



## Doctoral student presentation at the Swedish Council of Games Researchers

### 19th June, 14.30-Presenter bios and abstracts

<https://his-se.zoom.us/j/67130762425?pwd=QjBGT1JKMEtnQ2RkeTlhSzhpeEQ3UT09>

**Presenting:** Azul Romo Flores, Arsineh Boodaghian Asl, Torbjörn Svensson

**Azul Romo Flores** (she/her), azul.romo.flores@sh.se is a PhD student (3rd semester) at the Dept. of Media and Communication studies, Södertörn University, Sweden.

#### **Abstract for Azul's talk:**

The transition from the industrial to the information-based society has led to significant changes in educational system, most notably the values and perceptions of what type of skills and competencies that mark the workers and citizens of the twenty first century (Griffin et al., 2012). In parallel, the entertainment sector continues to evolve and provides highly mediatized forms of consumption. A relatively nascent phenomenon has emerged that clearly demonstrates the technological, social, political, and economic advancements of the digital era, namely Esports (short for electronic sports). While the economic significance of Esports has been globally recognized, its cultural impact is still unfolding and during the past decade we have seen Esports being integrated into the formal education system in many countries (Scott et al., 2021).

This paper introduces my research project, which is interdisciplinary and combines theories from media and communication studies and educational sciences. The central questions are: what is the social function of Esports education in society? How does Esport (as a school subject) shape the pupil's learning practices and identity? The purpose of this project is to examine the development of Esports education in Sweden, and how young people shape/reproduce/reject their identity in relation to their media practices. This study draws on a sociological approach (Couldry, 2012; Elias & Dunning, 1986; Willis, 1981) combined with a learning lives approach (Erstad & Sefton-Green, 2013; Erstad & Silseth, 2019). Empirically, the core material consists of semi structured, in depth interviews (Jansson et al., 2021; Kaijser & Öhlander, 2011) with pupils enrolled in Esport education, their parents, teachers, coaches, school principal and relevant staff, but also with other aspiring Esport athletes that are not enrolled in a Esport educational profile. In addition, participant observations (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007; Kaijser & Öhlander, 2011) with pupils during their in- and out-of-school activities will be conducted.

**Arsineh Boodaghian Asl** is currently a PhD student at KTH, department of biomedical engineering and health systems, with a background in computer science. Prior to pursuing her PhD, she worked 9 years as both a software developer and game developer. Her research interests include games, simulation and modelling, complex systems, and AR/VR. Her email address is [arsineh@kth.se](mailto:arsineh@kth.se)

**Abstract for Arsineh's talk:**

SocioBalance is a game intended for research and data collection on the factors that people prioritise for their mental health and wellbeing. This can lead to perceive the significant relations between mental wellbeing factors and identify weaknesses in society for better policy interventions. The game offers different scenarios where the players objective is to select a scenario and bring balance to life aspects such as health, relationship, work, family, and education, which further enhances individuals' knowledge on the influence of these factors."

**Torbjörn Svensson** is a teacher and Ph.D. candidate at the University of Skövde. He has a background in film studies with a Masters Degree from Lund University. His interest in narratives and narrative structures is helpful when teaching in the Game Writing program at the University of Skövde, which he started with then-colleague Marcus Toftedahl in 2012.

His current research interest, which is the basis of his Ph.D. thesis, is trying to understand game engagement and exploring the possibilities to transfer features that engage players to correspondents in other media forms. The fascination with game engagement has also led to involvement in projects concerning problematic gaming and the consequences of play, both positive and harmful. He is also a part of the West Swedish Media Literacy Network, where he tries to promote thoughts of Gaming Literacy.

**Abstract for Torbjörns talk:**

The transition of local news from the analog, printed format to a digital format, fit for our increasingly digitized media technology society, has not been as straightforward as imagined at the dawn of the World Wide Web. Many features for engagement are under-explored by newspaper producers. The central theme for Torbjörn's Ph.D. thesis is building a model for reader engagement in digital local news. The model is constructed by transferring features for user needs satisfaction and engagement in digital games to the realm of digital local news.

Self Determination Theory, which establishes ways of describing user engagement in general, and when applied to computer games specifically, forms the basis of the research. Additionally, detailed knowledge about user types counters a traditional 'one to many' broadcast logic and supports a greater understanding of heterogeneity within reader groups. The model also defines the digital maturity of the different features across a spectrum, from substitution via a modification to disruption (Su-Mo-Di). For example, some digital features replicate those from the analog printed version of the newspaper (substitution), while some are impossible to implement in a paper format (disruption).