

A game with both positive social interaction and negative social interaction can create long-lasting fun. Positive social interaction means player cooperating with one another. Negative social interaction means the player playing against one another. Not only sports games fit the statement, but also any games fit the statement.

Most sports games include both positive social interaction and negative social interaction. Soccer, for example, have players split into two teams. Players not only need to cooperate with players on your team by passing the ball when necessary but also need to play against the opponent by blocking their way of attack. Imagine soccer with only one team and the opponents are poles that you need to get past. Suddenly the game lacks the tension that could be created only by countering the opponent team's move and strategy. The game also lacks flexibility because it could only be played at places that are already built with stakes. Again, imagine soccer with as many teams as the players. It would definitely be a mess playing soccer that way with no cooperation among players and everybody for themselves. The same logic applies to almost any sports. When we took either the positive social interactions or negative social interactions out of the game, the game feels empty all of a sudden.

The general idea could also be applied to modern video games. For example, in World of Warcraft, there are two stages in every expansion. At the start of each expansion, most of the players are doing PVE activities like raid and dungeons. From the middle of the expansion, most players are transferring to PVP activities like arena and battleground. The reason behind such a transition is strongly related to the idea of needing to have both positive social interactions and negative social interactions. Raid, even though fun, could be boring after a few times because the environment never changes. Before the player learns the environment, they are curious, learning about new ways the environment works. It was the learning that makes the experience fun. But after they are done learning, doing PVE content feels like grinding, doing the same action again and again. That's why players are switching to the arena. Even though the environment in the arena could be simpler, usually consists of only 4 pillars, players queue for it over and over again, only because it was human players as your opponent, instead of programmed enemies. So, switching from only positive social interaction to both positive and negative interactions provide long-lasting fun. Also, in World of Warcraft, there are also activities that are only negative social interactions, which is called dueling, or 1 vs 1. But seldom do people see one player dueling over and over again for months. Instead, most players could queue for arena month after month. Thus, positive and negative social interactions both functions in World of Warcraft.

Many games do not incorporate any social interactions or only one of them and they could still be fun. However, games like that do not last long like those that incorporate both of them. When we are designing our own games, we might also want to consider it.