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Abstract

This thesis is on the topic of esports events as a driver of tourism, while also trying to classify it as event or sports tourism – or a hybrid of the two. Further, the thesis is aimed towards identifying the opportunities and challenges that might arise for the Danish esports event industry both presently, and in the future. The primary data for this inquiry were gathered through three semi-structured interviews with DMO/event agency representatives, 18 visitor interviews at a gaming convention/esports event – as well as a survey with almost 1000 responses. In combination, these different sources of data make the foundation of this thesis.

The theoretical basis for the research was limited by the small amount of academic research into the topic of esports tourism. However, the practical execution of large-scale esports events have similarities to other types of tourist events, as modelled after the event portfolio approach. Therefore, a literature review of event and sport tourism theories were conducted as a theoretical basis for supporting the categorisation of esports. Some esports research has however been done on topics related to tourism, e.g. social spheres, experience economy and marketing. Which was then also brought into the theoretical basis, in order to better understand the topic.

The primary findings throughout the demand-side data turned out to be the focus on the sports-like competitive aspect of esports events. Many of the visitors and survey respondents who had travelled, or were interested in travelling to esports events, primarily showed interest in one specific esports game and would therefore only travel for the one they were most invested in. Furthermore, it was shown that most esports fans would prefer events being within 500km of distance from them – which would signify that the Danish esports event industry would primarily create domestic tourism. Other identified motivations thing such as the new experience and the community.

Through the supply-side interviews, esports events were categorised as a mix of several traditional event disciplines, with a new target market. Accordingly, large-scale esports events in Denmark is a relatively new offering, but one with a large international audience, if the right tournaments are brought to Denmark – e.g. the ESL Pro League Final in Odense. The primary opportunities identified were the enormous interest sphere, which were shown to be receptive to the sponsors of events, and therefore also the possibility of esports being used as place branding. Furthermore, an overlap between esports fans and possible hires for tech businesses lacking in qualified manpower in Odense, shows esports as being potential marketing and recruitment channels.

The main challenges for the Danish esports event industry appears to be the lack of established stakeholders and partners with experience in esports in general, resulting in an underdeveloped industry compared to other countries. Furthermore, the qualities of large-scale esports events infers that only the largest cities in Denmark can utilise it to create sizeable tourism. Lastly, a more established esports event industry could arguably lead to niches within esports itself, which is further complicated by the rapid emergence of new esports games.

Subsequently, if the identified opportunities are to be properly utilised by Danish DMOs/event agencies, further research into esports event tourism is needed, in order to meet the challenges of working with an increasingly complex and competitive esports event industry.

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1.0 Introduction

Tourism is often understood as just the act of travelling, for business or pleasure, as they say in the movies. Tribe tries to encapsulate the problem with defining tourism by saying that trying to define it "(…) is *like defining an orange*" (1999: 75), thereby meaning that we all generally know what it is, but once a definition is agreed upon, problems arise. However, most definitions entail the following aspects: Firstly, that it is a trip away from an individual's home or normal habitat and secondly, that the visit is for a limited time period, and the person intends to travel back home again (Sørensen 2007). It is however essential to point out that all tourist behaviour is not international.

This thesis is on the topic of 'esports' events as a driver of tourism, while also trying to classify it as event or sports tourism – or a mix of the two. The terminology upon which this research stands is 'esports' itself, as it is a relatively new entry into the vocabulary of things that drive people to take up the tourist mantle. In order to get some proper academic knowledge on 'esports' as a driver of tourism, one must also understand how events in general can be used as attractions in destinations and cities. Events in themselves are organised happenings that are generally limited to a specific location and time period, such as concerts, competitions, holiday markets, festivals, fundraisers, parties etc. (Weed & Bull 2004). Depending on the scale and interest of the event, they can be leveraged as tourism drivers, this can be done in a plethora of ways, e.g. combatting seasonality of primarily summer destinations or appealing to a variety of target segments (ibid; Getz & Page 2016). Further, they can create *"positive images for the destination"* (ibid: 597) as well as help market a city through place branding. The events themselves are helpful in animating specific locales within cities, such as *"resorts, parks, urban spaces and venues of all kinds"* (ibid: 597). It can therefore be argued that events, and the tourists they might attract lay the foundation for development and maintenance of the abovementioned locales, in order to have the capacity to arrange larger, tourism-focused events in the future.

'Esports' is the name given to the industry of computer games as competitive spectator sports, entailing both the live entertainment events and the act of watching from the comfort of one's own home (Jonasson & Thiborg 2010). This industry has seen tremendous growth in recent years. The biggest 'esports' specific event is the Intel Extreme Masters World Championship in Katowice, Poland, garnering as many as 50,000 attendees in 2013, 104,000 in 2015 and growing to around 173,000 people attending in 2017 (Turtle Entertainment 2013, 2015; ESLGaming 2017). Correspondingly, there are many different events being held all around the world, with more viewers tuning into such games as League of Legends and DOTA2, compared to the American Baseball World Series or NBA finals (Schwartz 2014).

The topicality of 'esports' as a driver of event tourism is of importance to the event tourism industry, as well as the 'esports' industry itself. One of the main reasons for this importance, I would argue, is the meanings and attitudes that arise when trying to explain 'esports' to someone new to the topic. Accordingly, a person unfamiliar with the topic would most likely question both the entertainment and sport aspect of 'esports'. Wherein the typical arguments against the proposed quality of entertainment, as well as the 'sportification' (leisure activities becoming sports) of gaming is found in the idea of regular sports often being *"regarded as virtue, whereas computer gaming is looked upon as a vice."* (Jonasson & Thiborg 2010: 287) and furthermore, that the "*traditional definition of modern sport (…) is a physical, competitive and institutionalized activity.*" (ibid: 287).

It can be argued that 'esports' as a form of live entertainment, which results in event tourism, is still seen as a niche interest, at least compared to other forms of events, e.g. concerts, sports tournaments, conferences etc. However, the portrayal of video game tournaments as entertainment for spectators originate more than 45 years into the past, with the first acknowledged event being held at the University of Stanford in 1972. The event was touted as the first 'Intergalactic Spacewar Olympics' (Baker 2016) with the main prize being a year's subscription to the Rolling Stone magazine. Thus, the video game centric live entertainment event is older than one would think.

The main argument for comparing 'esports' to regular sports, in an event tourism perspective, therefore arises from the idea that it belongs in the industry along regular sporting events. Accordingly, this argument is given credence by the fact that there are regularly held tournaments in front of live audiences, who travel to see the events, many of which hold qualifying tournaments beforehand (Liquipedia Counter Strike, Dota 2, Starcraft 2 & League of Legends 2017). Thus, giving rise to the comparison between esports tournament structures, to the structure of sports such as tennis, athletics and badminton. One would necessarily have to consider the definition of sport in order to properly investigate this argument, with the main query being whether the definition is fluid or static. Jonasson (2016) argues that we easily associate modern sports with the ancient Greek Olympics, which could lay the groundwork for comparing esports to the roman games of old. As he puts it; "*Roman games and spectacles in Antiquity, infamous for their violent carnages, will always appear as a deviant sibling when compared to Greek athletics, much like e-sport in comparison with sport*" (ibid: 29). As such, the detracting arguments on ancient gladiatorial combat being too violent to be a sport, could be transferred almost directly to some 'esports' titles wherein the objective is to eliminate the opposition, such as the first-person shooter Counter-Strike or a fighting game like Street Fighter. The sedentary aspect of competitive gaming is however the most dividing issue, "*although comparable to sports such as shooting, pool and boule*" Jonasson (2016: 30) argues, due

to the fact that the two other aspects that make up the earlier definition of sport, competitiveness and institutionalisation, is readily found in the 'esports'-event industry today.

Whether 'esports' belongs in the grouping of regular sports could be argued about for ages, but the reality is that it might not matter to the fans who spend their evenings in front of a screen watching from home, and especially not to the 'esports'-tourists who dedicate their weekend to traveling to an 'esports' event. Accordingly, the spectacle of live entertainment in the form of large-scale competitive gaming events can already be argued as overlapping with regular sports. In so far that the comparison is grounded in the staging of the event, the media attention surrounding it, the attending fans and even the individual 'esports' competitors themselves.

On the organisational side, there is still lots of room to improve, but it cannot be denied that the growth of 'esports' have been explosive in recent years. Hutchins (2008) points out that an approximate 400% growth in participants and representative countries occurred for the World Cyber Games event from 2000 till 2007. Even though the event no longer exists, the point still stands. More recently, Danish investors pledged 200 mil DKKR for a huge 'esports' project entailing a large training arena for four of the biggest Nordic Counter-Strike teams, as well as investment in the teams themselves citing expectations of 'esports' *"…overtaking several regular sports within a few years. (…) seeing a huge potential in the media rights (…), but it hasn't at all been organised and evaluated, like we e.g. see in football"* (Leonhard 2016, my translation). In the last year, two large events have been held in Denmark, namely the BLAST Pro Series and ESL Pro League Finals, with live coverage on the public TV channel DR3 as well as sold out arenas. The first drawing in record numbers for the 15-39 year olds, with around 93.000 viewing from home, around 15% of the possible viewers in that age range, surpassing even the Olympics in Rio and the Eurovision (My News Desk 2017). Further, more than ten thousand tickets had been sold before the event (Majcher 2017). The second had more than five thousand attendees in the audience (Jørstad 2017). Judging by this, the viewers and attendees are eager to enjoy more live 'eports' events.

Consequently, a process of sportification (Jonasson & Thiborg 2010) has taken place in regard to 'esports', with only some of the bureaucratic, organisational aspects lacking, compared to regular sports. The events and organisations behind them, as well as the 'esports' fans (and possible tourists), forming the future of 'esports' events in Denmark in particular, is where the foci of this thesis will be. This is done in order to fill out some of the gaps in academic knowledge, in terms of tourism specifically for 'esports'. Therefore, this thesis will try to understand where 'esports' is going in the future, what the fans want out of the events, and try to identify what opportunities and challenges Danish 'esport' events might encounter going forward.

1.1   Problem Formulation

On basis of the introduction, this thesis sets out to identify the difficulties that arise in event tourism, working with a relatively new form of live entertainment: 'esports'. This involves both the supply and demand sides of the industry, as essential parts of understanding how to further enhance the experience of attending an 'esports' event.

Therefore, the above reflections have been articulated into the following problem formulation:

> ***"What are the opportunities and challenges in relation to the development of the Danish 'esports'-event industry and should it be understood as event or sports tourism, or possibly a hybrid of the two?"***

The reasoning behind the formulation above is grounded in the inherent international nature of the 'esports' industry, due to the fact that the big, competitive games have teams and fans all over the globe. Furthermore, the Danish 'esports' industry in itself is mostly comprised of the teams themselves, whereas the organisations behind the large-scale events are international enterprises, working together with local partners and stakeholders.

In order to gather a more complete image of the 'esports'-event industry as a whole, investigating both the supply and demand side is deemed essential. This will be done through a series of qualitative interviews, as well as an online survey that is comprised of both quantitative and qualitative questions. This is done in order to compare and contrast the organisations input on the future of Danish 'esports'-events, with the wishes and thoughts of the fans interested in attending the events. Accordingly, the end result of this thesis will hopefully add useful academic research to the small, existing, literary corpus on the topic of 'esports' events as drivers of tourism. Further methodological considerations will be elaborated on in section 3. Due to the relatively recent emergence of 'esports' as a driver of tourism, almost all of the literature covers the supply side of the industry. Therefore, this thesis will also try to add a demand side perspective on the industry through interviews and a survey conducted with the fans and potential 'esports' tourists.

2.0   Literature Review

In the pursuit of figuring out wherein the definition of tourism events that 'esports' fits, it is essential to look at how 'esports' events in general are carried out. Accordingly, the way in which the events themselves are established and carried out, lends itself to being a natural fit with the theoretical approach to event tourism. However, there has been a lot of mainstream media discussion on the topic of whether 'esports' can be qualified as regular sports, like the Danish Sports Union denying the recognition on a variety of grounds, such as the industry not being *"democratically club-based"* (Pedersen 2017, my translation), *"…ethical considerations (…) e.g. counter strike, that has to do with shooting others."* (ibid) and lastly that *"E-sports in Denmark are commercially controlled by companies alone"* (ibid). Conversely, the Olympic Council of Asia decided to invite 'esports' into the 5th Asian Indoor and Martial Arts games, granting credence to the claim of being comparable to regular sports (Olympic Council of Asia 2017).

Thus, the argument for 'esports' tourism being either, or both, event tourism and sports tourism is one that needs to be examined. The following section will therefore endeavour to examine the academic literature on both kinds of tourism, as well as 'esports' itself. There is a variety of different ways that 'esports' is mentioned in both media and literature, e.g. E-sports, 'esports', cyber-sports etc., however this thesis will from hereon use the term esports for clarities sake.

2.1 Event and Sports Tourism – A Literature Review

'Event tourism' as a specific term stems back to 1987, where the New Zealand Tourist and Publicity Department is cited saying that *"Event tourism is an important and rapidly growing segment of international tourism"* (New Zealand Tourist and Publicity Department 1987 *in* Getz & Page 2016: 597). Event tourism is, as the term hints at, when an event is used to *"attract tourists (and others, such as sponsors and the media) who otherwise might not visit a particular place"* (Getz & Page 2016: 597) e.g. concerts, festivals, carnivals, sports competitions etc. These events can then be split up into two distinct issues, namely the supply and demand sides of events (ibid). The two sides being split, with the demand-side being the consumers, or participants, being determined by *"who travels for events and why, and also who attends events while traveling"* (Getz 2013 *in* Getz & Page 2016: 597). Conversely, the supply side is the Destination Management Organisations (DMOs), private companies and governmental agencies that *"develop, facilitate and promote events of all kinds"* (Getz & Page 2016: 597).

The events themselves can have an enormously wide range of variance, due to the underlying special interest which defines the events themselves, being the differentiating factor. Accordingly,

the interest this refers to, is the experiences and attitudes made the tourist to attracted to the event in the first place (Trauer 2006).

There are of course different kinds of events, which will be described later in this section.

Whereas 'sports tourism' seems rather straight forward, the term itself has seen a variety of scholars work out definitions on the topic, e.g. Gibson (1998) and Weed & Bull (2004) both with a focus on leisure-based travel with the intent of either participating, watching or visit attractions associated with sport. Another definition of the term has been put forth by Deery, Jago & Fredline, which argue that sport tourism is primarily *"focussed on competitive sport (…) rather than recreational activities"* (2004: 244). This also lends itself to the notion that traveling in order to participate in or watch a sporting event, it is usually a planned, competitive event (ibid). This appears to fit into the mould of how esports events are carried out and viewed, as will be discussed later in this section.

Sports tourism can be split up into three different domains, namely 'active', 'event' and 'nostalgia' (Paiement 2011). These three differentiate themselves by the activities that define the sort of tourism. 'Active sports tourism' is defined by the act of performing some kind of sporting activity on the trip (Gibson 1998), such as going on a skiing trip or traveling to destination in order to participate in a sporting activity of some sort, whether that be on an amateur or professional level. Secondly, 'event sport tourism' is the practice of traveling for the specific purpose of watching sport events, e.g. a trip to see a family member participate in an event, or something as large as travelling to watch the Olympic Games (Paiement 2011). Thirdly, nostalgia refers to the act of traveling to a location that has a nostalgic sport connotation in the mind of the tourist (Gibson 1998) – such as visiting the Champs-Elysées in Paris for the cycling interested or Yankee Stadium for somebody interested in baseball.

Thus, sport and event tourism can be seen as overlapping fields of research insofar that they both pertain to the act of traveling to a destination with the motive of experiencing a specific event or activity, related to a specific interest, which cannot be experienced at the person's home. This description would subsequently also be fitting for esports event tourism.

Getz & Page (2016) includes sports events in the research on event tourism, as they naturally require the same kind of organisational backing as other types of events. Accordingly, the active sport tourism definition would also fit into the category of event tourism, in the case of athletes traveling to participate in sports events. The only part of sport tourism that can be argued as not coinciding with event tourism is the 'nostalgia' aspect, as it does not normally lend itself to the framework of event tourism (unless nostalgia related sports events are considered).

When it comes to event and sports tourism, Deery, Jago and Fredline put forth a model in which they argue that: *"If people are travelling to participate in or observe a competitive sport, it would normally be a sporting event"* (2004: 241), and as such sport tourism is very often event related. The different types of events that is contained inside the oft used definition of event tourism is essential in the distinction between the two types of tourism research, as will be explored in the following section.

2.2 Tourism and The Event Portfolio Approach

Getz & Page (2016) uses the term 'portfolio' to try to encapsulate the way in which event tourism can be distinctly classified into four different levels today. Accordingly, this is a term describing the way in which a destination can try to obtain a variety of events, in order to cover the multitude of different possibilities and interests available to humanity in the world of today (Ziakas & Costa 2011; Getz & Page 2016). They split up events into four classes, namely: 'Mega, 'Hallmark', 'Regional' and 'Local'. Further, they classify the events themselves according to whether they are occasional, such as mega events like the Olympic Games or World Cups; periodic, such as cultural festivals and major sports events, like the Football Champions League; and lastly one-time events, like e.g. large-scale concerts. The portfolio-approach model can be seen in the figure below.
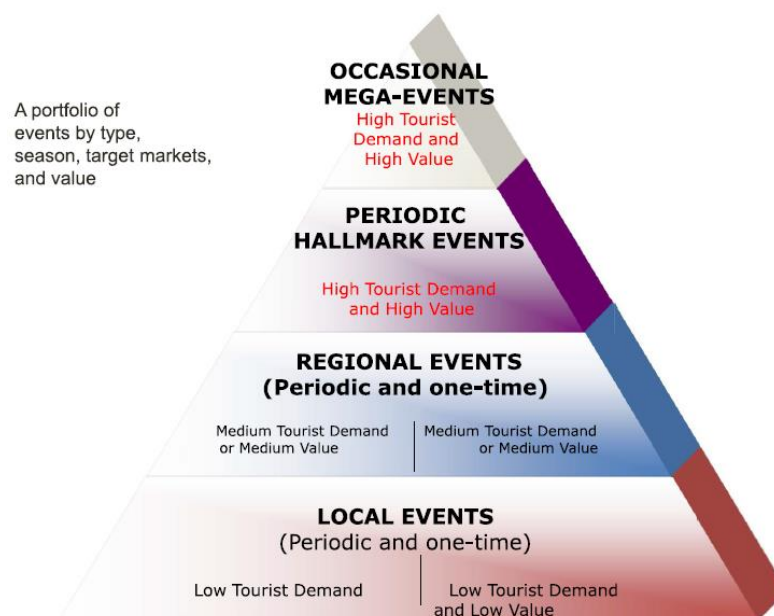
Fig. 1: The Event Portfolio Pyramid Getz & Page 2016: 596

Especially interesting to the event tourism researcher are the top level events, mega- and hallmark events, as they *"possess such significance, in terms of tradition, attractiveness, quality or publicity, that the event provides the host venue, community, or destination with a competitive advantage."* (Getz & Page 2016: 599). Conversely, the lower levels of the event portfolio pyramid, 'local' and

'regional' events are argued to be *"problematic from a tourism perspective"* (ibid: 599), due to the relatively smaller scale of the events themselves, as well as the intended targets usually being the local community and the residents themselves.

In the purview of this thesis, as well as in the cases of event and sport tourism, the two top level terms are the most interesting, due to the *"history of their use to enhance tourist attractiveness and related image-making or developmental roles"* (Getz & Page 2016: 598). This being used to describe mega events, whereas hallmark events arguably have a longer path to enhance tourist attractiveness and destination image, but that it is definitely possible, as Getz & Page puts it: *"Over time, the event and destination can become inextricably linked, such as Mardi Gras and New Orleans."* (2016: 599). This imaginary link between destination and event, often lead DMOs and event development agencies to try to fill out their event portfolio with a variety of different events as a part of a larger, sophisticated branding strategy (ibid). Therefore, the portfolio approach to event tourism, and sport events as tourism drivers, requires establishing relationships and connections with the organisations that own the events, or for the DMOs and event agencies to establish and maintain their own large-scale events (Getz & Page 2016).

> *A considerable and disproportionate amount of research has been directed at mega sport events, given their global prominence and infrastructure costs, but is somewhat irrelevant when it comes to providing useful lessons for developing an event-tourism portfolio in most cities and destinations.*
> (Getz & Page 2016: 605)

The above quote illustrates the problem with mega events, as the scale of the events are simply too big and too expensive for any single destination to attain, such as the Olympic Games. Thus, events are usually named after one city, but are actually rather a government backed image and development investment, due to mega-scale of the event itself e.g. Sochi Winter Olympics in 2014 in Russia or Rio 2016 Summer Olympics in Brazil. The mega events themselves can therefore be argued to be independent from any specific destination.
For this reason, the number of available mega events are relatively few, whereas hallmark events find their place in a wide variety of destinations and cities all over the globe, wherein they often exist because of the host community itself (Ziakas & Costa 2011; Getz & Page 2016).

At the core of event tourism are the sought after experiences that the tourist endeavours to attain on their travels, as the "*range of potential event experiences are quite broad, from the fun and revelry of entertainment, carnival and party, to the solemn spirituality of religious*

pilgrimage and celebratory rituals." (Getz & Page 2016: 608). Accordingly, the reasons why people travel to an event might not always be for the event itself, but rather the variety of activities and experiences that they encounter, which can be said to transcend the ordinary life of an individual. These experiences are unique to the event, due to the destination, organisers and people present, just as much as they are *"only available to the traveller or the event-goer"* (ibid: 608). What these experiences end up meaning to the individual is highly dependent on the inferred expectations and meanings given to the events by the special interest social groups, communities and larger society as a whole. Naturally, the more engaged social groups often attach different meanings to an event compared to the more casually interested (Getz & Page 2016).

2.3 Hallmark Events and Tourism

As mentioned earlier, the second level from the top in the portfolio-approach pyramid: hallmark events (**Fig. 1**), is the most interesting level to tourism research, when the aim is to *"attract visitors from outside the community and yield economic benefits through their spending"* (Ziakas & Costa 2011: 160). However, this also depends greatly on the destination or city's capacity for actually pulling of events at the scale of hallmark events, requiring significant investment in both physical facilities as well as marketing efforts. This is where DMOs and stakeholders from the private sector, e.g. concert venues, stadia, event agencies etc. have to cooperate in the development of an event portfolio (Ziakas 2010; Getz *et al.* 2012). This is not to say that all events in a destinations' portfolio is of the same type and scale, rather the opposite, that they have to cover as many different niches and it is therefore logical to develop them with specific interests and social groups as target-markets (Getz *et al.* 2012).

HALLMARK EVENTS: OUTCOME AND PROCESS GOALS

Organization and Ownership

OUTCOME GOALS:
-Attraction
-Image and Branding
-Community

Sustainability

Marketing

Fig. 2: Getz *et. Al* 2012: 54

The figure above illustrates the main goals and process outcomes that is sought after when using hallmark events as a part of a destinations tourism strategy. Accordingly, the figure outlines the key elements of general hallmark events, in order to get a better understanding of the essential partnerships between stakeholders, in the pursuit of increasing tourism through a complex system of events, especially hallmark, as tourism drivers (Getz *et al.* 2012).

Circles on the outer layer of **Fig**. **2** are all pertinent to the process goals of the hallmark events, thereby meaning what the different stakeholders are aiming at doing in the process of developing the events themselves. The "Organization and Ownership" (**Fig**. **2**) circle is meant to signify the ownership of the event, i.e. who works with the business model of events, in order to *"provide a sound basis for securing resources, the involvement of key stakeholders, transparent control and full accountability"* (Getz *et al.* 2012: 61). The resources are both monetary as well as human resources, e.g. volunteers and professional workers. Key stakeholders change from event to event, but at the hallmark level, the venues, event agencies, the hospitality sector as well as restauranteurs can almost always be included in this. The need for transparency and accountability can arguably be most important in securing the goodwill of host community (ibid), as well as creating economic leverage for future events (Ziakas 2010; Ziakas & Costa 2011).

Marketing can be seen in a 'process goal' context, as a mix of different things, such as the need for the event owners to maintain relationships with the tourism and hospitality sectors, as they are the ones managing the flow of tourists both to the destination as well as providing housing, food etc. for the ones staying for the events (Getz et Al. 2012). Due to the size of hallmark events, the marketing aspect is one wherein key stakeholders, such as event and marketing agencies with international reach are essential to the tourism aspect of the events themselves (Ziakas & Costa 2011; Getz & Page 2016). Furthermore, it is naturally essential for the tourists to have somewhere to stay for multi-day events. Therefore, the hospitality sector can be brought in for marketing cooperation leading up to the events, in order to make the decision-making process simpler for the travellers making the trip to a hallmark event. Medium and large-scale esports events generally take place over several days, so the availability of affordable hospitality offerings can be argued to be extremely important for the esports tourist. This is exemplified in events such as Gamescom in Cologne having set up their own camping ground for the duration (Gamescomcamp ND), or ODINCON in Odense and the GeeksGoneWild event in Aalborg offering the participants to sleep at the event itself.

Thirdly, the sustainability aspect of the model put forth by Getz *et al.* (2012) is defined by the economic sustainability, but arguably just as much of the environmental and social sustainability of the event itself. This is even more relevant in the world of today, with the ever increasing focus on green development and corporate social responsibility. Further, social sustainability also involves the goodwill of the surrounding community, which can be enhanced through the economic advantages the event can bring to the destination, but also through cooperation with the community itself, as well as the direct participation in the events themselves (Ziakas 2010; Getz *et al.* 2012; Getz & Page 2016).

The innermost circle on **Fig**. **2** outlines the main 'outcome goals' for hallmark event, thereby meaning that the three bullet points encapsulate most of what event organisers, as well as DMOs, want a hallmark event to do for the destination and arguably the events themselves.

Attraction, as an 'outcome goal' is the relative measure by which a destinations attractions and events have power to draw people, residents and tourists alike, to visit there (Leiper 1990; Ziakas & Costa 2011; Getz *et al.* 2012). However, this attraction is not a tangible power by which the tourist is pulled towards a specific attraction, as Leiper says that no one suggests the drawing power to be *"that a physical force emanates from within a sight, an object or event to cause people (tourists) to move"* (1990: 369). Therefore, the power of attraction or drawing power, is rather linked to the distance tourists are willing to travel in order to experience something specific, be that an event or a physical attraction. This is however an individually bound attraction, which can be magnified by the social worlds wherein an individual finds themselves, through the interests and values that they deem most relevant to themselves e.g. someone deciding to travel for an esports or regular sporting event. Hallmark events can therefore be said to have much more drawing power for the tourists that are highly invested in the special interest that defines the event (Getz *et al.* 2012), such as a specific musical artist, esports game or regular sport.

Hallmark events have their place in the event tourism portfolio pyramid due to their functional difference from the other tiers of events, where the lower levels of the pyramid might be attainable for most destinations – due to their lower level of complexity and economic costs (Ziakas & Costa 2011; Getz & Page 2016). However, as pointed out earlier in this section, Hallmark events are generally only attainable for larger cities, due to the scale of the events themselves. Local and regional events are therefore often not factored into a greater tourism strategy for a destination, unless they employ the idea of an event portfolio, wherein the lower level events can be utilised in drawing in people from the surrounding

areas (Getz *et al.* 2012), as well as fill out the calendar through a *"strategic patterning of events and their interrelations"* (Ziakas & Costa 2011: 151). Esports events would arguably be placed into both the regional and hallmark event levels in the pyramid, as some of the smaller events, such as GeeksGoneWild in Aalborg, primarily focus on the surrounding region – whereas events such as Gamescom, Intel Extreme Masters, ESL Pro League Finals and numerous similar esports tournaments could be categorised as hallmark events for the esports tourist, due to their large scale, international drawing power and seasonal reoccurrence. This strategic planning of events serves to underline the need for different types of events in a portfolio strategy, as too many of a single type of event might end up oversaturating the market with one type of event – and therefore spread the target groups too thin, i.e. resulting in unsatisfactory participation and reduced attraction to the destination.

DMOs and event agencies of course want the reputation of delivering satisfactory experiences. The co-branding that occurs between hallmark events and specific destinations are essential in this process, due to the events not always being seen as a hallmark for everyone, but rather existing as hallmark events for specific social groups and special interests due to the specific image the destination garners by having the events (Getz *et al.* 2012). This leads into the outcome goal which Getz *et al.* (2012) outlines in **Fig. 2**. Namely that of 'Image and Branding', meaning that one of the main reasons for having large-scale events are that they *"must help create a positive image for the destination/community, and become co-branded with it"* (ibid: 56). This outcome goal is something that cannot generally be achieved by anything less than large-scale events, and it is as such that hallmark events serve as image builders in modern tourism (Hall 1989). Accordingly, this notion of an individual's image of a destination is often described by Crompton's definition, as *"the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination."* (1979: 18). Esports events, being computer and technology focused events lend themselves the image of a tech-friendly destination, e.g. the cross-promotional efforts being undertaken by ODINCON in Odense, paring up the ESL Pro League Finals in Counter-Strike with a robotics expo, displaying the city's robotics and technology industry (ODINCON 2017). This cross-promotion is therefore being done with the possible overlap between esports and technology interested individuals in mind, in a branding and recruitment drive, for the city of Odense and its industry.

Therefore, if the beliefs and ideas are to live up to the actual impression of a destination there has to be a connection between the image making efforts from the supply side, the actual destination, as well as the tourists' experiences on location (Bowen & Clarke 2009). This idea is further refined by Chon (1991) into two separate notions, namely those of pre-visit and post-

visit images. The first being the image that a tourist has gotten beforehand, from the variety of information sources available today, e.g. guidebooks, TV-shows, the internet etc. However, this pre-visit image can be argued as being naive, if there are no actual experiences with the destination from the tourists' side (Selby & Morgan 1996). The further refinement of the image from the tourists' perspective, into a post-visit image is therefore argued to be more realistic, differentiated and complex (Chon 1991). As such, the marketing efforts involved with large-scale events and sports tourism must try to be as realistic as possible, in order to assure that the pre- and post-visit image of the destination is not markedly different and therefore possibly disappointing the tourist.

Accordingly, the major events (thereby meaning the top levels in **Fig**. **1**: Mega and hallmark events) described in the event portfolio approach to event tourism, undoubtedly have an effect on shaping the image of a host community, country or destination. This also being one of the outcome goals defined by Getz. *et al.* (2012), lines up with the notion of brand extension, meaning the idea of already established brands extending their image to a new destination, through events sharing the same recognisable aspects e.g. the Rose Bowl for American Football (Chalip & Costa 2005), or something such as the Intel Extreme Masters in esports. Both events are not geographically linked to the same destination, every time they occur, but they create imaginary links in the mind of the tourist, through the use of the same name, organisers and features. It can therefore be argued to useful for destination branding, insofar that the event interested tourist might not have visited the specific destination, had the event not taken place there. This brand extension is however something where the DMOs decide whether the kind of event aligns itself with what they are wanting as outcome goals in branding efforts. In effect, hallmark events can therefore be leveraged as positive brand extensions in so far that any benefits that tourists recognize in the event arguably also extends to being positives for the destination itself and that it fits into the possible tourism strategy of the destination (Meyvis & Janiszewski 2004).

Accordingly, the idea of co-branding is one wherein traveling hallmark events, e.g. Champions League football finals being held in different destinations each year (Stadiumguide ND) and likewise with the League of Legends World Championship (Liquipedia 2018), have the possibility of working together with a destinations DMOs in order to co-brand both the event and the destination itself. Co-branding, being the notion that events with well-established brands can transfer some of the created associations and images to that of the destinations image and vice versa (Chalip & Costa 2005). Thereby utilising the images that the tourists have of both the hallmark event as well as the destinations itself, in order to create what Chalip & Costa (2005) argues are the highest level of cooperation between an already established event and a destination interested in attracting tourists that frequent the social worlds, or source markets, which the event can be seen as a hallmark for. This decision process regarding co-branding, brand extension or brand features, from the destination branding side can be seen illustrated in the flow chart below.
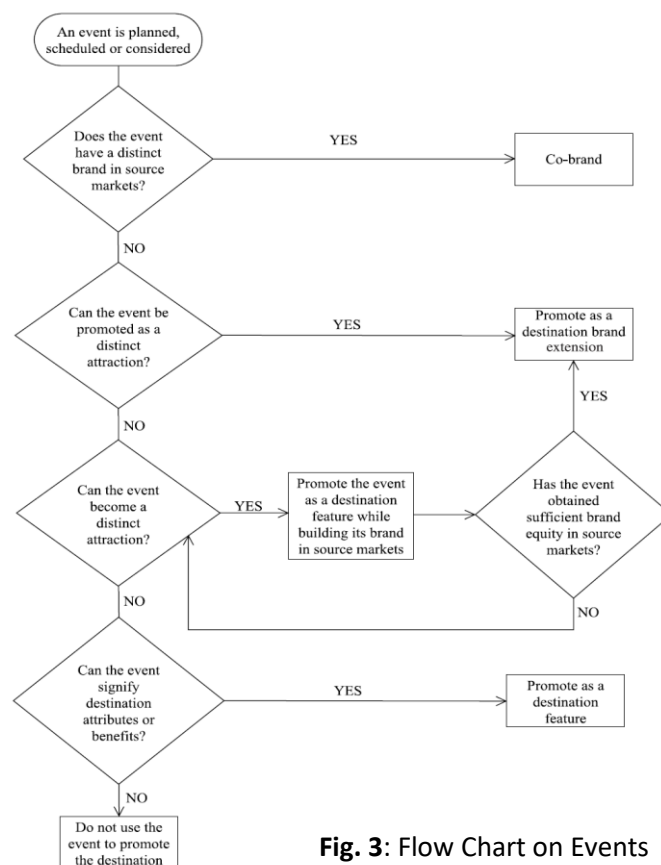
Fig. 3: Flow Chart on Events
Chalip & Costa 2005: 230

The last part of the **Fig**. **3** is meant to work with events that neither have large amounts of brand equity themselves, nor takes up enormous costs for the destination. Accordingly, if the DMOs find them suitable for their city/destination, it would still be feasibly for the destination to have the event – as a feature that fits into the branding efforts and image. This would

arguably be fit into the regional and local events in the lowest rungs of the event portfolio pyramid (**Fig. 1**), as they would not have significant tourism draw for outsiders, but would hopefully still be a boon to the community and destination itself (Getz & Page 2016). This would be events such as the recent GeeksGoneWild in Aalborg, when it comes to esports, or something such as the SpisOdense food festival.

The outcome goal of a specific image and branding, in an event tourism portfolio perspective is supported by the different levels of marketing cooperation that is required through the flow chart. The major events, with their own brand, arguably have distinct enough image-connotations that they should be co-branded with most destinations, at least when it comes to more mainstream interests such as regular sports. However, these types of events are also very complex and therefore require huge infrastructure capabilities and investment in general from the destination. This is done in order to attract the event owners to the destination itself. Conversely, the enormous amount of media attention garnered by mega and hallmark events will have some destinations justify the great expenditures through the publicity value alone (Getz et al. 2012). The next part of the flow chart is where one would find hallmark events with lots of brand equity in special interest markets, such as esports or newly developing markets. This is because the large-scale esports events, such as Intel Extreme Masters, Dota 2 Worlds or The International, arguably have enough of an established brand in the specific social worlds, and therefore could be used as brand extensions for destinations that find the industry appealing to their desired image (Chalip & Costa 2005).

The final outcome goal in **Fig**. **2**, namely "Community" is all about the host community benefitting from the events being held at a destination or city, through increased revenue for local businesses, better living conditions for the residents as well as improving the image of the destination for residents, and not just the tourists (Getz. *et Al* 2012). Accordingly, the lower levels of the event pyramid (**Fig**. **1**) are directly aimed at the community living at, or in the region of, the destination. As such, they directly benefit the interest groups in the surrounding area, through possible participation in the smaller events, but also drive event agencies or DMOs to innovate their offerings if the community interest is large enough. The larger scale, hallmark and mega events, are intended to bring in tourists, but also benefit the local community through other means – such as generating new and better employment in the area, attracting new residents and improving infrastructure such as leisure facilities and public areas. Whether these improvements are done for the events, they should also be seen as opportunities for the community to benefit from following the events themselves (Getz. et Al 2012). This is exemplified in events such as the ODINCON in Odense, being a both an

esports event and a robotics expo, in order to both brand the city as 'technology focused' as well as draw in new employment to the developing robotics industry in the city.

2.4 Esports Tourism in the Experience Economy

The challenges for growing tourism through new niche interests, such as esports, no matter how large the niche, is evident in the lack of literature on the subject of esports and tourism. There has not been done any large academic research on the topic of esports tourism in itself. Therefore, in the eyes of a tourism researcher – and within the scope of this thesis, it has to be treated like any other competitive events that generally take place over a period of several days. The comparisons that are most easily drawn is sports such as tennis, golf and badminton – due to their tournament formats, international audience and relatively niche interest spheres. However, there has been done some research on esports in regard to topics other than tourism, e.g. in regard to things such as marketing (Seo 2013), sports practice (Llorens 2017), sports psychology (Szasz 2014; Martončik 2015) and social spheres (Seo & Jung 2014). Accordingly, some of the existing literature can arguably be utilised as the foundation for learning more about how esports can be seen in relation to tourism, through the understanding of how the literature compares to existing tourism-related research.

Yuri Seo (2013) defines esports (or electronic sports, as he calls it) as a new marketing landscape of the 'experience economy'. This is a term first coined by Pine & Gilmore (1998) as being a new aspect of our economy, wherein companies *"intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event."* (Pine & Gilmore 1998: 98).
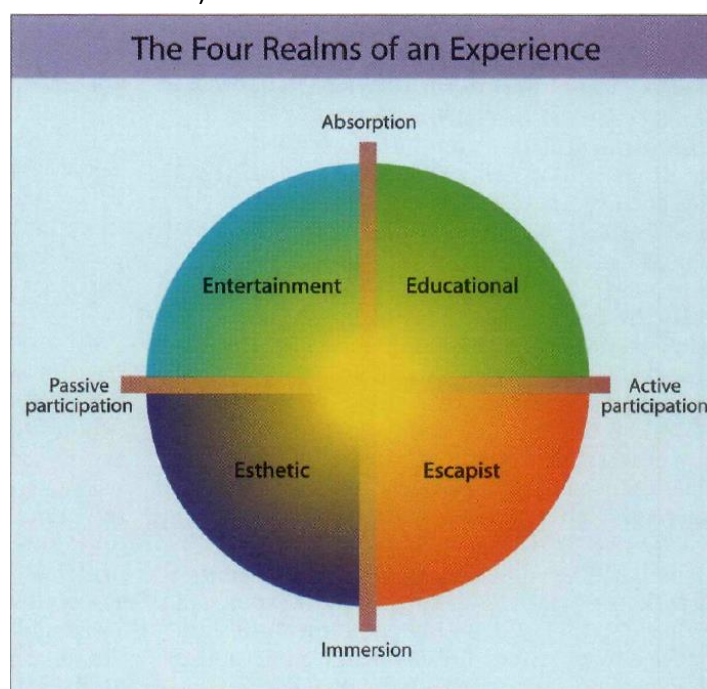
Fig. 4: Pine & Gilmore 1998: 102

They attempt to divide experiences up into four different realms, also called the 'four E's of the experience economy', as seen in **Fig. 4**.

Pine & Gilmore (1998) posit that the most fulfilling experiences encompass all four realms of the experience economy, forming a 'sweet spot' in the middle. Accordingly, this fits with the thought of esports as tourism events, due to their multifaceted experiences ranging into all four realms of the experience economy. This is supported by Seo (2013): Where somebody playing an esports related computer game is a form of escapism, attending esports events as esthetical experiences, learning from esports being educational and lastly that watching esports in itself is entertainment.

In regards to tourism, escapism has been treated as a primary motivation for deciding to travel by a variety of scholars (Iso-Ahola 1982; Harris 2005; Pomfret 2006; Bowen & Clarke 2009 etc.), and as such the escapist aspect of esports events – being a break from the daily routine, can be argued as being related to the esports tourists' motivation for traveling to an event. Furthermore, this can also be leveraged as something that could lure in newcomers to esports tourism events, as it is arguably a new type of experience for a lot of people, and as such a new form of escape from the daily routine. Accordingly, there is also some research on motivations to play computer games being linked to escapism through the possibility of active immersion in the virtual and social worlds found in computer games (Hassouneh & Brengman 2014; Kuo, Lutz & Hiler 2016). This would arguably grant credence to the four E's being used to frame the esports event tourists experience.

Esthetic experiences are defined as being the experiences wherein participants are immersed in an environment at the event, but have little to no impact on the actual impact on what the outcome of the event might be, such as tourist seeing the Grand Canyon, visit an art gallery (Pine & Gilmore 1998) or even spectate an esports event. This could be said of most immersive spectator events, but as Seo (2013) argues, competitive esports events are definitely aesthetic spectacles, and as such embody the esthetic experience. The escapist and esthetic aspects of the experience economy are argued to heavily overlap in the case of esports events, as "*they authenticate the consumption of eSports in a real world, traversing the boundaries between the online and offline experience of competitive computer gamers. As such, these tournaments are the most common place for eSports consumers to share their devotion…*" (ibid: 1551). With reported numbers of people playing computer games being anywhere between 2.3 (Wijman 2018) and 2.6 (Unity 2017) billion, the potential market is undoubtedly enormous – with the challenge then being bringing people out of their homes in

order to share their enjoyment with other fans, such as at the spectacle of competitive esports events.

The educational aspect of the experience economy is not as easily related to esports tourism, but it is however very evident in the way communities of esports fans, such as on Reddit or TeamLiquid, co-create knowledge, guides and strategies outside of events. These educational practices then help *"increasing consumers' gaming literacy and knowledge about the practice of eSports."* (Seo 2013: 1552) and thereby help along one of the most challenging aspects of esports tourism – granting people a better understanding of the allure of the industry.

Entertainment is placed on the left in **Fig. 4.**, in what is deemed the passive side of the experience economy – which is underlined by fact that most people think of entertainment experiences being more passive than active, e.g. attending a concert, watching a movie or enjoying an esports event. This is not to say that the spectator is completely passive, but that they are reacting and responding to the entertainment being presented, rather than being active participants in the event themselves (Pine & Gilmore 1998; 1999). At the centre of entertainment and esports is the viewing experience, which can be done both from home and at events, but with wildly different experiences. Accordingly, Seo (2013) frames the viewing experience from home as fostering feelings of participation and immersion, through the implementation of live chat on sites such as Twitch or Youtube, unlike regular competitive sports events, where the at-home experience is dependent on one's immediate company.

Conversely, the experience offered for spectators at events, whether that be regular sports or esports, are by other scholars deemed to be an active and social aspect of the event itself (Crawford 2004; Ludvigsen & Veerasawmy 2010). This active spectator experience, primarily occurring through fandom and the social worlds surrounding competitive or musical events is described by Ludvigsen & Veerasawmy as *"going beyond the passive consumption of the sport itself. The spectators are actively engaging in and co-creating their collective experience."* (2010: 103). This 'active spectating' pulls the event going experience towards the sweet spot in the centre of **Fig. 4.**, which is where the most fulfilling experiences are to be found (Pine & Gilmore 1998). This co-creation of spectator experiences is particularly relevant for computer games and esports, as the esports games themselves are often played by the dedicated fans at home. Furthermore, the very essence of computer games being that the developers of the games set the stage for entertainment through the creation of games, whereas the players themselves create their own experiences in them, through their own control of the game.

Computer games and the esports experience can therefore be seen as fundamentally co-creative media entertainment (Brenda 2015).

2.4.1 Esports as a New Niche in Event Tourism

Event tourism is generally something that caters towards large-scale traditional events, encompassing things such as business events, sports event tourism or festival tourism. In the scope of this thesis, venturing figure out if esports tourism is comparable to sports or event tourism – or both. As such, it would be fitting to look at definitions for traditional sport events, e.g. Mallen & Adams (2013) defines traditional sport events through two main characteristics. Firstly, that having a governing body such as an association or organisation is what makes it traditional e.g. Olympic Games or the World Cup. Secondly, that the "*event is a recognizable and time-honoured sporting activity*" (ibid: 2), and as such is structured and rule bound through generations of traditions. Consequently, change is very limited in traditional events.

Niche events, on the other hand, spring forth from change. Just as society changes through time, so does the needs and interests of individuals. Accordingly, some special interests, e.g. esports, sport or gastronomy, tend towards creating groups of people invested enough in the specific qualities and features of experiences that the creation of events for these niches becomes feasible (Novelli *et al.* 2005). If someone decides to design and host niche events, it is generally not something done within the context of a long established governing body, but rather a fresh start-up, an entrepreneurial event agency, or even a game production company, seeing the interest in a specific kind of event and taking a calculated chance. In the case of esports tourism, having rigid rules and regulations for how the events run would seem counter-productive, due to the numerous different games having esports followings today. With each game having different winning conditions and potentially different fans, the event setups have to flexible, in order to meet the wants and needs of both the players as well as the spectators/tourist. Therefore, classifying esports events as niche events is granted credence, insofar that anyone with the means, interest and drive can create a niche event, as the features and rules of a niche event is not as rigid as traditional events (Mallen & Adams 2013). As tourism drivers, these niche events typically fit into large market sectors, i.e. cultural tourism, rural tourism, sport tourism etc., but they are specialised to cater towards specific audiences and interest groups (Novelli *et al. 2005)*, such as esports might one day be classified as sports event tourism, due to the competitive nature and fandom surrounding it, but be focused towards a group of people that might not travel for regular sports.

Mallen & Adams (2013) argues that one of the main characteristics of niche events are that they can take unconventional form, with their examples being such things offshoots from traditional events, such as football events being played on sand with three people on each team, putting contests for golf or things such as innovative festival/media events. Here, something as Gamescom in Cologne could be a perfect example of an innovative mix between festival and media event, with overnight camping nearby, musical performances during the four-day event, esports competitions and an overall focus on games (Gamescom 2017). The definition of 'niche tourism' is not readily agreed upon. The size of the market would be an obvious characteristic, as Novelli *et al*. (2005) argues, it should be balanced between being large enough for tourism targeted towards it should be feasible, but not so large that it is coveted by every tourism producer. Conversely, some argue that it is not bound by size, such as with Chinese tourism still being a niche, albeit with a massive market size (Cooper, Scott & Kester 2005). Another basis for defining the term could be the changeability of tourism drivers in the niche, such as triathlons starting out as a niche activity that drove tourists with those interests to specific destinations that staged such events. However, triathlons were later on accepted into the Olympic Summer Games and as such, suddenly governed by a large, somewhat rigid organisation (Mallen & Adams 2013). However, with triathlons changing and adapting e.g. allowing teams of three to complete each sporting activity, or even changing which activities are entailed in the events, it suddenly straddles what Mallen & Adams (2013) argues to be traditional and niche events at the same time.

It appears that defining niche tourism is a challenging task, because niches are found in a huge variety of different interests that cause people to travel (Novelli *et al.* 2005). Accordingly, the definition is therefore more likely to stem from the social worlds and interest groups that decide to travel for a specific interest, with the niche being defined by the "*common cultures, shared world meanings and values*" (Limerick, Cunnington and Crowther *in* Mallen & Adams 2013: 7). For this reason, esports events can arguably be seen as one big niche, or maybe even a large group of niches, defined by their specific interest in one or more esports focused computer games. The challenge for the event agency or DMO trying to create and host esports tourism events would seem to be threefold: Firstly, selecting the right game/games to focus on, thereby making the event financially sustainable, due to the interested niche being large enough and willing to travel. Secondly, making sure that they create an event that garners enough attention and excitement, through new experiences or new geographical locations. Thirdly, securing the cooperation with local businesses, stakeholders and municipalities, by arguing that the interest sphere surrounding esports is a large enough niche to warrant their time and money. Changing and adapting the esports tourism events themselves would make them appear to be niche events. However, there are still somewhat set

rules for the computer games themselves, which generally apply to even the most casual gamer as well as the highest tier esports players. This lines up well with Mallen & Adams's (2013) notion of events being possibly both traditional and niche at the same time. Furthermore, niche tourism and interest-tailored events, such as esports, gives new opportunities for cities trying to branch out into new markets. This is supported by Novelli *et al.* (2005) stating that both the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) view niche tourism as more beneficial to host communities compared with traditional mass tourism. This is due to the sharp focus that niche tourism and events have, compared to traditional mass tourism – therefore being marketed towards a more well defined market than just any tourists (ibid).

3.0 Methodology

The methodological considerations that guide this thesis are derived from two main influences, namely the topic of research, on which it focuses, and the school of thought which its author subscribes to. While the research techniques and method of analysis are chosen based on their applicability to the research topic, the application and interpretation of these are unavoidably coloured by the epistemological and ontological influences that guide my understanding of science, research and truth. In this section, I will therefore devote substantial effort to describe the connection between the guiding perceptions, the methods chosen and the scientific implications for this thesis.

3.1 Epistemological and Ontological Influences

As is true for much social science research, I find that a social constructivist approach is called for to fully understand the topic of esports tournaments from a tourism perspective. The social constructivist approach allows us to depart from a focus on absolute truths (which brings little value when dealing with perceptions and behaviour of human beings) and instead focus on investigating the challenges and opportunities for esports as a tourism strategy from the perspective of trends in a large group of perceived truths. This also means that this thesis adopts an interpretivist epistemological perspective. Although it is interpretivist, the surrounding world is acknowledged as real and therefore existing – meanwhile also affecting the way in which knowledge is co-created and understood, through the social constructs that the researcher exists within (Guba 1990).

Working from a social constructivist perspective means regarding each individual perspective as valid, as long as it is sincere and it concerns the topic of inquiry (Klausen 2012). Being valid does not, however, mean that perceived reality is definitive. Conversely it is dynamic and fluid, as perceived reality is formed through social constructions, relations and predispositions (Guba 1990; Smith & Searle 2003). Consequently, I will consider the literature on the topic and the information conveyed by respondents in interviews and surveys as such. This also means that the conclusions reached in this thesis must be understood in the context of the time and place they are written, and no attempt will be made to draw ultimate conclusions which can be relayed as universal truths.

Further, when dealing with the topic of esports, which (as descried previously) is fraught with a reputation in some circles as not being proper sports, not being proper entertainment, and in consequence not being worthwhile. Ruling (or hegemonic) discourses and perceptions are thus a reflection of struggles over ideology and the definitions of truth. In this thesis, considerable effort

will be made to avoid such value judgements and to reflect on them when they are evident in the literature and/or data.

3.2 Research Technique

3.2.1 Qualitative research

A qualitative approach is applied as the primary research technique as it is considered to be suitable to the nature of the problem formulation as well as the above mentioned interpretive/constructivist approach to knowledge itself. According to Denzin & Lincoln: "*Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry*" (2011: 8). When seeking insight into the opportunities and challenges for (the distinct type of event) esports from the perspective of tourism, it is paramount to consider what characterises this topic. Seeing as the core of this thesis is tourism research, the research technique must be able to capture differing human opinions, preferences and conceptions, as they are at the centre of what drives tourism. The qualitative approach is uniquely suited to do so, and is therefore considered most appropriate.

Primary data is gathered through a variety of interview-types using the media best suited to the respondents. Interviews are used as a source of primary data, because of the suitability to research situations which aim to "*understand themes of the lived daily world from the subjects' own perspectives*" (Kvale 2007: 11). In addition to interviews, an online survey is conducted to pinpoint indications of trends, which cannot be detected in the interviews. Although surveys are strictly speaking considered part of the quantitative tool-box, they were intended to primarily be part of the qualitative approach in this thesis as they were only considered supportive and not intended to be a basis for statistical evidence. However, this turned out differently, due to the large amount of respondents who answered the survey and as such, some quantitative statistical data ended up being produced from the large amounts of answers. These statistics are however still only supportive, due to the nature of survey statistics being influenced by the way in which the questions are posed from the survey creator. Furthermore, seeing as the target of this thesis is the Danish esports event industry, the international character of many of the answers might not be directly applicable to Danish esports events. Consequently, the survey was sent out to the subreddits (interest specific sub-forums on reddit) focused on the largest esports games, in order to reach the largest group of people possible. Further, this was deemed essential, as the topic of esports and the social worlds surrounding it is primarily formed and based online.

For the purpose of clarity, the methods for collecting primary data are divided according to supply and demand side below:

3.2.1.1 Supply-side – DMOs and Event Agencies

The data collection design for the demand side has been influenced by an overarching consideration of the people and organisations that make up this group of respondents. The primary goal has been to reach the most relevant destination management organisations (DMOs) and event organisation agencies, and to gain access to the positions in these organisations that work with strategic level planning. This is considered important to subtract knowledge and understanding of what drives DMOs to invest or not invest resources in esport tournaments as part of their tourism strategy. Likewise, it has been a priority to reach event organisation agencies that have had experience with planning and carrying out esport tournaments with an aim to attract tourists, on the one hand, and on the other hand event organising agencies who are still in the phase of considering whether to invest resources into esports events. With this wide selection of profiles, it will be possible to juxtapose opinions and understandings from across the sector, thereby gaining a thorough insight into the opportunities and challenges for esports seen from the demand side perspective.

Due to this guiding methodological consideration, the data collection design has followed a pragmatic approach, namely to use the media of data collection best suited to reach the target group. Face-to-face interviews have been conducted when possible, but for organisations located outside Northern Jutland phone interviews were done.

Semi-structured interviews have been arranged where possible, as this is considered the most suited form of research technique to a) obtain answers to certain key questions, while b) allowing the interviewee to add information or other topics that emerge in the conversation. The semi-structured interview is uniquely suited to do so as it consists of an interview guide with a mix of flexible questions and allows the researcher to jump between questions and improvise emergent questions, guided by the direction that the interview flows (Saldaña *et al*. 2011; Marriam 2014).

3.2.1.2 Demand-side – Visitors to Events and Esport Fans

The supply side is represented by a combination of visitors to a large-scale esport tournament / gaming festival and esport fans, as mentioned above. The location for the visitor interviews were the event Gamescom in Cologne, Germany. This was deemed the nearest event with the semblance of a hallmark, or even a mega event, inside the interest spheres of online gaming and/or esports – which could therefore a great source of data for the Danish esports event industry. The interviews were

conducted with the same interview guide, both on the event grounds and at the connected camping area, in order to get an idea of how far people had travelled to get there, as well as what their main interest at the multifaceted event were. Accordingly, the short interviews acted as sort of a pilot study into the motivations for traveling to an esports event, as well as giving a first person insight into the size and dedication of the potential market.

In order to achieve the thorough insight described above, an online survey was designed to target esport fans answering from the comfort of their homes. A survey was chosen, as it makes it possible to collect answers from a semi-random group of internet users, interested in esports, regardless of whether they have been or consider going to an esport event. This is important as this is the target group for the strategic initiatives considered or conducted by the demand side. In other words, these are the people, whom should be attracted to visit a given location, and whose opinions and priorities should therefore be captured by the demand side's efforts.

Explained from the perspective of two extremes on the spectrum: should the fans, on the one hand, not be interested in travelling to participate in an esport event under any circumstances, then there is no tourism market for esports. On the other hand, should the fans be so focused on attending, that all other considerations are deemed irrelevant, the there is an enormous tourism potential, and the demand side should develop a very targeted strategy. These are of course crude extremes for the purpose of explanation, and not reflected in the data.

Simply put: "*Survey or descriptive designs are intended to systematically describe the facts and characteristics of a given phenomenon or the relationships between events and phenomena*" (Marriam 2014: 5). The survey is conducted not as an attempt to subtract large amounts of qualitative data, but to pinpoint certain trends among the potential target group for esports tourism. As such it is used to carefully detect trends and support the findings made through the general qualitative approach applied in this thesis. Exactly because this thesis is conducted with a qualitative research design, the survey is designed with the possibility to add information to the closed-ended questions. This quasi-qualitative approach is common among researcher and often used to gain insight into respondents' experiences and priorities (Goodwin & Goodwin 1996). The survey and interviews, in terms of demographics are further explained and considered in section 3.4 below.

3.3 Method of Analysis

A study's method of analysis, in addition to the research techniques applied, determines the reliability and validity of the conclusions made. In addition, it determines how general or specific the findings of the study can be considered. As described above, data collection is designed to capture as

relevant and reliable information as possible, while trying to do a thorough investigation of the topic. The primary data is combined with a review of recent secondary literature on the topic of esports. Much of this literature is derived from non-academic sources, since the topic of esports and its new-found place in tourism is not yet properly dealt with by academia. The theoretical framework for this thesis was drawn from a literature review on tourism related research, correlating to the way in which esports events could be introduced into destinations and DMOs tourism strategies. Accordingly, this was a necessity as there is no prominent theory from the body of work on tourism marketing, sports and event tourism which is considered applicable as a stand-alone theory on esports tourism. However, elements from a variety of theories can arguably be applied to the growing niche of esports tourism, as there are similarities to other forms of tourism and events. It is then my job as a researcher to utilise already existing theories and research, albeit on other topics than this thesis, in combination with my gathered primary data, to form new knowledge on the topic of esports as a new driver of tourism. This thesis is therefore also an attempt to add new scientific knowledge to this very limited body.

In regard to the analysis, the interviews were transcribed with a primary focus on meaning, which meant skipping double words and stumbles in the interviewees speech. This was done to make the interviews more easily analysed, in regard to the laid problem formulation of this thesis. The transcripts for all interviews were coded with 'Me:' as the interviewer and timestamped around every minute, to make it more easily searchable and analysable. Furthermore, the Gamescom interviewees were coded as numbers, as no names were exchanged, whereas the DMO/event agency interviews were coded with initials. For the survey analysis, a variety of figures and statistics were created from the quantitative questions in the survey, split up between the respondents that had travelled for esports events and the ones that had not, coded as 'travellers' and 'non-travellers' where it was deemed important. The statistics and figures were made in the attempt to show the most important trends in the gathered data. Accordingly, in the qualitative answers given by survey respondents, the writing was looked at and attempted categorised in accordance with themes that were identifiable in a large amount of them.

3.4 Interviews and Survey – Demographics and Considerations
3.4.1 Interviewees
The interviews conducted for this thesis were conducted with a pragmatic approach in mind, as talked about earlier in this section. This subsequently meant that the interviews were focused towards supply-side interviews with individuals that have worked with esports events, in the

relevant cities in Denmark. This ended up as being one person in Aalborg, namely Keld Rud (Appx. 2.1), working for the municipal event agency Aalborg Events. His relevancy towards the topic of this thesis is that he helped organising the regional esports event GeeksGoneWild in Gigantium in Aalborg, as well as working with events in general.

Two phone interviews were conducted with representatives from Odense, as the city had had a large-scale esports event at ODINCON. It was therefore deemed essential to get some input from the supply-side in Odense, on how they see the possible opportunities and challenges working with esports events. These two interviews were conducted with Søren Brønserud (Appx. 2.2) and Tue Kempf (Appx. 2.3). Søren works as an event consultant for the City of Odense, and as such is relevant for getting the DMO perspective on event and tourism strategies for a large Danish city, and specifically one that has worked with esports. Accordingly, this is also the reason for choosing to interview Tue, as he was brought in to work as the production manager for ODINCON, the large-scale technology expo and ESL Pro League Finals esport tournament, in Odense, and he has extensive experience working with large-scale events in Denmark.

The interviews conducted with visitors at Gamescom in Germany were done because of the enormous size of the event itself, and the wide variety of experiences offered there, not just being esports, but also a gigantic gaming convention and technology expo. This draws similarities to the event in Odense, but with many years of being in the same location as well as the event being many times larger. This could arguably be classified as something akin to a mega-event for the interest sphere focused on gaming. The 18 interviews (Appx. 1.1-18) were conducted with 20 people, 13 males and 7 females, trying to get similar amounts of both genders, but the male interviewees ended up being more plentiful. The ages ranged from 17 to 29, with only four interviewees being below the age of 20. The reason for conducting these interviews were getting some primary data on how far people travel to an event of the size of Gamescom, as well as their motivations for coming there. Specifically, this was aimed towards figuring out if the interviewees were interested in attending esports events without the framing of a gigantic gaming convention. Furthermore, the interviews also tried to get some opinions on how esports interested individuals saw the competitive aspect of esports games in comparison to regular sports, as well as possible strengths apparent in the esports event experience.

3.4.2 Survey
The survey was distributed online to a grouping of the largest esports communities on the site Reddit.com, specifically to get input from esports interested individuals. The respondents could start the survey on their own, with no qualifications having to be met in order to start it – it was a

simple click that was required. This was done in order to gather data from people that had enough interest in the topic of esports events, in order to spend some of their time answering a survey without getting any reward. Due to this, it is deemed that most of the survey responders answered honestly, because of their actual interest and not just because of some possible personal gain.

It was distributed and opened by a total of 1643 people during the answer period, with 972 of those completing the survey. 348 surveys were partially completed and 323 were just opened and not started. The demographics for the survey were 92% male and 8% female responders (Appx. 3). With an average age of 23,2, it appears that the it correlates to about the same age as the Gamescom interviewees. The nationalities of the survey respondents were split over a wide variety of countries. However, 406 of 996 filled out nationalities were from North America, namely American or Canadian. However, this does arguably not change the usability of the data from the survey, because of the international and global focus of the esports interest. With it gaining interest first and foremost on the internet, it can be argued that there are no large differences in the preferences of esports fans that depends on which country they stem from. The most occurring nationalities (as well as Korean, because of its analytical importance) can be seen below and in Appendix 3.

American: 317	Australian: 20	Brazilian: 10
British: 56	Canadian: 91	Danish: 22
Dutch: 18	Finish: 22	Filipino: 22
French: 20	German: 77	Korean: 4
Norwegian: 13	Polish: 14	Portuguese: 16
Swedish: 25		

The total of the above being 738 survey answers. With 996 total answers, the remaining 258 nationalities were split amongst more than 28 different countries and therefore not deemed important enough to group into the table above.

3.5 Limitations

With a topic such as esports, even though it has received enormous amounts of media attention, it is still a topic in its infancy when it comes to tourism and academic research as a whole. Further, the dominating predispositions within the body of literature on the topic of esports itself is not well tested, as there is relatively few researches who has published work on the topic. Accordingly, in the field of tourism research there is little to no research done on the social worlds that surround esports as a potential driver of tourism, as well as how the industry would fit into overall tourism portfolios and strategies. Therefore, my job as a researcher will be to try and deduce which existing

theories of tourism research that might be applicable to the topic of esports events as potential opportunities for DMOs and destinations, as a part of their tourism strategy. Furthermore, this also implies that the challenges that arise while conducting research for this thesis could also apply to larger organisations and other academics working on the topic. The research endeavour was limited by the infancy of esports events as a tourism practice and expert interviews on the supply-side were therefore not easily found in Denmark. Furthermore, the demand-side being data being primarily international could mean that it does not match up properly with what the preferences and needs are of the Danish domestic esports tourists. This means that the findings reached in this thesis should be interpreted with a degree of caution. Only when more practical evidence and experiences have been created in Denmark, will we be able to establish more assertive conclusions. This realisation begs further research into the topic as more cities test the waters of esports events as a part of a tourism strategy.

4.0 Analysis

First and foremost, the following chapters will try to ascertain whether esports events in general fit in the categories of event or sports tourism – or both. Further, it will also take a look at the people that consider travelling for esports, and what their motivations for travelling appear to be. Accordingly, the motivations of the potential esports tourists will be attempted categorised and understood, as collected through Gamescom interviews and the conducted survey. This categorisation is deemed important in order to gain a better understanding of how the events themselves should be carried out by the organisers, and how to best meet the needs and preferences of the possible esports tourists. Through the conducted supply-side interviews, an analysis of esports events in Denmark will be made in combination with secondary data gathered online. Furthermore, it will try to ascertain trends and important points in the gathered data, in trying to better understand the rapidly evolving interest sphere which esports exist within. This is done in order to help DMOs, event agencies and other organisers realise the challenges and opportunities that it brings forth in a tourism perspective. As well as add to the academic literature on esports tourism. The following analysis refers back to the survey and interview considerations in section 3.4, as this will have an impact on this thesis' applicability to the Danish esports event industry.
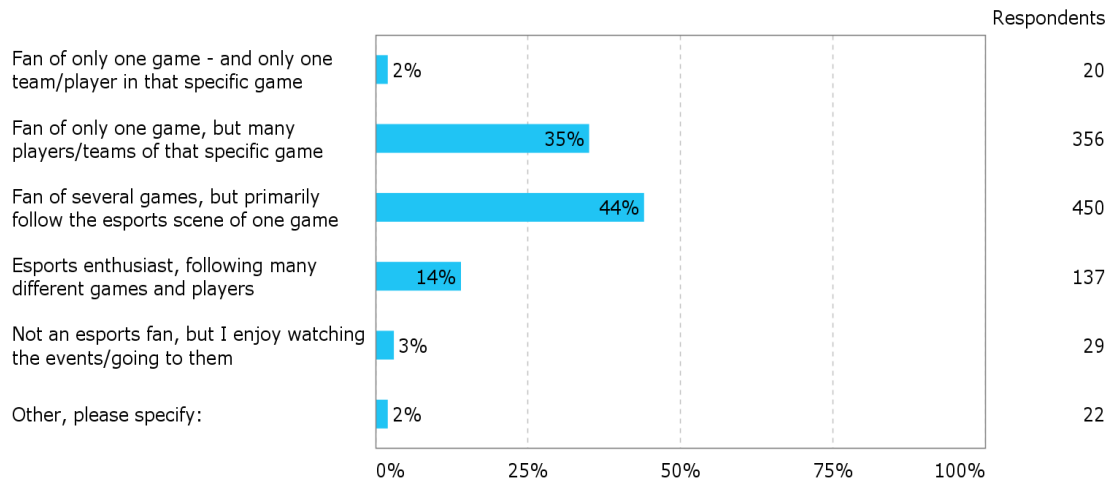
4.1 Understanding Esports - Events and Tourists

4.1.1 Analysing Esports for Potential Events

With any new venture in tourism, it is important to find out whether there is a market for the specific interest that drives the venture. This can arguably be tough for many different events, as it is hard to gauge interest in many traditional events, before actually arranging the specific event at a destination e.g. conventions or festivals. However, this uncertainty of interest can be diminished by doing questionnaires or target-group interviews. It is somewhat easier for traditional sports tourism, as there are generally hard data on how many interested individuals there might be, either through TV spectator numbers or other measures such as fan-club memberships, social media followings or historical data – for already established sports events.

In the case of esports tourism, it appears that the similarities are more akin to that of sports tourism, due to the fact that there are discernible daily spectator numbers for each individual esports game, primarily through online services such as twitch.tv, i.e. average spectator numbers for the week (7th-13th of May '18) being around 189k for Fortnite, 110k for League of Legends, 67k for Dota 2, PUBG at 62k, Overwatch at 51k and CS:GO (Counter-Strike: Global Offensive) at 34k (Esports Charts ND). This

being averages for the entire week, gives a good idea of the amount of international interest there is in the games that have a competitive esports element to them. It is important to point out that all of the viewership described above is not for esports competitions, but rather for individuals or groups, livestreaming themselves playing the games with competitive esports aspects inherent to them. One interviewee delineates the distinction as such: "*Gaming is relaxation, recreation and fun – esport is competition, it's goal-oriented, there's fans, there's athletes – as some call it; and there's typically money involved. (…) Esport is always gaming (...) Gaming is not necessarily always esport.*" (Appx. 2.3, my translation). Accordingly, the numbers grow when large-scale events take place, such as the League of Legends World Championship 2017 averaging around 520k viewers; large CS:GO events averaging anywhere between 80-575k and the large Dota 2 tournaments hitting between 80-407k concurrent viewers (excluding questionable numbers on Chinese viewership). All of the above numbers are concurrent online viewership numbers, with peak numbers being even bigger, e.g. League of Legends World Championship hitting more than two million viewers at its highest (Esports Charts ND), or the Pro League Finals in Odense peaking at 388,171 concurrent viewers (Krämer 2018). However, it is hard to argue that online viewership of a specific game correlate directly with the esports tourism potential of said game. Conversely, it does serve as an argument for the rising interest in competitive esports and it could therefore be used as indicators for which games DMOs and event agencies should throw their weight behind when it comes to organising esports events.

In regard to the section above, it appears that esports events is more likely to be understood from a sports tourism perspective, but not as one single sector of esports, rather a variety of esports that give rise to the esports event sector as a whole. Accordingly, the plethora of different esports games that a person might find interesting is very individual. Therefore, the esports tourist might be interested in attending an event for one game, but not another. This is supported by around a quarter of qualitative survey answers on essential reasons for going to an event, being categorised as about a specific game or tournament, e.g. "*I have to love the game*"; "*I'm the type of person who is playing only one game (…) The main reason for going to an event is if that game is there.*"; "*I need to be really into the game that is played*" and "*It's a "main" event, such as LoL World Championships, or CSGO Majors.*" (Appx. 3). Furthermore, four out of eighteen Gamescom interviewees also stated that they would travel for events if it is the 'right' game (Appx. 1.2; 1.3; 1.8; 1.18). This selectiveness of the possible esports tourists is also outlined in the survey, wherein responders were asked to categorise themselves into the kind of fans they see themselves as.
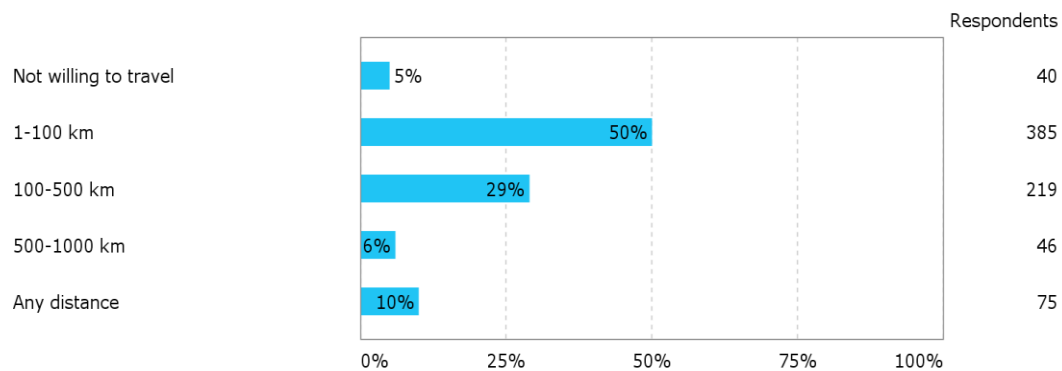
	Respondents
Fan of only one game - and only one team/player in that specific game — 2%	20
Fan of only one game, but many players/teams of that specific game — 35%	356
Fan of several games, but primarily follow the esports scene of one game — 44%	450
Esports enthusiast, following many different games and players — 14%	137
Not an esports fan, but I enjoy watching the events/going to them — 3%	29
Other, please specify: — 2%	22

Fig. 5. Self-Categorisation of Survey Respondents

The figure above (**Fig. 5**) ends up with 79% of people (Column 2+3) describing themselves as primarily interested in the esports scene of one game in particular. Tue Kempf, one of the event agency interviewees describes his experience with esports event goers being: *"fans of the sport, not just the team."* (Appx. 2.3, my translation). Accordingly, this grants credence to the notion of esports events focused on a single game, in Denmark and elsewhere, and that they should be organised with considerable thought given to the challenge of making sure that the specific game has sufficient interest in the nearby esports tourist market. This also poses a possible challenge, in the plethora of different niches that might arise in esports in the future, which will be looked at further in section 4.3.

Organisers should therefore have a keen eye on which games' esports possibilities are sustainable in their surrounding geographical markets – as it seems unrealistic to believe that a majority of esports tourists would travel around the world for every tournament. Further, this importance on the fans' proximity to the esports events are underlined by the two supply-side interviews with Aalborg Events' Keld Rud and Experience Hackers' Tue Kempf from Odense, who both worked with esports events. The first being about the relatively small event called GeeksGoneWild in Aalborg: *"A few come from afar, because of the teams and some are enthusiasts that want to travel far for it. But mostly it's from the surrounding region – maybe 80 or 85%"* (Appx. 2.1, my translation). Whereas the much larger ESL Pro League Finals at ODINCON in Odense had visitors from 29 countries other than Denmark, it was still 94,3% Danes that bought tickets to the event (Krämer 2018). Furthermore, this importance of relative proximity in regard to events are also echoed by around half of qualitative survey answers on why they have chosen not to attend an esports event, with answers such as: *"The cost of travel"; "No events in my country"; "Travel expenses (Flights are expensive)"* and *"Events for my Esport of choice are simply not available where I live."* (Appx. 3). This aversion to travel to

another country is supported by the 'non-traveller' survey respondents being asked to pick one or several reasons why they had not travelled to an esports event, with 69% picking the distance to the event as a primary reason for not traveling (Appx. 3). Furthermore, when asked about the distance they would be willing to travel for an esport event, 84% of the 'non-travellers' picked the options ranging between: "Not willing to travel" up to "100-500km" (**Fig. 6**). Accordingly, this further supports the findings of the event agency interviewees, being that a large majority of esports tourists would come from Denmark. Conversely, there is also the argument that enthusiasts do travel from other countries to attend large-scale esports events, such as the case was for the Pro League Finals at ODINCON, where around 6,5% of attendees came from other countries (Krämer 2018). This form of 'esports enthusiast' is also represented in the Gamescom interviewees, where four out of eighteen had travelled from countries other than Germany, one even from Oregon in the US (Appx. 1.5; 1.6; 1.9; 1.11).


Fig. 6
Travel Distance for 'non-travellers'

4.1.2 Esports Tourists: Reasons to Travel

When it comes to traveling for esports events, a variety of different motivations were also noted amongst the Gamescom interviewees and the survey respondents, other than travelling for specific esports games. For the survey respondents, there were a variety of essential reasons given for travelling to an esports event, which was then categorised in order to try and find trends in the motivations. The most prominent essential reasons, other than 'the game' (with 44 out of 208 answers being in this category), were found to be 'the experience' (24 of 208), 'community' (14 of 208), 'near proximity' (14 of 208) and 'novelty' (12 of 208) (Appx. 3). The most notable amongst these motivations for Gamescom interviewees were the experience as a whole, with fifteen out of eighteen answering "Why did you come to Gamescom?" with some formulation on the multitude of experiences at or around the convention, e.g. "*We wanted to see everything*"; "*Going into the city, to Gamescom, have fun with people*" and "*For the games and for the community, everything*" (Appx. 1.16; 1.10; 1.5). Accordingly, Gamescom is not only an esports event, but rather a large-scale gaming

convention, lasting almost a week, with an enormous amount of supplementary experiences other than esports, so it seems natural that it attracts people not only interested in esports. With only three out of eighteen Gamescom interviewees travelling less than 100km to the event (Appx. 1.1-18), it separates itself from the results of the survey, as seen in **Fig**. **7**., where 32% did not want to travel further than 100km to an event. However, the longer travel distance could also be credited to Gamescom arguably having hallmark event status in the gaming community, as people are willing to travel further for events of that importance (Getz & Page 2016), as well as the size of Germany itself.

When it comes to what aspects of esports events are opportune for drawing people to travel for them, and how far they might be willing to travel, there are several interesting findings in the survey respondents answers on these topics. When it comes to the distance respondents would be willing to travel, the findings were split up into 'travellers' and 'non-travellers' – as can be seen in **Fig. 6** and **Fig. 7**.
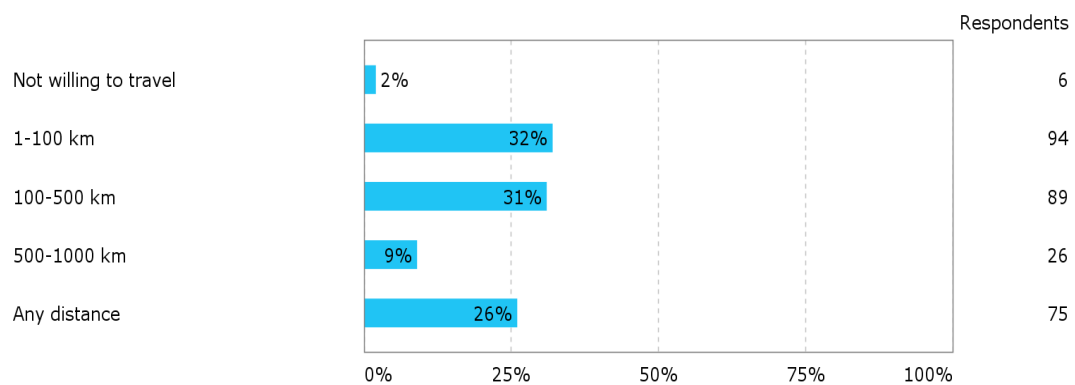

Fig. 7

Travel Distance for Esports 'travellers'

What is most interesting from a tourism standpoint is the rise in individuals willing to travel 'any distance' to see an esports event. This could arguably be the esports enthusiasts, as it is about 7,1% of total respondents for the question, which aligns itself pretty closely to the 6,5% of international attendees to the Pro League Final in Odense (Krämer 2018). Conversely, it could also be seen as an effect of having had a great experience at a previous event – and as such be willing to travel much further to have the same kind of experience. This seems to be the case for survey respondents, when they were asked to weigh how important it was for them, that they had been to the same kind of event before and had a good experience, with importance ranging from one (not important) to five (very important). The answers were then filtered by whether the respondent had attended an esports event before or not. The first four essential reasons for travelling to an esports event presented in the survey had little difference between 'travellers' and 'non-travellers' (Appx. 3). However, the one regarding previous good experiences had large differences, as seen in **Fig**. **8**., with

a much larger percentage choosing to weigh this essential reason for travelling to events as a 4 or 5, amongst the esports 'travellers'.

Fig. 8: "I have had a previous good experience at esports events"

	1 (Not Important)	2	3	4	5 (Very Important)
■ Non-travellers	31.9	23.2	33.9	8.9	2.1
■ Travellers	9.2	14.1	24.3	31.6	20.7
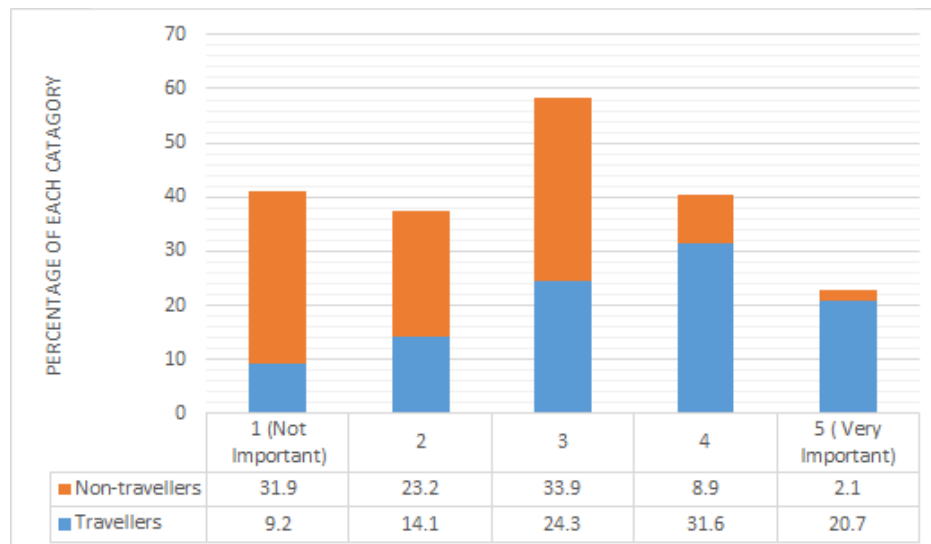
It could be argued that the big difference between 'travellers' and 'non-travellers', when weighing this essential reason for becoming an esports tourist, is more so due to the great experiences people have had at events – and not just because of them being esports enthusiasts. There will of course always be enthusiasts among the esports fans that decide to become esports tourists, but it stands to reason that great experiences at esports events would only lead to increased motivations for attending future events.

Both 'travellers' and 'non-travellers' weighed the possibility of their favourite players/teams attending events as quite important, with 78% weighing the importance as a 4 or 5 for 'Non-

MY FAVORITE PLAYERS/TEAMS ARE ATTENDING - "NON-TRAVELLERS" FIG. 9

MY FAVORITE PLAYERS/TEAMS ARE ATTENDING - "TRAVELLERS" FIG. 10.
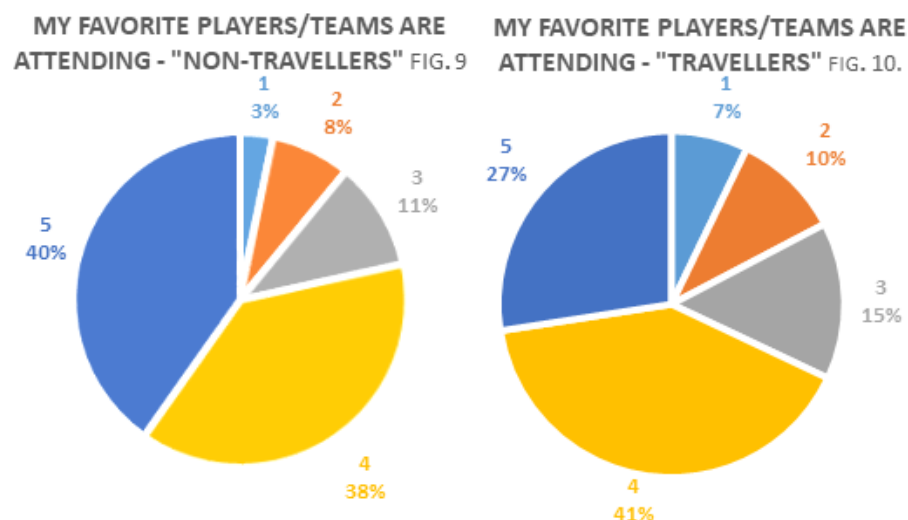
travellers' and likewise with 68% of the 'travellers', as can be seen in **Fig**. **9** and **Fig. 10**. With 5 being 'Very Important'. As such, it appears that the sports-like competitive aspect of esports, and the players/teams themselves, is a big reason for people wanting to attend events.

4.1.3 Categorising Esports

In regard to whether esports event tourism should be classified as sports tourism, it appears that there is significant portion of the fans that see esports events as primarily competitive events, and as such it would fit the definition of sports tourism that Deery, Jago & Fredline (2004) puts forth. Furthermore, esports is inherently competitive in nature, due to the mechanics and rules which the biggest esports games adhere to. Accordingly, it appears that a lot of the fans are deeply interested in that aspect of the industry. However, when it comes to survey respondents, the highest rating amongst the given essential reasons for going to an esports event was "That I have other people to go along with", ending up at an average of 4.1 and 4.0 out of five, for 'travellers' and 'non-travellers' respectively (Appx. 3). This alludes to the possibility that a lot of people travel for the community around the games as well. This is echoed in the DMO and event agency interviews, when it is stated that: *"…they go with their friends. (…) it's a lot like going to a festival"* (Appx. 2.1, my translation) and reasoned that the fans want: "*First and foremost to be a part of a community…*" (Appx. 2.3, my translation). This community is generally found online; as competitive computer games are played almost exclusively over the internet these days. Accordingly, this brings along opportunities and challenges for the esports interested individual, a several Gamescom interviewee states it: "*In esports, it's easier to get in to the community. If you have internet access, it's very easy to get contact to the community."*; *"…it is easier to connect to people around the world"* and "*The community is something special, because it is really all around the globe"* (Appx. 1.1). Conversely, if this ease of access to the community is to be leveraged as an opportunity, the events have to be organised with the specific games and communities in mind, as argued earlier in this section. Some of the challenges that are brought up from the fans points of view is the lack of understanding for the industry, as a Gamescom interviewee also brings up when saying: *"There are so many clichés, or stereotypes, about gaming culture. (…) So it's hard for people to understand and get in to."* (Appx. 1.1) Further, another describes esports as an interest and that "*they target a very different group of people, who were in the past just left out (…) Now they got something for them*." (Appx. 1.7).

In sum, it appears that there is a significant spread on the motivations for the possible esports tourists, with the most significant ones being: that it is for the community around – and competition at – esports events of a relatively large-scale. Further, the sections above serve to explore the most prominent motives behind traveling for esports, as encountered in the gathered data and

interviews, as well as the distance people are generally willing to travel. With 530 out of 1055 respondents (50,2%) being willing to travel between 100km and 'any distance', the opportunity for getting people to travel all over Denmark, from neighbouring countries and even some from across the globe, can definitely be argued for – as long as the event is important enough, of the right size and marketed correctly. Whether esports events should be classified as sports or event tourism is difficult, in the sense that esports is not just one esport, but rather a plethora of esports. Because of this wide variety of esports, and the relative newness of the industry, it is tough to pinpoint any conclusive segments within it, as Deery, Jago & Fredline states: "*Future research into profiling the segments would benefit the sector and provide a greater level of accuracy for policy and planning purposes.*" (2004: 244). However, it is apparent from the gathered data and interviews, that the specific esports games are an essential part of why someone would travel for it, but not whether that would qualify the sector as a whole as sports tourism. From the organisational side, it is arguably event tourism, but that is evidently also because of the way in which the events are run and organised from a supply-side standpoint, as Tue Kempf puts it: *"it borrows from some of the classical, traditional event-disciplines."* (Appx. 2.3, my translation).

4.2 Esports Tourism and Value Creation – The Opportunities
4.2.1 The Esports Market Size and Business Models

Creating value for the community, city or destination in which an esports event is organised, is dependent on the events either being financially sustainable in the now – or that they are seen as investments in some lacking aspect of the destination/city e.g. increased attractiveness, job creation or anticipated economic sustainability (Getz & Page 2016). In regards to esports, the event portfolio for the Danish tourism industry is generally somewhat full in the high-season during the summer.
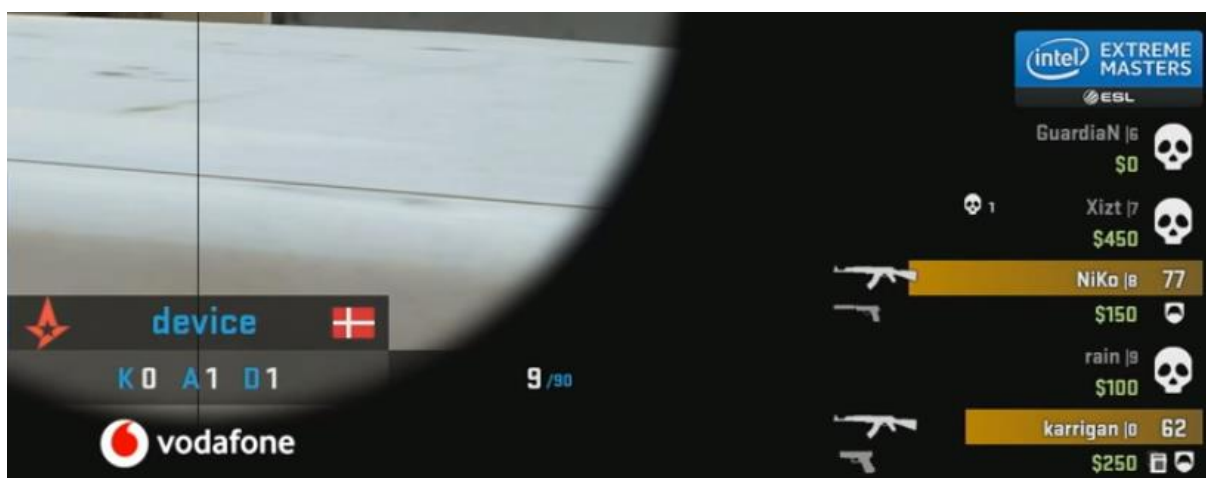
Screenshot from Intel Extreme
Masters Sydney
Fig. **11**

Conversely, indoor events such as esports are *"not nearly as sensitive to weather conditions"* (Appx. 2.2, my translation) and they could therefore serve as tourism drivers for the low-seasons in Denmark. Furthermore, the events have to stick to their budget in order to be financially stable, and as such, the business model for the events have to be sustainable. Some experimentation is being undertaken, but the regular business model for esports events generally seem to depend a lot on sponsorships. However, these sponsors also get a lot of impressions and screen time during the events. As Tue Kempf points out: *"they're on screen during the games, meaning: the more exposures that organisers can provide, the more money they get"* (Appx. 2.3, my translation). This is exemplified in **Fig. 11.**, taken from Intel Extreme Masters (a large-scale esports tournament), where the main sponsors for the event switch out every ten seconds, in the bottom of the screen (Vodafone), as well as the tournament name-sponsor (Intel) having a prominent place on the right side during every match. Furthermore, all sponsors are also shown during the breaks in between games.

These sponsors are shown throughout the event arena, as well as on the stream for the viewers at home. The sponsorships are of course not the only revenue created by the events, as the attendees also pay for tickets, travel and accommodation, food/drinks and possibly merchandise at the event. However, with esports events being relatively new to the experience economy, the pricing of the tickets is set relatively low, compared to other multi-day events, such as festivals (Appx. 2.3). Tue Kempf describes the general esports event business model as: *"very, very open – both as event (…), but especially in regard to transmission, as it is not very protectionist of the streaming rights."* (Appx. 2.3, my translation). This business model does arguably not correlate directly to possibilities for esports development in Denmark, but it does not restrict it either. As seen with e.g. the Danish Superliga football transmissions being shown on TV channels you have to pay for. Conversely, the largest esports streams are free to view online, paid for through advertisement running during the transmissions. This availability of the tournament transmissions also drives secondary esports event offerings, through things such as esports bars (comparable to regular sports bars, just focused on esports) e.g. the Grid in Copenhagen and Meltdown Esports Bars internationally. Further, cinema "viewing parties" such as EsportsBio being held in Nordisk Film's cinemas around Denmark show that there are opportunities for innovation in regards to how esports can create value for cities.

4.2.2 Esports Events as Place Branding

When it comes to utilising esports events in an event portfolio, several main factors were pointed out in the supply side interviews. Søren Brønserud from VisitOdense stated that Odense as a city is intent on *"becoming an actual esports city"* (Appx. 2.2, my translation). Further, he pointed out that

the city signed a three-year deal with the company behind Pro League Finals, namely ESL: *"in relation to conducting other large-scale esports events in the city"* (Appx. 2.2, my translation). Further showing the belief in the esports event industry in Odense. In regards to tourism, the large-scale esports events are clearly the most interesting, with some people travelling around the globe for ODINCON, which is something *"even Tinderbox can't do. Sure, some come from foreign countries, but not that from that far away."* (Appx. 2.2, my translation). The smaller, regional events are also in consideration for the DMOs and event agencies, such as the GeeksGoneWild event in Aalborg and Søren from VisitOdense stating that they also intend to *"involve the city (…). Which could be other esports events, for the city's youth or even just smaller finals"* (Appx. 2.2, translation mine). However, with large-scale esports events drawing fans from all over the world, the interest for esports tourism definitely exists. Therefore, it seems necessary then to try and ascertain whether it is even possible to brand a city or destination as an esports destination. Accordingly, 64% of survey respondents answered "Yes", when asked whether they connected a specific destination or city with esports, as can be seen below.
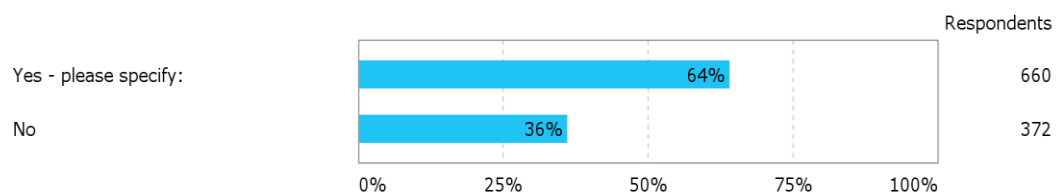

"Are there any cities/countries you consider to be connected to esports?" **Fig. 12**

When specified, by far the largest amount of mentions were South Korea as a country, with ~52% of 660 written answers mentioning it – the second highest being USA with ~15% mentioning it (Appx. 3). When it comes to cities being connected to esports, Los Angeles were the most mentioned with around 25% mentioning it in 660 answers – the second highest being Seoul in ~10% of answers (Appx. 3). In regard to USA and Los Angeles being mentioned as much as it is, that can arguably be linked with almost a third of survey respondents being from USA. It therefore appears that esports fans connect their own country with esports, which only seems natural, as one would arguably be more aware of the esports scene in one's own country. Conversely, with Korea and Seoul being mentioned as much as it is and only four out of 996 survey respondents being from South Korea, it evidently points towards the opportunity for branding a city or country as an esports destination in the mind of esports fans. This link between South Korea and esports is something that has been built up through many years, preceding much of the modern esports industry, with its roots all the way back to the 1990s and the South Korean governments focus on internet infrastructure (Mozur 2014).

They are also generally seen as the best esports country, as two survey respondents puts it: "*Korea, for obvious reasons*" and "*South Korea, they are the masters of esports*" (Appx. 3).

It therefore seems possible to utilise esports events in regard to place branding, but it has to be a prolonged effort over years, before it takes hold in the general interest sphere of esports fans. This opportunity has been recognised by some destinations and tournaments, such as the Intel Extreme Masters World Championship. The event has been held in Katowice since 2013 (Wikipedia ND) and is branding the city e.g. by utilising video footage with "I ♥ KATOWICE" clearly visible, in the breaks of tournaments, as can be seen in the picture below.
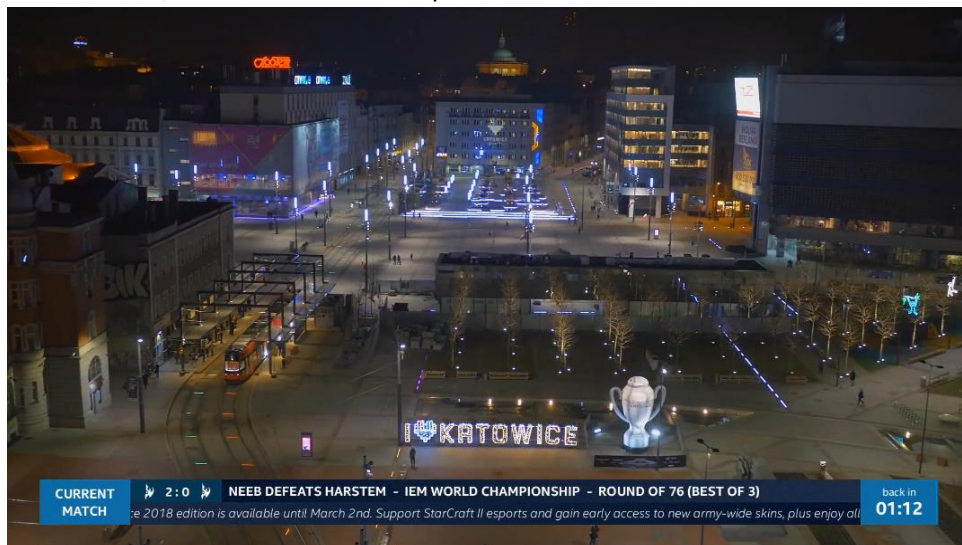
Screenshot from Intel Extreme Masters World Championship Katowice
Fig. 13.

Furthermore, Katowice had 44 occurrences in the survey question on cities/countries linked to esports, with Poland as a country only being mentioned 14 times. Accordingly, with 14 respondents being Polish (Appx. 3), the events' place branding strategy appears to be working on the esports fans. Accordingly, the commitment to a three-year contract between Odense and ESL, with *"the ambition to create top shelf esports events"* (Appx. 2.2), then arguably grants the opportunity to brand the city as an esports destination.

In regard to the Danish esports events, this opportunity was also recognised in promoting the Pro League CS:GO Finals at ODINCON, in connection with the city itself, as exemplified in the **Fig. 14**, with Odense being written in the top right during the matches. Further, it also showcased the event sponsors in bottom (here being the Tinderbox festival), as talked about earlier in this analysis.

Screenshot from ESL Pro League Finals
Fig. 14

The opportunity for sponsors and destinations reaching out to an extremely large and dedicated audience is evident in the esports sector, compared to other forms of social media marketing, due to the inherent social media aspect of the esports sector itself. Combined with the audience size, it could become a very potent marketing channel going forward.

4.2.3 Esports and Connected Industries

The other main opportunity for large-scale esports events in Denmark, which was identified by the DMO and event organiser in Odense, is the overlap between esports interested individuals and specific industries, namely the robotics and tech-focused industries. This is an opportunity because of Odense *"lacking highly qualified labour in these fields"* (Appx. 2.3, my translation). Which is echoed by the mayor of Odense saying: *"We have a robotics industry experiencing huge growth, and a large need for qualified labour."* (Nepper-Rasmussen 2017, my translation). This lack of skilled labour is also something Denmark as a whole might run into in the future, with an estimated lack of around 10.000 IT-developers, programmers and similar professionals by the year 2025 (Neiiendam J., Laursen, S. & Lønborg, C. 2018). Further, Søren Brønserud describes this opportunity with large-scale esports events not only giving *"a positive tourism-economic effect, but also functioning as a recruiting and marketing channel for recruitment to Odense's robotics-cluster"* (Appx. 2.2, my translation). Tue Kempf echoes this focus when stating: "*that it is not just about getting some tourists (...) They (the events) should also create some generic and staying growth."* (Appx. 2.3, my

translation). This connection between the esports tournament and the robotics expo, is also pointed to as being a request from the municipality's side, in order to meet some of its interests, namely the lack of qualified workers in these industries. This was done by showcasing the so-called 'tech-cluster' of high-tech businesses in Odense, at the expo connected to the tournament. Thereby hoping to make use of the argued overlap between the interest in esports tournaments and a possible professional interest in the tech industry. Tue Kempf underlines this identified opportunity when he argues for *"a huge overlap, in regard to them* (referring to esports fans) *being potential employees in the high-tech businesses"* (Appx. 2.3, my translation). This is again echoed by the mayor of Odense stating that they can see an overlap in *"those that are interested in esports, and those, who have the skill set"* (Nepper-Rasmussen 2017, my translation) required for the industries lacking manpower in the city.

In regard to the opportunity in potential overlap between the interest in esports and high-tech professions, it is feasible that the inherent technological focus of gaming and esports gives rise to a higher percentage of the interested individuals being tech educated, when compared to other interest spheres, such as regular sports. This opportunity could therefore be utilised in an effort of reaching people who normally might not have gone large-scale events, but now *"they got something for them"* (Appx. 1.7) or even those watching from home, if the businesses decided to market themselves through esports events in Denmark. These brands/sponsors could stand to gain a lot of exposure, and therefore also possibly attract qualified labour, seeing as 11 of 14 sponsors for the Pro League finals in Odense could be recalled by more than 67% of attending fans, responding to a survey after the tournament (Schellewald 2017). These sponsors being the ones switching in and out of view in the bottom-middle of the match broadcast, as shown in **Fig**. **11** & **14**. Furthermore, with an estimated 380 million (frequent + occasional) esports viewers worldwide (Pannakeet 2018), the possible exposure for businesses and industries investing in esports event sponsorships are quite substantial. Keld Rud describes this form of marketing as *"functioning differently from a lot of other events"* (Appx. 2.1) both before the events, but especially during the events themselves. This form of sponsorship exposure differentiates itself from a lot of other tourism related events, e.g. large concerts, festivals or sports tournaments. This is because of the visibility that sponsors end up having with regards to the attendees at the event, but even more so, for the larger number of viewers watching at home.

With the possible opportunity for attracting specialised labour to the destinations with large-scale esports events in Denmark, the important factors would be that the target groups being attracted are within the age range and educations of possible new hires in the connected industries. Tue Kempf noted this as the target audience, stating that it is: *"A very high amount of men, relatively*

well educated (…) *that are interested in esports"* (Appx. 2.3). With the survey respondents, the average age ended up being 23,2 years old (Appx. 3), which fits quite well with someone nearing the end of their education. The gender split of survey respondents were 92% male and 8% female (Appx. 3), which is quite a big difference, but not surprising – especially if the argued overlap between esports fans and the tech industry is valid. This difference is not as big in tech, with global gender disparity in tech industries being 47% more male than female (Byrne 2017), but it does grant further credence to the overlap between esports fans and the specialised workforce needed in tech. These are then also possibly new hires for the tech-cluster in Odense, as long as the events generate enough interest, the overlap is strong and the tech businesses invest sufficiently in marketing themselves to the esports audience.

4.3 Esports Events and Tourism – What are the Challenges?
4.3.1 Working with a Young Industry with an Enormous Audience

When it comes to esports events in Denmark and how they could possibly be used as tourism drivers, a variety of challenges were identified throughout the interviews and survey data. These are primarily related to the youth of the industry, as all three DMO/event agency interviews pointed to as well. Tue Kempf sums up the challenge of introducing a new niche of interests, specifically esports, to the Danish event industry: *"even though it is a coupling of things that has been done before, it is also a new combination with some new challenges."* (Appx. 2.3, my translation). Because of the relative newness of esports in the Danish event industry, and the way in which large-scale events are generally run – with the DMOs creating partnerships with businesses, it necessitates private businesses with the knowledge to run and organise these events. Keld Rud describes this cooperation with external partners as: *"them having working knowledge with e.g. a sport or some other interest driven thing. They then have expertise with the specific field, while we* (meaning the DMO) *have knowledge of working with the authorities, economy, marketing and all these things."* (Appx. 2.1). Accordingly, when it comes to larger esports events, challenges could arise when the trying to establish partnerships with event agencies. Due to the youth of the industry, not a lot of people in Denmark have worked with large-scale esports events, and as such it might be hard to find *"trustworthy business partners. It has to be someone who we believe are up to the task."* (Appx. 2.1). This challenge is also echoed by Søren from VisitOdense, as he points out the working method of the municipality, as helping the events get a foothold in the beginning and then *"having an external consortium take over the event. (…) So it is not Odense municipality that ends up staying as the primary stakeholder for the event."* (Appx. 2.2).

The youth of the esports industry, and knowledge of it as a whole, seems to be where the largest challenges arise for the Danish organisational side, when working with smaller events like GeeksGoneWild and even somewhat for large-scale ones such as ODINCON. The obscurity and youth of the industry is touted as a challenge for the smaller events, in regards to the financial backing. Keld Rud from Aalborg Events describes the challenge in arranging sponsors for the relatively small esports event GeeksGoneWild as *"getting someone to throw themselves into something they have no knowledge about – just because we tell them it is fantastic. It's pretty tough."* (Appx. 2.1, my translation). The same can arguably be said for the large-scale events, due to the inherent complexity in different esports, which results in a lack of insight into the games that drive the events - but also because of to the relative newness of the industry, resulting in sponsors and stakeholders having little insight and experience with the industry. Tue Kempf, the production manager for ODINCON, points this out as a challenge for the Danish esports industry as it is *"structurally young"* (Appx. 2.3, my translation). This challenge would also come in to play for DMOs and event agencies trying to organise large-scale esports events – being the types of events that could generate the most tourism economic effect in general. This challenge is meanwhile alleviated through the sponsorships being primarily targeted at businesses that have some kind of relation to esports or gaming in general, *"El-Giganten is also an example of someone we have tried talking to."* (Appx. 2.1, my translation). This challenge is then scaled up quite a bit when it comes to large-scale events such as ODINCON in Odense, as the interviewee from VisitOdense pointed out that: *"Not all Danish municipalities have the capacity or finances for it"* (Appx. 2.2, my translation). This point is further underlined by Tue Kempf, when he points out that it took *"effort from both ourselves, who organised the event, and the sponsors – to acquaint ourselves with how exactly it could be of value"* (Appx. 2.3, my translation). Accordingly, the possible lack of insight into how large-scale esports events could create value for DMOs and event agencies trying to work with them, is deemed as a challenge for the Danish event tourism industry.

From a tourism standpoint, the lack of experience with the organisational side of the industry in Denmark gives rise to the challenge of finding experienced partners to work with. However, this challenge is somewhat alleviated because of the similarities with other events, as mentioned earlier in this section. Further, with regard to esports events being tourism drivers, they should be large-scale events – and preferably important hallmark tournaments, in order to get esports interested individuals to travel for them. This excludes a lot of the smaller municipalities and cities in Denmark from utilising esports events as tourism drivers, simply because of the lacking capacity for it. However, smaller esports offerings can be utilised in order to foster the interests of individuals, with potential for them to end up working in the Danish esports event industry – but this does not

directly create any tourism economic effect. Furthermore, even with large-scale events, the amount of esports fans in Denmark alone would take up a large percentage of the available tickets at these events. As such it is not something that would create enormous amounts of international tourism for Danish cities, but rather move people all across Denmark, as domestic tourists.

4.3.2 A Complex and Rapidly Changing Group of Niches

When trying to compare large-scale esports events with regular events or sports events of the same size, it is encapsulated by Tue Kempf as being a cross between "*boxing, chess, the Eurovision Song Contest and a 'rock'n'roll' show."* (Appx. 2.3, my translation). Boxing because of the competitive nature and how it is framed for the audience – with presenters, analysists and commentators. The chess comparison is because of the mental preparation, concentration and focus that esports at the highest levels demands from the players. Lastly, the Eurovision and rock show comparison is made because of the amount of lights, stage setups and audience capacity that has become the norm for large-scale esports events in other countries (Appx 2.3). This comparison is an apt description of the supply side of the esports industry, while also describing the esports experience from a spectator and participant standpoint.

Accordingly, if the Danish esports event industry wants to measure up to the international competition, it demands quite some resources from the DMOs and event organisers. Furthermore, when it comes to having the right personalities presenting, analysing and commentating the esports competitions, it requires a certain amount of insight into each esports game, for the hiring of these people. This is due to each esports game having wildly different terminology and general knowledge in order to properly communicate what is occurring during the tournament matches. This is also a reason a few survey participants pointed to as being essential in order to lure them to events: "*I need to also like the casters"* and "*Knowing the casters at the event"* (Appx. 3)*.* As such, the sheer complexity of esports events are upped, because of the variety of different esports games that exist, wherein each of them have their own social worlds attached. Tue Kempf also notes this complexity when pointing to esports titles such as CS:GO and Dota, where the first is simpler to understand for the viewer and the second is more complex – but both have *"hundreds of tactical layers in them"* (Appx. 2.3, my translation).

Esports events as tourism drivers therefore have some challenges regarding to the events being successful from a spectator standpoint, which can be partially alleviated by the event organisers having experience in organising regular events. However, not having a firm grasp on what each esports game is about, and furthermore, not hiring people with a deeper understanding of the

specific game, can significantly worsen the spectator experiences at the events. Because of this, it would seem that future esports events in Denmark need to have a specific focus on finding the right people to work with. Furthermore, this challenge of insight into each is further underlined by esports games rapidly emerging and gaining massive audiences relatively quickly, at least when compared directly with regular sports, e.g. the currently most watched game Fortnite, being released on the 25th of July 2017. Because of this, it can definitely be argued that esports events are niche events, as the changeability is one of the main characteristics of niche tourism according to Mallen & Adams (2013). However, I would venture to argue that a future challenge for esports might be that it could evolve into a plethora of different niches, because of esports fan being mainly into one specific competitive esports scene at a time, as shown in **Fig. 5**. These different niches would then have to be properly understood, in order to create successful esports events in Denmark in the future, requiring further and continuously updating research.

With the 'traveller' category of survey respondents having 87% of people travelling about once every year or less than that (as seen in **Fig. 15**), it appears that the future esports industry in Denmark needs to try and anticipate which esports games are rising in popularity in order to attract the esports tourists to Denmark.
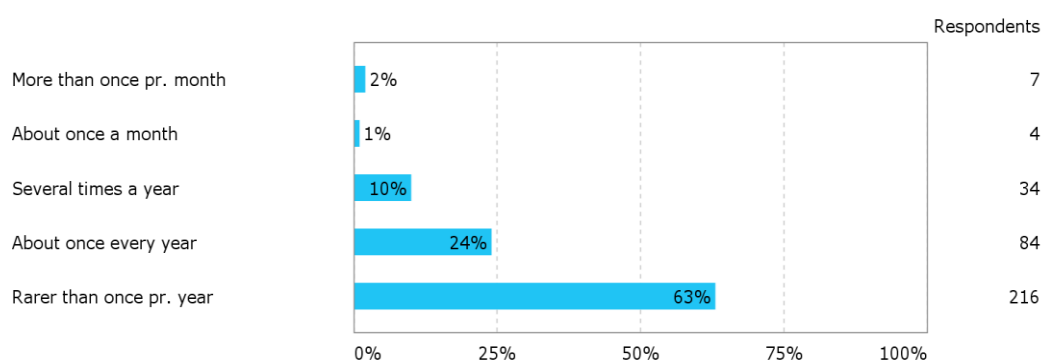
"How often have you attended esports events?" **Fig. 15.**

The travel tendency of esports 'travellers' are meanwhile towards an industry on the rise and the amount of events happening currently. With a very large audience, it could be argued that esports tourism would occur more often, if more events took place. However, it would still have to be the right events, focused on the right games, if the esports tourists' motivations remain the same as argued in section 4.1. Therefore, the argued challenge for the Danish esports event industry: Essentially needing insight into the complex niche of esports tourism is still apparent and will be increasingly so in the future, if current trends continues. From an academic viewpoint, this is even more evident through the lack of research that has been done on the industry, compared to other forms of competitive event tourism.

Currently, large-scale esports events in Denmark might very well attract people from all over Denmark, because of the novelty of large esports tournaments on Danish soil, not focusing on the specific games at the tournaments. But this could very well change in the future, if the industry gets more well established. This is also something Tue Kempf argues for when stating: *"if you get one of the large international tournaments here, then it not as crucial what game it is.* (…) *But in a year people will be a lot pickier"* (Appx. 2.3, my translation), both in regard to which tournament, but also what games are being played. Furthermore, this possible niche creation within esports tourism itself is supported by the amount of survey respondents stating their essential reason for attending esports events: 44 of 208 qualitative answers being related to which game is being played at the event (Appx. 3). Lastly, this is also something four of the Gamescom interviewees stated as the primary reason for them travelling for esports, namely that the game being played is one that they are highly interested in (Appx. 1.2; 1.3; 1.8; 1.18). This grants credence to the possibility of esports events becoming a multitude of niches in the future, which then would create challenges with predicting the viable "lifespan" of each separate esports game as grounds for creating large-scale esports events in Denmark.

This challenge is also something Tue Kempf points out as being applicable to the esports audience and fans themselves: *"It's incredibly hard to predict their behaviour. It's tough to influence them through traditional means."* (Appx. 2.3, my translation). This challenge is further underlined by the fact that esports games and the consequent interest therein can grow very quickly, compared to more ordinary event tourism. In sum, the newness of esports events as large-scale competitive spectator experiences, combined with the quickly evolving interest sphere creates some unique challenges for the Danish esports event industry. The challenge of insight into each esports niche will take considerable effort for the DMOs and event agencies attempting to organise large-scale esports events in Denmark – especially if they are to continually be of value to the host communities.

5.0 Conclusion

Through the research and analysis of this thesis, a variety of aspects has been looked at in order to try and understand the struggle with defining esports events and the tourism these create, as categorically event or sports tourism. This was done from both a supply and demand perspective, in order to see if there were significant differences between the two sides. Subsequently, several opportunities and challenges were identified with the aim of furthering the Danish esports event industry. This corresponds with the problem formulation being:

"What are the opportunities and challenges in relation to the development of the Danish 'esports'-event industry and should it be understood as event or sports tourism, or possibly a hybrid of the two?"

Parts of this research endeavour focused on the esports fans, namely the visitor interviews from Gamescom and the internet survey. In combination with general esports industry research, it has been concluded that there is a very large amount of people who enjoy esports competitions and games – and that good percentage of these are willing to travel for events.

Accordingly, the reasons for people traveling to Gamescom varied a lot, which can be attributed to the fact that it is the largest gaming convention and technology expo worldwide – and not only an esports event. Conversely, 13 out of 18 interviewees were interested in travelling for esports events, with some reservations – specifically the distance to the event, combining esports with other experiences and what game the event was for. So the interest in esports events amongst the general gaming community is apparent.

In the internet survey, the primary identified reasons for becoming an esports tourist were the competitive aspect, importance of events, the shared community and the relative proximity to the events. Therefore, it appears that the demand-side certainly have interest in competitive esports, which gives rise to the argument for the esports tourists to be aligned with the way some academic research defines sports tourism. However, due to the young age of the survey respondents and the esports audience in general, far-reaching tourism is arguable only feasible for a small percentage.

The sports tourism argument is also echoed by the supply-side interviews with Danish DMO and event agency individuals. Both because of the competitive nature, but more insightfully also due to the immense dedication and skill it takes for the professional players. Conversely, the argument for esports tourism being classified as event tourism is mainly because of it being a new offering in the Danish event industry – and that it shares characteristics with several other types of events. As such, some of the domestic tourism that occurred at the large-scale event in Odense, ODINCON, were

arguably because of novelty. However, the Danish esports interest is definitely apparent, and it is argued from the supply-side that future events in Denmark will draw more people for the competitions and games specifically.

Therefore, no definitive conclusion can be given as to whether esports events are purely sports or event tourism. It does on the other hand appear to be a hybrid of both, as a large percentage of dedicated esports fans definitely see the competitive aspect as the primary draw for esports events. At the same time, large-scale esports events are currently being organised as a coupling of things such as concerts and boxing, granting credence to the classification as a hybrid between sports and event tourism. This could change in the future, with a more established industry and more research on the topic.

The main opportunities for the Danish esports event industry, identified throughout this thesis, is summed up as three primary aspects: The size of the market, esports as a channel for place branding and its interest spheres' potential overlap with tech industries.

The first opportunity is grounded in the massive amount of people that are interested in esports, which is definitely also the case in Denmark, seeing how large-scale events, such as the Pro League Finals in Odense, sold out tickets. This is also supported by a multitude of smaller regional events and initiatives popping up around Denmark e.g. the GeeksGoneWild event in Aalborg. The sponsorship focused business models for most large-scale esports events, combined with the massive viewership, shows the possibility of esports sponsors reaching large amounts of people when choosing to sponsor events.

The second identified opportunity is the possibility of branding specific cities or destinations through esports. This was primarily supported through the survey respondents' answers regarding places they connected with esports. Accordingly, this opportunity is underlined by the fact that other destinations arguably have accomplished this type of place branding, such as South Korea, Seoul and Katowice in Poland. ODINCON and the Pro League Finals in Odense also recognised opportunity and had 'Odense' presented to a large international audience during most of the tournament.

The third opportunity was an identified overlap in the people interested in esports and their possible match with tech-focused businesses, in this case specifically in Odense. This opportunity was attempted utilised at the combined esports tournament and tech expo named ODINCON. Subsequently, this opportunity is one that could be viable for any large-scale esports event in Denmark – esports could potentially be a recruiting and marketing tool aimed towards specific tech industries lacking qualified hires.

The two primary challenges identified in this thesis were: The esports industry being young, and the complex and rapidly evolving group of niches.

The first challenge is primarily due to the esports industry being young, both from an organisational, structural perspective, but also in the target market. The structural youth of the industry brings along the challenge of not having established partners in Denmark, that are experienced in esports, which is something the DMO interviews particularly pointed to as being normal procedure for other types of events. The young age of the esports fans, and possible tourists, accordingly reduces the possibility of mass international tourism being created from esports – due to lack of financial means and available time. Furthermore, large-scale esports events requires venue capacity and financial support which only the largest cities in Denmark has.

The second challenge is one particularly pointed towards future esports event industry in Denmark. Esports being made up of a large variety of different games, there is a distinct possibility of further niche creation within the esports industry itself. This something that can potentially challenge the industry in the future. Both in regard to large-scale esports tourism events, but also for organising smaller, regional esports events. With a more established industry, being able to attract the "right" niche is essential.

The small amount of academic research currently published on the topic of esports underlines the need for future research into the industry, both for the good of the Danish esports events industry, but also for the industry as a whole. By viewership and visitor numbers alone, more research into what delineates esports tourists from regular gaming interested people could be argued for. Accordingly, the categorisation of esports fans through academic research could help clear up both the mainstream legitimacy issue as well as help organisers create better events in the future.

In sum, it is argued that the esports event industry in Denmark will continue to expand, despite the few established esports stakeholders in the country, as long as there is support from the municipalities and DMOs. Smaller esports initiatives do not lead to the same opportunities and challenges as large-scale esports events, but they could be essential in fostering interest in the industry. Large-scale esports events in Denmark primarily drive domestic tourism and will arguably continue to do so, with some international tourism being a plus. Hallmark esports tournaments do however bring in massive viewership numbers from all over the world. Subsequently, a big potential is identified in large-scale esports events in Denmark; being used both as place branding, marketing and recruitment channels for cities that have financial capacity and cooperation with connected tech industries.

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5. Med fokus på mit speciale emne, nemlig esport, har I så arbejdet med nogle events inden for det felt?
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6. Hvilke slags events, hvis nogen, ville du sige er sammenlignelige med esport events?

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8. Hvordan gik turneringen i Odense – var den succesfuldt fra dit synspunkt?

9. Hvor ser du de største muligheder indenfor esport, som større events der kan tiltrække turister?

10. Kan du komme i tanke om nogle specifikke udfordringer du stødte på i arbejdet med et esport event?

11. Hvor ville du forvente esport passe ind i turisme sektoren i fremtiden?

Appendix 1.1-18
Transcriptions: GamesCom Interviews
Appx. 1.1. Male, 25, German
[00.00] Me: Where are you from?

1: Here from Germany

Me: Ok, German. Fine.

Me: So, how far did you travel to get here?

1: Ahh, around 80km. Something around that.

Me: Ok, yeah. So, you live in? Where do you live?

1: In Mülheim an der Ruhr. Not Cologne Mülheim, which is a part of Cologne. But farther to the north, in the Rhein-Ruhr kompleks.

Me: Ok, Cool - and why did you come to Gamescom?

1: Why not? *laughs*

Me: Any specific reason?

[01.00] 1: Games are part of my hobbies, I've been attending the GamesCom for six years, I guess. Six or seven years. I'm here for the games, here for meeting people and for getting some loot.

Me: So if you're here just for fun - are you going to watch any of the competitions?

1: Uhm, not here. I watch competitions from home - mainly the hearthstone and the heroes of the storm competitions. And usually not here. Because theres so much other things to do. Maybe if I'm tired, I maybe sit down and find space, but it's nearly impossible to find seating space for the competitions.

Me: So you watch live esports from home?

1: Yes.

Me: Ok. What would make you travel just for esports?

[02.00] 1: Uh, that's a good question. It should be not too far away. I have a drivers' licence, but not a car. So I would have to travel by the train. It shouldn't be too far away. Which is possible around here, of course we have the large cities close to each other. There is so much here in Cologne, and in Dusseldorf north of here.

Me: So, just if it was nearby, and maybe not at GamesCom?

1: Yeah, if it's nearby, just for the esports, not too costly to get in. It doesn't have to be free, it just has to pay for the organisation and security. It shouldn't be like an orkester for 40 or 60 euroes. That's a bit too much.

[03.00] Me: So, somewhat nearby and not too expensive.

1: Yes!

Me: So, if you had to say. What would be the difference between normal sports (like football and all that) and esports? Just in your words.

1: Yeah, I think both are sports - even if you don't have to move yourself. And I don't really do sports. Esports are more like chess. Sport of the mind.

Me: Ok, that's cool. That's what I thought basically. If you had to think of some kind of strength that esports has - some kind of positive that esports has that you can't find with normal sports? Maybe something like the community, how easy it is to get into?

[04.04] 1: Yeah. The community is something special, because it is really all around the globe - it's easy to get into. And even if you don't know much about it, you can watch it. Maybe not in Hearthstone, because you have to know a few cards and the basic gamerules - so you can follow the games. But in the mobas, like League of Legends and Heroes of the Storm, that is more easy to watch without game knowledge - what objectives there are is more simple, and easier to get in to. It's easier to understand what's happening, what's going on and easier to get in to.

[05.08] Me: How do you think esports could get better as live events? What could get better?

1: As live events? I'm not really sure I have heard about that many esports events near me. Maybe because I don't really look for them actively or don't see any info about.

Me: So, more information and marketing?

1: Yes, that is needed. It is still a niche. If you really watch it weekly, you know when the next stage is happening and maybe where, but if then you have to prepare yourself to travel there, to take your days free, maybe it won't happen.

[06.04] Me: So you need to see about the events before time? This leads into the next development in esports. What would you like to see? Maybe that is what you say - more marketing.

1: Yes, more marketing. What I would like is some wildcard tournaments, so it really is normal players that have the chance to get to large tournaments. Really, in the team games, it is mostly sponsor teams and the big ones. In the single player things. They do it already, but more competitions to get ready for the large tournaments, even if you begin playing now. But there is the possibility, but it's not that common in other games.

Me: That sounds true. It seems too hard to get into.

[07:08] 1: Yeah, you have to be really dedicated, yeah.

Me: So, maybe more easily accessible?

1: Yes - or maybe some fun tournaments for the normal players, so you can really take part in the sport.

Me: Fun tournaments, that's a good idea. What do you think is the biggest challenge for esports?

1: I think it's on a really good way, seeing the use of some tournaments that are really large. We've seen the Counter-strike, the Dota tournaments. Basically in the last year. So it's really on a good way. But it's still just a niche, and maybe only known by younger people who play video games and know about that. Not really that common.

[08.15] Me: It's the niche thing it has to overcome?

1: I think it has to overcome its niche position. Maybe.

Me: Yeah, anything is valid. It's good.

1: I'm not sure it's good for it. Maybe it will not be that interesting for everyone. Maybe it could not work.

Me: Kind of like we talked about, you have to know the game, so of course you have to put some time into it.

1: Yeah. Exactly.

Me: Well actually, that's everything I wanted. Thank you.

[08:50] 1: No problem, and good luck with your master's thesis.

Appx. 1.2. Male, 21, Belgian
[00.03] Me: So, how far did you travel to get here?

2: Approximately 150-160 km.

Me: That's quite some km.

2: Two hours in a car.

Me: Why did you come to GamesCom?

2: Because I love conventions in general. The atmosphere, the people. The feeling of understanding you have with each other.

Me: It's very likeminded.

2: Yeah, exactly. I just love how the entire place is built in, almost like, a theme.

Me: It's all gaming.

2: Yeah - it also makes the virtual part more realistic.

Me: I can see why that's true. Since you're here, are you going to watch any esports competitions?

2: No, I'm personally not all that interested in the competitions. I'm more interested in a thing like the new games and the developers content, and merchandise.

[01.11] Me: Everybodies interested in new loot. Since you're not interested in watching esports. How come? What would make you interested, for example?

2: Yeah, maybe it's that I as a person is not all that, too competitive, especially when it comes to videogames. Except Destiny PvP, but that's just one example. But even then, if there would be a tournament of PvP in Destiny, I would probably still prefer to play myself, instead of watching other people.

[02.00] Me: Since I'm here, talking to you about this. I'm trying to compare to regular sports. Trying to compare to normal football and all that. Could you try and, in your words, explain the difference between regular sports and esports?

2: The main difference I think is, if you play like, FIFA. A very good example. If you play the game, you have the control over the entire team. That makes it more like a 1vs1.

Me: More individual?

2: Yeah! As when you play real football/soccer, it's a complete team sport. That's completely different. Some aspects of the same sport, but the experience is completely different.

Me: Seeing as we're talking about esports, could you think of something that the gaming community/the esports community has as a strength, compared to normal sports? Maybe the community, or how easy it is to get in to, or there's something for everyone.

[03.14] 2: I think it's very attractive, because it's easy to find a game. You just put it in your console or start it on you computerscreen, and just search for a game - and bam, you can play. Whereas if you want to play real soccer, you might have to wait for practice or have to ask 22 people to show up. That makes it a little more complicated.

Me: That's very true, you have to plan a soccer game and all that. Compared to just going in a game.

Me: Seeing as you're not interested in esports - how could it improve to maybe make you interested?

[04.08] 2: That's a very interesting question. Difficult question. I don't really think I've got an answer to that.

Me: It is also very hypothetical. Anything?

2: Hmmm... better graphics?

Me: Also thinking about it as a live event. How could it improve here, so you might actually watch some of it? What would make you watch some of it here? You're allowed to say no.

[05.02] 2: That's really difficult for me. As I'm really not that interested. If they want to catch me among the crowd - they really have to do their best. But perhaps be something like, the things of tournaments I've seen here, it's difficult to get a view of it. The pc's are all turned with their backs to the crowd. They could also make more giant screens on the back of the wall, then randomly switch through the monitors, so you can watch along. Something like that.

[06.20] 2: If they want to catch my interest, I'm a really difficult person. Stuff like, maybe free food or so?

Me: That's a good idea - everyone likes free food.

2: Or maybe cosplays.

Me: The last two then, where do you see the biggest opportunities for something like this?

2: In the form of tournaments or conventions?

Me: Both things, if you have any idea about that?

[07.00] 2: They are doing a really good job as it is now. Conventions attract a lot of like-minded people. But if they want to improve. Conventions can always improve by growing. More advertisements, more stands, more things to show. That will also lure more people.

Me: So, basically bigger and better.

2: Yeah. In the form of the tournaments - that really depends on the popularity of it. If it's really, really popular, maybe they can organise standalone events. Completely disconnected from conventions, for the really hardcore, like-minded people. But you really need to have a huge crowd, and the location has to be correct as well.

[08.02] 2: For example, I'm really interested in destiny and if there would be like a giant Destiny event, but it's all the way in America, then I'm unwilling to attend.

Me: So it has to be somewhat local? But if it was in Germany. Like here, in Cologne.

2: If it was Destiny oriented, I'd definitely be here. I'd take a bus or a train!

Me: Ok! What do you think is the biggest challenge for something like this? How do they, get out of the niche, catch the older crowd or anything else?

2: I basically think GamesCom is past its challenge. Seems like the challenge for conventions like this is growing to the stage where everyone knows it's an annual thing.

[09.00] Me: So, something like marketing?

2: Yeah, you can host a giant event, but if nobody knows its being held, then nobody will attend. In Belgium, we almost didn't find out that GamesCom was today. I had to search it up online myself.

Me: So you bought a ticket recently after searching by yourself?

2: Yes, there's no signs, no commercials, nothing.

Me: Agreed. I only found out yesterday that it's the biggest gaming conventions in the world.

2: That's a really good idea, more marketing in neighbouring countries. Any country really.

[10.10] 2: I know they are inviting youtubers to come and play and stream. Maybe try and get them to make some commercials. A lot of people watch youtube, maybe get them to advertise about going to GamesCom.

Me: That's a good idea! I think that's all.

Appx. 1.3. Male, 18, German
[00.03] Me: What's your age?

3: 18

Me: and where are you from?

3: I'm from Germany.

Me: and how far did you travel to get here?

3: About 300km.

Me: Ok, well Germany is big.

3: Yes!

Me: Why did you come to GamesCom?

3: Because I want to be here, because its the first year I get the 18 year armband

Me: That's the only reason?

3: Well, I've always wanted to go here, but I thought before that it was not worth it because I had a blue armband.

Me: So there's some games you can't play?

3: Yes!

[01.03] Me: Seeing as you've come here to GamesCom. Are you going to watch any of the competitions?

3: Yes, I will go to the Blizzard entertainment area - I want to watch some Hearthstone and World of Warcraft matches.

Me: Cool. So, Hearthstone and World of Warcraft - the arena stuff?

3: Yes!

Me: So you come to GamesCom for the whole experience?

3: Yes.

Me: What would make you travel just for the esports competitions?

3: I'm not the biggest esports fan. The main reason why I'm here is because of the games that I can test that are unreleased.

Me: Ok, so unreleased games. But if you had to imagine, what competition would like to travel to?

[02.15] 3: I'm not the biggest esports fan, so... hmmm.

Me: Maybe if you got some unreleased characters in a game?

3: Yes, that would do it.

Me: So if Blizzard held a competition near you and it was about hearthstone, and you could get the newest hearthstone pack there?

3: Yes, yes, yes!

Me: Can you tell me a difference between regular sports and esports?

3: So, the main difference is that esports are on computers or consoles. But in my opinion they are sports-like. So football and such are equal in difficulty.

Me: So you would call them both sports?

[03.10] 3: Yes, I would call them both sports.

Me: Ok, that's fine. What if you had to point out something that is better about esports than about normal sports?

3: That you don't have to go outside. So you can stay inside.

Me: Ok. If you could find something that could be better about the competitions here?

[04.13] 3: When I have my masters, I plan on traveling to Los Angeles to see E3. But this is my first convention. Can't think of anything that could be better.

Me: Just two more questions. In the future, where do you see the development going. Where is gaming conventions and esports heading?

3: They are getting bigger.

Me: So where do you see the next big thing like this?

[05.05] 3: This GamesCom next year and E3 next year.

Me: If you had to describe a problem?

3: There are no problems, I am happy!

Me: Ok, that's fine. That's the last thing I have for you. Have a good GamesCom.

Appx. 1.4. Female, 27, Iranian/German

[00.06] Me: Whats your age?

4: My age is 27.

Me: 27, ok. Well, gender is easy. What's your nationality?

4: My dad is from Iran, my mom German.

Me: Ok. How far did you travel to get here?

4: Like three hours.

Me: Three hours? Thats quite far. So why did you come here?

4: Because my boyfriend likes gaming, he's from Florida. He wants to go to GamesCom one time.

Me: He doesn't live in Germany?

4: He does, moved here 1½ year ago.

Me: Ok. Seeing as you're here with your boyfriend - are you going to watch any of the competitions?

4: No?

Me: That's fine.

[01.05] 4: Just if he wants to. I'm into the old games a little bit.

Me: Seeing as you're not interested in watching any kind of gaming.

4: I mean, I will watch, but I will not have any idea what I'm seeing.

Me: Ok, do you have any ideas about what would get you interested?

4: The problem is, I will try the games, but I always lose. So I will not go on playing it.

Me: So if you know that you're good at it and you know how the game works?

4: I was playing Sims a long time.

Me: I don't know if you can do competitions in sims. So it's basically if you know the game, you might be interested in watching?

[02.10] 4: I also played fifa, but you know, I always lose.

Me: If you were good at it?

4: It is fun to play in groups, but people don't chose me because they know.

Me: So if you were good at the games, you might play them, and watch them also?

4: Yeah, I mean, I would watch them also, even if I'm not playing them. It can be very interesting to watch.

Me: Ok! So if you could tell me, in your own words - whats the difference between regular sports, like football and all that and computer sports?

4: My boyfriend watches people gaming. Almost like fighting each other in these games. I mean, the people are different. If you look at like, English football with hooligans and fighting.

[03:12] 4: Then you have like, I don't want to say it, but like these nerds coming to their stage in their costumes and playing games. Totally different worlds.

Me: If you had to say a difference, or a strength, that this has, compared to regular sports?

4: I think people are more friendly.

Me: So the community is more friendly?

4: Yes. They compete, but they don't go and fight each other in real life. Its just in games.

[04.14] Me: Seeing as you're not the normal crowd here - how would you like to see it get better, how could they improve it?

4: The problem is, I would try more, but the lines are very long. So, maybe more opportunities to play a game - it's quite impossible, as there are a lot of computers.

Me: How about, if you had to watch any of the competitions here?

[05.04] 4: I think, like the big games have huge screens. I don't know what you could do better.

Me: Maybe more space for spectators?

4: Yes, so you don't have to wait as much. The smaller and older games are more easy to get to play, but the big games are full all the time. But the people are very friendly here.

Me: Just two more questions. Though you might not be the normal audience here, where do you see this type of convention heading in the future? Did you know anything of it beforehand?

[06.04] 3: Well, I think, 10 years from now it will be completely different, because you can do more from home. I don't think it is going to be as big.

Me: So, you think the opportunity would be trying to reach people in their homes?

4: Yes, I guess.

Me: That might also be a challenge? For you, not knowing that much about it, it might be challenging getting you to watch it.

[07.00] 4: Well, I'm interested in anything. So if somebody came and said "Let's go to a convention about flowers", I would be like "Yay, flowers! I'm up for travel! Lets do this!" I'm pretty fast at liking something. So I might be the wrong person to ask something like this.

Me: Well, maybe something like waiting in line for a long time in order to see and try things.

4: Yes, If I was very, very into this, I would not mind waiting a long time. But as I'm just waiting for my boyfriend, I just spend a lot of time people watching, it's very interesting.

Me: Ok, that's interesting. That's all I have, thanks!

Appx. 1.5. Male, 23, Swiss

[00.01] Me: Whats your age?

5: 23

Me: Gender is easy. Where are you from?

5: I'm from Switzerland.

Me: Ok, so how far did you travel to get here?

5: We drove for 6½ hours.

Me: Ok, you're all from Switzerland? (A group of people)

5: No, but we all drove from Switzerland, because they live near.

Me: Why did you come to GamesCom?

5: For the games and for the community, everything. Merchandise, stuff like that. And to play the new Call of Duty. It's for many things this year. Last year wasn't good, but this year you have Call of Duty, Destiny 2. You have so much stuff to play.
[01.04] Me: So you're not coming here to watch any of the competitions?

5: We want to, but it's not possible yet.

Me: Are you planning on watching any of the competitions?

5: Yes, at the last day, I wanna watch the finals of League of Legends.

Me: Ok, so you're actually going to watch some of it. So, you're travelling to GamesCom for everything. All the games, all the news, everything. Would you be interested in traveling just for esports?

5: Yes. If I had the chance, yes. For sure.

Me: Ok. In my thesis, I'm trying to compare regular sports to esports. What would you are the difference between regular sports and esports?

5: I think regular sports are not as hard focused on teamplay. Let's take an example of football. So you have a team, where it's maybe more chaos than anything else.

[02.11] 5: In games like League of Legends or Counter-Strike, you have to play more in a team and defend specific spots.

Me: So it's more ordered?

5: Yes, but I don't know how to say it. If you take CS:GO for example, you have a lot more communication between team members. Without communication it would not work.

Me: So it's more focused on working together and collaborating?

5: Yes!

[03.00] Me: Can you think of a strength to esports? Something thats better than normal sports.

5: First of all, team communication. I think esports makes way more fun, as you have don't need to be a sporty guy.

Me: Anybody can pick it up.

5: Yes, right. I think the community about gaming is way friendlier than regular sports.

Me: Good point. How would you think esports events, like the competitions here, and regular esports events could improve or get better?

5: There's many points where you can make it better in esports. For example, where it gets held. Most times it is in America.

Me: So you need more events?

[04.03] 5: Yes, you need more places in Europe, so we can go there. It's hard to travel to America for a European guy.

Me: So we need more competitions basically?

5: The only big chance is GamesCom every year. In order to watch ESL and other games.

Me: So in the future, do you think it will get bigger?

5: For sure. I think it's just the start right now, and maybe in ten years, it will be bigger than everything else.

Me: Possibly. I hear the Asian Olympic Council is bringing it into their considerations. Do you think it will someday be on the level of normal sports?

[05.12] 5: I think so, yes. I think it will get bigger than normal sports. Because the community is growing. I think it's growing from day to day. Five years ago I was at GamesCom and there was not nearly as many people here. Maybe it was 200k, last year was 350k. Way much bigger.

[06.02] Me: Actually, the last question. Where do you see the trouble, where's the challenge for esports? It still being a niche, where do you see the trouble for esports growing bigger?

5: I think the management and organisations from different countries not recognising it as a real opportunity and maybe a sport.

Me: So basically that the it is not seen as anything else than a niche?

5: Yes!

Me: That's everything. Thanks.

Appx. 1.6. Male, 17, USA

[00.20] Me: I'd like to ask your age?

6: Ahh... 17.

Me: Ok. Where are you from?

6: My country or do you want everything?

Me: Where do you live?

6: Oregon, United States.

Me: How far did you travel to get here? Did you travel from Oregon to get here?

6: Uh, yeah. Oregon and then we drove around in Germany for a few days basically.

Me: Wow, that's far.

6: Yeah!

[01.05] Me: Why did you come here?

6: So, my parents promised me that if I stayed out of trouble and good grades and everything, they'd take me on a trip to a place I wanted to go to. We couldn't make it to Worlds last year. The one that was in California. "So we'll take you to this, this year". It's the congratulations to you, you were smart.

Me: That's a good gift I guess! So, why are you actually here? Here to see all of the games?

6: Yeah, basically that's what we're here for. To see all of the games. Cosplay too.

Me: Ok! Are you going to watch any of the esports competitions?

6: I didn't actually realise that there was that many going on. I couldn't find schedules or anything. I watched part of the World of Warcraft one, when I was in the middle of the crowd.

[02.05] Me: So if you fall into the start of a competition for a game you're interested in, you're gonna watch it?

6: Yeah! Part of it at least.

Me: Ok, cool! So you've traveled for esports before? Or for gaming conventions?

6: Gaming conventions, where esports happens there. I've wanted to go to esports, but I'd basically have to go to another state and I can't do that.

Me: In your own words....

6: Oh no! "In your own words!"

Me: Don't worry, still easy. What would be a difference between regular sports and esports?

6: I've actually done a paper on this before. About why esports should be considered sports - and I had to fight my entire class on this. That sucked.

[03.02] 6: Esports, obviously you're not doing "too much physical stuff" - you are doing physical things. I mean, you're actually moving on a keyboard. But it's on a much higher mental level than normal sports, because there are way more to track.

Me: Yeah, it it's more fine-motor skills.

6: Yeah, fine-motor skills, game knowledge and perhaps more tactical.

Me: Can you think of a strength that esports has compared to regular sports?

6: One, it's way easier for anyone and their friends to get into. You basically have the exactly same practice tool that the pros have. You load up the game and they're playing the exact same game. Like I said, the mental energy, and uhm... it's easier to get more attached to the actual pros, because most of them are just teenagers. Who probably dropped out of high school or college to play games.

[04.20] Me: So, basically the ease of access?

6: Yes, and the community. It might be toxic, but it's still a community.

Me: How do you think esports could improve, when we're talking live spectator events?

6: Probably, somethings could be like different theatres or like large areas. To have more local connections.

Me: So it should be more local?

[05.03] 6: They don't have to be everywhere. But more places to actually go to, to watch stuff. Like every other bare probably has some sport going on. But there's very little for esports. Like, having actual places for everyone to be.

Me: So sports bars for esports basically?

6: Yeah! Possibly, not a newcomer channel, but kinda like twitch. Like having a thing for newcomers. Because like, you play the game, you know what this person is doing and all that - but like, almost someones who's willing to talk at your level.

Me: So you're hoping for the mainstream appeal basically?

6: Kind of. It is pretty mainstream already, but for the people that does randomly show up. Especially if it's on TV for the first time. Then possibly something for them to help figure out what everything is.

[06.11] Me: Newbie friendly commentary?

6: Yeah! At least a different one where it is a newbie commentary.

Me: That's a good idea. Two more questions for you.

6: Ok!

Me: Where do you see the big opportunities for esports development? Do you think it'll get bigger?

6: It's definitely going to get bigger. I would say, once it actually starts getting on to TV. Like, even if it's like some shows where they talk about everything. Kind of like different twitch channels that do commentary and analysis on different games. Basically a lot of sports channels do that. So going on the TV would be one thing and like I said - and the more local events the better.

[07.03] Me: The last thing would be something like: Where do you see the challenges being? For growing esports as live spectators?

6: Basically in every game, you need to have a basic knowledge of the game for it work. If you haven't played before, seeing all these random - oh, one person moves, then all of the sudden everyone freaks out. It's hard to understand. Basically the complexity.

Me: I see what you're saying, compared to football/soccer.

6: Yeah, you just have to shoot the ball. You can see why that's amazing or why that was a good play.

Me: If you score a goal, that's easy to see.

6: Yeah. Unless you play the game, it's hard to notice why this person is doing that.

[08.00] Me: Yeah. That's all I have actually. Thanks a lot!

Appx. 1.7. Male, 26, German

[00.13] Me: Whats your age?

7: 26

Me: Ok! Gender is easy. Where are you from?

7: Germany. By the dutch border. I'm studying in the Netherlands, thats why I can speak english very well.

Me: So, you traveled from where you're living?

7: Yes. It's about 120km, so about 1½ hour to drive.

Me: Ok, and why did you come to gamescom?

7: We want to have a good time, and chill out in the camp, and also to see the newest games and what's coming up in the future.

Me: Ok.

7: And the newest developments in the genre.

Me: Maybe get some free loot at the convention?

[01.10] 7: Yes, yes! This is my 7th eh, 6th time at GamesCom.

Me: Ok, so you're a regular. Seeing as you're not here specifically for esports, are you still going to watch some of the competitions?

7: Yes! If I can see a game, at the right time at the right place. I would like to watch it. To see what's it all about. Not for specific reasons, but just to try the experience.

Me: So you're not planning on watching anything specific, just seeing whats there?

7: No. Just seeing what's there. We did play the Lego Superheroes game.

Me: Was it fun?

7: We don't know, it was like confusing. Maybe we're too old for this. Maybe.

[02.12] Me: So, if you were thinking about traveling for esports. Would you ever do that?

7: No, I don't think so. I'll watch it on the internet.

Me: Ok, you'll watch it on the internet.

7: If I want to watch something, you can watch it on twitch or like in CS:GO you can watch it in the game.

Me: Oh yeah.

7: I also like the comments of the people following the game. If I have to see this.

Me: It's nice having commentators. If you were, in your own words, try and explain the difference between esports and regular sports?

[02.55] 7: Regular sports, most of the regular sports is about physical competition and esports is about mental competition. It's about getting your mind focused on whats happening and making the right decisions at the right moment. It's nearly chess, but it's lot faster.

Me: If you think about the gaming scene and computersports, like esports - could you think about a strength that it has compared to normal sports. Something thats better?

7: Especially these esports is more for a different user group. The normal user which is gaming, is never interested in regular sports, like football. If you ask around here who's interested in football - it's very few. With esports, they target a very different group of people, who were in the past just left out, just ignored. Now they got something for them. Especially the young group.

[04.16] Me: Exactly. It's mostly the young generation? Not a lot of old people into esports.

7: Yes! It's perfect.

Me: So, if you could say something about how it could improve? How could gaming conventions or esports competitions get better?

7: Yeah, they can get better. They can get more widely spread. It's very hard to get news on it, if you don't watch some specific news sites. In Germany there's ARD Tage-show which is the most viewed news.

Me: That's like regular news?

[05.00] 7: Yes, regular news, and also about sports. But not about esports. They said something about GamesCom, just because Angela Merkel opened GamesCom yesterday.

Me: So it seems like it's a lot about marketing?

7: Yes, also most of the people think esports is for nerds or for kids. It's not widely accepted in the community.

Me: Yeah, that seems true. I just have two more for you. Now that we're talking about the problems with esports and then maybe the opportunities. Where do you see esports and gaming conventions going in the next years?

7: I think it will get bigger. I think Cologne is a very good place for it to get bigger in the future and I think they will get bigger. They will get more well known. There will be more competitions for esports in the world and also prices will rise, so there's more to win.

[06.17] Me: More prize-money?

7: Yes, so it will have more competitors, so there will be more people involved in esports because of the rising price and also because of the rising fame. Today was a political round inside GamesCom, so it will be more accepted in politics and the community.

Me: So there was a political round. Could you tell me more about it?

7: Because there's a government election in septemper, so thats why they do these political things.

Me: To get the young people?

7: Yeah, exactly - to get these young people to vote for them. Also, I think that's Angela Merkel opened GamesCom yesterday, for the first time ever.

Me: Ahh, she opened GamesCom or something like that?

[07.09] 7: Yeah, she officially opened GamesCom. Like she for SeaWorld or IAA. Which is our very famous exhibitions. Yesterday was the first time ever for GamesCom, I think it's because elections are on the way.

Me: Yeah, it's the biggest gaming convention in world, so... What would you think are the problems, or the challenges, for the growth of esports?

7: At first, infrastructure. You can see, if you go outside here - the parking problem. The city of Cologne is currently putting cars away because they blocked some important roads, and I think they got tickets for at least 25-30-40 cars.

[08.01] Me: Out in this parking lot?

7: Yes, the parking lot was already full when we came here this morning. So a lot of people just parked and blocked the way. So, now they are putting the cars away.

Me: Specifically in Cologne, you think it's infrastructure?

7: Yeah, it's infrastructure - and then they have to manage all the mass of people. For security, but also for food and everything else you need.

Me: So it's basically the organisation - because it's growing so fast?

7: Yeah, it's growing fast. You have a very big mass of people and if they panic, you want to be somewhere else.

Me: That's true.

[08.54] 7: There has been an event in Germany, where this happened, in 2011. I think about 15 people died and 300 people were injured because there was some panic inside a very big group of people at Love Parade in Duisburg 2011.

Me: Ok, I'll have to look that up.

7: Yeah, it's very big for raving music and there was a panic inside a large mass of people.

Me: Ah, that's not good. But actually, that's all I have for you. Thanks a lot.

Appx. 1.8. Female, 21, German
[00.03] You're 21?

8: Yes.

Me: And where are you from?

8: Germany.

Me: How far did you travel to get here?

8: 435km.

Me: Ok, that's quite a trip. So, where do you come from in Germany?

8: Freiburg.

Me: That's west?

8: That's all the way in the south. On the border between germany and france.

Me: Ok, my german geography is not that good.

8: That's ok.

Me: Why did you come to GamesCom?

8: For my friends!

Me: Like, do you come here for the games or the competitions?

8: Yes of course, I'm a gamer, so I'm interested in it - and in Germany, conventions aren't like in America.

[01.02] Me: You can join, it's ok.

8: (Laughs) Just ignore my friends. And it's the nearest thing to there is to a convention. Because in Freiburg there is nothing like this computer games stuff. And all my friends live on the way here, so. Stuttgart and so on.

Me: So, since you're here - and you're not here specifically for esports - are you gonna watch any of the competitions?

8: Yeah, I will watch Overwatch esports. I basically started. I wasn't that interested in esports. But since Overwatch, because I played competitive games.

Me: Oh, you have a D.VA jacket on, I totally didn't notice.

[02.00] 8: Since Overwatch, so like for one year, I've been interested in watching competitive Overwatch league.

Me: Yeah, I hear they are starting up now with big teams and all that.

8: Yeah and that's pretty fun.

Me: I've watched a few matches, but I haven't played it yet. I'll have to get a better computer.

8: Yes!

Me: Would you actually travel for esports specifically? Like if there was an Overwatch competition in Germany? Would you go there?

8: If it wasn't too far, yes. If they had an esports team or a competitive game here at GamesCom I'd love to watch it.

Me: There aren't anything from Overwatch? No showmatches?

8: No, not even that. I saw the German team on the stage, but....

Me: But nothing else?

8: No.

Me: That's sad.

8: I really thought they would make something else.

Me: That's how that is. In your own words, what would you say the difference is between esports and regular sports?

[03.05] 8: I do esports, but I don't do sports. (Laughs) Because I'm so bad at everything, I could run down this road and trip three times and die, down that way.

Me: Well, if you could tell us something like the difference regular sports and esports, maybe something like the community or how easy it is to get into?

8: I think the community is pretty similar. Of course it's competitive and I did tournaments in fencing for a few years and it was the same kind of pressure on you.

Me: Like playing Overwatch?

8: Yes! If you were really good. I mean, we're not that good because we don't play regularly, but if I'm really in to it and I really want to win, I can feel the same pressure.

[04.05] Like fencing? So it's just like fencing for you. Same kind of competitiveness?

8: Yes.

Me: That's cool. Can you think of a strength when you think of esports as a live entertainment thing, compared to regular sports. Is there something that's better?

8: It's very inclusive, because if you have a disability or something else. Because, I'm not really healthy in that department and that sometimes slows me down. Because I have to watch for my body things, and stuff like that. I don't have to do that in esports.

Me: Of course, there's something for everyone in that sense.

8: Yes!

Me: That's cool. Seeing as you've come here, and you would actually want to watch something like live esports. How do you think it could get better? What's needed?

[05.00] 8: Uhm... What would make it better for me personally: I would like to see more female gamers in esports.

Me: Yeah. That's also kind of why I asked you guys, eh, girls. Because I haven't been able to find that many girls today in order to ask them.

8: (Laughs) Haha, oh what? In the GamesCom camp?

Me: There are some. But I've been getting mostly male interviews today, but that's how it is. So, more female competitors?

8: Yes!

Me: That would also get more market value, attract more of the female crowd.

8: Because I'd love to see female competitive gamers, because even with us and our competitive games, we have to hear shit - and that's just crazy. I mean, because we try to speak over voicechat or something like that.

Me: "A girl in a game?!"

[06.00] 8: Oh my god. Just shut up and play the fucking game. Friend: I once had a dude who just threw the second he realised I was a girl. He just said GG in the chat and just jumped of.

Me: So he left your team?

8's friend: He was in my team, and he heard in the voicechat that I was a girl and the second he realised, he just wrote "GG easy" and started jumping off the map. Killing himself.

Me: That's sad.

8's friend: I also think in regular sports, there are differences between male and female players. Like in football or running something, there are physical differences - and in esports we are all equal, everyone can be a good player. A female player can be as good as a male player.

[06.53] 8: The thing that slows one down, is this pressure behind you, because if you're not that good you get flamed for it because you're a girl. And then you don't really want to get better, because all you can hear is that probably you're a girl and blah blah.

[07.20] Me: They blame the sex instead of the skills?

8's friend: I heard the best Mercy player in the world is a girl - and they told her: "Oh, of course a girl is maining a healer. She's playing a healer. Because girls can only play support heroes." But also, the best Zarya player in the world is a 17-year old girl.

Me: Zarya is the pink haired russian?

8's friend: Yes. Zarya is a really skill based hero.

8: And I play Farrah.

Me: The flying one with the rocket launcher?

8: Yes!

[08.00] Me: I've not really tried the game, don't have a good enough computer, only watched some guys play it a little. But I think my new computer can play it, but I'm trying to focus on my master.

8: Maybe after you finish your master then!

Me: Then the last one: What do you think are the biggest challenges when it comes to growing esports - as a live spectator sport maybe? What's the big problem you're seeing?

8's friend: I think people don't really see it as a sport. It's like chess or something. They think sport is something to do with physical activity, where always have to do like, running or something.

8: Yes - and if you say esports to someone else, they say like "Yeah...." and they don't take it seriously.

Me: That's my trouble in this master's like: Esports?

[09.01] 8: Yeah, what?

Me: Then I have to explain for five minutes.

8's friend: In Europe especially, you don't really have that much exposure for people who are not normally into esports.

Me: Yeah, it seems it's mostly in America and not as big in Europe yet.

Appx. 1.9. Male, 23, German (Living in Austria)

[00.07] Me: What's your age?

9: 23

Me: Where are you from?

9: Germany.

Me: How far did you travel to get here?

9: 750km

Me: Where from in Germany?

9: I was born in Germany, but I live in Austria.

Me: Why did you come to GamesCom?

9: For the camping and the games. We want to test and look at all the new games at GamesCom.

[01.00] Me: For the games basically. Seeing as you're here for the games, are you gonna watch any of the competitions? The matches?

9: No, just for the games.

Me: No? Ok, just for the games to try them.

9: That, and new friends.

Me: That's also a good thing. Seeing as you're not interested in watching any of the competitions here. What would make you interested in watching competitive gaming? Can you think of anything?

9: No, not really.

Me: No? That's fine. Could you then maybe try, in your own words, say the difference between competitive computer gaming and regular sports? Like, what's the difference.

9: I don't see any difference, it's the same. Only you're sitting in front of a PC and playing - and do the same thing as other sports. So, that's my mind. I don't see a difference between esport and sports.

[02.11] Me: Then, if we're talking about esports as a phenomenom, could you think of a strength, something that's better than computer gaming and esports compared to regular sports?

9: Can you repeat this?

Me: Can you think of something that's better about esports compared to regular sports? Maybe something like the community, how easy it is to try or maybe that anybody can find a game they like, compared to sports maybe.

9: Hmm.. That's a good question, let me think. I don't know how I should say it. I think it's that anybody can find their game and watch it - and support it. Not like football or other sports. (Speaks German with his friends for a bit) I don't really know.

[03.45] Me: How do you think this can get better? Do you think there's anything that could get better, so you would actually go watch esports matches? If it was near you, in Austria and it was a game you like?

9: I think it could get better if there were more focus on small tournaments, for amateurs. So the amateurs could try and get better through real tournaments with ESL and esports. What I see is that the pros only play ESL and the amateur leagues is too small.

[04.55] Me: So, more fun events for everybody? So people can find out they like it.

9: Yes!

Me: Ok, cool! Two more questions. Do you see opportunities for gaming conventions and esports to get bigger? Do you think it will get bigger, or stay the same?

9: I think it should stay the same, because, like GamesCom so many games, so many people and no time. If you want to play or test some games, you have to stay for 2-3 hours for one game, with 10 minutes of gameplay. Over four days, it's not enough time! It should be less people, but more time for games.

[05.49] Me: Yeah, that's also something they can get better at then - make sure everybody gets to play. Instead of waiting all day. More play, basically. The last thing would be - what do you think is the challenge. What's the problem, for esports or gaming conventions? Is it because nobody knows about it, only young people or?

[06.30] 9: My thoughts are that it is just for younger people, or the younger generations. It needs to get on television and make more advertisements, so it could get more popular.

Me: So it's basically marketing?

9: Yeah, right, right! More people need to know. Esports is rising!

Me: That's a good answer, it's hard to find, unless you know where to look. That's everything, thanks!

Appx. 1.10. Male, 28, German
[00.04] Me: Your age?

10: 28

Me: Where are you from?

10: Germany

Me: So, how far did you travel to get here?

10: In kilometers or hours?

Me: That's up to you, kilometers would be nice, but it doesn't matter.

10: Around 500km, from east germany.

Me: Ok, that's quite a way.

10: Around seven hours in a train.

Me: Oh, you took the train. Can you point out why you came to GamesCom?

10: Our holiday. We've been camping for three years here. Going into the city, to GamesCom, have fun with people.

Me: So you see GamesCom during the day and then some of the days you go watch the city?

10: Yes!

[01.00] Me: Ok, it's also pretty cheap camping in the middle of Köln. Very nice. Ok, so you came for everything basically. Are you gonna watch any of the competitions?

10: A little bit. The world cup of World of Warcraft and if there were Overwatch here in Cologne, I would watch it.

Me: I don't think there is any Overwatch here.

10: No.

Me: So, if it was here, you would watch it.

10: Yes.

Me: Would you actually travel to see esports specifically?

10: No, but I want to.

Me: So maybe some time in the future?

10: Yes.

Me: And, in your own words, can you try and explain the difference between normal sports and esports? Or maybe some similarities.

[02.01] 10: Difference between these two is, esports, the companies own the games. Real sport, the sports are for everyone. Nobody can say that football, you can't play it. Otherwise it's the same for me.

Me: That's what I've been hearing from people. It's a good point that the games are owned by the companies, nobody pointed that out yet.

Me: Can you think of a strength, something good about esports, that you don't find in normal sports? Maybe something like the people playing or how easy it is to start playing it or anything really?

[03.05] 10: The only thing is, you need a PC. If you don't have any money - you can play free games.

Me: Yes, even on smartphones there's esports these days. I learnt that today.

10: Ok, something new for me.

Me: So you just need a pc. How do you think esports can improve as a live event? What could get better?

10: Spread them out. Overwatch is the best example. Spectator mode is shitty. If there's someone who's new to it, that don't know Overwatch, you can't understand the game.

[04.04] Me: So you need better explanations for new people?

10: Yes! CS:GO is much better.

Me: It also seems easier to understand because of the different heroes and all that. I can see that. So, you'd say that you need to understand it, before you find it interesting, whereas football is the goal you understand.

10: The round thing, into the square thing.

Me: That's true. Then I just have two more for you. So where would you see the biggest opportunity for esports, coming up?

10: Biggest opportunity, hmm...

Me: Yeah, would it be something like: growing it in europe or would it be like trying to get the older generation into it?

10: I feel that in the past, it's growing very nice. Every year there is more and more and more. I'm sorry, I only talk about Overwatch, but it's the thing I'm interested in watching.

[05.03] Me: Everything is growing. I mean, that's how it is, everybody has their game.

10: It's very nice. Blizzard wanted every team to have financial security.

Me: Ah, for the new Overwatch league?

10: About 80k or 60k pr. year, minimum. You can spend more if you want.

Me: So that's for the players, in the teams? That's pretty cool.

10: Yes. And healthcare and all the things.

Me: So, it's like a professional sports team.

10: Yes! It's like a normal job.

Me: That's very nice. So, you're seeing it getting closer and closer to regular sports?

10: Yeah!

Me: Cool - and then the last thing I would like to ask you. What do you think is the biggest challenge?

10: Showing people who didn't play PC or videogames, in order to find it interesting. So many people watch football and never played.

Me: That's a good point. It's hard to get people in to it, if they don't understand it. That's a good idea. Actually, that's everything I have to ask you. Thank you!

Appx. 1.11. Males, 29 & 28, Switzerland

[00.06] Me: Can I have your ages?

11: I'm 29.

Me: And you?

11: 28

Me: And you're both male, that's pretty easy. You're both from Germany?

11: No, Switzerland!

Me: Ah, Swiss! So, how far did you travel to get here? Did you travel from Switzerland?

11: About 700km. About 700 yeah. It took more than seven hours, with traffic jams and burning cars, really.

Me: We also had quite some traffic jams near Hamburg, for some reason.

11: No, Hamburg was not on our way.

Me: No, we did.

[01.02] 11: Ah, you did! You came by car?

Me: Yes, me and my brother in law. We came by car yesterday.

11: How far did you travel?

Me: Something like 700-800km, something like that. From northern Denmark, down to here.

11: That's very far.

Me: Yes, but it was also very pretty. So, you've been to GamesCom before?

11: No, first time.

Me: Ah, me too. So, why did you come here?

11: He invited me.

11: Yes, it was my gift for him. His birthday.

Me: Oh, cool. Good gift.

11: Yes, absolutely the best.

Me: So, what did you come here for? In that sense, did you come here for new games or for all the free loot or?

[02.01] 11: No, it was just spontaneous. The idea came really spontaneous. We was never here before. But we talked about it, and we just wanted to come here - and this was our chance.

Me: Yeah, it's also a good place to have a holiday.

(German speaking for a while, somebody offering noodles)

Me: So, are you going to watch any of the competitions while you're here? If you walk by them, would you stop and see the esports competitions?

11: Yes, of course! Esports, I'm very interested in esports!

[03.00] 11: Me too.

Me: Ok, cool. Are there any of the competitions here you want to watch?

11: Maybe the World of Warcraft Arena one.

Me: They're playing everyday, or?

11: Yes - tomorrow they start, and Saturday is the final.

Me: Oh, ok.

11: But I don't think we're gonna watch all of that.

Me: There's lots of things to see.

11: Also, the Player Unknown Battlegrounds.

Me: Oh yeah, the invitational thing. That's on saturday, right?

11: I don't know.

Me: I don't either. It's someday. Ok, that's cool.

11: And Starcraft too!

Me: Ok, that's my game too.

11: Oh! I'm sure you know Bunny.

Me: Yes, of course. But he's not that good anymore. He stopped playing for school.

11: I think he's got problems...

[04.02] Me: Wrist problems maybe?

11: Isn't he epileptic?

Me: Oh, I don't know. There's also German ones, TLO, Hasuobs and Heromarine.

11: Hasuobs is not playing Starcraft 2 anymore.

Me: Yeah he's playing Heroes of the Storm. That's pretty rare to meet people that like Starcraft 2. Because it's kinda small in that sense.

11: I played the campaign.

11: It's dying, come on. They kicked it out last year, of the ESL.

Me: Yeah, it's tough. Maybe Starcraft: Remastered can save it a little, if they do some crossover things. But it's getting smaller and smaller. That's how it is.

11: Yes.

[05.04] Me: It's also an old game.

11: Yes, mostly in the Korean scene.

Me: They are way too good also.

11: Yes, it's crazy!

Me: So, would you actually travel for esports? Like, would you go watch just esports somewhere? Not for GamesCom, but like Dreamhack or...

11: When it's near, of course! Why not!

Me: Yeah, I mean, cool.

11: But I won't travel to Los Angeles or something, it's too far.

Me: I mean, it has to be somewhat close.

11: Yeah! 600km.

Me: "Close" - within 600km, I'll write that. And if you had to try and explain the difference between normal sports, like football and handball and curling, whatever - and then esports, what would you say the differences are?

[06.11] 11: I would say, not everyone has the same talents. That's why I think esports is different from normal sports.

Me: Yeah, it's less physical in that sense.

11: Yes. It's a chance for people who has a handicap to do something.

Me: That's true.

11: And at the moment, it's very hard to do it in Europe. It's on its way, but it's not that far as it is with normal sports.

Me: Yeah, it's still a niche in that sense.

11: But I think it's growing.

Me: Yeah, it's growing every year, there's new esports growing up all the time.

11: And new games.

[07.02] Me: Can you think of, you already talked about it, a strength that esports has compared to normal sports? When it comes to live entertainment. Something that's better, if you have to go and watch an esports match.

11: Sometimes, I don't know, I like watching FIFA more than normal football. I don't know why.

Me: Maybe you can relate to how hard it is?

11: Yeah, maybe.

Me: I mean, normal football is tough, but you know how hard it is to play very well in FIFA. That's how I relate to Starcraft. I played a little bit, and then you see somebody who's really good at it. So you see, they're way better than me, in every sense. That's the way I find it interesting.

11: But you start to get better, by watching their playstyle. This is also a point. You are learning the skills from other people.

[08.06] Me: Yeah, if you compare it to normal sports, where you see Cristiano Ronaldo play football - you can see the tricks, but you can't do them. Because you need the extremely good footskills and all that.

Me: How do you think esports could improve, as a spectator sport, what could get better?

11: It's difficult. I don't think they have to change a lot, they are beating a lot of sports already. Twitch is a good point. I think it's gotten very good since twitch came online. There you can watch streamers streaming. Youtube also.

Me: Yeah, youtube gaming is coming up.

11: It also grows with the next generations; the kids of tomorrow grow up with games. They want to see esports, they want to do esports.

[09.05] Me: That's true, grows with the next generation. I also heard that disney just bought some kind of streaming platform. They want to do some gaming thing as well. Disney money is a big thing. That's true, that it grows with the next generation, it's a really good point.

Me: I only have two more questions for you guys, then you can get back to eating. What would you see the biggest opportunities for esports growth? More local competitions or would it be, the need to catch the older crowd? Where are the opportunities?

[10.00] 11: I don't think you can catch the older people, I don't think so. They don't understand why people are doing this. My father can't understand it.

Me: My parents neither. Anything else? Where's the next big thing? Maybe mobile esports or the local government creating clubs?

11: Maybe a world tournament.

Me: Like a world tournament?

11: Yeah, not only from specific teams. Right now you can create teams with different people from different countries. But maybe if it was like a world championship where you were playing countries against countries.

Me: So it's teams from each country?

11: Yes!

Me: That could be, anything is valid. Where would you think the challenge would be? Where's the trouble?

[11.06] 11: To create other growing games. Because, at the moment I think, DOTA and League of Legends they dominate. And FIFA! Other games can't catch the amount of people or the amount of money for the price.

Me: So you have to be a big game developer to make the big games?

11: Yes, you need new innovations, because people are getting tired of watching LOL or DOTA.

Me: That's true.

11: In ten or maybe twenty years, they are dying. Maybe not. But you always need some new thing.

[12.00] Me: So it's basically just the challenge of creating new games that will catch the crowd. It'll be sad when Starcraft dies out and I have to find a new game to watch.

Me: Actually, that's everything I have. Thanks a lot!

Appx. 1.12. Female, 20, German

[00.01] Me: Can I get your age?

12: I'm 20.

Me: Where are you from?

12: Germany

Me: So, how far did you travel to get here?

12: 20 minutes.

Me: Why did you come to GamesCom?

12: For the feeling I think.

Me: So you're going to try all the new games and get stuff from each booth?

12: Yes.

Me: Seeing as you're here, are you going to watch any of the competitions?

12: We're a lot at the Ubisoft stage and the stage contests.

[01.02] Me: Ok, so you're going to watch the cosplay contests?

12: Yes

Me: Ok, cool. Not any of the gaming competitions?

12: I don't think so.

Me: No, ok. That's cool. Can you think of anything that might make you travel for it? Would you ever go and watch esports?

12: No, I don't think so.

Me: Maybe then, if you can try and compare esports with regular sports, like football and everything. Could you try a difference between regular sports and computer sports?

12: I have to think about it.

Me: Yeah, don't worry, no pressure.

12: I'm not a sport person, but I think computer sport is different. I would do it because I don't have to go outside. I can just put it on my computer and play it.

[02.04] Me: So it's the comfort of your own home?

12: Yes, I think so.

Me: Can you think of something that's better about the competitive gaming scene, compared to regular football? Anything like the community or how easy it is to get in to?

12: I think there isn't really a difference. I don't think so.

Me: That's fine. That's a valid answer. No difference.

Me: Seeing as you're not willing to go to esports events, can you think of something that could get better? So you would maybe go to one? Anything, like more local events?

12: It's just sports. I'm not interested in sports.

Me: Seeing as it is here, maybe if they combined it with something else?

[03.03] 12: I think the people. They have to be interesting and funny or something like that. I would watch it because of the people, not because of the sport.

Me: Ok, that's a good answer. Just two more questions for you. So, where do you see it going in the future? What are the biggest opportunities. Do you think it will grow?

12: I think it could be really big, yes.

Me: And how do you see that? Is it the older generation or is it all kids?

12: I think, in some years - the kids are older, so the people that start with this are all older. And I don't think that people who are old now are gonna play it.

Me: I think that's true. Just one more. What do you think are the biggest challenge for the growth of things like this? Esports and gaming conventions.

[04.09] 12: I think the people that didn't grow up with it.

Me: So, the people that don't know anything about it - basically? It's also something about insight, you have to know what the games are to be interested in it?

12: I don't think so. If you want to play it, you get a tutorial about it and so you can learn it. You don't have to know everything about it.

Me: Cool. That's actually everything. Thanks a lot!

Appx. 1.13. Female, 20, German

[00.04] Me: Ok, and how old are you?

13: 19... 20! I'm 20, I'm 20!

Me: Good you remember - and female. So how far did you travel to get here?

13: One hour.

Me: From which city?

13: From Essen.

Me: And why did you come here?

13: Because I'm interested in various genres. Games like Dragon Ball, Life is Strange...

Me: So you came here to try the new games?

13: Just to look, I'm not a trier.

Me: Also maybe to get some of the gear from the booths and see some of the competitions and stuff? So, are you going to watch any of the gaming competitions while you're here?

[01.01] 13: No, not really.

Me: That's fine. Just to look. Can you think of anything that could get you to watch them. Anything like, if they combined it with something else or if they were close to you?

13: No.

Me: That's fine. Seeing as I'm trying to compare it with regular sports, like football and all that. Can you tell me, in your own words, a difference between normal sports and computer sports?

13: I mean, you have to be very fit for normal sports. I'm not in the condition to play football, because I would be out of breath really quickly. Virtual games you just have to sit down and have the tricks with your fingers.

Me: So it's more mental?

13: Yes!

[02.04] Me: If you can think of a strength, we already kind of talked about it, but maybe something that's better about computersports/esports compared to physical sports? Maybe the people, or how easy it is to get in to?

13: Yeah, it doesn't take as much time to get to know a game compared to football.

Me: So it's easier to get into basically?

13: Yeah!

Me: How would you think it could improve, as a live experience like this?

13: Maybe virtual reality.

Me: For the people watching?

[03.00] 13: Playing. Yeah.

Me: For the people playing, ok. So, more virtual reality.

Me: Then I just have two more questions for you. How do you see it growing in the future? Do you see it getting bigger - or do you see it stay the same?

13: I think it will get bigger!

Me: Yeah? Cool. What do you then think is the biggest problems? The biggest challenge for growing it in the future?

13: Never thought of that.

Me: Maybe something like: It's hard for the older people get in to it, or you have to know the game to find it interesting?

13: Maybe for the older generations to get into it. It's more for younger people.

Me: So it's still a niche in that sense.

[03.59] 13: Yes!

Me: That's everything, thanks.

Appx. 1.14. Male & Female, 20 & 21, German

[00.06] Me: What's your ages?

14: 20 and 21.

Me: 20 and 21, ok. Male and female. And you're both from germany?

14: Yes.

Me: How far did you travel to get here?

14: Three hours.

Me: Three hours - from which city?

14: Bremen.

Me: Bremen, cool. That's quite a while. Bremen to Köln. Why did you come here? For the games or anything?

14: Yes. For the games and the loot.

Me: The free loot is always good. So you're going to try the booths and try everything basically?

14: Sometime.

Me: Yeah, I mean, it's a long wait time.

14: If we don't have to wait too long.

Me: So you're just here to try everything basically.

[01.03] Me: If you're here, and all the gaming competitions are going on, will see some of them? Some of the esports competitions?

14: I would like to see Hearthstone.

Me: Ok, Hearthstone. Cool. I think that's today isn't it?

14: Tomorrow.

Me: So you're here to see some esports maybe?

14: Yeah!

Me: Seeing as this is combined with everything, games and esports. Would you ever consider going to watch just esports?

14: I think not.

Me: No? That's fine. But is there anything that could make you interested in going? If it was closer to you or maybe if you got free Hearthstone cards/packs or something like that?

[02.05] 14: Many of friends like counter-strike, so if I would go here with my friends maybe I would then.

Me: So maybe if it was a social thing?

14: Yes!

Me: Ok, so with friends. Seeing as I am trying to compare regular sports, like football and stuff like that with esports. So if you could try and explain to me a difference between regular sports and esports? Maybe that it's less physical or easier to get in to?

14: We're not really interested in sports.

Me: No, maybe a difference between the two? Different groups of interests?

[02.58] 14: I think that the main problem is that is not that common, esports.

Me: It's still very niche. Not known enough. Compared to normal sports. Can you then maybe think of something that's better about esports than normal sports?

14: You don't have to move. You can stay in your home.

Me: Yeah ok, that's cool. You can stay home. Maybe the people are nicer and there's a game for everyone?

14: Yeah, there's only so many different sports, but sooo many different games.

Me: So, how do you think things could get better?

[04.00] 14: Nothing. It's perfect.

Me: Nothing? It's ok with the wait times.

14: Yes, you don't have to see everything. I think it's ok.

Me: That's a valid answer. Then just two more questions. Where do you see the biggest opportunities for development like this in the future? Do you think it will get better and spread all over Europe or...? How do you see gaming conventions and esports in the future?

14: Maybe it will spread more, in Europe. It is getting bigger.

Me: It is getting bigger, so you would think that. That's true. Seeing as we're trying to think about how it's developing in the future, what do you see is the big problem? The challenge with getting bigger?

[05.08] 14: It's quite expensive. There are so many cliches, or stereotypes, about gaming culture. People already have an opinion. So it's hard for people to understand and get in to.

Me: Yeah, it seems that it needs to get more mainstream appeal. Actually, that's everything. Thanks!

Appx. 1.15. Male, 21, German

[00.04] Me: Can I ask how old you are?

15: I'm 21.

Me: Ok, 21 - and you're male. Where are you from?

15: I'm from Bavaria.

Me: Ok, you're german. How far did you travel to get here?

15: About 450km.

Me: That's quite far. What's the nearest city?

15: Nearest city is Guttenborg.

Me: Ok. Why did you come to GamesCom?

15: I'm a huge gaming fan, most of my freetime I play. I have some other hobbies, but it's not much.

Me: So it's for the new games? Anything specific you wanna try?

15: The new Monster Hunter World.

Me: Ah, there's a big que I see.

[01.03] 15: I think I'll try it tomorrow. Come there at 10 o'clock when it begins. So there aren't so many people.

Me: I think that's a good plan, going to see what you want to see first.

Me: So, you're not here to watch esports. But if you walked by the competitions, would you still watch them?

15: Yes, if it's a game that interests me, like Player Unknowns Battleground or..

Me: I hear they have a big invitational here.

15: Yeah, then I would watch it. I play it myself. I like it. It's a really nice game.

Me: It seems fun, my computer is not good enough to play it, but maybe someday.

Me: So, do you think you would travel to watch Player Unknown near you? For esports only?

[01.59] 15: No, not only esports. I must say that I play the games instead of look at others play the games. Because it's more fun for me. And I think most people who watch them, try to copy the good

players - and I want to find my own ways of playing. Sometimes watching it, yes, but not on every possibility.

Me: Yeah, ok. So if it was combined with something like this. You would watch it?

15: Yes!

Me: Ok, cool. I'll write that. In my thesis, I'm trying to compared esports with regular sports. Could you try, in your words, explain the difference between normal sports and esports?

15: The difference? I have to think. This is interesting.

[03.00] Me: No pressure.

15: To make some differences. I think esports is pretty much the same like real sports. So, for real sports you have to train. For esports you have to train. So I think there are not many differences. You have to like a game to play it for several hours. It's not like I play something for 200 hours and then I make a break and can then play other games. For normal sports, you can already do other sports arts. It may be helpful for other things. If I play Player Unknown Battlegrounds like a pro, I can also play Rocketleague because it helps me in a way for battlegrounds.

[04.01] Me: And it's fun also?

15: Yes, and it helps me in a way.

Me: And also, your skills also work in both, because you know how the mouse and keyboard works. So it's easier to switch between?

15: Yeah, that's true.

Me: Can you then maybe think of a strength - something good about esports, compared to normal sports? Something that's better.

15: Something thats better... Hmm.

Me: Maybe something like the people, the community or how easy it is to get in to?

15: I think in esports, it's easier to get in to the community. If you have internet access, it's very easy to get contact to the community. You can find forums to talk about it. It's very easy to get into the community.

[05.03.] Me: Compared to normal sports where you have to join a club and everything?

15: Yes.

Me: How do you think something like this can get better, as a live spectator event? What do they need to get better at?

15: Get better at? For something like GamesCom, I think there should be something that could block the sound from the other stages, so you can only hear the sound from the game you like to watch. Because, if you're in the middle of the hall, you hear everything.

Me: So, more soundproofing basically?

15: Yes, it is the first thing I would try to improve. So you can concentrate more on the game you're watching or playing. Otherwise, not very much can be improved, I think.

[06.00] Me: I just have two more questions. How do you see the biggest opportunities in the future for gaming conventions and esports? Do you think it will get bigger?

15: Yes, I think it will grow much bigger. Because of the new youth, they grow up with this technology. Like VR devices. They will have a whole lot of new communities where people join, so I think it will grow much in the next 30 years, like 10 times compared to how it is now.

Me: Yeah, that's valid, it's your opinion. I think it'll grow, that's true.

15: I don't think this marketplace with video games and esports will decrease, I don't think so. It will only improve.

[07.03] Me: And then the last thing. What do you think is the biggest challenge? When we're talking about growing esports, trying to get it out to everyone. Is it the mainstream appeal, because it's still a niche or what's the challenge?

15: The challenge? To grow, I think, sometimes you have to try something new. So, if you think of a new concept. To reach out to people, not only the mainstream, but with a new playing method, it should be very easy. It should be interesting for more players.

Me: So you think is to find new games to lure in new players. So the challenge is to get people interested, because it's still small.

15: Yes, yes, yes!

[08.00] Me: I think that's true. Because you have to know the game, to be interested in it, you have to play it a little maybe - and then you find it interesting.

15: Yes.

Me: That's everything, thank you a lot!

Appx. 1.16. Female, 29, German

[00.03] Me: Can I ask how old you are?

16: I'm 29.

Me: Ok. Where are you from?

16: From Germany.

Me: Ok! So how far did you travel to get here?

16: About 300km.

Me: Ok, from which city?

16: Osnabruck.

Me: Osnabrück, ah, I drove through that here.

Me: Why did you come to GamesCom?

16: Out of interest. It's the first time we're here, and we wanted to see everything.

Me: Cool. Seeing as you're here for everything, are you going to watch some of the competitions? The gaming competitions?

16: Maybe, if we walk by. But we don't have anything on the plans especially.

Me: But if you see them, and it's interesting, you might stay?

16: If it's interesting, of course.

[01.00] Me: Can you think of something that would make you travel for watching competitions. Esports competitions?

16: Not really.

Me: No? Ok. It has to be combined with something like this?

16: Yeah!

Me: If it's here?

16: Yes, if it was here, but not alone.

Me: Cool. In my thesis, I'm trying to compare esports with regular sports. So, if you could try and explain a difference between esports and normal sports, like football, what's the difference?

16: I don't think there really is a difference, because you work in a team mostly, you have to train your skills and everything. So, it's sports.

Me: It's sports? Yeah, cool. No difference.

Me: Then, could you think of a strength that esports has, compared to normal sports? Something that's better? Maybe the people, or how easy it is to get in to or that there's a game for everyone.

[02.10] 16: Yes, that - and that it is easier to connect people around the world. It's not like you have to go as a team in your home village. You have more possibilities.

Me: Yeah, cool. So it's worldwide community?

16: Exactly.

Me: How do you think this can get better as a live event, where you come and watch people on stages and such? What could get better?

16: I haven't seen anything, so I really can't compare it to anything.

Me: Maybe something like GamesCom, what could get better here? The wait times or the food or.. anything?

16: The wait times are hard. So maybe that.

[03.01] Me: Wait times and ques, that's always hard.

Me: Just two more questions. How do you see the future for gaming competitions, gaming conventions and esports? Do you think it'll get bigger?

16: It's getting bigger.

Me: Do you think it'll spread out all over europe?

16: Yes, definitely.

Me: And the last thing: What do you think then is the challenge? We both agree that it'll get bigger, but where do you see the problem being. Maybe getting new people into it or it still being a niche, in that sense?

16: Yeah, I still think that there are many people who think that: "Ah, you're sitting in front of your PC for hours, doing nothing" That kind of stuff.

[04.04] Me: The image basically?

16: Yeah.

Me: Yeah, I see that, people still see it as not being social. That's everything I have, thanks a lot.

Appx. 1.17. Female, 18, German

[00.04] Me: So, how old are you?

17: I'm 19.

Me: You're 19. Ok, and female. Where are you from?

17: I'm from Berlin.

Me: So you're German.

17: Yeah!

Me: So how far it is it from Berlin to here?

17: I think 6 hours. 5-6 hours I think.

Me: That's a long trip.

17: It's ok.

Me: So, why did you come here?

17: I come here because I'm a cosplayer, and yesterday I was cosplaying - and I also love games.

Me: That's a good answer. So, are you going to go around and watch the booths?

17: Yeah, I tested some games, like Assasins Creed Origins and Ni No Kuni 2.

Me: Oh yeah, I saw that.

17: And project cars!

[01.04] Me: The one with the big screens. That was fun?

17: Yup! They just asked me if I wanted to play and they took pictures of me. So I don't have to wait.

Me: Oh, you were in costume?

17: No, no. It was today. I skipped the line. It was pretty cool.

Me: Awesome. So what were you cosplaying as?

17: Yesterday I was D.VA from Overwatch.

Me: Nice. I see a lot of D.VA's. So, since you're here, and you go by a stage with an esports competitions going on, would you watch?

17: No, I'm not interested. But last year I was in Japan, and that was cool. Like, it was called WCS. World Cosplay Summit - and that was cool.

Me: Oh, so that's more you thing - the cosplay part?

17: Yeah!

Me: So, would you ever consider going to actual competitions for the gaming part, or does it have to be combined with the cosplay and the gaming convention?

[02.06] 17: I can think of it. But I don't know. I could. Maybe.

Me: Maybe an Overwatch competition with cosplay?

17: Yes! Definitely - and maybe World of Warcraft.

Me: There's the arena thing here at GamesCom.

Me: The thing is, in my thesis I'm trying to compare regular sports like football and such, with esports. Could you explain a difference between regular sports and esports?

17: I'm not really into esports. But, it's not that hard to play computer games.

[03.04] Me: So you can play from home?

17: Yes! It's just easier. I'm really lazy, so esports is better for me.

Me: That's fine. You don't have to join a club or go out to training, you can just play from your computer.

17: Yeah, it's not that expensive.

Me: Can you think of anything that's better about computer gaming and esports, compared to regular sport live events?

17: I don't know. I'm not into sports.

Me: So it's the interest? That's fine. Maybe it's community?

17: The community, the gaming community is so salty.

Me: I guess that's true.

17: But, some of my friends are from World of Warcraft.

[04.00] Me: Some of them are not salty then.

17: Like, my best friends, I know them from World of Warcraft. Known them for, I think, five years. Pretty cool.

Me: Ok, that's pretty cool. So you met some real life friends, and you've met them also? So, what did you play in World of Warcraft?

17: I played everything.

Me: All the classes?

17: Mostly damage dealers, like the deathknight. I stopped with Warlords of Draenor.

Me: I stopped in vanilla, a real long time ago.

Me: Seeing something like this, what do you think could get better? Seeing as it is a live event?

17: I love GamesCom so far, but it's so many people. That's why I was here Tuesday, that was way better. I played a lot of games there.

[05.07] Me: Oh, on Tuesday? Two days ago.

17: Yeah, I was a trade visitor.

Me: Ah, very nice! So, all the booths were still here on Tuesday?

17: Yeah. Today I'm just walking around.

Me: So, too big - and too many people for you, basically?

17: Yeah, definitely.

Me: That's also the wait times, you don't want to sit and wait forever?

17: Yeah. Last year, for Battlefield One, I think the line lasted for 12 hours.

Me: But there's also Battlefield One this year, right?

17: I think so, yeah.

Me: I think it's the new expansion or something. Just two more questions.

Me: What do you see the biggest as opportunity for development like this? Do you think it'll spread out over Europe?

[06.03] 17: I think it will get bigger, and the gaming community will also get bigger and VR and everything that's in development.

Me: So you think it will just grow with the young people learning how to play? Cool.

Me: One more thing. What do you think the big problem is, the challenge, how do they break out of being a niche or? Where's the problem with getting it out into the mainstream?

17: Well, I think it's a little bit hard for the older people, because they don't understand it. That we love gaming.

Me: Yeah, it seems like you have to understand gaming, so you might have to play a little bit?

17: Yeah! My grandmother played for a while, while she was visiting me.

Me: What did she play?

[07.05] 17: It was a spacegame where you can build stuff.

Me: So she played a little bit and got interested?

17: Yeah!

Me: Well, that's cool. Well, actually that was everything I have. Unless you want to add anything.

17: No.

Me: Thanks a lot!

Appx. 1.18. Male, 17, German

[00.02] Me: You're 17? Male - and from germany?

18: Yeah!

Me: So, how far did you travel to get here?

18: About 350km.

Me: From which city?

18: Halle.

Me: So, why did you come to GamesCom?

18: Yeah, I'm interested in games. I play a lot of games. I also looked for some, what'd you call it, after school you study, and there are a lot of companies here who can help you find work.

[01.08] Me: Like internships and such?

Me: So you're here to watch everything basically, get some free loot?

18: Yeah, and play some games.

Me: So it's everything basically. Seeing as you're here at GamesCom, if you're walking by a stage where there's an esports competition happening. Would you stop and watch it?

18: If it's a game I'm interested in, sure.

Me: So if it's the right game?

18: Yeah!

Me: Seeing as this is combined gaming convention, esports, merch and all that. Would you ever travel just to watch a game, like an esports match?

18: Nah.

Me: If it was closer to you?

18: Yeah, if it was close, sure - and maybe if it's a team that I know.

[02.00] Me: In what game maybe?

18: In Rainbow Six. Otherwise, no. It's not just travelling.

Me: So if it was combined like this, like GamesCom, with both esports and other things?

18: Yeah.

Me: Ok. I'm trying to compare, regular sports and all that with esports, for my thesis. Can you try and explain, in your own words, a difference between football/regular sports and esports?

18: Well, football and regular sports needs fitness and... because I have some medical issues, I cannot do sports because I have asthma. So it's easier and it's a lot of fun to play with my dudes.

[03.08] Me: Yeah, of course. You don't have to join a football club, you can just play with your friends and you can still play the real game, in a sense.

18: Yeah!

Me: That's also into my next question. Trying to find something that's better. A strength for esports, compared to regular sports? Maybe something like community or there's something for everyone - or how easy it is to get in to, like we talked about.

18: I think the regular sport community is bigger, like football and such is huge. But the esports community is more like younger people, and maybe like people who played the same games and on the same skill level. If I watch a football match and the players are ridiculously good. But if I watch, I know Rainbow Six match, between two teams, I think "I can do this". Not so good, but almost.

[04.17] Me: But still, they went in the right window. I know that for next time. It's easier to imitate the good people, compared to football and such.

18: Yeah.

Me: How do you think a thing like this, GamesCom and esports events, could improve? What could get better?

18: I think it's perfect already, and I don't know what to improve. There's everything here. It's not just games, it's also game industry and all sorts of stuff.

Me: All the hardware people and so on.

[05.01] Me: So, maybe something like better spectator spots, so you can see better or anything like that?

18: Maybe more chill rooms to sit, because everywhere there's not a lot of this.

Me: Yeah, you'll have to find the beanbags, and they might be taken. That's true.

Me: So where do you see esports heading in the future? Do you think it'll get mainstream appeal?

18: It is worldwide already. I think, because our whole life is developing more digitally, it's going to become a lot more popular.

Me: So you think it'll actually get to mainstream appeal, it's almost there now?

18: It won't be as famous as regular sports.

[06.02] Me: But that has also been famous for hundreds of years.

18: Yeah, it will take some time.

Me: Do you think it'll grow in Europe too, not just in America?

18: If Germany gets better internet, sure.

Me: That's a big thing. You don't have good internet in Germany?

18: No, no, no.

Me: That's sad.

18: Well, we've got good internet, but if you live outside the town, no.

Me: Ah, that's unlucky. The last thing is, what do you think is the challenge with growing esports? How do you get it to grow even more, how do you reach new people? How do you get more people to be interested in it?

18: Maybe if you tried to, I don't know, make other games. Now there's a lot of shooter games.

[07.12] 18: And Mobas! Maybe if you tried to make other sorts of games. New genres.

Me: So, new genres of games basically. They need to find new ways of getting people interested in it? So that's the challenge?

18: Yeah!

Me: That's actually all I have for you. Unless you have something to add, about the future of esports or anything?

18: Well, if you consider the amount of people here, it's going pretty good.

Me: That's true. Thanks a lot!

Appx. 2.1
Transcription, Aalborg Events - Keld Rud

[00.03] Me: Dit navn er Keld Rud?

K: Ja.

Me: Nu i skulle arbejde med Geeks Gone Wild fornyligt, hvad er jeres primære rolle når det kommer til sådan noget som det?

K: Vi har haft en dialog med LAN-team nord, som er ansvarlig arrangør i nogle år. De har oprindeligt været ude i Frejlev hallen - og så kontaktede de os da de syntes det var ved at blive for småt. Så gav vi dem noget støtte og hjalp dem videre i Gistrup Hallen. Så syntes de faktisk, da de havde været i Gistrup Hallen og haft udsolgt der, at det også var for småt. Så det vi så har hjulpet dem med der er ligesom at komme på plads i Gigantium. Få lavet nogle aftaler og få kontrakten i stand. Så vi har hjulpet rigtig meget også omkring fundraising. Det er voldsomt meget dyrere at skulle lave sådan noget som Geeks Gone Wild i en hal som gigantium, ift. Gistrup Hallen. Så det har vi hjulpet dem med.

[00.59] K: Vi har hjulpet dem med markedsføring også, sponsorkoncepter og pressehåndtering har vi også hjulpet dem med. Vores spidskompetencer er de ting som er udenom, så når vi laver partnerskaber, så er det ofte sådan at de har forstand på fx. en sportsgren eller en-eller-anden hobby betonet ting. Som de så har fag ekspertisen indenfor, mens vi ved noget om myndighedsbehandling, økonomi, markedsføring og alle de her ting.

Me: Ok, så det er alt det uden omkring, og så hjælper i dem der har special-interessen?

K: Ja.

Me: Ok. Sådan noget som indendørs events, som ude i Gistrup hallen og Gigantium. Hvordan forestiller i at det skal trække turister til Aalborg? Altså, ser I det som en branding af byen - eller er det fordi at det er special-interesser. Eller, hvad tænker i?

K: Altså det vil jo typisk være, med den slags arrangement, at hvis der kommer nogen udefra - så er de her typisk mens det står på.

[02.07] K: Det er jo ikke som om at de tager en uge i Aalborg. Det er grunden til at de er her, og så overnatter mens sådan noget står på. Vi har tidligere haft andre arrangementer ude i Gigantium. Vi har haft en katte-udstilling og vi har haft nogle damer der laver kvilte tæpper. Det er nogle meget specifikke interesser hvor der er nogen som virkelig går op i noget - og så kan det også godt flytte dem nogle geografiske afstande, fordi det virkelig er deres hovedinteresse. Jeg tror lige præcis Geeks Gone Wild, nu har jeg ikke de data på deltagerne, det er Lan Team Nord der sidder inde med det tilmeldingsdata. Men mit indtryk er at langt hoveddelen er nogen der kommer fra Aalborg eller de tilstødende kommuner. Der kommer nogle enkelte udefra, fordi der kommer nogle elitehold og der er nogen som virkelig har en interesse for det, som rejser efter det. Men i første omgang så er det nærområdet, måske 80% eller 85%.

[03.08] K: Men gradvist som sådan noget vokser sig større, så vil man jo have større muligheder for, når navnet breder sig og arrangementet også får flere og flere aspekter til at tiltrække nogen udefra i højere grad.

Me: Det er jo selvfølgelig også i medium størelsen i skalaen, Geeks Gone Wild. Der jo fx. det som der har været i Odense, og så kan man jo tiltrække folk helt fra Hawaii åbentbart. Ok.

Me: Du siger i arbejder sammen med diverse, altså selve interesseorganisationen, dem som arrangerede eventet. Det var et tredages arrangement, ikke? Fra d. 12-14?

K: Det var fredag, lørdag og søndag ja.

Me: Havde I nogle samarbejdspartnere ift. dem der kommer til byen for overnatning eller hvad for nogle generelle samarbejdspartnere havde I?

[04.07] K: Altså, det har jo været sådan at vi har taget kontakt hvis der er nogle som skulle hjælpe. Primært har det været i forbindelse med den her fundraising, hvor vi har kunnet tage fat i nogle fonde og sådan noget. "Kan I ikke lige, når der kommer en ansøgning fra dem her, kan I ikke lige kigge på den? Det er ret vigtigt at vi kan få det til at lykkedes." Det er jo altid det sværeste. Lige omkring overnatning, så vil det jo typisk være sådan, at hvis en organisation har et ønske om at vi laver noget specifik overnatning så kan vi tage kontakt til byens hoteller. Dem har vi et samarbejde med ift. alle de events vi laver. Men det har ikke været tilfældet i forbindelse med Geeks Gone Wild.

Me: Siden det har været lokalområdet, så folk tager hjem igen eller?

K: De sover faktisk ude i Gigantium.

Me: Nå, der har simpelthen været overnatning.

K: Der har simpelthen været overnatning.

[05.01] Me: Det var jo selvfølgelig også et LAN-event, sådan. Det giver god mening. Så det har primært været fundraising og marketing omkring Geeks Gone Wild?

K: Vi havde faktisk lige, mod slutningen, en de selv havde taget kontakt til LAN Team nord, som meldte fra på noget overnatning, fordi de ikke kunne have alle til at sove i Gigantium. Så der var vi

med indover at prøve finde overnatning. De er sådan rimelig selvhjulpne ift. at finde en skole og overnatte der.

Me: Ok, nu ved jeg ikke hvor meget forstand du har på sektoren. Men hvis du skulle prøve at beskrive det event derude, for en som slet ikke kender til det, hvordan ville du beskrive det for dem?

K: Altså, grundkernen i det der foregik ude i Gigantium er: At der sidder 900, relativt unge mennesker, med deres egen computer, som spiller med og mod hinanden.

[06.08] K: Det er grund essensen - og det er også det som adskiller det fra andre ting i Danmark der har været større. Fordi der har det primært været at man kunne komme og kigge på professionelle spillere. Det her er vokset udaf at der nogen som sidder og spiller sammen med/mod hinanden, og så er den anden ting ligesom koblet på fordi det giver mening at man faktisk indledningsvis kan komme til at spille mod nogle elite-spillere, selvom man får tæv. Det er også lidt sjovt.

Me: Det ved jeg de også har blandet nede til det der var i Odense, der hedder OdinCon, hvor de så også har haft en LAN side af det - hvor der kom folk. Men så var der også en stor turnering blandet ind over det. Så det er jo en naturlig kobling.

Me: Hvis du skulle prøve at sammenligne den slags events med noget, fra jeres side af. Som du har sagt før, er det de der special interesser? De meget specifikke interesser, er det elller måske sådan noget som en håndbold turnering der varer over en weekend. Vil du sige de er de samme slags grupper af mennesker der kommer til det?

[07.23] K: Jeg tror det er et krydsfelt af man har nogen der har en sær-interesse, men det har også en karakter af at det er ligesom man deltog i et idrætsstævne, så kommer man i nogle hold og man dyster mod hinanden. På den måde har det en sammenlignlig karakter ift. nogle idrætsstævner, det er helt klart. Det er der ikke nogen tvivl om. Det der så bliver indtaget derude er cola og chips.

Me: Så det er jo ikke det sundeste.

[08.00] K: Ja. Så hvis man skal rubricere det segmentmæssigt, så ligger det nok tættere over i de der specialinteresser tænker jeg. Men det kan også godt have en karakter af, at det er lidt ligesom et idrætsstævne - og der var jo også nogle elitehold. AAB havde et elitehold til turneringen.

Me: Ja ok, jeg hørte også at FCK's North semi-professionelle akademi også var der. Så der har været lidt der var taget dertil.

K: Lan Team Nord har også et samarbejde med DGI om at udvikle Esport som en egentlig foreningssports aktivitet.

Me: Det er da spændende. Det er godt at høre at DGI vil være med til at udvikle det efterhånden. Eventet derude, kostede noget at være med?

[09.00] K: Jo, der var et deltager gebyr. Tror det kostede 400 hvis man købte billet inden 1. oktober og så steg det 50kr og 50kr igen, og så tror jeg det kostede 600kr hvis man købte det i døren - og en gæstebillet kostede 50kr eller 100kr på en partout. Der var 1000 gæster over hele perioden.

Me: Ja ok, det er jo alligevel også en ordentlig omgang. Så der var mulighed for at købe mad og sådan ude i Gigantium?

K: Det har der også været ja.

Me: De har også en lækker omgang derude. Men jeg regner med at folk selv tog noget mad, chips og cola med som du siger? Folk var måske også ude og handle lidt ind ind i mellem.

K: De gange da jeg var derude, var der en trafik af nogen der lige var oppe på den tank der ligger ikke så langt fra Gigantium. Men ellers så tror jeg også mange handlede i den kiosk derude hvor man kunne købe chips og sådan noget i.

Me: Så skal de ikke flytte sig så langt.

K: Ja.

[10.05] Me: Det giver også mening når man er der. Så der er rent faktisk en god mængde spendering af penge i løbet af begivenheden?

K: Ja det er der.

Me: Det er spændende nok at høre, selvom det er en ung aldersgruppe, så har de jo også tegnebogen med.

K: Det har de. De helt unge havde fået penge med af deres forældre.

Me: Fair nok. Du siger at viden hvorfra folk rejste dertil, det skal jeg snakke med Lan Team Nord om?

K: Ja, de kan give dig de demografiske detaljer og så videre. De vil også kunne give dig nogle tal på hvad der er blevet brugt. Så hvis du er interesseret i hvad forbruget har været. De får sikkert en procent fra Gigantium som står for selve kiosk delen. De ved også hvor mange måltider der var blevet solgt. Man kunne nemlig købe en morgenmåltids pakke, og så kunne man købe aftensmåltid fredag og lørdag. De ville kunne give dig et indblik i et forbrug der har været der.

[11.09] Me: Demografien er jo lidt spændende for at se om der rent faktisk er folk som kommer lidt længere væk fra end bare lige fra omkring aalborg, så er det jo lidt mere turisme relevant.

Me: Synes du at det var en succes derude?

K: Jeg synes bestemt det var en succes. Fordi der var en stor grad af tilfredshed blandt de der var derude - der var ikke noget der gik galt. Ved nogle af de andre esports begivenheder der har været i Danmark de forrige år, har der været problemer med netværket og sådan noget. Det oplevede vi slet ikke. Det eneste hvor vi kan sige det har været, det var svært at få nær så mange deltagere som vi egentlig havde plads til. Vi havde plads til 1500, der kom lidt over 900. Men hvis ser på de havde 600 i Gistrup hallen, så er det immervæk over 50%. Så hvis man kan have en tilsvarende vækst til næste år, så begynder det jo at nærme sig de 1500.

[12.07] Me: Ja ok. Så hvis de har en kapacitet på 1500, er det så med Gigantium fyldt?

K: Så er der fyldt, så er der udsolgt.

Me: Det er også spændende, hvis de kan sælge Gigantium. Det er alligevel en del.

Me: Når I så vælger at arbejde sammen med Geeks Gone Wild, hvad er jeres overvejelser så? Hvorfor vælger i at gøre det?

K: Vi er jo sat i verden fra kommunal hånd, for at tiltrække events og sørge for at der er nogle arrangementer i byen. Der er ligesom tre parametre vi kigger på: Det ene er, om det er noget som der er en interesse blandt borgerne for? For så er det noget der gør at de synes tilfører noget til byen og som borgere at være her. Vi ser også på om det er noget som på kort eller lang sigt, om det

kan betyde at der er nogen som kommer og bor her på et hotel af den ene eller anden karakter - og bruger nogle penge her.

[13.11] K: Det tror jeg har været lidt i begrænset omfang, lige præcis med Geeks Gone Wild, der har måske været nogle enkelte mediefolk som har været heroppe. Men i og med at meget af den overnatning der foregår sker på skoler og ude i Gigantium, så er det jo ikke hotel-overnatninger der kommer ind. Når de har brugt deres penge ude i Gigantium, så er det jo også fint nok, men der er jo heller ikke restaurant besøg som sådan. Men Gigantium har fået en fin forretning ud af det også. Så ser vi også på omtale, der har jo været rigtig meget omtale.

Me: Det er rigtigt. Det har været ret meget i medierne, har set noget i TV2 Nord og diverse steder, det har været ret vildt.

K: Ja, der har været mange spil-op historier op til, jeg tror der var en eller anden som har spillet Quake for 15 år siden, og nu var han til Geeks Gone Wild. De lavede nogle forskellige småhistorier der ikke lige præcis handlede om det, men hvor det så alligevel kom ind hvis man læste historien igennem, og så var der billede derudefra - så det har også været ganske fint.

[14.13] K: Det er egentlig de tre ting, parametre, vi vurderer en event ud fra. Så kigger vi også på den samarbejdspartner vi begynder sådan noget med, fordi det skal være en troværdig samarbejdspartner. Det skal være nogen vi tror der kan løfte opgaven.

Me: Ja selvfølgelig.

K: Vi ser også på, indledningsvis, når vi fx. beder dem om at stille et budget op. Det er noget af det aller vigtigste, det er jo at de har forholdt sig til. Hvad koster det her, og hvor kan vi regne med at få nogle penge igen - sådan at det ikke giver et underskud. Vi er ikke interesserede i at der en forening der giver sig i kast med at lave et arrangement - og så ender det med at foreningen skylder en masse penge og må lukke sig selv. Hvis det nu er en sund og rask forening. Så vi vil jo egentlig gerne hjælpe dem med at komme ud af det med økonomien i behold. Så det er også sådan noget vi kigger på.

[15.04] K: Hvis vi kan se der er nogle store risici rent økonomisk, så vil vi i mange tilfælde sige at vi ikke vil være med - eller kan vi ikke lave det om så vi kan minimere de risici der evt. er.

Me: Så en rådgivningsrolle, rent økonomisk?

K: Ja.

Me: Det giver også god mening. Ser du det rent faktisk som noget der kan udvikles videre, som værende en turisme-tiltrækker, hvis Aalborg vælger at satse mere på det?

K: Det tror jeg bestemt det ville kunne. Det er jo et felt hvor rigtig meget af det kører på vandrørene. Så havde de, LAN team nord, en hel række af streamere der sad og streamede fra eventet derude - og på den måde er der nogen som får øjnene op for det andre steder i landet. På den måde, så fungerer det på en anden måde end så mange andre begivenheder, når man skal ud og markedsføre dem.

Me: Det er meget direkte på en eller anden måde?

[16.02] K: Ja, det er meget youtube det går på. Hvor der er mange andre ting vi kører på facebook. Jeg synes det har været enormt svagt af hvad der har været af respons når LAN Team Nord har slået noget op på deres facebook side - og jeg tror noget har at gøre med at de der er derude er så unge at de ikke rigtigt bruger facebook. De ser nok i virkeligheden nærmere hvis der er noget på youtube.

Me: Ja, der følger de vel nok den specifikke person, nærmere end Lan Team Nord.

K: Ja. Man har også en anden rækkevidde - hvis det nu er en streamer fra eksempelvis København eller Odense, som har landsdækkende følgere, der har været heroppe. Så er man pludselig ude i alle mulige afkroge - hvor at en facebook begivenhed, den kan meget nemt blive geografisk afgrænset. Hvis det ikke foregår i nærheden af en, så er man ikke nødvendigvis interesseret i det.

[17.04] K: Så jeg tror på den måde, den kommunikationsform der bliver brugt derude, det gør også at det har et potentiale til at blive større og være noget hvor der er mange der kunne finde på at rejse dertil, så længe man gør oplevelsen god nok. Det er at der er god forplejning og man har det virkelig sjovt, og der er en masse sjove side aktiviteter. De prøver også at lave nogle konkurrencer undervejs - så man ikke bare sidder klinet til en PC og bare spiller. Så der også foregår noget andet spændende.

Me: Det er også en måde hvorpå jeg har set det være sammenlignet med regulær sport, i den forstand af at man følger sin yndlings fodbold spiller. Så ser du hvor han er henne, og hvilke turneringer han er med i. Måske følger man ikke klubben på facebook - men man følger den ene spiller på instagram eller sådan noget. Der kan man måske lidt lave sammenligningen med at de følger deres yndlings streamer eller counter-strike spiller. Så ser de unge dem på den måde, nærmere end at følge eventet.

[18.05] Me: Fra fans' side er det lidt specielt ift. Det er spændenden nok høre at der har siddet nogle streamere derude, som har markedsført det på en helt anderledes måde end man normalt ville gøre.

K: Ja.

Me: Havde I nogle udfordringer ved at skulle udvikle og holde det der event? Er der noget specifikt som du kan komme i tanke om, som var lidt svært at overtale folk til?

K: Det største bump på vejen, når man skal gå fra at være et græsrods event til at komme på den næste skala, det er at nogle af de der har været sponsorer de har givet for få tusinde kroner. Vi havde egentlig nok lagt op til at det skulle løftes et niveau mere, før vi kunne få dækket udgifterne ind. Det har været svært at sælge sponsorater, og så lige geare LAN Team Nord til at det er nogle andre sponsorater der skal sælges før det kan lykkedes.

[19.12] K: Det gik fint i år med økonomien. Men næste år, der er nogle af de der fonde som kun støtter i opstarten. Så næste år skal man ud og have nogle af de der sponsorer til at rent faktisk lægge nogle penge. Det kan godt være svært for nogle af dem, hvis de har haft relation til en forening, og de syntes det gik fint da de var ude i Gistrup hallen med at de gave 100 poser chips eller nogle skærme - og nu skal de lige pludselig til at betale penge for at være med. Det der gearskifte, det kan være svært.

Me: Det er selvfølgelig også noget der har haft lidt eksplosiv vækst på interesse. Så det er måske svært at overbevise folk om at der virkelig er så meget interesse, hvis de ikke selv er inde i det. Det er jo en meget special-interesse i den forstand.

[20.00] Me: Det er også en af de ting der gør at jeg vil skrive om det. Det er lidt mærkeligt fra en uvedkommende side, er ikke så meget inde i den verden - men man forstår det ikke hvis man ikke sætter sig ind i det. Så virker det helt unaturligt at man overhovedet kunne vælge at tage til sådan noget. Udbredningen af det virker lidt svær.

K: Ja. Det er nemmere at sælge et sponsorat til en bankdirektør der går til fodbold - til en fodboldklub. End det er hvis han nu ikke interesserer sig for esport, eller spiller - ved mindre han har nogle børn der gør det eksempelvis.

Me: Og så er det børnenes job at skulle overtale ham.

K: Ja! Men det her med at få nogen til at kaste sig ud i noget, som de ikke har nogen anelse om - bare fordi man kommer og siger at det er så og så fantastisk. Det er ret svært. Det er også derfor vi primært har prøvet at kigge på hvem der umiddelbart en eller anden form for relation til det. El-Giganten er også et eksempel på nogen vi har prøvet at snakke med. Det har primært været LAN Team Nord.

[21.04] K: Hvor vi ligesom har prøvet at lave en liste over virksomheder hvor det ikke er helt fremmed for, fordi de sælger måske gaming tilbehør eller computere, eller et eller andet der gør.

Me: Eller sponsorerer nogle af holdene.

K: Ja.

Me: Ok, det giver god mening. Det er stadig en lidt lukket sfære på mange måder. Det er selvfølgelig også noget af en udfordring at skulle prøve at udbrede det. Fra min side er det også svært at skulle fortælle folk hvad det handler om. Det lyder som noget man ikke kan forstå.

K: Ja.

Me: En sidste ting. Hvad tror du alle de besøgende gerne vil have fx. Geeks Gone Wild. Hvorfor de tager afsted til det? Selvfølgelig er det en interesse for dem. Men hvad forventede de af eventet?

K: Differentierer du mellem gæster eller deltagere?

Me: Det her er dem som vælger at tage dertil for at spille dernede, som selv køber en billet og tager dertil for at sidde med deres egen computer. Hvad tror du de forventer?

[22.16] K: Jeg tror rigtig mange af dem har det her med at de tager afsted med deres kammerater. Så har de dedikeret noget tid hvor de bare er sammen og spiller. Der er ligesom ikke alt muligt andet der forstyrrer. Jeg tænker det er meget ligesom at tage til en festival. Hvor man er i den her sfære og den her verden i 24 timer - vi skal ikke tænke på alt det der vi sædvanligvis skal tænke på. Bortset fra lige at børste tænder og gå på toilettet. Men vi skal ikke ordne de der daglige gøremål man ellers skal. Det er venskaber og så det vi er fælles om. Det tror jeg er det som er det primære.

[23.00] K: Og har man kunne lægge noget oveni - at de har fået nogle ting de ikke lige havde regnet med. Ift. til at der har været nogle side-events eller et-eller-andet. Så har det været en ekstra appelsin i turbanen. Men jeg tror ikke det er det de er kommet efter. De kommer, efter min bedste overbevisning, fordi at de kan være sammen i 48 timer, og så handler det bare om det.

Me: Man skulle tro det også var flest grupper der tog afsted, i hvert fald når det er kammerater, nærmest som en festival. Fordi de nærmest lukker sig væk. Det giver meget god mening.

K: Tror det er yderst få der tager afsted bare en person, man vil tage afsted flere til det.

Me: Ok! Nu bliver det lidt gisning. Hvor tror du det vil passe ind i fremtiden? Nu snakker jeg mere konkurrence-siden af den, esports siden.

[24.08] Me: Tror du det vil passe ind som værende en turisme begivenhed, som kunne trække folk til Aalborg. Hvis vi snakker de større events, større end Geeks Gone Wild. Hvis man sammenligner med noget som i Odense.

K: Ja, jeg så for to uger siden, der var jeg ude til en konference der hedder Modern Marketing Services - hvor der var en engelsk marketings forsker - der viste et billede fra et event i Korea. Hvor der sad, jeg ved ikke hvor mange mennesker, men der sad godt nok mange og kiggede på nogen der spiller.

Me: Det har nok været Syd Korea, som er det primære esports land i verden.

K: Ja. Ved ikke om vi skal forvente noget i den stil der.

[25.02] K: Men hvis man for 10 eller 15 år siden havde sagt at der var nogen som ville tage hen og sidde at se på nogen spille computerspil på en skærm mod hinanden. Så ville man sige, ej, det er der ikke nogen der ville gøre. Så, det er ikke en udvikling særlig mange havde forudset - så at sige at det ikke ville vokse yderligere. Det tror jeg bestemt det ville kunne - og jeg tænker at Gigantium ville være en rigtig fin ramme til det.

Me: Bestemt.

K: Det afhænger i høj grad af om LAN Team Nord også har lyst til at blive ved med det - og fortsat øge interessen for deres arrangement.

Me: I skal selvfølgelig have den samarbejdspartner som kan styre det overdnet, som har den ildsjæl for det.

K: Ja.

Me: Som turisme industri er det jo noget af et sats, at tro man kan lokke en masse folk til på den måde. Men hvis udviklingen bliver ved med at gå den vej det går, så kunne det jo ske. Det er ikke noget man kan vide, sådan nogle ting.

[26.06] K: Nej.

Me: Som du også siger, udviklingen er gået ekstremt hurtigt lige pludselig. Det havde jeg da heller ikke troet selvom jeg har haft en interesse. Men jeg ved der er rigtig mange der gerne vil. Det er jo lidt noget nyt.

K: Igen, der jo det her med. Det må give et-eller-andet, det at man sidder der fremfor at man kan følge med på en skærm - for der er rigtig mange af tingene man kan følge med live på. Det giver noget andet at der er en scene og en tribune.

Me: Det er også der hvor jeg ville kunne prøve at sammenligne det med normal sport, fordi der kan du jo også sidde at se fodbold hjemmefra - men der er jo stadig folk som vælger at tage på stadion. Så der er i den forstand nogle sammenligninger i det.

[27.08] Me: Fordi det er en social oplevelse, og det er en anderledes oplevelse at se det live, selvom de stadigvæk sidder og ser det på en skærm. Så der er da helt sikker nogle sammenligninger man kan drage der, med sportsbegivenheder.

K: Ja, man kan iscenesætte det på en anden måde - man kan også dramatisere det lidt mere.

Me: Ja, selvfølgelig. Alting er jo stadig en social oplevelse når man sidder med, så føltes det jo helt anderledes at sidde og heppe med. Tror faktisk ikke jeg har meget mere at spørge dig om.

Appx. 2.2

Transcription: VisitOdense, Søren

[00.03] Me: Hej Søren. Jeg tror jeg vil ligge stille og roligt ud ved at spørge hvad dine arbejdsopgaver er ved Odense?

S: Jamen, det kan jeg sige ved, at vi har en organisering hvor det faktisk er organiseret ved det kontor der hedder vækstkontoret, som har lidt forskellige funktioner. Det har både funktioner ift. vores eventer, vi har en del rimelig store event satsninger - og så har det ansvaret for vores turisme indsats, herunder VisitOdense. Så jeg sidder faktisk organisatorisk i vækstkontoret, som er det. Men mine opgaver ift. turisme og vækst det er at jeg det sidste år har arbejdet på en ny turismestrategi for Odense, og er nu også ansvarlig for at man ser den her strategi i byen.

Me: Ok, men det leder jo meget godt ind i altså, hvordan jeres nye strategi er. Kan du måske beskrive den i hurtige hovedpunkter, for mig? Ift. events og hvad I tænker at gøre for Odense.

[01.11] S: Ja, det kan jeg sige, altså. For fire år siden, i 2014, blev der lavet en ret ambitiøs event-strategi som ligesom lagde retningen for de her års ret store eventsatsning - hvor vi har budt op i mod 20 mil. om året på at støtte events, med det formål at skabe øget turisme i byen. Sideløbende med det har der været en proces ift. at udarbejde en turismestrategi som har været flere år undervejs. Der har egentlig ikke været en egentlig turismestrategi for Odense. Det er så den der er blevet udarbejdet nu her. Sådan hovedtrækkene ved den turismestrategi det er, og der er flere indsatsområder, men en af vejene er at der skal være et langt større fokus på digitalisering ift. tiltrækningen af turister til byen.

[02.07] S: Dvs. øget tilstedeværelse på sociale medier, instagram, facebook, tripadvisor, andet - for at tiltrække turister til byen.

Me: Ja ok.

S: Det er sådan det ene ben. Det er måske lidt komplekst, det kan være jeg i virkeligheden lige skulle sende en lille tegning til dig. Men det der er i det er at der på fyn - nu prøver jeg alligevel om man ikke kan klare det på telefon, men skal nok sende tegningen til dig, så den måske uddyber det lidt. På Fyn er det sådan vi har et fælles turisme samarbejde, noget der hedder 'Destination Fyn'. Som arbejder på at tiltrække flere turister og fremme turisme-erhvervet på hele Fyn, på tværs af kommunegrænser. Og de har haft det primære ansvar for at tiltrække turister til fyn. Så har der været turistkontorer i alle landets kommuner, som i højere grad har taget sig af gæstemodtagelsen af de gæster som så er kommet til byen. Men også i mindre omfang har arbejdet på tiltrækningen af turister. Så der er flere interssanter i den sammenhæng.

[03.18] S: Vi kommer til at mande op, altså vi har stadig tæt samarbejde med det der hedder 'Destination Fyn', men vi kommer også til at mande op i arbejdet med at tiltrække turister til Odense. Og ikke længere alene have så stor fokus på servicen og gæstemodtagelsen, når turisterne er kommet. Så der sådan øget indsats i Odense på den front. Så ligger der derudover også i turismestrategien også et øget fokus og ressource, altså bemandingen ift. tiltrækningen af erhvervsturister, med Odenses placering centralt i landet, og med et nyåbnet ODEON, det er sådan et kursus, konference og koncertsted. Ved ikke om du kender til det?

[04.08] Me: Hvad kaldte du det?

S: Odeon.

Me: Jo, Odeon, det har jeg godt hørt om.

S: Ja, ja. I forbindelse med ODEON kommer der et hotel her i 2018, så byen bliver væsentligt forbedret, og hotel-kapaciteten det øges. I forvejen er der Odense Kongrescenter, men det ligger lidt udenfor centrum, så det vil sige med ODEON får man et meget centralt liggende konference-sted. Så vi har en formodning om at hvis vi får forbedrede faciliteter og en øget fokus på tiltrækning af større konferencer, både internationale og danske, ville kunne få flere erhvervsturister til byen, end det er tilfældet i dag. Der ligger vi på sådan et relativt beskedent niveau. Så er der jo også nogle indsatser ift. at omtænke eller re-tænke gæstemodtagelsen.

[05.04] S: I dag har vi sådan et traditionelt turistbereau, hvor folk kan komme ind og stille spørgsmål, men... hvad hedder det. Vi vil gerne ud og møde turisterne endnu mere hvor de er, dvs. vi skal have opbygget et netværk af decentrale informations steder, på hoteller, attraktioner og trafik-knudepunkter. Hvor gæsterne kan få service, når de er landet i byen. Derudover også noget med sådan nogle informationscykler, altså nogle christiania event-bikes, altså stillet op ved events eller konferencer eller i gågaden i højsæsonen.

Me: Så folk ikke skal søge hen til selve turistkontoret, men så i er der?

S: Så folk ikke skal søge hen til turistkontoret, men vi kommer ud der hvor turisterne er.

[06.04] Me: Ok.

S: Så det ligger der også i turiststrategien. Så der er flere elementer i at få flere turister. Man kan sige at den historiske udvikling, når man har kigget på tallene, at der har været meget begrænset vækst i Odense i de sidste 10 år. Hvor man kan sige at Aarhus og København har haft ret voldsomme vækstrater og der er sådan en general global trend mod øget storby-turisme og flere rejser om året. Men måske med kortere varighed. Så der er jo generelt højere vækstrater. Ved ikke hvor meget du, der er jo de der generelle øgede rejsemønstre fra, særlig fra Asien, med kinesere der i stigende omfang rejser ud i verden ikke også. Så der er nogle ret store vækstrater, og vi ser nogle potentialer i at vi med den nye strategi kan få lidt højere vækstrater end det har været tilfældet i de forgangne år. Med det overordnede formål at skabe øget beskæftigelse i Odense.

[07.12] Me: Ja selvfølgelig. Kan du forklare mig lidt om hvordan, Odense er jo en lækker by at gå rundt i, men i må da også have en hvis fokus på indendørs events, med fx. konferencer som du snakker om som business turisme. Men også noget som koncerter og sport. Som sportsturisme. Hvordan passer det ift. jeres overordnede strategi?

S: Det passer godt, vi startede med eventstrategien - og så har vi fået turismestrategien. Det jeg tænker det giver anledning til er at vi måske genbesøger eventstrategien og måske opdaterer den ift. turismestrategien, så der bliver et større match med de events vi støtter - og får etableret. Og så de målgrupper og fortællinger vi gerne vil fortælle om Odense. Så det kan godt være at der her over de næste par år vil være en. Komme nogle lidt andre events.

[08.08] S: Men man kan sige at: Helt overordnet har vores eventstrategi været en stor succes. Jeg kan sende dig vores, den der effektanalyse på succes. Men jeg kan sige fx. at i 2016 der har vi investeret 20,6 mil. i forskellige events og vores beregninger viser at det har givet en turisme-økonomisk gevinst på 83mil. Så det har været en rigtig god investering. Vi investerer jo sådan relativt bredt. Jeg ved ikke om du. De arrangementer som vi har i byen. Det meste kendte er jo nok

Tinderbox, som de fleste kender, som vi har fået sparket i gang. Men der er også fx. basket event på havnen, NBA. Der er startet en studiestartsfest op, sådan lidt i Distortion-stil, som hedder Karrusel.

[09.11] S: Vi har sat endnu mere skub i en Harry Potter festival, som der så har kørt i flere år. Der er Odense film festival, som er en festival som har været der rigtig mange år, som vi prøver at arbejde med at gøre endnu mere interessant for udenbyes gæster og også gerne internationale gæster. Så vi arbejder på en del events.

Me: Ja det må man sige.

S: Så senest den her OdinCon esports event i December måned, som vi fik etableret i 2017 og som har været en rigtig stor succes. Det der jo er fordelen. Nu spurgte du ind til indendørs events, gjorde du ikke det?

Me: Jo.

[10.02] S: Det har jo den fordel, indendørs events, at det er knap så følsomt over for vejrforhold, og derfor er det interessant også ift. at det så er mulighed for at ligge det uden for højsæsonen. Hvor man kan sige at hotel belægningen typisk er lidt lavere. Det kan give rigtig god mening at have nogle events uden for højsæsonen - og der er indendørs-events rigtige gode. Vi har egentlig ikke haft så mange i vores regi, altså vækstkontoret. Altså det er jo ikke fordi der ikke er en masse indendørs arrangementer, det er der faktisk i Odense. Men de events vi ligesom har støttet, der er rigtig mange af dem som har været udendørs: NBA, tinderbox mv. Men der er også nogle af dem som er indendørs. Man kan sige film festivalen er primært indendørs, der er den her esports OdinCon som også er indendørs og så har vi sidste år fået Gaffa Prisen til byen og så er der noget som hedder MusicDays, som er sådan en form for bogforum - med musik arrangementer og talks og andet.

[11.08] S: Som sagt, så er fordelen jo ved dem at de er knap så påvirkelige ift. vejret og kan ligges på lidt andre tidspunkter, så det var også det har som har været bevægegrund for at ligge den her esports-event i December måned.

Me: Hvor der bestemt ikke er højsæson. Du snakkede om OdinCon, altså som OdinCon. Som guden Odin?

S: Ja.

Me: Det har vel været kædet sammen, den store counter-strike turnering.

S: Ja det var Counter-Strike. Den hed egentlig OdinCon, det er ikke sikkert det røg ud i den brede offentlighed, men det var egentlig titlen på den. Men det var den der Counter-Strike finale i December.

Me: Ahh, ok - yes. Det er fordi jeg har set været omtalt som ESL. Men det er vel fordi det er dem som overordnet arrangerer det på en måde.

[12.04] Me: Nu vi har snakket om det der OdinCon. Synes du egentlig det var succesfuldt fra jeres synspunkt? Det har jo været meget omtalt pressen og..?

S: Ja, det har været. Vi har lige fået det første. Det er jeg ikke sikker på jeg kan sende til dig endnu. Men vi arbejder med et sådan et ret omfangsrigt effektmåling på de events vi går ind i. Vi har en ret dygtig analyse-afdeling, som laver nogle ret omfattende event effekt-analyser og umiddelbart ser det rigtig fint ud. Det gør det. For OdinCon. Det skal så siges at der jo nogle af de her events, hvor vi selvfølgelig har perspektiv på business casen, og at det generer en god turisme-økonomisk effekt ift.

de midler vi investerer, som jeg også startede med. Men der er også events hvor man kan sige de har flere formål, og jeg ved ikke om du har set noget af det presse der har været omkring OdinCon.

[13.09] S: Det har jo været at vi i Odense har en stor robot-klynge, altså dvs. rigtig mange virksomheder indenfor robot-teknologi, tror efterhånden vi har flere hundrede virksomheder, og det vækster helt vildt. Vækstperspektiverne er ret store. Det er jo rigtig fint. Den udfordring der så til gengæld er, at det er ret specialiseret arbejdskraft der kræves til den branche. Det er ikke nødvendigvis nogen arbejdskraft vi lige har i Odense eller på Fyn. Så vi har egentlig gjort det med OdinCon at vi har lavet koblingen mellem at sige: Der er nogle folk her som har interesse for Counter-Strike, som jo også godt kunne være målgruppen for at kunne arbejde med robot-teknologi i en eller anden omfang. Så hele den der event, udover der var finaler, så var der jo også et ret stort messe område ift. robot-teknologi, og en række af de virksomheder fra byen var også derude for at demonstrere.

[14.12] S: Plus vi i markedsføringen, ude på eventen, og også ift. målgruppen har slået ret meget på muligheden for at kunne arbejde i robot-teknologien i Odense. Så det har ikke kun haft det formål at skaffe en positiv turisme-økonomisk effekt, men også at være fungere som rekrutterings- og markedsførings-kanal for rekruttering af Odenses robotklynge. Så det har flere formål, sådan vil jeg sige at der egentlig er flere af vores events som har flere formål. Altså fx. også Karrusel, vores studiestartsfest lidt som Distortion. Det er jo også et spørgsmål om at vi gerne vil gøre Odense til en attraktiv studieby, hvor de studerende synes det er sjovt at studere. Det har jo også, flere af dem, flere formål.

[15.09] S: Ligesom vi også generelt måler på, og arbejder på at gøre Odense til en storby, dvs. også en by med massere af liv, leben og aktiviteter. Så på den måde spiller eventene også rigtigt godt ind. At der er basket event på havnen, at der er en film festival og der en madfestival og sådan nogle ting. Så det er også en del af vores arbejde, det er at bidrage til det her.

Me: Ja, selvfølgelig, at lave noget krydsmarketing på en måde også. Kan godt se når jeg lige går ind på OdinCon's hjemmeside, så er der jo også en robot på forsiden og der er links til det der Robocluster.

S: Præcis.

Me: Det giver jo også rigtig god mening, når det er inden for det samme interessefelt, mere eller mindre - at så have en kobling på den måde.

S: Ja.

[16.01] Me: Jamen selvfølgelig. Det kan man sige også må være jeres primære mål med det? Det er vel både at skabe interesse for eventet i sig selv og for Odense. Men det må vel også være for at brande byen efter den slags. Det er vel også en af de mål som I prøver at sætte jer når I laver sådan et event, er det ikke?

S: Det er klart, det er klart. Det var lidt det jeg sagde tidligere også - at det er lidt forskelligt efter hvad for et event vi snakker om, men det var helt klart sigtet med OdinCon - det var at lave den der kobling. At bistå med at skaffe kvalificeret arbejdskraft til robotklyngen. Sådan er det også tilsvarende ift. studiestartsfesten - at skabe en attraktiv studiestartsby. Skal lige se om vi har andre events hvor der er tilsvarende koblinger. Så er der jo også væres SPIS foodfestival, som er sådan en fødevarefestival henover en uge.

[17.03] S: Udover at have en masse mindre events henover året, så kombinere sådan en fødevarefestival. Det handler jo også om at vi gerne vil, der rent faktisk sker rigtig meget på gastronomi fronten i Odense de her år - og det vil vi jo også gerne understøtte og markedsføre ift. at skabe øget synlighed omkring det. Så der er SPIS foodfestival også en del af det, at iscenesætte Odense som en gastronomisk højborg, med rigtig mange muligheder. Så på den måde er der mange af vores events som har flere formål.

Me: Det giver også mening med den moderne verden vi lever i, det ikke kun fungerer med en retning.

S: Det er så lidt for egen regning, det kan jeg ikke lige umiddelbart dokumentere. Nu ved jeg ikke hvor godt du kender Odense og Odenses forhistorie. Men Odense blev rigtig hårdt ramt af finanskrisen, der har været rigtigt mange industrijobs - og Lindø værftet lukkede, som en af de helt store arbejdspladser på Fyn.

[18.06] S: Det har taget lang tid for Odense at komme sig oven på finanskrisen, også længere tid en mange andre steder i landet. Der har måske været sådan en, i virkelighed lidt i mange år, lidt håbløshed, lidt pessimisme. Jeg tror faktisk ikke man skal underkende den her eventstrategi, fx. med Tinderbox, at det har givet noget by-stolthed. Der en helt anden optimisme i byen nu her, og selvtillid for Odenseanerne, ift. at byen rent faktisk har en masse at byde på. I de her år bliver der investeret op mod 50 mia. i bygninger, altså boliger og byforandringsprojekter.

[19.04] Me: Det er bestemt også en slat da.

S: Der sker sindssygt meget de her år i Odense, og det skaber en hel anden by. Jeg tror ikke man skal underkende at events også kan fungere som en katalysator for øget vækst og optimisme. Det tror jeg i hvert fald det har været tilfældet i Odense. Det er selvfølgelig svært at måle, hvad det lige er der gør sådan nogle ting. Det er jo også nogle gange lidt en fornemmelse man kan have. Men hvor man måske tidligere var lidt negativ, håbløs og opgivende på attituden for år tilbage, så er der en hel anden tro og selvtillid i Odense - på at man har en fed by, og der sker en masse gode ting, ja.

Me: Jamen, jeg kan da også sige fra mit eget perspektiv af, inden for mine interessefelter, så har sådan noget som Tinderbox og den ESL/OdinCon sat Odense på kortet på en anderledes måde end det har før i tiden.

[20.02] S: Ja.

Me: Det er gået meget hurtigt lige pludselig at Odense er forbundet med de to ting lige pludselig. Og Tinderbox er jo blevet meget stort. Det har da bestemt fungeret, også for nogen som måske ikke kommer så ofte i Odense. Altså, jeg har ikke det største tilknytningsforhold til Odense, men jeg kender det da bestemt, på grund af de to events fx.

S: Det var egentlig også en del af event strategien, det var det her med at man vil egentlig finde. Så kan man så diskutere hvor unik er Tinderbox ift. mange andre musikfestivaller. Men generelt var tanken egentlig med vores eventstrategi at finde nogle events som var for os særegne. Til dels som var flerårige, så man kunne bygge dem op over tid og få større og større publikum. Men også nogle som var særegne for Odense, så man ikke bare lavede noget alle andre også har. Vi er ikke ude i at bare arrangere en masse et-eller-andet, Rod Stewart koncerter, eller Tina Turner, noget som mange andre, som Horsens har. Tesen har været, at det kan man jo ikke huske nødvendigvis.

[21.06] Me: Nej det er jo ikke lige byen man husker for det.

S: Men ift. vedvarende events som Tinderbox, så er det noget som får os ud i en langvarig effekt og bredere kendskab i hele landet til de ting. Det har egentlig været målsætningen at skabe nogle events, som var særegne for Odense, og langvarige.

Me: Ah. I forhold til mit speciale og esports events. Har du så nogen, fra din side af, fra en eventkonsulents side, har du nogen events på programmet i Odense som du vil kunne sammenligne med fx. OdinCon. Altså hvilke typer events vil du sige er sammenlignelige med det?

S: Ja, altså der er det jo mest nærliggende at kigge på de andre indendørs arrangementer vi har. Den som ligger tættest på kunne være sådan noget som Odense Filmfestival, som er en international kortfilms festival, som i virkeligheden har været mange år i Odense, men i de senere år er der sket rigtigt meget.

[22.13] S: Man prøver at lave mange events henover året, af mindre og større art. Kulminerende med selve prisuddelingen, en Oskar, der sædvanligt giver adgang til Oscar for kortfilm. Det er sådan lidt derhen af.

Me: Bestemt. Det er jo også en lidt speciel interesse.

S: Det er også en lille smule samme målgruppe. Den er måske bredere, der er bådere fra de unge storby interesserede til de lidt ældre. Men det er nok det der ligger tættest på. Jeg vil sige, ift. til Esport, der er tanken jo også at vi i Odense støtter sig og bliver en egentlig esports by, og forsøger at sætte os på den dagsorden - og lave andet end den her. Nu har vi en treårig aftale med ESL, ift. at afvikle større esports arrangementer i byen, ikke nødvendigvis Counter-Strike, det kan lige så vel være et andet ESL arrangement.

[23.27] S: Ja, for de har jo mange forskellige spil inde under deres kappe. Det er da spændende.

S: Så vi har en treårig aftale, men det var meningen, nu var vi godt nok en lille smule presset på tiden sidste år for at få det afviklet. Men nu er der lidt mere tid de næste år, nok til at endnu mere inddrage byen og lave nogle flere aktiviteter, der spiller sig op til det eller mindre esports ting end selve en stor ESL ting. Det kunne være andre esports ting, for byens unge eller bare mindre finaler eller et-eller-andet. Det er ikke mig der er involveret i det. Så det er begrænset hvad jeg kan sige om det, du kan prøve at tale med Tue Kempf omkring det, det er sådan et arbejde der foregår lige nu - hvad strategien skal være for det.

[24.23] S: Men der er et ønske om at man sætter sig på det. Men det hænger igen sammen med rekruttering til robotklyngen. Det er der et rigtigt stort vækstpotentiale i for Odense. Hvis det kan lykkedes at skaffe de kvalificerede arbejdskræfter, det betyder jo også at helt ned til at vi allerede arbejder målrettet med at skolebørn begynder at interessere sig for kodning. Det bliver der faktisk investeret ret store penge i, i Odense. Så det er helt ned fra mindre skolebørn, som fra en tidlig alder får undervisning og smager til selve kodningen, så de forhåbentlig også får interesse for det område ift. deres arbejdsliv når de bliver voksne - og selvfølgelig med esport, når de bliver lidt større teenagere måske.

[25.20] Me: Selvfølgelig, det er jo også på vej fremad især i teenageårene, der er jo mange efterskoler og diverse som begynder at have det på programmet. Så det er da en god idé. Det er jo der interessen ligger for en enorm mængde unge, så det er da helt bestemt relevant.

Me: Vil lige prøve at spørge dig omkring, indsamler i data ift. hvor de besøgende kommer fra, til sådan nogle events fx. som OdinCon?

S: Ja.

Me: Det gør i. Det er jo lidt interessant, om det kun er fra nærområdet, om i tiltrækker fra hele landet eller om der også er internationale besøgende.

[26.00] S: Ja, det er som sagt ikke lige offentliggjort, men jeg forventer det sker inden for relativt kort tid. Skal nok lige prøve at sende den til dig når den bliver offentliggjort. Vi har interviewere og stiller relativt mange interview, for at få afdækket den turisme-økonomiske effekt - men bestemt også demografien, hvad alder og bopæl for de besøgende. Nu kan jeg ikke lige huske tallene nu her, for OdinCon. Men det er jo bestemt en af dem som har størst tiltrækningskraft udenfor Fyn. Der er Tinderbox og OdinCon nogle af dem som tiltrækker flest udenfor Fyn. Vi måler det må en turisme-økonomisk effekt, og så måler vi det jo primært på folk uden for kommunegrænsen, som giver det største bidrag til turisme-økonomisk effekt. Og så Harry Potter festivalen i efterårsferien, har haft rekord med dem der har flest udenbys besøgende.

[27.13] Me: Man kan også sige det er tre forskellige interesse-sfærer. Selvfølgelig er der noget overlap. Tinderbox er måske lidt ældre end OdinCon generelle målgruppe.

S: Ja.

Me: Harry Potter er lidt noget andet. Selvfølgelig er der mange der interesserer sig for det.

S: Det er bestemt for forskellige målgrupper, det er det.

Me: Ja ok. Nu har vi snakket noget omkring mulighederne ift. samarbejde med ESL og at i har en tre-års kontrakt. Men ift. nogle udfordringer i arbejdet med OdinCon - kan du komme i tanke noget specifikt som har været besværligt, eller noget som i stødte på som har forhindret det i egentlig gerne ville?

[28.09] S: Altså, vi fik en rigtig - ift. vi var lidt pressede på tiden i '17 - så synes jeg vi lykkedes med en rigtig, rigtig god event og umiddelbart ser de resultater der er nu rigtig, rigtig fine ud. Det lykkedes fint, udover finalerne, var der jo også et LAN-event, der var messe område og det her med robot. Vi samlede en masse forskellige ting og det synes jeg lykkedes rigtigt godt. Der var nogen, som pga. tiden, vi havde egentlig håbet at invitere mange flere efterskoler til at komme og deltage i det her LAN-party. Der var nogle af de ting som vi ikke helt kunne nå at løse, af tidsmæssige årsager. Men i det store hele så virkede det rigtig godt.

[28.57] S: Den udfordring der ligger i det, med OdinCon her, er at vi virkeligheden gerne vil - altså, sidste år blev det primært drevet og afviklet fra Odense kommunes side, så det var os der stod for meget af koordineringen af eventen, rent lavpraktisk. Salg af messeområder og alle de her ting, aktiveringen. Sikre at hooke up med nogen der kunne stå for markedsføring, der er rigtig megen planlægning i den del. Perspektivet her, er egentlig at vi gerne vil have et eksternt konsortie som kan stå for den del - som kan overtage eventen. Det er det vi helt grundlæggende arbejder med. At det ikke er Odense kommune som skal stå som primære aktør for det event her. Det er et spørgsmål om at vi kan drive det i gang og så overdrage det til nogle kommercielle parter som kan drive det videre.

[30.04] Me: Det giver god mening, selvfølgelig.

S: Det tager meget tid. Det tror vi egentlig også på. Vi har selvfølgelig nogle dygtige og kompetente arbejder i kommunen. Men vi tror på at nogle kommercielle parter ville kunne gøre det endnu bedre.

Me: Man kan sige, det er et interesse felt. Hvis de virkelig går op i det.

S: Det er jo det vi gør. Vi har det jo også på Karrusel eller grundlæggende på det fleste af de andre festivaller - der er det ikke kommunen som er den primære afvikler på det, der har vi nogle andre. Men så går vi jo så ind og støtter dem økonomisk, så laver vi enten en tilskud og sponsor aftale med de events, så de får en bistand fra kommunen for at afvikle dem. Så laver vi selvfølgelig nogle aftaler som gør, hvis vi fx. ser på OdinCon, at det er et krav for os at der er et messeområde. Så kan vi stille nogle krav så vi får et event som også tilgodeser kommunens interesser.

[31.04] Me: Ja selvfølgelig. Det er også en udfordring at ligesom både finde tiden til at afvikle eventsne - men også at finde samarbejdspartneren der skal overtage eventet når i har sparket det i gang.

S: Ja! Det er nok det arbejde, og den største udfordring, med OdinCon. At finde den der rette model. Men det arbejder vi på nu her.

Me: Ja ok. Så har jeg bare et enkelt mere. Ved ikke hvor meget forstand du har på den side af det. Det sidste spørgsmål det er måske: Hvor tror du esport vil passe ind i turisme industrien i fremtiden? Ved ikke om du ser det blive større?

[31.52] S: Jo jo, det tænker jeg da bestemt. Der er jo ingen tvivl om at interessen er kæmpe stor og at det har et stort tiltrækningspotentiale. Så jeg tænker da bestemt det har en stor, og vigtig, plads i turismen fremadrettet. Det tænker jeg da helt sikkert. Det er jo også det vores målinger viser. At der skal noget særligt til, hvis vi virkelig skal trække folk på tværs af kommunegrænser, og endnu mere gerne på tværs af landegrænser. Så skal der jo events til som folk virkelig er passionerede omkring, så der virkelig er noget som har interesse. Det er jo så der vi kan se både OdinCon har haft - men også som jeg sagde tidligere - med Harry Potter. Det er sådan noget med at det er lidt specielt. Nu har jeg ikke lige tallene, men OdinCon der kom jo folk fra Hawaii.

[33.01] S: Men der kom jo virkelig folk som har rejst hele jorden rundt for at være med til at komme til Odense, og det kan vi jo ikke engang gøre med Tinderbox, der kommer da nogen fra udlandet, men jo ikke så langt væk. Så hvis der er den der passion, og det har et område hvor man har noget helt særegnet at byde på, så kan det trække folk på tværs af både kommunegrænser og landegrænser. Så hvis man har det rette. Det handler meget om, som også var ambitionen her, at virkelig lave et esports event på aller-øverste hylde. Så tror jeg at hvis man skal noget med, så skal man tænke stort, så koster selvfølgelig også nogle penge at få lavet en aftale med ESL osv. Det tror jeg er den vej man skal gå med det.

[34.01] S: Det er jo selvfølgelig ikke alle danske kommuner som har kapacitet og økonomi til det vel, så jeg tror nøglen er i det at man tænker stort. Jeg tror ikke at man trækker de helt store turister ved at lave et mindre event, uden den helt store interesse for målgruppen.

Me: Nej, der kræver næsten et stadion og diverse ting til de helt store. Det tror jeg du har ret i, at det ikke lige er alle kommuner - nærmere de store byer som har kapacitet til det.

S: Ja.

Me: Det synes jeg lyder super brugbart. Det er sjovt jeg ikke selv har hørt har navnet OdinCon når jeg selv har siddet og søgt rundt på det.

S: Ja, navnet var lidt sent inde. Vi var lidt udfordret på tiden inden aftalen med ESL faldt på plads. Så dvs. det var inden for et par måneder at rigtig meget af det blev planlagt og markedsføringen skete. Særlig set i det lys, så er det også flot at resultaterne er blevet så gode som de er.

[35.16] S: Selve finalerne blev udsolgt en weekend tror jeg. Det gik rigtig stærkt. Så var der lidt billetter tilbage ift. det LAN-party, og det messeområde, de ting der. Men der har også været rigtigt fine besøgstal. Det var noget af det hvor man måske, med lidt bedre tidshorisont havde kunne få endnu flere deltagere til de dele.

Me: Ja. Nu har i jo også en satsning på den tre-års kontrakt med ESL, så det er spændende.

S: Bestemt! Bestemt!

Me: Men jeg tror faktisk det var det hele af din tid jeg vil trække af din tid i dag. Du må meget gerne sende mig de dokumenter ift. jeres turismestrategi.

[36.05] S: Jeg skal nok sende dig turismestrategien - og effektrapporten. Den er ikke offentliggjort for '17 endnu. Så du må få den fra '16, men den viser meget godt terminologien i det.

Me: Det er også fint!

S: Så der kan du få et indblik i det.

Me: Det ville være herligt, jeg siger mang tak. Godt at snakke med dig.

S: Held og lykke med det. Du må ringe hvis der er flere spørgsmål!

Appx. 2.3
Transcription – Experience Hackers, Tue Kempf

[00.03] Me: Tænker jeg vil springe lige ind i det. Du er kommet godt hjem fra ferie?

T: Ja, det er jeg.

Me: Det var godt at høre. Hvad er det helt præcist din rolle er ift. proleague turneringen sidst?

T: Ift. den turnering kom jeg faktisk relativt sent ind i projektet - som produktionschef. Havde ansvaret for den praktisk planlægning og gennemførsel af arrangementet. Herunder også samarbejde med ESL, dem der udbyder turneringen. I den sidste tid og under arrangementet, havde jeg ansvaret for samarbejdet med de tech-clusters vi har i Odense. Som var en vigtig del af idéen bag arrangementet. Altså robot, drone og kode virksomheder og klynger. Og så uddannelses-institutionerne.

[01.06] Me: Ok. Jeg hørte der var noget med et kryds med Odincon. At det var også en expo for robot teknologi. Det var også noget du var med til at arrangere?

T: Ja, det er rigtigt. Det overordnede format hedder OdinCon - og OdinCon består af nogle forskellige elementer. I '17 bestod det af en LAN del og en expo del. Expo delen var egentlig både sådan klassisk hardware expo, hvor du kunne se det nyeste gamer udstyr, det nyeste tilbehør og prøve nogle ting - og så var det nogle oplevelser, altså nogle spil man kunne prøv selv. Men den vigtigste del for Odense, var egentlig sammenhængen til de tech virksomheder som ligger i byen, indenfor robot teknologi, og drone teknologi og kode virksomheder.

[02.08] T: Det hænger sådan sammen at vi er rigtig gode til det i Odense, men ligesom mange andre steder, så mangler vi kvalificeret arbejdskraft indenfor de her brancher. Der har vi så simpelthen identificeret at esport publikummet har et rigtig, rigtig godt match til de potentielle medarbejdere. Så det er faktisk i virkeligheden en kommunikations kanal.

Me: Det giver god mening, der er vel noget overlap ift. interessefelterne der.

T: Ja, der er et kæmpe overlap. Både ift. interesse men også ift. demografi. Rigtig mange mænd, forholdsvist veluddannede, forholdsvist velstillede. Ikke rige, men velfungerende, veluddannede mænd - som interesserer sig for esport. Der er et kæmpe overlap ift. dem som potentielle medarbejdere i de højteknologiske virksomheder.

[03.07] Me: Så giver det jo meget god mening at lave en expo blanding ift. de turneringer også.

T: Lige præcis.

Me: Ja ok. Kan du forklare mig lidt om hvordan du ser, nu ved jeg ikke helt hvad X-hack eller experience hackers du arbejder med, hvad er det mere præcist?

T: Tænker du på min baggrund?

Me: Ja, lidt - mere præcist hvad experience hackers I laver?

T: Ja, det er min konsulent virksomhed - som hjælper folk indenfor oplevelsesøkonomien, men også indenfor traditionelle brancher. Min egen baggrund, helt oprindeligt er en TV-baggrund, hvor jeg har lavet en masse TV-programmer og store TV-shows. Med fokus på musik og underholdning. Så har jeg i mange år været kommerciel chef i en professionel fodbold klub, været chef for et koncertbureau og har lavet en masse store shows.

[04.09] T: Så jeg har lavet alt lige fra fodbold landskampe, champions league kampe, chippendales stripshow, disney on ice, kæmpe Mamma Mia musicals, koncerter med John Mayer, Elton John, Volbeat. Så det er relativt bredt, indenfor både sport, musik og shows.

Me: Ja ok. Kan du, for at forklare mig lidt om hvordan du ser indendørs events, fx. som esport, men også koncerter og konferencer, hvordan de bliver anvendt i Odense til at tiltrække turister?

T: Jeg kan i hvert fald sige noget helt overordnet. Om hvordan det fungerer, sådan strukturelt.

[05.00] T: Hvis man gerne vil tiltrække turister, så er events et rigtig fint redskab - man skal selvfølgelig være opmærksom på at der er nogle forskellige parametre, der påvirker attraktiviteten af det enkelte arrangement. Hvis man skal simplificere det lidt, så er det selvfølgelig at selve eventet. Selve indholdet, hvor særligt, eller attraktivt er det. Er det kæmpestort eller meget unikt, så påvirker det selvfølgelig attrakiveteten. Men det skal også ses i relation til områdets attraktivitet eller byens attraktivitet. Et meget kedeligt sted, skal lave et relativt mere interessant arrangement for at få folk dertil, end et super spændende sted. Helt eksemplificeret: man gider godt tage til London for at se en relativt mainstream musical, men man gider måske ikke tage til Holstebro for at se fuldstændig samme produkt.

[06.10] T: Men fordi at byen, eller området, har en naturlig attraktivitet - så bliver eventet også mere attraktivt. Det er forbundne kar, kan man sige. I den ligning skal man selvfølgelig også have tilgængelighed - altså, hvor svært er det at komme derhen, kan man få et hotel og er det dyrt at komme derhen? Så det er indholdet af eventet, områdets attraktivitet og tilgængeligheden.

Me: Det er lidt en ligning der skal gå op.

T: Ja, det er forbundne kar ikke. Det er klart, at hvis man kan gøre alting samtidig. I en mega fed by, et mega unikt arrangement og massere hoteller, så vælter det jo ind. Men typisk er det også sådan at mindre byer, som fx. Odense, de bruger events som vækst-driver.

[07.01] T: Det har vi som kommune sagt: Vi vil sådanset godt investere nogle penge i at skabe nogle events, som i virkeligheden er for store til byen. Nogle som ikke naturligt ville ligge her, fordi vi ikke

er store nok til det. Men på den måde blive de en driver i udviklingen, så er de faktisk med til at gøre os større. Det tiltrækker, giver positiv omtale, øget bystolthed og så kan det så understøtte nogle særlige indsatser, som fx. tiltrækning af kvalificeret arbejdskraft - i det her esports tilfælde.

Me: Ok, kan du give et eksempel udover OdinCon?

T: Tinderbox er et godt eksempel hvor man kan sige at det ikke var en festival der havde været i Odense, hvis ikke nogle dygtige mennesker i kommunen havde sagt: "Vi vil gerne give det her arrangement noget starthjælp".

[08.04] T: Så har man et sponsorat i det, fordi der ikke umiddelbart er noget naturligt marked for Odense til at de havde etableret her. For hvis man ellers tror på markedet, så var det jo sket af sig selv. Men der gik man simpelthen ind og sagde, vi vil gerne facilitere og understøtte en stor international musik festival i Odense. Fordi vi tror på det kan være en driver i byens udvikling.

Me: Det er også bestemt noget som fungerer ift. marketing. Tinderbox sidder i hvert fald fast i mit hoved nu, selvom jeg ikke har et stort tilhørsforhold til Odense.

T: Præcis. Hvis man kigger på hvor man går ind og ser på tallene, hvor Odense får mest positiv omtale, så er Tinderbox med afstand den begivenhed der generer mest positiv omtale for byen. Så det kan være et eksempel på det.

[09.00] T: Der kan man sige at de fleste danske byer i hvert fald, har et kombineret vækst og turisme perspektiv på det. Så det handler ikke kun om at få nogle turister ind, så er de der nogle dage og så ud igen. De må gerne skabe nogle generisk, blivende vækst.

Me: Det skal jo også helst være godt for lokalsamfundet og de boende i byen samtidig med at det skaber turist vækst.

T: Ja lige præcis, den der øgede bystolt er selvfølgelig også vigtigt at se på, at dem der bor i byen ligesom kan se der er en mening med det. At det ikke bare er: "Nå, bruger vi en masse penge på et eller andet og vi forstår ikke rigtig hvorfor, og vi ser ikke rigtigt nogen effekt af det."

Me: Nej, det skal helst hænge sammen på alle måder.

T: Ja, lige præcis.

Me: Hvis jeg nu så drejer fokusset lidt over på mit speciale ift. esport - hvis du skulle prøve at forklare det til en uvidende person, som ikke kender til emnet, hvordan vil du så forklare det?

T: Altså esport?

Me: Ja.

[10.01] T: Så tror jeg egentlig jeg ville sige at esport, som event. Er det event delen eller helt grundlæggende du er ude efter?

Me: Hvis vi kan prøve at tage begge dele. Esport i sig selv og event delen kan vi snakke om efterfølgende.

T: Esport er egentlig en videreudvikling af gaming, eller det at spille computer, hvor gaming typisk er noget man bruger rekreativt - for at slappe af eller få hovedet et andet sted. Når jeg spiller computerspil, så er det faktisk nærmest meditativt for mig, for så får jeg lige lukket hele omverdenen ude, og tænker/fokuserer kun på det. Så gaming er typisk rekreativt, både hvis du gør det alene eller sammen med andre. Men når det så bliver esport, så bliver det lidt mere målrettet kan man sige.

[11.02] T: Det kan selvfølgelig være på alle mulige forskellige niveauer. Hvis jeg skal prøve at sætte nogle flere ord på det, så ville jeg sige at gaming er afslapning, adspredelse og sjov - esport det er konkurrence, det er målrettet, der er fans, der er atleter - kalder nogen det. Der er typisk penge involveret. Så man kan sige at esport er altid gaming, der er altid et gaming element i det. Gaming er ikke altid nødvendigvis esport. Det er selvfølgelig en forklaring der kræver man ved hvad gaming er.

Me: Selvfølgelig.

T: Giver det mening?

Me: Ja, det gør det helt sikkert. Det er også mere for at få en indsigt i hvordan du ville forklare det.

T: Så er der jo især i Danmark en stor diskussion om at det er en sport.

[12.00] T: Den er du sikkert også stødt på.

Me: Ja, bestemt.

T: Det har jeg sådanset nørdet en lille smule i. Hvorfor er det så vigtigt? Jeg tror det handler om sprog, hvor man især i de nordiske lande, når man hører ordet sport - så tænker man idræt. Den klassiske, fysiske udfoldelse. Hvor man i resten af verden, i hvert fald i den engelsk talende verden, der er sport bare noget at gøre med at der er nogle regler, og der er nogle fysiske elementer i det. Men det behøves ikke være idræt på den måde. Så sport og spil er defineret internationalt end det er i Danmark. Hvor begrebet sport ikke rigtig findes, der er det mere idræt man tænker på. Der kan man sige at hvis man kigger på definitionen af idræt, så kan man jo godt sige at det er esport måske ikke.

[13.05] T: Men hvis man kigger på den internationale måde at opfatte sport på - så er esport jo en sport.

Me: Man kan vel sige det er næsten lige så aktivt som sportsgrene som dart fx.

T: Eller skydning. Hvor puls betyder rigtig meget. Man kan jo også se dem der er rigtig gode til det, fx. Astralis, de kigger på et 360-graders perspektiv hvor de har folk der arbejder med holdets diæt, deres søvnmønster, deres generelle fitness, deres nakke stabilitet, deres rekreation, deres hånd-øje koordination og generelt deres mentale tilstand.

Me: Har set nogle af de DR programmer om det.

[14.00] T: Det ligner jo i hvert fald mere en sport end bare nogen der sidder og spiller computerspil. Synes jeg i hvert fald.

Me: Ja da, helt klart.

T: Der jo ikke nogen super simpel beskrivelse af det, fordi der er jo også leddet i mellem nogen der spiller computerspil og så et kæmpestort show.

Me: Ja, så det er jo ikke noget der lige er så let at forklare. Det er måske også derfor der er mange der har svært ved at sætte sig ind i hvad det egentlig er?

T: Ja, og det er måske også derfor at dem der så er vilde med det, virkelig er vilde med det. Fordi her er der virkelig noget med en kombination som virkelig taler til dem.

Me: Det er også noget nyt i den forstand, for en interesse-sfære som ikke har haft den slags i lang tid.

T: Ja, det er jeg enig i.

Me: Når du så har været med til at arrangere så stort et event som den ESL turnering, hvad tror du de besøgende kom for - hvad forventer de at få ud af sådan en stor turnering som den?

[15.10] T: Først og fremmest at være en del af et fællesskab og så komme tæt på stjernerne. At kunne komme tæt på dem de sidder og ser på skærmene. Det er jo ret interessant, man oplever tit... Har du været til en stor turnering selv?

Me: Har været til en enkelt nede i Köln. Men det var også en convention, den der hedder GamesCom, hvor der var turneringer dernede.

T: Ja. Det der er interessant at opleve er at folk også tydeligvis er fans af sporten, og ikke bare af holdet. Man anderkender jo et godt "move" - også selvom det er et andet hold der laver det. Det synes jeg er interessant ift. mange andre klassiske sportsgrene.

[16.03] T: Hvor man kæmper i mod hinanden, og det ikke er gymnastik hvor man er på gulvet. Men holdsport, hvor man kæmper mod hinanden, der holder man typisk med det ene hold. Men her er det helt tydeligt at rigtig mange, de simpelthen bare er fans af sporten.

Me: Ja, det er jo lidt interessant ift. fan perspektivet på det - at det er anderledes end regulær sport.

T: Ja, selvfølgelig holder man også med et hold. Husker jeg på et tidspunkt var i Hamborg til en DOTA turnering, og på det tidspunkt havde jeg ikke stiftet særlig meget bekendtskab med DOTA. Det var super interessant at opleve at hele arenaen går amok, at alle jubler pånær mig nærmest, fordi jeg ikke forstår hvad der skete i spillet. Det er jo ikke fordi at alle i den arena holdt med det ene hold. Det er bare fordi at der bliver anderkendt at der bliver lavet et godt cast eller et godt spil, hvad der nu gjorde.

[17.08] T: Det er fans af sporten og det her fællesskab omkring. Så kan man sige at det er et tech-interesseret publikum, relativt veluddannede, velstillede - og så er de relativt bullshit resistente de her folk. Man skal levere varen, det skal være ordentligt det man laver. Så de forventer noget i ordentlig kvalitet og de forventer et ordentligt service niveau. Men når det så er sagt, så er det også et super dejligt publikum at arbejde med. Fordi, der er ikke noget ballade, folk er skide søde og rare. Hvis man siger, i skal gå ind ad den dør - og ikke den anden - så gør de det. "Ok, cool nok." Det er ret interessant ift. alle mulige andre event discipliner.

[18.01] Me: Der er lidt styr over sagerne på en eller anden måde.

T: Ja. Folk kommer egentlig også for at hygge sig, for at være en del af et fællesskab. Og så vil jeg sige ligesom i alle mulige andre sektorer i underholdningsindustrien, så er jeg også omvendt sikker på at forventningerne vil stige fremadrettet. Jeg tror ikke at, på længere sigt, når udbudet også stiger og folk har prøvet det - at man så bare kan slippe afsted med at lave noget hvor service niveauet er i orden og så en flot opstilling med nogle storskærme. Der tror jeg, at der skal mere til. Ligesom i alle mulige andre sammenhæng. Altså, i gamle dage når man lavede en koncert skulle man jo også bare stille en scene op nede i enden af en mark og et rimeligt lyd-anlæg. Så kom folk. Der har folk jo helt, helt andre forventninger i dag.

Me: Ja, der går udviklingen ligesom hurtigt også.

T: Ja bestemt. Der kan man sige at den her del af oplevelses-industrien er meget ung. Der tror jeg meget af det publikum der kommer, de er glade bare for at få muligheden for at komme tæt på det.

[19.07] T: Jeg er sikker på at henover de kommende år, der vil folk efterspørge nogle anderledes konsistente events - som også kan noget mere end at man kun sidder og kigger på de her spil.

Me: Ok, så der må gerne være lidt andre oplevelser?

T: Ja det tror jeg - også lidt generelt sammenhængende oplevelser. Det kommer selvfølgelig også meget an på hvad for et marked man er i. I Danmark har man en relativt høj forventning til hvordan et event er designet, og hvordan flowet og service-niveauet er. Nogle steder i udlandet er folk helt ligeglade. Der er det bare ind og se arrangementet, så skal de bare have burgere og så hjem. Så syntes de det har været fedt.

Me: Der er vi måske lidt anderledes end visse andre steders publikum.

T: Ja, jeg vil sige at vi i hvert fald har nogle høje forventninger til service niveauet og oplevelsesdesign.

[20.06] Ok. Ift. internationale og andre publikum. Havde i nogle internationale besøgende til eventet dernede? Indsamlede i data omkring hvor folk rent faktisk kom fra?

T: Ja, det har vi. Vi havde besøgende fra 29 lande, udover Danmark.

Me: Det er alligevel rimelig vildt. Det må man sige. Jeg hørte også fra Søren Brønserud fra VisitOdense at der kom folk helt fra Hawaii af, som han lige kunne huske.

T: Ja, altså - de mest eksotiske var Japan, Australien, Thailand, Singapore og Vietnam.

Me: Det må man sige, det er også noget af en rejse for at komme til Odense.

T: Oplagt flest fra vores nabolande - Tyskland, Norge, Sverige, Finland, Holland. Tyrkiet var der faktisk en del fra - og USA.

Me: Ok, det er da spændende må man sige. Det havde jeg alligevel ikke forventet på en eller anden måde, men det er da enormt spændende at folk vælger at rejse så langt for sådan nogle events.

[21.09] T: Ja, det er super interessant!

Me: Ja. Hvis du skulle prøve at sammenligne esports events med andre former for events, som du fx. har arbejdet med. Hvad ville du så sætte det op i mod?

T: Altså, jeg har ikke selv arbejdet med det, har kun oplevet det. Men vil sige: Hvis man tog og krydsede boksning, skak, det internationale melodi gramprix og et rock'n'roll show. Hvis man puttede det ned i en gryde og kogte det sammen, så ville man få sådan et internationalt esports event.

Me: Det er også noget af en kombination!

T: Det er fordi at det er nogle events som låner fra nogle af de der mere klassiske, traditionelle event-discipliner. Altså, der er den der show-del. Man skal huske på at de her store/mega-events også er en TV-produktion.

[22.04] Me: Ja, selvfølgelig.

T: Mere kyniske personer ville jo sige at det dybest set bare er en kulisse for de 30 mil. der sidder og kigger med via. nettet, og ikke så meget en oplevelse for de der ti tusinde der sidder i arenaen. Så show delen - det er derfor jeg siger melodi grandprix. Med meget lys, og kraner og sådan - den fylder meget. Så er der boksningen, det er sådan hele framingen, typisk med en presenter, eller et "talent",

der kalder de her hold ind og de laver gerne sådan en "walk-in" igennem publikum og kommer ud igennem noget røg eller ild. Det er jo sådan noget man kender fra boksning, eller wrestling. Wrestling kunne også være et billede på det. Og så siger jeg skak, fordi der er et spil element i det, som kræver ekstrem forberedelse, koncentration og fokus.

[23.09] T: Og så er der rock'n'roll showet, som er fordi det alligevel ikke helt så pænt som melodi grandprix - der er også gang i lidt flere ting end bare røgmaskiner. Musik valget og sådan noget er ret intenst, typisk for at hype den her stemning. Det er typisk nogle events der låner noget relevant, eller bedste, i den her sammenhæng - fra nogle af de andre klassiske show discipliner.

Me: Jamen, jeg synes det er en god sammensætning - har selv prøvet at tænke over hvad man kunne sætte det op i mod. Men de fire du sætter op der, det giver rigtig god mening. Da du kom lidt sent ind i processen, hvad var dine overvejelser da du begyndte at arbejde med eventet i Odense. Altså, hvad var dine primære overvejelser ift. at skulle planlægge det?

[24.07] T: Der er tre. Det ene var at holde budgettet. Det er altid en god idé. Så var der to andre. Det ene var sådan - de hænger i virkeligheden lidt sammen, det er selvfølgelig lidt teknokratisk - men at sikre målopfyldelsen for de stakeholders eller interessanter der var omkring det. Altså dvs. ESL, deltagerne, tilskuere, udstillere (altså de her tech virksomhedder) - kommunen, som var opdragsgiver. Altså at sikre, at alle ligesom var mere end tilfredse når det var færdig. At få det balanceret. I sammenhæng med det, så udover at de bare skal være tilfredse, så skal det være så godt - have så høj en kvalitet - så alle har lyst til at gøre det igen. Så bygge en platform for fremtiden. Så man ikke bare sagde, det var da meget skægt, men det gidder vi ikke gøre igen.

[25.06] T: Vores, og min, ambition var egentlig at når vi var færdige med det. Så skulle alle sige: "Hold kæft vi glæder os til det kommer igen, for der skal vi helt sikkert være med."

Me: Det lader jo også til at det rent faktisk sker. Det virker jo til at eventet var rimelig succesfuldt og i tænker at fortsætte med det?

T: Det er i hvert fald planen. Der er selvfølgelig nogle ting der skal gå op, men det er tanken, ja.

Me: For hvad man hører fra mediedækningen, så virker det til at det var ret succesfuldt?

T: Jamen det var det også. Bestemt. Vi har fået mange gode tilbagemeldinger. Både på vores kvantitative og kvalitative målinger på det. Så både deltagere og tilskuere - og de her tech virksomhedder, som er ekstremt vigtige stakeholders - er alle rigtig glade.

[26.04] Me: Det var godt at høre det var succesfuldt.

T: Jeg har noget rapportering på det. Primært med udgangspunkt i ESL delen, men hvor man også berører nogle af de udenoms aktiviteter, det vil jeg godt sende til dig.

Me: Det vil jeg være enormt glad for.

T: Jeg tænker der er nogle gode, hardcore facts end det her sniksnak.

Me: Det ville jeg være enormt glad for hvis du ville sende videre i min retning.

T: Det vil jeg gerne, det gør jeg når vi er færdige her.

Me: Det vil jeg være meget glad for.

T: Du skal bare ikke lige lægge dem ud nogen steder - de er som sådan ikke top secret - men hvis du mest bruger det som baggrund og referer. Du skal selvfølgelig kilde angive det.

Me: Yes, det skal jeg nok.

T: Bare du ikke lige smider dem ud på et eller andet forum.

Me: Det gør jeg ikke, det lover jeg, det bliver til mit eget brug til specialet, hvis jeg skal bruge nogle specifikke citater eller noget data. Det er ikke mere end det.

[27.08] Me: Når du nu synes det er en spændende sektor, hvor tror du egentlig du ser de største muligheder inden for esport. Som nogle så store events som den i Odense?

T: Hvad tænker du på, ift?

Me: Jamen, tror du der er mulighed for at det er noget der vil blive spredt ud over flere byer i Danmark end bare Odense og at det vil fortsætte med at blive i større i Danmark?

T: Ja, det tror jeg helt bestemt. Det er allerede i gang på forskellige niveauer. København har jo BLAST, som kom et par uger i forkøbet, med det superflotte arrangement der var i Royal Arena. Som vi jo gik og grinte lidt af. Det var jo godt de lavede et lille warm-up arrangement til vores. Men det var jo super fantastisk - BLAST. Super dygtige folk. BLAST har nu offentliggjort at de skal Tyrkiet, til Istanbul og lave et BLAST show.

[28.05] Me: Nå, det var spændende.

T: Det er super godt gået af de folk, og så har enhver mellemstor dansk by en eller anden form for esports satsning. Enten i offentlig regi, hvor man prøver at facilitere - enten med udgangspunkt i uddannelses-sektoren eller en anden mere ungdoms fokusseret ting. Eller også et mere professionelt regi, hvor nogle virksomheder, fx. AGF, de går ind i esport og en del sportsklubber gør det. Man kan sige at de forecasts som der ligger internationalt er også at den vækst som vi har set de sidste par år den vil fortsætte i hvert fald i den næste fire-fem år - og så er det ikke til at vide om markedet stabiliserer sig, eller om væksten fortsætter.

Me: Mængden af individer rundt omkring i verden som interesserer sig for esport er jo helt enormt. Men markedet jo ikke helt oppe på niveau med dem endnu.

[29.07] Nej, det er det. De sidste tal jeg så, der gætter man på sådan 400 mil. der er interesseret i det. Jeg synes faktisk det er overraskende mange. Som enten er meget interesserede, som det man kalder entusiaster, eller også det man kalder "occasional viewers". Det er jo rigtig, rigtig mange mennesker.

Me: Det må man sige, det er jo større end en del regulære sportsgrene.

T: Ja - og man kan sige at de forecasts der ligger i USA er også at de faktisk allerede i år kommer til at overhale nogle af de klassiske amerikanske sportsgrene, som fx. NBA og Hockey.

Me: Har da også set de havde større séertal på, tror det var The International i DOTA - end NBA finalerne havde.

[30.00] T: Ja, men det er sådan lidt noget man skal passe på. For der er også noget instrument effekt. Nu bliver det selvfølgelig lidt teknisk. Men hele forretningsmodellen omkring esport er jo at gøre det virkelig, virkelig tilgængeligt - både som event, man prissætter faktisk billetterne relativt lavt ift. alt muligt andet. Men særligt ift. transmission, der er man ikke ret protektionistisk omkring sine rettigheder.

Me: Nej der ryger det bare ud på twitch.

T: Det ligges ud på twitch, og alle må sådanset tage det. Jeg sad og så fra Counter-strike turneringen i Odense, der sad jeg og så et albansk signal. Hvor der var to gutter nede i albanien der havde et lagn op med et ESL logo på, og så lavede de sgu en albansk stream hvor de kommenterede kampen. Det må de gerne, fordi at værdiskabelsen kommercielt ligger meget i "instream" - altså den eksponering i signalet.

[31.02] T: Sponsorerne, det har du sikkert lagt mærke til, er jo på skærmen under spillet og det betyder egentlig, jo flere eksponeringer udbydere kan levere til dem, jo flere penge får de. De fyrer den sådanset bare af. Hvorimod, en del mere klassiske sportsgrene, der har man jo en anden forretningsmodel. Der beskytter man rettighederne, sælger dem dyrt - typisk til nogle kabel-TV selskaber eller nogle selskaber der sælger set-top boxes, som så pakketerer de her kanaler, som transmiterer de her kampe, sammen med nogle andre. Så man bliver nødt til at købe den fulde pakke af dit fælles-antenne anlæg. Det har du sikkert lagt mærke til når du skal vælge hvad for en pakke du vil have. Så ligger sportskanalerne altid i fuldpakken.

Me: Ja, det er jo nemlig det.

[32.00] T: Så de er ligesom driver for en anden type økonomi.

Me: Det er lidt den favre ny verden der.

T: Ja, men så kan man sige der faktisk er nogen esports udbydere som er begyndt at sælge rettighederne. Jeg ved ikke rigtigt om det ekspandere. Personligt tror jeg ikke på det. Jeg tror ikke på du kan beskytte de her rettigheder.

Me: Det er i hvert fald svært når målgruppen er internet brugere primært. Der lidt noget med dem at de gerne vil have det meget let tilgængeligt.

T: Ja, der er også nogen der prøver - Nordisk Film har jo blandt andet lanceret Esport i biografen. Hvor de prøver at få folk til at mødes i biografer og se transmissioner fra de her turneringer. Det bliver super interessant at se hvordan det kommer til at gå. Om folk vil det, fordi det er sådan en hybrid/mellemting i mellem at sidde derhjemme, enten alene på en second screen - som de fleste jo nok gør, som jeg typisk fx. selv ser esport på nettet.

[33.03] Så sidder jeg faktisk typisk og laver noget andet, og så kører det på min second eller third screen. Så kan jeg kigge lidt på det en gang i mellem - og når det bliver rigtig spændende så fokuserer jeg selvfølgelig på det. Og så den anden måde jeg forbruger esport på, det er jo at komme til de store shows, hvor du får "the full experience". Der er altså nogen nu som prøver at se om der er et marked midt i mellem, hvor man måske kan mødes med nogle venner, i den lokale biograf og så i det her esport have en fælles oplevelse omkring det. Som jo aldrig kan komme helt op på niveauet på showet, men som stadigvæk er på en superfed i høj kvalitet, med høj lyd og sådan. Så der er jo mange der udforsker de her forskellige forretningsmodeller i økosystemet omkring turneringer og esporten.

Me: Ja, jeg kan da egentlig huske at jeg har læst at Nordisk Film faktisk havde fulde huse for mange af dem, men at stemningen i salen stadigvæk var lidt stille.

[34.05] Me: Det er jo også nye satsninger, det er jo spændende.

T: Ja, det er også noget med at publikum skal finde ud af hvad det er - og er det noget for mig, eller skal der nogle andre ind. Det kan også være det ikke virker. Det er ikke til at vide.

Me: Nej, det er jo det.

T: Jeg oplevede det der publikum, til selve eventsene. De ligger lidt midt i mellem en fodbold tilskuer og en tilskuer til kunst skøjteløb ikke. Men de vil sgu også gerne sidde med nogle popcorn og den store skumgummi finger - og rejse sig op og sådan. Jeg ved ikke om det fungerer i en biograf. Det vil tiden jo vise.

Me: Det er jo så det.

T: Det kan også være at nogen siger at man ikke kan tage til New York hveranden uge. Eller Odense. Eller Katowice. Eller hvor der er en stor turnering. Men det er også fedt nok at mødes i biografen i Brande.

Me: Ja, så længe det er sammenholdet man går efter, så giver det jo mening.

T: Ja præcis.

[35.00] Me: Når du så snakker om udfordringerne der er - med at vide hvor man skal satse ift. forretningsmodeller. Hvad stødte du i mod for nogle udfordringer da du var ved at arrangere ESL turneringen? Noget du ikke havde forventet?

T: Vil sige der var to typer udfordringer. Den ene var simpelthen at folk ikke vidste hvad det var - de forstod det simpelthen ikke. Altså, typisk folk på min egen alder, som måske ikke er super teknologi interesserede, men som alligevel var vigtige stakeholdere - fx. faktisk overraskende nok nogle af de folk som arbejder med de her tech-klynger. Det krævede faktisk en indsats fra både os, som holdt fast i arrangementet og dem, for at præcist sætte sig ind i, hvordan er det at det her kan skabe værdi. Fordi folk vidste ikke hvor stort det var, og vidste ikke hvor billigt det var. Det kan man sådanset ikke bebrejde nogen, for det er så ungt.

[36.04] T: Der var godt nok mange som efterfølgende sagde: "Ok, det var jo fuldstændigt sindssygt." Det havde folk slet ikke drømt om at der kom så mange, der var så dedikerede og så interesserede i det - og så et arrangement i den kvalitet.

Me: Nej ok, det kunne jeg godt forestille mig faktisk.

T: Det er vel ikke unaturligt. Jeg tror man kan sige det om mange ting. Hvis man aldrig har oplevet en rugby kamp på højt niveau. Så tænker man også: "Hvad er rugby? Er det ikke bare sådan noget man gør ude på en mark?" Så hvis man ikke kender til fænomenet, så kan det være svært at forstå. Og der er det her jo helt nyt. Så der jo en penetrations-tid inden folk finder ud af at det faktisk er stort og vildt.

[37.02] T: Inden at den viden i øvrigt spreder sig ud til andre end dem der er super interesserede i det. Så oplevede jeg, udfordrings-mæssigt, at det også er en ung branche. Dels er der mange unge mennesker i den. Fordi det også bare tiltrækker folk der synes det er fedt, og vil være med til det. Men det er også strukturelt ungt. Selvom det at lave en esports turnering, eller et esport event, selv hvis du kobler en messe og konference på, som vi gjorde. Så er det jo ikke noget man har prøvet før. Jeg havde ikke prøvet det før, selvom jeg har lavet alt muligt andet, og der var virkelig mange andre der ikke havde prøvet det før. Så selvom det er en sammenkobling af ting man har prøvet før, så er det også en ny kombination med nogle nye udfordringer. En del var ikke så slemt, det var bare at have en systematik omkring det og så gøre det. Det var mere det med at folk skulle finde ud af hvor stort det var.

[38.05] T: Altså, et eksempel: Vi skulle have et samarbejde med vores lokale busselskab. De ville næsten ikke tro på at der kom 6000 mennesker, der søndag aften skulle køres hjem, fra noget

computerspil. Folk var positive. Vi mødte ikke modstand som sådan. Men der var bare en skepsis overfor om det virkelig var rigtigt det her. "Er det så stort som i siger?"

Me: Der kunne i vil bare fremvise billetsalget?

T: Ja, ja. Det var heller ikke nogen lang diskussion, men det var en sjov oplevelse. Hvis vi nu siger at vi laver en John Mayer koncert. Så kommer der nok mange ikke, det er en automat reaktion. Men hvis vi har noget computerspil, hvem interesserer sig dog for det?

[39.00] Me: Det er også svært at sætte sig ind i. Det kan jeg godt nikke genkendende til når jeg nu skriver speciale om det, som turisme event. Der er ikke rigtig nogen der kender til det, i min omgangskreds. Det er nyt og spændende på nogle måder, men det kræver stadig at man har en indsigt i det før at man forstår det.

T: Men mange af dem der interesserer sig for det synes faktisk netop at det er en kvalitet at andre ikke forstår det. Det bliver lidt halv-filosofisk, men det der med at være en del af noget særlig. Det er mit indtryk at folk synes er ret fedt - "Vi har noget andre ikke kan forstå". Det er også en del af en ungdoms-kultur, og har været det igennem alle generationer i virkeligheden. De gamle kunne ikke forstå det der beat musik, eller de kunne ikke forstå det der hippie musik eller ikke forstå hvorfor det var så interessant at køre på knallert eller motorcykel.

Me: Det er også lidt specielt inden for esport - det kan godt være man forstår det ene spil. Men så forstår du måske ikke de andre spil der bliver lavet esport indenfor.

[40.07] T: Ja, så flytter du dig. Så kan man sige at man tager et helt ultra-nørdet spil - hvorimod man kan sige Counter-Strike er forholdsvist nemt at afkode. Er de døde eller levende? Er bomben sprunget eller har man disarmet? Og så er der jo 100 taktiske lag i det. Men du kan umiddelbart sætte dig for at kigge på det og forstå det. I hvertfald på overfladen. Der er andre spil, altså DOTA2 fx., der kræver det lige lidt mere at forstå. Ok, hvordan er det man vinder spillet? Hvordan er det de her figurer fungerer? Hvad betyder den grønne og den blå bar deroppe?

Me: I den forstand er det mere sammenligneligt med forskellige sportsgrene end bare en sektor. Det er ikke bare esport, det er en masse forskellige esporte.

[41.01] T: Ja, det er det. Det tror jeg fremadrettet at det vil blive brudt mere ned. Min påstand er, at i Danmark, som det er nu - hvis du får en af de store internationale turneringer hertil, så er det ikke så afgørende hvad det er for et spil. Så vil folk bare synes det er fedt, fordi det der, det skal jeg hen og være en del af. Men om et år der begynder folk også at være mere kræsne og siger: "Årh, men er det nu en Proleague finale eller en ESL one eller en Intel Extreme Masters. Og hvad er det for et spil?" Sådan er det med alle mulige ting - der over tid bliver mere diversificerede og folk bliver mere selektive i deres adfærd omkring det.

Me: Jamen ved du hva, det er guldkorn du kommer med. Vil lige spørge dig om en sidste ting inden jeg afslutter. Nu har jeg også taget rigtig meget af din tid her.

T: Jamen, det er cool. Du kan godt høre at jeg synes det er spændende selv.

Me: Ja, bestemt. Det er godt at høre der er nogle andre indenfor den lidt mere industrielle side af, som har en stor interesse for det, det er spændende.

[42.12] Me: Men hvor vil du forvente sådan noget som esport vil passe ind i fremtiden? Altså, ift. turisme. Tænker du at det rent faktisk er noget vi kan få folk til at rejse, i større mængder, til Danmark? Hvis det er at der bliver en satsning på det.

T: Jeg synes faktisk det er svært at sige, fordi at det publikum der er til det. Det er super svært at forudse deres adfærd. Det er svært at påvirke dem bare med traditionelle virkemidler. Men jeg kan sige, helt generelt - hvis man forstår at skabe nogle sammenhængende events i rigtig høj kvalitet, så har man en vinder. Det gælder i virkeligheden indenfor alle dele af turist-sektoren.

[43.01] T: Hvordan skaber man så et sammenhængende event i rigtig høj kvalitet? Jeg tror at dem der er dygtige til at se nogle perspektiver i krydsfeltet mellem det offentlige og det private, altså erhvervslivet, og så nogle aktører inden for oplevelses-industrien. Dem som formåer at lave de rigtige koblinger og så kombinerer det. Med fokus på at både levere et event af høj kvalitet og så få kommunikeret omkring det - og så få skabt nogle pengestrømme i virkeligheden. I økosystemet omkring det, via. sponsorer eller nogen der kan skabe noget merværdi som man ellers ikke ville have fået. Som kan være med til at løfte det.

Me: Ok, det giver selvfølgelig god mening.

T: Ja. Jeg kan egentlig ikke være så meget mere specifik omkring det. Hvis jeg kunne det, så var jeg gået i gang med det.

[44.01] Me: Ja selvfølgelig, det er også lidt en gisning.

T: Men man kan sige at man virkelig kan bruge Odense som eksempel. Her konstaterer vi, at vi har mangel på kvalificeret indenfor nogle bestemte sektorer. Det vil, og må kommunen i øvrigt understøtte, ift. statsstøtte regler og alt muligt andet. I virkeligheden er det lidt omvendt det er opstået her, der havde man ikke besluttet sig for at lave esport. Der havde man besluttet sig for at skaffe noget kvalificeret arbejdskraft til de virksomheder, så vi kan sikre væksten. Så fandt vi så i virkeligheden efterfølgende ud af, at esport var den mest effektive måde at gøre det på.

Me: Så må man regne baglæns der.

T: Det betyder så at Odense er super interesserede i at facilitere og understøtte det på alle mulige måder. Formentlig kommer vi til at se, i Odense, en række andre esports initiativer henover året. Men egentlig med en anden driver end bare lysten til at se på nogen der spiller computerspil, for at sige det helt på spidsen.

[45.03] T: Jeg tror i hvert fald, hvis det skal bredes ud. Selvfølgelig er der en turisme-industri i det, for dem som er interesserede i det. Men jeg tror også at tilgængeligheden bliver så stor, meget hurtigt, at folk måske ikke nødvendigvis rejser efter det.

Me: Nej, så skal det være de helt store events?

T: Ja, det er det. Der er det jo også begrænset hvor mange der kan være. For selv i den største arena eller stadion kan der jo måske være 50.000 mennesker, et eller andet sted i Asien. Men i de der klassiske. Jeg tænker at når du snakker om turisme, så er det mere i et vest-europæisk og dansk perspektiv. Der må man sige at de venues vi opererer med her, der kan måske være 15.000 mennesker og der vil jo altid være nogle lokale som køber nogle af billetterne. Så det er ikke hundrede tusindevis af turister der kommer ind, for de kan ikke være der.

[46.00] Me: Nej nej, selvfølgelig. Der kan man også sige at esport kan bruges til at fylde ud i de her lav-sæsoner, i den kedelige halvdel af året i Danmark.

T: Præcist. Det har faktisk også været et helt afgørende parameter for Odense. Der har vi simpelthen sagt at vi vil have det her hoved-event til at ligge i lav-sæsonen. Hvor der ikke sker så meget andet i byen, og hvor der i øvrigt er plads på hotellerne. Når vi går ind og måler på de her ting, og ser hvor

meget turisme-økonomi der er i det, så går vi også ind og kigger på netto-tal. Så dvs. at hvis der i forvejen havde været en belægning på 60% i byen, så kan det godt være at vores arrangement potentielt kan fylde alle hotellerne. Men hvis 60% af dem var fyldt i forvejen, så kan vi jo kun regne 40% ind i vores turisme-økonomiske beregning. Det er ikke alle der gør det sådan, men det gør vi her.

[47.05] Me: Det giver også god mening, ift. det ikke er den årstid man vælger at rejse til Danmark generelt, eller at rejse rundet i Danmark.

T: Nej, det er det i hvert fald ikke. Man kan godt påstå at dem der kommer udenbyes fra her, de ville ikke være kommet alligevel. Det kan vi med ret stor sikkerhed sige.

Me: Ja fordi, der er det interessen man rejser efter. Det er fordi at det er esport fx.

T: Lige præcis.

Me: Jamen, ved du hvad Tue - jeg tror faktisk ikke jeg har så meget mere, men det har været enormt informativt. Det må jeg sige.

T: Det var godt, jeg smider dig lige nogle af de der rapporter.

Me: Det vil jeg være enormt glad for.

T: Som kan du få et indblik i den professionalisme vi arbejder med deri, også os lidt mere gamle mennesker i branchen, vi tilgår det faktisk meget, meget systematisk.

[48.07] Me: Det synes jeg lyder enormt spændende. For det er ikke noget jeg har mødt så meget af endnu, pga. det er så ung en sektor. Der er ikke så megen forståelse for det altid.

T: Nej, men det er også fordi meget af det i virkeligheden også er forretningshemmeligheder, for at sige det lige-ud. Der ligger ret gennemtænkte og stærke stratgier bag meget af det der bliver gjort. Men det er ikke noget der lyder så godt, at man vil opbygge en stor markedsværdi i det her - og så sælge det til en stor amerikansk kapitalfond. Sådan er jeg sikker på at nogle aktører kører deres strategi.

Me: Nej, det lyder ikke så godt som at sige at man gør det for fansne.

[49.00] T: Nej, der lyder det bedre at sige at vi er super interesserede i et spændende nyt ungdoms fænomen. Det tror jeg sådanset også folk er, ellers tror jeg ikke man får succes i det. Men der bliver arbejdet utroligt professionelt i det, det er bare mere bag kulissen.

Me: Det glæder jeg mig til at se på, det er bestemt noget jeg kan bruge til mit speciale og det har det her helt sikkert også været. Du skal i hvert fald have mange tid, for dine 50 minutter næsten. Det har været herligt at snakke med dig.

T: Ja, det er godt, jeg sender noget til dig lidt senere i dag.

Me: Det er helt fint, ingen stress med det. Jeg siger i hvert fald mange tak for din tid. Hav en god weekend når du når så langt!

T: I lige måde, hej!