

# 異文化間における日本ゲームの受容

日・独プレイヤーの体験比較

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# Today's Presentation

## What do you get?

- Information on the current status of games within society
- A brief introduction of concepts and methods to analyze “play”
- A better understanding of how the experience of playing games is influenced by cultural factors

## Overview

1

**Digital games and why they matter**

2

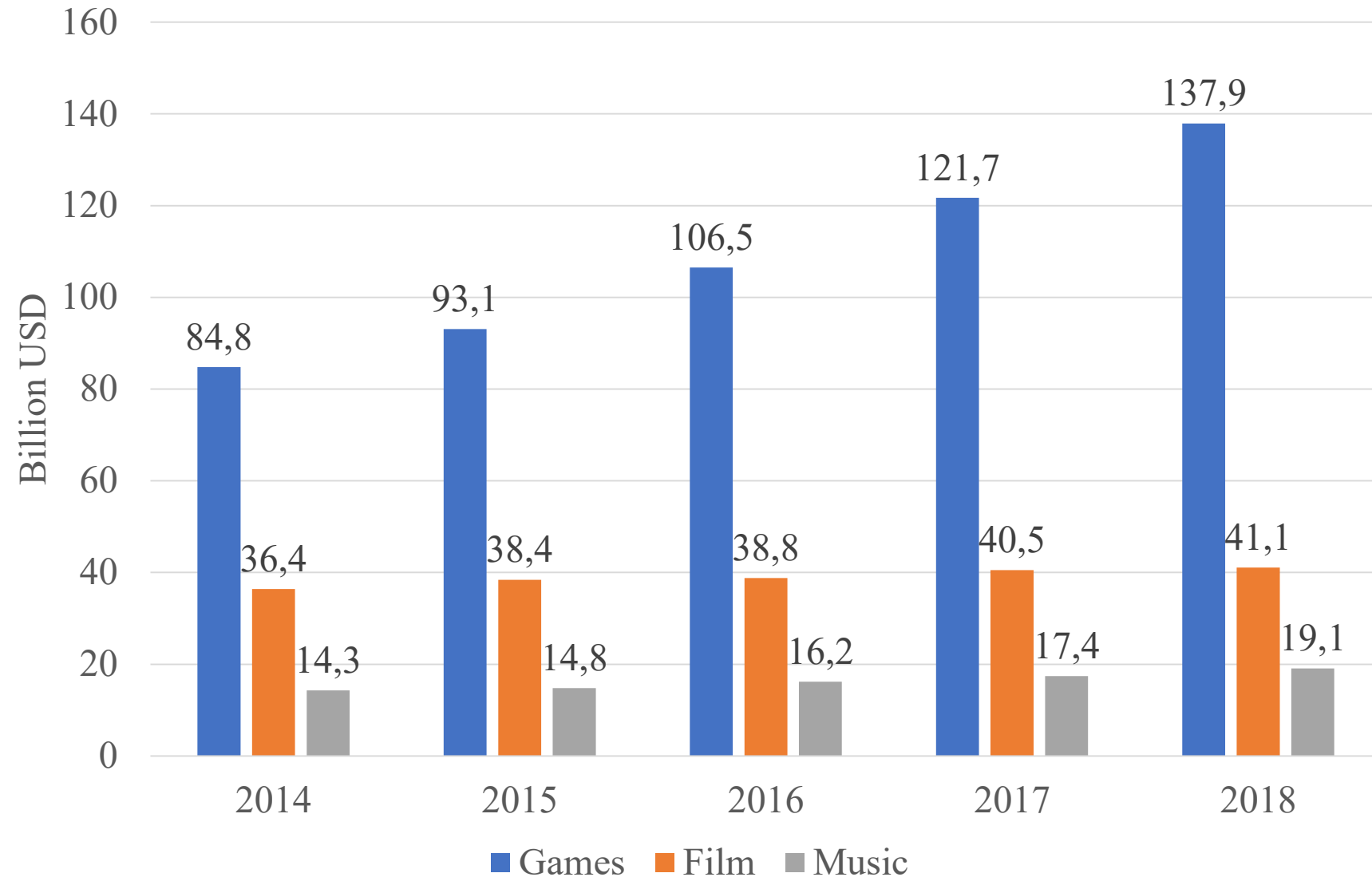
**Japanese games “across cultures”**

3

**Experiencing games in Japan and Germany**

# The Global Games Market

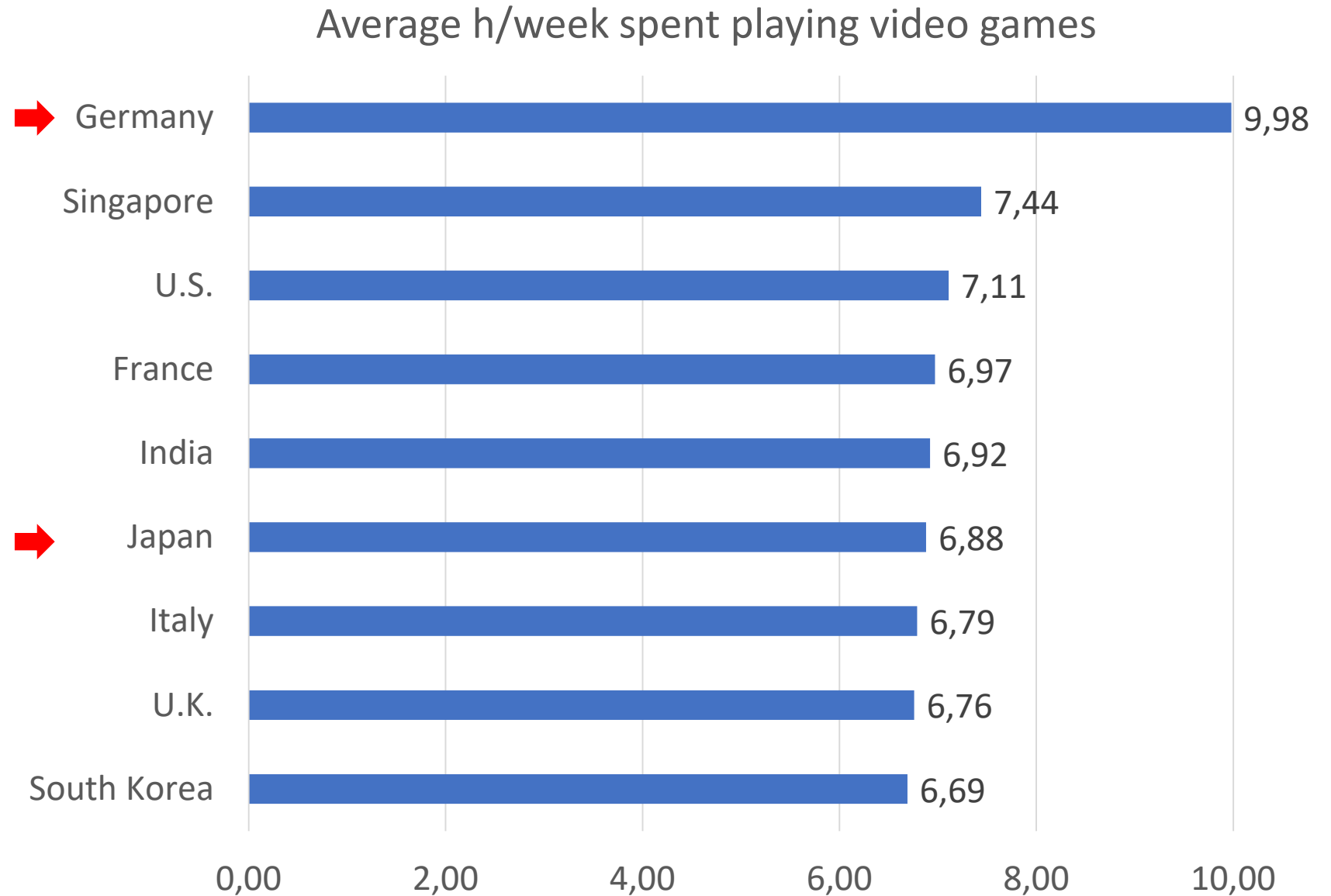
- Digital Games, the dominant entertainment media of our time?
- More than **2.9 billion frequent users** in 2019 (Statista 2019)



(Source: International Federation of the Phonographic Industry 2019, League of Professional Esports 2018, Newzoo 2018, The Motion Picture Association of America 2018)

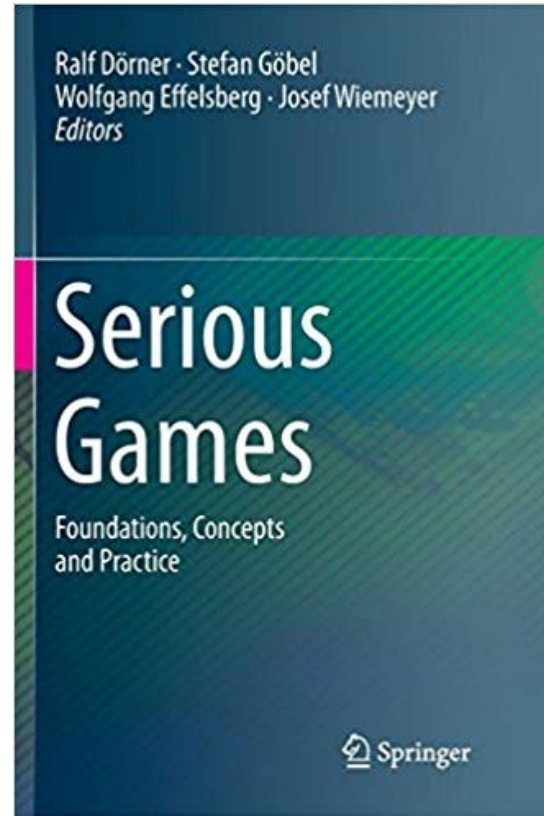
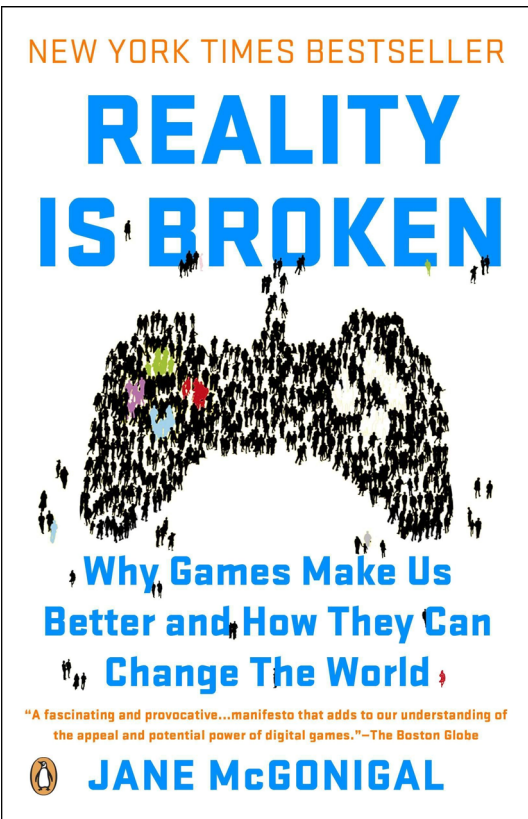
# How much time do we spent on games?

- Global average: 7.11h/week
- Average time spent playing per week peaks between 26 and 35 at 8.21h/week
- We spend **almost 3bn hours** playing games per day



(Source: Limelight Networks 2019)

# Games Today



- Escaping vs. improving reality through games

SEA Games | November 23, 2019

## SEA Games 2019: Esports, Dota 2, full schedule, live stream, when and where to watch, squad, timing in PDF



PHILIPPINES 2019  
30<sup>TH</sup> SEA GAMES



The image shows a large esports event for the SEA Games 2019. A large crowd of spectators is seated in a stadium, watching a Dota 2 match on a large screen. The stage is lit with blue and purple lights, and the Dota 2 logo is visible on a screen in the background.

(Source: <https://www.foxsportsasia.com/sea-games/1201714/sea-games-2019-esports-dota-2-full-schedule-live-stream-when-and-where-to-watch-squad-timing-in-pdf-hearthstone-tekken-indonesia-malaysia-philippines/>)

- Games are becoming sports: Esports

# Games are (mostly) global



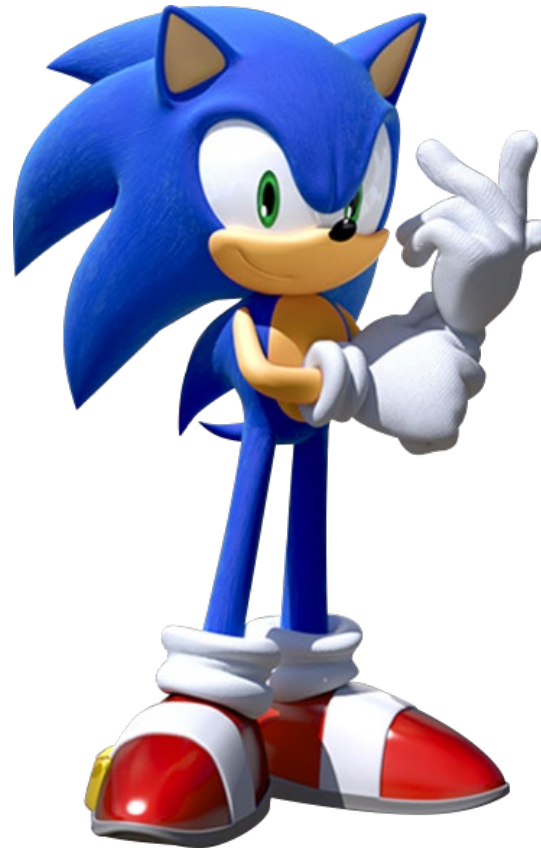
Source: <https://www.gamedevmap.com/index.php?location=Tokyo>

Or are they?

## Top 10 highest grossing game franchises

1. Mario
2. Sonic the Hedgehog
3. Pokémon
4. Call of Duty
5. Grand Theft Auto
6. Wii Series
7. The Sims
8. Need for Speed
9. Tetris
10. Final Fantasy

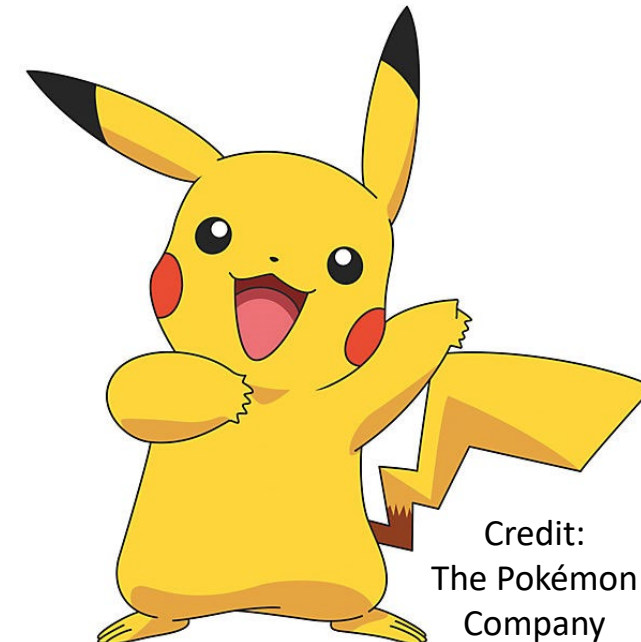
Source: <https://www.thegamer.com/top-15-highest-grossing-video-game-franchises-of-all-time/>



Credit: Sega



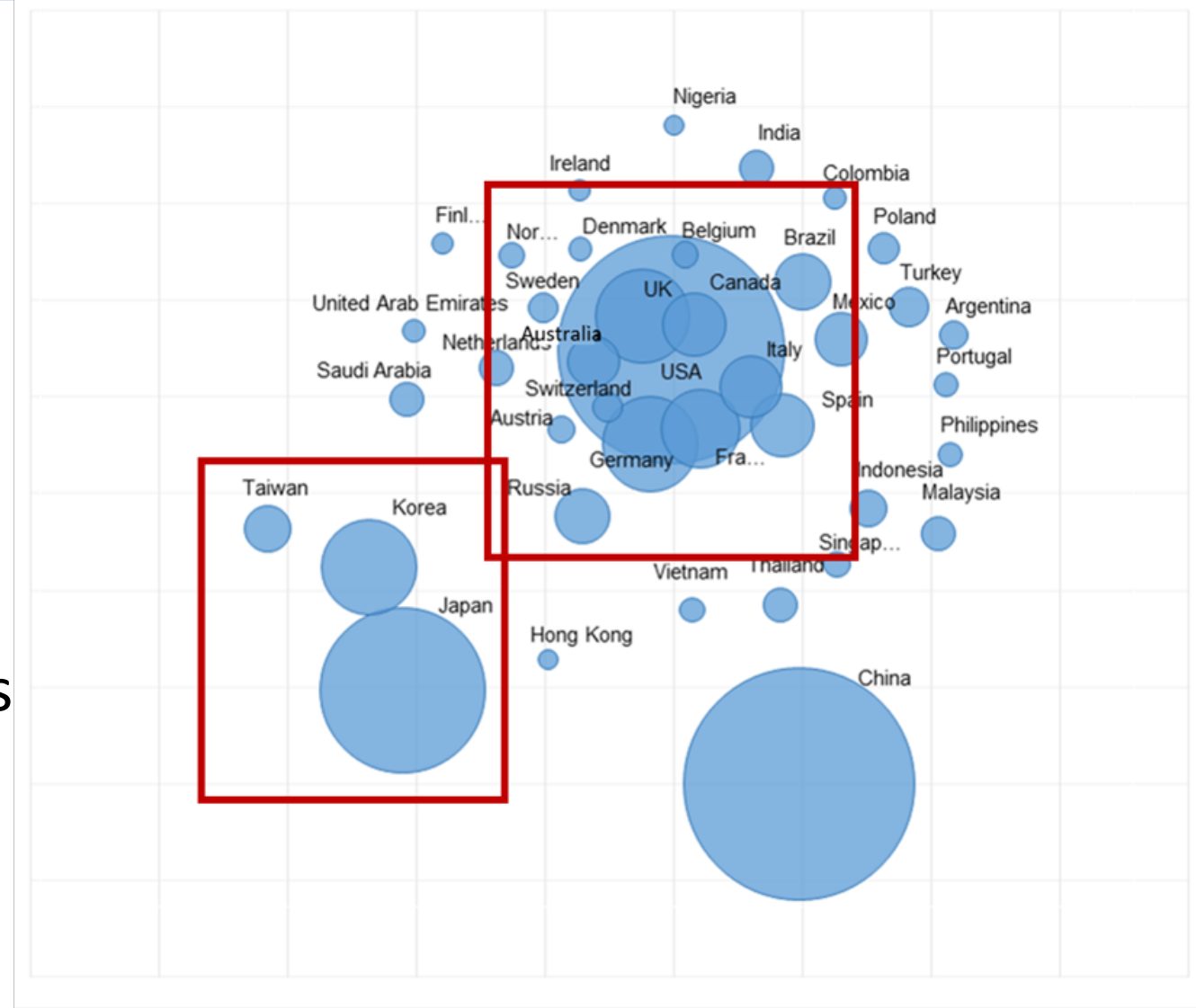
Credit: Nintendo



Credit:  
The Pokémon  
Company

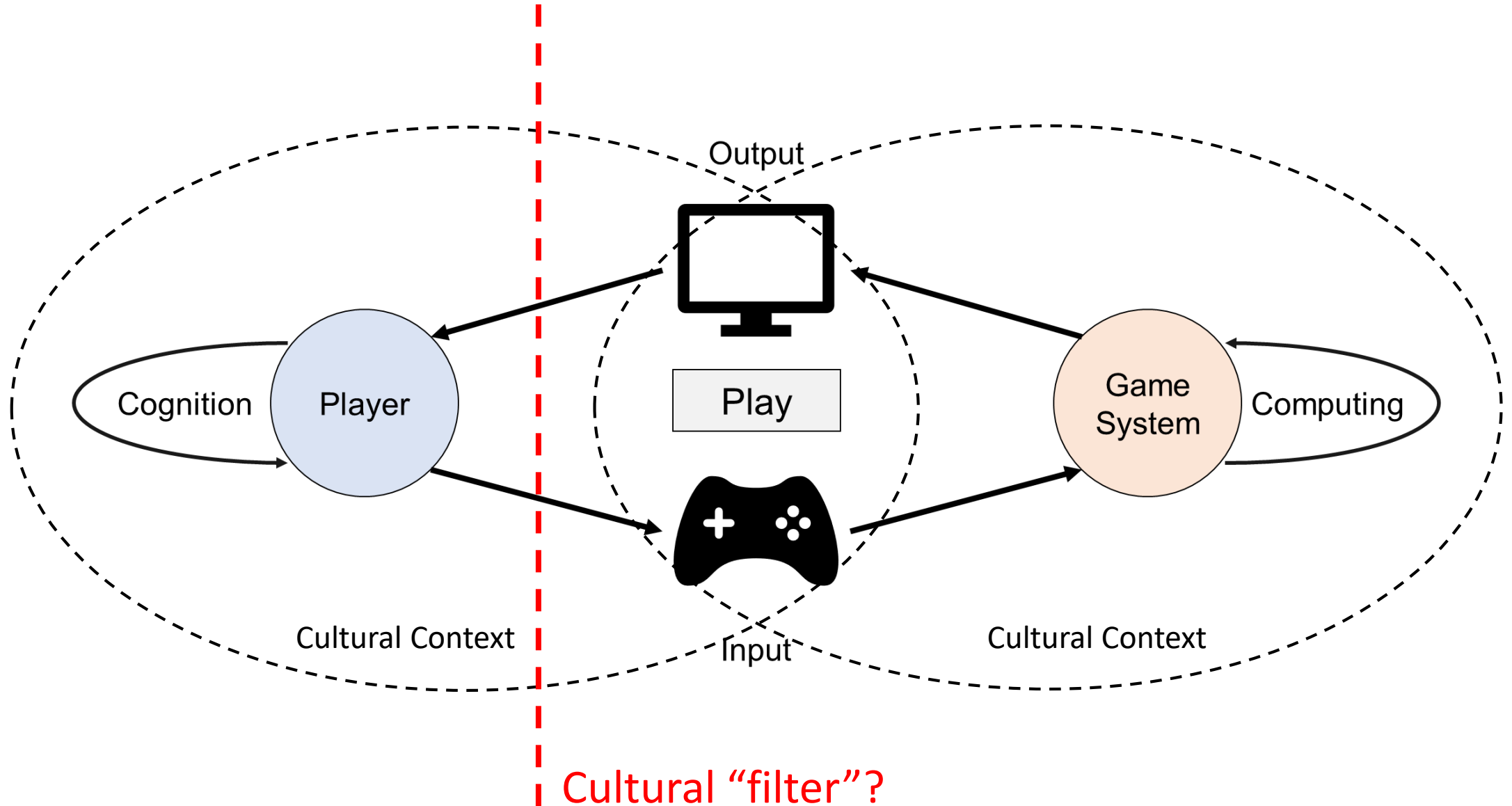
# The “bipolar” system (Pelletier-Gagnon 2011)

- Dichotomy between “East” and “West” and debates on the “Japaneseness” of Japanese games and consumers (cf. Consalvo 2006, 2016; Schules 2015; Navarro-Remesal/Loriguillo-López 2015)
- Differences in selection and evaluation of games across countries (cf. Zagal/Tomuro 2011)
- Lack of transcultural analyses of game cultures/players (Elmezeny/Wimmer 2018)



Similarity (MDS plot) of mobile game markets  
(Source: Game Refinery 2018)

# Play: The interaction between player and game system



# Research Questions

**RQ1:** Are there **cultural differences** in how digital games are **experienced and evaluated**?

**RQ2:** If yes, of **what kind** and in relation to which **elements of a game**?

**RQ3:** How can these differences be **explained**?

### Selected Research into Cultural Differences of Players

- Zagal/Tomuro (2013): Cultural Differences in Game Appreciation: A Study of Player Game Reviews

→ Low granularity

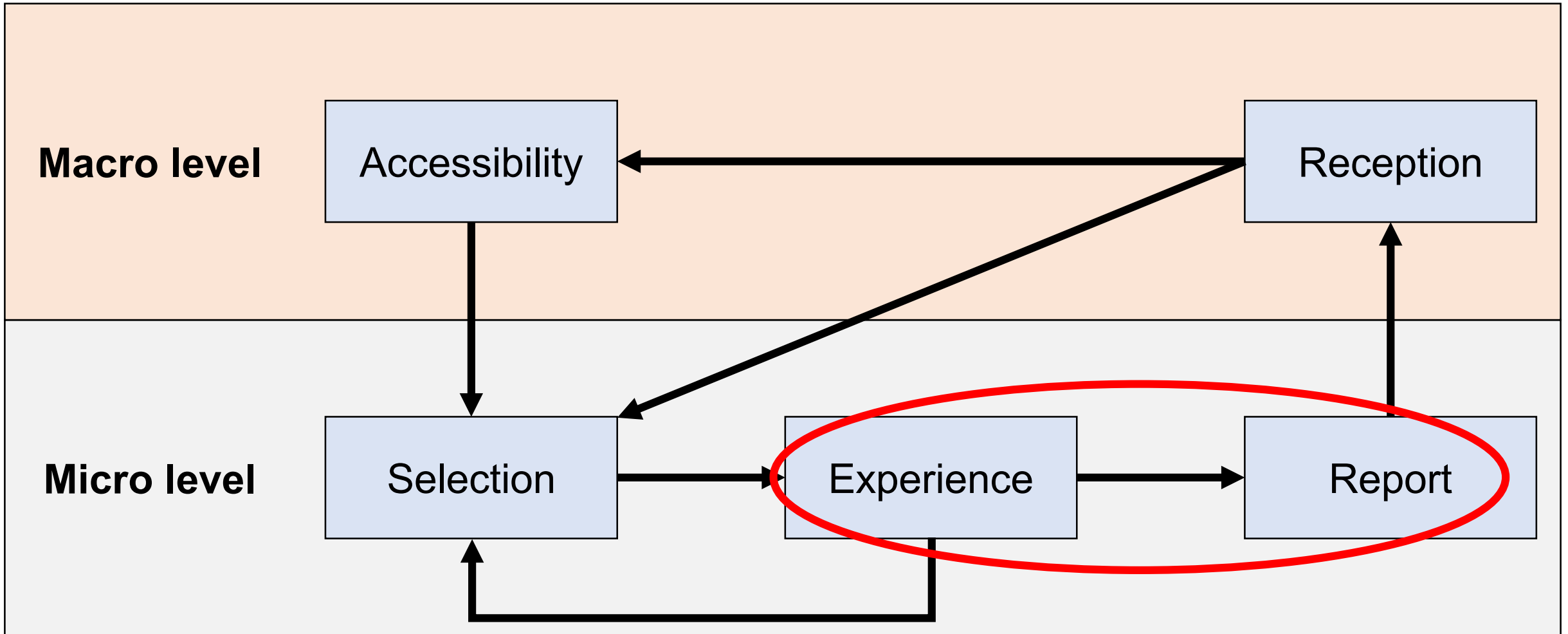
- Lee/Wohn (2012): Are There Cultural Differences in How We Play? Examining Cultural Effects on Playing Social Network Games

→ Deductive approach, problematic sampling (only Americans)

- O'Hagan (2009): Towards a Cross-Cultural Game Design: An Explorative Study in Understanding the Player Experience of a Localised Japanese Video Game

→ Small sample (1 game, 1 player)

## Play within broader contexts

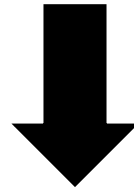


Cf. The “game as played” vs. The “game as reported” (Howell and Stevens 2019, 3)

## Examining the Player Experience: From UX to PX

User Experience (UX): “a person’s perceptions and responses that result from the use or anticipated use of a product, system or service”

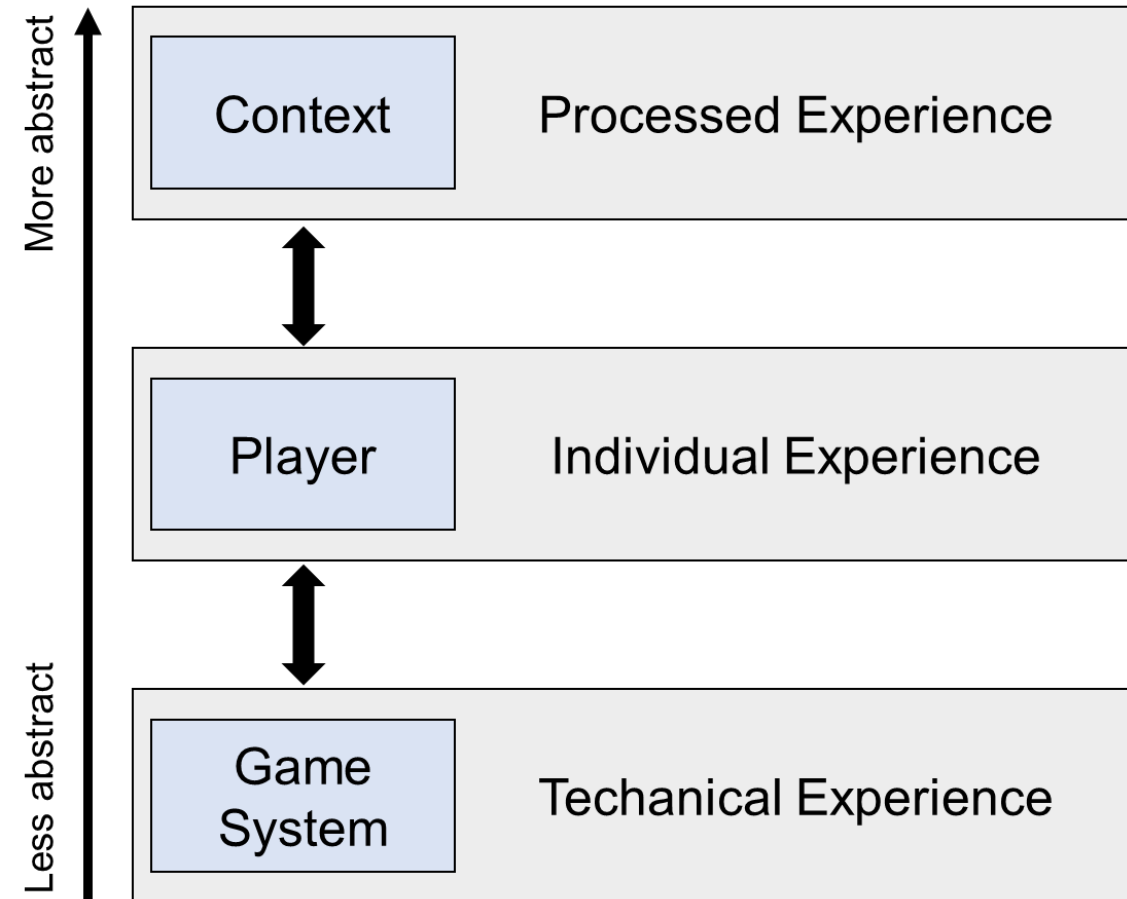
(ISO 9241-210)



“[Player experience] denotes the individual and personal experience of playing games. Player experience describes the qualities of the player-game interactions and is typically investigated during and after the interaction with games.” (Wiemeyer et al. 2016: 246)

“Player experience is located at three interacting levels: the (socio-) psychological, behavioral, and physiological level” (Ibid.: 266)

# Player Experience (PX) - Concepts

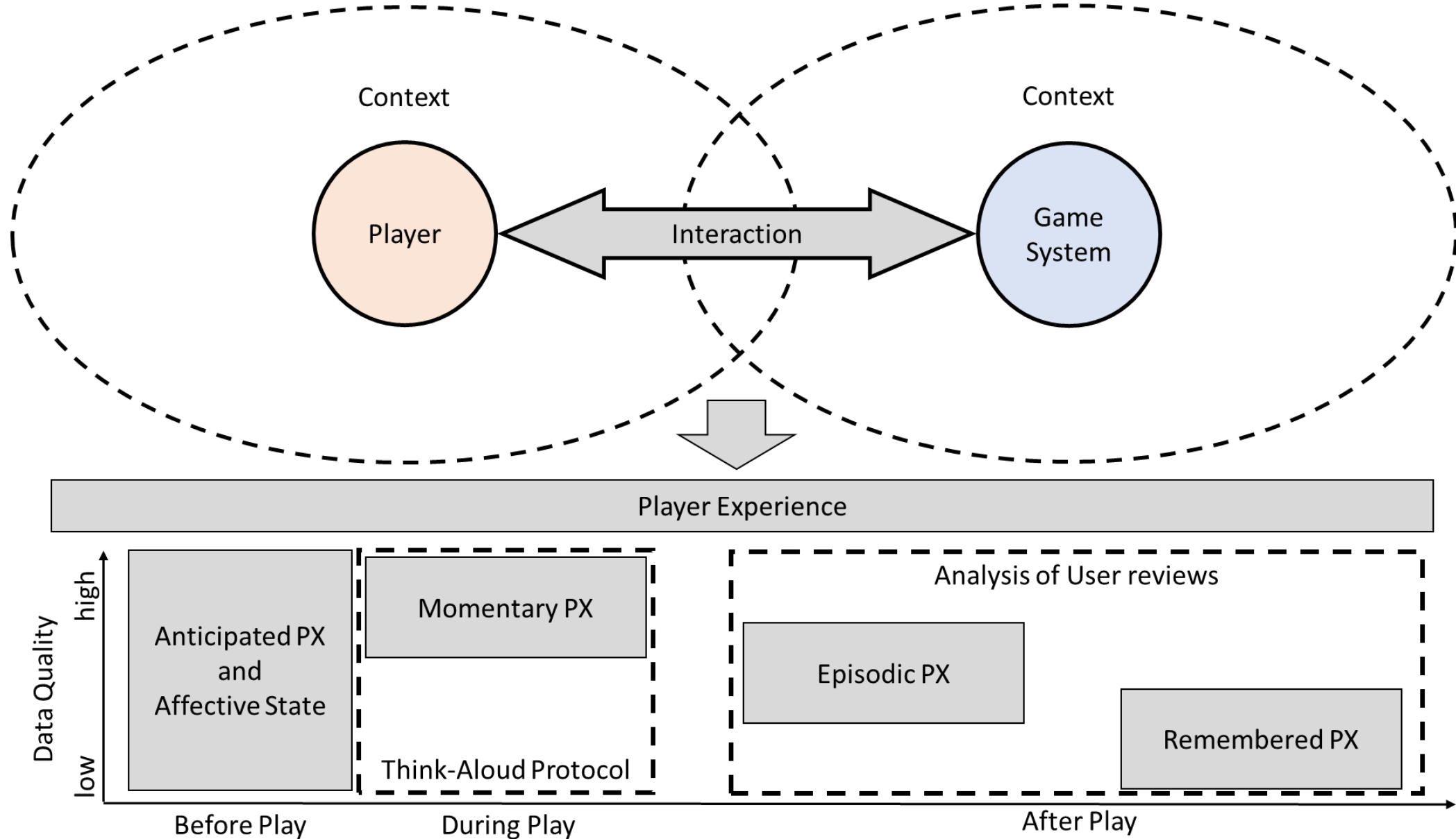


*Three layers of PX, based on Nacke and Drachen (2011, 5-6)*

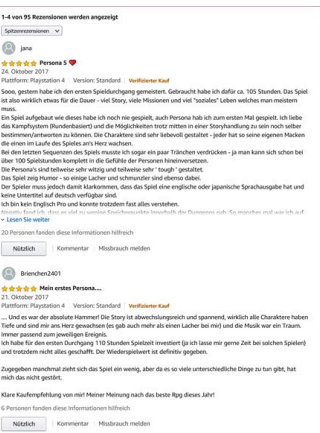
What	When	How
Anticipated UX	Before Usage	Imagining experience
Momentary UX	During Usage	Experiencing
Episodic UX	After Usage	Reflecting on experience
Remembered UX	Over time	Recollecting multiple periods of use

*Cf. Wiemeyer et al. 2018; Marti and Iacono 2016*

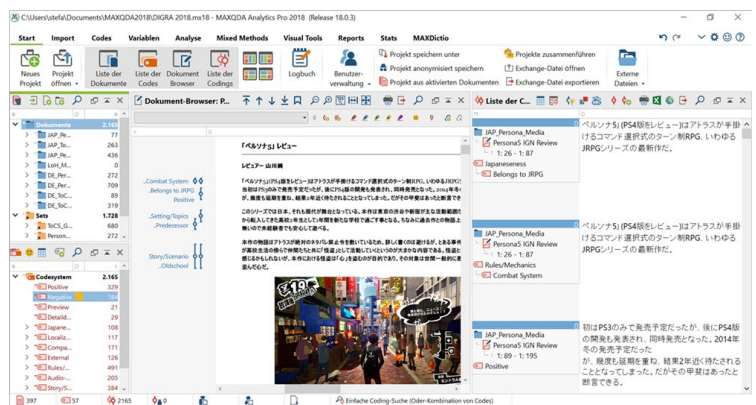
# How to measure PX



## User Reviews



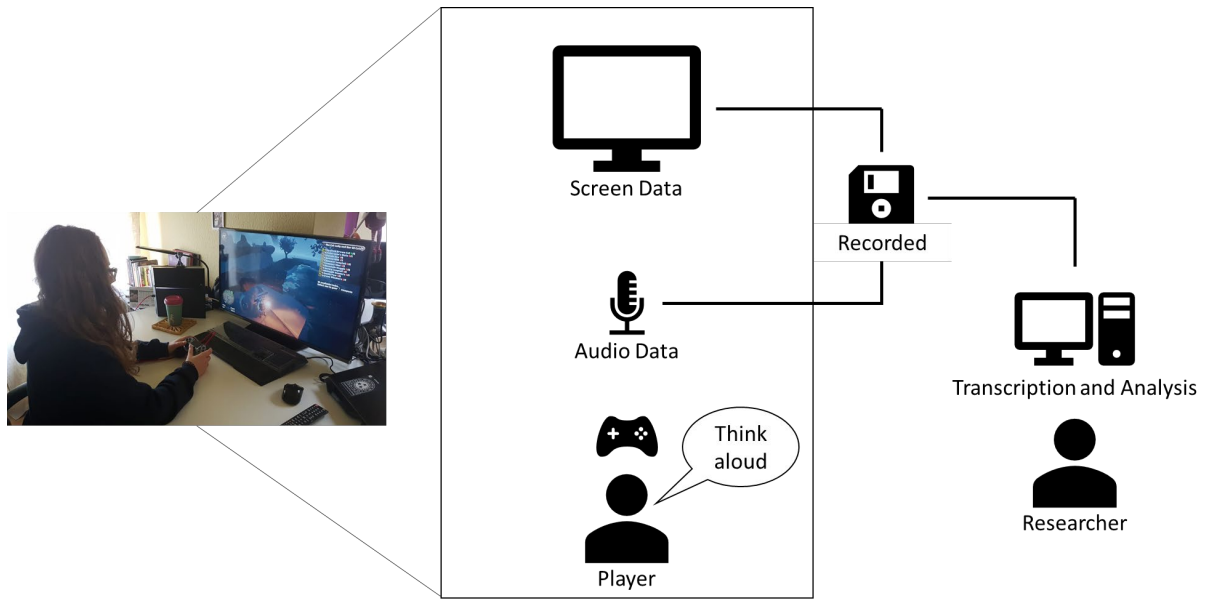
Amazon User Reviews



MAXQDA

Mixed-Method computer assisted analysis of  
German and Japanese user reviews from Amazon  
21,307 reviews in the corpus

## Think-Aloud Protocol



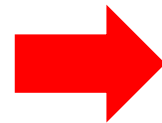
Recorded play sessions with  
10 German and 10 Japanese players (á 10h)  
=> More than 200h of recorded footage of 4 games

# Methods - Selection of Games and Participants

- 18 story-centric Japanese games released between 2016 and 2019 in Germany and Japan (“Most Similar Case Design”)
- 4 games for TAP-Sessions, chosen based on theoretical considerations and need for “tissue players”
- 10 German and 10 Japanese players (max. 30 years)

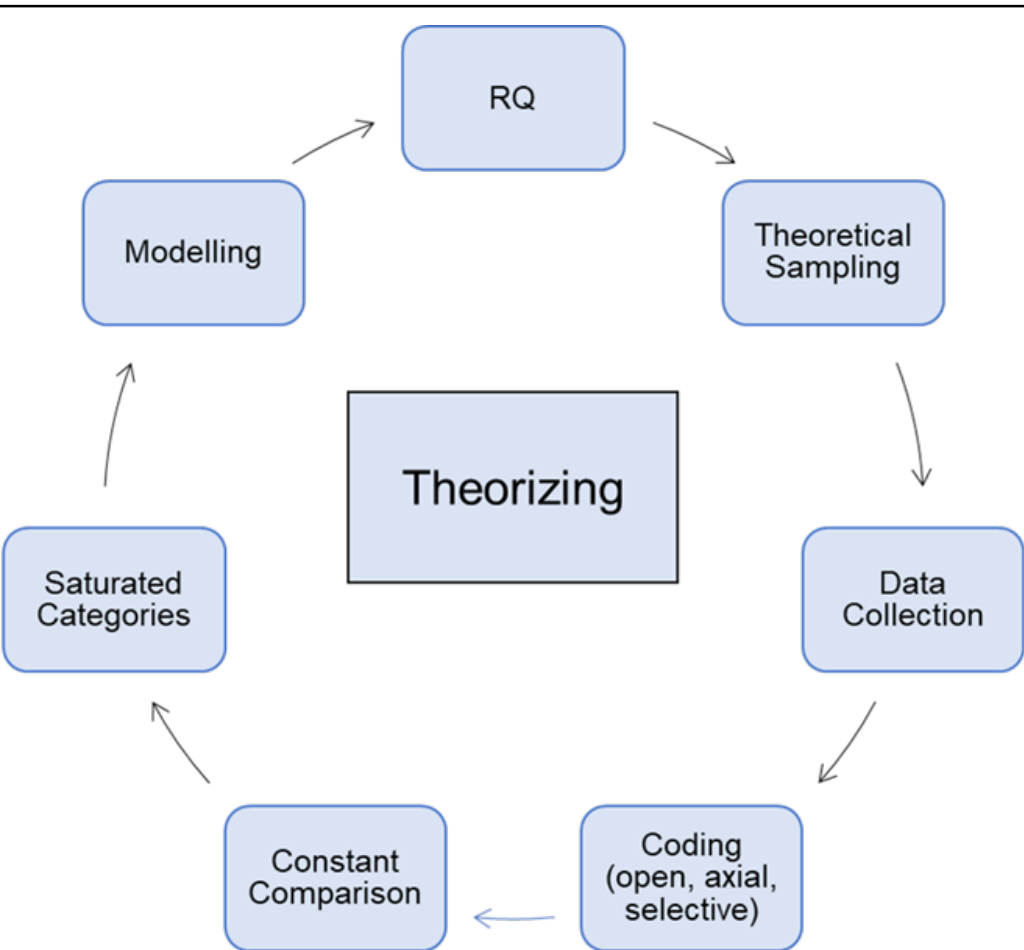


Clockwise from upper-left: Kingdom Hearts 3, Ni no Kuni 2, Dragon's Dogma, Tales of Berseria



Most-different (players) and most-similar (games) case design

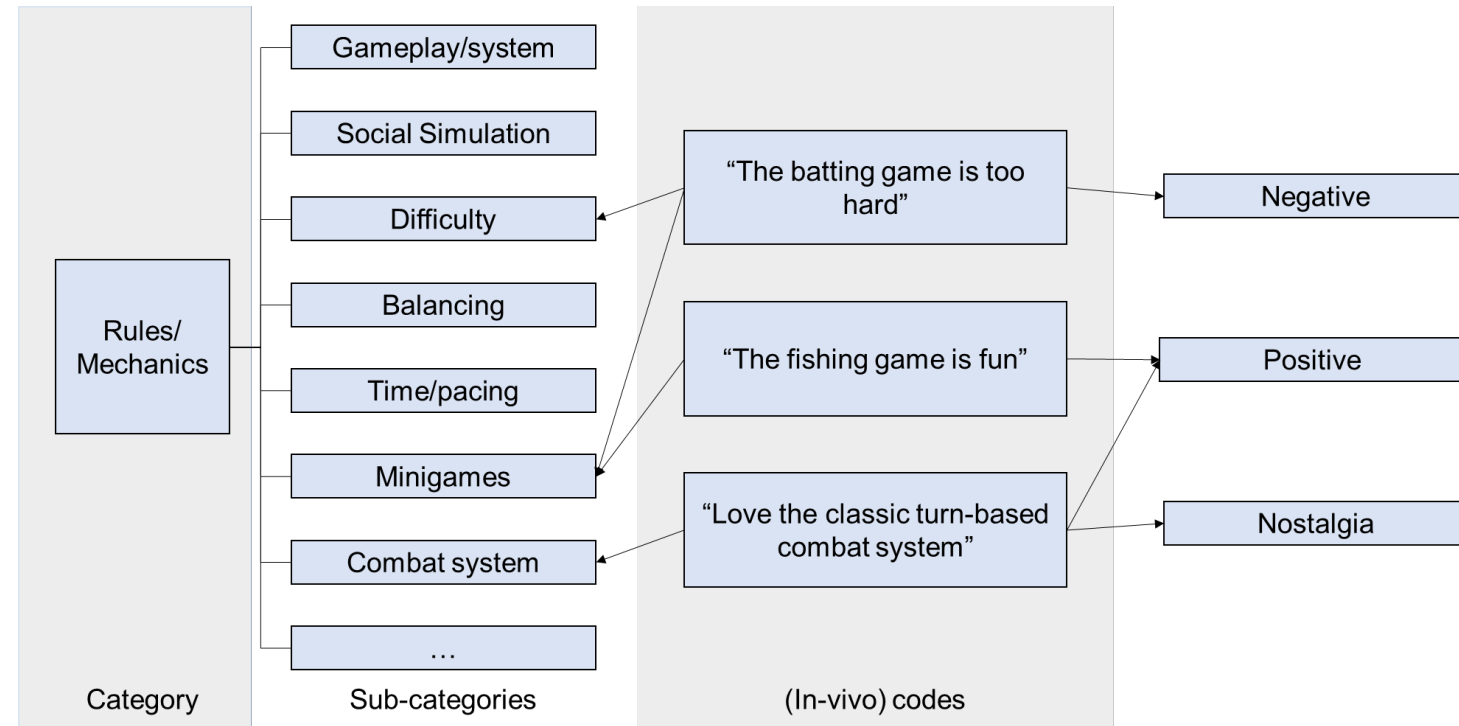
# Data Analysis: Grounded Theory



(Cf. Glaser/Strauss 1976; Corbin/Strauss 1990; Strübing 2014)

## Coding Examples

(Translated by the author)



## Results – Brief Overview and Selected Findings

Code System (highest level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Differences in evaluation of core <i>and</i> shell elements<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Core: e.g. pacing, difficulty, linearity;</li><li>• Shell: e.g. evaluation of story (e.g. stereotypical vs. 王道), characters, visual style</li></ul></li><li>• Differences in shell elements are more salient, but not necessarily more influential on overall experience (cf. Zagal/Tomuro 2013)</li><li>• Two patterns in reception of Japanese elements: positive (exoticism, virtual tourism, source of nostalgia) or negative (barrier to immersion)</li></ul>
Positive	
Negative	
Meta/Context	
Gameplay/Rules/Mechanics	
Story/Narrative	
Aesthetics	
Technology	
Structure	

## Example

# Selected differences in German and Japanese descriptions of Trails of Cold Steel I and II (Nihon Falcom 2018/2019)

Credit: Nihon Falcom



Sub-Category	Japan	Germany
Story	Repetitive, stereotypical, naively presented	Interesting, intriguing, grand scope
Characters	Lacking depth, unnecessary to the story	Well developed
Combat system	One of the games' better points, issues with balancing and tempo	Great tactical depth, dynamic
Compared to predecessor	Inferior story and characters	Advances in technology, design and combat

# Possible influences on PX

## Influences PX

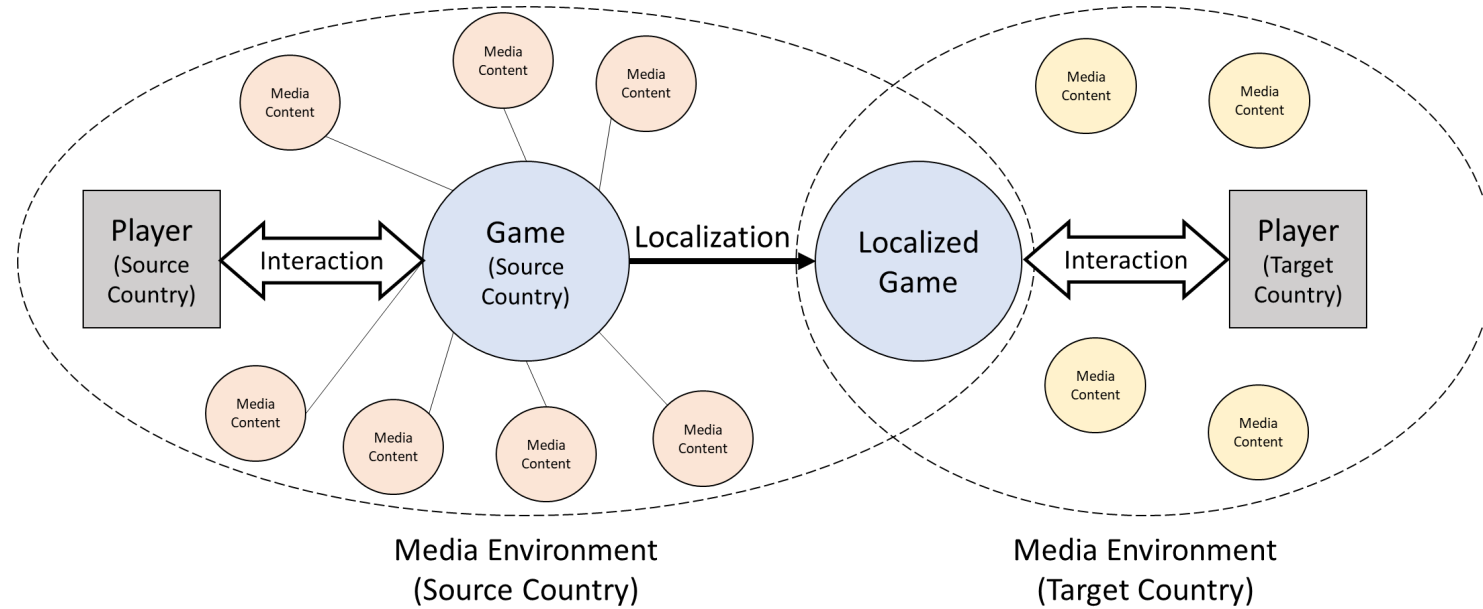
Localization

Media Environment/Context/Ecology

(Sub-Cultural) Identity

Values and Norms

... and the rest



## Meta-level differences

- Lexical Differences (e.g. *Gameplay* vs. *shistemu*)
- Differences in reviewing practices
- Different frames of reference
- Different age groups represented in Amazon reviews?

# Conclusions

- While there is a strong **indication for fundamental differences in PX between German and Japanese** players, a player's **(sub-cultural) identity and concrete preferences more strongly influence PX**
- Cultural **acclimatization can influence German players' experience and evaluation** of Japanese games (e.g. Germans familiar with or living in Japan, Japanophile sub-cultures)
- This does **not necessarily lead to the same evaluations as Japanese players**, sometimes they “overcompensate”, e.g. by framing game elements in exceedingly positive ways
- **Culturally specific content** in Japanese games can lead **to positive** (“virtual tourism”, appreciation of the exotic, feelings of nostalgia) **or negative** (barrier to immersion, inability to understand content) experiences in German players. This depends on the way such elements are implemented and localized

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