A different(ial) perspective: How social context influences the media violence-aggression relationship among early adolescents

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Does violence on television and in games make teens more aggressive? The answer is subject to passionate debates among parents, children, journalists, and academics. Some of them are convinced that youth become more aggressive after playing Call of Duty or watching Game of Thrones, and others are equally convinced that this is not the case. Rather than assuming that effects of media violence on aggression are the same for all teens, this dissertation investigated which adolescents may be more vulnerable to media violence. To that end, this dissertation asked how the social context of adolescents – their family, parents, and peers – influences the relationship between media violence and aggression. The dissertation reports the results of five empirical studies based on data from circa 500 Dutch families with children between 10 and 14 years old. By applying a different(ial) perspective to the classic question of media violence and aggression, this dissertation offers new insights and a step towards a more balanced understanding of media violence effects.

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