

Mapping game biopolitics: immunological paradigms in digital games

Purpose of research:

The purpose of this research project is to pose questions about the different ways of representing life and death management in games (biopolitics). How do games understood as texts of culture convey our fantasies, ideas or fears about various modern regimes? What solutions to social, economic and political problems are presented to us in relationship with state institutions, mechanisms of power or population control. Our goal is to describe how the issues of control over life and death are problematized in many game genres. We're interested in describing how games invite players to reflect on the positive and negative ways of social control.

Research description:

It can be said that the research in this project is conducted in virtual reality, because most of it comes down to playing games and searching their worlds for different representations and problematization of biopolitics. The research focuses on developing a typology and creating a map of individual elements of digital worlds, game mechanics or ideological representations of different ways of controlling life. This means that we are looking for a certain generalized schema that would be useful when comparing problematic narratives the functioning of various positive and negative social visions.

Reason for research:

We want to better understand how people construct narratives about managing life, what patterns appear in these narratives, and how video games represent and shape our concept of power, protection or extermination of other beings, groups or civilizations. By studying games, we want to find out more about our views on politics, economy and society, also in times of biopolitical restrictions related to the pandemic. What fears, behaviors and ways of thinking are constructed in games and presented to players as models for understanding phenomena such as the state of exception, migration, annihilation. What biopolitical games offer us, players?

Research results:

The main output of our research will be an insight into the cultural importance of games as carriers of various biopolitical solutions. Our typology will deepen your knowledge of games as an important medium, which creates ideological models for understanding and rethinking both real as well as fictional systems of exercising power over life and death. Mapping immunological paradigms in games tells us what games offer in our understanding of biopolitics.