

***eSports and ethics:  
The need for a research  
agenda***

***Ivo van Hilvoorde***

1978



# eSports





# eSports could be medal event at 2024 Olympics, Paris bid team says

- Paris bid committee co-president to meet with IOC about competitive gaming
- In April, it was announced eSports will be medal sport at 2022 Asian Games



**i** Competitive gaming draws spectators in droves to online platforms and real-world venues, like the Intel Extreme Masters Counter-Strike tournament in Poland's Spodek Arena this year. Photograph: Tom Jenkins for the Guardian

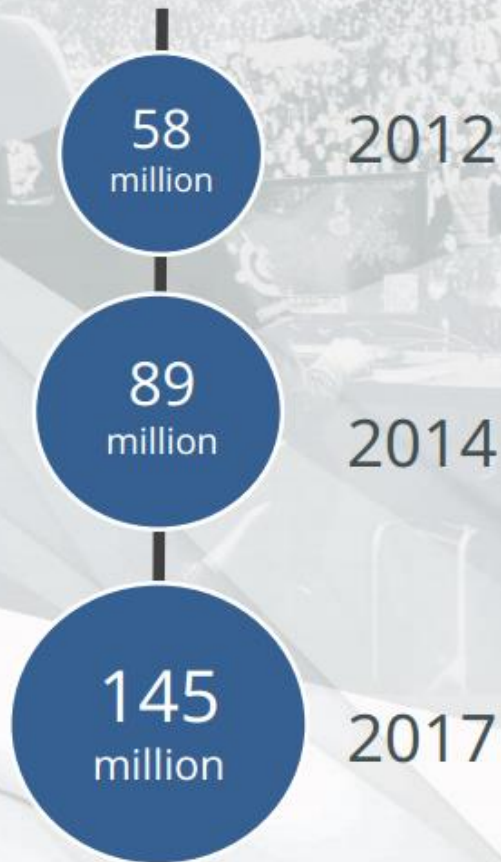
eSports could be added to the Olympic programme as an official medal sport in 2024.

# eSports = Sports?

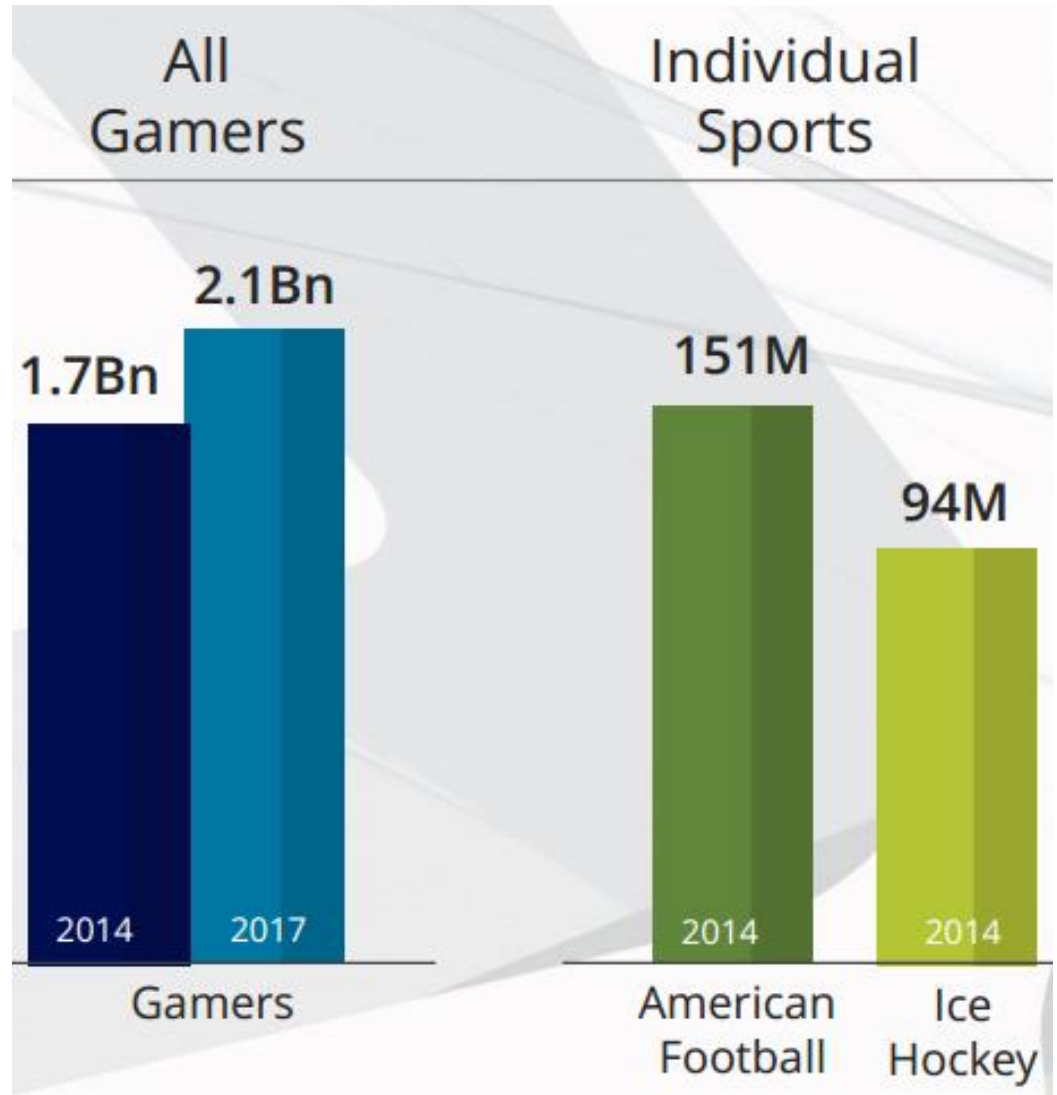
<b>GAME*</b>	<b>SPORT*</b>
lusory goal	elements of skill
lusory means	sufficient following
constitutive rules	institutionalization
lusory attitude	the skills must be of a physical nature

\* B. Suits

# GLOBAL NUMBER OF ESPORTS ENTHUSIASTS



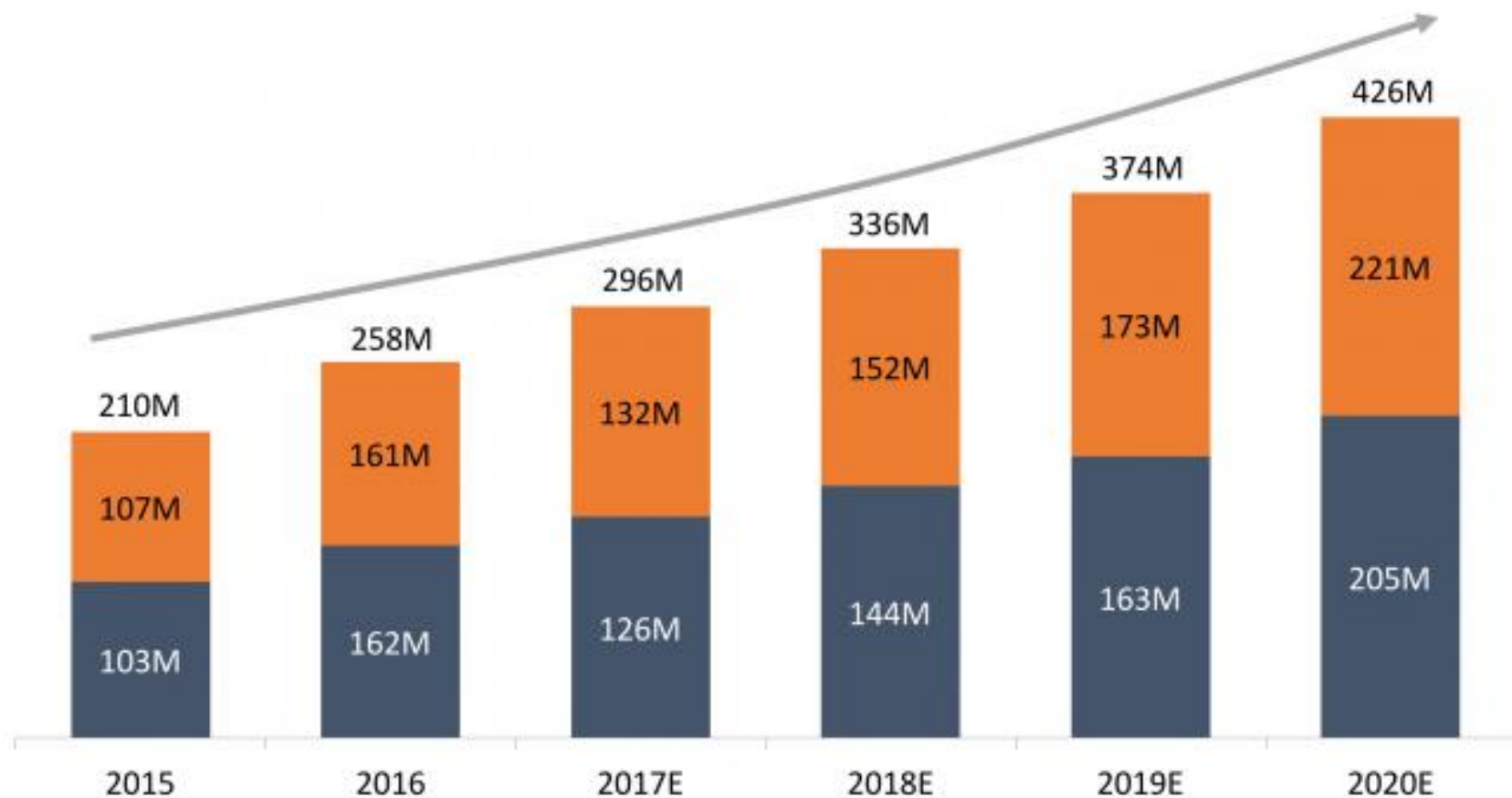
Report: Global Growth of Esports Trends, Audience and Revenues Towards 2017



# Global Esports Audience

- Enthusiasts
- Occasional viewers

+12.5% CAGR  
2015-2020



# Esports Prize Money Over Time

2005 to 2015 | Global | US & China Take Lead From Korea

© NEWZOO | JUNE 2015



## 2009: Korea's Esports Scene Takes a Blow

*Legislations in South Korea implementing bans and curfews on gaming, a feud between the Korean Esports Association and Blizzard, and the falling popularity of Starcraft contributed to the dip in prize money in South Korea between 2008 and 2012. Since then, esports broadcaster MBC was discontinued and OnGameNet is a much smaller operation whose content is no longer broadcasted on TV ....*



## 2014: US & China Lead

*Korea has never fully recovered, rendering the US today's #1 in the accelerating esports market, with China close on its heels ....*



Source: Newzoo, *The Global Growth of Esports: Trends, Revenues & Audience Towards 2017*



# eSports = Sports?

GAME*	SPORT*
lusory goal	elements of skill
lusory means	sufficient following
constitutive rules	institutionalization
lusory attitude ( <i>playbor?</i> )	<b>the skills must be of a physical nature</b>

\* B. Suits



## Sport, Ethics and Philosophy

ISSN: 1751-1321 (Print) 1751-133X (Online) Journal homepage: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rsep20>

### Embodiment and fundamental motor skills in eSports

Ivo v. Hilvoorde & Niek Pot

To cite this article: Ivo v. Hilvoorde & Niek Pot (2016): Embodiment and fundamental motor skills in eSports, Sport, Ethics and Philosophy, DOI: [10.1080/17511321.2016.1159246](https://doi.org/10.1080/17511321.2016.1159246)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17511321.2016.1159246>



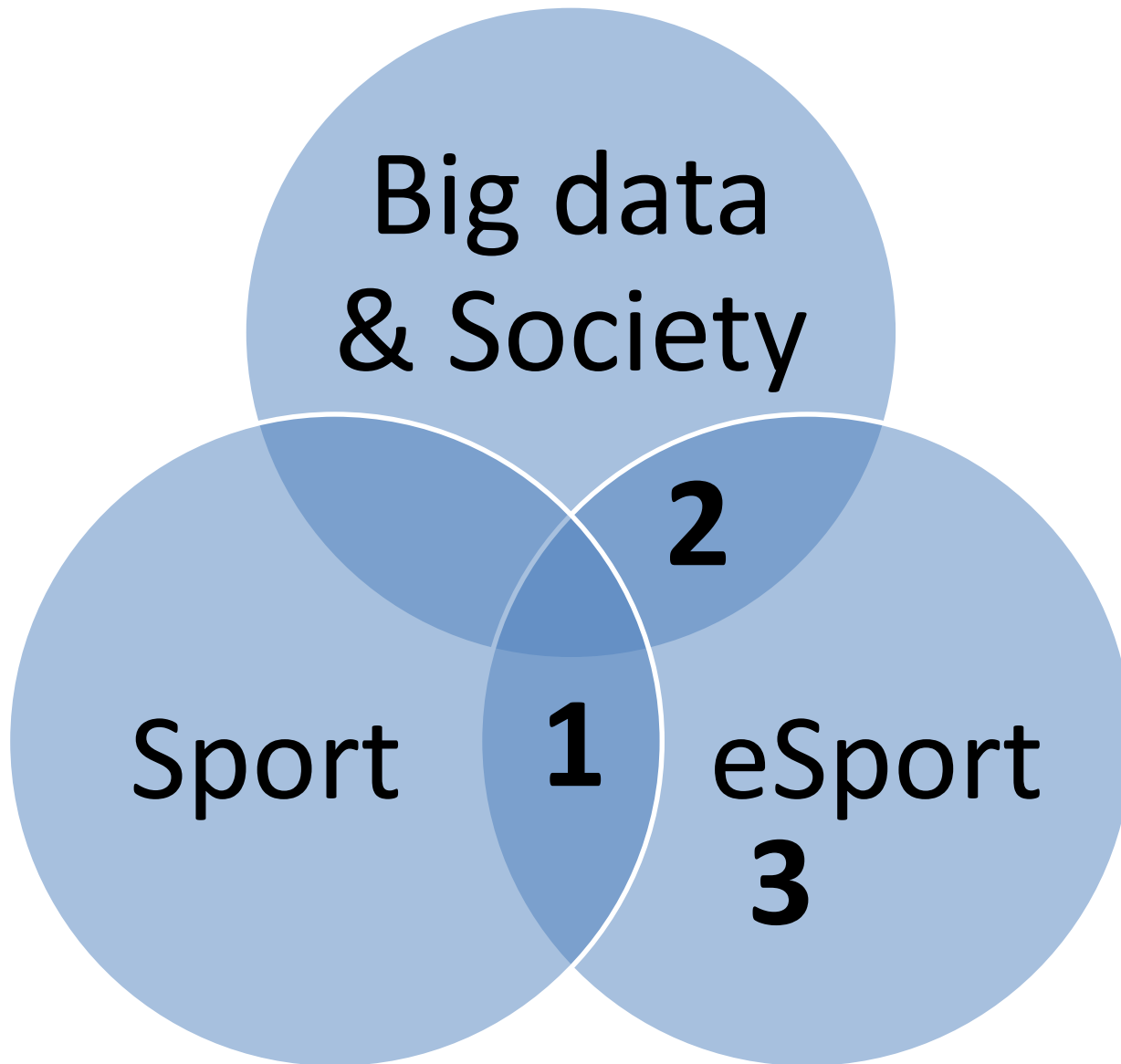
Published online: 01 May 2016.

Sport and Play in a Digital World

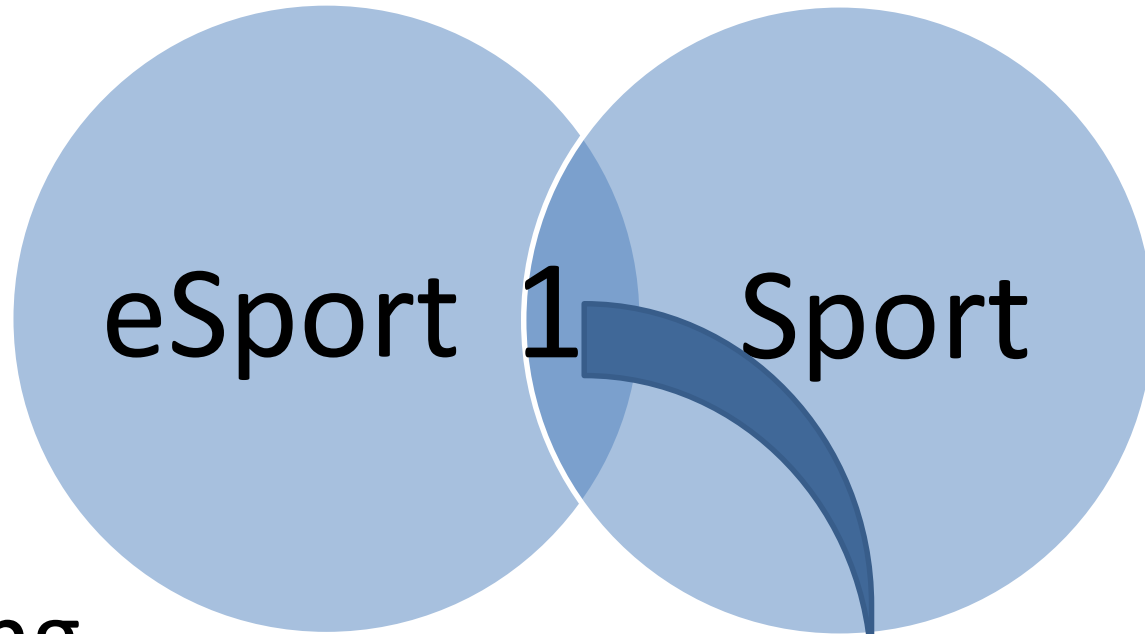
Edited by  
Ivo van Hilvoorde



# ESPORTS & ETHICAL ISSUES



# ESPORTS & ETHICAL ISSUES

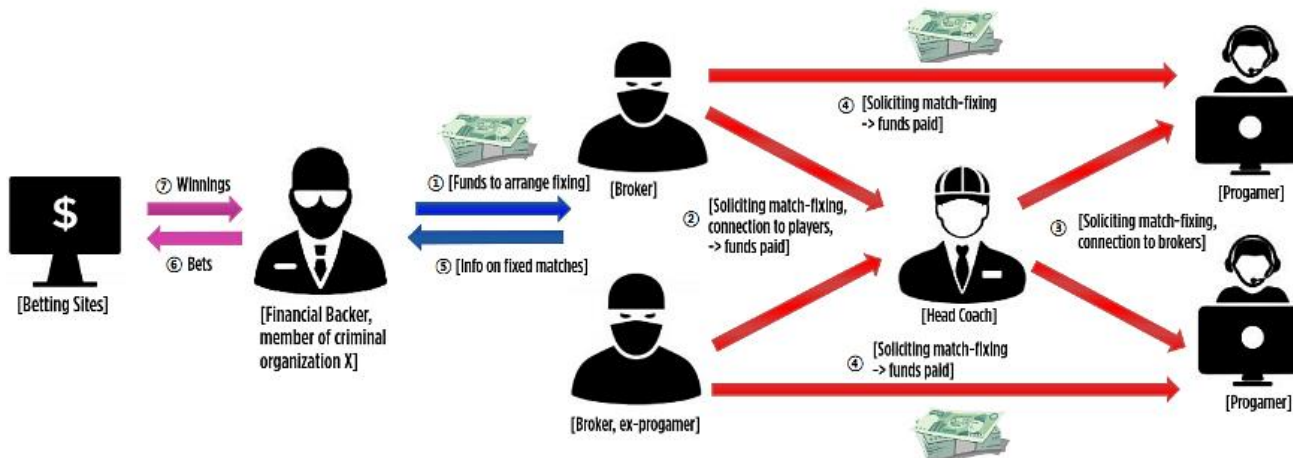


- ✓ Doping
- ✓ Matchfixing
- ✓ Harassment
- ✓ Child labour
- ✓ Governance

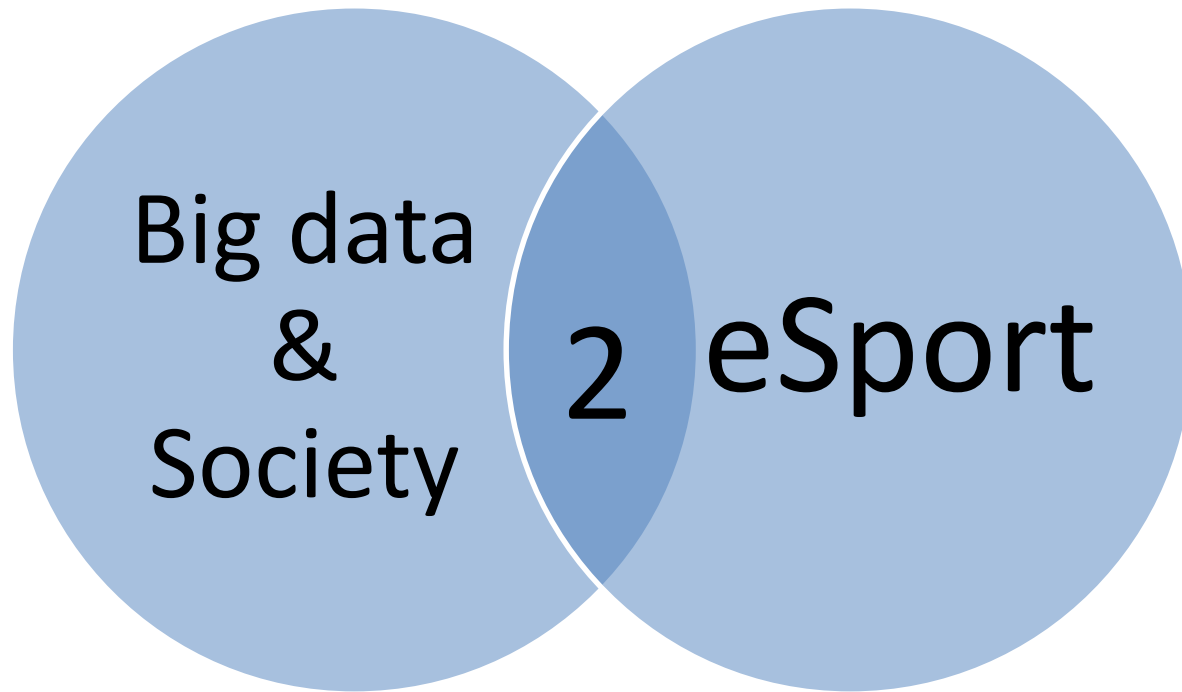




## Match-fixing in StarCraft 2 (1)

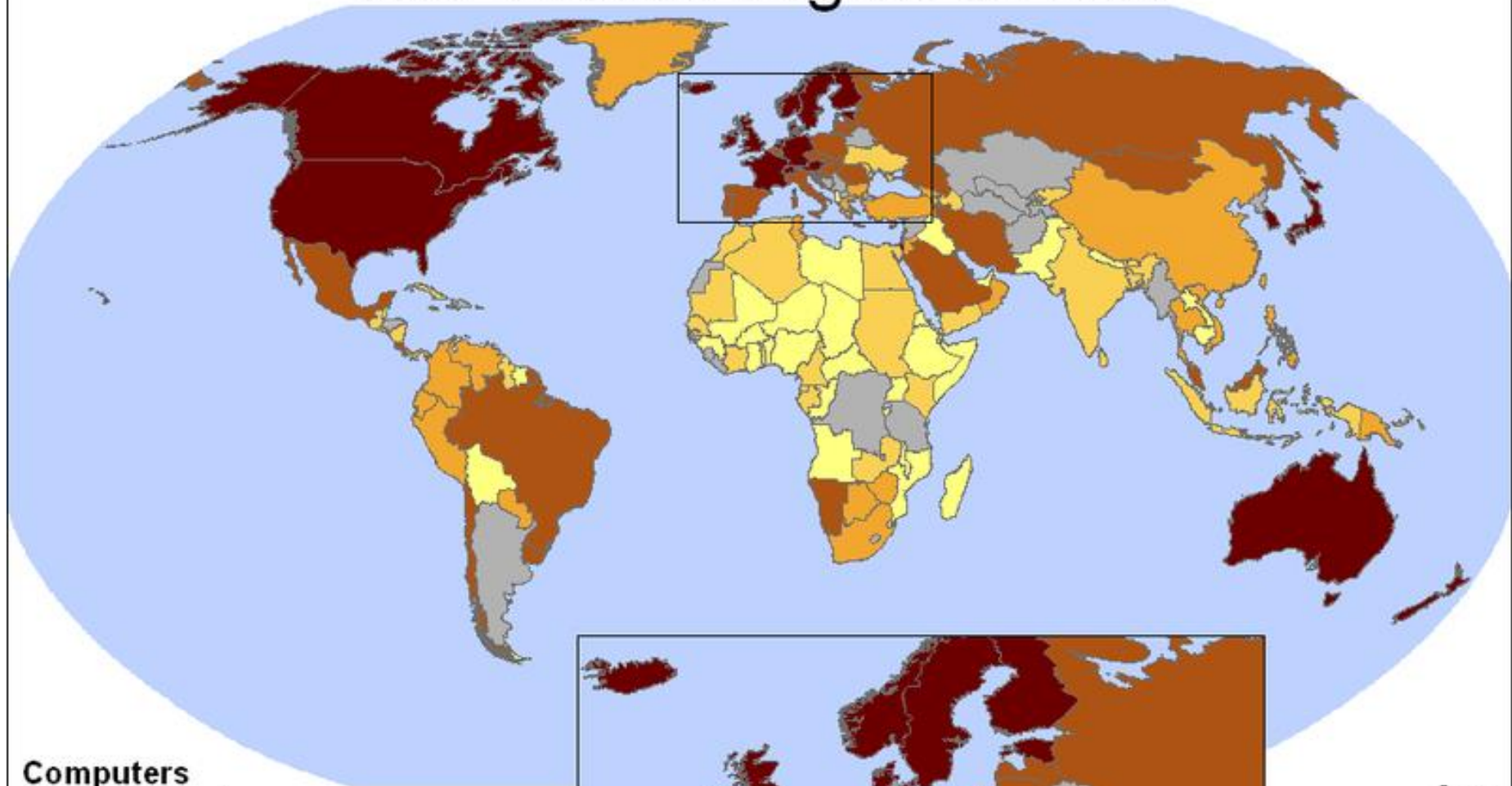


# ESPORTS & ETHICAL ISSUES

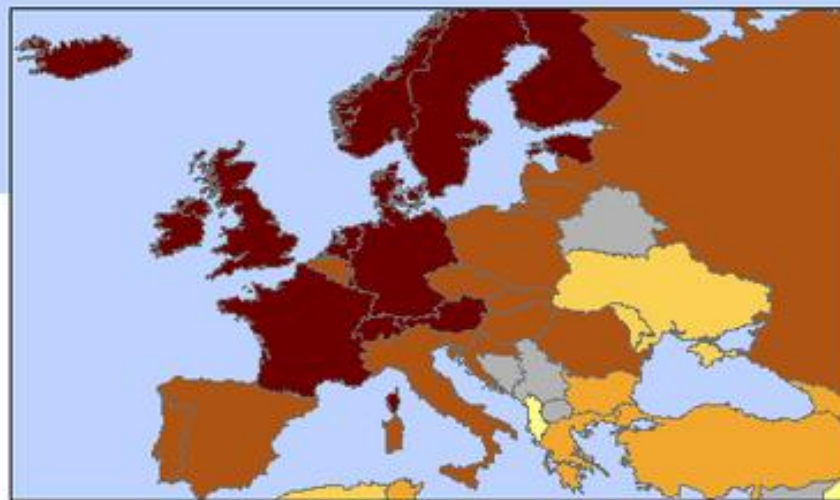
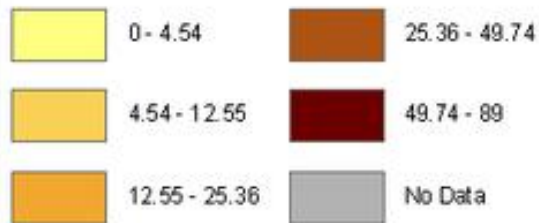


- ✓ Privacy and security
- ✓ Surveillance Futures
- ✓ Global digital Divide

# The Global Digital Divide



## Computers Per 100 People



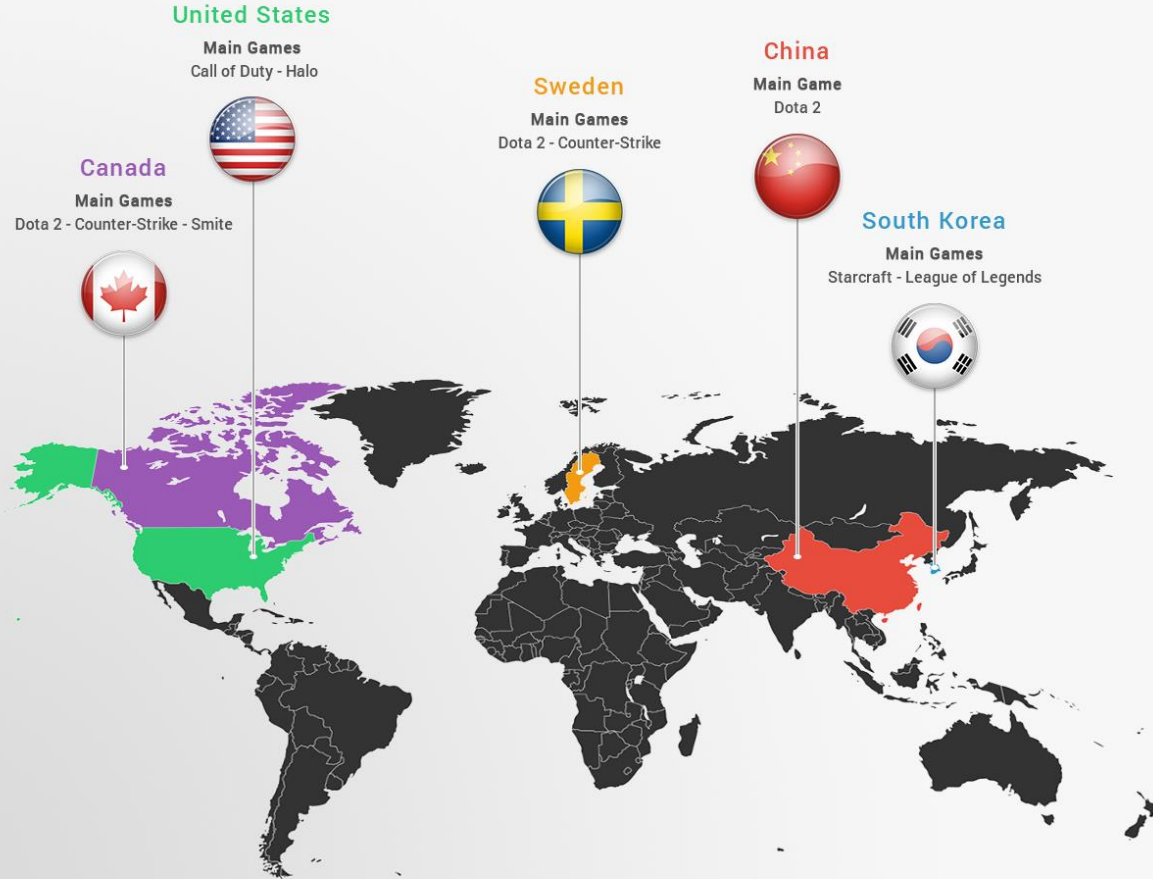
Source:  
United Nations  
Global Development  
Goals Indicators

Robinson Projection

Cartography by:  
Derek Boogaard

# THE HIGHEST EARNING ESPORTS COUNTRIES

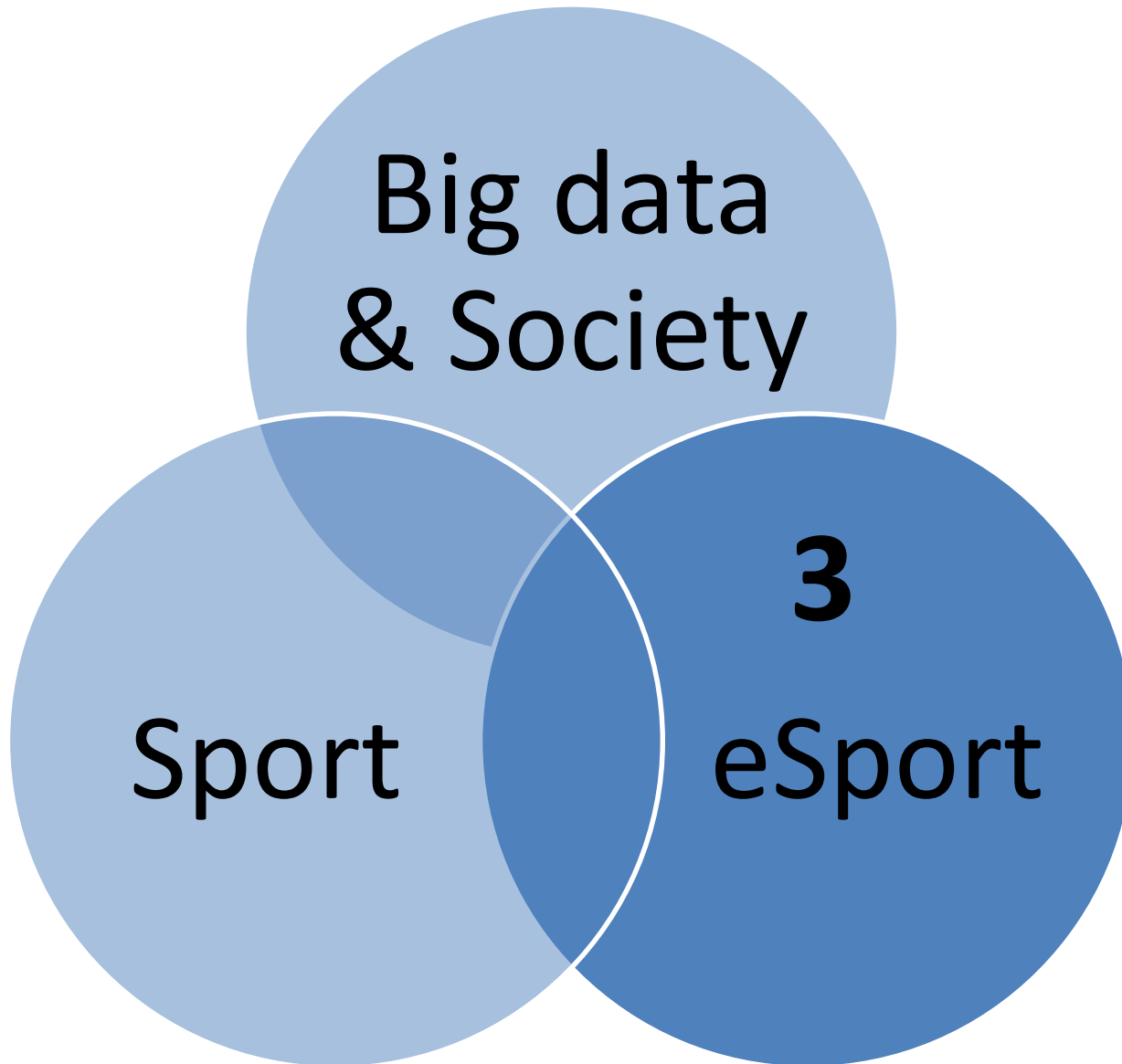
BY PRIZE MONEY WON



China	\$52,266,435.74	1
United States	\$46,909,614.66	2
South Korea	\$44,232,905.90	3
Sweden	\$18,945,467.84	4
Canada	\$10,366,238.67	5



# ESPORTS & ETHICAL ISSUES



# eSport specific ethical issues

- Cheating with software
- Online attacks to disable opponent
- Sabotaging internet connections
- Hacken
- Troll-playing
- Identity deception
- eSpionage
- Avoiding fights
- False accusations
- Intimidation

# Conclusion and challenges

- We need to understand these games better, before we can morally evaluate the behavior within the game.
- More ethnomethodological studies (cf. Boellstorff 2008; Milik, 2015)

EVE Players are less bound or restricted by terms of conduct and social norms of fair play, honesty and sportsmanship. (Carter & Gibbs 2013; Milik 2015)

Stealing, spying, bribing and throwing matches are commonplace.

EVE Online is unbounded and characterized by a “culture of mistrust”





“The acceptability of *eveSport* conduct is determined through its effect on the spectacle for the spectator rather than through concepts of ‘fair play’ or integrity of the performance.” (Carter & Gibbs 2013)



# Conclusion and challenges

- We need to understand these games better, before we can morally evaluate the behavior within the game.
- We cannot talk about 'the' ethics of eSport
- We have to acknowledge and understand the diversity of eSports
- Many rules are not fixed (yet)
- No clear distinctions between strategy, cheating and spoilsport
- Dynamics in online world not easy to manage
- Domination by male players
- Little knowledge (also by parents) of the 'ethos of the game'
- No uniformity of sanctions, no central governance
- Little or no education