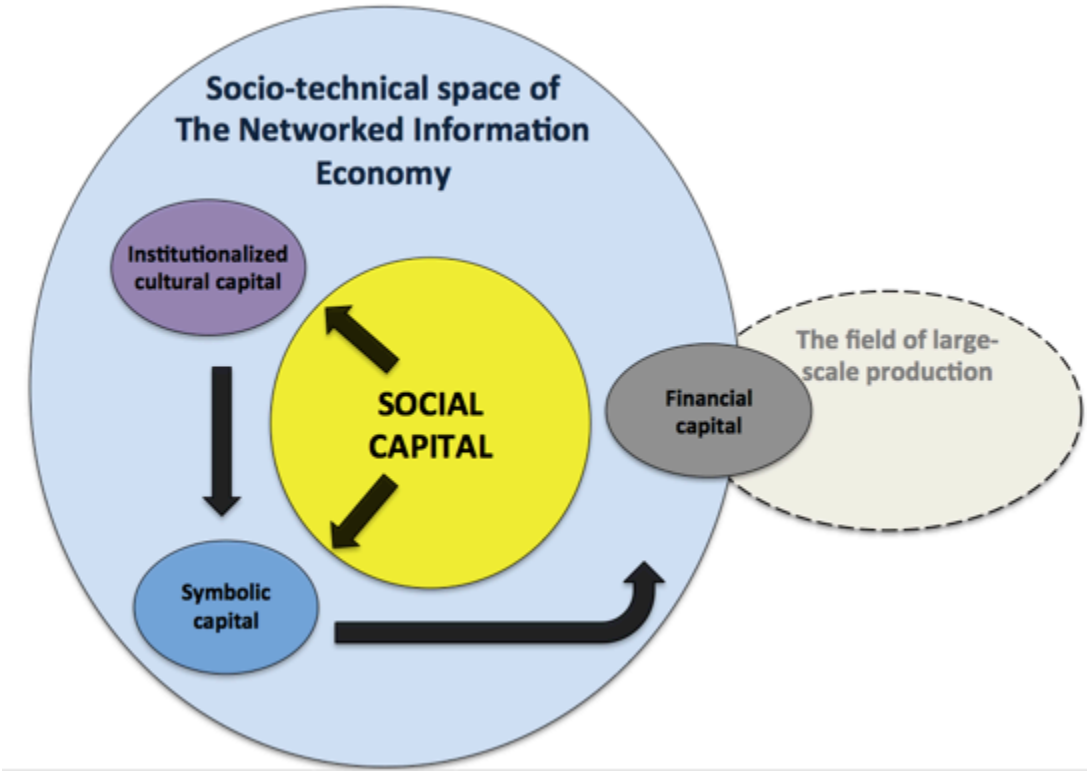


Figure 6.5: Indirect conversion dynamics and chains

Referring back to Figure 6.5, the following sections describe and analyse the identified conversion chains and paths indicated by the black arrows. These conversion chains are: 1a) Social capital to symbolic capital to financial capital, the latter in the field of large-scale cultural production; 1b) Social capital to symbolic capital to financial capital contained within the socio-technical space of the networked information economy; 2) Social capital to institutionalized cultural capital to symbolic capital to, potentially, financial capital. It

should be noted though, that while the visual representation of conversion processes illustrated in Figure 6.5 suggests clear boundaries between the different forms of capital, these boundaries are less clear cut in reality.

6.3.1 Two different conversion paths to financial capital by means of social and symbolic

The WAM production leaders and owners are deliberately seeking to mobilize the social capital of the production network in order to accumulate other forms of alternative capital as well as financial capital. A particularly interesting facet of this conversion of social capital is that the WAM producers explicitly acknowledge, and display a high degree of awareness of, the latent convertibility of social capital, and publicly address its value. The awareness of social capital and its convertibility is remarkable given the metaphorical nature of these theoretical constructs. One might therefore easily have expected the concepts of alternative capital to manifest less directly in the research data. Nevertheless, the WAM producers uniformly conceptualize social forces in ways that align quite precisely with Bourdieu's conceptualization and definitions of alternative capital. This attests to the overall importance of this capital in the social economies of the WAM peer productions. The first indirect conversion pattern that will be analysed can be described as taking the following chain: Social capital to symbolic capital to financial capital. As indicated in Figure 6.5, financial capital can be converted both within the socio-technical space of the networked information economy, and outside the boundaries of this space, in the field of large-scale production. The latter chain is the subject of the next analysis.

Pattern 1a: Indirect conversions extending beyond the space of the networked information economy

The first conversion pattern relates to indirect conversions of alternative capital, taking the form of conversions of social capital to symbolic capital. These conversions arise within the social space of the networked information economy. The pattern then incorporates a subsequent conversion to financial capital, in the field of large-scale cultural production. The entire pattern, one in particular utilized by the *Iron Sky* team, is illustrated as a possible path in Figure 6.5.

At large, the *Iron Sky* production team is very explicit in assigning value to social capital. As was described in the analysis of the production cases in Chapter 4, the team established a comprehensive range of online communication and interaction outlets throughout the production period. In addition to their WAM engagement and *Star Wreck* forum, they established a website, a blog, seven Twitter accounts, a YouTube channel, a MySpace profile, a Tumbler profile, a Facebook group and a website. On all these online communication channels, the *Iron Sky* team actively encouraged their community members to further share and spread information about the production. Likewise, they were quick in reporting on quantitative milestones such as, for example, the number of times the various *Iron Sky* trailers had been viewed on YouTube. This comprehensive online engagement was not facilitated exclusively to build up the relationships with their online community. It was equally motivated by a desire to quantify their social capital, and to make it visible.

The latent conversion mechanism, inherent in social capital when embedded in the space of the networked information economy, is explicitly addressed by the *Iron Sky* team, and repeatedly communicated in an unambiguous manner to the community members. The most vivid example of this is illustrated in the blog post titled *Indie Movies and the*

Importance of Sharing. This blog post is the only blog post ever to be published twice. It was first published in May 2010, and was reposted one year later, underlining the importance of the message put forward. In this blog post Vili, former *Star Wreck* cast member, and *Iron Sky* publicist, made a plea for all community members and fans to express their support and care by sharing *Iron Sky* content with their online networks. Vili explained to the online audiences that although they "might not think of [sharing *Iron Sky* content] as being useful or important" it is "very easy to do and also free", and most crucially, he underlined, such sharing "is not cosmetic or a gimmick, it's very important for us in a very concrete way" [Vili, *Iron Sky* blog post, 7 May 2010 & 5 May 2011]. In the aforementioned blog post, *Indie Movies and the Importance of Sharing*, Vili makes this point very clear:

> For projects like *Iron Sky* publicity is not just about the amount of viewers: at the production stage it's almost a literal currency with which we can get resources and freedom to make the movie we want to […]. Distributors, investors etc. are very interested in how much buzz a project has, and these people love numbers and figures. When negotiating with them, website statistics, YouTube views, Facebook likes and amount of demands turn out to be cold hard cash and at times the most effective bargaining tool.
>
> [Vili, *Iron Sky* blog post, 5 May 2011 & 7 May 2010 – emphasis in original]

The quote above demonstrates that symbolic capital converted by means of social capital in the space of the networked information economy is explicitly considered a financial asset by the *Iron Sky* core team. Note how Vili use metaphors related to concepts of capital. He frames the activity of sharing as a "literal currency" which enables the team to secure further resources. In doing so, he communicates that symbolic capital is convertible into financial capital. Note also the ease with which they find that this symbolic capital can be converted. This property is expressed though Vili's emphasis that symbolic capital in the form of Facebook likes, YouTube views etc. are the equivalent of "cold hard cash".

Concretely, the wide community-facilitated sharing of *Iron Sky* content resulted in measurable and easily communicable symbolic capital. The measurability and ease of

quantification are properties enabled by the networked information economy and its underlying socio-technical infrastructure. Views of video content on YouTube, for example, are automatically recorded and prominently displayed under published videos. High view counts may, in turn, result in more visibility in the form of a YouTube front-page placing. When social capital, as such, is an effective asset in networked cultural production, it is partially due to the logics underpinning the algorithms governing these spheres. These algorithms primarily honour popularity; they are governed by the logics of power laws. Therefore social capital, when mobilized in a way that makes it visible by means of digital traces and automatically quantifiable measures, converts into symbolic capital. A high number of website hits, for example, forms symbolic capital for artists (Scott, 2012, p. 245). What is arguably the most important feature of these symbolic capital is that they are field-specific symbolic capital, recognized beyond the social sphere inhabited by the core team and its online community members.

Over and over again, the core team makes similar explicit pleas for the community members to generate measurable symbolic capital, and highlight its potential conversion outcome. For example:

> We ask for your help in spreading the trailer […]. We need to remind them [the cinemas and distributors] that the audience for *Iron Sky* is a big one! And the best way to send a message like this is to see the trailer hit one million views before the end of *Berlinale*.
>
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook post, 6 February 2012]

> Digg us! It will make us strong!
>
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook, 14 May 2010]

The following post illustrate the ability of the *Iron Sky* team to convert the production's social capital into symbolic capital:

> We made it! 5 MILLION views of the *Iron Sky* trailer in ONE WEEK on YouTube, making it more popular than Spider Man, Battleship and other 100-200+ million budget films.
>
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook post, 15 February 2012]

For the *Iron Sky* team, social capital is one of their biggest assets because of its latent convertibility. In order to be able to further quantify and visualize their social capital, the *Iron Sky* team launches a *Demand Iron Sky* feature on their website in February 2010. This feature is promoted through all their online communication channels; an episode of the *Iron Sky Signals* is even used solely to demonstrate concretely how community members can sign up to attest their interest in having *Iron Sky* screened in their local cinema [*Iron Sky* Signal E07, video, 9 February 2010]. The *Demand Iron Sky* feature allows anyone to sign up to express that they demand the movie to be shown in their local cinema. The system records members' geographical locations, and presents a visualization of the aggregated data layered on a map of the world. Figure 6.6 illustrates this feature by displaying a screen shot of the visualization of this data, published on the main *Iron Sky* website. As of 10 September 2013, more than 50,000 individuals have actively signed to demand *Iron Sky*.



Figure 6.6: Screen shot of the "Demand Iron Sky*" feature on the* Iron Sky *website, 10 September 2013 [Source: http://www.ironsky.net/site/support/how-to-support/]*

This converted social capital, field-specific symbolic capital recognized by film industry agents and traditional *Iron Sky* stakeholders, serves not only to allow for the generation of financial capital. It also serves to increase the levels of autonomy of the *Iron Sky* core creators. Recall that in Bourdieu's model, depicting the field of cultural production, positions within the field of large-scale production imbue low levels of autonomy. In the field of large-scale production, according to Bourdieu, structural forces result in low levels of autonomy for producers creating cultural goods. These forces also bear some level of influence on the *Iron Sky* team; due to the large amount of traditional sources of financial capital invested in the production, the artistic decision-making processes are at risk of being least partially distributed amongst all stakeholders. Social capital, however, in its converted symbolic form, can mitigate any potential lowering of artistic autonomy. Vili explains this as follows:

> It's also the matter of artistic integrity: the more there is buzz about the film, the less chance there is that they [traditional funders] panic and start demanding changes that would make the movie more "commercially viable". […] When it comes to indie movies, sharing is caring.
>
> [Vili, *Iron Sky* blog post, 5 May 2011 & 7 May 2010 – emphasis in original]

The *Iron Sky* team thus perceive social capital as a means to a field-specific symbolic capital which is ultimately convertible into financial capital, and which, in its converted symbolic form, allow for higher levels of artistic autonomy.

The two other productions, *Ice Guns* and *Star Wreck 2π*, are equally seeking to convert social capital into symbolic capital. Recall that these productions, which have entered the distribution phase at the time of writing, actively communicated their production processes in online spheres beyond the WAM community. Compared to the *Iron Sky* team, however, they are less explicit in their public reflections and pleas for sharing content. Nevertheless, the underpinning logic is the same:

> Howdy Folks, do us a big favour and click this link... you don't have to do anything else, just clicking it helps us a great deal :D
>
> [Gerhard, *Ice Guns* Facebook post, 4 July 2011]

> *Ice Guns* can be watched on the web FOR FREE. Visit our brand new website, check the two latest trailers [...]. Admire the ads, [...], bash the trolls, re-post, tweet and blog about it! We love you guys cause you are THE BEST :D
>
> [*Ice Guns* Facebook post, 3 November 2010]

> It's finally here! Please share it with as many people as possible.
>
> [*Star Wreck 2π,* Facebook post, 30 January 2013]

> It seems that our fans have put on the turbo, already 2000 views! Continue to share. Oh and watch it completely through several times. That will increase the attention level.
>
> [*Star Wreck 2π,* Facebook post, 17 February 2013]

In sum, the indirect conversion of social to symbolic to financial capital, the latter in the field of large-scale cultural production, constitutes an explicitly recognized conversion mechanism. Across the production cases, WAM producers display high levels of awareness not only about the value of quantifiable social capital, but its latent convertibility. Uniformly, the production owners of *Iron Sky*, *Star Wreck 2π* and *Ice Guns* seek to gain further symbolic capital by means of social capital converted within the socio-technical space of the networked information economy. Social capital converted to symbolic capital is considered an asset in their own right, but their derived value is considered even more powerful. This symbolic capital is also a field-specific capital, valued outside of the sphere in which it was generated, the field of large-scale cultural production.

In addition to the conversion chain described here, a closely related conversion pattern is emerging from the data. The key difference between these two conversion chains lies in the

way symbolic capital is converted into financial capital. The next pattern thus allows for symbolic capital to be converted into financial capital within the socio-technical space of the networked information economy.

Pattern 1b: Conversions to financial capital by means of social and symbolic capital contained within the networked information economy

The conversion patterns analysed in the previous section extended from the socio-technical space of the networked information economy to the field of large-scale production. In this section, the analysis will focus on the conversion of social capital to symbolic capital to financial capital, as contained within the socio-technical sphere of the networked information economy, as indicated as a possible path in Figure 6.5. What is distinctive about this conversion pattern is the way financial capital manifests. We saw in the analysis of direct conversion from alternative to financial capital that the financial capital was the result of a transaction undertaken by an *individual* human being. Likewise, in the indirect conversion discussed in the previous section, financial capital was ultimately converted in the field of large-scale production by individuals of bodies of the formal film industries. In the socio-technical space of the networked information economy, on the other hand, financial capital enter the sphere through algorithms designed by commercial entities.

In academic literature, the commercialization of the internet is highlighted by a range of scholars, arguing that online platform and businesses encourage participation to secure revenue (e.g. Burgess & Green, 2008; Fuchs, 2009; Langlois & Elmer, 2009; Schäfer, 2011). Arvidsson & Colleoni (2012), for example, note how commercial entities such as Facebook and Google build their businesses around the commodification of participation, ensuring advertising revenue. Fuchs (2012a), describing how commercial entities harness and sell online user data, talks about *data commodities.* These data commodities are then, he

explains, "offered to ad clients with the help of either the pay per click (CPC) or the pay per 1000 impressions (CPM) methods of payment" (p. 723). This business model allows advertisers to target specific groups with "individualized advertisements" (ibid.). He describes the process as follows:

> […] advertisers set a maximum budget for one campaign and a maximum they are willing to pay for one click on their advertisement or for 1000 impressions […]. In the pay-per-click model, value is transformed into money (profit is realized) when a user clicks on an ad. In the pay-per-view model, value is transformed into money (profit is realized) when an ad is presented on a user's profile. […] The price of this commodity is algorithmically determined. (Fuchs, 2012a, p. 723)

In the literature, however, it is not considered that independent cultural producers might also financially benefit from the commercialized space, increasingly characterizing the internet. As we saw in the analysis of the four WAM production cases, presented in Chapter 4, *Iron Sky*, *Star Wreck 2π* and *Ice Guns* all established online communication spheres using, for example, Facebook and YouTube. By converting social capital to symbolic capital, for example in the form of views of video content posted on YouTube, the socio-technical structure of the networked information economy then automatically converted this symbolic capital into financial capital.

To illustrate this indirect conversion mechanism in more detail, focus will be turned to the *Ice Guns* production, the production that most explicitly relied on this conversion chain. Recall from Chapter 4 that Gerhard and the core *Ice Guns* team, from the outset of the production period, had as an explicit goal the production of a free cultural good. Over the course of the production period, however, ambitions, and consequently the production budget, grew. By the end of the post-production period, core team had spent their savings of €25,000 on *Ice Guns* related expenditure. They, nevertheless, made *Ice Guns* freely available online in November 2010. When they did so, though, it was with the expectation that they, as a result, would regain the €25,000 they had invested in the movie. The *Ice Guns* website

as well as the online platform Vodo, where *Ice Guns* was available for download, both offered a donation function, inviting audiences to make financial contributions to the core team. As such, this donation function, in particular, invited the forms of direct conversion of capital illustrated in Figure 6.4, which depicts direct conversions in the social space of commodity and consumer cultures. The core team was of the assumption that if online audiences ascribed *Ice Guns* high levels of objectified cultural capital, they would make a corresponding financial transaction. This assumption, however, did not manifest to the degree the *Ice Guns* creators had imagined. On several occasions, Gerhard expresses disappointment in the low number of donations made. For example, reporting on the financial status at various stages of the production, Gerhard wrote:

> Vodo donations are a bit better at $660, still this is nothing to write home about.
>
> [*Ice Guns* external blog, 4 May 2011]

> […] we got close to 200,000 downloads in all, but the receptions were very divided. Some loved it, some hated it, and most of them didn't care. We collected about €500 in donations [on named platform].
>
> [*Ice Guns* WAM blog, 9 August 2012]

Moreover, some online audience members explicitly questioned the logic underpinning the *Ice Guns* producers' assumption that the objectified cultural capital of free cultural objects would be honoured financially. The following exchange between an *Ice Guns* Facebook member and Gerhard vividly illustrates this point:

> Why are you asking for money when your stated vision is "free movies"?
>
> [*Ice Guns* Facebook member, comment, 6 July 2011]

> Well the film is free to watch, but it cost us $35,000 and two years of hard work to make it. So we're merely asking people if that is worth something to them.
>
> [Gerhard, *Ice Guns* Facebook comment, 6 July 2011]

> If I pay you anything, then the film is not free. Your film kicked ass. I watched it three times in two days. […] It cost you 35k and two years to make, […] I think you should drop the free angle. […] can I still slip something under the door?
> [*Ice Guns* Facebook member, comment, 6 July 2011]

> Sure, you can make a PayPal payment to our account […]. Thanks!
> [Gerhard, *Ice Guns* Facebook comment, 6 July 2011]

> Gave about the equivalent of two adults, one child movie admission in U.S. $
> [*Ice Guns* Facebook member, comment, 6 July 2011]

The core *Ice Guns* team operated with the assumption that releasing their film for free online would result in the generation of the financial capital they had put into making the movie. As illustrated in the above, one of the assumptions was that objectified capital would be converted into financial capital by means of direct conversions in the social space of exchange cultures, which, as the example above alludes to, it partially did. In addition, in making that assumption, the *Ice Guns* team counted on the algorithms of the commoditized online environment to secure them further return on their *Ice Guns* investment. They were explicitly aware that this environment makes possible the conversion of social to symbolic to financial capital. This form of conversion relied on the productions to develop their social capital by expanding the production networks to other online spheres, such as Twitter and Facebook. The *Ice Guns* team actively sought to incentivize the extended production community to further expand the network, thus increasing the level of social capital. Over and over again, the team intentionally created incentives for their *Ice Guns* Facebook members to attract further members. For example:

> All right what about this: Once we reach 444 fans, we'll have a prize draw for a free promo DVD among y'all!
> [Gerhard, *Ice Guns* Facebook post, 15 February 2010]

> People, we have big news coming up. HUGE in fact! A mind-boggling surprise that will soon be revealed - once we have 500 fans :D You know the drill ;P
> [Gerhard, *Ice Guns* Facebook post, 19 March 2010]

To a large extent, this strategy worked in accordance with expectations, something which was celebrated in production communications, such as:

> Big props go out to our hardcore Facebook fans who managed to meet our demand of a 10% rise in fans as payment for the new trailer - in the record time of much less than 48 hours! RESPECT ;D
>
> [Gerhard, *Ice Guns* WAM blog, 7 February 2010]

The expanding wider *Ice Guns* production network thus allowed for the further accumulation of social capital. This social capital, then, was actively sought converted into symbolic capital in the form of, for example, YouTube views. As was the case for the strategy for increasing the production's level of social capital, the conversion of social capital to symbolic capital was incentivized. The *Ice Guns* team promised the production network access to further content in exchange of symbolic capital:

> Come on people, everyone watch the trailer once more... 'Cause once we finally have 10.000 views, we'll release some exciting new stills from the movie!
>
> [Gerhard, *Ice Guns* WAM blog, 6 October 2009]

Evidently, symbolic capital expressed by means of quantified measures of various online platforms were recognized as an asset, just as it was acknowledged that social capital, when mobilized by incentives, could convert into symbolic capital. This symbolic capital, however, did more than serve the core team symbolically. It was explicitly intended to enable a further chain of conversion: to financial capital. Key for this last chain of the conversion, was the business model of the YouTube platform. The *Ice Guns* team initially had great expectations for symbolic capital to be converted to financial capital here:

> I had heard that you get around €3300 for a million views and I thought, with a little luck, 5 millions could be doable. And indeed, we started out pretty solidly, getting to 500.000 views in about one year.
>
> [*Ice Guns* WAM blog, 9 August 2012]

The importance of the conversion mechanism illustrated in Figure 6.5 is underlined by the fact that the *Ice Guns* team repeatedly discusses the concrete financial outcomes of the

conversions they are seeking to facilitate by means of social and symbolic capital. The production community, who seeks to help, honours their openness by pointing to ways to maximize this form of conversion:

> Releasing the statistics of the first six months of [YouTube] exposure in our blog started an interesting discussion [...]. We got some good advice, like the fact that we can set an external link to the top banner of our YouTube channel. After all, it's important for us to get as many people as possible to our home page – because practically the only money we make is from people clicking on the ads on the right hand side here.
>
> [*Ice Guns* external blog, 24 May 2011]

The *Ice Guns* team thus actively sought to facilitate one of the conversion paths indicated in Figure 6.5: Social capital to symbolic capital to financial capital. A wealth of data testifies that this conversion form materialized, and that the *Ice Guns* team as a consequence thereof gained financial capital. It should be acknowledged, though, that the financial outcomes of these conversions were significantly lower than the team had expected:

> The earnings made [...] on YouTube are disappointing [...]. Of course we had expected things to go a bit differently, in our naivety we had thought that each view of the film should easily generate 10 cents of income; if that would be the case, we'd have already made back the $35,000 we put into *Ice Guns*. The reality that it's only 0,2 cents per view really came as a bit of a shock =/
>
> [*Ice Guns* external blog, 4 May 2011]

> We made a peak of $20 for a single day [on ads on production website]. Well. If every day were like this for a period of 5 years, we'd make back our $35000 budget for *Ice Guns* ;P
>
> [*Ice Guns* external blog, 24 May 2011]

That the team's conversion attempts thus ultimately did not result in the generation of the expected amount of financial capital does not detract from the fact that the conversion mechanism materialized in accordance with the dynamics portrayed in Figure 6.5. This conversion formed an integrated part of the social economies of the production.

Having presented the analysis of two different paths of indirect conversion from social to symbolic to financial, the analysis will move on to present a final indirect conversion dynamic. This dynamic introduces and enables the accumulation of institutionalized cultural capital.

6.3.2 Indirect conversions mechanisms enabled by the emergence of new cultural intermediaries

As indicated by its name, institutionalized cultural capital traditionally requires established and powerful entities in order for it to manifest. The environment of the networked information economy, however, allows for the emergence of novel institutions characterized by a relative openness and lower barrier to entry (Benkler, 2006). One example of such institutions is the online encyclopedia Wikipedia. Traditionally, encyclopedias were controlled by gatekeepers in the form of reputable publishing houses, carefully selected editors, and authors chosen on the basis of their subject-specific knowledge. Although a growing body of research has provided unambiguous evidence that Wikipedia is subject to gatekeeping mechanisms, highly skewed power distributions and various biases (e.g. Graham, 2011; Halfaker et al., 2013; Hara et al., 2010), Wikipedia, nevertheless, from a comparative perspective, remains more open than traditional institutions, allowing self-selected individuals to form part of the generation of knowledge.

Likewise, emerging institutions in the online environment purvey novel forms of cultural intermediaries. Institutionalized cultural critics have long acted as cultural intermediaries, attributing symbolic value to certain kinds of artistic expressions (Blank, 2007; Bourdieu, 1984). In the context of filmmaking, online film review platforms, such as the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) and Rotten Tomatoes, allow users to publish reviews. The advent of these

user-generated reviews significantly challenge the authority and influences of institutionalized cultural intermediaries. Recall from Chapter 1, for example, Verboord's (2013) analysis of peer produced online film reviews. Verboord (2013) argued that the online sphere, combined with emerging peer production practices, challenged the way institutionalized capital was created. Previously, he argued, cultural intermediaries, in the form of professional film critics, were the source of the generation of such capital. The ability of amateurs to act as cultural intermediaries, however, was argued to reconfigure the "hierarchical model of cultural evaluation" (p. 15). Related research has shown that positive film reviews authored by peer producers ultimately lead to higher box office revenue (Chintagunta et al., 2010; Dellarocas et al., 2007). Further, it has been demonstrated that the volume of online film peer reviews is also of importance, as it, too, bears a positive influence on the financial performance of feature films (Duan et al., 2008). As such, this literature alludes to the latent convertibility of institutionalized cultural to financial capital, enabled by the networked environment. In the following, a final indirect conversion process, which is prominent across the WAM productions, is presented. This indirect conversion dynamic is associated with the following conversion chain: Social capital to institutionalized cultural capital to symbolic capital, to, in some cases, financial capital.

Pattern 2: Indirect conversion from social to institutionalized cultural to symbolic capital

Manifestations of the indirect conversion of social to institutionalized to symbolic capital forms a prominent theme across the production cases of *Iron Sky*, *Ice Guns* and *Star Wreck 2π*. This conversion chain is also illustrated in Figure 6.5. In this case, the first step of the conversion chain entails the conversion of social capital to institutionalized cultural capital. One of the consequences of the emergence of the more open institutions, described above, is

that institutionalized cultural capital can be more easily accumulated through the conversion of social capital. This conversion rests on two conditions. Firstly, it rests on the possibility of anyone, at least in theory, acting as cultural intermediaries. Secondly, it rests on the perception of these emerging forms of institutions. The WAM community, as noted in Chapter 4, perceives Wikipedia as an institution. The community member Joona, for example, when suggesting that the community initiate and author a Wreckamovie entry on Wikipedia, motivates his suggestion by stating: "If it's not in Wikipedia, it doesn't exist" [Joona, WAM community shot, 13 October 2009]. This stance also holds true for the Internet Movie Database. Because anyone, in theory, can act as cultural intermediaries, shaping institutionalized capital on select online platforms increasingly perceived as institutions, social capital can be converted into institutionalized cultural capital, if mobilized. In return, this institutionalized cultural capital converts into symbolic capital, as indicated in Figure 6.5 by the arrow leading from institutionalized cultural capital to symbolic capital. The symbolic capital is an outcome of the recognition inherent in the mere manifestation of institutionalized capital expressed by means of mobilized social capital in recognized online contexts associated with the networked information economy.

Attesting to the prominence of this conversion pattern, social to institutionalized cultural to symbolic capital, is the fact that even the producers of *Star Wreck 2π*, explicitly framing their production as an amateur fan film, were concerned with ensuring that the production was recognized on Wikipedia and IMDb alike. In the context of the IMDb, it should be noted that although the barriers to publishing reviews are low, the platform has strict gatekeeping mechanisms in place for creating an entry on a movie in the first place. To get a movie listed on IMDb requires a written application, and the film needs to meet the eligibility criteria of IMDb. These eligibility criteria are strict, and require that movies have been publicly available in a formal setting or format, for example, shown at a recognized film festival, in cinemas, or had other forms of professional distribution. IMDb's eligibility criteria

underline, amongst other things, that eligibility for inclusion is "not given just because a work has been [...] digitized and put on an internet page for downloading" (IMDb, 2013). For the *Star Wreck 2π* production, therefore, making it onto IMDb significantly altered its level of institutionalized capital. However, in the case of the *Star Wreck 2π* production, this particular gatekeeping mechanism was not overcome by means of indirect conversions on the networked economy. It was enabled by the symbolic capital of two of its cast members: the *Star Wreck* VI/*Iron Sky* director and CGI supervisor/producer. Thierry acknowledges this in a *Star Wreck 2π* WAM production shot discussion. Probed by WAM production members, asking how they managed to get *Star Wreck* 2 *2π* listed on IMDb, Thierry replied: "it was quite easy (maybe it helped of having Mikko and Santtu there)" [Thierry, *Star Wreck 2π*, WAM comment, 26 September 2012]. What this thus demonstrates is that these conversion patterns are dependent on some level of pre-established alternative capital. The networked information economy, while simplifying the conversion of alternative capital, does not transcend challenges related to the uneven distribution of capital across fields of cultural production, including the WAM field and art world, as argued in Chapter 4.

Returning to the prominence of the pattern forming the conversion chain of social capital to institutionalized to symbolic capital: Immediately following the premiere of *Iron Sky*, *Star Wreck 2π* and *Ice Guns*, the WAM production owners explicitly tried to mobilize their social capital, enabling the conversion of it into institutionalized capital. They encouraged members of their production community networks to publish reviews, to vote and to rate their movies on IMDb. Note that the eligibility criteria of IMDb posit that films must be completed and have been publicly available before they can be listed. The WAM production leaders thus actively promote this form of indirect conversion at the very moment it is technically possible. Below are some examples to illustrate this point:

> The voting season is now open! Everyone who saw *Ice Guns* during the test run or the Emden screenings, please voice your opinion on IMDb.
> [Gerhard, *Ice Guns* Facebook post, 6 November 2010]

> If you saw *Iron Sky* at the *Berlinale* don't forget to rate it on IMDb!
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook post, 16 February 2012]

> A new reminder, now that many of you have seen *Iron Sky*, why not give it a kick-ass rating on IMDb!
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook post, 29 May 2012]

While the WAM producers thus display high levels of awareness of the affordances of the socio-technical sphere of the networked information economy, and actively seek to enable the manifestation of this indirect conversion chain, they are not equally successful in accumulating the intended capital. On IMDb, for example, the *Star Wreck 2π* entry has 17 ratings from online audiences, no written reviews [as per 22 September 2013], which can be taken to imbue relatively low levels of institutionalized cultural capital. Judging by the number of votes visible on their IMDb entry, the *Ice Guns* production was better at mobilizing social capital. Here 275 online audiences have voted, and three peer produced reviews have been posted [as of 22 September 2013]. The *Iron Sky* production, in contrast to the other two, has facilitated the manifestation of this conversion chain to their direct advantage. On IMDb, the *Iron Sky* entry contains votes from more than 60,000 individuals, and 241 peer produced reviews have been posted [as per 22 September 2013]. This conversion from social capital to institutionalized capital allowed for the manifestation of symbolic capital:

> Wow, *Iron Sky* hops to #6 at IMDb's MovieMeter ranking! Topped only by such small indie flicks like Men In Black III, Snow White, Avengers and Prometheus!
> [*Iron Sky* Facebook post, 5 June 2012]

This symbolic capital, according to Bourdieu, is a credit which "always in the long run, guarantees 'economic' profits." (Bourdieu, 1993b, p. 75). While the available research data

does not contain information that would enable conclusions to be drawn on the degree to which these *Iron Sky* IMDb rankings have directly converted into financial capital, available research (e.g. Chintagunta et al., 2010; Dellarocas et al., 2007; Duan et al., 2008) on the economic revenue of peer produced film reviews suggests that this conversion is likely to manifest.

6.4 Summary of findings

This chapter presented an analysis of the social economies of the WAM productions by examining the flows of alternative and financial capital as they manifested in conversion processes. As a conceptual clarification, it was suggested to distinguish between processes of direct conversions of alternative capital, and processes of indirect conversions of alternative capital. Direct conversions were defined as processes which required a member of the wider WAM production community to make a *financial transaction* in the traditional economic sense. *Indirect* conversions, on the other hand, were defined as processes that required an individual to make a *social gesture*.

The two forms of conversion processes differed significantly in one particular aspect: the way in which the space facilitating them emerged. In the case of the direct conversion processes, the particular mechanisms at play were directly shaped by the interacting individuals' own framing of the space that connected them with the core production teams. In the case of indirect conversions, contrastingly, the enabling sphere was of socio-technical character, shaped by the properties of the networked information economy, rather than by the transacting production member's conceptualizations.

Through the analysis of the dynamics of direct conversions of alternative to financial capital, as manifested in the WAM productions, it became clear that the social drivers of crowdfunding activities cannot be understood in a unifying manner. A host of motivations enact their actualization, and the concrete shapers of conversion mechanisms are operating with contradicting logics and value systems. The analysis of indirect conversions of alternative capital made evident that the socio-technical space of the networked information economy allows for less labour intensive indirect conversion of social capital to other forms of alternative capital, in some cases leading to the subsequent conversion into financial capital. The analysis suggested that social capital, in this environment, became increasingly malleable, quantifiable and visible. Its increased convertibility introduced social capital as a key stake in the field of cultural production.

Chapter 7
Synthesizing discussion of findings

7.1 Introduction

The previous three chapters have presented detailed analyses of the production processes, practices and social economies of the four Wreckamovie-facilitated productions *Iron Sky*, *Star Wreck 2π*, *Ice Guns*, and Solar System. Each of the analysis chapters focused on a particular research theme and aspects of its associated research questions. This chapter brings together these findings in a synthesizing discussion, which concludes with suggestions for furthering theoretically informed approaches to the study of emerging models of cultural production.

Concretely, the chapter is structured to address each of the three research themes in turn, integrating findings presented across the analysis chapters. These synthesized findings are compared against the theories of cultural production presented in Chapter 2. Against the backdrop of identified discrepancies between this study's findings and the scholarly literature, previously supplied answers to the research questions are refined through the mapping of findings onto an adjusted version of Bourdieu's visual representation of the field of cultural production (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 124). Finally, this incremental mapping of findings informs the concluding chapter, which makes concrete proposals towards a theory of networked cultural production.

7.2 Key findings

7.2.1 Research theme 1: The worlds and fields of Wreckamovie productions

Across the analyses presented, one particular characteristic related to the fields of the Wreckamovie productions has emerged. This characteristic is best understood as a force arising from the tensions between two antagonistic value systems: that which is underpinning Benkler's (2006) description of commons-based peer production, and that which is conceptualized by Bourdieu (1996) through his notion of the field of large-scale production. This finding is significant as it departs from both Bourdieu and Benkler's compartmentalization of categories of cultural production models. To better account for this field characteristic, key premises of Bourdieu and Benkler's portrayal of cultural production will be briefly revisited.

In *The Rules of Art,* Bourdieu (1996) theorized the emergence of two distinct fields of cultural production, that of small-scale production and that of large-scale production. The latter field was argued to be the result of the rise of the (dominated) class of the politically powerful bourgeois, who promoted a market-driven form of cultural production, which corresponded with their own cultural consumption patterns and preferences. In response to this market-oriented production system, the avant-garde embraced a directly opposing value-system. In doing so, the avant-garde deliberately distanced themselves from the production model of the bourgeois and rejected the significance of the market for their artistic endeavours. Bourdieu portrayed these two fields as irreconcilable due to their profoundly differing underlying philosophies:

> These fields are the site of the antagonistic coexistence of two modes of production and circulation obeying different inverse logics. At one pole there is the anti-'economic' economy of pure art. […] This production […] is oriented to the accumulation of symbolic capital […]. At the other pole, there is the 'economic' logic of the literary and artistic industries […].
>
> (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 142)

While Bourdieu here describes the two fields as 'poles', indicating their existence on a continuum, his exemplifications of tensions and struggles suggest that he finds them to be primarily contained within one or the other of the two sub-fields of cultural production. Within the field of small-scale production, for example, Bourdieu explains that struggles and tensions are emerging between two sub-groups: the *consecrated avant-garde* and the *avant-garde bohemia*. The struggles between these two groups relate to the competition over the distribution of symbolic capital. The *consecrated avant-garde* imbue the highest level of symbolic capital. They are the established artists who have secured legitimacy through validations in the form of, for example, literary prizes. The *avant-garde bohemia*, on the other hand, can be understood as constituting a group of up-coming artists, who are reinventing artistic genres or conventions. Bourdieu, for example, refers to the Symbolist movement's rejection of the naturalistic genre's aesthetic expressions (1996, pp. 114-121), when portraying the relationship between the two groups of avant-garde artists. In essence, the competition for symbolic capital is deliberately intended to influence the degrees of consecration of any given movement or genre. These tensions relate to the struggles between "the 'new' and 'old', [and] the original and 'outmoded'" (1996, p. 121).

Like Bourdieu, Benkler (2006) operated with two modes of production. His conceptualization of the production model of *commons-based peer production* was explained by way of its opposition to the production models of the formal industries, epitomized by the Hollywood model (p. 275). Benkler argued that these two production models were best understood in terms of their antagonistic relationship and their contrasting modus operandi. The forces described at play were akin to Bourdieu's portrayals of the relationship

between the fields of small-scale and large-scale production: Benkler operationalized the opposing and compartmentalized models of production based on their relation to the market. Peer production, Benkler argued, operated within ''nonmarket transactional frameworks" (2006, p. 18), whereas traditional models, such as the Hollywood model, were "dominated by proprietary, market-oriented action" (2006, p. 18). Further, Benkler argued that peer production rested on values such as sharing. He devoted a whole chapter to discussion of *The Economics of Social Production* (2006, pp. 91- 127), highlighting that this emerging production form was fuelled by intrinsic motivations (2006, pp. 93-94) and calculative-free social exchanges (2006, p. 109).

In the context of the question of the characteristics of the fields of the Wreckamovie productions, however, Bourdieu and Benkler's dichotomous framing of production modes fail in accounting for the production practices and processes identified and presented in this thesis. In contrast, the analysis chapters have provided evidence that a key shaping force of the field of the Wreckamovie productions is constituted by the tensions that arise in the antagonistic interplay between social networked production and the production models of the traditional film industry. That is to say, the Wreckamovie productions are uniformly shaped by tensions that arise *across* the boundary between the field of small-scale and large-scale production; they are equally shaped by the values embedded in peer production efforts *and* the conventions characterizing the Hollywood model of production.

On the level of the individual Wreckamovie productions, to point to concrete examples of these tensions, we saw that the *Iron Sky* team was repeatedly torn between being faithful to the collaborative, open production model they had established with their earlier *Star Wreck* productions and their desire to become recognized by agents and entities in the formal film industry. They were, for example, confronted by this tension when they were denied official accreditation for the Cannes film festival in the early pre-production period. Their fight for

legitimacy led them to pursue traditional funding for *Iron Sky*. However, while they were successful in getting funds (€6 million) from traditional sources, including Scandinavian film councils, they only realized later, in the distribution phase, what the actualized implications of these funding decisions were. The pre-sale agreements with established distribution companies and the conditions of the contributions from state funded schemes dictated a modular distribution of *Iron Sky*, and prevented the team from making the movie accessible online for a global audience at the same date. Recall from Chapter 4 that many members of the extended production network explicitly communicated their dissatisfaction with the distribution model with they found to clash with the team's more collaboratively-orientated production model.

Relatedly, while *Iron Sky* in some ways resembled traditional productions of the formal film industry, because of its professional cast, funding and distribution model, the team explicitly distanced themselves from key values associated with the industry. In particular, they were vocal about the film industry's lack of understanding of online participatory practices, and their disapproval of the industry's IP rights management practices. Consequently, the team had to balance their legal obligations to funding bodies while still, under these constraints, trying to promote their culture of sharing,

Further, the *Iron Sky* team explicitly acknowledged the existence of the tensions emerging as an outcome of the antagonistic production models and value systems. When they embarked on their *Iron Sky* sequel in May 2013, they explicitly communicated that the *Iron Sky* production had been unduly shaped by the practices of the film industry. In particular, because of the lowered artistic autonomy they had been subject to because of their collaboration with the industry, they decided to readapt their production model for the upcoming production, the *Iron Sky* sequel. This deliberate change of production models highlights tenets of Benkler and Bourdieu's portrayals of the shapers of cultural production.

Benkler argued that networked technologies, and the values of the social model of peer production, increased the levels of autonomy of the cultural producers. Bourdieu pointed out that positions in the field of large-scale production were characterized by a low level of autonomy. The *Iron Sky* team experienced both these forces to be true.

The *Star Wreck 2π* production was also shaped by the tensions arising between these objective relations. While this was an amateur no-budget production, which was not intended for traditional distribution, it was not created as art for art's sake. Its intended audience was not restricted to a closer network of likeminded fans, rather, the producers actively promoted it in online venues that shared values associated with the formal film industry. For example, getting *Star Wreck 2π* listed on IMDb was a priority for the producers. The gatekeeping practices enforced by IMDb clearly attested that this entity, this new online institution, tried to maintain a strict boundary between productions of the formal film industry and amateur productions. Recall from Chapter 6 that IMDb explicitly defined online distribution as not satisfying the requirement of public availability, the key IMDb inclusion criteria. Had the *Star Wreck 2π* production operated exclusively within the value-system Benkler describes associated with peer production, then the screening of the movie in contexts more closely affiliated with these values, such as *Finncon*, and the free online distribution channels, would have been an adequate strategy for renegotiating the distribution of symbolic capital in the restricted field of production.

Moreover, the *Ice Guns* production process was directly shaped by the tensions between the two antagonistic modes of production. Initially the production was intended to form part of the growing body of free cultural goods, aligning closely with Benkler's descriptions of the economies of social production. The producers, however, were confronted by the limits of the social economies of networked cultural production in the distribution phase of *Ice Guns*. They had assumed that the peer production model was self-sustainable, that online

audiences would honour the objectified value of the production by making donations. Further, they assumed that the logic of the networked information economy, the commercialized online environment, would automatically convert their symbolic capital, for example, their YouTube views, into pre-determined amounts of financial capital. When the *Ice Guns* team, in the distribution phase, came to realize that that they would not be able to make back the €25,000 they had spent on the production, they found themselves forced into breaking with the value system of peer production. They entered into a distribution agreement with a traditional distribution company, which forced the team to take down *Ice Guns* from YouTube and other online platforms allowing for free downloads of the movie.

Further, tensions between the two production modes emerged around the legal aspects of the *Ice Guns* production. Building on free culture ideologies, the team had found inspiration in an existing movie that they mistakenly thought was in the public domain globally. During the distribution agreement negotiations, however, their error became clear. Consequently, the formal distribution company significantly lowered the amount of money they were willing to pay the *Ice Guns* creators for their work; this lower payment reflected the potential liability they might have to face. This example further highlights that the artistic qualities of this socially produced cultural artefact were valued in accordance with the practices of the formal industry, and not only in its own rights.

The *Solar System* production was also the outcome of the experienced tensions between the two production modes and value systems. Having been confronted by the limitations of the financial sustainability of the social production model, the producer deliberately embraced both modes: the pre-production, production and post-production stages were facilitated in a peer produced manner, while the distribution phase from the outset was intended to be facilitated by agents of the formal industry. This production set-up had as consequence that the core team did not try to create a wider production network. The *Solar System*

production, alone amongst the four production cases, had no Facebook or Twitter presence, just as it did not have an external blog or website. Because of this dual production mode, the social economies were deliberately restricted. There were no attempts at increasing the production's and the producers' various forms of capital through the direct or indirect conversion mechanisms described in Chapter 6.

Leaving the four productions aside, the Wreckamovie platform itself was also shaped by these tensions. As explained in Chapter 4, the platform developers had severe problems raising financial capital in the early development stages. Traditional funding sources were sceptical about the platform's potential. In the end, the platform was developed on a shoestring budget. Over the course of the data collection period, the financial challenges of the Wreckamovie platform further intensified, and resulted in the absence of formal community moderation and a stalling of technical development. The Wreckamovie owners' vision for the platform was explicitly to challenge the Hollywood model, embracing emerging models of social production. The production cases analysed in this thesis suggest that this vision was at least partially realized. The financial challenge, however, remains present. The Wreckamovie workshop I attended in the summer of 2012 attested to this. The key theme was how to develop a sustainable business model that would be compatible with the norms of the community. This challenge of ensuring the financial sustainability of the Wreckamovie platform and its vision has yet to be solved.

On a cross-case level, the tensions between the antagonistic modes of production likewise emerged. In Chapter 5, presenting a typology of Wreckamovie labour orientations, evidence put forward illustrated that some categories of workers favoured productions which aligned with the social model of production, whereas others were inclined to participate when the productions were deemed of professional quality, resembling productions of the formal film industry. The learning orientation, for example, in some cases, found overly professional

productions to inhibit the social aspects and learning potential of productions. The fandom orientation, on the other hand, did not engage with productions that were not lead by individuals with high levels of symbolic capital. Finally, the community orientation was sceptical towards production leaders who did not share the value of social sharing and the experience of mutual obligation, and who did not consider the development of genuine social relationships just as important as the production of the cultural goods. The ecology of the Wreckamovie labourers thus formed a continuum, with peer production values at one end of the pole and the established conventions of the division between creators and audiences at the other pole.

Finally, the analysis of the social economies of the wider Wreckamovie productions' networks, presented in Chapter 6, equally made evident that these economies cannot be explained by means of production models that are either oriented towards, or detached from, market logics. The direct conversion mechanisms, defined as processes that relied on a network member to make a financial transaction, clearly introduced calculative, measurable aspects into the social economies. However, different individuals of the extended network interpreted the act of making financial transactions differently. Some perceived these as forming part of a gift economy, others as forming part of consumer cultures. This showed that the Wreckamovie productions cannot be compartmentalized based on pre-defined criteria relating to the production model employed, as suggested by Benkler. Instead, they can encompass both models at once, depending on the interpretations of the individuals who voluntarily associate themselves with the productions. Relatedly, the uniform acknowledgement by Wreckamovie producers of the ability of the environment of the networked information economy to convert social capital into other forms of alternative capital and, in some cases, financial capital, testified to the hybrid economy of the productions. These were steered by gift economies, but also consumer cultures. They were driven towards the accumulation of symbolic capital, but, equally, financial capital.

Taken together, the evidence presented in the above suggests that Benkler's conceptualization of peer production, as facilitated by the networked information economy, combined with Bourdieu's definition of the field of cultural production, including his descriptions of the particular dynamics of its subfields, are valuable as theoretical orchestrating devices. However, as has been argued, the field of the WAM production cases differs in significant ways from the descriptions of the field of cultural production presented in Bourdieu's works. In particular, findings have suggested that the WAM production processes cannot be explained as an outcome of the characterising dynamics of either of the fields of small-scale or large-scale cultural production. Equally, Benkler's compartmentalization of peer production and the Hollywood model fails in explaining the patterns observed in this thesis' data. Instead, the field shaping the Wreckamovie productions is best understood, as mentioned, as a force which presents itself through the tensions that arise from the objective relations between two antagonistic value systems: that which is underpinning Benkler's (2006) description of commons-based peer production, and that which is conceptualized by Bourdieu (1996) thorough his notion of the field of large-scale production.

From vertical to horizontal struggles and tensions across antagonistic fields

The findings discussed above suggest a radical change in the dynamics of the field of cultural production, entailing a change in the directions of the primary struggles characterizing the two subfields embedded within it. In Bourdieu's account the struggles and tensions were unfolding within the boundaries of one of the subfields of cultural production, in a vertical manner, between groups of different positions. Now, the primary struggles and tensions arise across the two antagonistic fields in a horizontal manner.

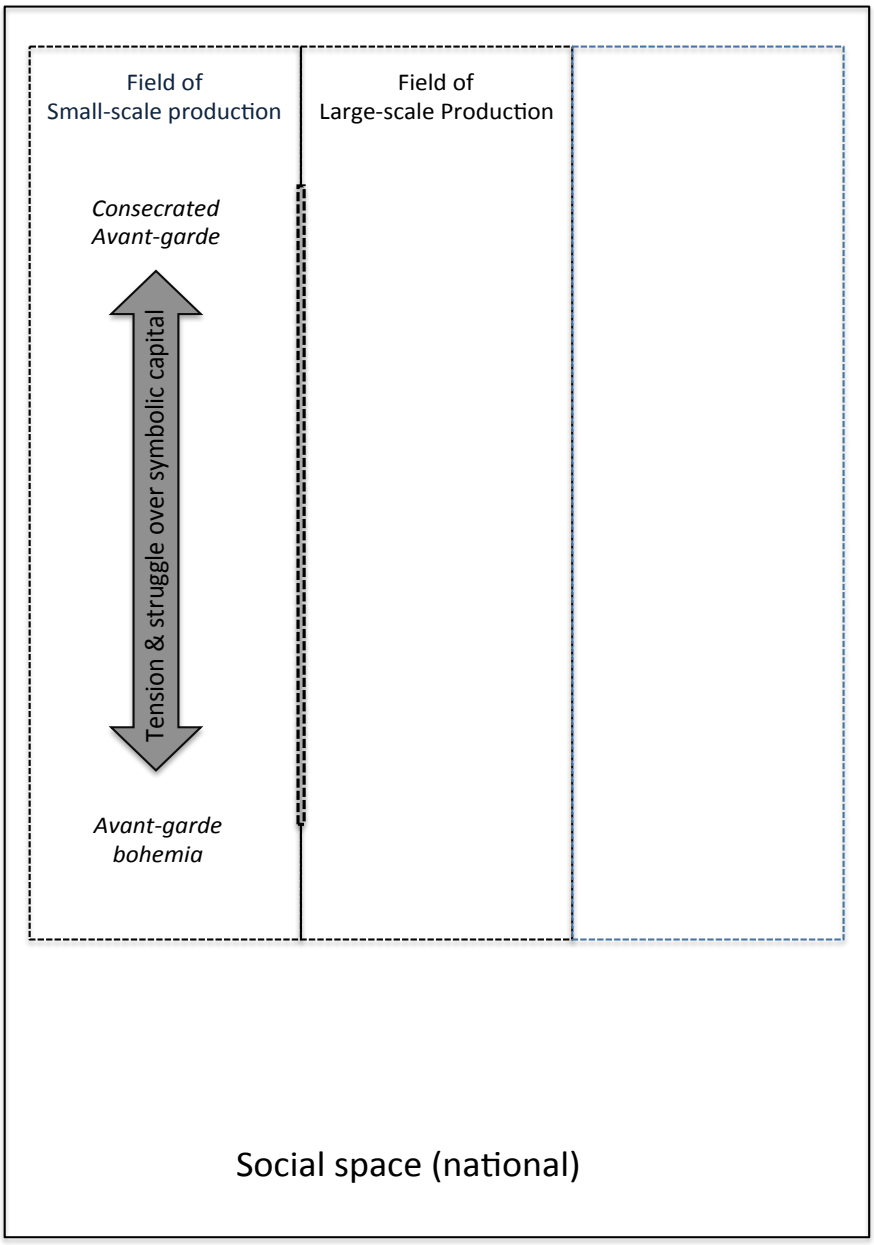


Figure 7.1: Stylized version of Bourdieu's figure outlining the field of cultural production

This radical change can be illustrated as the difference between Figure 7.1 and 7.2. Figure 7.1 presents a stylized version of Bourdieu's visual representation of the Field of Cultural Production (presented in Bourdieu, 1996, p. 124). Figure 7.1 depicts the two subfields of cultural production, and their embedding in the field of power and social space. The large grey arrow illustrates the primary direction of the struggles taking place in the field of

small-scale production, according to Bourdieu. This is the struggle over the distribution of symbolic capital amongst the avant-garde. Symbolic capital was unevenly distributed across this field, resulting in the two groups of the *avant-garde bohemia* and the *consecrated avant-garde* to perpetually engage in symbolic fights over artistic legitimacy. Symbolic capital was the key stake *per se* in the field of small-scale production. These struggles were contained within the subfield, operating with a shared belief-system, a shared logic, and a unified perception of the stakes at play. Note further, as illustrated in Figure 7.2, that Bourdieu defined social space as bounded geographically, *the national*.

In order to explain the characteristics of the field of the WAM productions, as argued, Bourdieu's model must be amended and combined with Benkler's notion of the networked information economy. Figure 7.2 depicts an illustration of what I call *the adjusted field of cultural production*, outlining the field of the WAM productions. Consulting Figure 7.2, note that Bourdieu's conceptualization of the field of small-scale production has been replaced by Benkler's concepts of The Networked Information Economy. The WAM field, as illustrated, is not contained within any of the two fields/models, as otherwise suggested by Bourdieu and Benkler, but spreads across the boundary between the two. Embedded in the circle of the WAM field is an arrow, illustrating the horizontal direction of the tensions arising within the field of the WAM productions. This arrow is significant, as it attests to the key finding: the identification of a change in the dynamics of the struggle unfolding within this emerging field of networked cultural production.

As suggested visually in Figure 7.2, the field of the WAM productions is governed to a much lesser extent by a shared value-system and unified logic. Rather, the field of the WAM productions is shaped by the opposing logics and the opposing stakes inherent in Bourdieu's conceptualization of the two subfields, and in Benkler's descriptions of the particularities of the networked information economy's production model as contrasted

with the Hollywood model. Moreover, as indicated in Figure 7.2, the field of WAM productions exceeds the boundaries of the field of cultural production at large, spreading into social space. This indicates that the non-professional cultural producers have been introduced in the field of cultural production. Note further that the adjusted social space, in contrast to Bourdieu's social space, is global rather than national, pointing to the multi-national, geographically dispersed, composition of WAM production members.

In sum, a key finding of this study is that networked cultural production, in the case of the WAM productions, denotes a shift in the configuration of the field of cultural production. This reconfiguration suggests a move from vertical tensions contained within a sub-field bounded by shared value systems, to horizontal tensions transcending the boundary between the two antagonistic spheres. A consequence of this reconfiguration is an increased complexity of the stakes at play, and a blurring of boundaries between non-market and market-driven cultural production.

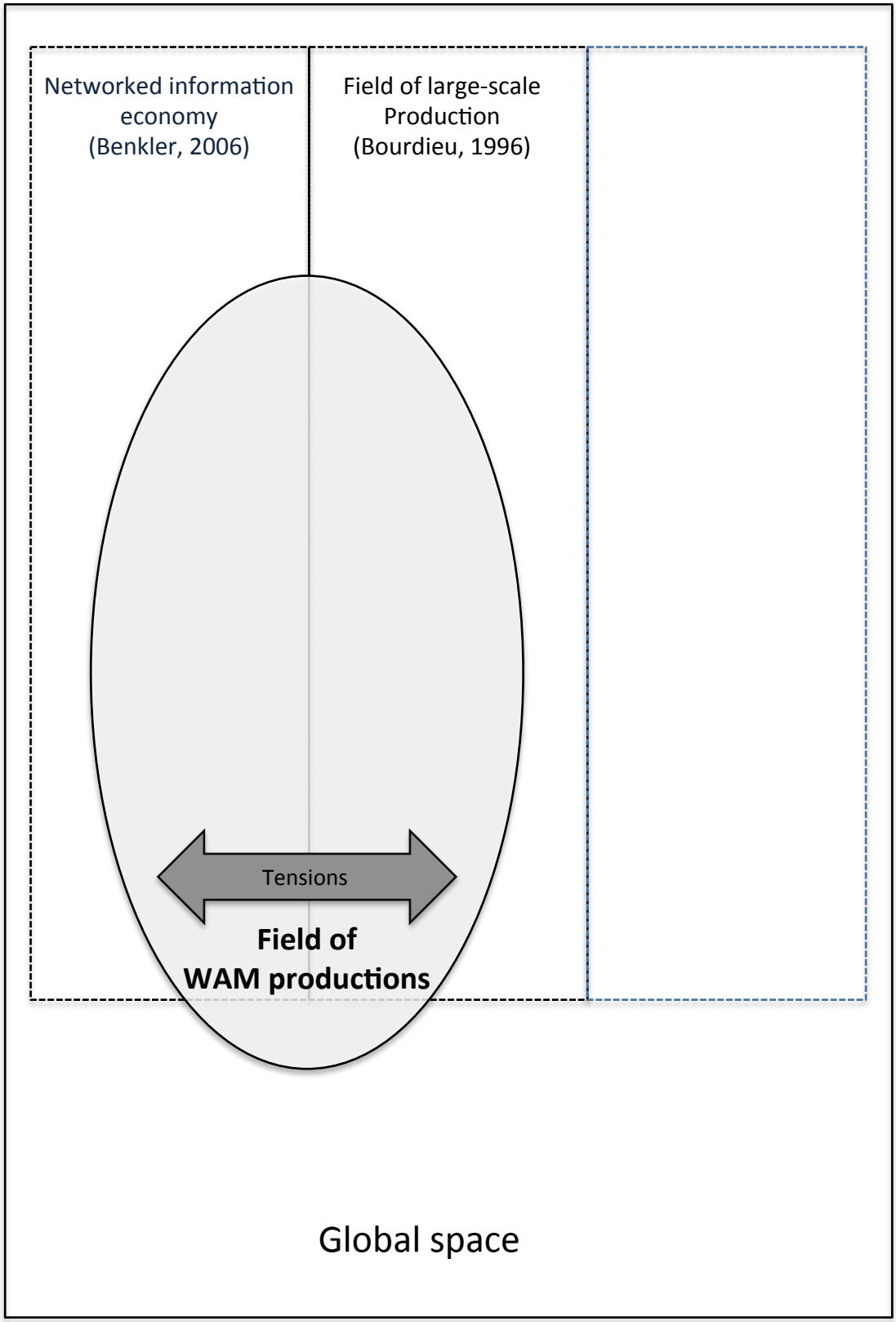


Figure 7.2: The adjusted field of the WAM productions

Field embedded in an expanding art world

The adjusted field of cultural production presented in the previous section cannot, in isolation, explain the realization of the Wreckamovie peer production, nor their production processes. As accounted for and exemplified throughout the three analysis chapters, the WAM productions were facilitated by collaborations taking place between heterogeneous groups of geographically dispersed volunteers. Acknowledging only the tensions shaping these productions would neglect the very pronounced socio-relational aspects enabling their production processes.

As has emerged across the three analysis chapters, the Wreckamovie productions were embedded within a shared art world. The individual productions, while forming distinct cultural goods, were connected both symbolically and concretely. The symbolic connections, for example, took the form of explicit written or verbal recognition of one production by another in their online communications. One such example was the *Iron Sky* team's blog post about the *Star Wreck 2π* shootings. These recognitions also had concrete manifestations in the form of hyperlinks between production websites or other production related content. Similarly, specific content presented in the completed cultural goods was, in some cases, connected to that of other productions, or to content forming part of the identify and trajectory of the Wreckamovie community. *Star Wreck 2π*'s spaceships, for example, were the exact same design as those used in the *Iron Sky* team's sixth instalment of *Star Wreck*. Likewise, one of the main characters of the *Solar System* production, the space rover *Nomad*, was developed for another Wreckamovie production. Further, as was also evident from Table 3.1 presented in Chapter 3, many of the Wreckamovie members took part in the production of several of the four Wreckamovie production cases, making up concrete social ties between the individual productions. What is more, the majority of the

contributions of the participating production members were published publicly on the Wreckamovie platform, forming an archive of traces of the influences the actual collaborations bore on the completed cultural artefacts.

If one compares Becker's discussions and definitions of art worlds to the practices and production processes of the WAM productions, it becomes clear that the concept of art worlds as conceptualized by Becker captures aspects of networked cultural production that Bourdieu's approach neglects. Becker's Art Work framework explained cultural production in a very different way than Bourdieu's theory of cultural production. As discussed in Chapter 2, Becker favoured concrete, visible interactions in social networks over Bourdieu's more structural theses. Recall that central to the art world framework was the idea that artistic goods were the outcome of the collaboration between a network of artists, integrated professionals and support personnel. As a consequence of this constellation, it was argued that any artwork bears direct marks of the collaborations. A key strength of Becker's framing of cultural production was that it defined cultural production independent of institutional organizations; instead, definitions of art worlds rested exclusively on how art worlds and their inhabitants defined them, thus making art worlds difficult to define empirically. This facet of Becker's notion of art worlds aids in overcoming some of the limitations inherent in Bourdieu and Becker's more dichotomous framing of production modes, allowing for productions to emerge across institutional boundaries.

Mapping the Wreckamovie art world onto the adjusted field of cultural production (Figure 7.2) thus provide further clarification to the answers to research question one:

RQ1: What characterizes the worlds and fields of Wreckamovie peer productions?

- *Which positional struggles manifest, and how do these relate to the more collaborative, socio- relational aspects of the production processes?*

Figure 7.3 depicts the art world of the WAM productions as embedded in the adjusted field of cultural productions. What the figure communicates is that the Wreckamovie productions are subject to the forces and struggles associated with any field, as Bourdieu holds, while equally being shaped by the socio-relational enablers of Becker's art world framework. These two very different forces and influencers are to varying degrees impacting on the Wreckamovie productions at different times in the production cycle. In periods, the enabling socio-relational influence is most pronounced, while at other times the horizontal tensions are more directly shaping the dynamics of the productions. The analysis of the four Wreckamovie productions suggests that the field tensions are most pronounced in phases and situations which relate to funding matters and questions of distribution, whereas the socio-relational enablers are particularly prominent at the stages of content production.

Figure 7.3 further introduces a central aspect of Becker's art world framework: the role of the state and regulatory frameworks. We saw the influence of these in the above, for example, in the context of *Iron Sky*'s funding model dictating a particular distribution strategy, and in the context of the legal challenges faced by the *Ice Guns* producers. Becker's notion of the role of the state and regulatory frameworks has been introduced in the space that in Bourdieu's original model was occupied by the field of power. The field of power has been replaced by Becker's notion to account for Bourdieu's (1996) less clear discussion of the relationship between the field of power and the subfields of cultural production in *The Rules of Art.* Further, the depiction of the Wreckamovie art world as expanding across the three columns above the global social space indicates that the state and regulatory aspects bear direct and more equal influence on the two sub-fields of cultural production.

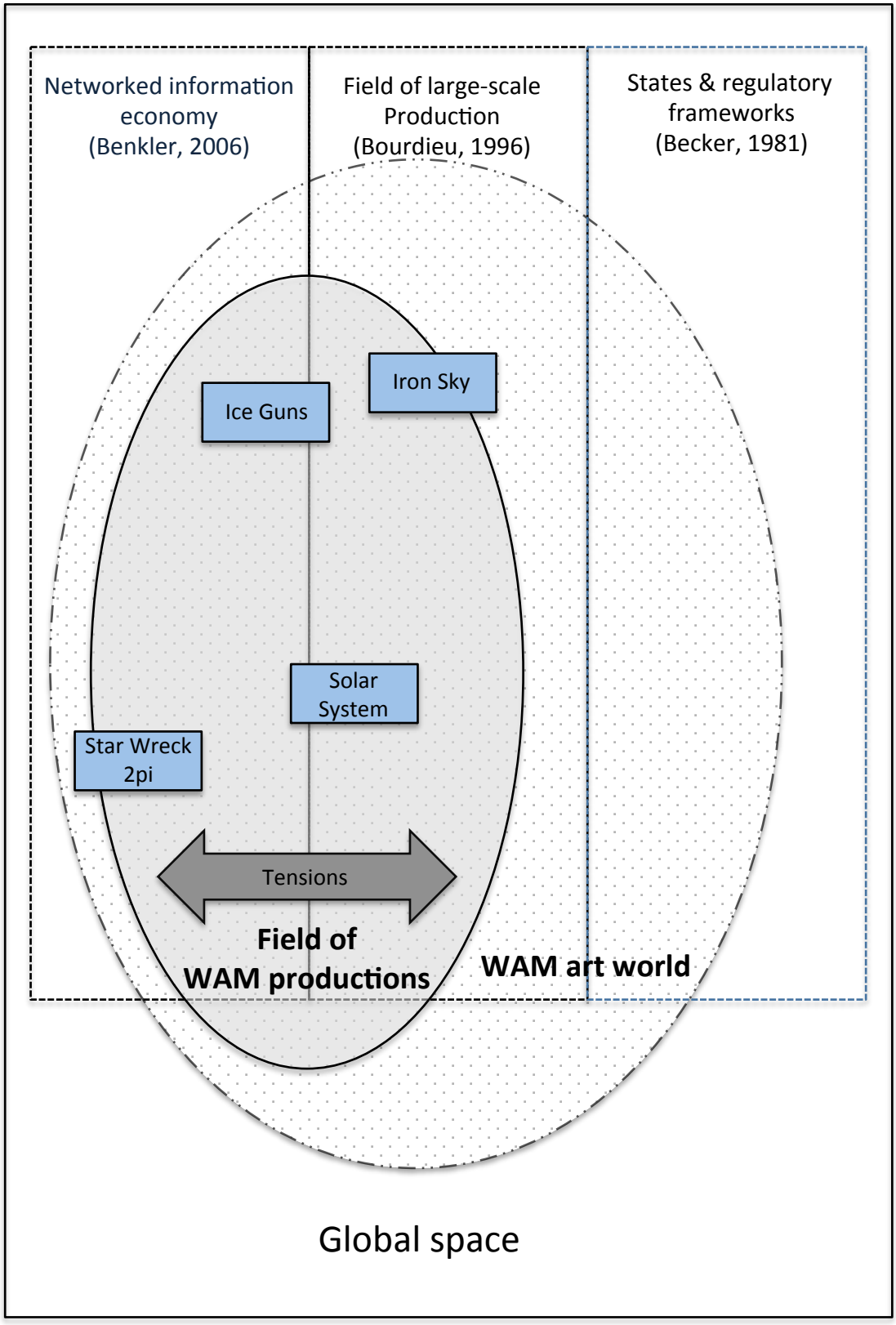


Figure 7.3: The adjusted field of cultural production embedded in the WAM art world

Further, Figure 7.3 illustrates the relative position of each of the Wreckamovie productions within the field of the WAM productions embedded in the art world. As mentioned, the four Wreckamovie productions are connected, and the depiction of the clear boundaries between the productions should therefore not be taken at face value. The primary intention with the positioning of the four Wreckamovie productions is to illustrate the diversity of production orientations within this shared art world.

Consulting Figure 7.3, we see that the *Iron Sky* production is placed in the upper right corner of the WAM field, signifying its close proximity to the field of large-scale production. For example, *Iron Sky* relied on a professional cast, traditional financial funding sources, and the film industry's established distribution models. Furthest apart from the position of the *Iron Sky* production is the *Star Wreck 2π* production, situated lower in the field of the WAM productions embedded in the WAM art world. This is to reflect that *Star Wreck 2π* was much more reliant on the practices associated with the networked information economy, operating with no real production budget, and imbuing lower levels of symbolic capital. The *Ice Guns* production, on the other hand, is located closer to the *Iron Sky* production, yet primarily shaped by forces associated with the networked information economy. The *Ice Guns* production was successful in facilitating the constructive participation of a large number of WAM members, and at completion, was watched by a large body of online audiences, but turned to the formal industry in the second distribution phase, after having given up on online distribution. Finally, the *Solar System* production is situated lower in the right side of the field of the WAM productions. *Solar System* was, from the outset, intended to be distributed professionally, mirroring the established value chain of the film industry. While facilitated by WAM members in the production process, it was not intended for consumption by online audiences.

While some aspects of Becker's concept of art worlds thus correspond with and account for the production practices analysed, one facet, in particular, poses an explanatory challenge. This challenge relates to the division of labour and the idea of the established conventions guiding them. Due to the relative novelty of networked cultural production in the form of peer production of feature film, conventions have yet to emerge and solidify. The lack of established conventions resulted in the co-existence of complementing, sometimes even conflicting, sets of conversions, as made evident in the discussion of labour typologies, presented in Chapter 5. These issues will be addressed in the next section, which presents a synthesizing discussion of findings related to research theme two: the division of labour in the Wreckamovie productions.

7.2.2 Research theme 2: The division of labour in WAM productions

The three analysis chapters provided concrete evidence of the multifaceted division of labour in the Wreckamovie productions. Chapter 4 portrayed the production processes of *Iron Sky*, *Star Wreck 2π*, *Ice Guns* and *Solar System* primarily from the perspectives of the production owners. Analyses presented made evident that the production owners took on the clear leadership of the productions, and made all the formative decisions shaping the production processes and their realization. For some, for example the *Star Wreck 2π* producers, the division of labour was experienced as highly skewed. Recall that the two producers decided to only include their names in the opening credits of the movie to reflect the proportion of labour they had performed. They explicitly expressed their disappointment in the degree to which labour could be mobilized through Wreckamovie. Likewise, the *Ice Guns* producers were acting as executives in the decision-making process leading to the formal distribution agreement. They only communicated this decision a year later to the production's WAM labour force. This reflected their challenge in coming to

terms with this move towards rejecting the values underpinning the peer production model, which they had believed in and pursued during the majority of the production phases.

Chapter 5 presented evidence on the division of labour as experienced by the WAM community and the four productions' member bases. The production members formed an ecology of volunteers, taking on concrete production tasks, explicitly performing labour roles aiding the actual production of the cultural goods. A heterogeneous assemblage of differentiated labour orientations, however, constituted this labour ecology. The analysis of labour orientations suggested that the WAM labourers conceptualized and interpreted their roles in contrasting, even conflicting ways, and that this in turn bore direct influence on how they conceptualized conventions perceived to guide their participation. Concretely, findings showed that five labour orientations were at stake across the four Wreckamovie productions: the aspirational orientation; the learning orientation; the community orientation; the ad-hoc orientation, and the fandom orientation.

The aspirational orientation was characterized by an emphasis on ensuring the completion of cultural objects; individuals steered by this orientation were driven by the pursuit of levering their position in the field of large-scale cultural production. To that end, the aspirational members initiated WAM productions and actively took on leadership roles, acting as decision-makers. To a large extent, the aspirational orientation mirrored established industry conventions specifying the operationalization of the division of labour. The aspirational took care and pride in providing constructive feedback on content submitted by production members in response to calls for concrete labour.

The learning orientation, on the other hand, was less concerned with the actual outcome of the production process. Instead, they cared for the learning potential intrinsic to WAM production tasks. As such, questions of accreditation of labour were not crucial for the

motivation of the learning orientation. Rather, these individuals were concerned with improving their skills and acquiring specific competences. As an outcome thereof, they were incentivized by the potential of comprehensive and constructive feedback from production owners and other community members.

The community orientation was motivated by experiences of belonging, and sought to develop genuine social relationships by means of active participation in the production process. Rather than choosing to participate in WAM productions based on the types of tasks available, the community orientation chose productions based on the level and depth of participation by other members, and the attitudes of the production leaders. The community orientation tended to closely follow and contribute to a large number of productions throughout their production phases, engaging with tasks exceeding the roles denoted by their official *Wreckupations*. The community orientation was formative in ensuring and maintaining the continuous participation on WAM, and were instrumental in organising offline community gatherings.

In direct opposition to the community orientation, individuals grouped under the ad hoc orientation were primarily concerned with solving specific problems, getting jobs done. Rather than engaging deeply with the WAM community, these individuals saw the WAM platform as a resource pool allowing for efficient crowdsourcing of ideas and content. Further, this orientation engaged only scarcely with submitted production content, and tended to restrict their feedback to general comments on the outcome at large of any given production task. Although the ad hoc orientation was concerned about accrediting WAM labour in accordance with the conventions of the professional film industry, their interaction patterns made them less able to independently identify WAM production members' contributions.

Finally, the fandom orientation was driven by the admiration of a specific group of artists, and thus participated in productions in order to build up a closer and public affiliation with these artists. The fandom-oriented individuals tended to join a smaller number of productions than any of the other orientations, and were also less likely to engage in dialogues with other production members. Compared to the aspirational, the learning and the community orientations, the fandom orientation played a marginal role in the actual realization of the WAM productions. The fandom orientation, however, played a crucial role in the formation of the social economies of the Wreckamovie productions, as became evident in the context of the analysis of the flows of alternative capital presented in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6, while framed as the analysis of the conversion of alternative capital across the four productions, portrayed additional facets of labour performed by volunteers. This labour, in contrast to the labour portrayed in Chapter 5, was not exclusively performed by the Wreckamovie production members, but also by the members of the productions' extended networks on online social platforms such as Facebook. The analysis of indirect conversions of capital illustrated how social capital, in the socio-technical space of the networked information economy, was convertible into symbolic and institutionalized cultural capital; converted capital which in some cases were further convertible into financial capital. These indirect conversions were defined as processes that required a member of the production or the extended network to make a social gesture. These social gestures, for example, 'liking' production-related content on online social platforms, sharing production videos or blog posts, voting on productions on IMDb, or re-watching production trailers to secure a certain view count, could equally be framed as labour performances, which generated capital for the Wreckamovie production owners.

In Chapter 6, it was demonstrated that the environment of the networked information economy made social capital increasingly malleable, visible and quantifiable. Likewise, it was made evident that all leaders of the four production cases acknowledged these properties of the environment, and actively sought to harness them to their advantage. Taken together, we see that labour issues in the Wreckamovie cases relate not only to questions of dividing specific labour tasks, and balancing the conflicting and differing perception of labour conventions, but equally to questions related to ensuring a high level of social capital of the production. This social capital, in the context of the online environments the Wreckamovie productions draw on, lends itself well to conversion. These conversions, in particular indirect conversions, however, only manifest if either a production member or a member of the extended production network performs labour in the form of a social gesture.

These findings related to the division of labour in the Wreckamovie productions do not correspond well with either of Bourdieu, Becker or Benkler's conceptualizations of cultural producers. Bourdieu, for example, did not consider amateurs to form part of the field of cultural production. Recall that in his visual presentation of the field, the non-professionals were divorced from the field of cultural production, positioned low within the field of power. Benkler, explicitly concerned with addressing the implications of networked technologies for cultural production, grounded his arguments in claims of increased autonomy and agency of non-professional producers. Benkler's conceptualization of commons-based peer production was thus intrinsically defined on the basis of the dichotomy of professionals and amateurs. Moreover, Benkler did not further problematize the notion of the non-professionals. Rather, peer production efforts were, in a unifying manner, described as constellations of hierarchy-free communities of self-selected, geographically distributed, volunteers working towards a shared goal.

Becker, on the other hand, operationalized the categorization of cultural workers differently. His key determining criteria applied in the categorization of artistic labour were not based on distinguishing between non-professional and professional *per se,* but on the *orientation* of the individual workers. In *Art Worlds*, Becker discriminated between what he labeled integrated professionals, mavericks, folk artists and naïve artists. The key differences between the cultural goods produced under each of these groupings, Becker underlined, were not immediately identifiable. As such, these cultural goods could not be distinguished from one another on the basis on their artistic expressions, their "surface appearance or sound" (p. 270). Rather, the differences emerged in their immaterial qualities, the degree to which they were oriented towards and shaped by established art worlds. However, this operationalization of the categorization of cultural workers based on the degree to which they were oriented towards recognized art worlds, bounded by prevailing conventions, did not allow for the diversification of orientations *within* art worlds. Further, while Becker, with his categorization of cultural producers, thus did pay attention to what Bourdieu might label non-professional production, his analytical focus remained concentrated on the collaborations between artists and integrated professionals, operating "with a shared tradition of problems and solutions" (p. 230).

In opposition to the portraits of cultural workers in the literature above is the unambiguous evidence of non-professional producers being explicitly embedded in the field of cultural production, as presented throughout the three analysis chapters. The WAM production members were not divorced from the field of cultural production, as suggested by Bourdieu. Likewise, Benkler's framing of cultural producers proved of limited explanatory measure. Benkler's framing emphasized the role of non-professionals, the peer producers, in carrying out networked cultural production, yet it rested on an equally crude dichotomous categorization of professional and non-professional cultural production. His approach thus failed in capturing the diversity of the makeup of the WAM community and extended labour

force. In this regard, Becker's notion of orientations provided a more fertile ground for the further dissection of the concept of the amateur, the non-professional. Nevertheless, Becker's work suggested that he was unappreciative of the potentiality of differentiated, parallel orientations co-existing within art worlds. In the case of the Wreckamovie productions, however, the labourers and participants were not sharing an overall orientation. Contrastingly, they embraced diverging labour orientations, which co-existed in parallel, and brought about a diversity of interpretations and perceptions of conventions guiding labour.

The above discussion has contributed towards answers to research question two:

RQ2: Which conventions guide the division of labour in Wreckamovie, and how are these conceptualized and perceived?

- What are the implications of the introduction of non-professionals in the field of cultural production in the case of WAM peer productions?

In order to provide further nuance to the discussion, the five labour orientations will be mapped onto the adjusted field of cultural production. The discussion clarifying the positioning of the orientations in the adjusted field, in turn, allows for the identification of partial answers to the sub-question, addressing the implications of the introduction of the non-professional producers in the field of cultural production.

Diversification of labour orientations

A key finding of this thesis is that the Wreckamovie production cases are characterized by an increased diversification of labour orientations aiding the production processes. The identification of the five co-existing labour orientations within the WAM art world has

enabled a more rigorous understanding of the characteristics of cultural producers, beyond the limited explanatory force ingrained in the dichotomy of amateurs and non-professionals. The proposed typology of WAM engagement can be further clarified by integrating the analysis of the division of labour with findings related to the characterizing features of the field and world of WAM productions. Figure 7.4 presents a visual integration of the findings related to the Wreckamovie productions' division of labour, art world and field. Concretely, Figure 7.4 illustrates the positions of each of the labour orientations as distributed across the WAM art world, embedded in the adjusted field of cultural production. As was the case with the placing of the four Wreckamovie productions in the WAM art world, illustrated in Figure 7.3, the visual representation of the labour orientations portrays stricter boundaries than what is warranted by the data. The positioning of the labour orientations is intended to communicate which of the forces of the two antagonistic fields bears the strongest influence on each orientation, rather than implying that the orientations are strictly bounded.

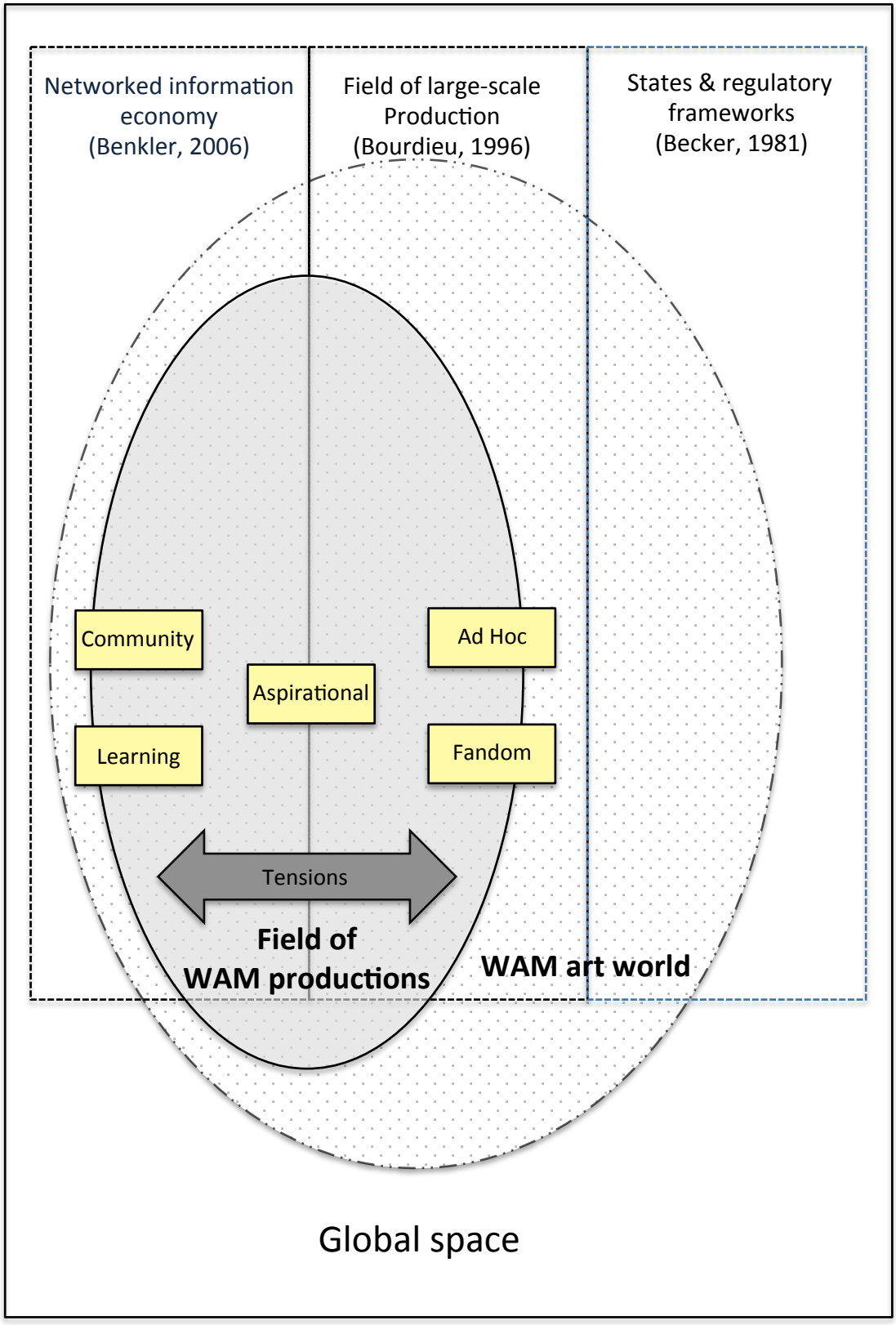


Figure 7.4: Labour orientations mapped in the adjusted field of cultural production

Consulting Figure 7.4, we see that the five different labour orientations are distributed to portray the different positions they take within in the field of the WAM productions. Their positions in the field indicate which of the two surrounding antagonistic fields primarily governs them. Looking at Figure 7.4, focusing on the left side of the field of the WAM productions, we see that the learning and community orientations are primarily governed by the value system associated with the networked information economy. Both orientations are characterized by the imbuing of high levels of individual autonomy. The learning orientation, for example, engages independently with informal learning processes; the community orientation displays empowerment when arranging offline Wreckamovie meetings, such as festivals. Likewise, both orientations value and engage with the collaborative and participatory features of the networked environment.

On the right side of the field of the WAM productions, as illustrated in Figure 7.4, the ad hoc and the fandom orientations are positioned, indicating that these are predominantly shaped by the logics underpinning the field of large-scale production. The ad hoc orientation is strictly mirroring established industry conventions related to the division and accreditation of labour. Further, this orientation values efficiency over community building. The fandom orientation is equally informed by established conventions, regulating the "relations between artists and audience, specifying the rights and obligations of both" (Becker, 2008, p. 29). The fandom-driven individuals take on the established role of fans, and focus on the interaction between themselves and the artists, rather than engaging with other production members and the Wreckamovie community at large. Finally, positioned in the middle of the field of the WAM productions, is the aspirational orientation, equally steered towards the networked information economy and the film industry, embracing aspects of the value systems underpinning each. The aspirational orientation, for example, is equally concerned about ensuring the proper accreditation of labour in accordance with industry contentions

as it is concerned about facilitating learning processes and ensuring community participation and cohesion.

Further, in Figure 7.4, the orientations are visually positioned in opposition to the orientation operating with practices and conventions furthest from its own. The community orientation, for example, is positioned opposite to the ad hoc orientation to illustrate their diverging perceptions of the Wreckamovie art world. The ad hoc orientation perceives of Wreckamovie as a platform enabling the crowdsourcing of ideas and content, the community orientation experiences Wreckamovie as a sphere facilitating the building of genuine relationships extending to the offline social world. At the bottom of the field of the WAM productions, the learning and the fandom orientations take oppositional positions, differing starkly in their perception of the role of interaction and feedback. Comprehensive ongoing feedback dialogues between all categories of Wreckamovie production members incentivize the learning-oriented Wreckamovie members. The fandom-oriented members, in contrast, rarely engage in longer conversations, and use the thumbing up function as a way of communicating feedback. Moreover, this feedback is directed to the production owners, rather than the production community.

The findings illustrated in Figure 7.4, portraying the diversified labour orientations, which make up the participatory member base facilitating the production of the four WAM production cases, make significant contributions to debates about the blurring boundaries of professional and non-professional cultural producers. It is recognized that
boundaries between professional and amateur cultural producers are increasingly blurring in the contemporary networked environment. It is recognized in policy discourses (as discussed in Chapter 1) as well as in scholarly literature (e.g. Bauwens, 2009b; Castells, 2009; Lessig, 2008; Meyer, 2010; Schafer, 2011). The recognition that professional and non-professional work exists on a continuum, however, does little to explain what different

positions on this continuum might entail. The presented typology of WAM labour orientations thus provides a tangible construct operating with a more nuanced conceptualization of categories of cultural producers situated between the poles of the amateurs and the professionals.

Contradictory implications of the introduction of non-professional producers

As suggested in the context of Figure 7.4, it is necessary to move beyond the dichotomy of amateurs and professionals in order to understand some of the implications of the introduction of non-professional producers in the field of cultural production. In this thesis, it has been proposed to categorize participation based on the orientations steering the differentiated, yet parallel, conceptualizations of art world conventions. Further, it has been demonstrated that the five identified WAM labour orientations, to varying degrees and in various constellations, are governed by the value systems and logics underpinning the antagonistic forces of the networked information economy and the field of large-scale production. Taken together, the identification of this complex composition of WAM member orientations, the horizontally directed tensions characterizing the field of WAM production at large, and the increasingly expanding boundaries of the WAM art world demonstrate that the implication of the introduction of the non-professionals in the field of cultural production are contradictory. This finding will be further accounted for in the following discussion of the implications as they manifest in the context of each of the individual labour orientations.

The practices and experiences of the community and learning orientations, as portrayed in Chapter 5, suggest that networked cultural production, in the case of the WAM productions, facilitated beneficial outcomes for the participating WAM members. By means of their

participation, individuals associated with these orientations were able to express themselves artistically in a mentoring, empowering environment, while actively engaging in the production of cultural goods. As we have seen, the learning-oriented participants, in particular, developed competences and skills transferrable beyond the specific production context that facilitated them. Equally beneficial for personal wellbeing: the community-oriented WAM members expressed great satisfaction from their experiences of communal belonging.

For the aspirational orientation, the implications of the introduction of the non-professional in the field of cultural production entailed a reconfiguration of gatekeeping mechanisms, traditionally ensuring a high barrier to entry to the film industry. Individuals of the aspirational orientation, characterized by its low levels of institutionalized cultural capital, were able to accrue embodied cultural capital by means of their WAM engagement. Further, as demonstrated in Chapter 6, they equally gained social capital by nurturing the growth of extended production networks. In return, the social capital vested in these networks because of the properties of the networked information economy was convertible into financial as well as symbolic and institutionalized capital. This ultimately allowed participants of the aspirational orientation to proceed towards their goal: to become increasingly recognized in the field of large-scale cultural production.

Implications relating to the fandom orientation included the possibility of directly interacting with artists admired by WAM members belonging to this category. These social interactions resulted in the increased experiences of co-ownership of the completed cultural artefacts. By participating in the WAM production processes, these participants gained symbolic capital. Further, the introduction of non-professionals in the field of cultural production allowed the ad hoc orientation to solve production related tasks and problems in

a cost-efficient manner. Meanwhile, these efficient processes generated numerous surplus advantages in the form of symbolic, social and financial capital.

The above outline of some of the implications of the introduction of non-professionals in the field of cultural production focused on the beneficial outcomes as analysed through the lens of the individual labour orientations. Thus framing the question of implications from the perspective of the labour categories, we see that the findings presented in this thesis to a large extent correspond with the diverging arguments put forward in literature reporting on implications of networked participatory practices. The experiences of the learning and community orientations, for example, resonate with Jenkins et al.'s (2009) framing of participatory cultures as nurturing skills and virtues such as collective problem-solving, and distributed intelligence, while likewise increasing competencies related to digital literacies in a meaningful social context. Similarly, the potential of the aspirational orientation to circumvent traditional gatekeeping practices, corresponds with Benkler's argument that networked technologies increase the agency of the individual; and with the gist of Shirky's (2008) claims put forward in *Here Comes Everybody*. Likewise, the relationships between the fandom and the ad hoc orientations correspond with arguments put forward in literature pointing to ways in which the internet facilitates mutually beneficial collaborations between fans and artists (e.g. Baym & Burnett, 2009; Baym, 2010, 2011; Bruns, 2012), resulting in value co-creation (Potts et al., 2008), and the promotion of "new, more positive, relationships among record labels, artists and fans" (Choi & Burnes, 2013, p. 35).

Nevertheless, the implications of the introduction of the non-professionals in the field of cultural productions become more complex when approached from a broader perspective than that of the individual labour orientations. If, instead, the five labour orientations are collaboratively addressed as forming an ecosystem of labour embedded within the larger

WAM art world encompassing the WAM field, implications include issues such as exploitation and the commodification of participation. As accounted for in Chapter 2, the rise of participatory and peer production cultures has led scholars grounded in critical traditions to engage with questions related to the exploitation of digital labour (e.g. Arvidsson & Colleoni, 2012; Banks & Deuze, 2009; Fuchs, 2010; Hesmondhalgh, 2010b; Kleemann et al., 2008; Terranova, 2000). Fuchs (2010, 2012a, 2012b), for example, has strongly advocated for the recognition of the capitalization of user-generated content, which, he argues, is "expropriated and exploited by capital to accumulate capital" (Fuchs, 2010, p. 179). Relatedly, it has been suggested that the discourses surrounding participatory practices of non-professionals deliberately mask the exploitative character of actualized co-production of goods (e.g. Hamilton, 2013; Van Dijck & Nieborg, 2009).

Responses to the debate on the exploitation of digital labour, however, have signified that that the debate "tends to fall into idealized, oppositional binaries" (Fish & Srinivasan, 2012, p. 137). To overcome that bias, Fletcher & Lobato (2013) suggested that digital labour must be analysed with due attention to the contexts, motivations and perceptions of the participating individuals. Similarly, Banks & Deuze (2009) argued that the key factor in determining the complicated ethical aspects of digital labour requires "careful attention […] to how the participants themselves […] negotiate and navigate the meanings and possibilities of these emerging co-creative relationships" (p. 419). According to Fish & Srinivasan, such attention requires the analysis of "how labour is capitalized and wealth is accumulated *at different points within the network*" (2012, p. 149 – my emphasis).

To address these critically framed digital labour debates in the context of the analyses of the WAM productions: the ecosystem of the differentiated WAM labour orientations suggests the existence of some level of exploitation of labour. Primarily the fandom orientation was subject to exploitation. This exploitation was rendered visible in the ad hoc-oriented

individuals' pronounced striving for social capital. Their limited engagement with actualized labour in the form of submitted production content indicates that these practices were evoked less in order to provide augmented experiences for their fans and collaborators, and more so in order to accrue capital. Social capital, as demonstrated in Chapter 6, was, for example, explicitly recognised as a currency, which, by means of conversions, allowed for the accumulation of further financial, symbolic and cultural capital. Because of the importance of social capital for expanding the financial economies of the WAM productions, deliberate attempts were made in order to generate social capital. The fandom orientation was, less wittingly, instrumental for the accumulation of social capital of the production owners. Moreover, the WAM producers' uniform attempts at mobilizing social capital in indirect conversion processes were guided by their realisation that social gestures in the commercial environment of the internet are commodification processes. For example, the socio-technical system of YouTube awarded financial capital in return for content views. As the analysis of indirect conversion of alternative capital, presented in Chapter 6, demonstrated, social capital, in its converted symbolic form, was actively sought and expropriated, enabling WAM producers to accumulate financial capital in the field of large-scale production, and to increase their level of autonomy.

Yet, the exploitative aspects of the Wreckamovie productions were not the overriding characteristic underpinning the production processes. As suggested by literature calling for a departure from "oppositional binaries " (Fish & Srinivasan, 2012, p. 137), by paying attention to the particular context of labour (Fletcher & Lobato, 2013), the perceptions of the participating individuals (Banks & Deuze, 2009), and distributions of capital "*at different points within the network*" (Fish & Srinivasan, 2012, p. 149 – my emphasis), the question of exploitation must be reframed. This requires attention to the broader patterns of flows and reconfigurations of capital within the social economies of the WAM productions, and at the same time, an analytical sensitivity and the perceptions of the individuals who form part of

these economies. Labour and capital are interconnected, and therefore the wider social economies of the extended WAM production networks must be included in the evaluation of the degree of exploitation. This issue will be further addressed under the synthesising discussion of research theme three.

The key findings emerging from research theme two, focused on the division of labour in WAM productions, thus included the identification of a typology of diverging labour orientations, co-existing in a parallel manner within the shared WAM art world. The five orientations were to varying degrees governed by the logics and dynamics of the antagonistic forces of the networked information economy and the field of large-scale production. The mapping of orientations in the adjusted field of cultural production allowed for more nuanced understandings of labour, implying that the implications of the introduction of non-professionals in the field of cultural production are contradictory. While each of the orientations, in isolation, benefitted as a result, it could not be ignored that the labour ecosystem of the WAM art world as a whole entailed some level of exploitation of labour, and partially promoted the commodification of participation.

7.2.3 Research theme 3: The social economies of WAM productions

The third research theme, the social economies of the Wreckamovie productions, was directly addressed in Chapter 6, and indirectly accounted for in Chapter 4 and 5. Chapter 4, presenting analyses of the four WAM production cases, made it evident that the social economies of the productions were not contained within the Wreckamovie community, the production member bases nor within the extended online production networks. The *Iron Sky* team, for example, reported in online communications on their trajectories of film festival experiences, sharing stories from the "wolf's den", as they initially coined the Cannes film festival. They explained how attending film festivals was similar to informal social

networking in bars. Further, they published behind-the-scenes videos, the *Iron Sky Signals*, throughout the production period, in which they, for example, portrayed the roles and responsibilities of the professional film crew, such as the costume and set designers, working on *Iron Sky*. The *Star Wreck 2π* production did less in the way of hinting to the influence of offline networks. Yet, a range of the actors involved were scientific colleagues of one of the producers, and her laboratory was used on several occasions as the setting for shootings. Further, in interviews with the other *Star Wreck 2π* producer, he explained that a non-Wreckamovie related offline contact had helped ensure that *Star Wreck 2π* could premiere at one of the most visited sci-fi conventions in Europe, *Finncon*.

These numerous examples makes it clear that the fuller picture of the social economies of the Wreckamovie productions cannot be captured by data generated through interviews and interactions with Wreckamovie members and online discourses alone. The way the boundaries of this case study have been set, as accounted for in Chapter 3, does not allow non-Wreckamovie related personal and professional offline networks to be included in the analysis of the social economies of the Wreckamovie peer productions. Nonetheless, acknowledging the limitations imposed by the research design, and acknowledging the potential influence of these offline networks, findings of Chapter 5 and 6 presented evidence responding to research question three:

RQ3: In which ways do alternative forms of capital manifest in the Wreckamovie peer productions, and what are the indications that the involved actors actively seek to convert these forms of capital into other forms of capital?

- *What characterizes the dynamics and mechanisms enabling the conversion of one form of capital to another?*

In the following, a synthesizing discussion of the manifestations and dynamics of alternative capital within the social economies of the Wreckamovie productions is presented.

Hybrid economies across gift and consumer cultures

The portrayals of individual WAM members' labour engagement presented in Chapter 5 gave way for the indirect identification of alternative capital as they manifested as direct outcomes of active participation in the production processes. The individuals of the aspirational orientation, who were seeking to become recognized in the field of large-scale production, accrued several forms of alternative capital by means of their Wreckamovie efforts. They gained embodied cultural capital through their experimentation with leveraging the quality of the completed cultural good. *Ice Guns*, for example, was initially intended to be an amateur production, but as the production took off on Wreckamovie, ambitions grew. Because of the production leaders' genuine and comprehensive feedback practices many of the participating learning-oriented became loyal helpers, attesting to the accruing of mobilizable social capital of the aspirational orientation. This social capital was what enabled the subsequent *Solar System* production to progress through the stages of pre-production, production and post-production within nine months. Further, institutionalized capital manifested as productions were completed: Both *Star Wreck 2π* and *Ice Guns* became listed on IMDb.

The learning orientation primarily, and in accordance with their motivations, gained embodied cultural capital: through their participation, they developed skills and competences. One participant, for example, was subsequently able to take on freelancing graphic design jobs, another gained sophisticated enough skills to be recruited as an assistant production leader of a new Wreckamovie production. Recall also, that a third learning-oriented WAM member, who had never thought he would be able to work professionally on film, was recruited by the *Solar System* producer to perform professional,

paid work once the formal distribution agreement had been settled. The community orientation, motivated by social relationships and the building of friendships ties, gained social capital by means of their sustained personal engagement not only with the production processes, but also with the individuals taking part in the making of the cultural goods. One such individual, for example, highlighted how she had increasingly engaged with other WAM members in offline contexts. Likewise, symbolic capital manifested in the interactions between the fandom orientation and the ad hoc orientation, which in return resulted in the increased manifestation of social capital of the ad hoc-oriented WAM members. As is being argued, the analyses provided evidence that the collaborative processes facilitated by the Wreckamovie platform, resulted in the manifestation of alternative capital in full correspondence with the intentions, interests and drivers of the individual labour orientations. Further, taken as a whole the WAM labour ecology formed a network of social capital.

This social capital of the closer community of the WAM production members strengthened the wider social economies of the productions. These wider social economies were analysed in Chapter 6. The analytical scope employed in Chapter 6 entailed a broader framing of the productions; this thus included in the analysis members of and interactions within and across the extended online networks of the four WAM productions. Concretely, Chapter 6 presented an analysis of the social economies of the WAM productions by examining the flows of alternative and financial capital as they manifested in conversion processes.

These conversion processes were suggested conceptually clarified through the distinction of direct and indirect conversions. In contrast to the manifestations and flows of alternative capital that arose as the outcome of WAM members direct engagement with specific production tasks, as presented in Chapter 5, the conversion processes analysed in Chapter 6 were not directly related to the actual production of the cultural goods. Rather, these

conversion processes were deliberately pursued in order to reconfigure the distribution of alternative and financial capital within and beyond the field of the WAM productions.

Indirect conversions, defined as processes that required an individual to make a *financial transaction* in the traditional economic sense, were in particular pursued by the *Iron Sky* team through their extensive portfolio of crowdfunding activities. While explicit financial transactions were taking place between WAM production members/members of the extended production network and the *Iron Sky* team, the team conceptualized these as acts of declarations of support. The crowdfunding activities were thus perceived as forming part of a gift economy.

The transacting individuals, however, did not uniformly share this interpretation: while some members of the extended production networks perceived the acts as gestures in a gift economy, others conceptualized these interactions within the frame of consumer cultures. The differences in the interpretations of the spaces in which these direct conversion processes unfolded directly influenced the dynamics of the concrete reconfigurations of capital ultimately enacted. When the space was conceptualized by the transactors as one associated with gift economies, the conversion processes were orientated towards the accumulation of symbolic capital. These dynamics corresponded to the values of gift economies and their "refusal of the logic of the maximization of economic profit (Bourdieu, 1997b, p. 237). Because of the mutual understanding of this social space as one of support and obligation, the financial transaction made were not experienced as forming part of exchanges in the traditional economic sense. The various material and scarce digital objects received in exchange for financial capital were not perceived of as alienable commodities, but as inalienable manifestations of the relationship between the core production team members and the transacting community member.

In contrast, when the conversion space was perceived as one associated with cultural consumption, the processes were oriented towards the accumulation of objectified cultural capital. In comparison to the social space of gift cultures, this space imbued fewer norms setting out expectations of mutual recognition and obligation as understood in the context of gift cultures. The transacting individuals were not as such concerned with forming strong social bonds with the core creators. Rather, they were concerned with associating themselves with the actual cultural objects such as the trailers and the completed movies. The social space of consumer cultures was perceived as a commoditized space, and the various goods, such as merchandise and scares digital goods, were therefore seen as alienable commodities. Consequently, there was a wider diversity in the transacting members' attitudes towards the crowdfunding activities. Their attitudes varied in accordance with the amount of objectified cultural capital they ascribed the goods. What the analysis of these two overall patterns of direct conversions of capital made evident was that in the case of direct conversion processes, individuals' framing of the social space that connected them with the core production teams directly shaped the particular mechanisms and stakes at play.

The influence of individuals' framing of the conversion space was one property that distinguished processes of direct conversions from processes of indirect conversions. The key distinguishing feature, however, was that *indirect* conversions were defined as processes that required an individual to make a *social gesture* rather than a *financial transaction*. Further, these indirect conversions were enabled by the socio-technical properties of a particular space: the networked information economy.

In Chapter 6, three indirect conversion paths enabled by this socio-technical space were identified. Each of types of reconfigurations of capital rested on the mobilization of social capital. For example, by means of the first conversion path symbolic capital converted from

social capital became a currency, "cold cash", in negotiations with industry stakeholders, enabling the accruing of further capital through sales of distribution rights. The second conversion path allowed for the conversion of symbolic capital, derived from social capital, to be converted to financial capital within the boundaries of the socio-technical space of the networked information economy. A key enabler of these conversions was argued to be the increasingly commodified architecture of the internet. These indirect conversions mechanisms thus authorized WAM producers to capitalize on, what Fuchs (2012a) described as, *data commodities.*

The third manifestation of indirect conversions of alternative capital rested on the ability of the networked environment to reconfigure the way institutionalized cultural capital is constructed (Verboord, 2013). Concretely, the WAM producers sought to mobilize their social capital, actively encouraging them to write reviews and make their vote on the WAM productions' IMDb listings. This archived, visible, quantifiable, public recognition published in an online environment characterized by its strict gatekeeping mechanisms, in return resulted in the institutionalized capital to act as symbolic capital.

As indicated in synthesizing discussions above, the social economies of the Wreckamovie productions are complex and multifaceted. Likewise, their dynamics and drivers are contradictory, and orientated towards the accumulation of conflicting capital. In essence, the social economies of the WAM productions form hybrid economies across gift and consumer cultures.

New stake in the field: social capital

Throughout *The Wealth of Networks* Benkler alluded to the importance of gift economies, which, he argued, were not peripheral to, but at the very centre of modern capitalist

societies (p. 116). This emphasis on gift economies and cultures was equally present in related scholarly literature concerned with networked participatory practices (e.g. Barbrook, 2005; Baym, 2011; Bays & Mowbray, 1999; Bergquist & Ljungberg, 2001; Burnett, 2003, 2012; Giesler & Pohlmann, 2003; Hellekson, 2009; Lessig, 2008; Pearson, 2007; Skågeby, 2010; Zeitlyn, 2003). Despite the emphasis of Benkler and others on the importance of recognizing gift economies as drivers of networked cultural production, and peer production in particular, Benkler's work, however, neglected that gift economies are upheld by complex social dynamics, as portrayed in anthropological literature (e.g. Malinowski, 1922; Mauss, 1954). Yet, in comparison with Becker, who did not at all concern himself with the underlying social economies of cultural production, Benkler at least highlighted the importance of recognizing social economies as a key driver of networked cultural production.

Bourdieu, on the other hand, was very explicit in his argumentation on the role and importance of social dynamics in shaping cultural production. Repeatedly, he pointed to the concepts of alternative capital when explaining the drivers of and stakes involved in cultural production. Bourdieu, however, framed the social economies in terms of struggles over capital. He, for example, described the relationships between the *consecrated avant-garde* and the *bohemian avant-garde* in the field of small-scale productions as centred around the competition over the distribution and accumulation of symbolic capital, around legitimation processes. With his emphasis on struggle, however, Bourdieu did not consider the social economies to play a facilitating and enabling role in cultural production; these economies were portrayed as exclusively driving competitions for a certain form of capital between antagonistic positions within either the subfield of large-scale or small-scale production. Further, Bourdieu paid relatively little attention to defining and accounting for the various forms of capital he otherwise operated with in the context of, amongst other, this theory of cultural consumption (Bourdieu, 1984). Recall from Chapter 2 that eight discrete forms of

capital were indexed in *The Field of Cultural Production*, albeit never defined. Moreover, in *The Rules of Art*, Bourdieu attended even less to defining the various forms of capital; social capital, as noted, was only addressed in two footnotes (Bourdieu, 1996 p. 288 note 64 and p. 361 note 65).

Bourdieu thus did not connect his theory of cultural production to his conceptualizations of the latent convertibility of alternative capital, as presented in other works (e.g. Bourdieu, 1984, 1993a, 1997c). Yet, as demonstrated in Chapter 6, the properties of the various forms of alternative capital, and their malleability and convertibility, enabled more refined analyses of the social dynamics of cultural production. The analyses of the flows and conversions of alternative capital portrayed the peculiarities of the experienced WAM productions' gift cultures; the ability of analyses of flows and dynamics of alternative capital has also been suggested by Dolfsma et al. (2009) and Silber (2009) as a means of understanding gift economies.

As made evident by the analysis of direct and indirect conversions of capital across the WAM production cases, however, the dynamics where shaped by gift economies and consumer cultures alike. These findings thus aligned with the increasing body of literature departing from a dichotomous framing of gifts and commodities (e.g. Bird-David & Darr, 2009; Darr, 2003; Davis, 1996; Herrmann, 1997; Lapavitsas, 2004; Rus, 2008; Smart, 1993). As also noted in Chapter 6, Carrier (1991), for example, argued that rather than forming two opposing logics, gifts and commodities exist on a continuum, making it impossible to distinguish between gift and commodities based on a set of pre-identified properties of each. Instead, in order to determine which of the two categories any given object intended for exchange belongs to, one must attend to the dynamics of the social space in which these exchanges unfold, as argued by Appadurai (1986).

To provide a concluding overview of the dynamics of the economies of the WAM productions, Figure 7.5 illustrates the social economies of the extended and immediate WAM production networks as mapped in the adjusted field of cultural production. This mapping of the hybrid economies of gift and consumer cultures as present in the identified conversion mechanisms alongside the networks of social capital constituted by the immediate WAM production communities of labourers allow for the identification of a key change in the overall dynamic of the field of cultural production: Namely, the introduction of social capital as a stake in the field of networked cultural production.

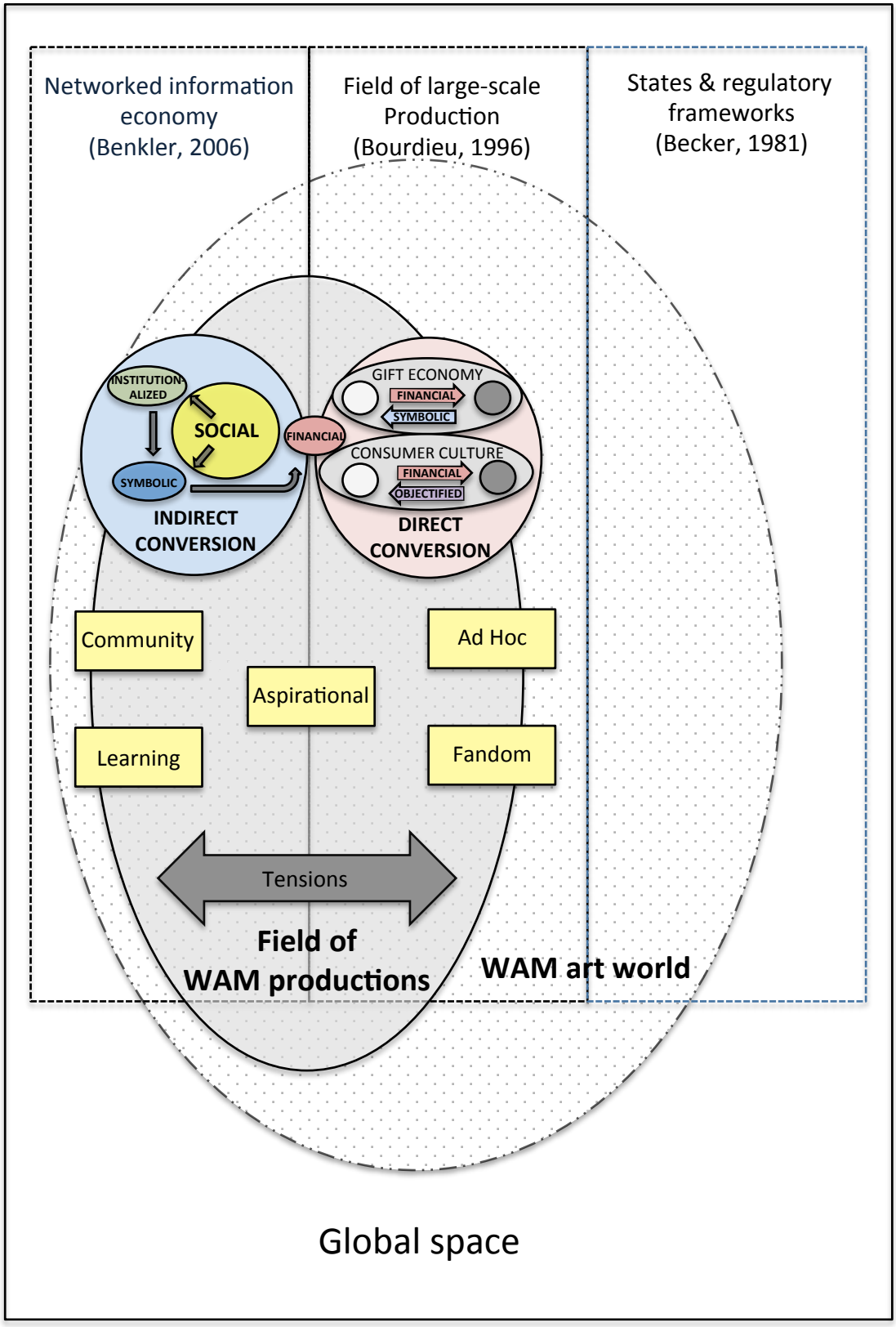


Figure 7.5: The social economies of the extended and immediate WAM production networks mapped in the adjusted field of cultural production

Figure 7.5 offers a visual representation of the social economies of the extended and immediate networks of the WAM productions as positioned within the adjusted field of cultural production. The red circle in the upper right corner of the field illustrates the identified drivers of the direct conversion mechanisms. The placing of the circle encompassing the dynamics of the direct conversion processes alludes to their closer association with the market and profit oriented properties of the field of large-scale production. The direct conversions are de facto economic transactions, requiring explicit financial transactions. Yet, we see that the red circle contains two opposing modus operandi: gift economies and consumer cultures. The depicted gift economy is oriented towards the accumulation of symbolic capital. Symbolic capital is otherwise associated with the field of the networked economy's cultures of social gestures. When this form of conversion can be facilitated in this position in the field of the WAM productions, it is because the transacting individuals frame the commodity exchange as social gestures, yielding symbolic capital. Symbolic captial, emerging in the bond between the transacting individuals, experiences as inalienable, and thus non-comparable. The second depicted direct conversion dynamics, that of consumer cultures, allign more directly with the drivers and values of its position in the field.

Note in Figure 7.5 that the blue circle in the upper left corner of the field illustrates the dynamics and mechanisms enabling the indirect conversions of alternative capital. The arrows embedded in the blue circle demonstrate the different conversion chains enabled by the socio-technical environment, as identified in Chapter 6. Note further, that financial capital converted within the circle of the indirect conversions reach accross towards the field of large-scale production, indicating that capital accrued through these conversion processes are effective as capital outside of the sphere which enabled their accumulation. Taking up the most space in the blue circle is social capital, refering to its increased prominence in the networked information economy.

Below the two circles depicting the stakes, drivers and dynamics characterizing the indirect and direct conversion processes is the network of the immediate WAM production community; the economy of labour orientations. The WAM members directly participating in production tasks furthering the actual development of the productions form a network of social capital, indicated in yellow. Figure 7.5 thus demonstrates that the significance of social capital in the WAM economies is an outcome of *both* its new affordances of malleability, visibility and quantifiability in the socio-technical space of the networked information economy, *and* an outcome of its role in facilitating the peer production of the cultural goods. In sum, Figure 7.5 highlights a new stake in the field of cultural production: social capital.

Chapter 8
Conclusions and recommendations

8.1 Towards a theory of networked cultural production

This thesis' first chapter opened with a quote by Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales, predicting that peer produced films would soon put an end to the Hollywood production model, to the old-fashioned production apparatus of the film industry. The form of networked cultural production he alluded to has only emerged alongside the uptake of participatory, networked technologies. Since the early 2000s, we have witnessed a progressive increase of such informally organized, socially oriented, production models. In particular, these practices have resulted in the creation of open source software and encyclopedic knowledge bases. However, in recent years, other cultural domains have also begun embracing such emerging participatory production models, for example in the context of theatre performances (Meyer & Hjorth, 2013), industrial design (Kleemann et al., 2008) and documentary filmmaking (Sørensen, 2013). Initial scholarly responses to these emerging production models were, in large part, characterized by utopian discourses, hailing the transformative potential of networked technologies to transform anything from culture to bureaucracies and business models (e.g. Benkler, 2006; Jenkins, 2009; Lessig, 2008; Shirky, 2008; Tapscott & Williams, 2006). Since the late 2000s, though, scholarly responses have taken an increasingly critical turn. In particular, the idea that peer production is operating outside market logics has been challenged (e.g. Berdou, 2011; Bruns, 2012; Mansell & Steinmueller, 2011; Meng & Wu, 2013). Yet, as discussed in Chapter 1, contemporary debates and theorizing within the field

of cultural sociology have paid little attention to understanding implications of these particularities of the networked environment on cultural production.

This thesis has provided evidence of the hybrid nature of networked cultural production, challenging its independence from bureaucratic forms and traditional production models of the formal cultural industries. It has demonstrated that networked cultural production, in the form of peer production of film, is best understood as being shaped by competing and antagonistic forces. This study has contributed significantly to scholarly knowledge by providing rigorous qualitative evidence on under-researched phenomena surrounding the peer production of films. With due sensitivity to the full production cycles, and their embedding in the online environment of the Wreckamovie platform, the thesis analysed the division of labour, the social economies, structures, and tensions of four peer produced feature-length films, drawing on multiple data collection methods and data sources.

A significant quality of this inquiry lies in its rigorous and novel combinatory use of existing theorizing on cultural production. In doing so, this thesis has contributed towards novel theory building on networked cultural production in several ways. Firstly, it has offered an innovative assemblage of the theoretical frameworks of three highly influential thinkers addressing cultural production: Bourdieu, Becker and Benkler. Becker and Bourdieu are both considered part of the literary canon of cultural sociology (Fuente, 2010), but are generally perceived as proponents of two opposing approaches to the study of culture (e.g. Fowler, 1997; Hesmondhalgh, 2006; Maanen, 2009; Santoro, 2011). By critically engaging with their theories, and by further problematizing the limitations of each through comprehensive reviews of related literature across a diverse range of academic fields, this thesis has contributed to debates on the convergences and divergences between Bourdieu and Becker's authorships (e.g. Becker & Pessin, 2006; Bottero & Crossley, 2011b; Fowler, 1997; Prior, 2008, 2011).

Secondly, this thesis addressed specific research themes and questions directly derived and informed, in an integrating manner, by the key premises and concepts underpinning the three complementary theoretical frameworks. This framing of inquiry, in return, allowed for the empirical data analysis to identify key properties defining and differentiating networked cultural production from its ancestors. Most importantly, through this critical engagement, application and fusing of these three well-established theoretical approaches to cultural production, the findings of this thesis can serve to provide generalizability beyond naturalistic generalization. The granular mapping of findings onto the adjusted field of cultural production, presented in Chapter 7, can, I argue, serve to initiate a proposal towards theoretical generalizations. This quality of case studies for building theory has been highlighted by scholars such as Flyvbjerg (2006). Concretely, Figure 8.1 below presents a visual outline of my proposal towards a theory of networked cultural production.

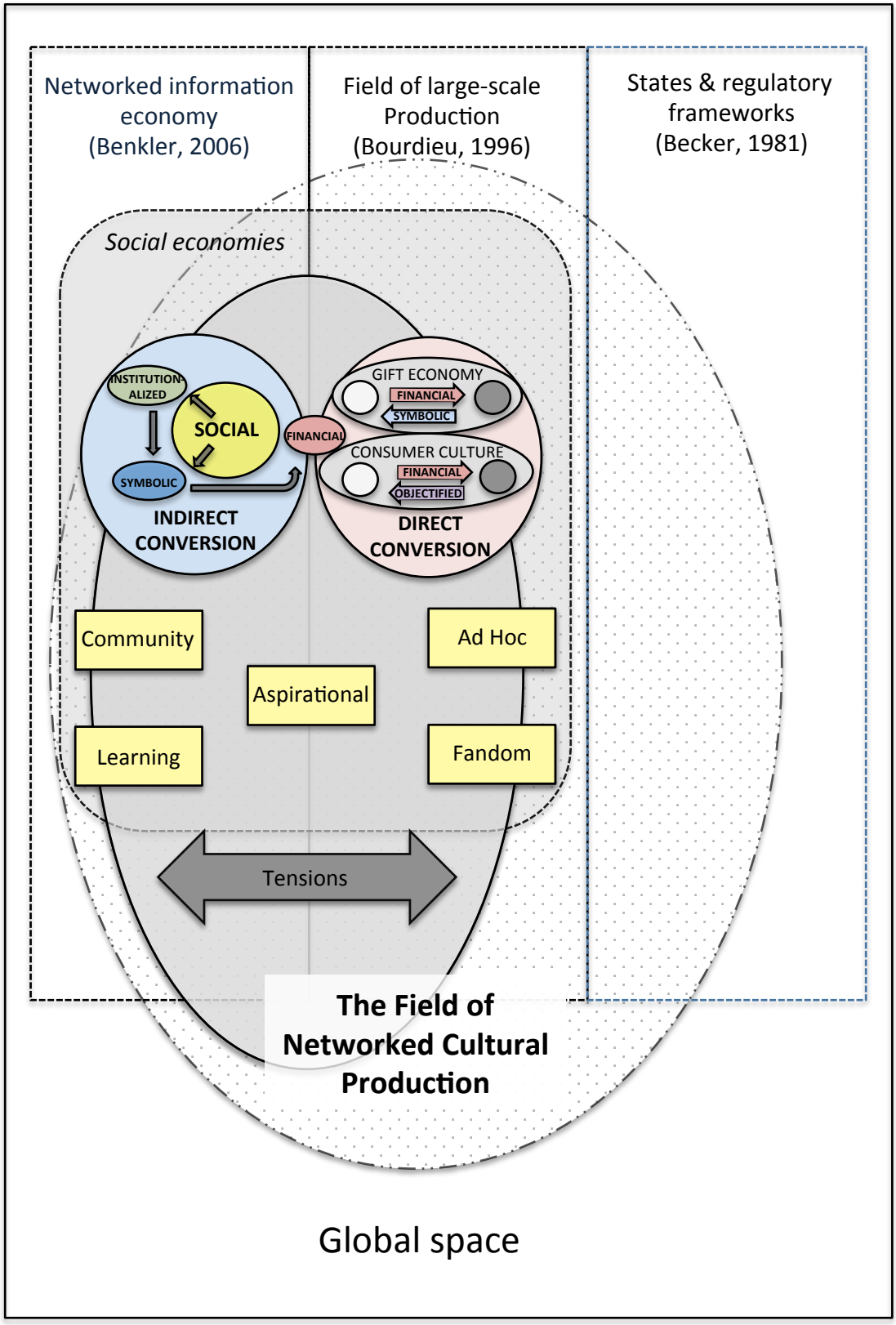


Figure 8.1: Outline of proposal towards a theory of networked cultural production

Figure 8.1 directly builds on Bourdieu's theory of the field of cultural production, and incorporates central aspects from Becker and Benkler's frameworks. However, rather than explaining cultural production via the relationship between two compartmentalized sub-fields, this proposal suggests that networked cultural production is best understood as being shaped by the tensions between two antagonistic value systems: that which is underpinning Benkler's (2006) description of commons-based peer production, and that which is conceptualized by Bourdieu (1996) thorough his notion of the field of large-scale production. Likewise, both of these two antagonistic fields are subject to the influences of regulatory frameworks of states; to illustrate this, Becker's highlighting of the role of the state and regulation for cultural production is included in Figure 8.1 as the third column.

Further, as illustrated in Figure 8.1, the proposal towards a theory of networked cultural production suggests that emerging collaborative, distributed production practices cannot be understood exclusively by applying analytical concepts related to tensions and struggles. Therefore, as depicted in Figure 8.1, *The Field of Networked Cultural Production* entails a merging of the concepts of the field and of the art worlds. The larger dotted circle denotes, as it did in the figures presented in Chapter 7, Becker's art world concept. This merging, however, should not be taken to indicate that the two concepts are identical; the concepts of the field and art worlds remain differentiated. Nevertheless, the forces and enablers inherent in the two concepts are both at play in contemporary networked cultural production, to varying degrees at different stages in the production cycles and trajectories.

As demonstrated in Figure 8.1, the proposal towards a theory of networked cultural production acknowledges the expanding boundaries of *The Field of Networked Cultural Production*, extending beyond the previous boundaries of the field of cultural production. The new field of production extends into the global, social space, indicating that a

continuously increasing number of non-professional producers take part in the creative processes.

Inherent in the suggested proposal towards a theory of networked cultural production are a number of significant contributions: Departing with the binary distinction of amateurs and professional cultural producers, this approach rests on the framing of volunteer labour in accordance with the notion of labour orientations. More concretely, this thesis proposed a typology of labour orientations, and accounted for the internal dynamics between these groups of participants and their relative position in the field of networked cultural production. In doing so, this proposal ties into the theoretical framework issues related to digital labour and exploitation. As indicated in Figure 8.1, the proposal towards a theory of networked cultural production insists that these issues must be analysed and interpreted in the context of the larger social economies of such productions.

As communicated through Figure 8.1, the social economies of networked cultural production are complex, and include the immediate production networks constellated by heterogeneous participants with differing orientations, as well as the productions' extended networks of fans and collaborators. Further, as indicated through the yellow color-coding in Figure 8.1, the dynamics between the immediate and extended networks of the social economies are, to a large extent, influenced by the properties of social capital and its particular affordances of malleability, quantifiability and visibility in networked environments. This framing of social economies thus acknowledges that the wider ecosystem of networked cultural production may entail some level of exploitation and commodification of participation, and highlights that social capital is a key stake in networked cultural production.

Moreover, the proposal towards new theory building argues that the cultures driving the social economies of networked cultural production are not operating with a unified logic. This is indicated in Figure 8.1 by the inclusion of the direct and indirect conversion mechanisms in the social economies of the productions. As illustrated, the cultures of the social economies are simultaneously oriented towards the accumulation of symbolic capital, objectified cultural capital, institutional cultural capital and financial capital. These different forms of capital accumulations are associated with profoundly differentiated cultures, including gift cultures and consumer cultures. A new theory therefore, as indicated in Figure 8.1, must allow for further analytical sensitivity regarding the parallel, conflicting cultures and value-systems driving the social production practices. Further, the outlined proposal explicitly argues for the importance of the increased attention to the flows and exchanges of capital, and holds that these can be analytically approached through the concept of capital conversion processes, as has been done in this thesis in Chapter 6.

As such, the proposal represented by Figure 8.1 is shaped by a more nuanced understanding of the mechanisms and properties enabling and governing the processes of converting one form of capital to another, as presented in this thesis. These conversion processes have long been acknowledged as under-researched (Bourdieu, 1993a). The empirical data analysis moved beyond more vague acknowledgements of the latent convertibility of alternative capital, and identified and modelled distinct conversion models. The outlined proposal towards a theory of networked cultural production ultimately argues that the multiplex cultures driving the social economies of networked cultural production can be explained as processes of capital reconfigurations enabled by locally and socio-technically shaped conversion mechanisms of alternative capital.

8.2 Policy recommendations in an European context

The empirical analyses of the four Wreckamovie peer productions *Iron Sky*, *Star Wreck 2π*, *Ice Guns* and *Solar System* have immediate relevance to policy. The introductory chapter of this thesis highlighted that networked cultural production was becoming a political priority in Europe. Increasingly, for example, the focus area of *audience building* emphasizes participatory and co-creative aspects of cultural access and consumption (Tomka, 2013). Further, the European Commission's policy discourses explicitly acknowledge that traditional distinctions between cultural producers and cultural consumers, the professional and the amateurs, are increasingly blurring (e.g. OMC, 2012; Bamford & Wimmer, 2012). Further, audience building is a specific priority under the *European Commission's* funding programme *Creative Europe (EU COM* 786/2 *2011)*, which contributes to the larger *Europe 2020* strategy.

This thesis has demonstrated that networked cultural production can serve as an effective means of engaging citizens in the creative processes leading to the production of cultural goods. The analysis chapters have presented evidence on how individuals have benefitted from their active participation in numerous ways. The learning oriented individuals, for example, gained specific skills and competences, allowing them to make the transition from amateurs to integrated professionals. The typology of Wreckamovie labour orientations, however, further suggests that the European Commission's concept of audience building needs to be highly sensitive to the diversity of audiences if initiatives funded under this priority are to achieve the intended outcomes. Based on findings of this research, it is recommended that such initiatives be targeted to serve the differentiated needs and specific objectives of the five different labour orientations and others which may emerge in different contexts.

European audience building initiatives targeted at the community oriented individuals, for example, should be designed to allow for blended approaches to on-going interaction. These initiatives should be sure to include offline gatherings as part of the goal, mirroring this orientation's emphasis on developing genuine relationships in real life over longer periods of time. As the data presented illustrated, the community orientation was not concerned with filmmaking *per se*. They were motivated by taking part in social processes leading to feelings of belonging and meaning. Therefore, this orientation could be motivated to partake in projects centred on broader topics related to cultural heritage, if framed and bounded as collaborative projects. For example, integrating audience building initiatives targeted at the community orientation with existing pan-European cultural heritage projects such as the online *Europeana* repository might remedy some of the limitations that have been identified. Erway (2009) has, for example, pointed out that the *Europeana* project has been reliant on goodwill rather than the intrinsic motivations of participators, and that it promotes top-down decision making. A suggestion for an audience engagement initiative targeted at the community orientation would be to arrange offline and online workshops allowing for the brainstorming of ideas for collaborative projects that would harness the available *Europeana* content in creative ways, and subsequently build Wreckamovie facilitated projects around these ideas, leading to the production of free cultural goods promoting topics central to the diverse European heritage.

Initiatives targeted at the learning orientation should have a focus on constructive feedback. In addition to serving as audience building, initiatives designed for the learning orientation would also serve as a means towards the goals associated with the European Commission's *Digital Agenda for Europe,* in particular its pillar concerned with *Enhancing digital literacy, skills and inclusion*. The analysis of Wreckamovie productions showed that the learning orientation was motivated by constructive and comprehensive feedback dialogues, and cared less about building relationships or reputation within the online community. The

informal learning processes, as demonstrated, led individuals of this category to acquire complex competencies, such as, for example, 3D modeling skills. From an economic perspective, such informal learning processes might form cost-beneficial approaches to promoting the life-long learning of skills that are considered key by policy makers for the future competitiveness of the European workforce. One specific recommendation for an initiative aiding in motivating the learning orientation would be to develop an open source feedback application that could be integrated into existing online platforms such as Wreckamovie. The application should be designed to facilitate in-depth, archivable, feedback processes and be informed by literature from learning sciences.

The aspirational orientation, on the other hand, possesses qualities that can help promote the goals of the European Commission's *Creative Europe* (2014-2020) programme. *Creative Europe*, for example, seeks to promote inter-European audience building, job growth and innovation within the creative and cultural industries. As this research has demonstrated, the aspirational orientation has facilitated the production of high quality cultural goods on severely restricted budgets. This has been aided by distributed online volunteers anchored offline in cities not famous for their film production: Tampere, Oslo, Stuttgart, Berlin. A large body of scholarly research on professional creative industries, notably the Hollywood-system (Christopherson & Storper 1986; Scott, 2004), has established that the geospatial proximity of individuals involved in creative production is essential for organising and performing these processes, and that cultural industries tend to cluster in a few large cities globally (e.g. Lorenzen & Frederiksen, 2008). Nonetheless, emerging forms of networked cultural production, as demonstrated, seem to challenge these conditions, and may, if sufficiently supported, help decrease the conglomeration of the cultural and creative industries in Europe. Concretely, based on this research, it is recommended that the aspirational orientation is supported as part of the *Creative Europe* programme by means of novel funding schemes. This research has pointed out that the aspirational orientation is

formative in ensuring the production of cultural goods, and facilitate learning processes and community building through their leadership practices. However, as has been shown, the aspirational orientation is challenged financially, and does not imbue high enough levels of institutionalized cultural capital or enough social capital to ensure the sustainability of their practice. It is therefore recommended that funding schemes are put in place to reimburse the project costs of the aspirational orientation up to €50,000 following completion and distribution, or alternatively, that crowdfunded means are matched/topped up to a maximum of €50,000.

This research has also demonstrated that the ad hoc orientation engages a large number of fandom-orientated individuals in production processes, leading to the experiences of co-ownership of the cultural goods. As such, therefore, these practices feed into the audience building priority, and initiatives could therefore be launched to promote such practices more broadly amongst professionals of the creative and cultural industries. Yet, as pointed out, these production practices of the ad hoc orientation do, to some extent, lead to exploitation, and, therefore, it is recommended that initiatives are funded to promote and develop ethical guidelines which can aid the industry in shaping its collaboration practices with extended online networks of fans and followers. Similarly, for the fandom orientation, it is recommended that educational initiatives are developed, aimed at ensuring that this orientation has sufficient understanding of the financial value of their participation to make informed decisions about their level of engagement. This might also take the form of an application that would give loose estimations of the financial and immaterial value of an individuals' participation in a project, and thus increase the transparency of the underlying social economies of networked cultural production.

A final policy recommendation relates to the concept of crowdfunding. As highlighted in Chapter 1, the concept of crowdfunding is gaining increased attention in policy contexts.

However, the primary policy focus lies on the regulatory changes needed to promote crowdfunding practices. This thesis has demonstrated that crowdfunding practices and drivers can only be understood in the context of the wider social economies governing networked cultural production. These social economies are complex ecosystems that are driven by conflicting logics and value systems, including gift economies and consumer cultures. As such, crowdfunding practices can be understood as processes allowing the conversion of alternative capital to financial capital. This framing of crowdfunding highlights that the concept must be tackled not only as a regulatory challenge but also as an ethical challenge. An ethical challenge calls for attention to be paid to the value of these conversion processes by all partners and stakeholders involved. It is therefore recommended that policy-makers develop concrete measures to support ethical conversion processes acknowledging the social imperative of networked cultural production.

8.3 Limitations and possible directions for future research

This research analysed networked cultural production from the perspectives of the non-professional Wreckamovie project initiators and volunteering participants. Yet, its findings highlighted that such models of networked cultural production cannot be understood as distinct from production models of the film industries. Likewise, the proposal towards a theory of networked cultural production argued that the values and drivers of both the field of large-scale production and the networked information economy shaped these emerging collaborative production practices equally. The research design of this study, however, gave little attention to the experiences of these emerging practices from the perspective of established film industry professionals and other key industry stakeholders. Further, this research did not address the degree to which the established cultural workers, entities and bodies bear influence on networked cultural production, or which further tensions arise as

an outcome of these dynamics. Existing research has suggested that the introduction of non-professionals in the field of cultural production has direct consequences for the professional labour forces of the creative and cultural industries.

Kennedy (2013), for example, has addressed problematic aspects of amateur production in the context of the crowdsourcing of design. Her empirical study of professional designers' perception and responses to online design crowdsourcing marketplaces suggested a number of dire consequences resulting from the introduction of amateurs in the professional production context. Kennedy concluded that design crowdsourcing practices altered the professional designers' "sense of their own professionalism" (2013, p. 243), and "devalue[d] their work" (2013, p. 243). Further, Kennedy argued that the increased use of such networked production models might bear direct influence on the already sacrificial work conditions characterizing labour within the creative industries (2013, p. 245). This stance bears some resemblance to Hesmondhalgh's (2010b) discussion of free labour and the creative industries, in which he suggested that the free labour debates in some respects have marginalised central concerns relating to the reality of professional workers.

To further develop the scholarly understanding of networked cultural production, it is suggested that future research specifically address the interplays between peer producing labour orientations and the professional workforces, funding bodies, policy-makers and other stakeholders of the creative and cultural industries. Such qualitative studies would additionally aid in theory building of networked cultural production, providing increased clarification of the mutually shaping implications of these emerging production models.

Other limitations of this research relate to central methodological choices. This research project took on a purely qualitative approach to inquiry. Such approaches are particularly well suited for investigating contemporary phenomena that are under-theorized and under-

researched. Nevertheless, the networked environment lends itself well to quantitative approaches to the study of social networks, and the interaction patterns associated with such networks. The distinct interaction patterns of the Wreckamovie labour orientation categories, for example, were identified solely by means of qualitative analysis, drawing on a small number of participants. Future research could take on quantitative Social Network Analysis approaches to the study of labour motivations embedded within systems such as Wreckamovie, and thus further refine categories of labour orientations and their specific participatory practices. These future quantitative approaches could draw on all archived interaction data of all associated individual participants, and take into account the full scope of information afforded by the socio-technical system: In the case of Wreckamovie, for example, this would include karma point levels, project member trajectories and communication patterns.

Finally, this study was restricted to providing rigorous, deep, evidence on the peer production of film in the particular context of the Wreckamovie platform and community. While the identified participatory practices and social economies of these WAM productions have been argued to allow for some level of theoretical generalizability, it is suggested that future studies be designed to investigate related forms of networked cultural production in other contexts, exceeding the production of audiovisual goods.

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Appendix A: Coding scheme

Codes related to RQ1

Fields

1. Objective relations/external struggles
    a. WAM community
        i. Antagonist: Hollywood
        ii. Networked participatory practices (habitus) vs. corporate dominance

2. Internal struggles/positioning
    a. WAM owners and key actors
        i. Differentiated visions: conflicts and departures
        ii. Developing sustainable business model
        iii. Maintenance issues

    b. WAM community
        i. Increasingly absent community moderation
        ii. Bugs and spam
        iii. Production visibility and member recruitment

Worlds

3. WAM community
    a. Importance of offline gatherings
    b. Establishing conventions and norms
    c. Building reputation/extending the network
    d. Boundaries/dynamics between WAM productions

4. WAM productions
    a. *Iron Sky*
        i. Heritage and legacy
        ii. Multi-platform engagement
        iii. Trajectories/professionalization processes
        iv. WAM engagement and tasks

    b. *Star Wreck 2π*: Full twist now!

i. Fan-fiction
ii. WAM engagement and tasks

c. *Ice Guns*
    i. Leveraging free culture
    WAM engagement and tasks

d. *Solar System* 3D
    i. Open content prompting production
    ii. WAM engagement and tasks

e. Comparative analysis of WAM worlds
    i. Funding models
    ii. Diversity/scope of production tasks
    iii. Level of member and producer engagement

<u>Codes related to RQ2</u>

5. Economic capital

a. Self-funded
    i. Day-job
    ii. Heritage
    iii. Loans
b. Crowdfunding
    i. Online crowd-funding platforms
        1. Campaign strategies and communication
        2. Contributor rewards
c. Crowdinvestment
    i. Legal issues
    ii. Attracting investors
    iii. Return on investment
d. Merchandise
    i. Material commodities
        1. T-shirts
        2. Mugs
        3. Mouse pads
        4. Pens
    ii. Digital goods
        1. Wall-paper
        2. Comics
        3. Manuscripts
    iii. Virtual, scarce goods
        1. Exclusive access
        2. Personal video greetings

3. Likes and links
4. Public dialogue

e. DVDs
   i. Self-distributed
   ii. Distribution agreements (pre-sale)
f. National funding agencies
g. Traditional industrial sources
h. Revenue from online adds
   i. YouTube
   ii. Voda
   iii. Production websites
i. Other issues related to economic capital
   i. Making a living
   ii. Frustrations
   iii. Lack of public/audience acknowledgement of production costs
   iv. Understanding online business models
   v. Continuous need for financial capital

6. Social capital

a. Online networks of collaborators
b. Offline relations and interactions
c. Distributed expertise
d. Accumulation as outcome of power laws
e. Increased quantification of social capital
f. Commodification of social capital
   i. Explicit
   ii. Implicit
g. Karma as indicator of social position in WAM community
   i. Strategies for devising karma
   ii. Interpretations of karma
h. Other issues related to social capital
   i. Individual vs. group accumulation
   ii. Maintaining social capital
   iii. Managing differentiated levels of social capital within production groups

7. Cultural capital

a. Embodied cultural capital
   i. Derived from habitus, indicators
   ii. Facilitating symbolic capital
   iii. Rejecting traditional sources for accumulating cultural capital
b. Objectified cultural capital
   i. Role of cultural intermediaries
      1. Traditional media coverage/ reviews
      2. Networked forms, e.g. IMDb
   ii. Processes resulting in embedding of objectified cultural capital

in merchandise
iii. Perceptions of objectified cultural capital by contributors
1. Gifts
2. Commodities

c. Institutionalized cultural capital
i. Alternative sources
1. Wikipedia entries
2. IMDb
ii. Conventional sources
1. Film festivals
2. Funding agencies (tensions)
3. Hollywood (tensions)

d. Other issues related to cultural capital

8. Symbolic capital

a. Strategies for accumulation
i. Harnessing the perceived wealth of networks
ii. Staying truthful and authentic

b. Discourses establishing symbolic capital
i. External
ii. Internal

c. Perceived indicators

d. Other issues related to symbolic capital

9. Conversions of capital

a. Symbolic to economic
i. Successful attempts
ii. Failed attempts

b. Cultural to economic
i. Mechanisms
ii. Indicators

c. Symbolic capital activating social capital
i. Collective action: Revolver gate

d. Perceived conversion logics and assumptions
i. High audience numbers yield economic profit
ii. Social media is a catalyst for converting alternative capital
iii. Perpetual communication nurture loyalty
iv. Honesty in communication secure sustained engagement
v. Audiences are willing to pay for content
vi. Independent producers serve the interests of their audiences

e. Indirect conversion mechanisms: gift cultures
i. Labor rewards
ii. Perceptions of commodities and goods

f. Barriers to conversions
i. Being heard, gaining attention

ii. Activating social network, collective action
iii. Establishing conversion norms

10. Positional changes

a. Orientations
    i. From amateur to integrated
    ii. Semi-professional to integrated
    iii. No positional change
b. Field spatial positions
    i. Changes in degree of consecration
    ii. Changes in perceptions of legitimacy
    iii. Restricted vs. large-scale field positions
c. Indicators of increased influence on broader field(s)
    i. WAM internal
    ii. Externally
d. Differentiation though accumulation of capital
e. Levels of autonomy
    i. Increased
    ii. Decreased
    iii. Unchanged

<u>Codes related to RQ3</u>

11. **Professional staff, integrated professionals**

a. Social media manager
b. Publicists
c. Lawyers
d. Producers
e. Director
f. CGI
g. Screen writers
h. Production leaders
i. Production assistants
j. 200+ professional titles in end credits

12. **Socio-technically defined roles, semi-integrated workers?**

a. Producer
    i. Responsibilities
    ii. Emerging conventions
b. Production leader
    i. Responsibilities
    ii. Emerging conventions

c. Assisting production leader
    i. Responsibilities
    ii. Emerging conventions
d. Production members
    i. Responsibilities
    ii. Emerging conventions

13. **Contractual agreements**

a. Hidden, back-stage
b. Socio-technically defined
    i. WAM terms and conditions
c. Negotiated, non-compliant
    i. Pre-collaboration initiation
    ii. Ad-hoc negotiations

14. **Perceptions of contributors, outcome of participation and work**

a. Social interaction
b. Learning opportunity, new skills and competences
c. Meeting new people
d. Becoming professional
e. Fandom
f. Tensions related to task contributions

15. **Actualized labour**

a. WAM members
    i. Copy writing
    ii. PR and promotion
    iii. CGI
    iv. Photographer
    v. Data cleaning
    vi. Coordination
    vii. Music composition
    viii. Consultant
    ix. Emotional support
b. Wider production communities
    i. Emerging roles
c. Recruitment and incentives

16. **Introduction of non-professionals in field of cultural production**

a. Consequences
    i. Increased communication in all production phases

ii. Direct dialogue and interaction
iii. Pre-demands of markets increased?
iv. Change in mobilization of resources
v. Direct collaborations between integrated professionals and semi-integrated workers
vi. Changing patterns of professionalization processes
vii. Increase in perceptions of co-ownership
viii. Expansion of consecration and legitimacy co-shapers

b. Unresolved issues
i. Making the back-stage transparent
ii. Ensuring ethical standards and reciprocity
iii. Sustainability of labour model?

Appendix B: Invitation to member checking

Dear [NAME OF PARTICIPANT]

Since we last spoke, I have been writing up my PhD-research on the Wreckamovie community and productions. As a valued participant, I want to give you the opportunity to comment on the written drafts before my PhD thesis is submitted.

****Why am I asking for your comments?****
In qualitative research, researchers often ask participants for their comments on written work before it is published. This is to ensure that we represent people, who have volunteered to take part in research projects, in an ethical manner. I therefore want to give you the opportunity to comment on the work prior to publication. Of course, you are not obliged to give your feedback – it is only an offer.

****What else?****
A secondary reason why I am asking for your comments is to understand the degree to which you agree with my interpretations of the Wreckamovie community and its production practices. Understanding how you and other participants relate to the findings of the research will help other researchers decide if they can build on this research in future research contexts. That being said, qualitative research is always biased: every researcher interprets the world in accordance with their own experiences. This means that my PhD thesis on the Wreckamovie community is the result of my subjective interpretations of observations and interviews carried out over the last 2,5 years. Therefore, I do not expect you to agree fully with everything I write. It is perfectly fine for you to disagree!

****What exactly am I sending you?****
The chapters I am sending you are an excerpt from the full thesis. A large part of the thesis contains theoretical discussions on cultural production. These more theoretical chapters are aimed at a very narrow audience: scholars of cultural sociology. In essence, cultural sociology as a field is interested in understanding how culture and art is produced. The underlying premise guiding this line of thinking is that art is the product of collaboration, rather than the outcome of the work of a single genius. In the chapters I am sharing, you will find references to some of these theories. In particular, I am talking about 'fields' and 'worlds'. These abstract concepts can be understood as follows: 'Worlds' are the practices and conventions that collaborators establish as part of their production of culture. 'Fields', on the other hand, are about the struggles that producers and co-producers face when actually producing culture.

****The two chapter drafts are focusing on the following themes:****

- Chapter 4: The worlds and fields of Wreckamovie and its productions.

This chapter contains analyses of the WAM community, its genesis, and the production processes of *Iron Sky*, *Star Wreck 2π*, *Ice* Guns *and Solar System 3D.*

· Chapter 5: The conventions and perceptions of labour in Wreckamovie

This chapter is about the different roles WAM members take on in the production of culture.

****How do you comment?****

It is perfectly fine if you only read through the sections you think are relevant for you. You can simply search for your alias in the text **(I have used the name xxx when quoting you) **, or only read about the productions or themes you are most interested in. If you wish to just write two sentences or a paragraph as response, that is more than enough. If you want to respond in more depth, that is of course welcomed too.

****What do you do with my comments?****

I take your comments into account before this research is published. I will also anonymize your response, and put it into an appendix so that future researchers/readers know what you and other participants thought of the research.

****Please remember****

Let me underline that you are free to not provide comments. This is an offer only. If you want to comment, please send me your comments before September 2, 2013, by email to isis.hjorth@oii.ox.ac.uk

Best wishes,
Isis

Appendix C: Participant information sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Research project: The emergence of cultural peer-production: A case study of independent film making in the Wreckamovie community

Researcher
Isis Amelie Hjorth, Doctoral Student at the Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford, OX1 3AJ, Oxford, United Kingdom. Contact info: isis.hjorth@oii.ox.ac.uk

Purpose of this study
In 2005, the Finnish sci-fi parody *Star Wreck:In the Pirkinning* was released online under a creative commons license. Two years later, by the end of 2007, it had been downloaded 8 million times, 17,000 DVDs had been sold after *Star Wreck* landed a DVD distribution agreement with Universal Pictures, and the movie had been broadcast on Finnish, Belgian and Italian television. Behind this success, however, was not a professional production company. *Star Wreck* was the culmination of six years work by five young Finnish amateurs, and an online community of 300 volunteers. This example of the Star Wreck movie is a powerful indicator of emerging forms of cultural production, enabled by networked technologies. In the domain of independent film-making, these technologies offer unprecedented possibilities allowing for innovative forms of co-creation in constellations that were not possible prior to the widespread uptake of the internet and, more recently, the development of social applications. As these phenomena are new, our knowledge on the subject is very limited. This research project seeks to build new theory in this field by doing research driven by the following overall question:

In independent film-making, when social technologies are used to facilitate cultural peer- production, how do the socio- technical and collaborative properties of the production influence the production process and the artefacts created?

Why are you being asked to participate?
As a member of the online community wreckamovie you are one of the few people who have actively engaged in collaborative film making over the internet. Your experience and thoughts are therefore very valuable for this study.

What will participation in this study involve?
I would like to have conversations with you, and ask questions such as how you got involved in wreckamovie.com, what motivated you, which production roles you have taken on in which projects and so on. Basically, I would like to hear your stories. These conversations/interviews can be conducted via Skype, telephone, emails or in person. I would like to do 3 rounds of a duration of approximately 30 minutes to 45 minutes. The interviews would take place between July 2011 to March 2012 at your convenience.

What are your rights?
You can change your mind at any time. If you no longer wish to be part of this study, you simply send an email informing me of that decision. No questions asked.

What if there is a problem?
If you have a concern about any aspect of this project, please contact me and I will do my very best to answer your query. If you remain unhappy and wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford (ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk).

Are there any risks or benefits?
I do not believe that there are any risks involved in participating in this study. You may benefit personally in some way by articulating and reflecting on your experience and creative practices.

Questions?
Please just shoot ahead if you have further questions related to this study, or want to know more before you make your decision.

Appendix D: Consent form

Consent form

Dear Wrecker,

This document is meant as a check-list to ensure that you have obtained enough information about what participation in my PhD research project, *The emergence of cultural peer-production: A case study of independent film making in the Wreckamovie community,* would entail, so that you can make an informed decision on whether you wish to participate. This procedure is part of Oxford University's ethics standards.

The goal of my research is to understand how networked technologies are enabling new forms of independent film-making. If you sign this document, you confirm that you agree with the following statements:

- ☒ I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and has received satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details requested;
- ☒ I understands that I can withdraw from the study without consequences at any time by letting Isis Amelie Hjorth know;
- ☒ I understand that this project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee;
- ☒ I understand that interviews will be recorded, and that soundfiles and transcriptions will be stored in password protected folders on the university network; I understand that the data will be deleted when the project has come to an end (ultimo 2013); and that this data is only used and accessed by Isis Amelie Hjorth for research purposes, and that findings will be written up in forms of journal articles and a Ph.D.-thesis;
- ☒ I agree to take part in this study;
- ☒ I understand how I can raise concerns or make complaints if I so wish.

The University of Oxford is committed disseminating its research for the benefit of society, and has therefore established an online archive of research materials. This archive includes digital copies of research carried out by PhD students. If you agree to participate in this project, the research will be written up as a thesis. The thesis will be published with open access for everyone to freely download from the online research repository.

1000 thanks,

Doctoral student Isis Amelie Hjorth // (+44) 07916637654 // isis.hjorth@oii.ox.ac.uk

Name of participant:_____

Contact info:_____