

The Cambridge Handbook of Violent Behavior and Aggression

Second Edition

The Cambridge Handbook of Violent Behavior and Aggression presents the current state of knowledge related to the study of violent behaviors and aggression. An important extension of the first Handbook published ten years ago, the second edition maintains a distinctly cross-disciplinary focus by representing the newest scholarship and insights from behavior genetics, cross-cultural comparative psychology/criminology, evolutionary psychology, criminal justice, criminology, human development, molecular genetics, neurosciences, psychology, prevention and intervention sciences, psychiatry, psychopharmacology, public health, and sociology. The Handbook is divided into introductory and overview chapters on the study of violent behavior and aggression, followed by chapters on biosocial bases, individual and interpersonal factors, contextual factors, and prevention and intervention work and policy implications. It is an essential resource for researchers, scholars, and graduate students across social and behavioral science disciplines interested in the etiology, intervention, and prevention of violent behavior and aggression.

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Second Edition

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We dedicate this book to our children Alexander, Philip, Marc, and Katarina (AV); Joseph, Patrick, Ellen, and Katie (DF); Jamison, Landon, and Finley (MD)

Each of you continues to both test and surprise us!

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Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Contents

<i>List of Contributors</i>	<i>page xi</i>
<i>Introduction: The Cambridge Handbook of Violent Behavior and Aggression</i>	xv
ALEXANDER T. VAZSONYI, DANIEL J. FLANNERY, AND MATT DELISI	
Part I Introduction and Overview	
1 Origins of Violent Behavior over the Life Span	3
DAVID P. FARRINGTON	
2 Longitudinal Study of Personality and Social Development: Insights about Aggression after Five Decades	31
LEA PULKKINEN	
3 A Life-Course Model for the Development of Intimate Partner Violence	52
J. MARK EDDY, JEAN SCHUMER, JOANN WU SHORTT, DEBORAH M. CAPALDI, STACEY S. TIBERIO, AND SABINA LOW	
4 The Dark Violence Hybrid: The Cross-Cultural Validation of an Integrative Model	65
AURELIO JOSÉ FIGUEREDO, EMILY ANNE PATCH, MARISOL PEREZ-RAMOS, AND GABRIELA JACQUELINE CRUZ	
Part II Biosocial Foundations of Violence and Aggression	
5 The Behavioral Genetics of Aggression and Violent Behavior	83
J. C. BARNES AND JORIM TIELBEEK	
6 Neuroimaging Evidence of Violence and Aggression	106
HEATHER MCLERNON, JEREMY FEIGER, AND ROBERT SCHUG	
7 Biosocial Bases of Aggression and Antisocial Behavior	125
JILL PORTNOY	
8 The Neuropsychology of Violence	136
JEAN R. SÉGUIN, LINDA BOOIJ, AND SCOTT O. LILIENFELD	
	vii

viii	Contents	
9	The Interaction of Nature and Nurture in Antisocial Behavior MATT DELISI	159
10	The Neurobiology of Bullying Victimization TRACY VAILLANCOURT	175
11	Molecular Genetics of Aggression and Violent Crime CASHEN M. BOCCIO, MARIANNA MCBRIDE, AND KEVIN M. BEAVER	187
12	Biosocial Foundations of Drug Abuse and Violent Delinquency MICHAEL G. VAUGHN, CHRISTOPHER P. SALAS-WRIGHT, AND JENNIFER M. REINGLE-GONZALEZ	206
13	Personality and Aggression: A General Trait Perspective COURTLAND S. HYATT, CHELSEA E. SLEEP, BRANDON M. WEISS, AND JOSHUA D. MILLER	221
	Part III Individual and Interpersonal Factors for Violence and Aggression	
14	Applying Empirically Based Trait Models to an Understanding of Personality and Violence DANIEL M. BLONIGEN AND CHRISTOPHER J. PATRICK	241
15	Social-Cognitive Processes in the Development of Antisocial and Violent Behavior BRIAN ENJAIAN, SARAH BETH BELL, ZACHARY WHITT, AND C. NATHAN DEWALL	259
16	Violent Juvenile Offenders: A Psychiatric and Mental Health Perspective MARCEL AEBI AND HANS-CHRISTOPH STEINHAUSEN	278
17	Self-Control Theory and Criminal Violence MICHAEL R. GOTTFREDSON	301
18	Peers and Aggression: From Description to Prevention FRANK VITARO, MARA BRENDGEN, AND MICHEL BOIVIN	324
19	Developmental Processes of Resilience and Risk for Aggression and Conduct Problems J. J. CUTULI, JORGE M. CARVALHO PEREIRA, SARAH C. VRABIC, AND JANETTE E. HERBERS	345
20	Child Abuse and Neglect TAMARA DEL VECCHIO, RICHARD E. HEYMAN, AMY M. SMITH SLEP, AND HEATHER M. FORAN	366
21	The Role of Gender in Violent and Aggressive Behaviors JAMIE M. OSTROV AND KRISTIN J. PERRY	382

	Contents	ix
22	Lessons Learned: Serial Sex Offenders Identified from Backlogged Sexual Assault Kits (SAKs) RACHEL LOVELL, DANIEL J. FLANNERY, AND MISTY LUMINAIS	399
23	Research on Social Structure and Cross-National Homicide Rates MEGHAN L. ROGERS AND WILLIAM ALEX PRIDEMORE	418
24	Preventing Violent Crimes by Reducing Wrongful Convictions BRIAN FORST AND C. RONALD HUFF	438
25	Strain Theory and Violent Behavior ROBERT AGNEW AND BYONGOOK MOON	453
26	On Cumulative Childhood Traumatic Exposure and Violence/ Aggression: The Implications of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) MICHAEL T. BAGLIVIO	467
Part IV Contextual Factors for Violence and Aggression		
27	Youth Gangs and Violent Behavior VICTOR MORA AND SCOTT H. DECKER	491
28	Social Networks and Violence MARK S. FLEISHER AND CHRISTOPHER C. MCCARTY	513
29	The Contagion of Violence L. ROWELL HUESMANN	527
30	School Violence GARY D. GOTTFREDSON AND DENISE C. GOTTFREDSON	557
31	Violence and Culture in the United States MARK WARR	575
32	Violence Prevention in a Global Context: Progress and Priorities for Moving Forward LINDA L. DAHLBERG, ALEXANDER BUTCHART, AND CHRISTOPHER MIKTON	589
33	Terrorism as a Form of Violence KEVIN R. CARRIERE, GEORGIA GARNEY, AND FATHALI M. MOGHADDAM	626
34	Psychopharmacology of Violence JAN VOLAVKA AND LESLIE CITROME	645
35	Individual, Family, Neighborhood, and Regional Poverty/ Socioeconomic Status and Exposure to Violence in the Lives of Children and Adolescents: Considering the Global North and South HOLLY FOSTER AND JEANNE BROOKS-GUNN	654

x	Contents	
36	Firearms and Violence	687
	BRANDON TURCHAN AND ANTHONY A. BRAGA	
	Part V Looking Toward the Future	
37	The Interrelationship of Self-Control and Violent Behavior: Pathways and Policies	711
	BRIE DIAMOND, JENNIFER R. GONZALEZ, WESLEY JENNINGS, AND ALEX R. PIQUERO	
38	The New Frontier: Leveraging Innovative Technologies to Prevent Bullying	724
	CATHERINE P. BRADSHAW, LINDSEY M. O'BRENNAN, TRACY E. WAASDORP, ELISE PAS, JULIA BLUMENSTYK, DANIELLE BARTOLO, AND STEPHEN S. LEFF	
39	Neural Substrates of Youth and Adult Antisocial Behavior	736
	REBECCA WALLER, HAILEY L. DOTTERER, LAURA MURRAY, AND LUKE W. HYDE	
40	Research Designs and Methods for Evaluating and Refining Interventions for Youth Violence Prevention	756
	ALBERT D. FARRELL AND KRISTA R. MEHARI	
41	New Directions in Research on Violence: Bridging Science, Practice, and Policy	777
	ALEXANDER T. VAZSONYI, DANIEL J. FLANNERY, AND MATT DELISI	
	<i>Index</i>	791

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[More Information](#)

Contributors		xiii
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Introduction: The Cambridge Handbook of Violent Behavior and Aggression

Alexander T. Vazsonyi, Daniel J. Flannery, and Matt DeLisi

The second edition of *The Cambridge Handbook of Violent Behavior and Aggression* represents an important extension of the first Handbook, published ten years ago. We believe we have been able to compile the current state of the art and state of our knowledge related to the study of violent behavior and aggression. As we did with the first edition, we maintain the distinctly cross-disciplinary focus, represented by the newest scholarship and insights from behavior genetics, cross-cultural comparative psychology/criminology, evolutionary psychology, criminal justice, criminology, human development, molecular genetics, neurosciences, psychology, prevention and intervention sciences, psychiatry, psychopharmacology, public health, and sociology. We find that this feature is paramount as our understanding of violent behavior and aggression is informed by a multitude of efforts originating from across all these areas of study and disciplines.

Each editor brought to this Handbook different and unique strengths, experiences, and networks of colleagues, which proved critical to being able to successfully recruit the current panel of expert contributors. We were quite fortunate to be able to add Matt DeLisi to our editorial team – he was essential in making the Handbook what it is, in so many different ways. We

maintained a similar structure of the Handbook, which is divided into (1) introductory and overview chapters on the study of violent behavior and aggression; (2) chapters focused on biosocial bases; (3) individual and interpersonal factors; (4) contextual factors; and finally, (5) a section on “looking toward the future” that includes four content chapters in addition to a conclusion by the editors, which examines prevention work, intervention efforts, and policy implications moving forward. We omitted a section we had included in the first edition focused on research methodology for studying violent behavior in favor of adding new content, in particular the research on biological bases of violence that has emerged over the past decade, but also with insights looking to the future, related to prevention and intervention efforts. In addition to an entirely new chapter content in a number of contributions, including the editors’ conclusion chapter, new chapters were included on the molecular genetics of aggression and violent crime, on lessons learned from serial sex offenders based on a backlog of sexual assault kits, and on insights about the development of aggression and violence over the life-course, based on long-term longitudinal work from Finland. Each of these contributions, from an internationally renowned panel of experts in their

respective fields, contains important new information.

We believe that the current Handbook continues to differentiate itself from other related work in the published literature and to occupy a unique position in scholarship focused on violent behavior and aggression, by its particular cross-disciplinary focus, by both an in-depth and focused treatment of the study of violent behavior and aggression, and by considering these behaviors across the lifespan of human development, rather than focusing on particular developmental periods. In this sense, the current Cambridge Handbook represents a unique resource for researchers and scholars, but also for graduate students across social and behavioral science disciplines interested in the study and etiology of violent behavior and aggression.

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The cover of the Handbook is Franz Marc’s “Fighting Forms” (1914), inspired by the artist’s experiences related to World War I, which would also ultimately lead to his demise, in 1916 near Verdun, France.