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Cultures of Video Game Concerns in a Comparative View: Report of a Two-Day Workshop. Ruhr-University Bochum, Germany, January 2015

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Abstract: The same video games are played by young people all over the world. All over the world these games become matters of concern. Young people's involvement with video games is of concern to families, industry, science, and regulatory bodies. However, different dynamics play out in each country within and across these practices. Each practice and country finds different cultural, social, material and institutional ways of dealing with video games. The international workshop "Cultures of Video Game Concerns in International Comparison" sought to situate the concerns about video games and investigated the methods through which they play out in different contexts. The focus was on Denmark and Germany, but other international scholars also participated to add international perspectives. In addition to national comparisons the workshop compared video game concerns in the game industry, among youth and parents, in science, and in legal and regulatory contexts. The methodological focus on concerns proved highly productive for disrupting the usual stale discussions about the veracity of research on the effects of video games, and for understanding video game concerns as integral parts of the methods applied by scientists and non-scientists alike in their everyday attempt to meet the situated challenges that arise when dealing with video games.

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1. Concerns

Typically particularly intense debates about the effects of video games follow violent events such as school shootings (SØRENSEN, 2013); however, the concerns these media-technologies evoke are continuous. Parents are concerned about the time their children spend playing video games and about the strong attractions that games have for children. Media effect scholars are concerned about the potential aggressive effects they document through their experiments and surveys. Health professionals are concerned about the well-being of the population; they are not confident that video games benefit this. Social workers and educators are concerned about the addictive potential of

video games. Game regulation agencies seek to protect minors from potential harmful content by informing purchasers through age classification labels. [1]

Such general concerns are present in the everyday activities of these and other professionals. Yet, absorbed by routine practical tasks, professionals also experience more concrete concerns about video games. In the practices of age labeling, video games present the task of classifying the game according to one of several pre-given categories (SCHANK, 2013). In scientific practices video games are encountered as epistemic objects that attract academic curiosity, and a need for modeling or experimentation (cf. RHEINBERGER, 2001). In other practices people are concerned about how to turn video games into objects of legal democracy in order for them to be dealt with through rights, laws, and regulations. Video games also circulate as commercial goods and some practitioners take great care to promote their successful circulation in the market. Elsewhere video games have given rise to competitive sporting leagues where men and women participate in tournaments, even earning a living if they are competent and fortunate enough. Many people in the game industry are concerned with video games as aesthetic productions (PLONTKE, 2014). Children and young people often engage with video games for fun and relaxation or to share with friends. [2]

Despite the diversity of concerns that video games evoke, the question is rarely asked how such concerns are shaped. How is it that different professional and private cultures give rise to such diverse concerns and seek different solutions? These were the questions posed by the workshop "Cultures of Video Game Concerns: A Comparative View," organized by Espen AARSETH (Copenhagen) and Estrid SØRENSEN (Bochum) and co-funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the Mercator Foundation. [3]

The workshop was organized specifically to ensure a methodology that would center on a research object orientation, i.e., attending to the "matter of concern" (LATOUR, 2004) rather than following the logic of scholastic or disciplinary conventions. The focus was particularly on video games in relation to children and young people, as this is the relation that evokes most concern throughout different areas of society. Gathered for the workshop were a group of interdisciplinary scholars and professionals from Germany and Denmark with expertise in children and young people's gaming, parental concerns, game regulation, industrial game development and production, as well as in game effects. The interdisciplinarity made internal disciplinary debates irrelevant and drew participants' attention to the object of research; i.e., video game concerns. Professionals usually meet with peers who share similar concerns at scientific conferences, at game industry fairs, and at parents' meetings. However, such meetings rarely give rise to questions specifically about their concerns, how they differ from others, and indeed how they are shaped with and through specific social and material cultures, in relation to each other or by delimiting themselves from each other. With the comparative perspective across different professional areas and across two neighboring European countries the aim of the workshop was to generate discussions about the cultures through which the concerns about

video games are shaped and dealt with. Although the narrow focus on Denmark and Germany was an important methodological approach in order to specify the discussions, scholars from Australia, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom also attended the workshop. Their participation added broader international perspectives to the focused discussions. [4]

Estrid SØRENSEN (Bochum) introduced the workshop by presenting a discourse analysis of all coverage of video games in relation to children that was published in November 2014 in the five largest national newspapers (excluding tabloids) in Germany and Denmark. The review showed considerable differences. While German newspapers introduced and explained notions such as "interactivity" and "online gaming," Danish newspapers applied internet jargon such as hashtags (#) in the titles and content of the newspaper articles. The 10th anniversary of *World of Warcraft*[1] was covered in three Danish national newspapers but received no coverage in the German press. The German papers, on the other hand, often related video games to the need for adult protection of children from digital violence, gore and sex, and the difficulties of doing this in an online world. This topos was peripheral in Danish newspapers and only appeared as an oppositional voice claiming the right to question the general celebration in that country of any digital innovation. Indeed, in Danish newspapers discussions of video games in education saw the only problem to be teachers' and parents' lack of competence or commitment to engage with these media-technologies. While in Danish papers teachers' and parents' lack of media literacy was equated with their incapacity to understand children and child culture; it was described as an inability to protect children in the German papers. The general image of the two countries thus introduced to the workshop was that of a Danish discourse strongly influenced by the discursive repertoire of digital culture and in favor of promoting video games to children. The German newspaper discourse seemed unaffected by digital culture, and presented a rather skeptical attitude towards children's engagement with video games. [5]

Following the introduction, eight talks throughout the first day addressed one of the following areas of concern about video games in relation to children and young people, and in either Denmark or Germany: regulatory agencies' concerns, scientific concerns, children and parental concerns, and game industry concerns. In the morning of the second day, participants were divided into four discussion groups to focus on one of these areas of concern. Each group was asked to address the following questions: What are the concerns in your area about video games in relation to children and what keeps these concerns stable? What further questions would be important to ask? After a plenary summing up of the group discussions participants were divided into two groups to discuss concerns on video games in relation to children in either Denmark or Germany. A final plenary session presented conclusions from the discussion groups and proposals for future development of the work. [6]

1 *World of Warcraft* is a massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) created in 2004 by Blizzard Entertainment. The game has 5.5m.subscribers worldwide (Nov 2015).

Divided into the four areas of concerns the following four sections present summaries of the talks and discussions. [7]

2. Concerns About Video Games in Regulation

The German game rating agency USK[2] views video games from the perspective of the law and its psychological vocabulary while also taking into account the rights of game publishers to trade games. USK does this by differentiating between kinds of games and between kinds of children. Based on membership categorization analyses (SACKS, 1972) of USK rating reports SCHANK described how USK accomplishes this by applying different vocabulary for games and children and by bringing these vocabularies together. A game is described in terms of its genre, whether it is part of a series, the story it tells, its aim and characters, and with reference to the game mechanics, etc. Children, on the other hand, are described with reference to age, educational levels, and emotional and cognitive psychological stages. In the classification reports these different phenomena and their vocabularies are carefully connected by the notion of the "player." This hybrid phenomenon is sometimes the avatar in the computer game, sometimes the person in front of the computer and sometimes it is the person in front of the computer acting in the computer game. The latter is expressed in sentences such as "the player [in front of the computer] looks over his [the avatar's] gun." Through its hybrid character "the player" works as a textual device to connect the game with the child, and game vocabulary with educational and psychological terminology. Through such textual devices USK becomes a "trading zone" (GALISON, 1997) between legal, psychological, educational, and game industry vocabularies and concerns. [8]

Faltin KARLSEN (Oslo) reported from the group discussions on regulatory concerns. They identified as core challenges the difficulties of defining what a game is. In current technological developments online games, as well as tablet and mobile games, merge different media and often involve communication. Thus, when games are regulated, communication is regulated as well. This raises the question of how to delimit the definition of games to make it possible to regulate only the game aspects that are found problematic and not communication. The notion of game ontology may be helpful for this (AARSETH, 2011). Another important question focuses on the privatization of game regulation. Two actors were mentioned: On the one hand, families are increasingly expected to regulate children's gaming activities. Each family is thereby turned into its own private regulation agency. On the other hand large corporations, such as Google and Apple strongly regulate games through their models of distributing mobile games and apps. The games that iTunes[3] and Play

2 The USK was founded in 1994 to evaluate computer games in the German market and provide these with an age label. The Abbreviation USK stands for *Unterhaltungssoftware Selbstkontrolle* which translates to Entertainment Software Self-Control. Despite the name the age rating board meetings are led by a state representative.

3 iTunes is a mobile device management application, which is (primarily) used for Apple electronic devices to access music, videos and computer games.

Store[4] exclude from their platforms become difficult to access for gamers. By keeping the criteria covert for which game they offer and which they do not Apple impedes public discussion of game concerns. Increasingly, game regulation becomes a private matter to be dealt with in families and corporations, while the power and priority of state regulation decreases. Even if the European game rating framework PEGI (Pan-European Game Information) may not be an ideal regulation model, the group found it important that its transparent criteria enable public engagement in debates about game regulation. [9]

The discussions of regulatory concerns in Denmark and Germany focused also on the different approaches to children, seeing them as either competent (in Denmark) or in need of protection (in Germany). Many participants viewed the Danish scheme as more contemporary in its approach to children, which reflected the child perspective emphasized over the past decades in childhood studies (CHRISTENSEN & JAMES, 2008). Yet, it was also pointed out that this scheme not only encourages children to develop competences to engage with video games, it indeed requires them to do so. It defines norms for how children and parents are to engage in the situation of play. Clearly, some children and parents fail to meet this requirement and often feel left to flounder and make their own judgments and decisions. The German game classification system's age assessments, on the one hand, provide parents and children with guidance. On the other it provokes an ongoing collective debate in German society about how to engage with video games and it enables this by combining vocabularies from different concerns. [10]

3. Concerns About Video Games in Science

The second session was on scientific approaches to video games in the two countries. Tobias ROTHMUND (Landau) focused on quantitative psychological approaches to video games. Social psychology is interested in aggressive behavior in general, and is concerned about video games as a means to investigate aggression and other psychological mechanisms. Like other quantitative sciences, social psychology aims to produce universal claims and they most often do so in video game research by referring to meta-analyses of 30 years of psychological research which show small but unambiguous aggressive effects of violent video game play (e.g., ANDERSON et al., 2010; GREITEMEYER & MÜGGE, 2014). Even if this evidence is questioned by some psychologists and non-scientists uncertainty is not among social psychologists' central concerns. Rather, they take the evidence as a foundation that allows them to focus on other matters. In his talk ROTHMUND focused on social psychologists' concern about what they see as lay-people's biased perception of scientific results about video game effects. ROTHMUND and his colleagues explored this question further. Based on a survey among gamers and non-gamers they found that gamers tend to perceive scientific results about aggressive effects of video games as an identity threat, while people identifying with pacifism feel threatened by violent video games (ROTHMUND, BENDER,

4 PlayStore is the equivalent to iTunes applied by users of Android devices.

NAUROTH, & GOLLWITZER, 2015). A concern which social psychology seems to share with lay people and other professionals is how to measure aggression. Social psychologist are deeply engaged in discussions about methods, yet their particular interest in psychological mechanisms that are beyond conscious control render most external critiques of their methods irrelevant. [11]

Espen AARSETH presented a view of the history of Danish research into games. The very first paper on video games by a Danish researcher was Peter Bøgh ANDERSEN's "Elektriske Historier" [Electrical Stories] from 1984. Of the total number of 1,234 papers published by Danish game researchers only 41 (3.3%) have "child" in the title. For game studies it has been a more or less conscious strategic decision not to focus too much on children. As a new area of scholarly research game studies have struggled to be taken seriously. Because literature, art, and media for children are generally considered less valuable than their adult counterparts, game studies rather strived for recognition of computer games as adult media and developed a methodological bias against focusing too much of their research on children. While game studies have not been occupied with the potential negative effects of video games, it has shown considerable interest in ethical gaming (e.g., SICART, 2009). There have been only a few media effect studies focusing on video games in Denmark; and the most well-known US-based studies on negative effects of video games are broadly disapproved of there. AARSETH pointed to the neglect of these studies to take the specificities of the games into account. Often, violent games are compared to non-violent games. Yet, according to AARSETH, these games differ on many other parameters, such as game mechanics, narrative, atmosphere, and speed that are crucial for how the games are experienced and for the excitement the games induce. [12]

The session on scientific approaches generated more confrontational debate than any other session at the workshop. While the participants during the workshop's first session were fully engaged in thinking about regulatory concerns and the solutions which the Danish and German authorities had developed, they were less open to acknowledge and involve themselves with scientific concerns. Following a well-known pattern in the controversies about video games some participants criticized the scientific methods applied to study video game effects and others rejected this critique due to lack of insight into these methods. In the discussions about video game regulation, children and parental relations to video games and the industry's engagement with video games in relation to children, it was taken as a matter of course that multiple concerns about video games existed in these areas. The discussions related to science, however, followed a zero-sum pattern of either acceptance or rejection of scientific methods and results. Science aims for universal and singular claims and this rendered it odd to discuss scientific concerns in the same terms as the other areas. [13]

Daniel KARDEFELT WINTHER (London) summarized the group discussion of scientific concerns about video games in relation to children and sought a less confrontational path. One issue discussed was the interaction between science and the public sphere. No matter which discipline and from which paradigm researchers investigate video games, they all feel that their research is

undermined by the massive media presence of pseudo-scientists. In each country a few (male) scientists seem to dominate the media picture. They are often not experts on video game research but come from areas such as cognitive science, neuroscience, or criminology and have only done very few, if any, studies on video games. They mobilize very simplistic scare-stories. On the one hand their dominance makes it very difficult for more serious researchers to communicate their results to the public. On the other, funding organizations often take over vocabulary from these simplistic public discourses and develop funding schemes for "game addiction research," for instance, instead of focusing on the scientifically more profitable notion of "problematic gaming" (BLECKMANN & JUKSCHAT, 2015; BRUS, 2013; KARLSEN, 2013). Another issue dealt with in this group was the seemingly endless and futile discussion and critique of scientific measures of video game effects. Rather than debating the specificities of scientific methods which are so intimately configured with disciplinary and paradigmatic practices, scientists may profit from debating the consequences of presenting the kinds of results they do. For instance, gamers feel stigmatized by media effect studies showing that video games induce aggression. No matter the truth of such results they fail to address gamers. Indeed, they may even have the detrimental effect that gamers distance themselves from science. Accordingly, scientists should learn to design studies that not only produce valid results but also results that can be understood by gamers and the wider public. To do this it may be useful to engage in interdisciplinary work across scientific disciplines and paradigms that tend to disagree with one another. Science needs to focus not only of the truth of their results but also on their consequences in the public sphere. [14]

4. Concerns About Video Games in Children's Culture and in Families

Dorte Marie SØNDERGAARD (Aarhus) presented insights into her ethnographic studies among Danish youth. Generally, video games are part of their everyday lives equal to hanging out in the school yard, football, etc. Yet, these youth often experience pressure from adults to legitimate their video game play more than their other activities. They struggle to find ways of communicating that make adults understand video games on an equal footing with their other activities. Even though the issue of violence has become peripheral in the public debate, youth and their parents alike are concerned about violent content. Other concerns are addiction and passivity. Some children distance themselves from their parents and refuse parental involvement in their gaming activities. Other children make a protest but do accept invitations to discuss the concerns with their parents. Some children accept the discourse on video game concerns and talk about ways in which they try to stay away from video games. Sometimes the adult ways of dealing with video game concerns have unintended consequences, such as when the after-school clubs that were part of SØNDERGAARD's study limited the time in which children were allowed to play. Children reacted to this regulation by refraining from playing the more complex and intellectually challenging games, such as adventure and strategy games, and turned to simple and very violent action- and shooter games. SØNDERGAARD reported further observations of more complex ways in which parental regulations and peer group interactions

were continuously being negotiated. The study showed how parental concerns had profound influences on peer group interactions and on children's competent ways of using video games to develop the skills they needed in their social life (cf. SØNDERGAARD, 2013). Further detailed narratives shared with the audience described young Danes in their homes who spoke of video games as giving them a break from their exhausting life in school and in the family. For example one boy liked to shoot the opponents in *Counter-Strike*[5], whom he named after his bullying schoolmates. The young people in the study also presented elaborate reflections on the ways in which society deals with violence and how some violence can be articulated and some cannot, which kinds of violence are normalized and which are considered deviant. Several of the young people in the study considered the depictions of violence in video games as much less severe than violence in the news, in the school yard, in the Middle East, etc. For many of the children the games present an opportunity to deal with, ridicule, and laugh at the violence they fear in everyday life. [15]

Sandra AßMANN (Köln) and Alexander MARTIN (Paderborn) presented results from HEINZ and SCHMÖLDERS' (2012) cross-sectional study of German parental concerns about video games. It shows that parents of 5-12 year old children in Germany are particularly interested in information about the potential risks of video games to their children and, to a lesser extent, they seek information on what children can learn through video games. According to the study more than 50% of German parents do not play video games with their children, and do not know what their children are playing. In general, parental understanding of the games is limited and simplistic. Parents who are less engaged with video games tend to be more worried about their children's video game play than parents who play video games themselves. Due to the more violent content of the games boys play, parents of boys generally pay more attention to classification than do parents of girls. The study also showed that particularly mothers and sons do not talk about video game concerns. Furthermore, immigrant parents tend to be less worried about their children's video game play. This does not correlate with a lack of information about video games. Finally, a core discussion in Germany concerns the location of video games in children's homes, whether it should be in the children's room, or in a place where it is more visible to parents. To sum up, parents in Germany are particularly concerned about violent video game content and video games as risk factors. They do seek information but their level of understanding of video games is poor. [16]

Liam BERRIMAN (Sussex) reported from the group discussion on children and parental concerns about video games in relation to children. Their discussions echoed those of the regulation group. The group pointed to regulatory and educational institutions increasingly withdrawing from taking responsibility for children's media use. Due to this shift and because children more frequently use media that parents are not familiar with, their burden of responsibility for children's media use intensifies. Both children and parents are supposed to

5 *Counter Strike* is a multi-player first person shooter computer game series in which a team of terrorists battle against a team of anti-terrorists. The game was originally developed by Valve Corporation and first published in 1999.

develop competencies and media literacy to deal with video games. This unfolds in an atmosphere of unclear scientific evidence, massive marketing from the game industry, lack of traditions for, or experience of ways to deal with video games as a family, and a strong moral expectation to succeed in doing this. The group proposed that under these conditions there is an increased need for research into how families actually manage this; through which practices it becomes possible to develop positive game experiences and what kind of resistances children and parents develop. [17]

One of the striking differences that appeared in the session on children and parental concerns about video games in Denmark and Germany was not so much in the content of the talks but in the approaches of the discourses. SØNDERGAARD's presentation revealed that in her ethnographic analysis great care had been taken with the details and complexity of how video games are integrated in the dynamics of daily life, while being less interested in how video games can be mapped representationally according to societal categories and in what ways professionals can improve the situation. AßMANN and MARTIN, on the other hand, presented a less complex overview of parental concerns which, however, may be more useful as a foundation for enabling political decision-making and for legitimating pedagogical intervention. AßMANN and MARTIN emphasized that the discourse in Germany is very much about lack of parental information that would help their children. Enlightenment and education are seen as the solutions to the concerns about video games. There are good reasons to argue that just as AßMANN and MARTIN's presentation mirrored (or enacted) the German discourse and way of dealing with children and parental video game concerns, SØNDERGAARD's presentation mirrored the Danish. Here, the request for new, more nuanced or complex vocabularies to talk about and deal with concerns at a situational level are stronger than the interest in more authoritative guidelines and information about video game effects. As also became salient in the discussion about regulatory concerns, the locus of intervention and, thus, the need for knowledge seems in Denmark to be much more about the individual's intimate everyday practices, while interventions and knowledge in Germany is directed at the societal level rather than at the individual. [18]

5. Concerns About Video Games in Relation to Children in the Game Industry

The final session of the first day was on the video game industry in Denmark and Germany. Simon LØVIND (Copenhagen), editor of the Danish *Game Scheme* funding bureau for video games[6], provided insight into the Danish game industry from this perspective. The focus of the talk was a new parliamentary agreement on the funding scheme for video games which was passed in the autumn 2014. The first agreement from 2008 had focused on supporting start-up businesses. Aware of the potential public critique of state support to the video game industry, politicians were careful to focus the scheme on the educational potential of games. Emphasizing the paradox of basing a cultural funding scheme on

6 The "Game Scheme" [*Spilordningen*]was founded in 2008 by the Danish Ministry of Culture to support the development and growth of Danish computer games.

economic and educational criteria LØVIND welcomed the new agreement which (also) highlights cultural criteria. The agreement's introductory sentence states explicitly that digital games are a natural part of children's, youth's, and adults' everyday lives. It establishes for the first time a legal foundation to support the development of games that are directed towards adults, and not only to children and youth. Two new criteria have been introduced: The level of challenge in the game and its level of responsibility. These criteria turn the evaluation of games from a negative view—in terms of what they should not contain (pornography, violence, etc.)—to a "constructive" perspective. In order to be eligible for support games must provide the gamer with challenging experiences, and may even challenge the players' expectation of games as a medium. The criterion on responsibility places less emphasis on content such as nudity or violence, but more on transparency of the game's business model (in-game advertising and sales, mechanisms to keep gamers playing, etc.). Also it prioritizes games that present an awareness of social responsibility; e.g., racism- and sexism-free online communication, and data protection. The game funding body has been challenged to develop these new criteria for cultural funding. The funding schemes for film support target the portrayal of Danish culture and language but due to the global character of the game industry, these traditional criteria are not applicable to games. The funding bureau's concern is to mediate between the culturally most innovative game development and political support that is largely dependent on the (generally more conservative) public discourse. For this reason LØVIND pays great attention to the public debate which has changed considerably within the past few years in Denmark. He presented examples from the Danish press, such as a critique of city planners based on the argument that anyone who has played *SimCity*[7] could have done better, and a discussion of a current negotiation in which the vocabulary of video games was used to argue that the politicians had the necessary knowledge, skills and resources but they lacked the wisdom to make the right decisions. LØVIND takes such utterances as evidence that video games have entered and transformed general culture. [19]

Sandra PLONTKE (Bochum), Peter LARSEN (Karlsruhe) and Benjamin BEIL (Cologne) gathered in a panel to discuss the concerns of the game industry in Germany in relation to children. They agreed that several different concerns are visible in the game industry. Game publishers and retailers are generally conservative, careful, and mainly concerned with economic issues. Game developers, on the other hand, are usually highly educated, passionate and dedicated to making games and, mostly, have precarious employment prospects. Small independent game developers are based on an entirely different economic model to that of the large AAA game publishers. Entering such large publishers you leave the national frame and enter a global arena, LØVIND pointed out. The game distribution channels are geared to a global rather than a national market and most game funding relies on international sources. Accordingly, the games have to address a generalized global player. Game producers' main concern is to ensure freedom from legal and media interference. The game industry is not an

7 *SimCity* is an open-ended simulation game series in which the player builds and maintains a city by attending to a variety of different material and social tasks that keeps the city and its population well-functioning. The game was first published in 1989 by Will WRIGHT.

altruistic business but wants to make good, financially profitable games. Accordingly, they are concerned about predictable market conditions, regulations etc. The services and advice offered in Germany by the USK is very helpful in this respect. Currently, the game industry is mainly reactive, not proactive. Yet, PR people from the game industry in Germany are increasingly working on identifying MPs who are themselves gamers and may be influential in promoting the gaming agenda. The game industry has some success in this in North Rhine-Westphalia by placing emphasis on gaming as a job-intensive industry. This can be described as moving the debate from the cultural pages of newspapers to the business pages. Peter LARSEN anticipated that game companies will soon have lobbyists on their payroll. Game developers feel that the public debate about game content that centers on whether it is harmful or not is far too simplistic. In their view, a game may very well be simultaneously violent, funny, and socially challenging. Both academics and game industry representatives would like much more mutual exchange, and academic in-fighting is seen as negative from the perspective of the industry. Furthermore, game industry representatives are often hesitant to collaborate with researchers because of academics' tendency to mobilize media debates that compromise the image of the game industry. [20]

Simon LØVIND (Copenhagen) reported that in their discussions the game industry group found it necessary to distinguish between "true" and "false" concerns. "False" concerns are those about violence and nudity since there are already systems installed for dealing with these. Furthermore these concerns render other, "true" concerns invisible, such as how it can be possible in the current educational system to develop media literacy that is appropriate for the children's current media landscape. Another "true" concern is about social games and how to moderate, filter, block, and report them appropriately. Small companies often do not have the resources to deal with this and, accordingly, public authorities are needed to support developers formulating a good approach. The game industry is also concerned with developing games that engage and absorb players without making them addictive. However, they lack knowledge about the specificity of game addiction compared to other forms of addiction, which design features encourage addictive behavior, and how much or which kind of gaming is good and which is not. The group furthermore identified a blind spot when it comes to knowledge about the conditions of game production in relation to what concerns they generate. The AAA[8] mainstream games that are most often seen as problematic have a very specific global economic setup with a different business model compared to indie-game studios that are more often based on a local economy. In what ways do these conditions contribute to shaping concerns? Finally, the importance of more exchange between the industry and academia was emphasized. [21]

8 AAA or triple-A is a term used for games with the highest development budgets.

6. Closing Remarks

"You cannot simply provide children with electronic bikes without teaching them about the traffic." With this metaphor Peter LARSEN ignited the concluding debate: We cannot just provide children with new video games, they also need to learn how to deal with and understand them, and in relation to other media users and the current culture. Other participants added that even more than this, the workshop had very clearly demonstrated that when children start using new video games it is not only the children who need to learn how to go about them. Families, science, regulatory bodies, and industry are challenged to adjust their worlds to be adequately coordinated with the world of children and video games, and with each other. The workshop's insight into the complexity of video game concerns as they exist within and across (sub-)cultures relied centrally on the methodological approach of the workshop. It did not a priori privilege any approach or methodology but allowed interdisciplinary and intermethodological exchange across qualitative and quantitative methods. Each method allowed the research object—concerns about video games—to present itself in different ways. The multiplicity of methods made participants focus primarily on the research object rather than on technicalities of research methods. This does not mean that research methods were not of importance. On the contrary, it became clear that different scientific and non-scientific methods work as resources for people to deal in different ways with the concerns and controversies about video games that they are confronted with in their everyday practices. In this sense, rather than discussing methods as a matter of universal disciplinary standards, the workshop pointed to the productivity of dealing with methods in intimate relation to the object of research and the way in which it exists in different ways in different practices. [22]

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