

# **PIXELS FOR PROFIT. A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE PROCESSES OF CAPITALIST APPROPRIATION OF GAMING IN RECENT YEARS**



The development of videogames has been the subject of much debate in recent years, both among researchers and gamers. There is a popular opinion within this community, easily seen on online platforms, that videogames have declined in quality due to a shift in their development objectives. Instead of seeking to create unique and fair products, videogames are created with the aim of generating more and better business revenue, as tools for profit. In this way, modern gaming is increasingly positioning itself as a controversial industry, where expectations decline with each title released due to an unstoppable wave of monetization of various aspects of videogame gameplay that takes control of the industry's business model and removes the meritocratic power of players. That said, this project seeks to understand how the videogame industry has increasingly become a capitalist machine, through the study of monetization strategies, appropriating this cultural product and transforming it into a tool for achieving lucrative goals, via analysis of the income practices of these products. That said, this project seeks to understand how the modern video game industry has increasingly become a capitalist machine, through the study of microtransactions, appropriating this cultural product and transforming it into a tool for achieving entrepreneurial goals, via analysis of the economic structure and revenue practices of these products. To obtain this information, we take the example of a video game, League of Legends, where we will thoroughly analyze the various predatory and manipulative strategies used to obtain these profits, rooted in capitalist and neoliberal mentalities, which pave the way for the rest of the industry and create the current business model. Thus, it is also important to understand the implications that such mechanisms have on the gaming community, studying how players are conditioned by them. The methodology will use data collection techniques following documentary analysis, netnography, and interviews, in a qualitative approach, where digital content will serve as empirical object. The specific mechanics of the selected video game will also be analyzed in order to better understand the strategies, as a kind of virtual "field" work.

**KEYWORDS:** Videogames, Micro-transactions, Business Model, Hyper-monetization, Meritocratic Gaming



**Pedro Ferreira:** My name is Pedro Ferreira, and I am a sociologist graduated from the Faculty of Arts of the University of Porto (FLUP), with a particular interest in the analysis of emerging social phenomena and the dynamics that shape contemporary society. My work is mainly in the sociology of culture, focusing on the intersections between music, video games, and internet culture, seeking to understand how these domains produce meanings, identities, and forms of social participation. My approach combines attention to technological transformations with a critical perspective on digital cultural and economic practices, exploring themes such as the consumption of cultural products and the expressions and behaviors of online communities. With a strong commitment to rigorous research, I favor methodologies that allow me to capture both social structures and the everyday experiences of individuals, while maintaining contact with communities as a priority.

Contact: [pedroferreirattt12@gmail.com](mailto:pedroferreirattt12@gmail.com)

