



DEGREE PROJECT IN INDUSTRIAL MANAGEMENT,
SECOND CYCLE, 30 CREDITS
STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN 2020

Gendered Game: Gender and gender imbalance in the gaming industry

How is the gender imbalance created and
explained the Swedish Gaming firms?

MAROUN NASR

Gendered Game: Gender and gender imbalance in the gaming industry

How is the gender imbalance created and explained the Swedish
Gaming firms

By

Maroun Nasr

May 2020

Master of Science Thesis TRITA-ITM-EX 2020:281
KTH Industrial Engineering and Management
Industrial Management
SE-100 44 STOCKHOLM

Könet Spel: Kön och ojämlikhet i spelindustrin


Hur skapas och förklaras könsbalansen av de svenska spelbolagen?

Av

Maroun Nasr

Maj 2020

Examensarbete TRITA-ITM-EX 2020:281
KTH Industriell teknik och management
Industriell ekonomi och organisation
SE-100 44 STOCKHOLM

| | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------|
|  <p>KTH Industrial Engineering and Management</p> | <p>Master of Science Thesis TRITA-ITM-EX 2020:281</p> <p>Gendered Game: Gender and gender imbalance in the gaming industry</p> <p>How is the gender imbalance created and explained the Swedish Gaming firms?</p> <p>By Maroun Nasr</p> | |
| | Approved | Examiner Monica Lindgren |
| | Commissioner N/A | Contact person N/A |


Abstract

The low levels of gender diversity is an characteristic that is directly associated with the gaming industry. The gaming industry is multi-dollar business with huge influence on technological advancement and possesses a great power and influence over its users. It is in a position to shape how users view the world and how they interact with it. Studies within the field of gaming have previously showed that gaming can have a significant impact on children and adolescents' behavior. Therefore, it becomes of great interest to examine how gender imbalance is created and how it is explained by the gaming firms. The study will examine these questions through a Swedish perspective.

The methodology of this research paper can be divided into two main section. Firstly, a literature review was conducted to gather information about relevant theories, concepts and previous research. Thereafter, ten individuals working for different Swedish gaming companies were interviewed to gather their perspective and view on the topic.

The results showed that the gaming firms explained the gender imbalance and how it is created through gender and societal norms. However, when discussing the structure of the company, culture and other practices, results indicated that the gaming firms play a larger contributing role to the imbalance through; male-dominated gender structures and cultures that makes it difficult for women to progress and feel belonged in the company, establishing requirements that exclude certain candidates, and by having a confused perceptve regarding the situation.

Keywords: Gender diversity, Diversity, Gaming Industry, Swedish Gaming Industry

| | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|
|  <p>KTH Industriell teknik och management</p> | Examensarbete TRITA-ITM-EX 2020:281 | |
| | <p>Könat Spel: Kön och ojämlikhet i spelindustrin</p> <p>Hur skapas och förklaras könsbalansen av de svenska spelbolagen?</p> <p>av Maroun Nasr</p> | |
| Godkänt | Examinator Monica Lindgren | Handledare Åsa Johansson Palmkvist |
| | Uppdragsgivare N/A | Kontaktperson N/A |

Sammanfattning

Den låga köns mångfalden är något som är direkt associerat med spelindustrin. Spelindustrin är en enorm industri som har stort inflyttande på teknisk utveckling samt har stort inflyttande över sina användare och kan forma hur de ser på världen och interagerar med den. Studier inom spelområdet har tidigare visat att spel kan ha en inflyttande på barn och ungdomars beteende. Därför har det blivit ett stort intresse att undersöka hur könsbalansen skapas och hur det förklaras av spelbolagen. Denna studie kommer att undersöka dessa frågor ur ett svenskt perspektiv.

Metodiken för denna forskningsrapport kan delas in i två huvudavsnitt. Först genomfördes en litteraturstudie för att samla information om relevanta teorier, begrepp och tidigare forskning. Därefter intervjuades tio personer som arbetar inom svenska gaming bolag för att samla in deras perspektiv och syn på ämnet.

Resultaten visade att spelföretagen förklarade obalansen mellan könen och hur det skapas genom köns- och samhällsnormer. Men när man diskuterade företagets struktur, kultur och andra aspekter, visade resultaten att spel bolagen har en större bidragande roll till obalansen än vad de själva tror. Dessa företag utformas av mansdominerade könsstrukturer och kulturer som gör det svårt för kvinnor att utvecklas och känna sig del av företaget, formar krav som exkluderar vissa kandidater och så vidare som bidrar till en låg köns mångfald inom branschen.

Nyckelord: Köns mångfald, Mångfald, Spelindustri, Svensk spelindustri

Acknowledgement

This research study is a result of Master Thesis course in Industrial Engineering and Management at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm.

I would like to start off by thanking my supervisor, Åsa Johansson Plankvist, for the continuous support and guidance throughout the course. You provide valuable input and different views which help tremendously in creating this research paper.

I would also like to extend a big thank you to all of the interviewees who offered their time and shared their experiences. This research paper would not be possible without you.

Table of Content

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 1 | Introduction | 9 |
| 1.1 | Research Question | 10 |
| 1.2 | Limitation | 11 |
| 2 | Theoretical Framework | 11 |
| 2.1 | Important Concepts and Theories: Defined through a Gender Perspective | 11 |
| 2.1.1 | Gender, Equality and Gender Diversity | 11 |
| 2.1.2 | Gender Norms | 12 |
| 2.1.3 | Gender In Organisation | 13 |
| 2.1.4 | Discrimination | 14 |
| 2.1.5 | Homosociality | 15 |
| 2.2 | Previous Research: ICT, Gaming, and Gender | 16 |
| 2.2.1 | Computer Engineers Versus Gender Researchers Perspective on the Gender Gap in the ICT | 16 |
| 2.2.2 | Emotions in a Rational Profession | 17 |
| 2.2.3 | The glass walls and the glass ceiling | 18 |
| 3 | Method | 19 |
| 3.1 | The authors view | 19 |
| 3.2 | General approach for each method | 19 |
| 3.3 | Systematic Literature Review | 19 |
| 3.4 | Interviews | 20 |
| 3.4.1 | Semi-structured Interview | 21 |
| 3.4.2 | Participants | 22 |
| 3.5 | Implication of COVID-19 | 22 |
| 3.6 | LinkedIn | 23 |
| 3.7 | Analysis | 23 |
| 3.8 | Gantt Chart of Master Thesis | 23 |
| 3.9 | Evaluation of research methods | 24 |
| 3.9.1 | Transferability | 24 |
| 3.9.2 | Credibility | 25 |
| 3.9.3 | Dependability | 25 |
| 3.9.4 | Comfirmability | 25 |
| 3.10 | Ethical Considerations | 25 |
| 4 | Results | 26 |
| 4.1 | Gender Structure: Quantity, Segregation and Power | 26 |
| 4.1.1 | Gender Distribution | 26 |
| 4.1.2 | Career Progression within the Gaming Industry: A Female's Struggle | 27 |
| 4.1.3 | Visibility: The minority effect | 28 |

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 4.2 | The culture of the Swedish Gaming Industry | 29 |
| 4.2.1 | Culture | 29 |
| 4.2.2 | Belonging | 30 |
| 4.2.3 | The new norm: The passionate and the social | 31 |
| 4.3 | Gender Diversity and the Required Change: The gaming industry’s per- ceptive | 32 |
| 4.3.1 | Increasing Gender Diversity in the Gaming Industry: The good and the bad | 33 |
| 4.3.2 | The Perception of Gender in the Gaming Industry | 34 |
| 4.3.3 | The reason for the lack of Gender Diversity in the Gaming Industry | 35 |
| 4.3.4 | Recruitment Process and Homosocial Recruiting Impact on Gen- der Diversity | 36 |
| 5 | Discussion | 40 |
| 5.1 | Gender Structure: Quantity, Segregation and Power | 40 |
| 5.1.1 | Gender Distribution | 40 |
| 5.1.2 | Women Career Progression within the Gaming Industry | 41 |
| 5.1.3 | Implication of the Minority Effect: The positive and the Negative | 42 |
| 5.2 | Culture | 42 |
| 5.2.1 | The Swedish Gaming Industry’s Culture | 42 |
| 5.2.2 | Belonging | 43 |
| 5.2.3 | The new nerd: Passionate and Social | 43 |
| 5.3 | Gender Diversity and the Required Change | 44 |
| 5.3.1 | Increasing Gender Diversity: The good and the bad | 44 |
| 5.3.2 | The underlying factors contributing to low levels of Diversity: The Gaming’s industry’s perspective | 45 |
| 5.3.3 | Recruitment process and Homosocial Recruitment | 46 |
| 6 | Conclusion | 48 |
| 6.1 | Implications for the Industry | 49 |
| 6.2 | Applications | 49 |
| 6.3 | Limitations and Weaknesses | 49 |
| 6.4 | Suggestions for Further Studies | 50 |
| 7 | Sources | 51 |
| 8 | Appendix | 56 |
| 8.1 | Interview Guide | 56 |

1 Introduction

The current gaming industry in Sweden is highly homogeneous with men representing roughly 80% of all employed in the industry. The game studios working on mobile platforms employ the most women. Overall, the proportion of women is still low in comparison with many related industries. There are major challenges ahead in further development of recruitment work, attracting more women to the industry, and the pursuit of equal opportunities in the gaming industry (Arvell, 2019)

When looking at leadership positions in the industry, one clearly sees that there is a lack of females and minorities. Less than 25% of the staff making up the technical staff were women across all major companies in Silicon Valley in comparison to the non-technical staff where over 50% were women. Furthermore, the statistical number concerning racial diversity was even worse, where Hispanics and African Americans only combined to less than 10% of both the non-technical and technical staff. This has created a concern in major gaming and technology companies such as Google and Facebook, as the lack of gender and racial diversity can impact both economic creative development (Kafai et. Al, 2016).

The gaming industry has experienced a rapid and exponential growth over the past decade and has been considered to be a refreshing and modern medium for both art and innovation. (Gates & Rochelle Cade, 2017) (Hadzinsky, 2014) Furthermore, it has developed into a central pillar and driving force for many technological advancement over the years. In the past 40 years, the industry of video games has turned into a multi-billion dollar industry from its origins as a "hobby". (Gates & Rochelle Cade, 2017). The Swedish gaming industry's revenue for 2018 surpassed 19 billion SEK and has tripled over the last five years. It is a growing industry that has a lot of influence over its users (Arvell, 2019). The gaming industry possesses a great power and influence over its users and can shape how they view the world and interact with it. Studies within the field of gaming have previously showed that gaming can have a significant effect on children and adolescents' behaviour (Boxer et al., 2015).

Addressing the issue of low diversity in the gaming sector is important for a number of reasons. It's about creating equal opportunities for rewarding careers for women. Having a homogenous group of people creating the games impacts what types of games are created. This, in turn determines what types of people become interested in games and spark an interest for pursuing a career in engineering games. This essentially strongly relates to the big picture of there being a gender gap in the ICT sector as stated by Kafai et al (2016). The interest in gaming can serve as a segway into becoming a computer engineer and it is of high importance that no industry, especially the ICT sector not being dominated by a self-selecting homogenous group. The ICT sector's development is important for the global society and the gaming industry is an important part of this. The

topic concerning diversity has been discussed heavily in different contexts and situations but the gaming industry is a relatively young industry and the extent of the research done is limited. This makes the gaming industry a compelling case to examine as the gaming industry is characterized by low levels of diversity.

A previous study that has been conducted is by Paaßen et al (2016). Their research showed that women and men play video games in approximately equal numbers. Despite this similarity, video gaming is still strongly associated with men. According to them this is due to all professional and highly visible figures in gaming culture being male. On the other hand, female players who achieve a moderate level of competence are rendered invisible or are actively marginalized. (Paaßen et al, 2016) Another study within this field, focused more on occupational segregation and showed that women are underrepresented in the games industry workforce as a whole and particularly in certain roles. Furthermore, women tend to be concentrated in more traditionally ‘feminine’ roles such as marketing and administration. Moreover, women are underrepresented in core creation and development roles, such as coders, designers and artists; roles that tend to require technical skill and knowledge (Prescott & Bogg).

Therefore, it would be interesting and of value to examine how low level of diversity is created and explained by the Swedish gaming companies.

1.1 Research Question

This study aims to explore how the low levels of diversity are created in the gaming industry and how gaming firms explain the gender distribution. This is of interest and importance since the gaming industry is increasing in popularity and the low gender diversity dictates what types of individuals are allowed to take part in this community. It is therefore crucial to have a better understanding regarding the topic. Therefore, the following research questions have been formulated.

- How is the gender imbalance created and explained by the Swedish Gaming firms?

Scope/Delimitation: This research will have the following scope/delimitation.

- The Geographical constraints are set to Sweden. The gaming companies that will be included in the research may have an international background operating in Sweden.
- Seniority, role, and experience, will be considered in the analysis. However, the aim is to get different perspectives from different individuals in different divisions of the gaming companies. There will therefore be a constraint regarding who will be interviewed except that they need to be currently working in a gaming company.

- Gaming companies include video gaming developers, and mobile gaming developers.

1.2 Limitation

There are a few limitations that are important to mention. The time frame of the research is limited. This may have an impact on the quantity and quality of the data gathered. The amount of individuals willing to participate was low. Furthermore, even if the aim was to get as many different perspectives as possible, it proved to be difficult to get employees at gaming companies involved in the study. The interviewee group was not as diverse as initially intended. All of this might result in the study not being generalizable in or outside Sweden.

2 Theoretical Framework

In this chapter of the report, important concepts regarding gender will be presented. Thereafter, relevant previous research regarding the topic will be presented in order to examine, explain, compare and link the findings of this research to what has already been done.

2.1 Important Concepts and Theories: Defined through a Gender Perspective

2.1.1 Gender, Equality and Gender Diversity

Gender is defined as being female or male, not in regards to biological difference, but in relation to social and cultural difference.(Oxford Dictionaries, Gender) Furthermore, the United Nation (UN) defines that gender "refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men." Through socialization processes, these attributes, relationships, and opportunities are taught and constructed. It is important to note that these all are context-based, alterable and time specific. Moreover, when being defined by a gender, there are certain expectation placed on the individual, and based on the context of situation, things that are either allowed or valued in male of a female.(United Nations, 2001)

Gender Equality refers to "the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys". This implies that both women and men are entailed to the same opportunities and responsibilities. It should not depend on if an individual is born as a male or female.(United Nations, 2001)

2.1.2 Gender Norms

In general terms, gender studies seem to have three core components (Billing & Alvesson, M, 2009):

- "the notion that gender is central and relevant to understanding all social relations, institutions and processes"
- "gender relation constitute a problem as they are characterized by patterns of of domination/subordination, inequalities, oppression and oppositions"
- "gender relation are seen as a social construct"

The last component refers to that gender is not biologically given but is developed based on social, cultural, and historical conditions. The term gender and the distinction between men and women are based on social definition that are not natural but are an on going process. Therefore, term and content of gender can be radically changed. Some research sees the biological difference as having a significance, however, the social construct defines what is acceptable and normal for a man or a woman.(Billing & Alvesson, M, 2009)

According to Ridgeway and Correll, the idea of gender norms was advanced by feminist sociologist that argued that gender norms was a system that allocates resources, roles and power according to whether a person/practice is perceived as masculine or feminine (Ridgeway & Correll, 2014). The majority of the existing gender systems are hierarchical, privileging masculinity over femininity (Heise et al. 2019)(Weber et al. 2019).

In the system of gender, norms are just one out of many different elements such as gender roles and gender socialization. Norms are the pillars in this system that say what social rules and expectations that apply for the system to function. Gender norm as a term was first introduced in the health and development lexicon in the late 20th century (Connell & Pearse 2014). Much of the work within the term was directed to promoting women's rights and well-being, part of the traction was built through work on masculinity and how masculinity can result in harm for both men and women (Connell, 1993)(Connell & Messerschmidt 2005)(Courtenay ,2000) (Evans et al. 2011).

The theoretical work within gender studies was initially mainly focused on gender norms but in the 2010s the studies diversified, with the upsurge of queer and transgender studies. A new way of thinking of gender raised, where gender was a psychological sense of

oneself as either a man, a woman or something in between. Furthermore, a linguistically change occurred, people started to substitute the word sex for gender, which resulted in the loss of the distinction between biology and social construction (Heise et al. 2019).

The increasing interest in sex and gender in regards to behavior and health was well needed. Gender is the main border for social relations (Ridgeway 2009) and is a big present share of how people view themselves and others (Deaux & LaFrance, 1998). According to Wood and Eagly, gender is the primary category for differentiation between people even in regards to race, age and occupation (Wood & Eagly 2010).

Four features within the gender norms are:

- Gender norms are learned in the childhood, from parents and peers (Cislaghi & Heise, 2019)
- Unequal gender norms reflect and preserve inadequate power relations that usually are disadvantageous to women (Cislaghi & Heise, 2019)
- Gender norms are entrenched in and replicated through institutions (Cislaghi & Heise, 2019)
- Gender norms are shaped and replicated through social interaction (Cislaghi & Heise, 2019)

2.1.3 Gender In Organisation

Gender systems, as defined by Hirdman (1988), are dynamic structures of networks and processes that produce certain regularities and effects. The system is hierarchic where the norm is that the masculine has superiority through its power position. The system also divided in the sense that it separates the masculine from the feminine. This system is what sets the basis for thoughts and actions that characterize the relationship between male and female which can create power strategies and conflicts (Hirdman, 1988).

Acker (1990) argues that organizational structures in organizations are masculine since they are dominated by the male gender and the structure was created by males and their experiences. It is argued that this is what sets the basis for segregation between the genders in the organizational structures.(Acker, 1990) Moss Kanter argues along the same lines by stating that it is not the individuals within the structure that create gender segregation, it is the structure itself. The example is drawn that women perform tasks with much lower status or if they are at the higher in the hierarchy of the organization they are regarded as tokens. This is problematic according to Moss Kanter because people with less opportunity and a weaker power position have the tendency to lower their personal expectations on themselves.(Kanter, 1990)

Moss Kanter has also put forward a model for viewing the gender situation in an organization. The model consists of three pillars which are opportunities, power and quantity. Opportunities refers to how well performance will lead to someone's possibilities to succeed and move up in the hierarchy. Power refers to acquire the resources to act and work efficiently in accordance to the someone's personal goals. Quantity refers to assessing if someone belongs the minority group or majority group depending on the number of people in each gender group.(Kanter, 1990)

Processes in organization can be gendered. Gender segregation can be categorized into three groups (Wahl et al., 2011):

- **Horizontal Segregation:** When males and females are present in different organizations or industries.
- **Vertical Segregation:** When males and females exist in different levels of hierarchy in an organization.
- **Internal Segregation:** When males and females with the same role are subjected to different tasks.

Kanter (1977) argues that being part of a minority group has three main structural effects:

- **Visibility:** Refers to women are subject to more attention and visibility in positions with male majority.
- **Contrasting:** Refers to differences and similarities between groups are accented with the presence of a minority group among a majority group.
- **Assimilation:** Refers to the minority having a higher chance of being subject to being stereotyped due to their minority position amongst a majority group.

2.1.4 Discrimination

Discrimination can be defined as the process of treating one or several individuals from a specified group (a group consisting of e.g. a certain age, sex, ethnicity etc.) unequally in comparison to other individuals of another group. (Oxford Dictionaries, Discrimination) Discrimination can be divided into direct and indirect. (Wahl, 2003)

1. **Direct discrimination:** specifically and openly stating the an individuals has been discriminated (Wahl, 2003)
2. **Indirect discrimination:** the act of treating someone unfairly based on specific group of belonging without directly state that the individual is being discriminated.

In a study conducted by Wahl, which focuses on the theme of direct and indirect discrimination, the author examined how Swedish females working as engineers and economists viewed their current work situation. The study showed that approximately 57% of the individuals who took part of the study felt that they received positive treatment frequently. The reason behind this, according to the study, was their gender. Furthermore, the study stated that the most common treatment that were labelled as positive were the following (Wahl, 2003):

1. Receiving more attention
2. Being remembered due to the fact that they were receiving more attention
3. Receiving special treatment in social events

Wahl continues by explaining that there is a structure to the positive treatment the individuals received in her study which can be summarized as:

1. **Female subordination:** Expectations are generally lower. This results in an increased willingness to help and more positive reactions when tasks are completed
2. **The minority situation:** As previously mentioned, being remembered, receiving more attention but also being portrayed as a symbol due to the minority situation in the company.
3. **Gender relation:** In social situations expectation of a woman can become more concrete due to the power relations and gender expectations

2.1.5 Homosociality

Homosociality can be defined as the social interactions that occur between same sex individuals. When examining homosociality from an organisation culture in relation to men, it can be divided into four dimensions. The four different dimensions can be explained and described as following (Hearn, 2002)(Wahl et al., 2011):

1. Male-dominated cultures
2. Men's culture being the organisation culture
3. Invisibility in male dominated cultural
4. Deconstructing the organization cultural and men relationship

Homosociality in male dominated industries can be described and defined as men surrounding themselves with men. Furthermore, it contributes to the situation where men e.g. choose other men for more significant tasks or promotion. This creates a significantly superiority of masculinity, create certain group value and due to their gender they

are awarded certain advantages and rights. This manifests itself by male managers recruiting more men in general but especially men who they feel are similar to themselves, resulting in what is described as homosocial reproduction. A result of homosociality is that women get excluded in different contexts e.g. women get excluded from positions of power.(Hearn, 2002)(Wahl et al., 2011)(Holgersson, 2012)

2.2 Previous Research: ICT, Gaming, and Gender

2.2.1 Computer Engineers Versus Gender Researchers Perspective on the Gender Gap in the ICT

Salminen-Karlsson (2011) presents the views of the gender gap in ICT from two different perspectives. The first view is from the computer engineers. The author mentions that there are educators in this field that believe that part of the problem is about women being misinformed and thus not able to understand the rewards of a career within ICT. They believe that the disinterest in ICT stems from early childhood experiences where it is seen as natural that women do not like computer science according to them. It is thought that this disinterest in the computer science field can be overcome by modifying and amending certain elements to the educational plan. Some have suggested to emphasize the applications and the social parts of working as a computer engineer. Other measures to try to increase the interest and knowledge in the field at an early stage include providing special hands-on courses for people with no prior knowledge. Different teaching techniques have also shown to diminish the difference between the achievements of men and women.

However, Salminen-Karlsson continues to argue that these measures reproduce women as different from the norm. All of the mentioned possible measures included seeing the women as different and the women as group are to always be compared to men as a group. Salminen-Karlsson continues to argue that as long as the problem is viewed as having the women as different, there will be two groups to relate to: the boys that belong to the norm and the women outside the norm.

Salminen-Karlsson also presents the views of the problem from the gender researchers' view. Instead of seeing the problem as the women being different from ordinary engineering students, Salminen-Karlsson sees computer engineering as being different from other parts of higher education. She sees computer engineering education as a practice that excludes a large number of women amongst other kinds of people. She believes that the starting point for measures to eradicate the problem should be to change the education and not the characteristics of women. She brings up previous studies that show since the education has been and still is dominated by men, it is natural that the excluding mechanisms are reproduced.

Salminen-Karlsson is however, aware that although the engineering faculties are aware of the problem, the way the problem is approached and attacked will be different. The two views are simply trying to solve the problem from two different ends. She argues that the creation and development of ICT in society should not be left in the hands of a self-selected group. She is aware that the characteristics of the computer engineering education is not very receptive to advice from outsiders that conduct social science research. She mentions the problem of language in which computer engineering is far away from being a reading and writing culture whilst gender studies is the complete opposite. These are factors that can affect the comprehension of the decision makers adhere to progress and advice from gender studies.

2.2.2 Emotions in a Rational Profession

In a study conducted by Kelan (2007), she states that discourses are gendered and binary in ways such that men are associated with thought, intellect, and reason and women with body, mind, and intuition. Gendering of skills means the differences between gender binary which highlights the dissimilarities of masculinity and femininity. The binary system tends to be hierarchical, where features of masculinity are higher valued than features of femininity. Gender binary is viewed as problematic since it is normative and contains valuation. However, gender binary is important because it sets the foundation for the mental construction on which people draw to make sense of a situation (Kelan, 2007).

The view on femininity is changing as it is beginning to be viewed as something desirable and no longer viewed as undesirable at work. Feminine skills are now esteemed in numerous occupations. Femininity has become a newly valued commodity in the labour market. However, it has also shown that women may not per se be the ones who will profit from the valuation of femininity.

One of the more masculine work professions is engineering, which rarely is associated with emotionality. ICT workers are often depicted as hackers working in isolation with just their computer. This image is said to discourage women from joining ICT professions. Women who are present in the ICT sector are often portrayed as working in the “less technical” and “softer” areas such as design rather than coding. Though, what is described as ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ seems to be contextual and contingent.

According to Kelan there is an unfair reaction to the display of femininity depending on the gender of the person who expresses it. Men are rewarded for displaying “unnatural” feminine skills while women are not (Kelan, 2007).

2.2.3 The glass walls and the glass ceiling

Gendered Occupational Segregation is a form of horizontal segregation also known as glass walls. It is a measure of how much a specific job consists of a specific gender (Miller et al., 2004). It is a result of regarding some jobs as being for males (or undertaken by men) while other jobs are dominated by women and can be seen as gendering professions (Prescott & Bogg, 2014). Miller et al (2004) mentions that Gendered Occupational Segregation is reproduced as workers have the tendency to select and pursue jobs in which they feel that their gender is represented. Although the phenomenon refers to horizontal segregation, it can still occur vertically as brought up by Acker (1999) where leadership roles are associated with males. Gendering in professions can be seen as some roles such as HR and marketing have higher percentages of women (Deuze et al., 2007)

Metz & Tharenou (2001) bring up that the two main factors defining a woman's advancement opportunities in an organization are human capital and social capital. Human capital refers to the skills and ability to perform the job whilst social capital refers to the social network and mentorship. Metz& Tharenou mention that women are not given the same opportunities of advancement as men as they do not have the same possibilities to create a strong social network which is of higher importance for the higher roles in the hierarchy.

An explanation for the lack of women in middle and upper management is described as the glass ceiling hypothesis brought forward by Morrison et al. (1994). It entails the perception that the higher roles in the hierarchy are regarded as elite groups that consist of men and are also created by men (Singh & Vinnicombe, 2004). The hypothesis essentially states that there is a glass ceiling that hinders women from further advancement rather than lack of qualifications or necessary skills.

Research by Prescott & Bogg (2011) shows that women tend to perform better and reach higher hierarchal positions in organizations that have a defined and clear career path. The organizational structures in the IT industry are often flat with no clear hierarchal structures to outline a career path. The flat organizational structure hinders women from advancing their career within the company as these types of organizations rely much less on formal and standardized criteria that are to be achieved for a promotion. Martin & Barnard (2013) showed that providing clear career paths that are visible for the employees is necessary for retaining women in the organization.

3 Method

The research strategy of this report consisted of a qualitative method to gather information. The primary methods that were used to gather relevant and credible information were a systematic literature review and conducting interviews with industry experts and representatives from different firms within the gaming industry. In the following section, the methods and steps executed will be presented.

3.1 The authors view

Social constructionism is a knowledge theory in communication and sociology that examines the development of constructed understandings of the world that form the basis for shared assumptions about reality. Social constructionism questions what is defined by humans and society to be reality. The author has preconceived notions which this thesis is grounded upon; that there is a low level of gender diversity, and that women and men might be different due several factors e.g. norms developed by society.. Therefore, the author has a biased viewpoint. Since the work is based on the fact that there is a low level of gender diversity in the gaming industry, the literature review, the analysis, the interviews have been shaped and affected to fit into that fundamental assumption and views of the researcher in one way or another. However, given that this thesis is based on social constructionism this is not seen as problematic.

3.2 General approach for each method

The qualitative methods used to gather information was conducted by using an inductive methodology approach. The inductive producer that was followed consisted of three different parts (Bryman & Bell, 2011):

1. Generating an initial perception.
2. Assembling relevant and creditable information.
3. Reviewing, analyzing and concluding the results based on the findings.

This is an iterative process with the aim of connecting existing theory and findings to the data gathered (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

3.3 Systematic Literature Review

The systematic literature review followed a six step producer. The methodology was as following (Durach, Kembro, & Wieland, 2017):

1. Defining a research question
2. Determining required characteristics of primary studies

3. Retrieving sample of potential relevant literature
4. Selecting pertinent literature
5. Synthesis of literature
6. Reporting results

Defining the research question was an iterative process. First a general area of research was determined and thereafter examined to gain more knowledge. A research question from the initial research was generated and as further initial research was conducted the question was refined. Thereafter, the research question was further refined by adding a more specific scope in terms of geographical restriction and focusing on certain elements e.g. diversity was specified to only gender diversity.

The third step of the systematic literature review was to retrieve a baseline sample of literature. Two important aspects of this step is to define and apply relevant keywords and determining search procedures (Durach, Kembro, & Wieland, 2017). Defining the relevant keywords was also an iterative process in order to generate an acceptable database to ensure a high-quality and relevant information base. The keywords were initially selected directly from the research question. However, this gave a high number of returns and therefore, a process of refining the keywords by testing other words, combinations, and using different conjunctions was conducted. This reduced the number of articles returned. Furthermore, different criteria were added to the search include; publication years, research area, and document type. This reduced the number of articles further.

For the fourth step, the abstract and conclusion of the resulting articles were examined to further determine the relevance of the articles. This results in a few articles. The next step was to deeply examine the resulting articles to ensure their quality and relevance. The fifth step is to synthesize the study which means summarizing, integrating, or cumulating different findings across the primary studies (Durach, Kembro, & Wieland, 2017). The articles were therefore, reviewed again, summarized, and a thematic analysis was conducted. The last step was to report and present the results by providing a descriptive overview and presenting the thematic findings.

3.4 Interviews

The interview process of this study was divided into three different three sections. As the systematic literature review was being conducted, a few initial interviews were completed. By conducting a few interviews early in the process, it provided a better understanding on how large gaming companies view diversity in the industry. This was of importance in order to gain a better understanding about the underlying cause of lower diversity

in the industry. Furthermore, questions surrounding how they work with diversity and inclusion on a regular basis was important to understand how it impacts the firm.

After conducting the initial interviews, the interview guidelines were reviewed and improved as new perspectives regarding the subject was gained and the realization the certain questions needed improvement. Thereafter, a second round of interviews were conducted and if needed, a third round of interviews was done to answer follow up questions or to clarify certain things if needed. The individuals that were interviewed worked for industry leading gaming companies with varying roll within the organisation. The companies and individuals that took part in this study were kept anonymous as requested.

3.4.1 Semi-structured Interview

The interviews were roughly 60 minutes long and were performed over the phone. The interviews were recorded by the interviewers. In addition to this, notes were taken during the interviews to keep record of their answers as well as marking important time stamps of the interview for easier reviewing of the interviews post-interview. All interviews were held in Swedish.

The interview structure was semi-structured. The majority of the questions were open-ended and could open up for several topics of discussion. This allowed for follow-up questions from the interviewers. The introduction to the interview was aimed to ask personal details about the interviewees. The larger part of the interview was aimed to ask questions about their company. The final part of the interviews were more directed questions relating to gender diversity. The exact questions of the interview can be found in the appendix.

The cons with having a semi structured interview is that semi-structured interviews can flow more like conversations, they tend to take longer than typically question-and-answer sessions and some other interview techniques. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews don't require asking every candidate the same questions, there's room for inevitable biases like sexism, racism, ageism and other biases based on discriminatory factors. Nonetheless, individual, semi-structured interview is a method particularly appropriate for comprehending the meaning of a deeply rooted phenomena (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2013; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Even Though, semi-structured interviews are occasionally criticized for being time consuming (Collis & Hussey, 2009), the advantages of semi-structured interviews in this study was deemed appropriate.

3.4.2 Participants

A total of ten individuals participated in the interview section of this research. Initially, twelve participants were planned to take part in an interview. However, two individuals asked for the questions beforehand, emailing the answers instead and opting out from participating in the interview. The answers from these two individuals was therefore excluded. In the table below, all participants are presented. Name and company will be kept anonymous as mentioned in ethical considerations section. All names in the table below are fictional. However, their roll in the gaming industry, experience in the industry and the length of each interview is presented in the table below.

| Name | Company | Gender | Roll | Exp.* | Length |
|-------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Emma | Company A | Female | Software Engineer | 6 | 60 min |
| Jennifer | Company A | Female | Technical Designer | 12 | 46 min |
| Max | Company B | Male | Sales Manager | 2 | 30 min |
| Alice | Company C | Female | Software Engineer | 5 | 49 min |
| Alex | Company C | Male | Sales Manager | 5 | 56 min |
| Alexandra | Company D | Female | CEO | 6 | 53 min |
| Emily | Company E | Female | Software Engineer | 2 | 53 min |
| Isabell | Company E | Female | Marketing | 1 | 40 min |
| Maria | Company F | Female | Software Engineer | 7 | 42 min |
| Sara | Company F | Female | Software Engineer | 4 | 57 min |

The below table showcases how many people were contacted and how many respondent. Through LinkedIn 110 men individuals were contacted. Out of those 110 only 10 responded corresponding to roughly 9%. Approximately 2% of the males contacted participated in the study. The search generated fewer women matches. Only 67 females were contacted. However, 13 responded (3 more in comparison the men) and a total of 8 women agreed to participate in the study. .

| Gender | Contacted | Respondent | Participated |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Male | 110 | 10 | 2 |
| Female | 67 | 13 | 8 |

3.5 Implication of COVID-19

The escalation of the situation regarding COVID-19 created a few obstacles for this research paper. Initially, the aim was to examine a single Swedish gaming company and interview employees across different divisions with different positions. However, due to the circumstances the company in mind did not have the capacity to be fully engaged

in this research. Therefore, different individuals working for different gaming companies were contacted via LinkedIn and asked to take part of the research.

Since the company that was initially going to take part of the study backed out due to the implication caused by COVID-19, the initial timeline for the research got pushed forward as a new process of trying to find new individuals and companies to participate in the study.

3.6 LinkedIn

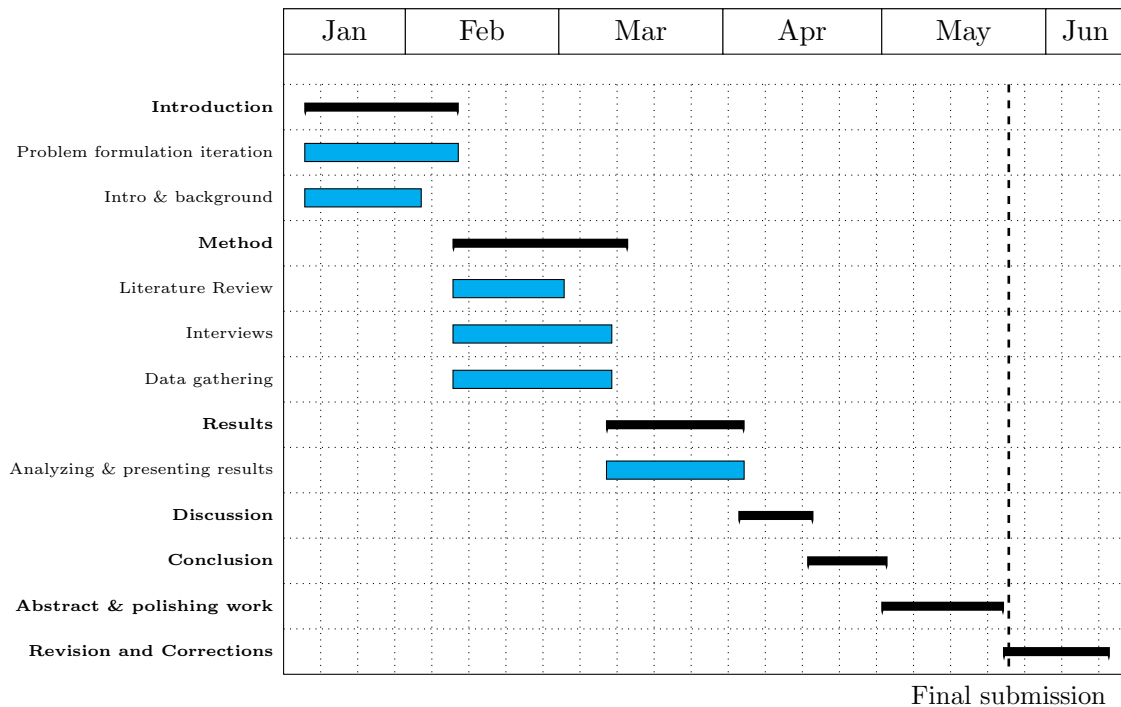
As mentioned in the previous section, due to the implication caused by COVID-19, new participants were needed. Using LinkedIn's filter system, it was possible to add certain criteria for the people search. The criteria were based on the research questions and therefore the following criteria were chosen: Location ("Sweden") and Industry ("Computer Games"). Filtering the profiles with the criteria "Computer Games" did not exclude companies that mainly create mobile games or console games which was a desired outcome. Thereafter, each person on each page was looked at to ensure that they are currently working at a gaming company. Every individual that met the criteria was connected (if possible). A short text was sent, introducing the author, and briefly describing the research (each text was limited to 300 characters). If someone replied a dialog was held to see if there was interest to participate and if there was an interest an interview was booked. After the first couple of interviews, some of the interviewees provided names of people that would be interesting to interview. They were also connected via LinkedIn.

3.7 Analysis

After each interview, the recorded call was transcribed for analysis. The aim was to find themes relating to the literature review by highlighting the various themes. When all interviews were conducted, another round of highlighting themes was conducted to find the most frequent and common themes among all interviews. These were categorized and quotes/comments that illustrated the themes were extracted.

3.8 Gantt Chart of Master Thesis

The figure below illustrates a general overview of the schedule for completing the research.



The actual writing of the report occurred simultaneously as each task of the Gantt chart is executed.

3.9 Evaluation of research methods

The data gathered for this research paper is based on qualitative methods, information from interview being a central part. To evaluate the research and the methods utilized, the “trustworthiness” concept was applied. Considering the subjective nature of the study utilizing this concept is more beneficial as it is more suitable. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008)(Graneheim & Lundman, 2003)

3.9.1 Transferability

The concept of transferability concerns demonstrating and establishing connection from the conducted studies to previous research and other contexts. This was done in primarily two ways (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008)(Lincoln & Guba, 1985)(Graneheim & Lundman, 2003):

1. A significant part of the data collections included a systematic literature review which included previous studies, and theoretical framework
2. The discussion and analysis section link the finding of the study to previous research, theories and concepts

3.9.2 Credibility

Credibility refers to the authors ability to examine the results and draw logical conclusions. This is done by presenting the results, illustrating the interpretations done and relating it to past literature.

3.9.3 Dependability

The concept of the dependability in the trustworthiness framework concerns what the level of repeatability of the study and building trust with the reader and the research. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008)(Lincoln & Guba, 1985)(Graneheim & Lundman, 2003) This can be accomplished by illustrating that the information presented was gathered in a clear and logical manner. Each step of the research is presented in the method section, and the interview were documented.

3.9.4 Comfirmability

Confirmability refers to the level of impartiality of the research findings. More specifically it concerns connecting the different components of the research to the data in comprehensible manner.(Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008)(Lincoln & Guba, 1985)(Graneheim & Lundman, 2003) In order to achieve this, the findings will be presented in the result section, and thereafter (in the discussions and analysis section), the gathered data will be connected to the previous research found the in the theory section and link all parts to the research questions. In order to establish higher level of confirmability, an audit trail will be conducted to illustrate the decisions made regrading interpretation. Furthermore, direct quotes will be included in the report to as accurately as possible portray the interviewees responses correctly.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

In the beginning of every interview the author explained the context of the interview stating the information disclosed would be used for the thesis paper. Furthermore, before recording the interviews, the author ensured the participants that their identity and the identity of their company would remain anonymous and not mentioned anywhere. Furthermore, they were asked whether or not they would allow to record the conversation. After confirming that is was fine to record, the author recorded the interviews for transcription and analysis proposes.

4 Results

The following section will present the results from the interviews. The general themes discussed by the respondents will be presented and direct quotes will be examined. This section will be divided into three parts: Gender Structure, Culture, and Diversity & Change.

4.1 Gender Structure: Quantity, Segregation and Power

This section will present the results related to the following topics: Gender structure, segregation and power.

4.1.1 Gender Distribution

Several of the respondents were not granted permission to disclose the actual gender distribution within the divisions of their respective companies while others were not aware of the current statistics. However, seven of the ten interviewees shared their perception regarding the gender distribution in different divisions: Top Management (e.g. executive management teams, CEO, CFO, etc.), Production (e.g. software developers), Marketing, Design (e.g. front-end developers) and human resources (HR). The table below illustrates the results:

| Divisions | Perception of % of females |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Top Management | 2%-10% |
| Production | 2%-20% |
| Marketing | 35%-45% |
| Design | 30%-40% |
| HR | 30%-40% |

The lower value of the interval represents the smallest percentual value for the division provided by any respondent while the highest value represents the largest percentual value given by any of the interviewers. As the table above illustrates, the distribution between men and women differs drastically depending on which part of the organization one examines. Top management positions, which are the most influential roles in the company, are mainly occupied by men. Only between 2% and 10% are occupied by women. Similarly, the production department is largely dominated by women were a maximum of 20% of the employees are women. However, when one examines the other divisions (Marketing, Design, and HR) there is a significantly large increase in the number of women employees.

It is important to consider that these values are not statistically accurate. However,

these numbers provide an insight to the respondent's perception of the gender distribution within their organization and portrays the following picture:

1. Women and men are found in different sections of the hierarchical organizational structure, where men seen in higher positions, illustrating vertical segregation.
 - (a) More men occupy positions of power and influence
2. Women and men are generally seen in different divisions within the organization, illustrating horizontal segregation.

It is important to note that these values are not statistically accurate. However, these numbers provide an insight to the respondent's perception of gender distribution within their organisation and portrays a picture of both vertical and horizontal segregation.

4.1.2 Career Progression within the Gaming Industry: A Female's Struggle

A theme that was frequently discussed among the respondents when discussing advantages and disadvantages of being a woman in the gaming industry was career progression. Five out of ten respondents stated that being a woman had certain advantages in relation to career progression. According to the five respondents, it is easier to progress into leadership positions within one's division (e.g. receiving a promotion for a project leader position). Emma stated the following during the interview:

"I have worked for two global gaming firms, and the trend that I have experienced is that women more often get promoted to leadership roles with their divisions. Women are generally seen as more social, a quality valued as a leader."

According to Emma, and the other four respondents whom shared a similar view, the reason for women receiving a promotion and progressing at a faster pace within their respective divisions lays in the notion that women have certain qualities that are more suited for such roles. Anna stated the following regarding the subject:

"Women are seen to be more social than men, a quality that is coveted in roles like project leaders. Because of the perception that women are more social, we gain an advantage and get promoted to this types of roles."

The notion that women are more social than men was overlapping theme between these give respondent. This was the only reason that was stated by the respondent to why women have a higher probability to get promoted to project leader positions. Furthermore, none of these respondents stated that they perceived that women are a more social but conveyed that this seemed to be the perception with their respective organization.

The five other interviewees focused more on top management positions, stating that the most significant promotions are usually assigned to men. Emily stated the following:

“If you look at top management most positions are occupied by men. The under-representation in women is those role is extremely clear”

This illustrates that vertical segregation within the gaming industry and that and that men and women are found in different parts of the hierarchy.

4.1.3 Visibility: The minority effect

Visibility was stated to be both an advantage and disadvantage for women by most interviewees. The female respondents conveyed that they often received more positive recognition in comparison to their male peers. In certain contexts, such as performing at the required standard, usually results in women receiving more praise from their supervisor and male coworkers. Emma shared the following statement during the interview:

“My coworkers often feel surprised when I deliver the same quality of work as they have produced[...]. I usually receive more praise and recognition when compared to my male coworkers for similar tasks. However, it’s important to note that this has decreased over time as I’ve solidified and proved my competence over the years. However, I still experience it from time to time. The feeling that I’m more ”visible” is still clear as the number of females in my divisions is more or less the same.”

Emma constructs women to be more visible, in a positive manner, within the gaming industry. However, if one examines the quote further, one can see how the organisation plays an impactful role in constructing a certain image of women in the industry. By interpreting Emma’s statement, performing equally to men seems to be seen a surprise for many. This hints that being a competent software engineer is seen as a unique competence among women. Furthermore, despite her continuously showcasing her skill set and knowledge, she still receives more recognition than her male counterparts. This illustrates that despite Emma conveying that visibility is an advantage, the organization plays a significant role in gendering programming skills towards men. The image portrayed is that gaming companies have lower expectations on women. This might be one of the underlying reasons to why an under-representation of women exist in the gaming industry. This lower expectation might be another reason for the vertical segregation that is seen within the industry.

As previously mentioned, visibility was also mentioned as an disadvantage by the respondents. Even though 60% of the female respondents did not feel a requirement to outperform their colleagues to receive recognition, they felt a certain internal pressure to prove themselves. The female respondents explained that the reasoning behind this

was due to the constant spotlight they were under. Furthermore, the respondent convey that the pressure of performing to the required standard lays in that one's mistake is highlighted to a higher magnitude. Emily shared the following to the author:

”When performing at the required standard, I feel more recognized than my male employees but if part of my work doesn't meet the required standard I feel that the bias of ”females are not software developers” kicks in. It's easier to be seen and be placed under a spotlight when you are physical different from the norm.”

Another respondent, Alice, also shared a similar opinion to Emma, sharing her experience in the gaming industry:

“Initially, I found it satisfying receiving high praises from my colleagues but after some time I felt differently. When performing well I received more recognition and when performing poorly at was amplified[...]. I realised that being treated and viewed equally was much more important for me to feel at home at my company than receiving higher praise.”

Emily's statement portrays how gendering of programming skills is present in the gaming industry and what role the organisation plays in it. When performing at the required standard, her colleagues seem surprised by her efforts and therefore, she received more praise than what is consider standard. However, while under-performing she feels that the individuals in here surrounding were not surprise and had those expectations. In combination with Alice's quote, being treated equally is crucial in order for individuals to feel comfortable in at their work place.

4.2 The culture of the Swedish Gaming Industry

This section will present the interviewees responses regarding the topic surrounding company culture.

4.2.1 Culture

The discussion surrounding culture was a central part of the interviews. Each respondent was asked to describe the company's culture in detail. The most recurring descriptions were:

1. That there is clear hierarchical structure in the company. Roles are defined and there is a clear chain of command. However, the organisation itself acts in a flat manner.
2. There is a relaxed atmosphere with divisions and groups.
3. Interaction with other divisions is limited and often uncomfortable.

4. Open-minded culture and accepting environment

Interestingly, one of the more heavily discussed theme and which the respondent placed emphasis on was the hierarchical structure of the company but that the organisation itself acts in a flat manner. Eight of the ten respondent seemed to associate the organisational structure with firms culture.

Several of the respondent mentioned that there was limited interaction between different divisions. Jessica stated the following:

”The culture from the organisations perspective is that our firm has open and interactive working environment. The culture aims to make everyone feel at home and accepted. I think at a department level, this can be seen clearly. However, if one would look at the company as whole, one would see another picture. For example, I rare interact with individuals outside my team or division and in the unique case I actually due there is discomfort as I don’t feel belonged with that group.”

Jessica portrays an image that there is a segregation between departments within the company. She describes that being assigned to another team for certain tasks comes with some discomfort. It seems that company has an aim to create an open and interactive environment between the employees but seems limited to smaller parts of the firm.

4.2.2 Belonging

Belonging was one of the disadvantages discussed by the respondents when asked to state the advantages and disadvantages of being a women in the gaming industry. The description provided some interesting insight regarding the companies culture. Several of the female respondents conveyed that they found it difficult to feel belonged in the workplace. Alice stated that:

”The main issue ,which I as women feel, is that I have to be one of the guys in order to part of conversations or activities not related to work. I have to change certain aspects of my behavior, not only to fit in, but also for my male colleagues to feel comfortable around me.”

When it came to work-related tasks or activities, Alice and several of the other female respondents, mentioned that they had no difficulties feeling belonged as there knowledge, time and expertise was needed. However, when it came to social activities, whether work-related or outside-working hours activities with their colleagues, they felt as an outsider. The female respondents described that they felt no direct pressure in reconstructing themselves but felt a requirement to fit in and not create any discomfort with the group.

Furthermore, three of the respondents shared similar stories regarding situations where they do not feel they belong. Alice shared the following:

”There has been several times where for some reasons, it could be me completing an assignment or meeting that ended late, I have been late for lunch. I usually sit with my team where out of twelve individuals I’m the only girl.[...] As I approach the table, the men in my team just go silent and I see them changing attempting to try and change the subject to something they feel is more appropriate when I’m around”

Emma shared a similar story but stating this experience has changed over-time:

”Initially, my male co-workers used to become quite or try to change a certain subject when I used to come around. However, lately, I feel as they see me as one of them because topics that we never discussed are openly being talked about around me. [...] topics that are considered more masculine [...]”

This provides an indication on how the male-dominance impacts the culture. As these companies are mainly dominated by men, they discuss topics that are considered masculine and when a woman approaches they change the topic. It might be because of the social constructions and the perception that society has which is that men and women are different, with different interests. However, for the female respondents it seemed to amplify the sense that the industry is male-dominated with a male-dominated culture where in order to fit, it is required for them to adapt to the majority.

4.2.3 The new norm: The passionate and the social

When discussing the ideal recruit, the majority of the respondents constructed an image that the ideal colleague was both technically knowledgeable and had certain personality traits. The most mentioned qualities in a new recruit mentioned by at least seven of the interviewees were:

- Proactive
- Social
- Kind and helpful
- Passion for gaming
- Knowledgeable

Being social, passionate and knowledgeable were the characteristics mostly discussed by the respondents. Alex mentioned that:

”Being knowledgeable and well-rounded soft engineer is central for the job.[...] I also believe that having a passion for the game is essential to be able to create great games. If you are not interested in gaming, how are you going to be able to understand what makes a great product? I tritely believe that passions correlates with quality one produces. This is an aspect that cannot be overlooked. [...] but something that is perhaps equally important is social competence. We want everyone to get along and enjoy their time at work”

Jennifer stated the following:

”[...]I think being social is an individual is extremely important for our culture. We do lots of event during the year and spend most of our time together as co-workers. Being social is equally important, at least for me, when looking at a new recruit. I think many people share the same opinion as I. The old notion that a programmer need to be a complete nerd, with has an amazing technical skill but lacks social skills which is consider fine is dead I think.”

Interestingly, when the respondent were asked about the recruitment process many focused on the technical aspect of process. Overall, the respondents conveyed an image that personal- and technical skills are almost equally important. The notion that all programmers are nerds, who self-isolate and so on, is not what employers are looking for. The notion of passionate can be associated with term nerd in many senses but it seems that the gaming industry is looking for a new type of nerd to bring into their culture.

Another aspect to consider is the weight place on being passionate. The interviews convey a picture that being passionate in gaming is essential in order to succeed and product quality work. By having this as requirement, technical sound individuals are left out of the organisation and culture despite perhaps having an interest in gaming. But being an amazing programmer is not enough. This could potential exclude qualified and great recruits from joining the company.

4.3 Gender Diversity and the Required Change: The gaming industry’s perceptive

This section will present the results regarding the importance of gender diversity in the gaming industry, the underlying reasons for the unequal gender distribution, and the changes that need to occur to nullify this from the respondents perceptive.

4.3.1 Increasing Gender Diversity in the Gaming Industry: The good and the bad

The respondents were asked to disclose their perception regarding the benefits and the disadvantages of increased gender diversity in a gaming company. The majority of the respondents began by stating that a key component to understanding and being able to reflect upon the advantages and disadvantages of increased diversity is to examine the firm's client base. Alice state that:

“Most gaming firms have a diverse client base, and those firms that currently don't have one, aim to achieve this in the future. Simply put, a more diverse client base entails good business. The more people that are interested in your games, the higher the financial returns are

Emma shared a similar view stating that:

“It's basically impossible to develop great games to a potential client base that consists of men, women, elders, kids, immigrants and forth if the majority of the developers is consisted of middle ages white men”

The respondents argue that having a more diverse workforce provides more perspective and knowledge to the company. This, according to the interviewees, results in a higher level of innovation. Being able to discuss and learn from each other is a crucial aspect of constantly improving and developing games.

Another advantage mentioned by 40% of the interviewees was that having a more diverse workforce enables individuals to be themselves. This creates a more open culture and environment resulting in individuals not feeling required or pressured to adapt to the majority. Emily mentioned the following:

“Increasing diversity has great advantages for the company. It increases the sense belonging and may help in retention. I have had few colleges in the past years, both female and individual with minority background, changing jobs as they did not feel a sense of belonging”

Emily conveys that by increasing gender diversity it can help with some of the culture struggles that some of the women discussed e.g. belonging. According to her statement, increasing diversity will help in establishing a more open culture and therefore, aid companies move away from the male-dominated culture currently present.

Another theme discussed by the respondents, although at lesser degree, surrounded the topic of fairness, equality and inclusion. Alice stated the following:

”I think increased diversity also has a tremendous amount of weight in regard to fairness, equality, and inclusion. Increasing diversity is an essential first step for companies to illustrate that the gaming community is open for everyone regardless of their background. The gaming industry is a multi-billions dollar industry and has the potential and opportunity to break down gender barriers. Not only in its own industry but by also setting an example for other industries”

Alice seems to place emphasis on social justice arguing that it is important to increase diversity to showcase that the gaming industry provides equal opportunity for everyone. Moreover, she conveys that considering the size of the gaming industry it can play a significant role in breaking down gender barriers and setting an example for other industries.

The general view on the disadvantages associated with a diverse workforce was considered minimal and neglectable in comparison to the advantages. Moreover, it was stated that when discuss and examining diversity one should view it as a long-term investment. With that perception, there is no real disadvantages. However, from a short-term perspective there could be some potential disadvantages. Mike stated the following during the interview:

“When having a less diverse workforce, decision-making processes are general more effective in terms of time. People have similar perspective and less time in spent on debating. More diversity leads to more perspective and therefore longer decision-making processes”

Max continues on by stating that faster decision-making does not necessary in better products:

“However, it is important to keep in mind that faster decision-making processes has no correlation with better products. Even though this at times could be beneficial it no necessary always the case.”

The last common theme concerning disadvantages was the potential tensions that can be caused when more diversity is introduced to the company. This was discussed from short-term perspective and was often referred as an adjustment period.

In summary, all the interviewees had a consensus view regarding the potential benefits and disadvantages of increasing diversity.

4.3.2 The Perception of Gender in the Gaming Industry

The general consensus on the level of gender diversity in the gaming industry was that it was low. Several of the respondents mentioned that there has been a slight improvement

over recent years. However, in relation to the expected outcome of strategies developed to increase both gender- and ethnic representation these initiatives are yielding slower results than anticipated. Four respondents disclosed that when communicating with recruiter and upper management, they seemed surprised by the slow and marginal changes experienced. Julia stated the following:

“The current state of female representation across most companies is extremely low despite improvements being seen. In comparison to other industries these improvements are marginal at best. There is more that can be done to improve the situation at a faster pace.”

Emily had a similar view but formulated her answer as following:

“The level of diversity is low but improving. It’s a working process and will take time and patients. Companies are taking actions towards improving the gender gap that exists.”

All respondents agreed that the level of diversity was low and needed to be improved. However, there were a few differing opinions regarding the magnitude of change that is occurring. The majority (seven respondents) conveyed that improvements needed to be done to reduce the gender gap while the remaining interviewees argued that this is a long process and constantly trying to radically change strategies is ineffective.

4.3.3 The reason for the lack of Gender Diversity in the Gaming Industry

Gender norms and cultural values were the underlying theme to why there was an underrepresentation in females in the gaming industry according to the interviewees. All respondents had played video games at a young age and had therefore, developed an interest in gaming. Consequently, this triggered an interest and motivation to work within the industry. Furthermore, the respondent stated that despite there being an increasing interest among women to play games, there is still a notion that gaming is a male activity. Alice shared the following story during the interview:

“One of the company initiatives I am a part of had me speaking to a middle school class. I started by asking the students if they had played any video games. The boys started shouting out different games they played but no girls replied. So I asked what about you girls? And the boys started shouting that “girls do not play video-games””

Alice portrays the underlying reason for the lack of gender diversity based on this and several similar experiences. She mentioned that she did not start off her career in gaming due to these norms present in society as this was not expected by her as a female. However, as she grew older and the perception regarding females began to change, she

made the jump. Alice points to gender and societal norms gendering gaming toward males and excluding females. Alice, along with the other interviews, highlighted that the core issue lies outside the organisation and are deeply rooted in norms. Interestingly, as previously mentioned, the respondent conveyed that gaming firms have a vital role in changing norms and enlighten young females about the opportunities present in the industry. Thus, they portray their organisation as gender neutral and not a real contributing factor to the reason for the low levels of gender diversity.

4.3.4 Recruitment Process and Homosocial Recruiting Impact on Gender Diversity

The recruitment Process

The recruitment process was discussed during the interviews in relation to how it contributes to inequality and what role it might play in impacting the low levels of diversity in the industry. Frequently mentioned themes, that were mentioned by at least four interviewees, were the following:

- Generally equality is not an issue in the recruitment process. If a person applies to a certain position, the screening process is equal.
 - An essential part of the application process is a programming test. These tests are objective in the sense that the results are hard to argue against.
- If applicants are equal on paper, the individual that has a minority background is generally chosen as he/she is seen to have a unique background that may contribute to the company.
- There is a low amount of female applicants.

Several of the respondents argued that the recruitment process as whole was provided equal opportunity to all applicants. Despite acknowledging that there might be some bias in their decision-making, they argued that the recruitment process is designed to provide an equal and unbiased opportunity to receive a job at their company. Jennifer stated that:

“A central part of the recruitment process is to examine an individual’s credentials and past experiences. Thereafter, they are asked to complete a programming test. It is hard to argue against the results of any of these factors. Therefore, if someone meets these requirements they are offered a fair opportunity to get the job”

Jennifer, along with the other respondents who shared a similar view, placed emphasis on the technical aspect of recruitment process. They seemed hesitant to discuss the interview section of the process despite mentioning that their was a personal interview part of

the process. Initially, it seemed that they were trying to convey a picture that personal traits were less important and that your technical knowledge was the most important factor. However, as previously mentioned, when discussing the ideal recruit (a question that came after asking about the recruiting process) all individuals placed emphasis on social skill including Jennifer and those who shared her view. This portrayed an image that the personal interview section was important even for Jennifer and the other respondent.

The rest of the respondents focused more on the process as whole and placed more emphasis on the personal interviews and the number of applicants. They mentioned that despite having pre-defined criteria and guidelines for what to look after in an applicant, they mentioned that they had experienced ethnically and gender bias. Sara, who occasionally helps with interviewees, shared the following:

”A colleague and I, had an interview with a women who had passed the initial programming test. We invited her for a personal interview. As normal, we started of by asking here some technical questions before going into the personal questions. It was obvious for us both that she was lacking some of the technical knowledge that we expect a candidate to have. However, we found ourselves considering offering her a position despite her not being technically qualified.”

Sara continues on by discussing the reasons why:

”Me being a women in this industry, was considering the experiences and perspectives the candidate could bring to our team as women. This is something hard to measure but could be very useful. However, my colleague, who works in HR, was discussing things like ”she was one of the few females who applied, she would a great hire but only if she was not lacking some of the technical knowledge””

It is important to note that Sara is commenting on what another individual has stated and therefore, cannot be labelled as completely accurate from the authors view. However, these statements provide some interesting insights. Firstly, based on the second quote, it seems that the gaming industry is feeling pressure in hiring women and the number of women applicants is considered low. Secondly, there seems to be several aspects that are examined during the recruitment process that are hard to measure e.g. different perspectives.

Another aspect that was discussed in relation to recruitment was concerning a gaming companies role in increasing female engagement in gaming. All interviewees agreed that major gaming companies have a responsibility. Alex stated the following:

“I think most major gaming companies are engaged in different initiatives including ours. However, we do not place our efforts in the right place. We

should be engaging the younger generation since they most likely have not chosen a career path”

Other interviewees touched on this theme as well, stating that focusing on the younger generation is vital and enlightening them about the opportunities present in the gaming industry is key to changing the norm that gaming is male activity. This is another example indicating that gaming firms are explaining the reason for the low levels of diversity as a cause of factors outside the organisation.

The number of female applicants

One theme, however, that all interviewees mentioned was that the recruitment process is not only composed of the application process, screening and the interviews. According to the interviews, the problem centers around the fact that the majority of the applicants are male. Max discussed a research he had conducted and stated the following:

“When conducting my research, the results indicated that one of the reasons for our company receiving more male applicants was due to the language in the job announcements. Women tend to take requirements more literally than men do.[...] A man would apply to a job with a three year job experience requirement while having two while a woman wouldn’t. Men usually have more confidence in their competence. After changing our formulation in the job description we found a increased amount female applicants.”

In this case, Max is conveying that the organisation has a central role in why the level of diversity is low in the industry and why the gaming companies are not receiving enough female applicants. He describes that the way the company communicates to potential candidates is not gender neutral. This analysis, although refreshing, is short sighted.

Homosocial Recruitment

The presence of homosociality in relation to recruitment when discussing *women progression* within the company was clear. External recruitment did not seem to suffer from one of the main themes of homosociality: *men prefer men*”. However, this was portrayed as being the case for internal recruitment, in other words promotion. Emma stated the following:

”There is clear under-representation of women in senior positions. The tendency at our company is that we recruit people within the company to higher position and the top is male-dominated. People with higher positions usually promote people that are more similar to them. It creates some sort of comfort understanding or knowing the person you are promoting. For

example, a white male, around the age of 40, with a certain lifestyle, will most likely promote some that is similar to him”

This theme of men promoting men was a common statement by the respondent. Seven out of the ten respondent mentioned this to be the case. The conclusions that can be made by the interviewees comment is therefore that internal recruitment focusing on promotion to more senior position are effect by homosociality.

5 Discussion

This section will discuss the themes presented in the results and relate them to past literature and theories.

5.1 Gender Structure: Quantity, Segregation and Power

Gender structure was discussed through three different topics; gender distribution within the organization, women's career progression and the minority effect. Each topic will be discussed and examined separately below.

5.1.1 Gender Distribution

As previously mentioned, the respondent did not disclose the exact number of gender distribution between the divisions. However, they provided the author with their perception. In the marketing, administration and HR departments, the gender distribution between women and men was more even. However, the top management and production roles were males dominated. Wahl divides gender segregation in a organisation in three ways. Two of the aspects she discusses can be seen in these gaming companies. First of all, horizontal segregation is clear seen as men and women are found in different divisions of the company where the majority across all departments seem to be composed of men. The other aspect, which Wahl discusses is vertical segregation which can also clearly be seen in these gaming firms as males and females are present in different levels of the hierarchy. Occupational segregation (the glass wall) in terms of gender role identity may be an underlying explanation to how organisation play a role in creating an undiverse industry according Bogg and Prescott as it creates women career barriers. Similar to the perception conveyed by the respondents, Bogg and Prescott state that women in the gaming industry tend to be concentrated in more traditional "feminine" roles such as marketing and administration while being underrepresented in roles that require more technical skills such as production and design. Interestingly, the Swedish gaming companies portray the exact same picture provided by Prescott and Bogg with the exception of the role designer, where the concentration seemed to be higher according to this study. Prescott and Bogg argue that the occupational segregation may have an impact on gender role identity and attitudes. By generating a glass wall it might result in certain jobs being considered as male oriented while others being considered as women jobs thus gendering certain professions. The consequence of horizontal segregation is that workers have the tendency to select and pursue jobs where their gender is represented more. Since the Swedish game firms illustrates clear horizontal segregation they might be contributing to the gender imbalance as individuals might pursue careers were the their gender is represented more.

5.1.2 Women Career Progression within the Gaming Industry

When discussing the topic of women career progression within the gaming industry, there were two general themes mentioned. Firstly, five respondents (they will be referred to as group A) stated that women have an advantage in terms of receiving promotions to project leader roles within the company. However, the other half of the respondents (they will be referred to as group B) focused on top management roles stating that the majority of the top positions are occupied by men. Interestingly, none of the individuals working for the same company had the same view on this subject, were the trend was that one focused on promotion to leadership roles while the other focused on top management positions. Group A portrayed a picture that progressing and receiving a promotion was a higher possibility as women due to women being perceived more social than men. However, group B portrayed a picture showing clear career barriers for females in the industry. This might be one of the underlying reasons to why the gender structure in the gaming industry is the way it is. In conclusion, there were two different perspectives regarding the opportunities available for female progression in their career between the respondent and the reasoning seems to lay in how they project their progression. If the aim is to progress within one division, the opportunity seems present but if your goal is to occupy a higher management role, the opportunity seems limited according to the respondent.

In a study conducted by Prescott and Bogg (2011), approximately half of the female participants felt that there were not enough opportunities for them to progress compared to roughly one-third of the male participants. Furthermore, in a research paper by Dyer-Whiteford and Sharm (2005), their article suggested that there is a significantly smaller number of women at executives' level in the industry. Furthermore, Prescott and Bogg's findings suggested that, generally, there was a negative view of career progressions of women by both men and women and recognition that career barriers exist portraying group B's image of the situation.

When discussing culture, the discussion of organisational structure was in the center. Interestingly, the majority of the interviewees associated the structure of the organisation as part of culture. Despite stating that the organisation has a hierarchical structure, all respondents argued that their firm acted in a flat manner. According to Wickham et al. (2008) Women tend to achieve and progress better in an organisation with a clear organisational hierarchical structure in the ICT industry. Increased understanding in terms of progressions and advancement would provide more clarity of the existing barriers in the company, therefore enabling changes and allowing women to progress. The author did not find any correlation to Wickham's findings. Despite the flat nature of the gaming firms that took part of this research, the majority of the respondents conveyed that hierarchical organisation structure was clear despite the firms functioning more as a flat organisation.

The results of this study is also in line with glass ceiling hypothesis set forward by Morison which is discussed in Prescoot and Bogg (2011). As previously mentioned, the hypothesis states that there is glassing ceiling that hinder women from progressing with the company. This is something portrayed by the female respondents as they do not refer to any lack of qualifications or skills but to the concentrations of men at the top.

5.1.3 Implication of the Minority Effect: The positive and the Negative

Kanter discusses high visibility as an disadvantaged when discussing that women are perceived as a token. However, the findings showed that visibility is both considered an advantage and disadvantage by several of the respondents. The findings that supported Kanters arguments was that the several of the female felt that they were in the spotlight constantly and everything they did was amplified e.g. mistakes. Due to the increased visibility, the female respondents felt that their mistakes were more easily seen because of their uniqueness (being one of few women in the their divisions). Furthermore, some of the respondents stated that they did not enjoy being more visible since it created a separation between them and their colleagues and contributed to the feeling that they are not equal.

However, several women expressed that there was an overall advantage of being a women in term of recognition. Several of the female respondents mentioned that the increased attentions and recognition resulted in high praise when they performed to the required standard contradicting Kanters argument that visibility is an disadvantage. However, these results support Newberys findings that suggest that visibility can be considered an advantages in contexts were recognition is an important factor.(Newbery, 2013)

5.2 Culture

5.2.1 The Swedish Gaming Industry's Culture

When the respondents were discussing culture the most interest aspect was how they described the structure of the company. The conveyed that the organisational structure was constructed as a hierarchy but acted in flat organisation. It seemed that the respondent want to convey that their organisations culture was based on openness and equality but certain statemented hinted that their companies actually acted in the way as it was structured, in other words as an hierarchy. Interestingly, the organisational structure was associated with the companies structure. Similar to the ICT community, the gaming industry seems to want to portray have a relaxed and innovative culture were dress codes are not a requirement and with unique feature are in place e.g. ping tables and gaming rooms. It seemed that having a hierarchy challenges the open and fun environment that these companies want to establish portray.

Furthermore, in study conducted by Dwyera, Richard and Chadwick (2003), the authors discussed the correlation between top management, gender and culture. They stated that gender diversity's interaction throughout the organisation and especially at top management level is a key component in creating a supportive organizational environment and culture which may need to be in place before beneficial aspects of gender diversity can be fully achieved. However, the way the respondents described their culture and structure it seems that these gaming firms are missing a key component of creating a supportive environment that enables gender diversity. Firstly, despite describing their company as flat, their statements indicate a clear gap between top management and the divisions themselves and according to Dwyera et al. this provided a struggle in creating a supportive environment for gender diversity. Furthermore, the statements surrounding the gender distribution between different parts of the company indicate a clear under-representation of women in top management. The interview statements convey that their culture creates an open-minded culture. However, the way they describe their organisation would contradict the findings of Dwyera et al. as the respondents' companies are missing key elements that Dwyera et al. argue are essential in order to create a supportive environment and culture that enables gender diversity.

5.2.2 Belonging

The topic of belonging provided an interesting insight. When discussing the respondents' company culture, none of the individuals mentioned "it's a male dominated culture". However, when describing that feeling belonged as women was hard there were a few indications that hinted that these gaming firms have a male culture. The female respondent mentioned that they felt that they needed to change and be "one of guys" in order to feel belonged in the company. This insinuates that the gaming industry's culture is actually structured based on male values and expectations as male gender norms seem to be the focus of socialization patterns. This is similar to what Acker argues when discussing his views on organizational structures being masculine in industries dominated by the male gender. Further on, he argues that this might be the basis of segregation between genders in organisations which seems to be indicated by the results of this study.

5.2.3 The new nerd: Passionate and Social

Previous research within the gaming industries had the tendency to portray and associate the typical gamer with certain characteristics such as addicted, socially isolated, etc, all being negative aspects. Children's views seemed to portray this image of being a nerd in individuals working in the computer gaming industry. (Bryce & Rutter, 2001) (Mason et al. 2014) Some of this perception might be based on how things used to look and might hold some truth but the results of this study show that the gaming industry is looking

for a new "type" of nerd. Someone that is passionate, which perhaps can be associated with "addicted" to gaming, but that is not socially isolated. On the contrary, the gaming industry are looking for a passionate "game:ar" that has social skills. This is interesting because it contradicts who the typical employee in tech and gaming's is portrayed by many. Furthermore, the respondents place huge emphasis and convey a sentiment that being passionate is a necessity. However, Bogg and Prescott (2011) stated in their research that females that did not play video games during their free time or have a true passion for gaming still had intentions of progressing in the gaming industry entailing that they might have a passion of their carriers instead. This in itself could be another motivating factor. Furthermore, Prescott and Bogg refers to a research conducted by Consalvo that discussed the long hour culture in the industry and the long hours needed during crunch time (when a game is due to be released). According to Prescott and Scott interpretation regarding Consalvos work it is viewed that passion is the main reason to why the employees are willing do the long hours. This might be the reason the respondents place such emphasis on passion. Despite, them not mentioning the long hour culture, they did mention, similar to Consalvos, that long hours might be required when a game is due to be released. However, gaming does not seem to be the only factor generating a passion and willingness to work long work. As Prescott and Bogg state, individuals might have passion for career progressions. However, the interviewees in this research study emphasised passion for gaming which might result in these firms excluding potentially great candidates. This exclusions might be one of many reasons in how the gaming companies are contributing to the gender imbalance in the industry.

5.3 Gender Diversity and the Required Change

5.3.1 Increasing Gender Diversity: The good and the bad

An example of this is in the mutual fund industry, where a research was conducted which, results indicated that diversity had an impact on mutual funds.(Baer, Michaela, et al. 2008) Their results indicated that diversity had an impact on mutual funds performance (were performance was measured in terms of decisions making). The conclusion was that with a more diverse group each decision made was in a more informative manner. The results of this research is in line with the findings of the study. The respondent argued that by having a more diverse employee base it increases the perspectives present and therefore, the decisions that are made are more informative. However, in a study conducted by Hambrick & Donald, the others stated the more diversity can lead to slower actions being taken due to increased difficulties to a line perceptive.(Hambrick & Donald) This was also in line with what the respondents of this study expressed. However, the respondents mentioned that this was only a concern from a short-term perspective when there is a so-called adjustment period.

Moreover, in an article by Xie et al., the authors argue that gender diversity in research and development can promote innovation efficiency. The reason behind their argument is that gender diversity provides informational and social benefits through out the innovation.(Xie,Luqun, et al. 2020)

All of respondents places value in diversity, and their motivation to why diversity is beneficial or has implication are aligned with previous study's conducted in different industries. The aim of study of study was not discuss the pros and cons of gender diversity nor are the respondents answer based on conducted research but perceptions and experiences. However, it provides insight to why change in diversity in the industry is important.

5.3.2 The underlying factors contributing to low levels of Diversity: The Gaming's industry's perspective

When discussing the reasons for the lower levels of diversity in the gaming industry all respondents mentioned that gender norms and societal expectations were the two underlying contributors for the picture seen today. They argued, using personal experience, that society creates gender norms, defining what is accepted and expected by boys and girls. The notion conveyed when asking these direct questions was that the underlying issue lays norms. The interviewees seemed to place the issues away from the organisation. Interestingly, when Salminen-Karlsson discusses the computer engineers' view on the gender gap in ICT they seem to overlap with respondents' views. The computer engineers' view believes that the interest in ICT is rooted in early childhood experience similar to what the respondents of this research argued. Furthermore, this view states that an important measure could be to try and increase the interest and knowledge in the field at an early age, again coinciding with the respondents' views regarding the topic. Now, the ICT community and the gaming community are not identical but similar in several aspects and when comparing their view on the subject from their perspective the issue is placed outside the organisation and they portray themselves as gender neutral. However, similar to what Salminen-Karlsson argues in the ICT context when describing the genus view of the gender gap, an issue that can be seen in the gaming industry is that they view women as different,contributing to the sense that males belong in the norm of gaming while females are found outside the norm. Similar to the ICT community, they respondents discussed and reasoned that the characteristics of women needed to be changed to develop an interest for the profession. The intention is not to convey that the gaming industry is completely mistaken about their perceptions but to showcase their potential role it plays in contributing to an undiverse environment forming gender by conveying that the solution lies in altering certain characteristics in women.

5.3.3 Recruitment process and Homosocial Recruitment

Recruitment was a heavily discussed topic across all interviews. Interestingly, several of the respondents focused on the candidates' experience and technical knowledge when discussing the interview process, neglecting to mention personal qualities. They argued that the introductory programming test is completely objective as the results of one's technical skill cannot be questioned. These respondents' descriptions portray their company as gender neutral as they place importance on an individual's knowledge rather than on anything else. This picture constructed by the interview differs slightly from previous research. Kelan (2007) discusses in her research study that most individuals saw both social and technical skills as crucial while these respondents initially portrayed that technical skills are the most important aspect and not mentioning anything about social skills.

Another aspect that was discussed was that there were not enough female candidates applying to the jobs. The respondent stated that there are not enough women interested in gaming, again referring to the gender norms stating that it was the underlying reason. On the other hand, Max conveys that it might be the gaming firms not communicating in a gender neutral way that might actually be the problem. However, this analysis does not examine the issues deeply but the results indicate that it might be the industry that needs to be changed and not the characteristics of women, similar to how Salminen-Karlson presents the gender researchers' view. Interestingly, almost all direct answers regarding why there is a gender imbalance were linked to women characteristics and the need to change them by changing gender norms and cultural values. The statement by Max was the only answer placing direct accountability on the firm. However, as mentioned throughout the report, by interpretation and linking the respondents' statement, there were a few indications on how the gaming company is contributing to the imbalance and indicating that they might need to change certain aspects of their organisation.

By examining the statements from the respondents, there appears to be several aspects of homosociality in the organization that in a few aspects favor men over women. This study mainly found support for gendered processes in the form of internal recruitment related to internal promotion. When discussing recruitment, none of the female respondents conveyed that they had experienced women being excluded from the pool of candidates for new recruits in favor of qualities associated with the male gender. However, most of the positions found higher up in the hierarchy are given to internal candidates and findings of this report indicate a homosocial bias in the process. The respondents, including the male interviewees, conveyed that personal connections seemed to be a crucial aspect of receiving a promotion. Based on the respondents' statements, most senior positions are occupied by men and they tend to identify themselves with individuals similar to them resulting in more men receiving promotions to senior positions. This resulted in

the interviewees stating that there is a smaller likelihood in women receiving promotion to senior positions due to the top of the organization being male dominated. This is in line with the theory and effects of homosociality highlighted by Wahl et al., Hearn and Holgersson. It is important to note that an extremely small amount of the individuals working in the industry and only a few of the gaming companies are represented in this research. However, these results may give an indication and supports the notion that men prefer men.

6 Conclusion

There were several perceptions regarding to why there is gender imbalance in the gaming industry and several contradictions, solidifying the complexity of the topic and conveying an image that the gaming firms might not have full understanding of the situation. When directly asked to state the underlying reasons to the low-levels of diversity in the industry, gender norms and cultural values were at the center of the respondents explanation. The interviewees argued that there is a notion that gaming is a gendered as a male activity and that young girls are not expected to play video games. Therefore, their interests are placed in other areas. Initially, they portrayed a picture that the underlying issues lay outside the organisation and is created by society. They continue on by stating that it is their responsibility to enlighten the younger generation about the opportunities present in the industry to reduce the gender gap in the industry.

However, by looking at the other themes discussed with the respondents, there seems to be other explanations to why the gaming industry is suffering from gender imbalance. By looking at the gender structure of the organisations, it seems clear that these companies suffer from both vertical and horizontal segregation creating an gendered structure where the top is male-dominated. Furthermore, women seemed to be placed in more social roles, like project leaders positions, while men occupied more senior positions what are considered more influential. Moreover, women seemed to be suffer the minority effect of visibility. Several of the respondents mentioned that at times this was an advantages as they received more recognition but at times it was an disadvantage as e.g. mistake were highlighted more. All of these aspects illustrates structural inequality in the company which are created by the organisation as whole and might be one of the underlying reasons to the gender imbalance. Important to note, advantages or not, some female respondent preferred to be treated equally

Furthermore, the organisations culture was described as open-minded and accepting culture that seems to work well at division levels. However, several of the female respondents insinuated that their organisation actually had a male-oriented culture as several of the female respondents had difficulties feeling belonged within their teams and firm. They stated that their male colleagues would change subject when they arrived at the lunch table for example, again indicating that part of the problem actually lies with the company. Moreover, something that was highly emphasised was that passion was a vital characteristics that a new recruit needs to have. This is many ways excludes several viable candidates as being passionate might not be a necessary quality to perform at the required standard.

When discussing the recruitment process, several of the respondent portrayed it to equal however, that some bias och preconceived opinions might play some factor. It also seemed

that that the companies felt pressure in recruiting women to their company. Furthermore, the respondents conveyed that they receive a small amount of female applicants to their jobs announcement. The reason provided was again related to gender norms and that there is not enough women interested in the gaming industry. This is another example where the firm places the underlying cause outside the company. However, one of the respondents argues that the reason behind the low number of applicants is related to how they communicate their job descriptions stating that they are not written in a gender neutral manner directly placing the blame on the organisation.

In conclusion, and to answer the question: How is gender imbalance created and explained by the Swedish Gaming Industry, it seems that the how can be explained in different ways. The Swedish Gaming companies explain, when asked directly about it, that the gender imbalance is as an issue generated directly by society and its norms. However, through interpretation and discussing their statements, the results indicate that gaming firms may play a crucial role in creating gender imbalance through male-dominated gender structures and cultures that make it difficult for women to progress and feel belonged in the company. Furthermore, they seem to have contradicting discourses in relation to the underlying reason to the gender imbalance, and do not seem to truly understand the underlying causes to why the industry might be the way it is, and therefore placing efforts in the wrong places.

6.1 Implications for the Industry

The aim of this research was to explore how the gender imbalance is created and explained by the Swedish Gaming Industry. This research might provide a baseline and foundation for companies to gain a further understanding to why there is an under-representation of females in the industry and from there, develop strategies to improve the situation.

6.2 Applications

As previously discussed, the study may not be comprehensive enough to draw any concrete and solid conclusion. Despite that the study is probably not generalizable in contexts outside of Sweden and might even not be generalizable in Sweden, it might still provide greater insight about gaming industry, its perspective on gender, and how to help in creating this imbalance since increasing gender representation with most companies is an ongoing process.

6.3 Limitations and Weaknesses

One of the limitations discussed in the report is the fact that the number of interviews may not be comprehensive enough to draw a generalizable conclusion. Furthermore, the inter-

viewees from the different companies did not all have the same occupation. The more optimal interview pool would have been e.g. having a software engineer from both Company X and Company Y, making it easier to compare the divisions in more detail.

Another aspect to consider is that most participants had less than six years of experience in the industry, while only three had more than more. Therefore, the findings does not the different perceptions depended on the level of experience in the gaming industry. Moreover, despite the attempt to be as objective as possible their might have been some bias in the interpretation of the subject result which needs to be consider when dealing with qualitative data from interviews.

6.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

Exploring the recruitment process of gaming firms further would be something to consider for further research. This could include the marketing aspect, interview process and much more. A common theme among the interviews was that the number of females applying was significantly lower. Research the reasoning behind this further and examining potential solutions would be of high interesting.

Another interesting topic to research would be comparing gender diversity in different geographical location. This could provide more insight to the topic and providing various perspective. One could compare and analyze the underlying reasons to way the level of diversity is either same or different, who they tackle this issue and so forth.

A more specific study could also be made focusing on one company. The benefit of this is that the authors can examine the issues, strategies and other aspects in greater detail and perhaps provide valuable knowledge that other companies may utilize and learn from.

7 Sources

Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations. *Gender Society*

Acker, J. (1999). Gender and Organizations. i J. S. Chafetz (Red.), *Handbook of the sociology of gender*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum

Arvell, N. (2019). Spelutvecklarindex 2019. *Dataspelsbranschen, 2019(1)*. .

Baer, Michaela, et al. (2008) “The Impact of Work Group Diversity on Performance: Large Sample Evidence from the Mutual Fund Industry.” SSRN,

Baxter, P., & Jack, S . (2018) *Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers*

Billing, Y. D., & Alvesson, M. (2009). *Understanding Gender and Organizations*.

Boxer, P., Groves, C. L., & Docherty, M. (2015). Video Games Do Indeed Influence Children and Adolescents’ Aggression, Prosocial Behavior, and Academic Performance. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 10(5)*, .

Brown, D. (2002). *Career Choice and Development*.

Bryman, A., & Bell, E., (2011) *Business research methods*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

Chapter 20 (Analysing interviews) of the book: Flick, Uwe, ed. *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis*. Sage, (2013)

Cislaghi, B., & Heise, L. (2019, December 13). Gender norms and social norms: differences, similarities and why they matter in prevention science.

Collis, J., & Hussey, R. (2009). *Business Research: A Practical Guide for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students (Vol. 3rd Edition)*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan

Connell, R. (1993) *The big picture: masculinities in recent world history, Theory and Society*

Connell, R.W. and Messerschmidt, J.W. (2005) *Hegemonic masculinity: rethinking the concept, Gender & Society*

Courtenay, W.H. (2000) Constructions of masculinity and their influence on men's well-being: a theory of gender and health, *Social Science & Medicine*

Deaux, K. and LaFrance, M. (1998) Gender. In D.T. Gilbert, S.T. Fiske and G Lindzey. (eds.) *The Handbook of Social Psychology*.

Discrimination - Definition of Discrimination, *Oxford Dictionaries*

Deuze, M., Martin, B. C., & Christian, A. (2007). The Professional Identity of Gameworkers. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 13 (4), 335-353. .

Dyer-Whitford, N., and Sharman, Z. (2005) The political economy of Canada's video and computer game industry. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, Vol. 20, pp.187-210.

Dwyer, S., Richard, O. & Chadwick, K. (2003, December). Gender diversity in management and firm performance: The influence of growth orientation and organizational culture.

Eriksson, P., Kovalainen, A. (2016). *Qualitative methods in business research*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Evans, J., Frank, B., Oliffe, J.L. and Gregory, D. (2011) Health, illness, men and masculinities (HIMM): a theoretical framework for understanding men and their health.

Gates, J., & Rochelle Cade. (2017). *Gamers and Video Game Culture: An Introduction for Counselors*

Gender - Definition of Gender, *Oxford Dictionaries*

Graneheim, U. H., & Lundman, B. (2003, November 5). Qualitative content analysis in nursing research: concepts, procedures and measures to achieve trustworthiness.

Hackett, G., and R. W. Lent, eds. 1992. *Theoretical advances and current inquiry in career psychology*. New York: Wiley.

Hadzinsky, C. (2014). *A Look into the Industry of Video Games Past, Present, and Yet to Come*.

Hambrick, Donald C., et al. *The Influence of Top Management Team Heterogeneity*

on Firms' Competitive Moves. JSTOR.

Harvey, A., & Fisher, S. (2014) "Everyone Can Make Games!": The post-feminist context of women in digital game production. *Feminist Media Studies*, 15(4), 576–592.

Hearn, J. (2002). Alternative conceptualizations and theoretical perspectives on identities and organizational cultures: A personal review of research on men in organizations. Aaltio, I. Mills, A. J.. In *Gender, Identity and the Culture of Organizations*.

Heise, L., Greene, M.E., Opper, N., Stavropoulou, M., et al. (2019) Gender inequality and restrictive gender norms: framing the challenges to health

Holgerson, C. (2012, March 13). Recruiting Managing Directors: Doing Homosociality.

Kafai, Y. B., Richard, G. T., & Tynes, B. M. (2016) Diversifying Barbie and Mortal Kombat: intersectional perspectives and inclusive designs in gaming. Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon University,ETC Press

Kajornboon , A. B. (2005) Using interviews as research instruments

Kanter, Rosabeth Moss (1977). *Men and Women of the Corporation*

Kelan, E. K. (2007). Emotions in a Rational Profession: The Gendering of Skills in ICT Work. *Gender, Work & Organization*

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2013). *Den kvalitativa forskningsintervjun* (Vol. 2:8). Lund: Studentlitteratur AB. .

Lincoln, YS. Guba, EG. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Martin, P., & Barnard, A. (2013). The experience of women in male-dominated occupations: A constructivist grounded theory inquiry. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 39 (2), 1-12. .

Mason, C. L., & Barba, R. H. (2014, February 24). The Emergence of the "Nerd", *Journal of Research on Computing in Education*

Metz, I., & Tharenou, P. (2001). Women's advancement: The Relative Contribution of Human and Social Capital. *Group & Organization Management*, 26 (312), 312-342.

Newbery, M. (2013). *Gender and the Games Industry: The Experiences of Female Game Workers*. Faculty of Communication, Art & Technology, School of Communication. Simon Fraser University.

Paaßen, B., Morgenroth, T., & Stratemeyer, M. (2016). What is a True Gamer? The Male Gamer Stereotype and the Marginalization of Women in Video Game Culture. *Sex Roles*, 76(7-8), 421–435.

Pitts, D., (2009) Diversity Management, Job Satisfaction, and Performance: Evidence from U.S. Federal Agencies. *Public Administration Review*, 69(2), 328–338.

Prescott, J., & Bogg, J. (2011). Career Attitudes of Men and Women Working in the Computer Games Industry, *Journal for Computer Game Culture*

Prescott, J., & Bogg, J. (n.d.). The computer games industry: Women's experiences of work role in a male dominated environment. *Women in Engineering, Science and Technology*, 138–158.

Richard, O. C., Kirby, S. L., & Chadwick, K. (2013) The impact of racial and gender diversity in management on financial performance: how participative strategy making features can unleash a diversity advantage. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(13), 2571–2582.

Ridgeway, C.L. (2009) Framed before we know it. How gender shapes social relations, *Gender & Society*

Ritchie, J., & Lewis, J. (2003). *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. .

Rutter, J. and Bryce, J. (2001). (PDF) *The Gendering of Computer Gaming: Experience and Space*

Salminen-Karlsson, M. (2011). The problem in the eye of the beholder: Working with gender reforms in computer engineering

Sanyal, Chandana, et al. (2015) "Diversity and Inclusion Depend on Effective Engagement: It Is Everyone's Business to Ensure That Progress Is Maintained." *Human Resource Management International Digest*

Scholz, Tobias M. (2012) "Talent Management in the Video Game Industry: The Role of Cultural Diversity and Cultural Intelligence." Wiley Online Library, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd

Segal, G., Borgia, D., & Schoenfeld, J. (2002). Using Social Cognitive Career Theory to Predict Self ...

Settle, A. M., McGill, M. M., & Decker, A. M. (2013). Diversity in the game industry: is outreach the solution? Proceedings of the 14th Annual ACM SIGITE Conference on Information Technology Education - SIGITE 13, 171–176.

Singh, V., & Vinnicombe, S. (2004). Why So Few Women Directors in Top UK Boardrooms? Evidence and Theoretical Explanations. *Corporate Governance*, 12 (4).

United Nations (2001), GENDER MAINSTREAMING: STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY, Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women

Wickham, J., Collins, G., Greco, L., & Browne, J. (2008) Individualization and equality: women's careers and organizational form. *Organization*, Vol. 15(2): pp.211-231.

Wahl, A. (2003). Könnsstrukturer i organisationer (Doctoral dissertation, Handelshögskolan i Stockholm).

Wahl, A., Holgersson, C., Höök, P., Linghag, S. (2011). *Det ordnar sig* (2:1 ed.). Lund: Studentlitteratur AB.

Weber, A., Cislighi, B., Meausoone, V.C., Loftus, P., et al. (2019) A global exploration of the effect on gender norms on men's and women's health.

Xie, Luqun, et al. (2020) "Gender Diversity in R&D Teams and Innovation Efficiency: Role of the Innovation Context." *Research Policy*, vol. 49,

8 Appendix

8.1 Interview Guide

Do you mind telling me a bit about yourself?

What is your role in the company?

How long have you worked for your current company?

What is the definition of gender diversity according to you?

What is your perspective of the level of diversity in your company?

From an organisational/culture perspective, is there a set strategy for diversity?

What diversity issues are you currently facing?

How does your company work with diversity?

Are there any benefits of working in a diverse working environment? (Based on personal experience)

Are there any challenges in working in a diverse working environment? (Based on personal experience?)

Are there any challenges in terms of recruiting that creates an undiverse industry like in the gaming industry?

What is the most common mistake in an organization's thinking about diversity?

How diverse is the executive/leadership team?