A meaner, more callous digital world for youth? The relationship between violent digital games, motivation, bullying, and civic behavior among children.

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## Sample

304 children aged 11 to 14 years from the United Kingdom recruited via a school

## Implications For Parents About

Parental practices / parental mediation

## Implications For Policy Makers About

Creating a safe environment for children online

# Abstract

The relationship between violent digital games and youth behavior remains contested in the scholarly literature. To date considerable scholarship has focused on
university students, with fewer studies of adolescents or children. The current study
examines correlational relationships between violent game exposure and bullying
behaviors, antisocial attitudes, civic attitudes, and civic behaviors in a sample of
304 children from the United Kingdom (Mean age 12.81). The paper also
considered motivational influences on use of violent digital games. Results indicated that violent game exposure did not correlate meaningfully with either antisocial or civic behaviors or attitudes. These results are discussed in a motivational
and developmental context.

# Outcome

"violent game exposure was not correlated with aggressive attitudes or bullying behavior. Violent games were also not correlated with civic attitudes but had a weak positive correlation with civic behaviors. Overall, our results do not lend evidence to the belief that violent video games contribute to negative outcomes in youth... Though small in effect size, the link between
violent game play and civic behavior is interesting, particularly given it is in the opposite
direction expected. It is important to note that these data are correlational, not causal, and thus
explaining this finding is speculative by nature. However, gaming in general is a social activity
and that may be particularly true for actionoriented games. In such a context, games can be
viewed as creating social cultures among youth that, in turn, promote civic engagement. Gaming, including action-oriented violent games, thus can provide a mechanism for secondary civic development. Or, put another way, how games are used by youth may be more crucial
than the content of those games. Interestingly, parental involvement was unrelated to violent video game play." (Ferguson and Colwel, 2018: 209-10).