

## The Science of Violent Behavior Development and Prevention

This book describes the lives of twelve people born in Europe and North America during the Second World War. They became leading scholars on the development and prevention of violent human behavior. From the first to the last page, the book introduces contrasting life stories and shows how the paths of these scholars crossed, allowing them to create a relatively unified body of knowledge regarding how human violence develops and how it might be prevented. The authors describe the similarities and differences in their family backgrounds, university training, theories, and collaborations – not to mention how they differ in research methods and scientific conclusions, and their influence on the research published today. These comparisons celebrate the diversity of their experiences as well as their achievements. Knowing their stories, you can stand on the shoulders of these giants to look to the future of this subject and potentially contribute to its next steps.

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# The Science of Violent Behavior Development and Prevention

*Contributions of the Second World War  
Generation*

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*Edited by*

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## Preface

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The publication of this book was planned for the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War II. The **first** aim of the book is to describe the research of 12 scientists, born during World War II, who made important contributions to the advancement of knowledge on the development and prevention of violent behavior, defined as *the use of physical force against others*. The **second** aim is to describe the life-course development of these 12 scientists through autobiographies. The **third** aim is to place their scientific contributions within the past 2,500 years of the philosophical and scientific history of knowledge on violence and its prevention. The **fourth** aim is to understand their scientific contributions within the social and technological changes of the past 75 years, which brought together individuals who were born in countries that were on opposite sides during World War II (Canada, Finland, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United States) and who have managed, over the last 50 years, to collectively advance knowledge on the development and prevention of violent behavior. The **fifth** aim is to present the points of view of younger investigators concerning the scientific contributions of the World War II babies and the research agenda for the next few decades.

Thus, there are four important historical perspectives to this book: **First, world history** from the 1939–1945 war to the major social, technological, financial, and scientific changes that unfolded over the following 75 years; **second, the history of research on violent behavior**, to which the book's authors eventually made numerous key contributions; **third, the personal and professional history of the World War II babies**, who became highly productive scientists; and, **fourth, the life course development of the children** the authors followed with their longitudinal and experimental studies.

The authors describe the circumstances of their births between 1939 and 1945, the education they received, the studies they designed, and the collaborations they created to understand and prevent the development of human violence. The book provides an excellent description of the present state of knowledge regarding the development and prevention of

violent behavior, from early childhood onward. **It also gives a unique inside view on the development of the scientists, the development of scientific collaborations, the development of the science of behavior development, and the development of experimental preventive interventions.**

The book clearly highlights the slow but effective creation of an interdisciplinary bio-psycho-social approach to understanding human development and preventing the development of violent behavior. From this perspective, it should be required reading for students in criminology, education, law, pediatrics, psychiatry, psychology, public health, and social work.

There is no doubt that two classic philosophers, Thomas Hobbes and Aristotle, would have recommended this book. First, it attempts to understand and prevent what Hobbes described as the original state of humanity: **'war of all against all'**. Second, the common method used by the investigators follows Aristotle's main conclusion concerning scientific investigations: 'He who considers things in their first growth and origin, ... will obtain the clearest view of them'.

### Why Is This Book Original?

**First**, it is written by scientists who were born when their countries were involved in World War II and who created ongoing longitudinal and experimental studies in order to understand the development and prevention of violent behavior.

**Second**, the authors describe the advances in their research domain in line with their own scientific careers, starting from early childhood education through elementary, secondary, and university education. These descriptions allow the reader to understand the development of the theories, methods, and findings based on the autobiographies of the main contributors. Interestingly, these stories show that the lives and work of successful scientists are largely dependent on serendipity.

**Third**, because the authors of the different chapters worked on related topics, and often collaborated, the reader will be able to understand how the networking of scientists from different countries contributed to the development of an interdisciplinary science of violent behavior development and prevention.

### Why Should This Book Be Read?

1. For the pleasure of reading biographies of successful humans.
2. To understand the developmental trajectories of high-achieving scientists born in Europe and North America during the Second World War.

3. To understand the development of international cooperation among scientists over the past 50 years.
4. To understand how younger scientists perceive the contributions of the World War II babies.
5. To understand the development of the science of violent behavior prevention from antiquity to the 21st century.

### **How Should This Book Be Read?**

1. **Like a novel** from the first to the last page. The reader will discover 12 main actors. Although each has his or her own very different story, their paths eventually crossed, and they produced a network of scientists who created a relatively unified body of knowledge concerning human development and the prevention of behavior problems.
2. **Like a textbook**, where you focus on specific questions. For example, what are the similarities and differences in the scientists' family backgrounds? In their university training? In their theories? In their collaborations? In their research methods? In their conclusions? What influence do they have on research published today? How will this field of research evolve over the next 30 years?