

We are constantly exposed to violent images. They are present in the media we watch, we read, and even in the games we play. Everyone is exposed, through films, TV, social media, ... But does these violent imagery have an effect on our behavior ?

The truth is that this is a very controversial issue. There are very few studies on the topic, and they tend to contradict themselves. Some studies show that violence that is seen may be directly linked to actual violence, such as the study mentioned in article 1.

The issue is more complex : it appears its consequences depends on the type of games played, the degree of exposure, the type of person exposed. The effects on players may vary due to a combination of risk factors : it is not an issue on its own. In fact, most of the articles agree that violence in games is more a risk factor than a direct link. It adds up to already existing factors, such as age, social status, and sex (article 1). According to *John Bingham*, children are particularly sensible to violent imagery. The issue is that, as *Susan Scutti* points out in the fourth text, violent video games reward hurting others. When the goal of the game is explicitly “kill the most people in a given time”, we should really ask ourselves questions on the real benefits of these games.

On the other hand, many advantages of video games have been shown, especially concerning problem solving abilities (OECD, article 2). However, we should point out a key element in these observations : not all video games have the same benefits. While online multi-player games are strongly denounced for their addictivity, other games are known for their impact on school performance and cognitive abilities in general.

I would now like to highlight some flaws in the set of texts proposed here. There is a recurrent organization in the documents : the American Psychological Association. It almost looks like it is always the same arguments that are brought by the same people. Although it is a professional organization, one may put into doubt their arguments because there not many other actors to back their claims. Furthermore, many of the articles are quite old (2013) and start to be outdated, mainly because the media evolve quickly with the changes in technology. We don't consume them the way we used to, and the new generation has a different, hopefully more critical look over what is presented to them.

To sum up, we should, in my personal opinion, be really careful. This issue does not only impact our behavior, it could also impact our freedom of speech, if we were, for example, to restrict some images or games “to protect a part of the population”. We shouldn't generalize the issue, but look deeper to distinguish different uses of the media, and their respective impacts on us. We lack long term studies on the phenomenon. We therefore can not draw a definitive conclusion, being not sufficiently informed. As the first document points out, we should rely on evidence rather than instinct.

Bibliography:

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5. **Study finds that violent video games may be linked to aggressive behaviour** *John von Radowitz* (The Independent) August 17, 2015