

Copenhagen Business School

The Participatory Broadcast and the Digital Viewing Experience

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Table of contents

Resumé.....	4
Introduction	6
Research question.....	7
Background	7
Integrated live chats at social media platforms.....	9
Esports.....	10
Methodology.....	11
Research paradigm	11
Research logic	12
Methodological choice.....	12
Research strategy.....	13
Methods.....	13
My role as researcher	15
Sampling technique.....	15
Theoretical Framework.....	16
Digital culture and media.....	16
Viewer interaction and traditional TV	17
Social watching.....	20
Social streaming	21
Crowdspeak.....	22
Social motivations of digital participation	23
Social contagion	24
Domestication.....	26
Results & Analysis	29
User Study.....	30
Heavy users	31
Why Twitch?.....	31
Place of use	33
The chat as a community	35
The chat and social contagion.....	39
Participation or not?	40
Case description: CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu.....	43

Twitch and the competition.....	45
Participatory culture and esports at TV 2 Zulu	46
Moderated interaction.....	49
The tone	52
The platform concern.....	55
Domestication of platforms	58
Conflicting findings.....	61
Impact for research and business	63
Research impact for TV 2	63
Impact for broadcasters.....	66
Impact for research.....	69
Conclusion	72
Perspective.....	74
In times of crisis: Social distancing increase social watching	74
Literature.....	75

Resumé

Digital live-streaming services in general and Twitch.tv in specific is changing the broadcasting landscape, and the viewing experience with it. Interactive elements and user participation through a chat feature is changing the way the viewers are consuming and interacting with the content of the broadcast. Simultaneously, second screening and cross-media experiences are an emerging trend for traditional broadcasters, where third-party platforms are utilized for user involvement and participation. As such, this thesis has investigated how user participation is influencing the viewer experience at Twitch, and how the perception of the chat phenomenon is differing from user to broadcaster.

With an interpretivist approach and qualitative methodology, the thesis is based on seven semi-structured interviews: Five with users of Twitch in the age group 12 to 19 years old, and two interviews with key employees from the Danish broadcasting company TV 2, who has established a permanent esports broadcasting concept. TV 2 provide the same content as Twitch and cater to the same target group, but the provided participatory elements differs greatly. At TV 2, the user participation is based on the use of Twitter and Facebook, where the viewers are encouraged to send questions, pictures, discuss, and comment on the broadcast. On Twitch, the chat is integrated as a part of the broadcast.

To answer the research question, the thesis has utilized pre-established concepts identified in the literature as well as existing theories. Ford et al. (2017) has introduced the term *crowdspeak* to explain the act of large-scale interaction at Twitch, where hundreds of messages can occur every other second. The high-volume of messages causes the viewers to primarily post emoticons or abbreviations, which is found to be compelling and meaningful to the participants, equivalent to cheering, clapping, and chanting in a physical setting at a sports stadium. The social motivators for this kind of user participation has been identified as entertainment, sense of community, and social interaction (Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018).

The user study of the thesis showed, that the crowdspeak phenomenon is an important factor for the viewer experience. The users perceive the chat as the foundation to why Twitch is providing a

sense of community, as well as a feeling of watching the games together with others, even though the individuals are alone in a physical context. It was established, through the use of social contagion theory, that the Twitch chat is a social contagious environment, capable of influencing the emotions of the viewer and making them act in the same way as the majority of the audience. The fast, live, and high-volume elements of the Twitch chat was found to have a positive influence on the viewer experience, which in general was rated higher than the viewer experience at other platforms.

The perception of the Twitch chat was different in the eyes of the employees of CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu. In this case, the high-volume chat messages were primarily perceived as noise, and as an element that is hard to control and secure a good tone throughout. Additionally, the findings showed an integration concern as the broadcaster was skeptic towards how to integrate a similar chat feature as Twitch provides. From TV 2's perspective, their role as a broadcaster should not be the facilitator of a live interactive chat feature, but rather focus on their core product of journalism, and provide high-quality content. Thus, it was found that the crowdspeak phenomenon is not present on TV 2's platform, as they provide user participation based on their ability to control what other viewers are exposed to.

The different perception of the value a chat feature adds to a broadcast was analyzed using domestication theory. The users of Twitch were found to have domesticated the concept of chatting while watching, while this was not the case for the participants of TV 2. The domestication process is tightly connected to the perceived relevancy for the individual, and this relevancy was not found for Hvid and Alstrup of TV 2. This is a natural element in a domestication process, as the domestication happens in different order and velocity based on contextual use, physical setting, device, and relevancy for the individual (Christensen, 2019). With domestication theory, the media technology concepts must be integrated to pre-established structures and routines of the users' environment, become embedded in the mind, and accommodate to how the individual's view themselves. The difference between being a user of Twitch and a broadcaster with a journalistic background has in this context proven to be the factor of a different perception and domestication process.

Introduction

The broadcasting landscape has been changing rapidly in recent years, as an era of streaming is emerging. The established TV-market are being turned upside down by digital platforms, and with it comes a drastic change to the viewer experience.

Interaction and user participation are becoming cornerstones in the digital broadcasting experience on live-streaming services. Chat features, that allows users to chat with each other and interact with the broadcaster or streamer during broadcasts, are developed as integral parts of leading platforms. Amazon, Google, Facebook, and Twitter all provide video streaming services with a chat feature implemented as a part of the viewing experience. The Amazon-based platform, Twitch, primarily used for the esports industry, markets themselves by highlighting the chat experience they provide rather than the content broadcasted (Twitch.tv, 2020).

The participatory culture is not a phenomenon restricted to the digital live-streaming broadcasts. Interactive elements and user participation are steadily becoming regular features of traditional television, where users are encouraged to participate on third-party platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. This phenomenon has been identified for the Danish broadcasting company TV 2 and their program *CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu*. The specific program broadcasts the same esports tournaments that can be accessed through Twitch; thus, there is a foundation to analyse how the participatory elements are integrated differently across the platforms and broadcasters in the context of the same content.

Using established research of user behaviour and participatory culture on Twitch, and the theory of social contagion, the thesis will explore how the chat feature at Twitch is being used, whether it has been domesticated by the viewers, and how it is influencing the viewer experience. This will be assessed through five interviews with users of Twitch.

Based on interviews with key actors of the TV 2 program *CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu*, the thesis will further analyse and discuss how participatory elements are included in their context, what the perceived value is of these elements, and whether the perception of an integrated chat feature is differing from the users of Twitch to the broadcaster of TV 2. As such, the thesis will contribute to the field

of user participation at digital live-streaming platforms, as well as how traditional broadcasters are accommodating to emerging features at competing platforms.

Research question

How is user participation influencing the viewer experience at Twitch, and how is the perception of the chat phenomenon differing from user to broadcaster?

Background

This thesis addresses specific mechanics and cultures on the streaming platform Twitch.tv. As such, this section will briefly introduce the platform and its basic functionalities to create a baseline of knowledge for further references throughout the project.

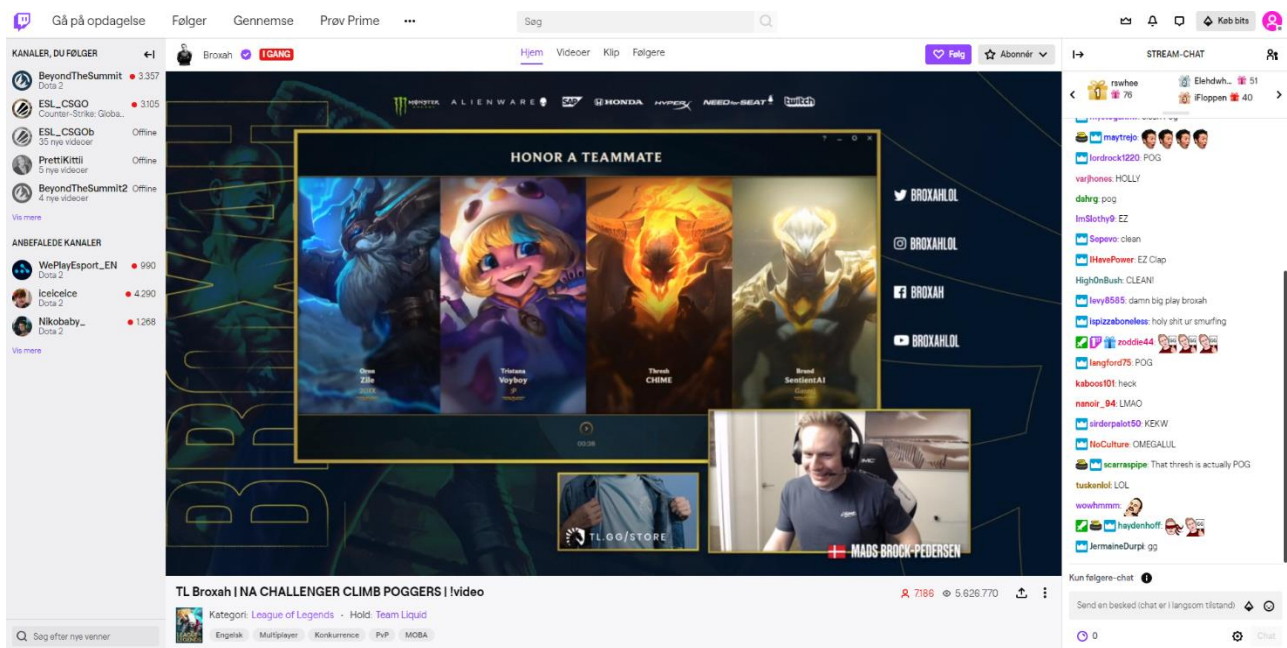
“We saved you a seat in chat” (Twitch.tv, 2020).

This quote is the first text that Twitch introduces on their about page, which highlights how the platform view itself: As a chat. Founded in 2011, the Amazon-owned platform is the largest live streaming video service for video games with more than two million broadcasters and 15 million daily active users (twitch.tv, 2020). Twitch further describes themselves as a platform where *“...millions of people comes together live every day to chat, interact, and make their own entertainment together”* (Twitch.tv, 2020). The foundation of Twitch is esports, however, the platform has a declared goal of making sports as well as esports more interactive, as such they have experimented with acquiring broadcasting rights to the NFL. The most viewed titles are, however, the video games League of Legends, Fortnite, Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO), Dota 2, as well as the category “Just Chatting” that includes all the streams that does not have a specific game title involved (twitch.tv, 2020).

Watching a livestream on Twitch, the standard viewing experience for the user is as shown in Picture 1. The video feed is the centre of attention, however, the chat on the right side is an integral part as well. In the chat, some users have icons alongside their name as an indicator of them being a

subscriber to Twitch Prime. Twitch Prime, achieved by paying a subscription fee linked to Amazon Prime, gives access to various benefits such as chat badges and exclusive chat colors and emotes (twitch.amazon.com, 2020). Additionally, the users can subscribe to their favourite channel to voluntarily support them financially on a monthly basis, while single donations to the individual streams is also an option. In both cases, Twitch takes a share of the fee.

Besides the integrated chat feature, the users can additionally write each other privately via a direct messaging feature.



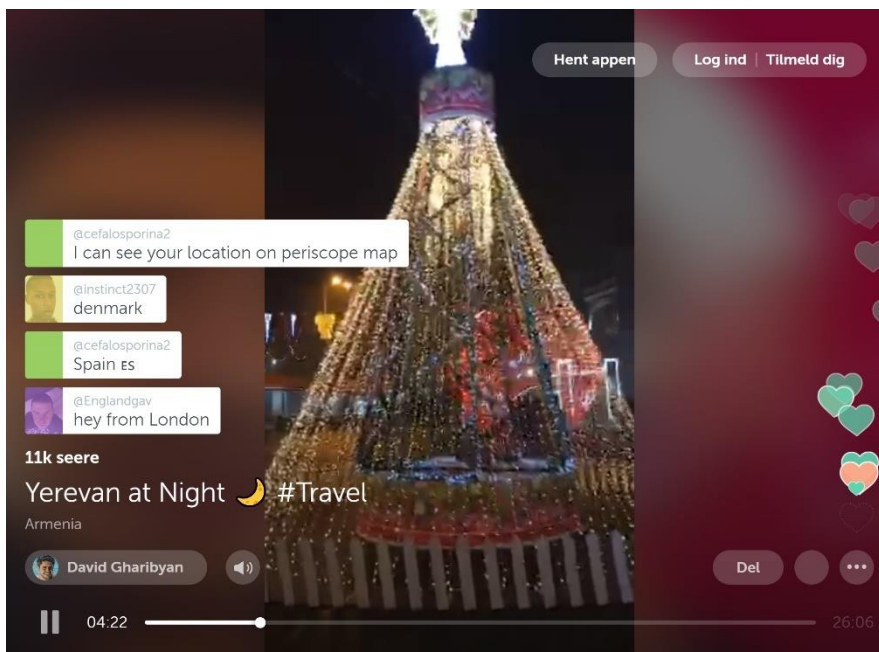
Picture 1: How a livestream looks at Twitch.tv

Emotes are an essential part of Twitch, and the platform offers more than 200 Twitch-unique emotes that are free for all to use (twitchemotes.com, 2020). The emotes are created when specific words are written for example “LUL”, which references the known term “LOL” (laughing out loud), equals an emote of a laughing man. The “Kappa” emote is another extremely popular one and is used for so called *trolling* or to convey sarcasm. The interviewed users of Twitch of this thesis refers to the emote “PogChamp” multiple times, which is a way of expressing shock, surprise, and/or excitement comparable to saying *oh my god*. As such, the Twitch platform offers a variety of emotes that is not common to the internet in general but is platform-specific, thus creating a culture and language of its own.

Integrated live chats at social media platforms

Although the scope of this thesis mainly addresses Twitch and traditional broadcasters, there are interesting elements to include from other digital platforms as well. As such, the framing of this thesis is widely based on a general tendency at the social media platform landscape, where live chat features are integrated to a large extent.

One of these platforms are the Twitter-owned application Periscope. Periscope is based on live video streaming, and as seen in picture 2 a chat feature is included. The chat is added as a layer upon the actual video feed and is mainly used to communicate between streamer and viewer. The chat feature was launched as a part of the first version of platform.



Picture 2: Periscope with a live chat feature

While direct-messaging, group chats and social interaction in general is an integral part of Facebook and has been it since the dawn of the platform, the live video feature with an integrated chat was first added in 2015 (D'onfro, 2015). As shown in picture 3, the live chat feature at Facebook works in the same way as their standard comment system, however, it naturally updates instantly to show the newest messages.



Picture 3: Periscope with a live chat feature

The Facebook-owned platform Instagram does also feature a live chat functionality, that allows users to quickly react to the video feed. The messages are integrated as a layer on top of the video feed, just as with Periscope. Instagram is further encouraging reactions with emoticons, see picture 4, as there are added buttons that allows the user to quickly react to the stream. Picture 4 is taken during the COVID-19 lockdown in Denmark where multiple celebrities turned to live streaming at Instagram to connect with their fans.



Picture 4: Instagram with a live chat feature

Esports

The focus of this thesis is at chat features at broadcasting platforms, and electronic sports (esports) as a concept is not central to the analysis and discussion. However, as the research is solely related

to platforms broadcasting esports, this section will briefly provide some context for further reference.

Esports is the general term used to describe video games as an act of sport competition. Often, it takes place in multiplayer games, and the competition between professional players in tournaments is facilitated by game developers, esport companies, and broadcasters. The popularity of esport has increased widely with the introduction of live streaming platforms, where Twitch and YouTube has established themselves as the go-to platforms for the audience in the western world, while the similar platforms Douyu and Huya dominates in Asia (Vækstfonden, 2019). Broadcasters has, however, begun to show esports with ESPN and Sky Sports internationally and TV 2, DR, and Canal9 in Denmark (Vækstfonden, 2019). According to DR Medieforskning, 13 percent within the age group 12 to 29 years old in Denmark is following esport regularly (Nilausen & Hansen, 2020). 16 percent is interested at watching esports on TV, while 5 percent of all households are using Twitch regularly in Denmark to broadcast esports.

Methodology

Research paradigm

The research paradigm of this study is based on interpretivism. In relation to ontology it is therefore the believe that there is no single truth or reality connected to the research area (Saunders et al., 2016). It is the subjectivist philosophy that underlines how human beings are different from physical objects because of the meaning they create. The focus is on the lived experience of the individual, and the individual's as well as the researcher's own perspective is included in the research. Thus, it is not the objective to look for the general, average, and representative, such as with a positivistic approach. The objective is to identify specifics and uniqueness from the participants of the interviews (Saunders et al., 2016).

Although this study has identified concepts from previous studies of similar fields, thus creating prerequisites to test whether these concepts is appliable by a positivistic approach, the context of the participants of the interviews are simply too important to ignore. As such, it is not feasible to

simply test whether established concepts are relatable to the participants of this study. The research question is based on the individual's experience; thus, it is contradictory to be looking for single truths. This researcher's philosophy is that a perceived experience of a user is too individual to attempt to generalize based on pre-established concepts. By taking an interpretivist approach, the research of this thesis will take the context of each interviewee into consideration. The identified concepts presented in the theory section will serve as a reference point for the research and is very important to understand and compare the results.

Additionally, the interviews conducted was partly based on the pre-identified concepts and was partly used to frame the context of the interviews and formulate the specific questions, while still taking the specific context of the participant's into account. As such, the interviews with the users will search for the identified concepts as well as additional elements of social interaction and user participation that are influencing the viewers experience at Twitch.

Research logic

The research logic of this thesis is based on a mixed approach with both deductive and inductive elements. As theoretical concepts have been identified in the start of the research process, which has helped to formulate the research area, a deductive approach has been in place. However, as the research is based on qualitative analysis, the deductive approach is limited in allowing meanings expressed from the research participants to be explored adequately (Saunders et al., 2016). As such, inductive elements are needed to accommodate to the interpretivist philosophy and allow for new perspectives to occur.

Methodological choice

To investigate how specific features are influencing a viewer experience, and how individuals' perception is differing from each other, it is central to understand the research participant's thoughts and perspectives. As such, a qualitative methodology will be the used throughout the project. A qualitative methodology is useful in the context of trying to make meaning of individual's perception, as the data collection is non-standardised, and the researcher has the freedom to

deviate from premade questions and procedures (Saunders et al., 2016). As such, new themes that is found during the data collection can be directly followed up upon to enrich the research field.

A quantitative method was not found relevant, as it is not the focus of the thesis to present a generalized opinion about Twitch or user participation features in general. The focus is on personal opinions and perceptions; thus, it is undesirable to force the research participant's into premade schemes and terms. The qualitative methodology allows for open reflection and takes the individual's context into account with the right research strategy in place.

Research strategy

As presented so far, this study is based on an interpretivist approach with a qualitative methodology with both deductive and inductive elements. The research design of the thesis is exploratory, as such the focus is to seek new insights, ask questions, and to assess the phenomena in a new light (Saunders et al., 2016). To accommodate to these needs, an interview-based research strategy has been chosen. Interviews create rich data sets to reveal complexities of what is studied, consequently making it ideal to obtain an understanding of what the users of Twitch are thinking and experiencing in their own words through the user participation features, and how employees at TV 2 are perceiving the value of the phenomena through their context. This approach further allowed the interviews to evolve continuously, as the results from one interview could be used to reframe and adapt question to the next. This was especially the case from the interviews with the users of Twitch to the interview with the TV 2 employees. To gain the needed understanding of the TV 2 employees' perception of the phenomenon, it was paramount to have interviewed the users of Twitch first. The users of Twitch provided an in-depth understanding that served as a foundation to ask, discuss, and challenge the perspective of the employees of TV 2.

Methods

The interview methods of this research are based on semi-structured interviews. This approach is desirable as it gives the opportunity to probe answers, thus providing a good foundation to a

interpretivist study where the focus is to understand the influence of a viewer experience by a chat feature and the deviation in the perceived value from other user group to another.

In total, there has been conducted seven semi-structured interviews; one in a group and six individually. Five of these are with users of Twitch, where the focus was to get the individual's perspective and perception of if and how the phenomenon of user participation at Twitch is influencing the viewing experience. Semi-structured interviews were fundamental to this process, as the structure will secure coherency and comparability of the collected data, while still allowing follow-up questions to further explore interesting perspectives during the individual interviews (Saunders et al., 2016). The sixth semi-structured interview were conducted with a manager of Dreamhack Sports Games, however, it was not found relevant for the thesis.

The interview with the employees of TV 2 was conducted as one group interview. The initial plan, and the agreement in place, was to conduct two semi-structured interviews with the individuals one by one, however, due to unforeseen time constraints at the day, the interview had to be adjusted to a group interview. Sceptics of group interviews would say that they are not able to provide the depth and detail of specific issues in the same way as individual interviews (Saunders et al., 2016). It is uncertain how the results of the interview would have changed if conducted individually, however, it is undeniable that a group dynamic influences the outcome. In a group setting, the interviewees react to each other's opinions, and they might skip a question if the other part has explained it thoroughly from their perspective. However, this changed dynamic can also serve as a strength, as reflections may have occurred that otherwise would not as a result of the discussion between the two interviewees.

Besides conducting the group interview at TV 2, the editor of the program CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu was followed throughout the evening during a broadcast. As such, an ethnographical method was used at a smaller scale. This gave the opportunity to get a firsthand experience on how the editors are working with community involvement and user participation during a broadcast. As such, a sound foundation was built to analyse the case of TV 2 and compare it to the results from the interviews with users of Twitch.

My role as researcher

As an interpretivist there is a subjective influence connected to the research. Naturally, the goal is to achieve the highest level of objectivity, however, there are a few factors in place that limit this desire. With a background working with viewing parties in esports at Nordisk Film Cinemas, the pre-understanding of the phenomenon may impact how the data is collected and analysed. Furthermore, my own use of Twitch can be described as casual, and the chat feature in center of this research is a familiar feature to me. Although this may cause bias, this pre-understanding is the fundamental reason to the framing of the thesis. Arguably, the questions asked in the interviews would not have been asked without the same knowledge in place. However, it is important to note that the foundation of the study relies on theories and pre-existing research of the field. As such, nothing is based solely on this researcher's perception of how the phenomenon should be researched.

Sampling technique

A non-probability sampling technique has been chosen for this study (Saunders et al., 2016). This technique comes with elements of subjective judgements within the selection process; however, it is needed to answer the research question properly. As this research is framed around investigating specific features' influence on the viewing experience of users of a specific platform, and the accommodation to this phenomenon of broadcasters, the sampling needs to happen on a subjective basis. The interviewees need to have the right context in place to be able to address the features in focus. As such, the interviewees for the user study were chosen with the prerequisites of being users of Twitch. The decision to contact TV 2 and the interviewees of them was based on my pre-understanding of the topic, as it was known that the company was working with esports broadcasting, and the same goes for the employee at MTG. Danmarks Radio was contacted as well, but was unavailable due to the outbreak of COVID-19.

In total, the research is based on seven interviews: Five with users of Twitch and two with broadcasters, one of them being a group interview with two participants. As such, it is not ideal to generalize the findings of this research on a larger scale, however, the sample size is sufficient for

answering the research question and for considering this study a contribution to the general studies of this field.

Theoretical Framework

Digital culture and media

To frame the overall scope of the thesis, this section will introduce some aspects of digital culture theory in relation to media.

One of the most common parallels to draw is, that the evolution of media happens because of the constant advancement of technology (Creeber, 2009). While this unquestionably have been the case previously, the state of the new media landscape has changed. Today, the key to the evolution of media exists in how we as individuals and as a society are using it, and what our relationship to the media is. Creeber (2009) argues that the right question to ask is what we are doing with the new media, and what the new media are doing to us. As such, understanding the phenomenon of digital culture becomes central.

In the field of digital culture studies, the term *participatory culture* has emerged. In a participatory culture, the audience is a central part of the creation and the dissemination of content. According to Creeber (2009) this is resulting in a change of communication models; from ‘one-to-many’ to a ‘many-to-many’ system. Creeber (2009) uses Facebook and YouTube as examples of websites that breeds the participatory culture, as the audience is becoming an active participator in the creation and consumption of content. *“Consequently, rather than being seen as essentially commercial and inactive, in a postmodern world consumption itself is now regarded as a positive and participatory act”*. Interaction between the audience and the media has therefore been positioned as the central factor in digital culture theory. However, the term *interactivity* has received some critique for being watered down (Miller, 2020). Miller cites Manovich (2001) for calling interactivity a meaningless term, as the basic fundamentals of a computer is to manipulate and customize information, and that all previous forms of media could be considered interactive as it have engaged the audience in some way. Kiouisis (2002) frames three different thematic ways of viewing interactivity. The first is

a direct extension of Manovich's (2001) view, as it sees interactivity as implicit due to the technological structures of the computer or in media in general. The second is sociologically oriented and is rooted in the context of the communication. Some contexts encourage more interaction than others. The third and last theme is described as more psycho-socially oriented aspect (Miller, 2020). In this case, the perception of the user or the audience is central as to whether they want to take an active or a passive role in the use of the specific media, or as Miller puts it: *"... or the extent to which they feel invited to participate in an interactive experience. This approach tends to be used when evaluating web site designs, where some sites are better than others at establishing an active role for the user of the site, creating a more interactive experience"* (Miller, 2020).

In the context of this thesis, it is especially relevant to view interactivity in relation to the second and third theme. The digital culture of media has emerged to be a participatory culture, which is paramount for the coming sections and the analysis and discussion throughout the project.

Viewer interaction and traditional TV

Netflix, Hulu, YouTube, HBO, Disney+, and many more. Combined they represent the transformation from traditional broadcast media to on-demand streaming services. While the previous section established that a participatory culture is in place in the digital culture of media usage, this section will focus on how broadcasting and traditional TV has emerged alongside the introduction of digital streaming services.

"The Danes are streaming like never before, and it is turning the established TV-market and how we access the content upside down" (Hansen & Oxfeldt, 2020).

In the study of Spilker, Ask & Hansen (2018) it is described how researchers have been discussing and evaluating whether the introduction of streaming services would be the death of traditional television. Enli & Syvertsen (2015) too highlights how studies have declared television in its traditional form dead as a result of changes in technologies, markets, and emergence of new services and business models. Throughout the analysed studies, Enli & Syvertsen (2015) find the very understanding and definition of television to be undergoing changes. They describe how the

most common understanding of traditional television is based on a fixed schedule of programs that are broadcasted simultaneously to a mass audience watching in their homes with fees and advertising being the main source of income (Enli & Syvertsen, 2015). They argue that this model is challenged on three counts: *“First, the fragmentation of audiences may undermine the mass media aspect of television; second, traditional television companies may not be able to acquire the content they need to uphold an attractive schedule, and third, the very business model may be undermined as both viewers and advertisers are seen as migrating away from the broadcast platform”* (Enli & Syvertsen, 2015).

Although the characteristics of digital broadcasting and esports in specific are social interaction and participation, does that mean that social interaction and viewer participation is not present in the traditional broadcasting space? Certainly not. Second screening or multi-device television has been a major element in how the development of the broadcasting landscape in recent years (Neate, Jones & Evans, 2017), and 87 percent is estimated to use their mobile device while watching television. Whether the use of the device is related to the watched programme varies. The study suggests that the programme-related second screening has provoked a transformation of the traditional TV viewing experience. Broadcasters are now considering companion apps or companion content that provide complementary information, games, and discussions. However, although this trend has emerged due to the introduction of smartphones, the study refers to Schmitt et al. (2003) who found that 46 percent of the time, watching TV was accompanied by eating, reading, or social interaction. As such, it is not a new phenomenon that viewers are not fully focused on the broadcast. Neate, Jones & Evans (2017) uses the term *social second screening* to describe how users follow hashtags and discuss events in real time on Twitter as an example. This is mainly found in relation to live sports and debates.

The increased second-screening or multiplatform context (Sørensen, 2015) may have challenged television as we know it, but it has also initiated a revival of live TV. According to Sørensen (2015) the increased access to platforms has changed the way viewers access, consume, and interact with the content. Her study shows how broadcasters have started to re-think the notion of liveness on television by incorporating digital platforms: *“As the TV brands and networks expand their presence*

online, and deliver content across platforms, devices and screens, they are also redeploying and using the core strengths of their medium – liveness and reach – to regain market shares and viewing figures” (Sørensen, 2015). Sørensen emphasizes that broadcasters are starting to take advantage of social media networks to foster attention and gain (free) exposure. *“This is especially the case in the coverage of live events, where broadcasters not only outsource and sometimes free-ride on social network activity, they also actively encourage it – crucially without seeking to host or curate this on their own platforms or sites. In doing so they boost attention around these live events, and in this process accumulate viewers, as well as build and amplify the sense of their own cultural importance and centrality in the mediation of live events” (Sørensen, 2015).* As such, the study concludes that liveness has found an uprising on the backbone of second screening, as broadcasters can increase the connectivity and participation of viewers by utilizing their usage of multiple platforms. In this case, traditional television is therefore not declared dead. Although it is changing, the argument is that the increased usage of platforms is complementing live broadcasts on linear television rather than disrupting it.

The use of companion apps and second screening in general is framed by Miller (2020) as a part of the digital culture or participatory culture as described in the previous section. Miller (2020) argues that the media is undergoing a creation of cross-media experiences, where the content of a broadcast as an example is no longer restricted to the specific transmission; follow-up stories are created on multiple platforms, and the consumers are approached by involved brands to commercialize and create profit. Miller (2020) gives the example of the TV show *Glee* that expanded the show’s presence to online albums and singles, YouTube channels, apps, a musical theatre tour, and a reality TV show. Thus, the media production is becoming less of a standalone product, as the cross-media experiences seems to have become more and more popular in recent years.

One thing is to facilitate a participatory culture of interactivity towards broadcasts, and another is to make it count. Pynta et al. (2014) highlights how few studies have focused on the interactivity between the second screening experience, as there mainly has been reports showing that second screening is taking place, but not whether the screens are connected and thus enhances the viewers experience. However, Pynta et al. (2014) refers to a Nielsen study that proved a connection between

Twitter activity and television ratings. The more Twitter activity, the better the television rating, and when television shows with high ratings is on, the Twitter engagement increases. The study of Pynta et al. (2014) was based on a neuroscience methodology, and it showed that engaging on social media platforms such as Twitter while watching television would significantly affect the neural indicators of engagement in the broadcast as a viewer. As such, the study suggests that advertisers can take advantage of programs that offer and encourage social media interaction, while broadcasters and content creators should consider how to integrate social media to their programs to build loyalty and attract new viewers.

Social watching

In the study of Maruyama et al. (2017) the term *social watching* is discussed. It is when an integration of the broadcast media and social media is occurring, as the viewers are increasingly voicing their opinions and seeking information about the specific broadcast on the social media platforms. The study showed how exposure to social media opinions and interactivity “...influence a sense of community” and thus creates a social layer to the viewing experience. Once stimulated, the viewers are actively seeking to maintain their position in the community and the relation to the broadcast is strengthened. In relation to watching games this finding is supported by a Deloitte study (2018) that among other topics presents how watching sports is an increasingly social experience. A survey showed how 68 percent of Baby Boomers preferred to have no interaction with anyone while watching sports, which dropped to 34 percent when asking millennials. As such, the majority of millennials prefers to interact while watching sports, and 41 percent of the 18-24 years old specifically mentioned texting, online forums, and social media platforms as they preferred way of engaging during games. Thus, social watching is not only about coming together in real life to enjoy broadcasts together, it is increasingly becoming a digital phenomenon. The report concludes: “Teams, leagues, and broadcasters should assume that fans are interacting with the game, their friends, and the broader fan community on a second screen” (Deloitte, 2018).

In other parts of the literature on the area social watching is referred to as social TV. Edge (2013) describes social TV as a provider of an interactive platform “...for audiences to engage, on a personal level, with their favorite gamer personalities”. Here, Twitch is mentioned once again as the dominating platform that have established a “new interactive Internet exclusive marketplace that

does not require traditional broadcasting methods". Edge (2013) outlines four spectating personas within the community to describe the reason behind watching: The inspired, the pupil, the entertained, and the crowd. The inspired uses the video stream as an inspiration to learn new strategies for their own gameplay. The pupil uses the stream as a tutorial, while the entertained is looking for pure entertainment such as competition, humor, fandom and excitement. The last one, the crowd, relates strongly to this project, as the user spectates due to *"strong communal ties"* and likes to participate in the spectacle in a group (Edge, 2013). Edge (2013) refers to a study by Scholz (2011) that describes digital participation of audiences because of the nature of the viewership being in front of a computer.

Social streaming

The term social watching is a direct result of the phenomenon social streaming. Social streaming refers to how a player of a video game broadcast his own gameplay through a streaming platform such as Twitch, YouTube Gaming and/or Mixer. The major difference from this type of broadcast and traditional linear television is, as another Deloitte report reflects upon (Stewart & Arkenberg, 2019), that the audience can engage and connect with the star players in a way that is not possible with professional sports athletes. The report asks a question that relates directly to what this study is about:

"Linear television tends to be very passive and one-way, and eSports is very immersive and two-way and you can communicate with other people who are watching the same thing at the same time. You can communicate with the people that are playing and competing. So, how would that fit work if you're going to try to merge traditional TV broadcasters with eSports?" (Stewart & Arkenberg, 2019).

The report does not answer this question directly as it remains an open question and field of discussion. However, it is noted that broadcasters are starting to acquire esports rights, even though it is expected that the majority of the audience will remain on the dominating streaming platforms. According to a study by Scholz (2011) the terms social streaming and social watching is a result of Internet Protocol Television (IPTV). IPTV is another way to describe digital broadcasting or digital television, and Scholz argues how esports and IPTV have emerged together in the past twenty years.

Backing up the included literature of social watching and streaming, he says: *“Viewers want to participate simultaneously and want to share their emotions instantly”*. Throughout the literature available on the area this point seems to be dominating. Interaction and participation are key and is the major difference between traditional sports broadcasting and digital broadcasting of esports.

Crowdspeak

During broadcasts of major tournaments on Twitch, several hundred thousand users can be active in the chat simultaneously. Thus, as one can imagine, the volume and speed of chat messages can be through the roof. An interesting concept to help understand the value of high-volume chats is outlined by Ford et al. (2017) as *crowdspeak*. Defined as large-scale interaction that may appear chaotic, meaningless, or cryptic, their study of Twitch channels and chat interaction showed how the massive chats are legible, meaningful and compelling to the participants of the channel (Ford et al. 2017.). Shifting away from individual, conversational speech, crowdspeak is a result of a reduced characters per message and volume of meaningful content. *“Massive Twitch chats instead supported a playful form of participation more akin to chanting, clapping, or doing “the wave” in a large sports arena, where participation is enhanced by a crowd that not only watches, but speaks”* (Ford et al. 2017.). The study further suggests that the crowdspeak was relying on tacit references, inside jokes, and an “acquired fluency” of the community-specific way of expression. In the study of Nematzadeh et al. (2019) on information overload in group communication, the user behaviour on Twitch is examined as well. They argue that the massive rate of chat messages or information caused the users to be receiving an overload of information that potentially keeps them from interacting. If they interact, they argue: *“Following the flow of messages becomes harder as the information load increases, and users will resort to short cuts such as more simplified and stereotyped expressions, repetition, copy-pasting and non-textual markers, like emoticons”* (Nematzadeh et al., 2019). As such, the crowdspeak phenomenon is widely supported by this study, as it suggests that the use of emoticons and abbreviations becomes the normal in a high-volume chat setting.

Ford et al. (2017) further discusses the implications of crowdspeak and its origin of the Twitch.tv platform. They suggest that YouTube Live, Facebook Live, and Periscope all offer the same real-time, concurrent chat integrated alongside the video feed as a result of how crowdspeak has evolved on

Twitch. As such, these platforms encourage user participation and frames crowdspeak as the future of the online viewing experience.

Social motivations of digital participation

User participation at digital streaming platforms is evident, and social watching seems to be in continuous growth. To understand the phenomenon and the underlying reasons for its success, it is crucial to investigate what drives the users to participate.

In the research field of user participation cultures, similar studies are including the sense of community theory (Mcmillan and Chase, 1986). The definition of sense of community is divided into four elements with the first one being *membership*. This element is the feeling of belonging or sharing personal relatedness. The second, *influencing*, is related to how one has a sense of mattering in a group. The third, *integration and fulfilment of needs*, is the feelings and expectation of having the member's needs met through the resources in the group. The last element is *shared emotional connection* which relates to the belief and commitment that members of the community have shared and will continue to share history, common places, time together, and other experiences.

In a study by Hilvert-Bruce et al. (2018), the social motivations of live-streaming viewer engagement on Twitch was investigated. It was found that sense of community and social interaction were the sole motivators for users to participate in the chat. As such, it is suggested that these social motivators are the underlying reasons for Twitch's success, and the platform is depending on social motivations compared to traditional mass media. In specific, eight socio-motivations for live-stream engagement were identified: Entertainment, information seeking, meeting new people, social interactions, social support, sense of community, social anxiety, and external support (Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018). These eight represent the foundation of why users are participating, thus serving as a fundamental framework for this thesis.

Social contagion

The phenomena of social or behavioural contagion originates from the social science of The Contagion Phenomenon (Marsden, 1998). The latin word contagion means “from touch” and is used to describe how for example infections are transferred from physical touches. However, in the social contagion theory the essential difference is that behaviour can spread as well *“...through populations as they were somehow infectious”* (Marsden, 1998). Polansky, Lippitt and Redl (1950) describes it as the spreading of moods, attitudes, and/or a behaviour from person to person or through whole groups and further defines it as: *“An event in which a recipient’s behaviour has changed to become “more like” that of the actor or initiator. This change has occurred in a social interaction in which the actor has not communicated intent to evoke such as change”* (Wheeler, 1966; Polansky, Lippitt & Redl, 1950). Marsden (1998) argues that there are many vague definitions of social contagion throughout the literature, however, he highlights one from the The Handbook of Social Psychology as particularly precise: *“The spread of affect or behaviour from one crowd participant to another; one person serves as the stimulus for the imitative actions of another”* (Marsden, 1998). It is, however, noted that a crowd is not fundamental to the contagion process as mass media *“...allows for the possibility of contagion through dispersed collectives”* (Marsden, 1998). According to Marsden, there are two different areas of research within social contagion: Behavioural contagion and emotional contagion. The behavioural contagion relates to the fields of hysterical contagions, deliberate self-harm contagions, contagions of aggression, rule violation contagions, consumer behaviour contagion, and financial contagion. Within behavioural contagion, and in the context of this project, the consumer behaviour contagion is the most interesting to elaborate further on. Marsden describes it as how consumer behaviour sometimes is resulting in a *“...spread of consumer fashions and fads through populations in a manner more indicative of an influenza epidemic than rational behaviour”* (Marsden, 1998).

For emotional contagion, Sullins (1991) describes it as *“the process by which individuals seem to catch the “mood” of those around them”*. This phenomenon is a consequence of how humans automatically has a tendency to synchronize facial expressions, voices, and postures with others in the same environment as them. These emotions are then mimicked and triggered.

The natural self-belief is that we all are in full control of our decisions, and that we act intentionally and rationally in a given context. However, the social contagion field suggests that this is not always the case (Marsden, 1998). Instead, it is suggested that we have little control over the culture we become infected with. *“Whilst we may like to believe that we consciously and rationally decide on how to respond to situations, social contagion evidence suggests that some of the time this is simply not the case. Rather than generating and ‘having’ beliefs, emotions and behaviours, social contagion research suggests that, in some very real sense, those beliefs, emotions and behaviours ‘have’ us”* (Marsden, 1998). In a study of collective behaviour and sports crowds by Mann (2009), contagion theory is used to explain the spreading of booing, slow clapping, and bottle throwing. The spreading of this behaviour is related to a high-status model in a large, anonymous crowd (Mann, 2009).

In this project, it is particularly interesting to draw on the literature that has examined how online community behaviour are contagious, and to see which role the theory of social contagion has gained in the digital age.

In a study by Cohen & Lancaster (2014) it was examined why people engage in co-viewing on social media platforms. Emotional contagion and the need to belong was two of the most influential parameters found in the study. A study by Seering, Kraut and Dabbish (2017) argues that text chat behaviours on the Twitch.tv platform, as this project addresses widely, are contagious. Furthermore, their argument is that users with a certain authority such as moderation abilities, a specific connection to the channel, or a certain celebrity-status in the community has a greater influence on the behaviour of others. Their study concludes: *“When a user posted a message with a particular type of behaviour, subsequent messages were substantially more likely to contain that behaviour”* (Seering, Kraut & Dabbish, 2017).

Similar findings are presented in the thesis of Chow (2016) on crowd culture and community interaction on Twitch. Chow shows throughout the study how there is a viral spread of chat activity that becomes contagious extremely quickly in specific contexts. The examples given refers to how inside-jokes and memes, when mentioned on the broadcast, often is the source for the social and emotional contagion. The users quickly mimic each other’s behaviour causing a mass response and rate of messages in the chat.

Domestication

The theory of domestication has been used in studies of media and communications for many years to understand the processes of media technology's acceptance, rejection, and use (Berker et al., 2006). It provides a framework to understand information and communication technologies (ICTs) and their role in people's lives. Domestication originates as a term to describe the process of taming of wild animals; however, it has been adopted to observe and analyse users when confronted with new media technologies. With domestication theory, the new technologies must be integrated to pre-established structures and routines of the users' environment. The media technologies can become tamed and thus be a well-integrated part of the everyday life and a part of the routine (Berker et al., 2006). The new media technologies must be readjusted and generate a cultural meaning that fits naturally into the specific home (Christensen, 2019). As such, one of the core elements of the domestication is the psychological disappearance, where the technologies become embedded in the mind. From Berker's standpoint in 2006, one of the most important reflections for researchers of domestications was to analyse how the physical disappearance of technology are influencing the users. As new technologies are not only in the form of physical objects that can be seen and touched, Berker argues that the more invisible the technologies become, the harder they will become to tame.

In domestication theory, the media technology's double articulation is central. Christensen (2019) gives the example of the TV; something we all recognize as technology, but the real meaning of it is a combination of the specific object and the content it provides. The size, brand, and design matters for how it accommodates to the environment, and the content it provides matters as well. As such, Christensen argues that the real meaning of the television in the local context is a result of how the object is handled in the physical space as well as how the content is consumed. *"It is through the specific choices, habits, and consumption of content that the cultural conception of what the TV is, occurs"* (Christensen, 2019).

In the domestication theory there is a four-step process of taming or adoption of media technology that the user goes through. These are *Appropriation, Objectification, Incorporation, and Conversion* (Christensen, 2019).

The theory suggests that the first step of domestication, appropriation, is a matter of acquisition. From being an item seen in a commercial or store window, the media technology now enters the home. It goes from the formal to the moral economy (Christensen, 2019). The market value is traded to actual value of use.

With the step of objectification, the theory suggests that one relates to items by enforcing new meaning of the object; it gets a new form. As such, the object goes from something unfamiliar to a personal belonging with emotions related to it and a cultural meaning. Christensen (2019) utilizes the term “*Bricoleur*” from Levi-Strauss to explain how the individual is creative with the boundaries of being a consumer and thus a subject to the material provided by the manufacturer. It is in this phase that decisions are made of where to place the media technology within the home. The object’s physical placement changes the usage and the behaviour in the specific rooms.

In the stage of incorporation, the physicality of the object is not important, but rather how the media technology is being integrated into everyday life of routines and projects (Christensen, 2019). With incorporation, decisions are made about what to spend time on what to ignore. With media technology in specific, a study by Gray (1992) showed how the introduction of the VHR caused women to purposely act ignorant of how to operate it in order to reduce that number of tasks in the home. Today, the incorporation of media technology can be related to the use of smartphones, and how it has become a central technology to create and maintain relations for young people especially (Christensen, 2019). The phone is now the fulcrum of entering social networks. As such, the incorporation of media technology such as the smartphone relates to adjusting routines and behaviour within the home, which can have a direct influence on how we interact with the people of our household or our social networks.

The last step, conversion, refers to the social value gained from integrating the media technology into the home. The use of the technology can be a way to showcase a modern lifestyle within the household and thus become an expression of consumption in social interaction and identity. “*The media technology accommodates to how the household’s residents’ view themselves*” (Christensen, 2019). Consequently, the conversion in the domestication theory happens through the specific use of the products. Christensen gives the example of the computer; that one knows how to produce something on it such as e-mails, newsletters, websites, networking, and/or interact socially. The

acquisition and the imagined value of the product qualifies the consumer to enter social relations (Christensen, 2019).

The domestication theory has received critique throughout the years, and various perspectives of it has been released. Sørensen and Lie (1996) looks at domestication theory with a more general mindset, as Christensen (2019) refers to as the Norwegian perspective. In this context, domestication is a matter of stabilization and habituation of the media technology within the society and not as much about the individual's home. As such, the Norwegian perspective looks at how for example using computers in the individual's home is a sign of a general domestication of the computer in the society.

The book of Christensen (2019) contains a further analysis of domestication theory in the context of recent media technologies such as social media platforms. By including the theory of phenomenology of the everyday, Christensen argues that the individual's perspective of the world matters in the context of domestication. An interesting perspective is the inclusion of Alfred Schütz' matrix of social reality. *"The division can clarify the difference of social phenomena within a reality of reach and in a reality separated from our physical and time-related surroundings"* (Christensen, 2019; my translation). Schütz refers to Mitwelt as the term of the world that is central to the discussion of media technologies. It is the reality that lives outside of our physical surroundings. With the views of locale and space of Giddens, 'space' is the way one experiences the reality that is outside of the physical world (Christensen, 2019). *"Specific actors use the relation between the interpersonal interaction in the everyday life with media-mediated interaction to comprehend their own cultural standpoint, but also to reflect and choose their own cultural lifestyle"* (Christensen, 2019; my translation). Christensen argues that the new digital media technologies gives the opportunity to communicate and interact, thus enhancing the feeling of control and involvement in the Mitwelt. The difference of interacting in the 'space' as opposed to the 'locale' is, that in the physical context you have to take other people's feelings into account in a face-to-face encounter, while this is not a necessity in the 'space'. We do not feel responsible in the same way (Christensen, 2019). *"On social media we mimic known forms of social interaction, but we also see how new systems have occurred – e.g. with the use of emojis or the opportunity to write a comment to a post"*

to get the poster to change his mind” (Christensen, 2019). Christensen (2019) relates this theory to the domestication theory by arguing that the use of media technology is not only occurring in contexts, it creates new contexts. The physical context is not the sole space of domestication, as the mediated space now serves as a platform to interact within. As such, the social interaction on a social media platform will reflect a certain understanding of the technology, the individual’s competence, and capacity (Christensen, 2019).

In the perspective of Christensen, the phenomenology of the everyday outlines how media technology becomes relevant to the users. Naturally, the specific technologies are not seen as relevant to all the residents of the household or members of the family. Phenomenology focuses on how the consciousness is never empty, and the mind will always focus on something in our surroundings. The media technology can therefore become relevant to the users in specific contexts, but these contexts are not necessarily the same, and they will not necessarily occur in the same order or speed. The domestication of the media technology therefore starts with a specific relevancy of a given context. *“Thus, the media technology is not interesting by their introduction to the market, but because they in some way are interesting and useful for the actors’ projects”* (Christensen, 2019).

Results & Analysis

As presented in the methodology section, the analysis of this project is based on five semi-structured interviews with users of Twitch, as well as a semi-structured interview with managers from the Danish broadcast company TV 2. The presentation of the findings will be divided into three sections. First, the user study will be described, its results presented as well as analysed in relation to the established theory. Secondly, the interviews conducted with the broadcasters will be presented and analysed with the theory and research question in focus. Finally, the combination of the two sections will lead to a discussion of how the research is impacting the research field and the implication it has for the business of broadcasters.

User Study

The central objective of the user study was to examine the presumptions that led to this project, and the themes identified in the literature. As the interactive elements of Twitch is such an essential part of the platform, interactions and user participation were exactly what needed to be discussed among the users. It is, however, important to note that the interviews did not seek to validate any hypothesis, but rather examine the fundamental reasons of why the users are using the platforms, how they experience them as opposed to traditional tv platforms, and what features they use on the platforms and why.

The five interviews were conducted through the span of a month and was all done separately from each other. For convenience, the users have been given numbers as a reference point throughout the study. However, in table 1 the interviewees names, age, preferred platform, and average use of Twitch can be accessed.

1	2	3	4	5
Name: Nicolai	Name: Christoffer	Name: Gustav	Name: Albert	Name: Lucas
Age: 19	Age: 15	Age: 17	Age: 12	Age: 15
Preferred platform: Twitch	Preferred platform: Twitch, Mixer	Preferred platform: Twitch	Preferred platform: YouTube Gaming, Twitch	Preferred platform: Twitch, YouTube Gaming
Days used per week on platform: 7	Days used per week on platform: 7	Days used per week on platform: 1	Days used per week on platform: 7	Days used per week on platform: 7
Avg. hours spend per day: +2	Avg. hours spend per day: +2	Avg. hours spend per day: +2	Avg. hours spend per day: +2	Avg. hours spend per day: +2

Table 1: Description of interviewees of the user study

In the following paragraphs the findings of the interviews will be presented, analysed and discussed in relation to the theory.

Heavy users

As presented, the user study contained of five users in an age span from 12 to 19 years old with all males. While User 3 categorized himself as a casual user of Twitch, tuning in once a week, the rest of the participants categorized themselves as heavy users with daily uses of either Twitch or YouTube Gaming. According to the heavy users, their average time spend on the platforms accumulates to more than two hours a day. In contradiction, neither of the participants used traditional TV on a daily basis, however, all of them used streaming platforms such as Netflix, Viaplay, TV 2 Play and DR TV every day. User 2 said:

"It is rare that I turn on the TV and zap through the channels. I sometimes watch traditional TV with my parents, and otherwise it is mostly for sports. I'd rather use Twitch and Netflix to be honest" (User 2, appendix 1; my translation).

As such, the step of incorporation in the domestication theory has been performed, as the participants have actively chosen to integrate Twitch in their everyday lives and routines. Traditional TV has clearly been deprioritized and visiting the platform on the participants' computers has been made a clear priority.

Why Twitch?

It is evident throughout the interviews, that the participants are very conscious about their selection of streaming platforms and deselection of traditional TV. From a research perspective, it was therefore obvious to raise the question: Why is a streaming platform such as Twitch the priority for the target group?

The main categories identified in relation to this question can be categorized as: Content, convenience, interaction, and community. The content of the platform is naturally the essence of why the users are visiting the platform in the first place. The users wish to access streamers and tournaments of the specific game title they follow, and the platform is in many cases the sole space

for them to do so, as there might be exclusive rights in place. The convenience is tied to the user experience of how easy it is to use; especially in terms of switching between content. The participants all highlighted multiple game titles as content of interest, showcasing the strength of Twitch and the variation it provides (appendix 1).

Interaction and community are features that is not tied specifically to game titles or personal interests of the users. It is additional features of which the platform has shown an immense success of integration. User 1 said: *“There is always something to watch, and it is where all the big tournaments are broadcasted. I am both in to CS:GO and Dota 2, and that is happening on Twitch. And, it is easy to use, and it just functions as it is supposed to. And it is kind of where the community gathers to watch it all together”* (User 1, appendix 1; my translation). Watching it together is a feeling that is phrased differently across all the interviews but is present throughout them as well. User 2 labels Twitch as a place for gamers to meet, while user 3 thinks of Twitch as *the* place to meet if you are into esports. User 5 highlights the community as a fundamentality to why he uses Twitch. As such, there are data across the interviews that relates directly to the trend of social watching as described in the theory section. Consequently, the social motivations of engagement at live-streaming platforms identified by Hilvert-Bruce et al. (2018) is linked well to the findings of this study. Entertainment and social interactions are important drivers for the interviewees in their use of Twitch, while the sense of community comes out even stronger. The interviewees phrase it as watching something together, and as a place where the community meets to connect about the interests they share. In this case, the *membership* feeling of Mcmillan and Chase’s sense of community (1986) is particularly present, as it relates to the feeling of belonging or sharing personal relatedness. By describing Twitch as a place to meet for the community, the feeling of belonging as well as sharing personal relatedness is arguably in place.

The participants relate to all the spectating personas of Edge (2013) with *the crowd* being the most evident. Watching Twitch is not seen as an individual experience for the participants, it is rather described as a social viewing experience based on the visibility of the community.

Presumably, most viewers of traditional TV know others are watching the same as them, however, the awareness of it is fundamentally different on the Twitch platform as the crowd is constantly

present in the form of chat messages. Thus, the users are getting a constant reminder of the social setting they are a part of, even though their physical setting is private and individualized. As Christensen (2019) argued for in his reflection on domestication theory, the media technologies are not only occurring in contexts, it is creating new contexts. In this case, the participants' use of Twitch is not occurring in any physical social context, as they are using the platform alone, however, a social context is created as a result of the contextual use of the platform. Schütz' *Mitwelt* or Giddens' *space*, the reality that lives outside of our physical surroundings, is a phenomenon that helps understand how the participants of the interviews are viewing the Twitch platform. As the users are describing the platform as a place of interaction and community, where people gather to share experiences, they are experiencing Twitch as a *space*. The social experience lives outside of the physical and time-related surroundings and is mediated by the chat functionality.

The domestication theory in its original form has its limitations when it comes to explaining the domestication of a digital platform such as Twitch. However, as Christensen (2019) argues, the mediated space is now a platform to interact within and is a subject to domestication in the same way as a physical context. How one interacts on Twitch reflects the individual's understanding and competence of the platform. As the participants all describe community and interaction as integral parts of Twitch, which matches the platform's own description of itself, the media technology that is Twitch has been *tamed* by the participants. Arguably, the step of objectification has been performed as new meaning has been enforced to the platform, although it is not a physical object. Twitch is not only seen as a provider of content; it has been getting a new form as a social platform where the community watch games and tournaments together. As such, there are emotions related to the platform, and it has been getting a cultural meaning in the eyes of the participants.

Place of use

It can be argued that the use of Twitch is not an action that takes place in the physical surroundings, as it is rather tied to the general use of the computer, tablet, or television. As such, it is in competition of attention with every other service on the internet, and the domestication of the platform is therefore widely tied to this context, the internet. However, the physical context of the use of the platform is not to be ignored.

During the interviews with the Twitch users it was asked how and where they use the platform. Noticeably, the participants mostly related their use of Twitch to an individual experience in their respective rooms. User 1 said: *"I mostly use it at my computer and watch it in my room"* (User 1, appendix 1; my translation). User 2 sometimes uses Twitch on his phone when he is commuting, but otherwise the use is mostly connected to their rooms within their homes. Interestingly, when asked about their use of traditional TV, the responses are very different. In this case, the only use case is connected to viewing it with the participants' parents. Asked about the use of traditional TV, user 4 said: *"Sometimes during the weekends, if I am in the living room"* while user 2 said: *"I sometimes watch TV with my parents, but otherwise I mostly use it for sports"* and user 1 said: *"That is very rare I must admit. It is only if I join the old ones in the living room"* (Appendix 1; my translation). In the original form of domestication theory, the physical placement of the media technology is an important aspect of the domestication process, as it changes the usage of the object and the behaviour in the specific rooms (Christensen, 2019). Furthermore, the physical placement is an indicator of how the household have integrated the media technology in general. The placement of a TV in the center of the living room indicates an embracement of the technology as an integral part of the everyday life's routines. With the findings of this project's user study, it is evident that Twitch have not been domesticated fully within the households. However, the same can be said for the TV in its traditional form. It is clearly not something that the entire family uses daily anymore, as the general use of media technologies have been fragmented within the household. In this case, the younger member of the households are in their rooms watching their favorite platform such as Twitch. In this context the question is whether this is a deliberate choice by both the parents and their kids, or if this is due to a domestication process that is handled differently by the two different age groups. As presented in the theory section, Christensen's perspective on phenomenology in the everyday life and domestication (2019) is that not all media technology is seen as relevant to the residents of the household. The media technology will become relevant to the users in different order and speed, if the specific technology is relevant to a given context. As such, the domestication of Twitch - or the core functionalities of the platform integrated to other platforms – requires a relevancy to the context of the remaining members of the family or household. For the participants of this project's interviews, this domestication has not occurred within the family yet, as the use case is restricted to their own rooms. Later, the thesis will address

if and how the core functionalities of Twitch can be integrated to regular broadcast companies. It can, however, be concluded that the five participants of the interviews have domesticated Twitch as an integrated part of their routines within their own room.

In the Norwegian version of domestication (Sørensen and Lie, 1995) as the theory section addresses as well, the focus is less on domestication of the media technology within the household and more on the general domestication in the society. The specific placement of the technology is thereby not seen as relevant; the relevancy is whether the technology is adopted on a larger scale throughout the society. Based on the five user interviews conducted for this study, it is not realistic to propose a general domestication of Twitch in the society. However, as community and interaction are highlighted as the cornerstones of Twitch's attractiveness, it is arguably essential to have a domestication in place to a certain degree. Without the needed adoption of the platform for the specific target groups there is no community and thus no interaction. The domestication of the core functionalities on a broader scale throughout the society are therefore required for Twitch to have the effect on the participants of this user study. Through the lens of this domestication perspective a societal domestication of Twitch is paramount to the users, and it is a viable way of analysing whether the platform is domesticated or not. As the interviewed users are highlighting the experience of watching games "together" with the community, the users must have a feeling that the majority of the community are present on the platform, and thus the platform have been domesticated throughout the community. The domestication throughout the society is in this case replaced with a more globalized domestication process, as Twitch as a digital platform targets a worldwide audience. A societal domestication of Twitch is therefore not concludable based on these findings and is not particularly relevant to the perceived experience of the individuals. The experience of the sense of community and watching games together requires the presence of a community but is not restricted to local contexts.

The chat as a community

In the previous sections, it has been established that the participants highlight interaction and community as some of the main reasons of why they use Twitch. At the Twitch platform, there is primarily one way of interacting among the community: The chat. To examine whether the

participants of the interviews are consciously choosing to use the chat feature at Twitch, the users were asked questions related to their general use of the platform. Asked to describe their way of watching a stream, User 5 said: *"I mostly use Twitch on my second monitor, and then I might be playing a casual game on the other screen or just browsing around. Sometimes I have my full attention at the stream, but it really depends on the tournament, and whether the game that is on is exciting or not"* (User 5, appendix 1; my translation).

It was interesting to ask whether the participants are watching the video streams in full screen or not, as the full screen functionality makes it impossible to chat or view the chat simultaneously. User 1 said: *"I do not think I ever really use full screen. I mostly use the theater mode where the video stream becomes bigger and the chat is still visible. I really like that mode"* (User 1, appendix 1; my translation). The same point was made for the rest of the users, although user 3 said that he sometimes uses the full screen mode to get the best possible experience in terms of resolution. User 4 reasoned his deselecting of full screen by stating: *"Then I can't see the chat"* (User 4, appendix 1; my translation). The difference between the two modes can be seen in picture 5 and picture 6.



Picture 5: Watching Twitch in Theater Mode



Picture 6: Watching Twitch in full-screen mode

Thus, it was found in four out of five interviews that the interviewees mentioned the chat themselves without being directly asked about it. The question was about the use of full screen, which showed how it is a very deliberate action to not maximize the screen and instead keep the chat aligned with the broadcast.

When asked specifically about the chat and how the participants are experiencing and using it, the interviews only showed positive feelings towards it. The general perception was that the chat is the source of the sense of community, and none of the interviewees could imagine Twitch without the integration of the chat.

"I think the chat is a part of the experience you have on Twitch to be honest. The chat and the video are tied hand in hand in some way. There is no video without the chat and vice versa. It would most definitely be boring if the chat suddenly were not there, because sometimes there is just not much happening on the stream, and then you are just chilling in the chat instead. In some way it is providing a break and something to do while you think the other thing is boring. And sometimes you look at it even though it is really exciting on the stream, because there is still funny comments, some crazy spam or trolls who are having a blast" (User 5, appendix 1; my translation).

It is clear from this quote that this user has established a perception of the Twitch chat as a core feature that is a part of the platform he likes. The content provided by the broadcast is not the

experience, the experience is the combination of the broadcast and the chat, where the chat sometimes becomes the main source of entertainment. This perception repeats itself throughout the remaining interviews, and it is noticeable how much the users are emphasizing the social aspect of chatting as a core functionality on the platform.

In relation to socio motivations of viewer engagement at live-streaming platforms (Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018), parallels can be drawn to entertainment and social interactions. It is evident that the integrated chat experience serves as an entertaining element of which the interviewees rates highly, and the social aspect of chatting relates directly to social interactions. User 3 takes it even further and reflects on how he thinks Twitch is more of a social media platform than a streaming platform. He says: *“If I think about Netflix or something like that, well then it is pretty similar, but at the same time it is very different. I think Twitch is very easy to navigate on, and then there is obviously this chat functionality and maybe even a bigger community around it. I am thinking more that I am using a social media platform on Twitch than using a streaming service such as Netflix”* (User 3, appendix 1; my translation). As such, Edge’s (2013) description of Social TV is precise, as the users are highlighting the ability to engage as an audience as paramount to the experience. In the Deloitte report (Stewart & Arkenberg, 2019) it was highlighted how traditional TV is widely associated with being passive and one-way while esports broadcasting is two-way and immersive, as there is a layer of communication with other viewers who are watching the same. In the study of Maruyama et al. (2017) it was highlighted how social media opinions and interactivity influence a sense of community, in the same way as Hilvert-Bruce et al. (2018) thus creating a social layer to the viewing experience. As such, the findings of the interviews widely confirm the established theory and studies of the area, as there clearly is a sense of community and social media elements in the way the users are perceiving the platform. In the eyes of the interviewees, the ability to interact and participate with the broadcasts separates digital broadcasting of esports on Twitch from both traditional TV and digital streaming services such as Netflix and HBO. The products are therefore not necessarily equated and viewed as the same, as there is a fundamental difference in the perception of the platforms that differs from a social media experience to a one-way streaming experience. *“There is something more vivid about watching something on Twitch. There is a greater feeling of liveness*

because you can see what other people are writing [...] In a way, I feel closer connected to what I am watching at Twitch than other places” (User 2, appendix 1; my translation).

The chat and social contagion

To understand the perception of social watching, interactivity, sense of community, and the connection between broadcast and user, as the interviewees are describing, the theory of social contagion is key. As such, this section will introduce the specific findings of the interviews that describe the interviewees’ own interpretation of their participation in the chat, and how the chat is influencing them emotionally while watching.

During the interviews, the participants were asked how they feel about having the chat integrated alongside the video stream. As established in the previous sections, the interviewees relate the chat to the sense of community and interaction, however, in multiple cases they elaborated on how exactly the interaction are influencing them emotionally.

“The chat is very important to me now that I think about it. I think it is extremely funny to see what people write and it always makes me laugh. People are a bit crazy and they troll a lot, but to me that is also what makes it fun” (User 1, appendix 1; my translation). Besides being an element of entertainment, as it is also described as by user 2, the chat is found to minimize the sense of watching something alone as user 3 outlines it. He argues that the sense of community occurs as a consequence of people writing in chat. The social contagion theory can in this case be used a tool to understand how the interviewees are experiencing being affected by the other users in the chat. As presented in the theory section, Polansky, Lippitt and Redl (1950) describes the social contagion as a spreading of a mood, attitude and/or behaviour from person to person through whole groups. As such, when the interviewees are describing how the chat are making them laugh and causing them to feel more entertained, the phenomena of social contagion is an explanation. In the words of Sullins (1991), social contagion is a process where individuals seem to catch the mood of those around them. While this has been used to examine behaviour of traditional sport crowds that are physically present, to explain the spread of booing and slow clapping at a stadium, it is also a viable way of describing the interviewees emotions while watching Twitch. As Marsden (1998) highlights,

social contagion happens through dispersed collectives just as through crowds, and this process is very evident in the case of user 1:

“There is something cool about being able to see the reactions from others, who are watching the same as you. As mentioned, it really makes me laugh. It is hard to explain, but it is kind of like it enhances the emotions you have during a game. When there is a crazy headshot or a sick play it is like it becomes even crazier by having the chat filled with PogChamp’s. Then you know that other people also think it was wild” (User 1, appendix 1; my translation). The description of the enhancement of emotions relates well to how social contagion can be a spreading of a mood. In this case, the user express that he is excited about the content no matter what, however, the presence of the crowd in the chat enhances those emotions in a contagious way.

The equivalent to booing, cheering, and clapping in a stadium is referred to as crowdspeak on Twitch, as established in the theory section (Ford et al., 2017). Ford et al. describes it as a playful form of participation where the crowd is transformed to not only being a viewer but a speaker. As such, when user 1 describes how a certain event at the broadcast becomes “even crazier” with the viewers use of a certain emote, a parallel can be drawn to how the crowd is cheering digitally in the shape of crowdspeak. User 4 refers to this phenomenon as the act of cheering together: *“The most important thing about Twitch is the chat and the fact that you can write each other and interact with the streamer. During major tournaments people are cheering together in the chat, and if something funny is happening you can see that everyone else is laughing about it too. That is so funny”* (User 4, appendix 1; my translation). As such, the perception of crowdspeak is the same in this case, and the viewers emotions are evidently contagious to this user study’s participants.

Participation or not?

In the social contagion theory, it is a central element that both emotions and actions of other people in crowds are contagious and spreading through the group of individuals. The previous section showed examples of how emotions are transferred, however, the equivalent to cheering at a stadium, crowdspeak, should also have the derived effect that it causes the users to participate with their own crowdspeak as well. The user study did not show as clear results in this regard, as the users were split between whether they liked to participate in the chat themselves or just enjoy the

communities' interaction silently by reading their messages. User 1 explained how he mostly reads the chat, but sometimes tend to add an emote. By asking further what it takes for him to participate himself, he said: *"If something really nice happens in the tournament that gets the chat going crazy then I will sometimes join in and write something"* (User 1, appendix 1; my translation). Thus, the social contagion is having a clear effect in this case, however, it is related closely to the content and the excitement that it brings to the specific user in this case. The interaction by others in the chat is not the sole factor that will cause user 1 to participate. It must be the right combination of two factors: The content's appeal to the individual user and the excitement in the chat from the community. For user 2 the participation is mainly limited to broadcasts from so called streamers, while his participation is minimal for tournament broadcasts. User 3 rarely participates in the chat. User 4 does, however, often participate in the chat and says: *"... it is just something you do on Twitch. When someone sees something that matches a meme, they quickly express themselves, and then everyone writes the same"* (User 4, appendix 1; my translation). As such, user 4 highlights the essence of the contagion theory. His perception is, that when a user reacts to the broadcast by using what Ford et al. (2017) calls tacit references, inside jokes, and an "acquired fluency", the rest of the chat joins in and writes the same.

For user 5, participation is undoubtedly the essence of Twitch. As he puts it: *"I think it adds so much to the stream that you can see what other people are writing, and it makes you want to participate in the conversations and write all sorts of ridiculous stuff [...] I sometimes write, because I think it is super funny to spam Kappa or LUL when someone does something funny. It makes me laugh every time the chat is filled with LUL's, because then you know that other people is also laughing, and it makes you want to write it yourself"* (User 5, appendix 1; my translation). As such, there is clear example of how social contagion is working on user 5. The emotions and moods of others in the chat are clearly spreading, and so is the desire to participate himself. When he sees people indicating a laugh by typing a certain word or emote, the desire to write in the chat increases.

Throughout the presented findings, it is evident that the user study of this thesis has results that relates to the theory of social contagion. The users are all relating the Twitch platform to interactivity, community, and a sense of watching together, and there are multiple examples of how

the chat is influencing the users. As such, this part of the thesis contributes to how social contagion can be used in contexts outside the physical existence of a crowd. In this case, the context is mediated by a platform, and is evidently having the same effect on the users as the theory suggests to be happening in the presence of a crowd. Thus, based on the small sample size of the user study, social contagion theory is highly relevant to investigate cases of participatory cultures on digital platforms. The social contagion phenomenon on a digital platform such as Twitch can help researchers and broadcast companies to understand, why the users are attracted to the interactivity of Twitch. As the platform has evolved to be one of the most successful live streaming platforms, and evidently has been domesticated by the target group, broadcast companies should look take advantage of the functionalities that is leading to the social contagion phenomenon, and investigate whether an implementation of similar features would benefit their business. According to the users within the user study, these features would add value to the platforms.

At the end of the interview with each of the five participants of the user study, the interviewees were asked about how the experience between traditional TV as well as streaming services such as Netflix differ from Twitch, and whether a chat function could be relevant at these platforms. User 1 highlighted how watching on Twitch leads to a feeling of unity, openness, and community, while watching on Netflix is more of a solo project without any social context. About adding a chat function, he said: *"I think you could do it, but I am unsure about how, and whether you would use it or not. I think it would be hilarious to see what other people wrote during X Factor"* (User 1, appendix 1; my translation). User 2 argued how regular sports seems like the obvious genre to add a chat functionality, while user 3 highlighted the importance of being able to turn it on and off as the factor of its success. User 4 said: *"Twitch is much more fun than TV, because I can watch all the games, I play myself, and I can meet and write with others who are into the same. You cannot do that on TV"* (User 4, appendix 1; my translation). User 4 further described how his parents would probably not use a chat functionality, before he quickly corrected himself after thinking about how they currently interact on Facebook during the TV show Vild Med Dans (Dancing with the Stars). For user 5 it was highlighted how he has never seen a chat on Netflix or TV, thus he is having no sense of community while watching. As he puts it: *"I think you can make it fit, but it is probably not everyone who wants to use it. I think for me and my friends who are used to watching esports in this way, I think we would*

appreciate it and think it would fit in most cases, but my parents and grandparents would probably find it strange. But I think, once they have gotten used to it, they would find it funny, because it is super funny to see what people write of weird stuff sometimes” (User 5, appendix 1; my translation).

While these statements are not a testament to whether a chat functionality would work on traditional TV or other streaming services, it is interesting that the feature has been domesticated to such a degree that the users find it natural to be implemented to other platforms and technologies. These findings further enhance the basis of why it is interesting to investigate how broadcast companies can integrate a similar chat feature, and whether it would be a successful element on their own platform. From the small sample size of this user study, it is not viable to make any general conclusions, but it is noticeable how this group of users separates the experience of watching at Twitch and watching at other platforms.

Case description: CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu

Besides a user study, the research of this thesis is based on interviews with relevant employees of the broadcast company TV 2. In this section, the findings from the interview conducted at TV 2 will be presented, analysed and discussed in relation to the theory section as well as the findings from the user study. First, the coming paragraphs will provide a thorough description of the case and the background and relevancy for including it in this research.

TV 2 Denmark is a state-owned broadcast company that is behind the most watched channel in Denmark (omtv2.tv2.dk, 2020). The company operates seven channels in total, an on-demand streaming service called TV 2 Play, and the website tv2.dk. With 1300 employees, TV 2 is one of the largest media companies in Denmark.

The primary reason for reaching out to TV 2 and including them in the thesis is due to their investments in broadcasting of esports. Starting in 2015, TV 2 Zulu introduced the game Dota 2 to their viewers with a dedicated program called *esport på Zulu*. While this did not last for long, esports was brought back on Zulu with the acquisition of the rights to broadcast the game Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO) in early 2018 (esportsmagasinet.dk, 2018). One year earlier, the competitor Danmarks Radio had started to broadcast CS:GO on TV as the first channel in Denmark. However,

with the success it had, TV 2 realized their need to invest, and this has now evolved into a permanent concept of the program *CS:GO på TV 2 Zulu* (CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu).

CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu is a part of the sports division at TV 2, and has two key employees; both are represented in the interview. The Editor in Chief of Sports at TV 2 Play, Allan Hvid, is the overall responsible for the esports broadcasting at TV 2, while Kasper Alstrup is the editor of the program CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu, thus being the main actor in the day-to-day operations. On a day of broadcasting a CS:GO tournament, I met both Hvid and Alstrup in Odense to discuss their strategy behind producing esports broadcasts to learn how they are working with user inclusion and participation.

The Editor in Chief of Sports at TV 2 Play, Allan Hvid, explained their entry to esports broadcasting as following: *“Three years ago, there was a crystal clear opinion at TV 2 that Counter-Strike did not belong at all on any of our platforms. That included all other shooting games as well. What happened was that Danmarks Radio broadcasted BLAST Pro Series in 2017, and it went really well for them. Then we thought it was about time to try it as well. So we started with the major in Boston in early 2018, and it went really, really well in the young target group. From here on out we have been working with figuring out that it belongs really well at Zulu to reach its target group”* (Allan Hvid, appendix 2; my translation).

Following this decision, TV 2 has bought the majority of the broadcasting rights to CS:GO and permanently hired the commentators and analysts that Danmarks Radio used. As such, Danmarks Radio does not have any permanent concept established around broadcasting CS:GO. As a result, the program CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu is now the main esports product on the Danish broadcasting market, and it is in direct competition with Twitch. The tournaments broadcasted are exactly the same, meaning that users can find the same in-game content simultaneously on both Twitch and TV 2 Zulu in relation to CS:GO. The difference is, however, that TV 2 Zulu is producing their own broadcast in a studio with their own hosts, commentators, analysts, and reporters. This dynamic is exactly what makes it interesting to study. TV 2 Zulu has taken a product that is born digitally and has achieved its success through the Twitch platform. The product has then been integrated to the established broadcasting model of TV 2, thus making it linear as a traditional TV product. The features of chat

integration aligned with the screen is not present in the shape of the product that TV 2 Zulu is offering, and neither is it on the streaming service of TV 2 Play where it is broadcasted simultaneously. It is therefore interesting to investigate how the management and producers in charge are perceiving this fundamental difference between the platforms, and whether they deliberately are working towards reaching a similar dynamic of user participation and community feeling that is found on Twitch. By watching multiple broadcasts of CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu, it is very evident that community involvement and interaction through Twitter is an integral part of the program. Thus, similarities in user participation has been found prior to the interviews, and this dynamic was the primary angle of the questions. The focus was to gain insight on how TV 2 Zulu is working with community involvement and user participation during their broadcasts, and whether the chat functionalities at Twitch are perceived as a potential feature to integrate on TV 2's own platforms.

Twitch and the competition

The user study of this thesis found that five out of five users preferred to watch esports at Twitch. One of the users mentioned CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu as a program, he sometimes watches (User 3, appendix 1). The content broadcasted on the two platforms are essentially the same, so what it is that TV 2 finds to be their competitive advantage? This section will present the findings of the interviews in this regard, in order to establish an understanding of how the managers of esports at TV 2 are perceiving their own position in the market of esports broadcasting.

The broadcasting of esports is a digital native product, primarily born on Twitch. The majority of the viewers of these tournaments are used to watching at digital platforms, which makes the integration of CS:GO to a linear broadcast on TV 2 Zulu seem as a step backward in terms of the technological development of media. The same concerns were raised by Allan Hvid during the interview: *"At first, we wanted to see if it would work. Is there anyone that want to watch it on flow tv, when you have an English version on Twitch at the same time? Our hosts are the reason that we can make it happen. We have the best casters, players, and experts at the studio, and our coverage is enriching the product with something you do not get at Twitch"* (Allan Hvid, appendix 2; my translation).

The enrichment of the product is a reference to how TV 2 Zulu are working with the product on a journalistic level. By producing interviews and segments with Danish players and experts, the argument is that they are providing a product to Danish viewers that is not available to them anywhere else. The storytelling is key, and it is main competitive advantage they have on the other platforms, it is argued (appendix 2).

Additionally, the interview revealed a desire to produce a broadcast that is more mainstream than what exists at Twitch. Allan Hvid said: *“The thoughts about our coverage of it has been that we wanted to make it more mainstream and less geeky. Without losing it all, but making those two things collaborate. And also giving it a more classic sports coverage. We wanted to take it more seriously, while we keep the nerdy and niche parts”* (Allan Hvid, appendix 2; my translation) while Kasper Alstrup added: *“You could say that CS:GO have two parents at TV 2. There is the sport division, who are very good at producing sport and making it popular. And then there is Zulu where the mood is relaxed, and everyone is having fun and joking. Here, it fits to include the viewers and make them involved in way where it feels like they are a part of the show”* (Kasper Alstrup, appendix 2; my translation).

As such, it is evident that the interviewees are mainly focused on how their production and journalism are improving the viewer experience, while simultaneously trying to make a more mainstream version of the broadcast that draws on fundamental elements from sports broadcasts. These are the clear factors of which the interviewees find their product to differentiate the most from Twitch. However, as Kasper Alstrup is mentioning there as an additional and very important factor to their broadcasts: The inclusion and involvement of the community.

Participatory culture and esports at TV 2 Zulu

In spite of the fact that the broadcast of CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu does not share the integrated interactive features as Twitch, interactivity and community involvement are highlighted as cornerstones in the strategy (appendix 2). With concurrent viewer counts between 30.000 and 90.000, the success is undeniable, and the strategy in place is evidently accommodating to the users' needs.

Since the introduction of the concept to TV 2 Zulu, the company has had a strategy in place to build a community at two different social media platforms: Twitter and Facebook (Appendix 2). In this moment of writing, the Facebook group “CS:GO på TV 2 Zulu” have more than 12.400 members. *“Now, in the second year, we have been able to build a really strong community on Facebook. It is almost becoming so big that it is being killed by its own success, as we are struggling a bit with the tone and the good spirit. We have more than 10.000 followers in there, and every time we broadcast it is about 70-80 percent of them who becomes activated. They are really passionate”* (Allan Hvid, appendix 2; my translation). Thus, the Facebook community are clearly an element in the overall strategy, and so is it to “activate” them during broadcast; or in other words – make them participate and interact with each other. As described in theory section, the term social second screening is used by Neate, Jones & Evans (2017) to outline how users discuss broadcasts and events in real time on social media platforms in relation to live sports and debates. In this case, it is exactly this kind of social second screening that the interviewees are referring to and praising the success of. Kasper Alstrup said: *“I think we unconsciously have had an eye on the community and the viewers who are watching. From the first transmission we have had a hashtag on Twitter, which has been top trending when we are live. We have done it to embrace the underground culture, that we know exists around it. So, when TV 2 is broadcasting CS:GO the community is included in the studio, and we are using them actively in the transmission by taking questions and comments”* (Kasper Alstrup, appendix 2; my translation). Alstrup is thereby acknowledging that a second screening strategy is in place. As such, Miller’s (2020) point about cross-media experiences becomes relevant as well. In the cross-media experience, the broadcast is less of a standalone product, as other platforms are utilized to provide additional content, thus enhancing the experience of involvement for the user. By actively starting and promoting a hashtag on Twitter, CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu is creating a cross-media experience, where viewers are encouraged to engage and read along. Furthermore, the creation of the Facebook group serves as a cross-media experience as well, as the group is used to share news, articles, and videos to the followers in addition to providing a platform for user participation.

One of the possible explanations to this increased development of cross-media experience can be found in the included study of Sørensen (2015). As presented, her argument is that second screening and multiplatform contexts have caused a revival of live TV, as it has changed the way viewers

access, consume, and interact with the live content. The digital platforms become the key to an increased success of live TV instead of the death of linear TV. For TV 2 Zulu and their esports broadcasts, the interaction between broadcast and viewers on Twitter and Facebook are solely dependent on it being live. And Hvid (appendix 2) widely agrees with Sørensen's study (2015) about the importance of live TV. He says: *"That it was live sport can do. Together with live entertainment it is what moves users. Back in the days if you could show the newest James Bond movie as the first one you would have a million viewers. You cannot do that today because Netflix also has 400 movies a year. What will make you gain customers in the future, and it is always going to be like that, that is live sport and entertainment. It is only going to become even crazier. The rights will become more expensive in many years to come"* (Allan Hvid, appendix 2; my translation).

By utilizing the liveness of the broadcast and the availability of the social media platforms, TV 2 can mediate an interaction between the commentators and the viewers. And according to TV 2, 70-80 percent of their community are engaging in some sort of participation while the transmissions are live. This percentage of engaged users is a testament to the program's success, as there according to Pynta et al. (2014) is a correlation between Twitter activity and television ratings. The more the viewers are engaging on social media platforms while watching the show, the stronger are their feeling of engagement in the broadcast.

CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu is thereby leaning closely towards recent studies and tendencies found in the literature. There is a clear strategy in place to utilize social second screening, and the build-up of a community is seen as fundamental to the program's success. The liveness of the show enables the ability to interact with the audience and cause social media engagement, thus everything is pointing towards that this program is completely aligned with the current landscape of modern broadcasting. However, the difference between this approach and the platform of which the content originates from is clear. At Twitch, the participation is an integrated experience, while using Facebook and Twitter as a medium is a use of secondary platforms outside of the broadcast's context. CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu may therefore be aligned with current broadcasting trends and tendencies, but an emerging question is why they are not aligned with competing platforms.

Moderated interaction

Although the previous section has established that CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu share the elements of interactivity and participation with Twitch through a participatory culture of cross-media experiences, the differences between the two approaches are clear. At Twitch, the chat feature has established the phenomenon crowdspeak where thousands of viewers simultaneously post short messages and emotes. This approach is relatively unmoderated, thus writing something in the chat will cause it to be public to every other viewer and potentially influence their experience, although it might just be for a second. With CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu there is no unfiltered way of engaging with the broadcast. While the viewers can freely write what they want on Twitter and Facebook, the editors of the broadcast are the sole deciders of what is included at their platform and in their broadcasts. This is a very deliberate choice, the interview showed:

"I think we unconsciously are being inspired by Twitch, where the chat is constantly active on the side. Because, the chat is also ongoing for us constantly; it is just on Twitter. You just do not see it on the side of the screen, but here we handpick whatever we think is contributing to our broadcast. If someone shares a picture of a cake, they baked with a team logo in it, we think it can be fun to show, although many sport broadcasts would think it is silly to spend time on. But I think we are softer here" (Kasper Alstrup, appendix 2; my translation). As such, it is clear that CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu is aware of the difference of participation that is between their product and Twitch. However, Alstrup is arguing that their program includes the viewers and their content in a way that traditional sport broadcasts would not, thus positioning them in a middle spot of participatory culture between Twitch and sports broadcasting on traditional TV. This positioning is a result of the desire to make the viewers participate while still staying in control of the content. During the interview, the interviewees were asked if they could see any way of integrating a live chat feature, such as Twitch provides it, and thus give up the control. This was generally not considered an option: *"I think our experience is, as Allan also mentioned about Facebook, that it is difficult to keep a good tone. What we know is, that the Twitch-chat has been toxic ever since it came, and people are bashing each other or filling it with unimportant LOL. What we use in our broadcasts is presented to 30-90.000 viewers, and we want to control the output. It needs to complement everyone [...] It is too autonomously to open the gates"* (Kasper Alstrup, appendix 2; my translation).

What is interesting about this statement is the contradictory experience of the Twitch chat by Alstrup compared to the presented findings of the user study. The user study leaned towards a social contagion phenomenon in the Twitch chat, which was primarily experienced as a positive contagion by the users. In this case, Alstrup is experiencing the opposite. His experience of the Twitch chat is that it is indeed social contagious, however, in a negative way where the users are spreading negative vibes. His argument is that if the community is to be involved in the broadcast, the editors of the broadcast are the sole decision makers of what contributes to the experience and what does not. In this context he highlights good questions, pictures, funny comments, and sharp analyses as the key elements to include. This separates CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu from the crowdspeak phenomenon even further. The study of Ford et al. (2017) suggested how the massive chat interaction at Twitch are legible, meaningful and compelling to the participants of the channel akin to clapping and chanting in a sports stadium (Ford et al., 2017.), and this was widely confirmed in the user study of this thesis.

The Editor in Chief of TV 2, agreed with Alstrup: *"It needs to be able to contribute with something and support our product. Otherwise, I think you will experience it as noise. If you as an example integrated it at TV 2 Play, which is a payed subscription service, the users who pay for access would not expect to be met with all that noise"* (Allan Hvid, appendix 2; my translation). Evidently, the interviewees of CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu has an entirely different experience with the Twitch chat as opposed to the participants of the user study. In this case, the chat is perceived as noise, while the user study drew parallels to crowdspeak, where the chat messages is perceived as a digital way of cheering and watching games together. Allan Hvid further elaborated: *"While I am thinking about it, I also think that there are some values related to TV 2 that we cherish. We cannot tolerate all sorts of things. We have values and ethics. We are not broadcasting all sorts of crap, understand me correctly, we try to protect ourselves. We are very passionate about our journalism, that it is proper and thorough, which is why I do not think it is a good match to be able to write anything you want on our platforms. I actually think that is a poor match. I would feel that our product would be pulled in the wrong direction"* (Allan Hvid, appendix 2; my translation).

The strong opinion is arguably a result of the historical background and traditions related to TV 2 as a media company and to journalists in general. A journalist collects, writes, and/or distributes news to the public (Wikipedia, 2020), thus it is the essence of the role to be the intermediary between the content and the consumers. By having a live, unmoderated and free-to-use chat feature, the importance of the journalist becomes devaluated, and in the eyes of the interviewees, the control over the product's quality is lost. As a broadcast company, TV 2 has its origins from the linear way of planning broadcasts where the producers and planners decide what programs are on in which order. This phenomenon, also referred to as flow TV, is still very much alive as established in the theory section, however, it is fundamentally different from broadcasting on digital platforms. On digital streaming platforms such as Netflix, HBO, Twitch, and YouTube, the control of the content is much more fluid. The platforms ultimately decide what content is provided, however, when and how the users want to access the content is entirely in their own control. And for Twitch and YouTube in particular, the control is even looser. Here, the majority of the content is provided by the users themselves, the so-called streamers, who largely is the decision makers of what content to produce.

In the case of CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu it is important to note that the program is hybrid in its publication, as it is broadcasted live on both the linear channel TV 2 Zulu and the digital streaming platform TV 2 Play. However, as it is live and the broadcast is identical across the two platforms, it is evident from the interview that the fundament of the program is built upon the principles of flow TV. However, it is additionally clear that the opinion about an unfiltered live chat solely on the digital platform of TV 2 Play is, that it does not belong at their platforms. And according to Allan Hvid, this will not change even if flow TV 'dies' in the coming years. If this were the case, CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu would arguably be in direct competition with Twitch and similar platforms; much more than they are today. If the users can only access the content through digital platforms, the question is if interactive features become the parameter of which the users chose their favorite platform. To this, Hvid says: *"I definitely think that our product will be affected by the declining power of flow. And it will take shape of what is big already. I just do not think that our role will be to facilitate it. Our role as a media company is to do journalism, storytelling, and buy rights to broadcast live events. I have a hard time seeing that TV 2 as a media company should be the ones facilitating or including it,*

because it is so strong in the communities already. I see your point about us being affected by the digitalization, but right now we protect what TV 2 Play is, and what it is not" (Allan Hvid, appendix 2; my translation). This concern is largely based on a 'what if'-notion of the future, and it is naturally difficult for anyone to predict how they will act without knowing the current challenges of the media landscape. Nevertheless, it is noticeable how confident the Editor in Chief is about not adopting the competing platform's features.

The tone

One of the main concerns of Alstrup and Hvid throughout the interview is the tone and language used by the users in the Twitch chat. As presented, through their eyes the chat is toxic and primarily negative, which is a direct contradiction to the results found in the user study. In the user study, user 1 said: *"... there is not really anything to read, it is more something you look at, because it is mostly emotes"* (User 1, appendix 1; my translation). As such, the perception of the chat is divided between the two research groups. One is experiencing crowdspeak, and the other is not.

The most significant difference between the interviewees is the age disparity. Alstrup is 30, while Hvid is 43. Furthermore, Hvid is not a user of Twitch, and his perception of the platform is therefore indisputably different. However, during the interview it became clear that Alstrup uses Twitch himself. When presented with the results from the user study and the phenomenon of crowdspeak that simulates the atmosphere of cheering as a part of a crowd, he said: *"I can recognize that from myself when I am watching Twitch"* (Kasper Alstrup, appendix 2; my translation). As such, Alstrup arguably has a closer relation to the platform, and besides acknowledging the perception of the participants in the user study, he shares parts of the perceived experience with them. Despite this, Alstrup does simultaneously perceive the Twitch chat as a place with a bad tone and unimportant messages.

Social contagion is defined as: *"The spread of affect or behaviour from one crowd participant to another; one person serves as the stimulus for the imitative actions of another"* (Marsden, 1998). As such, there is nothing in social contagion theory that restricts the spreading of behaviour to be positive or negative affected. Social contagion theory is therefore not a tool to describe how and

why the perception of Twitch by the two different interview groups is fundamentally different. This difference is arguably instead to be found in the disparity of age and use cases as described. Through the lens of social contagion theory, we can gain an understanding of how emotions and moods are fragile and very likely to shift unconsciously. As such, it has been used in studies of sports crowds to explain everything from booing and aggressive behaviour to clapping and cheering (Mann, 2009). As such, the concern raised by Alstrup and Hvid (Appendix 2) is theoretically justified, as there is a risk related to having a crowd in the shape of a chat. Although the participants in the user study solely perceived the chat as funny and positive, the social contagion effect does make it theoretically possible for the chat to become negatively charged in a blink of an eye. As behaviour and moods are spreading, and thus causes members of the crowd to mimic the behaviour, it does not take much for a tone to become negative, and for the majority to join in. However, this phenomenon is arguably platform independent, as the theory relates to a physical or mediated crowd, and the concern should not be restricted to Twitch alone. As such, the interviewees were asked if they ever had experienced the loss of control and spreading of negative tone on the platforms they use, and if so – is there a difference?

“Yes, at least we have a little bit of control over it. But you do have a point. A few years back I was very critical about it, and I remember it quite well. There was a time where reach meant everything because it could generate traffic, and then it did not matter if people were talking shit on Facebook and smeared each other. If only it could get you the traffic. I liked the fact that we could reach a lot of people with our content, but I do not think it was an argument for taking advantage of it and posting to start a debate. Then you are eyeing the traffic, but is it affecting your journalism? That is problematic. It is not exactly the same, but still it is: We have to make some choices about our coverage, and what we stand for. And I think we do that sometimes in relation to our Facebook group, which generally is not a bad place although it takes off sometimes in a wrong direction” (Allan Hvid, appendix 2; my translation).

The loss of control about the content, and the risk of having a negative chat filled with noise, as Alstrup and Hvid are arguing, is a valid concern to raise based on the social contagion theory. If we through the results of this study believe that the users of Twitch indeed are experiencing social

contagion in a positive way, it must also be recognized that a majorly negative tone is possible. As the user study clearly shows that the chat is adding value to the users' experience, the real challenge for TV 2 – if they were to integrate similar chat features - may therefore be how they can facilitate participation that is likely to be positive contagious. The point of the feature must be to improve the viewers experience, and not to create traffic in the way that Hvid describes about the company's previous Facebook strategy.

As a result, the representatives of TV 2 were asked if the phenomenon of crowdspeak could be the solution. The user study indicates how crowdspeak, primarily in the shape of emoticons and single words, is providing an experience of cheering and being a part of a crowd. Thus, if CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu limited the users' ability to write to only contain emoticons, the risk of a negative social contagion effect would be kept down. This point got the interviewees thinking: *"I think it [crowdspeak] is the same people are seeking and experiencing with our Facebook group, without being precisely the same. When our hosts say something that is way off and funny, people start to write about it on Facebook, and it gets a lot of comments. So, I can actually see that it has a basic purpose. But what I am having a hard time seeing is where is it to place it. On the TV-screen there is simply no room for it. Then it must be on side of the signal, and otherwise you need to make it second screen. We have worked with it before in our sports app, but it would be really weird, if we were to make a shout-stream from Counter-Strike in our app. Otherwise, you need to make a solution specially to the CS:GO coverage, but it would not have any purpose between broadcasts, so it is hard to figure out where to place it. It would not be ideal at TV 2 Play"* (Allan Hvid, appendix 2; my translation).

The same point about TV 2 Play was made by Alstrup: *"I think TV 2 Play is too small right now. If you are supposed to get the feeling of being a part of something bigger as with Twitch where it flows out, it is just not happening at Play. Then we needed all our users on Twitter and Facebook to get in there before it would matter"* (Kasper Alstrup, appendix 2; my translation).

Thus, when the interviewees are presented with the idea of adding features to enable the phenomenon of crowdspeak, which consequently limits the options of negative social contagion, the arguments change. The fear of the negative tone and loss of control is no longer the main

concern; the concern is the technical implementation and the volume of users at their platforms compared to competing platforms. The crowdspeak phenomenon is desired, as Hvid said: *“All broadcasters would love to have a million emoticons rolling down the screen, if they had a million users. That would be awesome, but I just think it is difficult. There is always someone who has started before you”* (Allan Hvid, appendix 2; my translation).

The platform concern

To be or not to be your own platform: That is the question. In earlier parts of this section it was established how CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu is using the secondary platforms Facebook and Twitter as a medium for enabling user participation during broadcasts. At the digital alternative, Twitch, the participation is an integrated experience. Now, we just learned how one of the main concerns about integrating a Twitch chat alike feature at TV 2’s platforms is 1) How to integrate and implement it technically and 2) If it is possible to attract enough users to compete with the volume of an established community.

The research of this thesis does not address how to technically implement the chat feature at broadcasting platforms. As such, there is no theoretical argument to be made to suggest how TV 2 can accommodate to the technical challenge. Hvid and Alstrup’s point about how a chat would work at the TV screen during a regular, linear broadcast is valid, and the solution is not obvious. As a result, the discussion of implementing a chat as an integrated part of the screen may be hypothetical, however, researching the possibility of using VR, AR, and other technical solutions could be a potential solution to this challenge. That is a (relevant) discussion to have and is a natural field for further research.

In relation to the implementation of a chat feature at TV 2 Play there is a fundamental difference. TV 2 Play is a digital platform; thus, it theoretically has the same possibilities for development as its competing digital platforms. The development and implementation of the feature is naturally restricted by the available resources, but with the right resources in place it is possible to achieve. The third technical option mentioned by Hvid and Alstrup is a second screen solution. TV 2 already has a sports app in their portfolio to provide a cross-media experience, however, it was quickly

written off as a poor solution in the interview (Allan Hvid, appendix 2). As presented, it was not found feasible by the interviewees to develop a specific second screen solution to the CS:GO coverage as *“... it would not have purpose between broadcasts”* (Allan Hvid, appendix 2; my translation). This concern is rooted in the frequency of the CS:GO transmissions at TV 2 Zulu which is restricted to about once a month. The planning of the broadcasts is directly related and controlled by if a tournament is on, and if TV 2 Zulu has the rights to show it. As such, Hvid raises an important consideration about the viability of a CS:GO transmission specific feature. From a business perspective, it is difficult to see the value of developing a feature that is only relevant in a restricted period. Consequently, if a feature of this kind should be developed, TV 2 should find relevancy in it for a broader scope. This could as an example include the general sports broadcasts. Further research is needed to assess if the viewers of traditional sports would perceive the same sense of community and crowd-feelings as the Twitch-users with an integrated chat solution, and it would be a relevant field for TV 2 to look into.

The second concern, the platform concern, relates to if it is possible to attract a relevant mass of users to compete with established communities. The argument of Alstrup is that the digital streaming platform of TV 2, TV 2 Play, is too unsubstantial as of now to provide a sense of community. Furthermore, the strategy of using Facebook and Twitter as a medium for user participation is a very deliberate choice, as Alstrup highlights: *“I think our current philosophy is that we do not have to be the community ourselves. You often say about social media that we are feeding them with users and traffic, but I actually feel like that when we are broadcasting, it is us who are taking advantage of them. We take advantage of the availability of their platform. The users are there already, and I do not think it would be easy to pull them in to TV 2 Play. The best for us right now, and I think it is going to continue this way, is to take advantage of the giant platforms that is available”* (Kasper Alstrup, appendix 2; my translation). This perspective raises important questions that is fundamental to the digital strategy of broadcast companies. The digital transformation of broadcasters is ongoing, and it is a paramount decision to choose the right platform strategy. Is the right move to invest in the development of your own platform and compete, or should you adjust your product to accommodate and take advantage of existing platforms? In the context of CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu is noticeable how the interviewees described the takeover of broadcasting rights from

Danmarks Radio. As explained, TV 2 was at first retaining from broadcasting CS:GO but chose to invest after seeing the success of Danmarks Radio. At the time, Danmarks Radio had established the use of Twitter as a part of their broadcasts, which TV 2 chose to replicate in their own version of the programs. By not having your own platform, and thus making the users used to participating via a third-party platform, history can repeat itself. CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu can lose the rights to broadcast tournaments to Danmarks Radio, who can then reinitiate their use of Twitter. As the users are not committed to a TV 2 platform, but to Twitter in this case, the chosen strategy is arguably making the product more fragile. To this, the Editor in Chief said: *“We have bought all the rights, so it is obviously easier for us to own a hashtag for the next couple of years. But I completely agree that the loyalty is fragile. If DR rebuys the rights, then the community will not stick with us. It is just something else with Twitch. You cannot compete with them [...] We are not initiating something that we do not believe in for the long run. It is hard to say if we should risk establishing a community or make new technical integrations, because do we want to prioritize that over having a live reporter at three tournaments? I do not want that. Because I won’t make any money on the first part, whereas the live reporter is directly improving my product. It is hard to see how we can compete with something that is so huge. Then you need to integrate it in some sort of collaboration, but even there I find problems. But it is possible that we are doing it in ten years”* (Allan Hvid, appendix 2; my translation).

The journalistic concern is thereby included again, and it is a recurring factor throughout the interview. If the interviewees are forced to choose, they will prioritize the journalistic quality of the product over technical features at any time.

Furthermore, it is noticeable how much emphasis the interviewees have on the element of competition with larger platforms. An integration of a new feature does necessarily have to be a strategic act to outperform competitors, it can strictly be an attempt to improve the viewers’ experience. In the user study of this thesis it was found that the interactive elements of Twitch are an important factor for how the users perceive the sense of community and experience the platform. As such, if TV 2 were to invest in similar features, the argument should be to look for direct improvements for the viewers’ experience with an expected derived effect of improved ratings. CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu has found success by utilizing their journalistic strengths to produce high quality content, and these elements are integral for their future success. However, the findings of the user

study suggest that TV 2 can find even further success by noticing closely what makes Twitch appealing for the target audience and try to adopt these features.

Domestication of platforms

It is evident from the interviews that the users of Twitch and employees of TV 2 do not share the perception of the value gained from an integrated chat feature. One explanation to this is the different context of which the two perspectives originates from. The interviews conducted with the users of Twitch are based on investigating specific use cases and perceived experience, while the interview at TV 2 was focused on exploring how the company is working with interactivity in broadcasts today, and why they are not replicating core features of Twitch. As such, there is naturally a contextual difference in the standpoint of the two interview groups.

Another way of possibly explaining the different perceptions and sentiments towards chat features at broadcasts is the theory of domestication. As described in the theory section, domestication theory is mainly used to analyse the process of ‘taming’ new media technology in the homes of the users (Christensen, 2019). Thus, it is a framework to explore how the new media technologies becomes an integrated part of the individual’s everyday life and routines. In the case of the interviewed employees of CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu, the research does not include an investigation of the interviewees use of technology in their private homes. It does, however, reflect the personal opinions and perceptions of the technology, which arguably is rooted in the degree to which the specific media technology has been domesticated by the individuals. Berker et al. (2006) explain domestication as a process of the media technology’s acceptance, rejection, and use, thus the theory can be utilized to explain where the actors are in this process, and why rejection may have occurred.

With domestication theory, the new media technologies must be integrated to pre-established structures and routines of the users’ environment (Christensen, 2019). In the case of TV 2, the interviews with Alstrup and Hvid showed how their journalistic background are causing them to instantly relate the new technology to how it will influence the journalistic structures of the company. As it is a routine for both participants to produce, edit, and control exactly what enters

the screens, the idea of adding an anarchistic element of live chat is not something that is easily adoptable to pre-established structures. As such, pre-established structures and routines of Hvid and Alstrup's work environment is conflicting with the idea of giving up control of the content. Additionally, according to domestication theory and Christensen (2019), the media technology accommodates to how individual's view themselves, and in this case the journalistic background is what dominates the self-view. Thus, the accommodation of a feature that is different from the self-view has a fundamental issue in a domestication process.

Another important dimension to domestication of media technology is the local context; how the object is handled in the physical space as well as how the content is consumed. *"It is through the specific choices, habits, and consumption of content that the cultural conception of what the TV is, occurs"* (Christensen, 2019). For the interviews with Alstrup and Hvid, it was evident that a chat feature was not viewed as a natural part of their conception of what the TV is offering. For Hvid especially, the concern about where to place and integrate a chat feature was raised multiple times during the interview. The habits and the regular consumption of content of Hvid in relation to the TV can serve as an explanation to this. His cultural conception of what the TV is suppose to do and offer, what content is appropriate and what is not, and how he usually uses the TV, is through the lens of domestication theory a cause to why the media technology feature is rejected. While the user study showed an acceptance in the domestication of the phenomenon from the users' perspective, the interview with Hvid and Alstrup is showing the opposite. In the user study it was noticeable how the participants reflected upon the chat feature as an integral part of why they used the platform. The feature had become a habit for them to use, and they argued how other streaming services and traditional TV was lacking the same ability to create a sense of community. In the interview with Alstrup and Hvid, the feature is described as noise and as a devaluation of the product. As such, there are two very different conceptions of the value the interactive feature can bring, which arguably is rooted in how the individuals have domesticated the phenomenon.

The results of the research furthermore point towards, that Hvid and Alstrup's domestication process is influenced heavily by seeing the success of new phenomena in familiar contexts. As presented, the adoption of the CS:GO broadcasting concept only occurred after seeing the direct

competitor, Danmarks Radio, find success with it. As such, the domestication of the concept was influenced directly by another company's domestication process. As such, it would be interesting to see how TV 2, and Hvid and Alstrup specifically, would act if a competing broadcaster would implement an integrated chat feature. Christensen (2019) argues that the individual's perspective of the world matters in the context of domestication, and in this case, it can be related to the perspective of esports broadcasting and user participation from TV 2.

The fact that there are two opposite conceptions and domestications of the same phenomenon is not untraditional. According to Christensen (2019) it is expectable. As presented, he argues that the individual's perspective of the world matters in the context of domestication and uses phenomenology of the everyday to explain how media technology is becoming relevant to the users in different contexts and orders. Naturally, the perspective of the world varies across all the interviewees, thus the domestication process will happen differently. As such, the different media technologies will not be seen as equally relevant to all individuals and target groups at the same time, and the context of which it becomes relevant is not necessarily going to be the same. As a result, there is a chance that the chat feature will never be seen as relevant for the Editor in Chief of Sports and TV 2 Play, Allan Hvid, in the context of esports, however, it might become relevant for him in a different context. The argument of Christensen (2019) is that the media technology is not interesting simply because of its introduction to the market. It is only interesting when it is found relevant for a specific context of the individual user. The relevancy has been established by the users of the user study as a feature that provides a sense of community and simulation of a crowd-effect, but the same relevancy is yet to be found by the interviewees of TV 2.

In the Norwegian perspective of domestication theory by Sørensen and Lie (1996), domestication is a matter of stabilization and habituation of the media technology within the society and not as much about the individual's home. Consequently, it can be argued that a domestication of social viewing features through a larger part of the society is exactly what needs to happen before a major broadcasting company such as TV 2 will adopt the technology. As presented, it is currently five percent of all households that are using Twitch regularly in Denmark to watch esports (Nilausen & Hansen, 2020). As such, although there is found a domestication of the feature within the specific

group of users included in the research of this thesis, there is no evidence to claim that a larger scale of domestication is in place. Furthermore, as the argument from Hvid and Alstrup is that there are too few users at their platforms to achieve a sense of community through a chat, there is a further need of domestication of their platform and the hypothetical feature. For the concept to work, the majority of the viewers need to domesticate the technology as a natural part of their consumption of TV content. However, this quickly becomes a 'chicken and the egg'-discussion, because how is the phenomenon going to be domesticated throughout the society, if the technology is not introduced to their platforms? The feature can be accessed through Twitch, YouTube Gaming, and Mixer, however, there is no way for anyone to experience a chat feature through a broadcast company's platform if it is not introduced in the first place. As such, the domestication can only occur through the active choice of using Twitch or similar platforms. The exception is, that a light version of the domestication process for the viewers of CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu arguably has been started, as the program is actively using community involvement in their broadcasts. As the ratings are high, and the program is enjoying a fair amount of success, it can be argued that the viewers are in the process of domestication of the interactive phenomenon – in a smaller scale than at Twitch. There is not a live chat feature integrated, and thus the domestication process of this specific functionality is not present, however, it can serve as a small incentive to become familiar with the established benefits of the feature.

Conflicting findings

The findings presented throughout the thesis have showed how users and the broadcaster TV 2 respectively views user participation and live chatting during esports broadcasts. Based on the analysis and discussion from the previous sections it is evident that there are different perceptions of the value an integrated chat feature is adding to a broadcast. However, it is important to note that while this may be a disagreement, there are many similarities between how the users describe their experience of Twitch, and how the broadcaster is describing their way of working with esports.

The biggest similarity is the view of community involvement, relatable to the sense of community by Mcmillan and Chase (1986). Although Hvid and Alstrup (appendix 2) does not perceive a chat feature as a value adding element, the community is an integral part of their broadcasts. As

established, the major difference is the choice of platform used to facilitate the user participation, as well as the editorial element; the broadcaster is controlling the content on the screen, thus there is no free access to be a part of the broadcast. The clear limitation of this study is, that it has not been investigated whether TV 2 is providing the same sense of community and feeling of watching games together as Twitch is providing to the selected users of this study. To be able to conclude whether the viewer experience is the same, or if one platform leads to different perceptions, a study of both viewer groups is needed. However, it is evident that the users of Twitch are basing their viewing experience on features and elements that are simply not present on TV 2 or at other broadcaster's platforms. The users interviewed for this study highlight how a fluid, live chat experience is enhancing their emotions and provides a similar feeling to be a part of a crowd at a sports stadium. This is solely based on the way numerous emotes and short messages, the crowdspeak phenomenon, is being spammed in the chat on Twitch. As such, the findings of this study suggest that features on Twitch facilitate and influence the viewer experience in a way that the community involvement on TV 2 is not capable of. In the context of TV 2, user participation is majorly facilitated by including selected comments, images, and questions for the hosts and experts to discuss in the studio. As such, the sense of being a part of a crowd cannot occur.

By comparing the user interviews with the interview of the managers of CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu, the clear contradictions of the findings is thereby evident. While a crowdspeak phenomenon is not initiated by TV 2, it is not viewed as a value adding element either. The perception of the phenomenon is therefore different between the two groups. Hvid and Alstrup (appendix 2) is experiencing the integrated chat experience as noise and as a risky element in terms of controlling the tone, while the selected users of Twitch is perceiving the chat as a simulation of a crowd and facilitator of a sense of community and social interaction. Thus, a question emerges: Is one wrong and the other right? Logically, it is not this simple. As this study researches how different actors experience and perceive specific interactive features, it is not feasible to judge whether one perception is better than the other. The individuals are experiencing what they are based on their context, as the domestication theory helps explain. The different actors are perceiving value of a media technology based on the specific use case and relevancy of the given actor, and this is occurring in different tempos and contexts.

The right or wrong question is not ideal in the context of individual experiences and perceptions, however, when it comes to a business context it is highly justifiable. As CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu have found success with their approach to esports broadcasting, nothing points at that a wrong approach has been chosen. Furthermore, this study does not have the any data to suggest that the viewers of CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu are longing for similar chat features as Twitch provides. However, what this study does show is an investigation of what makes Twitch appealing to the target group; supported by both pre-established theory as well as the conducted research. Additionally, the findings suggest how a broadcaster has adopted user participation elements and integrated it in a different way to accommodate to their platform. Consequently, this research of this thesis is impactful for three different areas: TV 2, broadcasters in general, and the research field of user participation at digital platforms.

Impact for research and business

In this section, the results and analysis from the conducted interviews will be compared. As such, it will be suggested how the findings are impacting the research field as well as how it can be used for business purposes.

Research impact for TV 2

As described, it cannot be concluded that CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu is approaching user participation wrongly. However, the findings of this study as well as the included research and theory are clearly suggesting what the users of Twitch are valuing in their viewing experience. As Twitch is the main platform for viewing esports, and esports broadcasting is what TV 2 practices in this case, this study can suggest what elements TV 2 advantageously could investigate further for business purposes.

The trend on social media platforms has been emerging towards live video and chat features for several years. As this study shows, chat features can be found on not only Twitch (Amazon), but on YouTube (Google), Mixer (Microsoft), Periscope (Twitter), Facebook, and Instagram. The phenomenon has been researched widely, and studies suggests that social interaction and the sense

of community is what drives the digital engagement when watching videos. Mcmillan and Chase (1986) suggests how a sense of community is related to the feeling of belonging, to matter in a group, and to share emotional connections and experiences with the members in the group. The sense of community has been identified widely across the interviews with the users of Twitch in this study, and the chat feature is the main element responsible. The research of Edge (2013) suggests four spectating personas of Twitch, that serves as the fundamental reason to why an individual chooses Twitch as the platform: The inspired, the pupil, the entertained, and the crowd. The entertained and the crowd is the primary personas identified throughout the research of this thesis. User 1 said: *“There is something cool about being able to see the reactions from others, who are watching the same as you. As mentioned, it really makes me laugh. It is hard to explain, but it is kind of like it enhances the emotions you have during a game. When there is a crazy headshot or a sick play it is like it becomes even crazier by having the chat filled with PogChamp’s. Then you know that other people also think it was wild”* (User 1, appendix 1; my translation). Thus, it is evident that the perceived entertainment is increased by the chat feature, and the crowdspeak phenomenon, as it enhances the emotions of the viewer. A crowd-experience is simulated in a way that is not possible for a traditional broadcast. The theory of social contagion suggests that moods and behaviour are spreading across crowds, which ultimately points towards an increased engagement by the users when a chat is present at the broadcast. The viewer wants to participate, and his mood is influenced positively by the visibility of what other viewers are writing and thus thinking and experiencing at the same time. Advantageously, TV 2 should investigate how they can facilitate a social contagion process, where the behaviour of the viewers becomes contagious. Hvid and Alstrup showed caution and skepticism towards an unmoderated chat, as they feared the tone would become too toxic. What was found during the interviews with the users of Twitch, was that crowdspeak was the value adding element of the chat feature. The immense use of emoticons and abbreviations is identified as the elements that contribute to the experience of the viewers, thus, limiting the viewers ability to write in such a fashion limits the risk of having a negative social contagious chat.

Digital culture theory suggests how a participation culture has emerged, and it is what ultimately drives users to use platforms today. Thus, it should be desirable for TV 2 to increase engagement and user participation. Creeber (2009) outlines how both Facebook and YouTube breeds a

participatory culture, where the users are becoming an actor in the creation and consumption of content. *“Consequently, rather than being seen as essentially commercial and inactive, in a postmodern world consumption itself is now regarded as a positive and participatory act”* (Creeber, 2009). With the strategy of TV 2, where the viewers are actively encouraged to participate through third-party platforms, it is closely tied to the general trends of the area. However, TV 2’s problem is outlined by Enli and Syvertsen (2015), as the traditional broadcasting model is challenged. *“First, the fragmentation of audiences may undermine the mass media aspect of television; second, traditional television companies may not be able to acquire the content they need to uphold an attractive schedule, and third, the very business model may be undermined as both viewers and advertisers are seen as migrating away from the broadcast platform”* (Enli & Syvertsen, 2015). With a migration away from the broadcast platform, the product provided by TV 2 will eventually not exist anymore if the trend continues. Thus, the product will become more and more digital with time, which will equal out the playing field between TV 2 and their competitors. Consequently, the elements of competition will rely even more on the emerging participatory culture at digital platforms, thus adding even more incentive to look further into the integrated chat experience. Alstrup said that CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu is unconsciously being inspired by Twitch and the constant active chat (appendix 2), however, the strategy is accommodating more to broadcast tendencies than user participation tendencies at digital platforms. Companion apps and cross-media experiences have been the tendency for several years for broadcasters (Neate, Jones & Evans, 2017), where social second screening in the shape of following hashtags and discussions on Twitter as an example is the new normal. What makes this even more interesting is, that before the introduction of the smartphone, 46 percent of time television viewing was accompanied by other activities such as eating, reading, or social interaction (Neate, Jones & Evans, 2017). Thus, it has been evident for multiple years that viewers want social interaction, discussions, and in general another layer added to their viewing experience when watching broadcasts. With the findings of this research as well as the pre-established theories and studies, the question is why a broadcaster should accommodate to this urge of adding another layer to the experience, by encouraging the use of second screening. The sense of community and social contagion of crowdspeak emerges based on being able to participate live and fast, and more importantly being able to see what the rest of the crowd is writing and experiencing. It is the shared experience, relatable to the act of watching a

movie together with family and friends, or social watching, that is enhancing the viewing experience of the users at Twitch. How this phenomenon can be integrated at traditional broadcasts is another discussion, but the findings suggest that it is worth investigating further.

Impact for broadcasters

The objective of this study has primarily been to compare the findings from the users of Twitch to the broadcasters of TV 2. As such, broadcasters have not been investigated on a more general level, thus there is no foundation to conclude anything on a larger scale for broadcasters. However, the findings do in combination with the theory and related studies pave the way for multiple interesting perspectives for broadcasters who are looking to broadcast esports or generally improve their viewer inclusion and participation.

The findings, described in the previous section, is ultimately framed for CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu, but is highly relevant to other broadcasters as well. The sense of community and social interaction elements is evidently an important factor for viewers today and goes hand in hand with the general tendency of an emerging participation culture. User 1 said: *“It would be pretty funny to see what other people wrote during X Factor, I bet a lot of fun would come from that”* (User 1, appendix 1; my translation). The interviewed users of Twitch generally showed an interest in having the same chat features on non esports-related programs, which could pave the way for a field to investigate further. As such, this study leads to the question of, if a generation of viewers are becoming used to the participatory elements as an integral part of the broadcasts, and if broadcasters should expect to accommodate to this change. The interviewed users of Twitch are between 12 and 19 years old, and a further study about the habits of participatory cultures and viewing experiences would be ideal for this target group. This study can suggest that this target group values the chat experience highly in the context of esports, but it is not investigated how it would be working outside of esports broadcasting.

The research of CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu furthermore provides valuable insights for broadcasters looking to integrate esports or improve the user participation of their broadcasts. While TV 2 has not adopted the chat feature of Twitch, they have created their own way of accommodating to the participation culture that exists on Twitch. The strategy has been to establish a community by

creating a Facebook group, where recurrent viewers can discuss the content with the broadcasters and each other. Additionally, TV 2 is using Twitter to facilitate participation during broadcasts, as they use a recurrent hashtag for the viewers to ask questions, send pictures, and discuss. This strategy leans heavily towards the results found in the study of Pynta et al. (2014), where a relation between Twitter activity and TV ratings were proved, as it showed that engaging on social media platforms such as Twitter while watching television would significantly be the neural indicators of engagement in the broadcast as a viewer. As CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu is perceived as a success by the broadcaster, and the program has been able to attract a relevant amount of viewers, it is evident that the strategy in place is working to their favor. Whether this comes down to the user participation strategy is not concludable, however, previous studies indicate that this might be the case. In the study of Sørensen (2015) it was found that the broadcasting of live events especially has been getting an uprising on the basis of social network activity. *“This is especially the case in the coverage of live events, where broadcasters not only outsource and sometimes free-ride on social network activity, they also actively encourage it – crucially without seeking to host or curate this on their own platforms or sites. In doing so they boost attention around these live events, and in this process accumulate viewers, as well as build and amplify the sense of their own cultural importance and centrality in the mediation of live events”* (Sørensen, 2015). This tendency relates directly to the strategy of TV 2 and can be arguably be a relevant finding for broadcasters in general. What is central to note is, as Sørensen (2015) describes, that broadcasters generally are not looking to host or curate the interaction on their own platforms. As such, they *free-ride* on the success of the platforms, which based on the interview with Hvid and Alstrup is the choice of strategy for TV 2. Hvid and Alstrup (appendix 2) does not believe in creating their own community on their own platform, and they do not think that their own digital streaming platform TV 2 Play will become *the* platform. Their perception is, that they are taking advantage of the platforms available, and that it is not plausible to compete with the established platforms. As this study is not centred around investigating digital platform strategies, it cannot be concluded whether this strategy is right or wrong. However, the research of this thesis indicates that the viewer experience found in the case of the interviewed users of Twitch may not be achieved by facilitating user participation at third-party platforms. In return, the editorial control is kept in the approach of TV 2. The findings indicate

that CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu has been able to facilitate user participation while staying in control of what enters the screen and becomes a part of the broadcast.

The attitude towards a chat feature by Alstrup and Hvid of TV 2 relates strongly to their domestication of the phenomenon. Their perception of what the TV is and is not originates from a more traditional way of viewing broadcasting. Encouraging second screening to facilitate participation has been adopted by TV 2, but other than that the viewing experience has not been developed. This is not only the case for TV 2, but for broadcasters in general. No one has created similar features as the digital platforms Twitch, YouTube, and Facebook, and thus the perception of what the TV is, is steady. Twitch has re-shaped the idea of what a broadcast can include and provide, by adding additional elements to the experience. This has evidently been domesticated by the target group and is now perceived as a fundamental reason to why they value Twitch highly. In the context of this study, the emerging question for broadcasters is therefore what will happen if the viewing experience is experimented more with. Will participatory elements such as a live chat feature be appropriate and successful in the context of traditional sports and live entertainment? Using the domestication theory, we can understand why the adoption of media technology phenomena are taking place in different velocity, and the will to tame a technology relies on the relevancy for the individual. However, the relevancy can only be assessed if the individual is given the chance to try the phenomenon in practice.

On paper, a chat feature integrated with a traditional sports broadcast or live entertainment program may sound strange. However, 15 years ago so would the idea of using your phone as a second screening device to communicate with a broadcast and to discuss with other viewers what you are watching. The phenomenon of second screening has been domesticated largely throughout the society, as it clearly has found a relevancy in the households, and there is a clear theoretical and research-based foundation to claim that the a chat feature could be relevant for a large group of viewers as well. As of now, second screening is the primary facilitator of viewer participation, however, it is simultaneously steering the attention of the viewer away from the broadcast. The findings of this study show, that the integrated chat experience at Twitch is causing the viewers to deliberately choose to watch both the broadcast and the chat at the same time, thus keeping them

focused on the broadcast while they participate. As such, broadcasters could look to experience with the perception of what the TV is supposed to offer and embrace the potential of user participation that digital platforms such as Twitch has paved the way for. This study shows how TV 2 has experimented lightly with how user participation and community building can improve viewer experiences, while the interviews with the users of Twitch clearly indicates a positive influence on the viewing experience with an integrated chat feature.

Impact for research

In this thesis, the research and theories of digital culture, social watching, sense of community, social contagion, and domestication has been the central elements to understand, analyse, and discuss the findings. Consequently, the findings influence these fields of research.

It is widely confirmed throughout the thesis that the digital culture theory of emerging participatory cultures and social watching is in place in the context of the interviewees. In both groups of participants, the users of Twitch and the broadcaster TV 2, a tendency has been found in community involvement and user participation, which ultimately is found to influence the viewing experience of esports broadcasts. The research of this thesis further contributes to this field by having found multiple examples of how the phenomenon *crowdspeak* is an important factor in how the viewing experience is influenced by participatory elements. The participants of the user study value the sense of community as well as being able to see how other viewers are reacting towards the broadcast as the most important elements of their viewing experience at Twitch. As such, it is found that crowdspeak in the shape of emoticons and abbreviations is a driver of the sense of community and serves as a value-adding element to a digital viewing experience. The theory of social contagion has proved relevant to understand the phenomenon of live chatting, and why the viewers are experiencing an influence of emotions and behaviour when watching Twitch accompanied by a live chat. Thus, the thesis contributes widely to the theory of social contagion, as there are findings indicating that social contagion as a phenomenon is present on digital viewing platforms with chat features. In combination with the research of participatory cultures, these two phenomena relate well, as the social contagion theory can be used to explain the background of user participation, and how emotions can be transferred online through live chatting during broadcasts. This finding solely

relates to this specific context of this thesis; however, it would be relevant to conduct further research on social contagion in relation to user behaviour on digital broadcasting platforms with integrated chat features.

The findings of this thesis further indicate how there is a fundamental difference to how the users of Twitch and the broadcaster TV 2 is perceiving the value of a chat feature integrated alongside the broadcast. This impact the research of the digital transformation of broadcasters, and how they are accommodating to the viewer behaviour and trends on digital viewing platforms. The results of the thesis provide valuable insight to how this specific broadcaster is working with participatory elements during the specific program, and what the basis is for not completely imitating the content's original platform, Twitch. In this context, the research field of domestication theory has proved to be able to explain why the perception of a media technology differs, and why the velocity of adoption may vary from individual to individual. As such, the results of the thesis suggest how domestication theory can be used to analyse a differing perception of participatory features on digital platforms. Domestication theory cannot be used as a framework to explain what process needs to in place for TV 2 to tame the media technology phenomenon fully, however, it is a useful field of research to help understand a general process of how an individual adopts a certain media technology, and why this may be different from one context to another. The results of the user study support the arguments of Christensen (2019), who uses the theory of phenomenology of the everyday to address domestication of digital platforms. As such, the physical context has not been found as the central space of domestication for the users of Twitch; the mediated space where the interaction is taking place is where the domestication needs to happen. The specific technology used for watching Twitch, such as the PC, is already domesticated by the interviewees and is placed in their rooms. Thus, the domestication process is about taming the platform and the features it offers, so it becomes an integrated part of the routines the individual has when turning on the PC and going online. As this process is not the same for the interviewees of TV 2, who's context is more related to the use of the TV, it can be an argument to why the domestication of the chat feature is different. The technology used to access the content differs, and the perception of the different technologies varies as well. The need for a participatory element might be more relevant in the case of a younger target group, or it might be tied to the specific device used to access the content. However, further

research of how features are domesticated across different devices are needed to draw conclusions on this specific matter. What is concludable is, that with domestication theory the new media technology must be integrated to pre-established structures and routines of the users' environment, and these are very different from the two parties interviewed. One party is interviewed based on their use of a platform, while the other is interviewed in a business context. The users' environment is therefore fundamentally different, and the perception of the phenomenon and the domestication hereof is arguably influenced by this.

Conclusion

In this thesis, it has been investigated how user participation is influencing the viewer experience at Twitch, and how the perception of the chat phenomenon is differing from the user of Twitch to the broadcaster of TV 2.

The literature review of the thesis established that a participatory culture is in place at digital broadcasting platforms, where social watching is becoming the new normal for multiple digital live-streaming services including Twitch and YouTube. For Twitch specifically, the term *crowdspeak* has emerged as an embracement of the large-scale interaction that may appear chaotic and meaningless from the outside but is experienced as meaningful and compelling to the participants. The high-volume chat messages are viewed as an equivalent to a crowd cheering, booing, and chanting in a physical setting at a sports stadium. The literature established, that these interactive elements and phenomena is based on social motivations for the participants such as sense of community (Mcmillan and Chase, 1986), entertainment, and social interactions (Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018). For broadcasters, it was established that an embracement of the participatory culture has been in place for some time, especially in the context of live sports and entertainment. However, while the participatory element is integrated directly on the Twitch platform, the broadcasters are mainly using second screening to encourage user participation, and previous research has shown that there is a link between television ratings and Twitter interaction in the context of a viewer (Pynta et al., 2014).

Through an analysis of the research of this thesis in relation to the users of Twitch, the results were found to both confirm the established theory and research of the field as well as contribute to the area with new perspectives. The user participation elements at Twitch is influencing the viewer's experience by leading to sense of community, a feeling of watching the games together, increased experience of entertainment, an enhancement of emotions, and increasement of their desire to participate themselves. As such, it is established using domestication theory that the phenomenon has been domesticated by the interviewees of the user study. With the inclusion of social contagion theory, it can be concluded that the users are indeed exposed to a contagious environment in the Twitch chat, where other viewers chat messages of emoticons and abbreviations are changing the

way the users feel and behave. It is the high-volume of messages, the crowdspeak phenomenon, that is the central driver of the sense of community and the increased entertainment perceived.

The research of the esports broadcast CS:GO at TV 2 Zulu showed clear differences in the perception of the chat phenomenon. The findings of the interviews with the two employees of TV 2 widely confirmed the theoretical framework, as their strategy is based upon second screening, by using Facebook and Twitter as facilitators to encourage user participation during their broadcasts. As such, a crowdspeak phenomenon is not present on TV 2's platforms, as the producers closely sort what is included from the users and what is not. Thus, TV 2 is not aligning with the emerging trend of participation culture at digital platforms, where viewers want to participate simultaneously and want to share their emotions instantly (Scholz, 2011). Instead, TV 2 is prioritizing their journalistic background of editing and controlling the content, and this is not varying from their linear to their digital broadcast.

The biggest difference in the perception of the chat phenomenon has been found to be the perceived value of the chat. While the users of Twitch included in this thesis is perceiving a sense of community and watching games together, and the stadium-feeling of the crowdspeak phenomenon, Alstrup and Hvid of TV 2 is experiencing the chat as noise and unimportant messages. Their perception is, that the tone is hard to control, while the users of Twitch indicate that the chat is entertaining to follow and can easily be turned off if it becomes toxic or irrelevant. Both parties want the sense of community to be present at the broadcasting platform, however, the participatory elements preferred to achieve this is differing. The findings show, that Alstrup and Hvid of TV 2 does acknowledge the value of crowdspeak that the integrated chat feature brings to Twitch, however, a concern is how to implement a similar feature at their own platform, and whether this is profitable.

The thesis suggests that the different perceptions from the users of Twitch to the broadcaster of TV 2 can be analyzed through domestication theory. The domestication process is tightly connected to the perceived relevancy for the individual, and it is evident that limited relevancy of an integrated chat feature during a broadcast is found for Alstrup and Hvid. The relevancy of a community-including feature is equally domesticated by both the users and the broadcasters, as it is perceived

as a value-adding element, however, the disagreement is linked to how liberated the user participation should be during a broadcast. In domestication theory, the individual's perspective on the world matters, and the new concepts must be embedded in the mind, readjusted, and generate a cultural meaning that fits naturally into the specific context. The perspectives of world in the context of the users of Twitch and the interviewees of TV 2 are different on multiple levels, and it is clear that one part has found a natural fit for the concept while the other has not.

Perspective

In times of crisis: Social distancing increase social watching

During the COVID-19 pandemic the term social watching have become increasingly important on digital streaming platforms. Shortly after the shutdowns in Europe and USA a Google Chrome extension app called Netflix Party was launched (netflixparty.com, 2020). The app allows users to invite their friends to a shared viewing experience by synchronizing the video playback and adding a group chat on the right side of the video frame. As such, the core functionality is precisely as known from Twitch and YouTube, where chat is integrated directly on the platform as a juxtaposed feature. According to netflixparty.com more than a million users have been using the app so far (netflixparty.com, 2020).

While Netflix Party was launched because of the global pandemic and accompanied self-isolation, it is still highly relevant in the context of this project. The need of social watching apps naturally increases in a time where people are restricted from being together, however, with the success from Twitch, YouTube, and Facebook in mind, the interesting part is: What will happen after the pandemic? Will an app such as Netflix Party continue to grow, will Netflix perhaps pick it up as a feature within their platform, and will other streaming platforms look to develop something similar? These questions are impossible to answer on beforehand, but looking back years from now, the pandemic may have been what ended up accelerating the pace of the social watching features at digital platforms, as viewers likely will experience the same sense of community and feeling of watching content together, as the research showed in this thesis.

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