

Beate Flath

## Data-Based Co-Creation and Participation: Reflections on an Ambivalent Relation by the Example of Music Apps

### Introduction

Participation is a central keyword of our times—it is discussed and reflected in various ways, not least against the backdrop of (de-)democratization (Taylor and Nanz 2020, Manow 2020, Rosanvallon 2015), populism (Hillje 2018, Balzer 2019) and culture management (Lange 2015, Mandel 2016). The availability of everyday digital technologies, such as smartphones or tablets, and related applications has created a special dynamic within these discussions: A positive vision of a networked world meets echo chambers, populist forums, and hatred on the net.

Against this background, questions about the role of pop culture and pop music, various economic institutions, players, and stakeholders arise. Who is allowed to participate, how, and to what extent in creation and exploitation processes? How are various forms of participation, e.g. economic, political, and creative participation, related to each other? How are these forms of participation correlated to democracy? These questions are the starting points of this paper, which focuses on co-creation-based pop-music-apps.

Participation based on co-creation means that participants are part of the artistic process. “Co” indicates that artists *and* the audience, users, the customers etc. are constitutive parts of the artistic or the creative process. Following this, the audience, users, customers etc. are integrated into the artistic and creative production process.<sup>1</sup> The availability and usability of digital network media had, and still has, a great impact on the form and quality of participation and co-creation, not least because they make increasingly targeted use of users’ data. Such data-based co-creative apps open up the possibility for not only personalizing playlists, but also—as will be shown later—personalizing the sounds of a song or controlling the light of the smartphone display. Concepts of co-creation reach their limits when legal issues like intellectual property or exploitation rights are affected, for example when author- and ownership are not clear. Following this, creative participation (in terms of contributing actively to a creative process) and economic participation (in terms of being part of the related economic utilization processes) are in a state of tension. This is where the present text comes in. It discusses data-based co-creation initiated by music apps with respect to the contradictions and ambiguities of creative, economic, and political participation, whereas the attribute “data-based” refers to those co-creative processes based upon data generated by and saved on portable digital devices, for example smartphones or tablets.

While conscious of the *Digital Labor Debate* (e.g., Scholz 2013, Fuchs 2010), this paper mainly draws on three theoretical approaches: Armin Nassehi’s (2019) approach to digitization and

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<sup>1</sup> This approach is used in various contexts, which range from arts to creative industries and marketing. At the beginning of the 1960s, Umberto Eco introduced in *Opera Aperta* (1962) the concept of open work by referring to the works of Alexander Calder and John Cage, where he considers co-creation and participation as epistemological processes. A wide range of artistic movements used co-creation and participation as aesthetical and epistemological “tools” (e.g., Fluxus, Viennese Actionism).

data, Klaus Dörre's (2009, 2019) further development of the concept "Kapitalistische Landnahme" (capitalistic expansion),<sup>2</sup> and Karl Polanyi's (2011 [1944]) ideas about fictitious commodities. Based on these approaches, the paper develops a theoretical framework, which is illustrated by analyzing the two music apps: *Fantome Mezzanine* by Massive Attack, and the "Handy-Lightshow" feature of the official app of the German schlager singer Helene Fischer. Discussing these analyses against the backdrop of the theoretical framework leads to suggestions for developing productive approaches in order to deal with emerging tensions and contradictions—a defining component of pop culture. In other words: Dealing with contradictions and tensions is constitutional of pop culture and pop music, as understood here:

Throughout my life, I loved and hated Pop at the same time. Pop was emancipation here and oppression there, explosion of truthfulness here and implosion of hypocrisy there. Pop conserves the inner child and enhances the aging. Pop constructs the distinction of classes and disregards them. Pop is universal, regional and national. Pop participates in everything because it is an expression of capitalism within democracy as well as an expression of democracy in capitalism. (Seeßlen 2018, translation B.F., blurb)

## Digitization, Data, and Value Creation

It is common to focus on the influence of digital technologies, their availability, and various features on economies, societies, and cultures. This discussion takes a different approach in order to look at the *relation* of digitization and value creation using Armin Nassehi's central argument in *Muster. Theorie der digitalen Gesellschaft* (2019). His main research question addresses the conditions of the emergence of digitization. Based on the idea that the main characteristic of digitality is linking and recombining data (Nassehi 2019, 31), he argues that the origin of digitality lies in the counting done in 19<sup>th</sup> century to create public social statistics. Following this, origins of digitality relate to the administrative demands of national states, urban planning, the need for the rapid provision of goods etc. Counting and detecting patterns became central processes with respect to societal complexity in the early modernity (ibid., 63). Thus, data and their relation to complexity, structure, and regularity of societies are based on counting, whereas categories and units of what is counted result from self-observation of societies. These categories are created and shaped in cultural discourses. One can say society rediscovers itself through a digital view (ibid., 59). Nassehi treats digitality not as an independent but as a dependent variable and allows an alternative perspective on digitality, digital technologies, and their relation to society, economy, and culture. Digital data can be recombined in almost any manner and its generation is unnoticed by users in many cases.

These insights can be connected to various critical reflections on data mining and surveillance (e.g. Bauman and Lyon 2013, Zuboff 2019) as well as on value creation. The economist Mariana Mazzucato argues that in many cases value creation is embedded into value extraction. In *The Value of Everything: Making and Taking in the Global Economy* (Mazzucato 2018), she explores the understanding and interpretation of value creation within capitalistic societies along the variable boundaries of productive and non-productive fields.

<sup>2</sup> Also see the research of the Research Group funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG): "Landnahme, Beschleunigung, Aktivierung. Dynamik und (De-)Stabilisierung moderner Wachstumsgesellschaften" (DFG Research Group 2020).

While it is of course OK for companies to create services around new forms of data, the critical issue is how to ensure that the ownership and management of the data remain as collective as its source: the public. As Morozov [2016] argues, “Instead of us paying Amazon a fee to use its AI capabilities – built with our data – Amazon should be required to pay that fee to us.” (Ibid., 221)

This critique refers to distribution issues, which are of central interest when questions of political and economic participation are raised because the assignment of productive and non-productive spheres is concerned. Value creation based on data is invisible, and therefore the producers of data do invisible, unpaid jobs. Such concerns capture the relation of data value and societal frameworks as well as the associated understandings of being productive or unproductive. At the least, this is reflected in being paid or not. The *relation* of so called productive and non-productive spheres is of special interest since in many cases the non-productive, unpaid sphere contributes to the running of the productive one. This becomes evident with respect to housekeeping or caring, which are essential for keeping the productive sphere in capitalistic systems being productive (e.g. Fraser 2019, 80–81; Fraser 2016; Fraser and Jaeggi 2018). Transferring this approach to the production of data and its value leads to the consideration that the unpaid, supposedly unproductive, users essentially contribute to the productive sphere of the trade in data.

These considerations are related to the concept of *Kapitalistische Landnahme* (“capitalistic expansion”) (Luxemburg 1913, Gramsci 1991 [1929], Harvey 2006). The basic idea of this critical approach highlights the interaction of internal (commodified) and external (not commodified) markets, whereas internality addresses already existing capitalistic markets (in which democracy and capitalism *can* be linked) and externality refers to, for example, (former) colonies, little known music cultures, and new branches characterized by outside economic forces and unequal exchanges. According to this, internal and external markets act like communicating vessels, which is the driving force of capitalistic economic systems as commodifying not commodified markets. Adapting these considerations for the issue discussed here, one can say that the external markets shift more and more in the private (supposed to be unproductive) sphere of internal, capitalistic markets. Thus, capitalistic expansion and therefore value creation is supposed to be within unproductive spheres and in former internal markets. Klaus Dörre refers to this as “Landnahme zweiter Ordnung” (“expansion in second order”; Dörre 2019, 35).

Up to this point, various types of values are taken into account. In economics there are many ways of defining value, from mercantilist and physiocratic approaches to classical economics and the neoclassical perspective. In addition to the question of what influences value (e.g. trade, treasure, soil, labor, preferences, price), questions of the relation of value and monetary units arise. It is suggested here that in general values are discursive, contingent, and fluid cultural concepts, consisting of monetary (e.g. price, revenue, taxes, salaries, profit) and non-monetary components (e.g. aesthetic experience, sense of belonging, creativity etc., Flath 2018). This approach considers that monetary components of values need a cultural or societal reference point to be considered as value. Hence, the individual value of an app on a smartphone could be determined by the price paid, the popularity of the app and the features of the app. Or as another example, the collective value of a new (bought) feature of a blog for a blogger-community could be composed by the integrative (not additive) cumulation of individual values as the appreciation of this new feature, the reach or the price. Transferring this approach to the question addressed here—the relation of co-creation and participation by the example of

data-based music apps—permits the understanding of individual as well as collective value creation processes beyond pure monetary issues.

To sum up the main arguments of this section: Counting and pattern detection are the basic principles of digitality. Within their cultural embeddedness lies the value of data, because the units of counting, for example, clicks, likes, preferences, or inhabitants, are highly related to social and cultural discourses. The discursive dimension of values also addresses the difference between and the relation of so-called productive and non-productive spheres. The non-productive, more or less private spheres contribute not only in terms of housekeeping and care, but—regarding the present issue—also in terms of producing and delivering data by using digital network media. In accordance with the theory of capitalist expansion, external, non-commodified markets are moving more and more into the heart of private spheres. Data-based co-creation is one important part of this process.

### **Commodification of Data and Participation—A Polanyian Perspective**

The question on commodification of a good is not only related to the question of distribution—as discussed using Mariana Mazzucato’s quote above—but also to the critical discussion about how goods become commodities (e.g. Honneth, Forst, and Jaeggi 2007; Satz 2010) and how these processes affect our “Lebensformen” (way of life, Jaeggi 2014, 25).

The economic sociologist Karl Polanyi (1886–1964) suggested, in line with Karl Marx, that labor, raw nature, and money are “fictitious commodities.” This means that they are not originally produced for being traded at a market:

But labor, land, and money are obviously not commodities; the postulate that anything that is bought and sold must have been produced for sale is emphatically untrue in regard to them. In other words, according to the empirical definition of a commodity they are not commodities. Labor is only another name for a human activity which goes with life itself, which in its turn is not produced for sale but for entirely different reasons, nor can that activity be detached from the rest of life, be stored or mobilized; land is only another name for nature, which is not produced by man; actual money, finally, is merely a token of purchasing power which, as a rule, is not produced at all, but comes into being through the mechanism of banking or state finance. None of them is produced for sale. The commodity description of labor, land, and money is entirely fictitious. (Polanyi 2001 [1944], 75–76)

Following Polanyi, commodification of these “fictitious commodities” leads to the subordination of social life to the capitalistic economic system and therefore to an end of embeddedness of economy: “Instead of economy being embedded in social relations, social relations are embedded in the economic system” (ibid., 60).

In general, commodification is related to the mechanisms of a market with its suppliers and demanders as well as owners. As labor, money, or raw nature, data are not “produced” to be traded. They are collected to be traded. Strictly speaking, users are producing data, service providers are collecting data, and are trading with data. Adopting Polanyi’s idea, data are fictitious commodities. They are not produced by users to be traded in a market; they arise as a kind of by-product from using digital network media. The origin of this data lies within digital practices of everyday life.

Nevertheless, Polanyi's approach needs to be examined in more detail and differentiated in terms of data. He points out that activities called labor cannot be detached from the rest of life, nor can they be stored or mobilized (*ibid.*, 77). This is not entirely the case within a digital world because data-based co-creation, as invisible labor, is tracked, stored, and mobilized activities of users. Additionally, like knowledge, which can be considered as fictitious commodity too (Jessop 2007, 123; Cangiani 2019), data have a reflexive character: Data are "raw material" for data production.

This paper considers data as "fictitious commodities of second order" because—in contrast to labor, for example—they are not produced by users of digital network media to be supplied to a market, but within the private, unproductive sphere. This is related to Dörres's aforementioned concept "Landnahme zweiter Ordnung" ("capitalistic expansion of second order", Dörre 2019, 35) that notes the tendency of capitalistic expansions to blur the protections of inner markets (as private, supposed unproductive spheres)—in this case privacy policy, privacy rights, and exploitation rights. The accompanying invisibility leads to a political invisibility of users. Whereas, for example, during the process of the commodification of labor, unions arose—in a Polanyian perspective these protecting processes are part of the "double movement" (Polanyi 2001 [1944], 79; Ther 2019; Dale 2016, 5)—the commodification of data has not been accompanied by a formation of comparable political institutions or movements. Although there exists a wide range of political discussions and discourses which address the rights of users with respect to data protection, issues of how, and to what extent, users are "data workers" are given relatively less political attention. One can say that human resource management arrived in the living rooms of users (Burawoy 2015, 204; Dörre 2019, 42).

In terms of capitalistic expansion, external markets open more and more within the core of internal markets, which means that consumers actively contribute to driving it forward. Klaus Dörre (2019, 41) describes and argues that there is a technology driven loss of democracy. He points out that the main actors of the digital expansion are technology groups, which are linked with international shareholders and financial institutions. Their business model is based on an exploitation of knowledge, copyrighted intellectual work, and information about social relations. By using services such as Facebook, Twitter, or Google, users turn into unpaid data providers within these business models (*ibid.*, 42). Following this users, as data producers, *have* a part in this market but do not *take* part in any negotiating process regarding the use of their data, despite, for example, making decisions about cookies. This (non-)participation through data-based co-creation is at least an urgent question about democracy within capitalism.

## Data-Based Co-Creation: Framework and Definition

In general, co-creation within the context of digital network media can be described as interaction *within* and *across* various groups of stakeholders (e.g. consumers, producers, users, algorithms, producers, and distributors) with various aims (e.g. running a blog, creating a new sound, or providing a collaborative environment to create an innovative image) and with respect to various values (e.g. identity, creativity, fandom, promotion). This goes in line with the conceptual framework for value co-creation suggested by Payne, Storbacka, and Frow (2008). They consider co-creation of value as an interactive and recursive process, which includes customer, encounter, and supplier processes. Following these considerations, co-creation can

lead to blurring the line of formerly separated players and their roles: The consumer becomes a “prosumer”<sup>3</sup> (Toffler 1970, 1980) or the user becomes a “produser”<sup>4</sup> (Bruns 2008). The present paper focuses on those types of co-creation where traditional predefined roles of consumers and producers are blurred, because this view provides a framework for including a variety of groups of players.

From the perspective of suppliers, co-creation is related to the consumer experience as a central resource of value creation. The understanding of the importance of customer experience regarding consumption became very popular in the beginning of the 1980s (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982) and at the end of the 1990s (Pine and Gilmore 1998, 1999). Nevertheless, following Lebergott (1993, 3), the assumption that value lies in the consumption experience is rooted in the works of Adam Smith, Alfred Marshall, and John Maynard Keynes, and was picked up again in the 1950s by Wroe Alderson (1957), Lawrence Abbott (1955, 39), and, not least, by Alvin Toffler (1970, 178; see also Holbrook 2006, 2000). More recently, the assumption that value lies in the consumption experience is related to the shift from production intensive economic systems to service oriented systems and furthermore to a service-dominant logic of marketing. As developed by Vargo and Lusch (2004), this logic highlights the importance of the customer as a co-creator of value.

Co-creation, as it was termed by Coimbatore Prahalad and Venkatram Ramaswamy (2004a, 2004b, 2004c), is (1) “about *joint* creation of value by the company and the consumer [...]”, (2) is “allowing the customer to co-construct the service experience to suit her context [...]” and (3) is “creating an experience environment in which consumers can have active dialogue and co-construct personalized experiences” (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004c, 8, italics original). Following these considerations, co-creation is not only related to a concrete product or service, but to the co-creation of monetary and non-monetary components of value for customers and suppliers.

Based on a literature review of 33 peer-reviewed research papers in the English language published from 2011 to 2017, Harriman Saragih (2019) identified five topics of research on application of co-creation in music industries: stages of the value-chain; co-creation focus (experiences, monetary, social); co-creation strategy (involvement, curation, empowerment); channels (recorded music and/or live music industries); and platforms (combined, physical, virtual). A significant finding of this study is that co-creation is highly related to the supplier’s aim of enhancing the experience of customers (ibid., 471, see also Tschmuck et al. 2013), and suggests that co-creation is an important tool within the music business (see also Baym 2018). In line with these considerations is Patrik Wikström’s (2012) approach to successful distribution models: They include the concept of “doing things with music” in terms of playing (with) music like playing a game. Wikström describes a shift from a so-called “ownership model” to an “access model” and finally to a “context model” of music distribution. As the term says,

3 The futurologist Alvin Toffler (1970, 1980) considered the fusion of producing and consuming activities. In the late 1970s he coined the term “prosume,” which captures the idea that consuming becomes more and more interrelated to producing. Toffler developed this concept on the basis of observations within the U.S. context, like the upcoming of ATMs, hotlines, do-it-yourselfers, and self-help-groups.

4 In regard to the availability of digital network media, Axel Bruns (2008) developed the concept “produse.” It terms the amalgamation of production and use, as it can be observed for example in blogs or wikis. Users are producers and producers are users. Following Bruns, “produsage” is characterized by four key principles: a) open participation/communal evaluation, b) fluid heterarchy/ad hoc meritocracy, c) unfinished artefacts/continuing processes, and d) common property/individual rewards (Bruns 2008, 27–28). Therefore, producers not only become users and the other way around, but also traditional concepts of artefacts and creative processes, as well as rights of intellectual property, change within the context of produsage cultures.

the first model is based on the idea of owning music, which was/is the business model of the traditional recorded music industry. The second model is based on the idea of having access to music, which is the dominant business model of streaming services, and the third model is based on consuming, not to say to “experiencing,” music via interactive apps—this last approach follows the paradigm of “doing things with music” (ibid., 15). This is closely related to considerations about participatory cultures (Jenkins 1992)—originally considered as fan cultures—which are located at the intersections of new digital technologies, DIY subcultures, and economic trends (Jenkins 2006, 136), as well as, to the idea of spreadable media (Jenkins, Ford, and Green 2013), which addresses the shift from distribution to circulation of media content.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, what is meant by data-based co-creation with respect to these approaches? First of all, data-based co-creation is considered here as co-creation based on consumer’s data, taking into the account that the co-creative process is based on already existing data and generating new data at the same time. It thus follows the difference between “user generated content” and “user generated data”, as suggested by Mark Andrejevic (2009, 418–19). The prefix “co” refers to user’s data based on his or her past and current activities and corresponding algorithms. A simple example for such data-based co-creation is the recommendation-system of Spotify on the basis of user listening habits (e.g. Eriksson et al. 2019, Prey 2018, Lamere 2008). In contrast to this, the present paper narrows the focus to music apps, which are used consciously and purposefully by users. Whereas Spotify playlists are generated by a user’s listening behavior and are to some extent a “byproduct” of their listening behavior, data-based co-creation initiated by music-apps integrates user data in concrete individual as well as collective creative process in terms of playing with music consciously and purposefully.

## The Relation of Data-Based Co-Creation and Participation

In general, *participation* implies a relation between parts, as for example individuals, fans, listeners etc. and a certain reference point, such as groups, scenes, communities, societies, economic and political systems. The verb “to participate”—in terms of to “take part in,” to “be involved in,” or to “have part in”—addresses various qualities of these relations, which refer to interrelating social, cultural, aesthetic, political, and economic fields (see for example Jenkins 1992, 2006, 2013, Lessenich 2019a, b).

With respect to arts and culture, “participation” can be related to economic, social, and cultural accessibility to cultural offers (e.g. in terms of affording cultural offers at a reasonable price or in terms of accessibility for disabled persons);<sup>6</sup> it can be related to having a say in political terms (e.g. in terms of the involvement in political decision-making processes regarding cul-

5 Carsten Winter (2012, Kaufmann and Winter 2014) puts development of digital network media into the context of social innovation and argues that due to upcoming and available digital network media, media prosumers contribute to social innovation. Prosuming activities, as activities which include aspects of producing as well as consuming, provide the potential for social innovation. Based upon this, Winter describes and analyses on-demand-cultures with respect to open networked value creation (Winter 2012, 66). Creators’ activities include, for example, publishing a blog or a website, uploading a video, or writing an article, becoming entrepreneurs of their own pop culture. In a similar positive and optimistic way, Michel Serres (2013), in *Petite Poucette*, encourages the young generation—referring to the dominant role of the thumb while using the smartphone—to reinvent society, educational institutions, and not least themselves.

6 Accessibility can be seen as related to Elisabeth Klaus’ and Margreth Lünenborgs’ (2004) understanding of “cultural citizenship,” which terms cultural practices as the enabling to participate competently in cultural resources and production of meaning in media society.

ture); it can be related to economic participation (e.g. in terms of benefiting from copyright or exploitations rights); or it can be related to the opportunity to be part of creative processes as in co-creative processes initiated by music apps. Whereas these fields of participation (accessibility, involvement in political decision-making processes, integration into the exploitation chain, and involvement into the creative process) are interwoven and are mutually dependent, the relation of creative participation (in terms of data-based co-creation) and economic participation (being factored in the copyright and exploitation right system) is the main issue here. This relation is primarily influenced by legal issues, which should, for example, regulate the compensation for delivering data or the sovereignty over data. As many discussions around digitization and Big Data show, sovereignty over data as well as compensation for delivering data are fields of political negotiation processes (e.g. European Data Protection Regulation 2019). This raises questions about how users can be players in this political field, and if and how co-creation processes can be used and/or transferred into these negotiation processes.

Graeme Turner's concept of a "demotic turn" (2010, 2004) is useful here. He argues, with respect to reality television shows, that the participation of ordinary people increases, but that this does not lead to democratization. "Demotic turn" captures the process from exclusive access to access for greater parts of the population. Then, the audience has the opportunity to participate, but not in terms of representing their political or social interests. Referring to Mark Andrejevic, Turner argues that participation is rather a form of labor than a mode of citizenship, and individual expression does not lead obligatorily to individual empowerment. To put it pointedly: Entertainment related activities are invisible labor and human capital reaches to the very private spheres, which transform unproductive into productive spheres. This consideration relates to Klaus Dörre's "Kapitalistische Landnahme zweiter Ordnung" ("capitalistic expansion of second order", Dörre 2019, 35) as well as Mariana Mazzucato's interpretation of capitalistic value creation (Mazzucato 2018, 221), discussed above. This is the crux of matter when it comes to questions on participation or representation (Terkessidis 2015, 32–33), because non-productive fields, as core fields of value creation within data-based co-creation processes (see above), are characterized by an absence of political and economic representation (e.g. in terms of unions and value shares).

## **Data-based Co-Creation by Music Apps: Massive Attack and Helene Fischer**

In 2016, the British trip hop band Massive Attack released the app *Fantom*, and in 2018, the app *Fantom Mezzanine* that refers to their album *Mezzanine* of 1998. The description says: "*Fantom Mezzanine* is a sensory music experience. It features completely new interactive remixes of the classic album *Mezzanine*. You can make and share a video and the music will adapt in real-time to what's happening!" (3rd Space Agency 2020). The app enables the user to shape the sound of single tracks with respect to the GPS data of the smartphone, the playlists, and the brightness of the environment measured by the camera. Then, the user's data and algorithms co-create a personalized album based on songs of Massive Attack (Flath 2016b).

In 2015, the German schlager singer Helene Fischer went on tour with her show *Farbenspiel*. Fischer's app (Helene Fischer 2015) included the feature "Handy-Lightshow" that uses the acoustic signals of the concert to change the color and light of the smartphone's display. Con-



cert attendees hold their smartphones up into the air—like lighters—and the display changes as a function of the music (Flath 2016a).

Massive Attack's app relates to the private context and personalizes in real-time ("live") existing tracks from users' data; Helene Fischer's app relates to the collective creation of light within a live music concert. Whereas *Fantom Mezzanine* uses data saved on (e.g. music) and generated by (e.g. GPS data) the smartphone in order to create personalized versions of existing Massive Attack songs, the "Handy-Lightshow" app reacts to the acoustic signals from a live music concert. Both apps can be considered with respect to data-based co-creation, although their co-creation processes differ. As mentioned previously, the attribute "data-based" refers to past as well as current data, which means that data-based co-creation uses already existing data and generates data at the same time. Following this, the co-creative process of *Fantom Mezzanine*, which is based on saved and generated data and algorithms, differs from the co-creative process of "Handy-Lightshow," which is based on acoustic musical within a collective situation and the usage of the app by many concert attendees, who become co-creators of the lightshow. A closer look reveals that the access to data may differ, but in both cases data-based co-creation is characterized by delivering data within a productive creative process. Following this, the usage of the apps *Fantom Mezzanine* as well as the "Handy-Lightshow" are—in style of "prosume" and "produce"—co-creative "prolivering" processes.

Both apps provide a framework for creative participation. For example, the app *Fantom Mezzanine* by Massive Attack provides co-creation based on data, which are saved on and generated by the smartphone, in terms of an interaction between an emotionalized everyday object, and probably highly emotionalized music. Using this app could also contribute to social and/or cultural participation becoming being part of a music culture or fan scene. These considerations can also apply to the app "Handy-Lightshow," even though it is used in a different situation. People who take part in a concert and use the app generate a sea of lights in a collective situation just by holding their smartphones into the air. In this case creative participation takes place too, and it is possible that users of this app participated socially and/or culturally by being part of a collective experience.

With respect to political participation as sketched in the previous paragraph, it appears that creative participation does not lead to economic or political participation as discussed above. There is no sovereignty over data and no compensation for delivering data (beside the permission to use the app or to have fun). Nor is there political representation for their function as invisible workers. Following this, the relation of co-creation and participation seems to be an uneven one, which is represented by the inequality debate in respect to rights as well as by the inadequacy debate in respect to the commodification of data. Whereas inequality and inadequacy are one side of the coin, entertainment, fun, social networks and fandom are the other side. The misuse of customer data has no impact on users' social or cultural participation. To the contrary, the more intensively music apps are used, the more diverse are the possibilities for co-creative processes, and the more data is generated. Following this, the crucial issue regarding co-creation and participation is that creative participation in terms of co-creation does not influence social and cultural participation in a negative sense by hindering social and cultural participation, but that social and cultural participation is integrated into value-chains. In contrast to a Marxian understanding of exploitation,<sup>7</sup> users are not forced in a narrow sense,

<sup>7</sup> Referring to Erik Olin Wright, David Hesmondhalgh (2010, 274) sums up, that in a Marxian sense, "Exploitation occurs when the material welfare of one class is causally dependent upon the material deprivation of another.

but because of the integration into and omnipresence of digital network media in everyday life, force is related to the power of an oligopolistic supply market.

Finally, the question of how this can be changed in democracies must be addressed. Crucial here is that democracies and related political discourses are increasingly influenced by digital mass media—not only in terms of content, but also in terms of structure. In the words of Philip Manow:

Within a logic characterized by mass consumption and mass democracy, the sheer extent of distribution, the pure click numbers can claim their own democratic dignity [...]. Negotiations always take place only afterwards and with a certain degree of unsuccessfulness—what is legitimate and what is possibly only a short-term excitement or even criminally relevant. (Manow 2020, 114, translated by B.F.)

Following this, democratic negotiations about the commodification of data are integrated into processes of the deinstitutionalization of production by the public (Manow 2020, 113). This is one aspect that makes it difficult to enforce user rights. On the other hand, movements based on the internet do not offer enough opportunities to turn participation into political representation, because effects of participation are fragmented (Tufekci 2014, Krastev 2017, Menasse 2019). Regarding digital network media the political scientist Ivan Krastev (2017) contends:

We will remember not manifestos of these protest movements, but videos; not speeches, but happenings; not any political tracts, but conspiracy theories. They are a form of participation without representation. (Krastev 2017, 100)

These two aspects illustrate a dilemma: The potential for more political participation through digital network media is not necessarily a positive influence on democratic discourse and does not necessarily help users to band together with regard to political institutions. This means that the question concerning the extent to which creative participation also leads to economic participation is ultimately one which requires more focus on political participation in the sense of participation in democratic processes and public discourses.

## Summary and Concluding Remarks

This paper started with noting that data is generated by users unnoticed, with the implication that value creation from data is based on the invisible—not only because data are not visible in a narrower sense but also because users of digital network media generate them within the so-called supposed unproductive sector, the private sphere. These considerations are related to the concept of capitalistic expansion, which is characterized by the interrelation of external (commodified) and internal (not yet commodified) markets. Polanyi's concept of fictitious commodities—commodities, which are not produced for trade on the market (as labor, raw material, and money)—is adapted for the issue discussed here which considered data as fictitious commodities of second order, which addresses the fact that they are not *produced* for a market and are not *supplied* by users for a market. Following this, capitalistic expansion reaches formerly unproductive and inner markets, as the private sphere of citizens where music apps are

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[...] Second, that causal dependence depends in turn on the exclusion of workers from key productive resources, especially property. Third, the mechanism through which both these features (causal dependence and exclusion) operate is appropriation of the labour of the exploited." In line with Andrejevic, he argues that the third aspect is not served within the context of digital labor.

used. Thereon, and in line with the concepts “prosuming” (Toffler 1970, 1980) and “producing” (Bruns 2008), data-based co-creation should be termed here as “prolivering”: Users of digital network media produce and deliver data at the same time. Apart from correct assessments that data-based co-creation environments can enable creative participation, co-creation also co-creates markets and capitalist expansion. In the end, this represents the commodification of what Alvin Toffler (1980, 266) called the “production for use” (see Fn 2) in terms of commodification of data.

These dynamics find their counterpart in experience-related strategies of music- and media industries, which focus on data-based co-creation in manifold ways and for various reasons. Not least, they provide environments for social and/or cultural participation in scenes and fan communities. In addition, participation in data-based co-creation is a highly ambiguous field: Co-creation meets surveillance, and capitalistic expansion meets cultural participation. Taking part and being involved goes along with being (ab)used. Sometimes the line between these aspects is clear, but sometimes it is thin and nearly invisible. Especially in regard to the need for entertainment, social networking, or security, tolerance toward data tracking and trade in data is more or less given. However, although every perspective in this issue is plausible when considered separately, taking them together turns into a kaleidoscope of ambivalence. The lines between making and taking (Mazzucato 2018) and inclusion and exclusion (Lessenich 2019a, 2019b) are blurring. To capture this ambivalence, a dialectic approach to participation is suggested, enhancing possibilities of participation by co-creating leads at the same time to exploitation and exclusion.

This perspective touches one core issue of pop music cultures and popular music studies: Its relation to mass production, industrialization, and capitalism and the related aesthetic, social, political, and economic impacts. This relation is highly connected to questions about affirmation, subversion, the emancipatory quality of pop music cultures and their commodification (e.g. Holert and Terkessidis 1996) as well as their ambiguities, ambivalences, transitions, and parallelisms as outlined in the quotation from Georg Seeßlen (2018) at the beginning of this paper. Nevertheless, this ambiguity raises very fundamental questions, which not only address the value of artists and creative professionals as well as the value of the creative process, but also concepts of employment, for example, the unconditional basic income (e.g. Braun 2014), distributional issues, justice, and ownership.

Last but not least, it will also be a matter of representing the economic, societal, and cultural importance and value that digital data have in these days and thus making it visible in the public sphere. Whereas, for example, the heavy or textile industry not only shaped the economy and society but was also directly visible in the cityscape through factories and worker housing, there is no equivalent for the economic, societal and cultural significance of data. Or in the words of Niklas Maak:

We need symbolic places that make data understandable as public good and collective property. A city center does not always have to be a piazza with cafés, theatres and art museums. One could imagine a city hall built over a glass server hall. In it one could present the totality of all data like a gold reserve as a public treasure of all citizens and organize guided tours to sensitize people to what one could do with this data if it did not become the private property of corporations. (Maak 2020, 69, translation B.F.)

Hence, pop music cultures are not only given other types of symbolic places, but new places, which represent participation and turn participation into representation.

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Jun.-Prof. Dr. **Beate Flath** studied musicology, art history and business administration in Graz (Austria). After finishing her doctoral thesis on sound design in television advertising she

worked as a post doc at the Department of Musicology (University of Graz) and at the Department of Cultural Management and Gender Studies (University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna). Since 2015, she has been junior professor for event management focusing on popular music, media, and sports at Paderborn University. [www.beateflath.net](http://www.beateflath.net).

### **Abstract (English)**

This paper discusses data-based co-creation initiated by pop music related apps with respect to ambivalences of cultural, social, economic, and political participation. It refers mainly to Armin Nassehi's (2019) approach on digitization, Klaus Dörre's (2009, 2019) further development of the concept capitalistic expansion and Karl Polanyi's (2011 [1944]) ideas on fictitious commodities. Referring to two examples—*Fantome Mezzanine* by Massive Attack and the feature "Handy-Lightshow" of the app of the German schlager singer Helene Fischer—the paper suggests a dialectic approach to cultural, social, economic, and political participation, and raises questions on employment, distribution, and ownership.

### **Abstract (Deutsch)**

Der Beitrag diskutiert datenbasierte Co-Creation Prozesse, die durch Popmusik-Apps initiiert werden, in Hinblick auf die Ambivalenzen kultureller, sozialer, ökonomischer und politischer Teilhabe. Er bezieht sich dabei vorrangig auf Armin Nassehis (2019) Überlegungen zur Digitalisierung, Klaus Dörres (2009, 2019) Weiterentwicklung des Konzeptes der Kapitalistischen Landnahme und Karl Polanyis (2011 [1944]) Begriff der fiktiven Güter. Bezugnehmend auf zwei konkrete Beispiele – die App *Fantome Mezzanine* von Massive Attack und die Funktion „Handy-Lightshow“ der offiziellen App der Deutschen Schlagersängerin Helene Fischer – wird in Hinblick auf kulturelle, soziale, ökonomische und politische Teilhabe ein dialektischer Zugang vorgeschlagen, der Fragen nach Beschäftigung, Verteilung und Eigentum aufwirft.

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