

**EXAMINATION**  
**SGO4010 Qualitative method**

**April 14<sup>th</sup> 2016**  
**(6 hours)**

No aids, except for dictionaries that have been submitted to the Faculty of Social Sciences for control, are permitted.

Results will be posted on the Studentweb May 6<sup>th</sup> at 2.00 pm., and will be available to the candidate from approximately 3.00 p.m.

The results are considered official on publication in Studentweb and students are responsible for checking their result at this time. If you want an explanation for grade, you must apply **within one week** after the result is published. If you want to complain on the grade, the complaint must be lodged within three weeks after the grades are published in Studentweb.

This examination paper consists of **2 pages + three Appendices**.

The candidate must submit both the original and the copy of their examination answers.

NB! Make sure the copy is legible. **No draft is permitted.**

Remember to write down your candidate number for later use.

Select **one** of the attached cases (Appendices A, B or C). Use this case to discuss **all** questions below. The two questions will carry approximately equal weight in the grading of the exam.

- 1) Which research questions could be relevant to examine the topic in the text you have chosen? Give **two** examples of possible research questions that can be addressed with qualitative methods. Discuss why the chosen method (or combination of methods) is appropriate for each of the two research questions you have formulated.
  
- 2) Choose **one** of your research questions above and the accompanying method(s) to discuss the following questions:
  - a. How will you collect data for this project, and which challenges do you expect to meet in the course of the data collection?
  - b. How will you address the ethical dilemmas associated with your research design?
  - c. How does your choice of method affect the kind of knowledge generated in the project you have outlined?

*NOTE: You are encouraged to draw on literature from the course reading list, topics discussed in seminars and the lecture series. In assessing the exam, we will consider practical method skills, knowledge of the curriculum, as well as analytical maturity.*

**Good luck!**

## Appendix 1

# Inside the Tragic, Obsessive World of Video Game Addicts

By Cecilia D'Anastasio, VICE

[The text has been edited for this exam]

January 26, 2015

The withdrawal made Brett want to die. The 12-year-old had only been cut off for a few hours, and his mind was already wandering to a dark and dangerous place. Looking out the window of his family's three-story home in Wassenaar, a suburb of the Hague, in the Netherlands, the American transplant imagined swan-diving out of his room and falling to the ground below, with his skull cracking open against the pavement. A grim death, sure, but at the time he felt anything had to be better than not being allowed to play *Counter-Strike*.

Brett's father had retrofit a metal lock on his Celeron computer to prevent his son from gaming. When it was locked, the Celeron's data cable was disconnected from its hard drive so it couldn't turn on, preventing Brett from gunning down digital assailants. Half an hour after Brett was mulling suicide, however, a friend called him on the phone and invited him to come over and game. Brett, nearly at his psychological brink, was relieved.

"I remember thinking, *It's probably very unnatural for someone to go from thinking about killing themselves to enjoying themselves in the span of 30 minutes,*" the now 23-year-old told me ten years later.

However strange, that incident was a mere prelude to the depths that Brett would sink with his burgeoning video game addiction—an affliction that has plagued his health and his familial relationships and stunted his adult life.

Brett's addiction reached its first fever pitch in 2007, when he was in the tenth grade and living in Marin, California. He was so focused on *World of Warcraft* that he stopped bathing or brushing his teeth regularly. He rarely got more than a few hours of sleep because he'd stay up all night dungeon-crawling. He was clocking up to 40 hours a week on video games on top of going through the motions during the day at school. It got so bad his teacher ordered him out of class because he looked like one of the monsters he'd savaged the previous night. He failed all of his classes that trimester.

Brett was playing so many hours of video games the seams between reality and virtual reality started to break down, once causing him to attempt a *World of Warcraft*-style teleportation move at a bus stop.

By summer break, his parents had had enough. At 3 AM one June morning, Brett was pulled out of bed by two strangers who would escort him to a six-week "wilderness camp" rehab program called Second Nature in Bend, Oregon. He kept company with teenage alcoholics and drug addicts. Over Skype, I asked Brett what he talked about on the way to his first rehab program.

Seven years, two rehab programs, and more than \$100,000 worth of addiction-treatment bills later, Brett still games more than 65 hours a week.

Brett isn't alone in his struggle with gaming. Over the past decade, we've seen several tragic stories of addicted gamers make international headlines. Seungseob Lee, a boiler repairman in South Korea, played *StarCraft* for more than 50 consecutive hours at an internet café before suffering a fatal heart attack. In China, a man named Xu Yan died after playing an online game persistently for two weeks. And in America, a woman named Rebecca Christie was sentenced to 25 years in prison after she allowed her daughter to starve to death while Christie was preoccupied with *World of Warcraft*.

Experts estimate that more than 3 million Americans between eight and 18 could be suffering from video game dependency. And medical authorities are finally noticing. The latest edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders recently christened the phenomenon as "internet gaming disorder." The DSM warns that such "persistent and recurrent online activity results in clinically significant impairment or distress," adding that certain neural pathways are triggered just like a drug addicts' would be when ingesting their substance of choice. To put that comparison in perspective, there could be about 1 million more diagnosable dependent gamers in America than coke addicts.

There is no "typical" gaming addict. Lurking on various online fora, I encountered Scott, 41-year-old former alcoholic whose gateway game was online gambling. From there, he obsessively played strategy and puzzle games until, after relapsing multiple times and separating from his wife, he found an online 12-step group for dependent gamers. On Reddit, I met a 21-year-old who listed 27 console games and hundreds of flash games he played obsessively. He recently "sobered up" at a rehabilitating boarding school and stays clean with an online support group devoted to game abusers.

[...]

Today, Brett's working on getting his A+ Certification to be a computer technician. He's been taking Santa Barbara City College classes on and off for a years, not finishing more than a couple semesters in a row. And he's still gaming despite his stints in rehab. Over Skype, Brett excitedly listed some of the 100-plus computer game titles that recently thwarted his desire to shower for six days. He says he would have rather spent those 15 minutes gaming.

"Right now," he said, "I don't really do that much."

His father, with immeasurable dejection in his voice, added, "He is as bad today as he was when we sent him to wilderness camp. That's six or seven years of his life wasted."

## Appendix 2

### Vegans Go Glam

By JEFF GORDINIER, SEPT. 29, 2015, New York Times

[The text has been edited for this exam]

CALABASAS, Calif. — It is easy to feel lumpy and inadequate here in Malibu Canyon, at the sunny, breezy home of Julie Piatt and Rich Roll, the couple behind a recent cookbook and lifestyle guide called “The Plantpower Way.”

Mr. Roll, who is 48 but looks as if he could still compete on the Stanford swim team, talked the other day about his workout routine and how abandoning meat and milk helped return him to a state of godlike health. “Kicking dairy was brutal,” he said. “That’s like getting off OxyContin.”

Ms. Piatt, who also goes by her spiritual name, SriMati, was all flared pants and dark flowing hair as she crisped up veggie burgers in a pan. She was happy to reveal her age; people don’t believe her anyway. “I’m 53,” she said. “It’s my nonalcoholic, meditative, yogic, vegan lifestyle.”

Even their children seemed to be on board. Ms. Piatt put a mountainous platter of nachos at the center of the dining table, and the four of them, ages 8 to 20, ravenously dug in, with no grouching about the absence of sour cream and Monterey Jack. “Is everyone good?” Ms. Piatt asked. “Does anyone want more cashew cheese?”

Veganism has been edging into the mainstream for years now, coaxed along by superstar believers like Bill Clinton and Beyoncé. But lately, as plant-based eating has blossomed and gained followers, influential vegans are laboring to supplant its dowdy, spartan image with a new look: glamorous, prosperous, sexy and epidermally beaming with health.

The evidence is bountiful — at restaurants on both coasts and in cookbooks, on blogs and throughout social media. “Being a vegan has crossed over into fashion territory,” said Kerry Diamond, the editor of Yahoo Food and the editorial director of Cherry Bombe magazine. Decades back “there was nothing chic about it,” she said. “Now it’s become a thing.”

[...]

People have adopted veganism for virtuous reasons, but vanity plays an undeniable role as well. It’s not uncommon to hear vegans mooning over “the glow,” an irresistible incandescence that starts to emanate from within after a few weeks or months of eating only plants. (To cite one example: “The Oh She Glows Cookbook.”)

“There are definitely some really nice superficial benefits to the whole thing,” said the popular British blogger Ella Woodward, 24, whose book “Deliciously Ella” chronicles her success in conquering health problems with a plant-oriented (she eschews the V-word) regimen. “My skin is so much cleaner and clearer.”

Vegan cooking itself has gone through a stark transformation, and so has the way it is sold: In some coastal pockets, at least, stern sermons have been replaced by the seductive allure of la dolce vita.

Nonvegans are welcomed, not shunned. “The message has changed,” said Kathy Freston, an author and vegan proponent. “And we have moved away from that old dogma.”

[...]

These vegans may look as if they have everything figured out, but getting there can be a long process. As the Plantpower family gathered for lunch at the long table, Ms. Piatt marveled at recollections of her youth in Alaska, where her father used to drag home wild game. “I remember eating bear once, as a child,” she said.

Jaya, her youngest daughter, looked up with eyes wide. “Wait, Mommy, you ate a bear?” she asked.

“It was when I was a kid,” Ms. Piatt replied. “I didn’t understand yet.”

## Appendix 3

# China's 'leftover' women

## How a growing number of Chinese women are shunning societal pressures to marry – and the labels attached to them.

Katrina Yu | 29 Oct 2015 | Al Jazeera

[The text has been edited for this exam]

**BEIJING** - Zhang Lin waits in a noisy restaurant outside the university where she has taught for more than 10 years.

"I'm sorry I've started already; I haven't had a chance to eat all day," she says. Surrounded by noisy groups of older men and rowdy students she sits alone in a flowing white dress, her wavy air tumbling over her shoulders as she eats. She is 38, but could pass for a student.

Between bites, she explains that she's from the country's south, and although she has lived in Beijing for 11 years, her father has never visited her.

"Among their four children, I'm the only one who's not married. He says because I don't have a family he has no reason to come here," she says, her tone momentarily subdued. "My mother came once, three years ago. But it was a disaster, a complete disaster," she adds.

Zhang was raised in a small city in what she describes as a very traditional family.

"My mother especially, she's always worrying about me being single. My parent's generation are always on stand-by to sacrifice themselves for their children. One day she called me and said she would visit for the summer to help me find a husband."

Zhang's mother had read an article about Beijing's 'marriage markets', where parents of single children would gather at the city's Zhongshan Park, in the hope of matching their child with the offspring of another desperate parent.

Twice a week, groups of about 30 to 60 parents meet in the same spot, each carrying pieces of paper containing information about their child - their job, level of education and salary, as well as their physical attributes.

"When the markets started it was just for parents. But these days, you see more and more single children are dragged along with them. It's like a fair for parents and their 'leftovers', mostly women," sighs Zhang, who admits to having helped start the trend.

Out of duty, she reluctantly accompanied her mother to the market twice a week, standing silently beside her for more than an hour at a time. "I felt I couldn't refuse, but doing it made me feel everything bad you could possibly feel; humiliated, depressed, furious. I felt like such a loser, standing there to sell myself."

**Labelled**

The term 'Leftover Woman' was first coined in a report by the Chinese Women's Federation in 2007 to describe young females in their late 20s who had not yet married.

The phrase quickly gained momentum, finding its place among popular colloquial terms such as 'Gaofushuai' (a rich, tall and handsome male) and 'Baifumei' (a pale-skinned, wealthy young woman).

But while the label is relatively new, its message isn't.

China's foremost ancient thinker, Confucius, wrote: "The Chinese girl was brought up, then as now, with matrimony in view as her goal," and "the woman follows the man. In her youth she follows her father and elder brother; when married, she follows her husband; when her husband is dead, she follows her son".

According to these tenets, marriage in China had less to do with romantic love, and more with filial duty and societal stability. Hundreds of years later, China has modernised, and women, according to Mao, "hold up half the sky", but most still face harsh judgements for remaining unmarried past a certain age.

**Finding independence**

Zhang Lin, Li Yuan and Lily Lu all agree that building independence, financial and otherwise, is the key to decreasing any stigma associated with being single.

"The sad thing is most Chinese girls will never be truly independent," says Zhang. "It's worse in Beijing because of the cost of living and housing. If a girl doesn't have a house she can't feel secure. So young people tend to be more desperate here, because they believe if they at least find someone they can solve this problem together."

While traditional ideas about marriage in China aren't being abandoned altogether, they are evolving.

"More and more women are slowly changing their minds, especially in big cities where things are slowly opening up," says Zhang. This year she joined the cast of Roseann Lake's 'Leftover Monologues', telling packed audiences of young women and men about the humiliation she endured trying not to be 'leftover'.

"Before I was made to feel shame, and now I'm proud, comfortable. The mind-set, in bigger cities especially, is changing," says Zhang. "China's becoming more open and people are starting to talk about it and even laugh about it. Slowly, we're getting over being 'leftover'."