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Good or Bad: Propagation Analysis of Pro-Social and Anti-Social Norms in Virtual Video-Game

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**Introduction**

The question "Are people inherently good or bad?", is a long-time unanswered and fundamental question in the field of psychology in general, and in social psychology particularly (citation). Through the years, several suggestions have been made regarding the core values and manners in which people behave and are born with. Researches concerning this issue are hard to conduct, due to the vast social influences people are susceptible to in life. People learn how to behave and communicate in life in a way that is commonly agreed upon. Generally speaking, people often view their inner desires or "Self" as ones that are not necessarily aligned with their behavior or "Social Self". Moreover so, people do not always know their true desires or motives themselves. This makes it hard to research and understand the core values of people that underline their social persona.

In the field of social psychology, good and bad are terms that are often discussed and referred to as pro-social and anti-social behavior. Generally speaking, pro-social behavior contributes and aids the group, sometimes at the expense of the one behaving so. In contrast, anti-social behavior is a behavior that harms the group, often in a way that favors the one behaving so. Experiments in game theory have shown that the best strategies tend to be antisocial and egocentric, leading to the optimal outcome for the individual. Having said that, humanity and society are proof that humanity as a whole preferred to act in a pro-social manner over the years. Some researches have even claimed that culture and society was the initial fundamental step that separated human life from animals.

In recent decades, technology has also made an astounding development, entering and influencing many fields. With these technological advances, media in general, and electronic screens in particular, have become a common sight in the family cell as well as in educational and social frameworks. In line with the technological advancement of many fields such as communication, security, and work, games have also become more advanced, digital, and complexed than ever. The monumental and widespread impact of digital gaming can be seen primarily in Western countries and especially in the United States, with 97% of American teenagers ages 12-17 playing digital video games (Lenhart, et al., 2008). Accordingly, as social psychologists, we should strive to understand the social interactions that occur not only in the real world but also in the unexplored virtual world.

In the literature, video games have been often described as very addictive and in some several cases has been reviewed as escapism practice of sorts. Studies have analyzed the broad gaming experience and have found, through several theories (such as the SDT), several elements to keep the players in the game. These elements are commonly divided into two categories, one is controlling and the other is informative. The controlling element refers to the external aspect of the reinforcement and describes how the reinforcement encourages the person to play solely for the achievement or prize. The informative element, on the other hand, refers to the internal aspect of the reinforcement and functions as feedback through which the person can assess his or her ability to perform the activity. Therefore, the person will tend to improve in the activity for the sake of his or her inner satisfaction which will encourage him to continue doing the activity (Burgers, Eden, Engelenburg, & Buningh, 2015; Ryan & Rigby, 2006). New academic fields, such as gamification studies, gave been inspecting and researching such elements so that people would be able to apply them in other mediums (e.g. Internet sites or workers management).

In consequence, players that play video games regularly (i.e. gamers) often describe their video game experience as very immersive. Many players have even expressed how video games formed a platform through which they can express themselves freely in it. Video game categories and styles are very variant, making it easier for gamers to find the game which best suits their needs. There are games for social gamers (e.g multi-player games), belligerent gamers (e.g. action-based games), adventurous gamers (e.g. single-player games) and even for gamers that just want to learn and experience new things (e.g. simulation games and virtual reality games). This helps the players find their niche and get more easily immersed in the game.

Additionally, Games generally and video games in particular are not confined by the rules and laws of society. This fact can lead people to act freely and in accordance with their true nature, as there are little to no retributions to their actions. Sometimes video games get criticized by the media for this fact, as some individuals have previously blurred the lines between game and reality leading to some violent actions on their part influenced by video games. Except this also stands to show us the immersion people can experience through a video game. As such, by observing and studying one's behavior, we can assess and learn much about his personality and true self.

One way in which I think video games can answer the question "are people good or bad?" is through the propagation analysis of pro-social vs anti-social behavior. By reviewing the structure and valance of these behaviors, we can approximate whether people tend to be more pro-social and "pass it along", or whether people are more vindictive and active in "spreading the hate". I believe this analysis will shed light on the true face of society.

**Proposed research objectives and hypophysis**

The proposed research aims to shed light on the pattern and valance in which pro-social and anti-social behavior propagate and spread throughout a video game environment. More particularly, this research will focus on pro-social and anti-social behavior as experienced by players in the game "Player Unknown's Battleground" (PUBG). We hypothesize that pro-social behavior will spread in a faster manner and larger numbers than its counterpart as in anti-social behavior.

**Method**

Using the PUBG.inc API service, we will be able to collect and store real-life game data and statistics of players and their matches over tim e.