

Chapter 8

Other Media

Through the latter half of the twentieth century, most public and scientific concern centered on the alleged deleterious effects of television, pornography (to be discussed in the next chapter), and video games. Other media, including movies and radio in particular, have comparatively faded from view despite that objectionable content including violence has probably risen over times in these media as well as those that receive more attention. Specific movies such as *Natural Born Killers* or radio shows such as *Howard Stern Show* may be criticized for their crass content. Overall, as video games take the forefront of public and scientific discourse other media, perhaps even television and pornography, are slipping to the backburner.

In the current chapter we consider several forms of media that have received less attention in modern research including movies, cartoons, comic books, music, and religious writings. Most of these areas, at least in recent decades, have been eclipsed by concerns about television, video games, and pornography. Yet, they occasionally garner attention and concern. This chapter considers whether research indicates such concerns are merited.

8.1 Movies

As noted in Chap. 2 movies were probably the first modern mass media in the twentieth century to receive widespread public and scientific consideration. The Payne Studies and the Hays Code were just two of the major highlights reflecting concern in some circles that violent and objectionable content of movies might lead to behavior problems in youth. By the second half of the twentieth century the focus had switched to television. Both research on and concern about movies dropped off. Not surprisingly, this led to significant relaxation in censorship of movies in the latter half of the twentieth century, with the Hays Code being replaced by the current ratings system presented in Table 8.1. The movie ratings which have been

Table 8.1 Movie ratings system

G	General Audiences. No objectionable content
PG	Suitable for children with parental discretion. Some mild objectionable content
PG-13	Suitable for children above the age of 13. Moderate objectionable. Possibly violence, some language, or mild nudity
R	Suitable for teens with parental supervision. Under 17 not admitted without a guardian present. Significant objectionable content including graphic violence, strong language, graphic nudity, and sexual situations
NC-17	Under 17 not admitted. In practice, usually reserved for sexually explicit films, although some films with highly graphic violence, torture, etc., may also warrant this rating
X	No longer used by legitimate motion pictures. Used only unofficially by the pornography industry

developed by the Motion Picture Association of American (MPAA, 2012) have undergone some changes over time. When first developed in 1968, movie ratings had four potential classifications, G, M, R, and X. The rating M for mature was intended for all audiences, although many viewers mistook it to be sterner than the R rating (MPAA, 2012). As such it was changed to GP and finally PG. The PG-13 rating was added in 1984 due to objections that some PG movies had significant nudity, language, or violence. Finally the X rating was dropped when it was co-opted by pornographic films. The X rating was not initially meant to indicate pornography per se. Other nations have their own ratings systems. Some, like France, are operated by government ministries (CNC, 2008). Others use voluntary ratings systems similar to the USA.

Ferguson and Kilburn (2009) found that most recent research articles examining the issue of media violence and aggression examined either video game violence or television. Violence in movies was a distant third, possibly indicating relative lack of interest in this older media. As with other forms of media, this meta-analytic review found little evidence of a relationship between viewing violent movies and aggressive behavior.

As with other forms of violent media, consumption of violent movies by adolescents is very common (Worth, Chambers, Nassau, Rakhra, & Sargent, 2008). One recent Icelandic study surveyed college students on self reported violent film consumption, acceptance of violence, and personality variables (Sigurdsson, Gudjonsson, Bragason, Kristjansdottir, & Sigfusdottir, 2006). The authors found that individuals who were more accepting of violence in general were more likely to consume violent films. This study did not link such consumption with aggressive behavior, however, and is correlational in nature.

One study of 150 elementary students surveyed students on their consumption of violent movies and video games and their effect on empathy and pro-violence attitudes (Funk, Baldacci, Pasold, & Baumgardner, 2004). Results were inconsistent. No relationship was found between movie violence exposure and empathy, but a small relationship was found between movie violence exposure and pro-violence attitudes. However, the study is correlational in nature, and did not examine aggressive behaviors. Thus, this study is unable to demonstrate a link between movie violence viewing and aggressive behaviors.

One study compared the self-reported consumption of violent films of males with schizophrenia institutionalized in a psychiatric hospital who had a history of violent behavior against controls without such a history (Guy, Mohan, & Taylor, 2003). Results indicated that violent males did not differ from nonviolent controls in their consumption of violent films, although they did report greater enjoyment watching such films. These results suggest that consumption of violent films played little role in the development of violent behavior for these men. It should be noted that results from an incarcerated psychiatric population cannot be generalized to the general population, however.

In one of few recent studies of film violence to attempt to actually study aggressive behavior, Zillman and Weaver (1999) randomized college students to watch either violent or nonviolent films over a 4-day period. On the final day of the experiment, some of the participants were insulted by a research assistant. Subsequently the participants were provided with an opportunity to rate whether the research assistant should be rehired for a future job. Naturally, those participants who had been insulted by the research assistant were less likely to offer a positive recommendation. However, participants who had watched violent movies as compared to nonviolent movies turned in slightly more negative reviews. Of course the mismatch between turning in a job recommendation and committing a violent crime is rather obvious. The “aggression” in this case, following an insult, is both nonviolent and justified. As such results from this experiment cannot be generalized to serious aggression or violent behavior. If we remember the issue of “demand characteristics” it is also possible that the college students were able to guess that, following 4 days of watching violent films, they were expected to behave more aggressively.

Unfortunately few other recent research studies have examined aggressive behavior specifically as a consequence of watching violent films. There simply appears to be comparatively little research in this area, at least recently. Most of the research studies of movie violence do not examine aggressive behavior in a valid way. There is little reason to think that research studies that examine television would necessarily differ from those on movie violence. As the effects seen for research on television violence have been weak and inconsistent, there is little reason for greater confidence regarding movie violence effects.

Probably the film which has attracted the most attention in recent years as potentially inspiring copycat crimes is *Natural Born Killers*. The film follows the violent exploits of a young couple who murder indiscriminately. The film loosely parallels the real life case of Carol Ann Fugate and Charles Starkweather. In the film the murderous couple becomes folk heroes and is portrayed rather sympathetically.

Attempts have been made to “link” *Natural Born Killers* with real life crimes. One of the most famous cases was that of Florence Rey and Audrey Maupin, a young French couple who went on a sudden murderous spree. Hijacking several cars in succession, the young couple shot to death several French police officers and a civilian. Ultimately the couple were stopped by a police roadblock and shot. Maupin died and Rey (who had not done the actual shootings) was sentenced as an accomplice. The connection with *Natural Born Killers* appears to have been created

in the news media given the similarities between the French couple and the couple in the film. To date, no evidence has emerged to indicate that Maupin or Rey had even seen the film. The couple did have a history of legal problems and associations with anarchist groups (New York Times, 1994).

In the USA, *Natural Born Killers* was held accountable in a lawsuit regarding the crime spree of Sarah Edmondson and her boyfriend Benjamin Darras. The couple killed one man, and then shot and paralyzed Patsy Byers. Byers subsequently filed suit against the movie's director Oliver Stone and Time Warner Entertainment. As has been the case with most lawsuits in which a link between media violence and actual crimes is asserted, the case was dismissed (BBC, 2001).

8.2 Cartoons

Technically cartoons may themselves either be television shows or movies. They are occasionally singled out in the research literature and deserve some special mention here. Particular attention is paid to cartoons as the majority are developed with children in mind. Some cartoons both on television (e.g., *Family Guy*, *South Park*) or movies (e.g., *A Scanner Darkly* which used rotoscope over live actors) are developed with adult audiences in mind. They may receive particular criticism from anti-media activists who mistake cartoons as exclusively marketed toward children. Anime refers to a specific kind of Japanese-influenced animation that is often adult-oriented containing considerable violence. Anime cartoons have a significant following in the USA and other countries. The anime style can be recognized by characters with large eyes, multicolored hair, exaggerated expressions and movements. There is even a specialized kind of Japanese-influenced cartoon pornography called Hentai.

Violent acts are commonly portrayed in cartoons, including those aimed at children (Coyne & Whitehead, 2008; Kirsh, 2006). However, the violent acts portrayed are typically minor in comparison to television programs or movies (Kirsh, 2006). Some have argued that the humorous elements of many cartoons may serve to mask the violent elements (Potter & Warren, 1998). Viewers may be unaware that they are watching a program with significant violent content. Unfortunately little research has examined the potential impact of the mixture of humor and violence on children (Kirsh, 2006).

Coyne and Whitehead (2008) have argued that aggression in television and cartoons can be divided into two forms, both of which are important to consider. These two forms of aggression can be delineated as follows:

- Direct aggression: Physically aggressive or violent behavior intended to cause immediate physical harm. Hitting, kicking, biting, stabbing, shooting etc., would all be directly aggressive.
- Indirect aggression: Involves more subtle social efforts at aggression. The intent is still to cause harm to the other person, although often social harm rather than physical harm. Spreading rumors, revealing secrets, malicious gossiping, all would be examples of indirect aggression.

The authors analyzed the amount of indirect aggression in popular Disney cartoons. The authors concluded that indirect aggression in animated Disney films was lower than direct aggression, and typically portrayed negatively.

The methodology of cartoon research strongly mirrors that of television research. In one of the earliest experimental studies, children were randomized to watch either a violent *Woody Woodpecker* cartoon or a nonviolent cartoon (Siegel, 1956). Children were then observed and rated on aggressive acts while playing with a second child. The following same children were brought back the following week and observed in the opposing condition (i.e., kids who had watched the violent cartoon now watched the nonviolent cartoon). No differences in aggressive behavior toward other children were found between violent and nonviolent cartoons. It may be, however, that the exposure to cartoons in the laboratory was too short to demonstrate effects, or that children's real-life exposure to violent cartoons was constant across both conditions and thus a short exposure could not demonstrate effects. Nonetheless, similar results were found in other studies of comedic cartoons with violence (e.g., Hapkiewicz & Roden, 1971).

One study examined correlations between frequency of viewing cartoon and movie violence and teacher reported aggressive behavior (Aluja-Fabregat and Torrubia-Beltri (1998). Frequency of viewing cartoon violence was not associated with aggression in either boys or girls. Movie violence was slightly associated with aggressive behavior in boys but not girls. Taken together these results suggest that direct exposure to cartoon violence has no relationship to aggressive behavior. The authors did find that boys who reported the highest enjoyment of violent cartoons were slightly more likely to be aggressive.¹ In other words, the personality of the boys may be related to increased aggression, as well as increased enjoyment of viewing violent cartoons, but actually frequency of viewing violent cartoons did not result in increased aggression. Some cautionary notes are worth mentioning about this study. First, the authors did not control for other relevant variables such as family violence. Thus, even the only significant media effect result, for boys with movie violence, may be explained by other variables. Also, the aggression measure used, teacher ratings, has demonstrated low validity in other studies (Henry, & Metropolitan Area Child Study Research Group, 2006). Similar results were found by Ellis and Setyra (1972) using a 5 min exposure, with similar problems regarding the confusion of aggressive behavior and aggressive play.

Silvern and Williamson (1987) took baseline measurements of preschool children's aggressive behavior and then randomized them either to watch the violent cartoon *Road Runner* or to play the "violent" video game *Space Invaders* for 6 min. On the next day the two groups were switched and the children were exposed to the opposite media as the day before. On each day the aggressive behavior of children was observed during free play with peers. The researchers concluded that both media forms increased aggression from baseline. Multiple problems with the study limit its interpretation however. No no-violence media control group was included

¹ $r=0.23$

in the study. The 6-min exposure is too brief to have much effect. It is unclear if the observers were actually rating aggressive behavior or merely cooperative and mutually enjoyable aggressive play. Kirsh (2006) also notes that forcing the children to play with the same peers and same toys over multiple days may have frustrated the children explaining any increases in aggression better than the media exposure.

From these studies of cartoon violence we can conclude several things.

- Little evidence links exposure to cartoon violence with aggressive behavior.
- Exposure times in some research studies have been too short to demonstrate much effect.
- Aggressive behavior and aggressive play are confused in some of the studies.
- Innate personality traits may lead some children, particularly boys, to report enjoying violent cartoons more, and engage in aggressive behavior.

Thus, although cartoons ranging from *Bugs Bunny* through *Family Guy* have often been the source of criticism, little evidence suggests children imitate behaviors seen in them to the point of reaching a public health concern.

Kirsh (2006) suggests that comedic elements in many cartoons may offset the influence of violent content. Viewers may simply not recognize comedic violent acts as violent. This may be the case, although evidence in favor of the influence of non-comedic cartoons is not much more encouraging. Overall some scholars have concluded that the potential influence of cartoons is minimal, that young children can distinguish the moral implications of violent acts witnessed in cartoons, and that any imitative behavior is short-lived only and playful in nature rather than aggressive (Peters & Blumberg, 2002).

8.3 Comic Books

As noted in Chap. 2, comic books were at the center of controversy regarding media violence effects. Some early researchers suggested that comic books could have cathartic like effects, reducing behavioral problem in children (Bender & Lourie, 1941). By the 1950s, this view was out of fashion. The psychiatrist Dr. Frederic Wertham, published *Seduction of the Innocent* (1954/1996), claiming that comic books were causing juvenile delinquency. Wertham's claims got the attention of congress although the comic book industry engaged in self-censorship and the storm died down. With the MPAA's 1968 rating system, greater amounts of violence, sex, language, and nudity began to appear in films under the more restrictive R and X (later NC-17) ratings. The relaxation of self-censorship by the movie industry opened the door for other media industries to follow suit. The self-censorship that comic books had endured for several decades began to come undone. By that time, television was the central focus of media debates, and little attention was lavished on comic books.

Many current comic books do contain considerable adult themes including graphic acts of violence (Kirsh & Olczak, 2002a). In one of the few studies of comic

books violence Kirsh and Olczak (2002a) randomized college students to read either a nonviolent comic book or an extremely violent comic book. The students then read a set of scenarios in which either direct or indirect aggression had occurred, but the intent of the perpetrator was unclear. For instance stories might include a child being hit in the back with a ball or not being invited to a party. Respondents were asked to judge the intent of the perpetrator and the degree of retaliation that was appropriate. Results indicated that respondents who had read the extremely violent comic book were slightly more likely² to interpret the scenarios as intentionally more aggressive than those who had read the nonviolent comic book. This study is interesting and well done, but does display some weaknesses that limit the interpretations of the results, namely:

1. The study was conducted on nonviolent college students rather than children.
2. The study does not measure aggressive behavior as an outcome. There is no reason to believe that individuals who interpreted the scenarios as more aggressive would be prone to greater aggression themselves. In other words, the outcome is not a valid measure of aggressive behavior.
3. There is significant potential for demand characteristics. Demand characteristics are a threat to the validity of a study in which participants are able to guess the hypothesis and consciously or unconsciously change their normal behavior to provide experimenters with the results the participants think the experimenters want. Demand characteristics are an issue for many media violence studies, as well as many studies outside of media violence. In particular, given that the participants were students in a *psychology* class, they may have been informed about media violence research and easily guessed the study hypotheses.
4. The resulting effect was very small and should not be overinterpreted.

Thus, research on comic books such as in this study, perhaps not surprisingly, displays many of the same strengths and weaknesses as other media research.

The same authors conducted a second, similar study (Kirsh & Olczak, 2002b). In this second study the focus was exclusively on indirect aggression. Once again undergraduate college students in a psychology class read scenarios in which one child engaged in an act of indirect aggression (e.g., children at a lunch table stop talking when a peer sits down with them). Prior to reading the scenarios, the participants had read either an extremely violent comic book or a nonviolent comic book. They were asked to rate the aggressive intentions of the perpetrators and how much retaliation was appropriate. Once again a small effect³ was found for the violent comic books on judgments of the scenario. This study has the same strengths and weaknesses as the above study.

Unfortunately few other published peer-reviewed studies of comic book violence exist. There are no studies linking comic book reading to violent behavior.

² $r=0.20$

³ $r=0.24$

8.4 Music

The issue of violent and sexual content of music lyrics has received some attention in recent years. Music has been one genre that has perennially found itself at the center of controversy. During the twentieth century:

- Jazz music was criticized during the 1920s for contributing to a culture of immorality.
- Rock and roll, in its various forms including heavy metal and punk, were criticized for sexual, rebellious and sometimes violent lyrics.
- Hip hop and some pop music has been criticized for sexualized lyrics
- Gangsta rap has been criticized for lyrics with strong violent, sexual, misogynistic, or drug related content. For example the 1980s rap group NWA invited controversy with songs such as “Fuck Tha Police.” Critics contended that the song encouraged violence against law enforcement, whereas defenders claimed the song highlighted tensions between minorities and law enforcement.

Numerous music artists have found themselves at the center of controversy, some of them sued over allegations that their lyrics caused listeners to engage in violent or suicidal behavior. In one famous case, musician Ozzy Osbourne was sued by the parents of a young man who committed suicide while listening to one of his albums.

Case Study 1

In 1984 19-year-old John McCollum shot himself in the head with a .22 caliber rifle while listening to an Ozzy Osbourne record. His headphones were reportedly still on at the time of the shooting. McCollum had a history of substance abuse problems and depression. His parents subsequently filed a civil suit against Osbourne alleging that his music in general and the song “Suicide Solution,” which appeared to advocate suicide, was responsible for inciting McCollum to suicide. McCollum’s parents asserted that Osbourne should have been aware that music such as his had the potential for influencing emotionally disturbed individuals and thus was civilly responsible for damages.

The song “Suicide Solution” contains lyrics that appear to consider alcoholism as a slow method of suicide. Some reports suggested that the song is a tribute to Bon Scott, the lead singer of Australian band AC/DC who had died from alcohol poisoning. At issue were a set of somewhat garbled and unscripted lyrics that may or may not have said “Get the gun and shoot” or something along those lines, although the exact content has been subjected to much debate and confusion. Generally, however, the song does not appear to advocate suicide.

The court case against Osbourne was dismissed on First Amendment grounds. Even if Osbourne had advocated suicide, he had a constitutional right to do so.

It is not uncommon for victims of tragedies to search for third-parties to blame. This is a fairly normative and common human response. Families of suicide victims and crime perpetrators alike naturally wish to deflect feelings of guilt themselves have. Unfortunately, it also does much to deflect responsibility from the actual individuals who make choices to harm themselves or others.

In 1985 Tipper Gore, wife of former vice-president Al Gore and four other women formed the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) to pressure the recording industry to voluntarily put warning labels on albums with explicit lyrics, including those with violent or sexual content. The PMRC took a strong “media effects” position, arguing that the lyrics in music and images in music video would simultaneously frighten children and lead to increases in violence, rape, sadomasochism, suicide, masturbation (the Cyndi Lauper song “She Bop” was particularly singled out) and Satanism.

The PMRC was also concerned about alleged backwards lyrics, also called *backmasking* and accused bands ranging from Iron Maiden to Styx of including backmasking on their albums. In 1990 the band Judas Priest was sued for the suicide deaths of two young men. Allegedly the band had included the backmasked words “do it” on one of their albums. The suit was dismissed. Vocalist Rob Halford later commented that including subliminal messages on their albums inciting their fans to kill themselves was absurd. If they were going to include subliminal backmasked messages “Buy more of our records” would have been a more apt choice.

The PMRC succeeded in getting hearings before the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation committee, and also succeeded in getting some stores such as Wal-Mart to refuse to sell albums with explicit lyrics. Ultimately the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) agreed to put parental advisory stickers on some albums voluntarily. Much skepticism remains regarding whether the stickers are terribly effective. They may give albums a certain “forbidden fruit” quality and actually increase sales...ironically encouraging musicians themselves to include more explicit lyrics. The PMRC itself has also been exposed to considerable criticism for its advocacy of censorship and “nanny state” politics.

One article reported on a series of small studies of undergraduates who were exposed to music with either violent or nonviolent lyrics (Anderson, Canagey, & Eubanks, 2003). Students were asked to report either how hostile they were feeling, or complete word pronunciation or word completion tasks such as filling in the missing letters of words. Small effects were found for listening to violent songs. However, several important limitations of this study are worth noting. First, these studies were conducted with nonviolent college students who may have been able to guess the study hypotheses and adhere to demand characteristics. Secondly, and more important, no measures of aggressive or violent behavior were included as outcome variables. Other studies have found opposite results, with no effect for violent lyrics on mood (Ballard & Coates, 1995; St. Lawrence, & Joyner, 1991), although these have similar problems as the Anderson, Carnagey, and Eubanks (2003) paper.

Another study found somewhat mixed results (Wester, Crown, Quatman, & Heesacker, 1997) exposed male undergraduate students either to sexually violent rap music or to the same music without lyrics. White students were specifically chosen given the belief that white students are unlikely to listen to rap (although it is not clear that this is true) and thus would have little previous exposure to such music. No effects were found regarding students’ attitudes toward women. However, students exposed to the violent lyrics did report having more adversarial relations with their female partners. Limits of this study include the small ($n=60$) undergraduate sample and absence of measures of aggressive behavior. Other studies have found small effects for watching violent music videos on hostile mood

(Johnson, Adams, Ashburn, & Reed, 1995a; Johnson, Jackson, & Gatto, 1995b) although once again effects are small and there is an absence of valid measures of aggressive behavior.

Fischer and Greitemeyer (2006) attempted to correct for this oversight with several studies including a laboratory of aggressive behavior. In these studies the “hot sauce” aggression measure, involving the administration of spicy sauce to confederates, who ostensibly must then taste the sauce was used as the aggression measure. Both men and women exposed to lyrics that were negative toward the other sex administered more hot-sauce to opposite-sex confederates. Unfortunately, the hot-sauce aggression measure has been specifically criticized as lacking validity (Ritter & Eslea, 2005). As with other studies in this area the use of undergraduate students and potential demand characteristics also limit the generalizability of the results.

Other research has found that music can reduce aggression in real-life situations (Wisenthal, Hennessey, & Totten, 2003). The authors of this study randomized adult drivers either to listen to music or to remain in silence during commutes. The authors found that drivers listening to music reported lower aggressive feelings during traffic congestion than did those who drove in silence. Although this provides a rare real-world glimpse into the influence of music on aggression, the study is limited in several respects. First the authors did not distinguish music with violent lyrics from that with nonviolent lyrics. Furthermore, drivers in the “silence” group may have been frustrated due to being prevented from engaging in their normal music listening behaviors. In other words, drivers who prefer silence may not see similar increases in aggressive feelings. Finally, once again, no measure of aggressive behavior was offered.

Although expressing concern about the increased explicitness of rock and rap music lyrics, the American Academy of Pediatrics has noted that no studies have demonstrated cause and effect harmful effects of music lyrics exist (AAP, 1996). As noted by the AAP, this may be in part because, much of the time, the lyrics are too hard to decipher in the first place.

8.5 Religious Writings

It is no secret that many religious writings such as the Christian Bible contain significant passages containing violent content. Some have argued that religion and religious texts may increase violent behavior when religion appears to sanction violence (e.g., Juergensmeyer, 2003). Few empirical studies have examined this issue, although at least one article has attempted to link reading the Bible with increased aggressive behavior (Bushman, Ridge, Das, Key, & Busath, 2007). The researchers report on two studies, one at Brigham Young University (a predominantly Mormon university with a high proportion of students who believe in God) and one study in the Netherlands. In both studies, participants read violent passages from the Old Testament. The passage was obscure, one that most students would be unlikely to recognize. Half of the participants were told that it was from the Bible, the other half from an obscure scroll. Half of the students read a version that included passages in

which God appears to approve of retaliatory war and killing of other groups. The other half did not read the violence sanctioning passage. Participants then completed the “noise blast” TCRTT discussed in previous chapters. Those who read the passage suggesting that God sanctioned violence delivered slightly louder noise blasts than those who did not read this passage. Effects were very small, particularly for the Brigham Young University study⁴ although results for the Dutch study were only slightly larger.⁵ The weaknesses of this study should be readily apparent. Nonviolent college students were used. The potential for demand characteristics are high. The TCRTT used has been well documented to have validity problems as a measure of aggression (Ferguson & Rueda, 2009). Thus, its results should be taken with a considerable grain of salt.

The Bushman et al. (2007) study is important for another reason, however. This study, using passages from the Bible as the “violent media” and using methods similar to other media violence studies finds effects that are on order with those of television and video games. Given that cultural conservatives make up a considerable proportion of those who advocate the censorship of violent media from children, if Bushman et al. are to be believed, this censorship should extend to portions of the Bible itself. The Old Testament is replete with violent depictions, and the central event of the New Testament is the explicit torture and execution of Christ. Those who endorse media violence research vis-a-vis the censorship of television or video games risk finding themselves in a hypocritical position if they do not extend this view to religious writings such as the Bible as well, if those writings contain significant violent content. By contrast if one concludes that one set of this research is seriously flawed, it must be flawed for all forms of media, not just religious writing.

8.6 Conclusions

As television and video games have absorbed most of the attention of media violence researchers, other forms of media have received considerably less research. In examining what research does exist, several conclusions can be reached:

- Results from most other forms of research are inconsistent at best.
- The use of actual measures of aggressive behavior are less frequent for other media than for video games and television.
- The research itself appears to follow societal panics. In other words, as society panicked about the potential effects of television, and then video games, these forms of media received considerable research attention, whereas other media were ignored. This observation fits with concerns by some scholars that media violence research largely responds to and is influenced by societal moral panics (Gauntlett, 1995; Grimes, Anderson, & Bergen, 2008).

⁴ $r = 0.11$

⁵ $r = 0.26$

- Whatever one's opinion is of media violence research, its effect extend not only to media of social concern such as television and video games, but also to socially endorsed media, particularly the Bible. One cannot separate one's feelings about one set of media from another.

Although other forms of media get less attention than television, video games and pornography, the same pattern of strengths and weaknesses can be seen within them. Indeed, what is most interesting is how the same pattern plays out over and over. Societal concerns about a new media predate scholarly efforts. Initial scholarly efforts often demonstrate significant methodological weaknesses, yet often they are quickly promoted to the status of public health concerns. Gradually, however, society becomes increasingly comfortable with the new media and concerns die away. Scholars who made the most extreme statements, such as Wertham in the case of comic books, are often left holding the bag.

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