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**Interdisciplinary Institute for
Conflict and Violence Research**

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(Editors)

Handbook of Research on Violence

Westview Press (USA)
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1. Why Such a Book?

Studies on violence in modern western societies have multiplied in recent years. Possible reasons for this are not only a new awareness but also gradual or temporary increases in various types of violence, the return of past forms of violence, or the ways in which the phenomenon has shifted to different sectors of society.

Both social and political concern has therefore led to the publication of comprehensive surveys such as the Violence Report of the German Federal Government or regular reports like those published in the United States.

At the same time, it is remarkable that no handbook of research on violence is available in either English or German-speaking countries. Up to now, the handbooks on the market address only specific fields such as violence in the family.

The increase in violence and the lack of any broad overview of research on the topic in all its complexity are the reasons underlying the present outline of a handbook of research on violence that should summarize the current international situation.

2. Individual Disciplines and a Transdisciplinary Perspective

Because of the complexity of the phenomenon of violence, it makes sense to include numerous disciplines. Nonetheless, compiling a handbook calls for clear conceptual decisions. The preferred choice here is for a variant focusing on one central discipline around which other relevant disciplines can be grouped.

This central discipline should provide the systematic structure of the handbook, whereas empirical, exemplary, problem-related contributions should come from a selection of relevant scientific disciplines. This means that the systematic and problem-related contributions will differ in style.

This outline focuses on the social sciences with their broad range of empirical research. This is the perspective used to formulate the phenomena and concepts, and the theoretical approaches available in this discipline will form the frame of reference.

The design extends this frame of reference by including seven relevant disciplines. It is assumed that the findings generated by these disciplines can also be taken up again in the systematic contributions from the social sciences that follow them. This implies a transdisciplinary perspective which "borrows" from various relevant disciplines. The selected disciplines are philosophy, cultural science, jurisprudence, political science, psychology, history and social biology.

3. The Heart of the Handbook: Violence From the Perspective of the Social Sciences

The heart of the handbook will be the study of violence from the perspective of the social sciences. However, even within this single discipline, violence proves to be such a complex phenomenon that a presentation of the state of research in problem-adequate ways depends decisively on how the phenomena are grouped. This arrangement has to reflect the complexity of the phenomenon and derive from the basic approach to describing and explaining violence in the discipline.

This basic principle is to conceive violence as a social phenomenon. Consequently, violence is viewed as any destructive activities that arise in conflicts through a network of individual or collective actors, institutional conditions, and public or private opportunity structures in conjunction with structures of meaning (including political outlooks) as well as particular group memberships.

In such a conception, varying interaction-elements (because the total network of interaction is not involved in every variant of violence) are coupled with situations (different conflicts) and associated with different dynamics.

Organizing the handbook according to a conception that is in line with the central discipline takes sufficient account of the complexity of the phenomenon and avoids any inappropriate narrowing down to, for example, one "explanatory model." This is particularly crucial for a handbook, because it should not favor or promote, for example, one explanatory approach, but present the state of knowledge in the broadest possible terms so that contradictory findings and gaps in research become apparent.

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5. The Formal Framework

The handbook will contain approximately 60 articles. They should describe the State of the Art. The paper shall not have more than 50.000 signs (including blanks).

The articles of this handbook shall have the same formal structure. Please organize your paper in the following way:

1. **Introduction** (6.000 signs)

An introduction to the topic and an explanation of central concepts. Differences in defining concepts should be clarified. This is particularly important because of the strong variations in meaning in concepts of violence. For example, it can be assumed that psychological violence is assigned a higher status in (personalized) family relations than in groups or gangs.

2. **Theoretical Approaches and Empirical Results** (30.000 signs)

This should be followed by the treatment of *theoretical* approaches and, when necessary, *methodological approaches* to the phenomenon of violence in question. Within this framework, selected major research, that is, *definitive studies* on the topic (from different research traditions) and corresponding *key statements* should be presented and discussed.

3. **Desiderata** (6.000 signs)

This should be followed by identifying current controversies and future requirements in the reported approaches and studies.

4. **Approaches of Prevention** (3.000 signs)

Finally, relevant prevention approaches should be sketched briefly for the specific field.

5. **Bibliography** (5.000 signs)

On the two following pages you can find some instructions for citation. The first page concerns the citation within the text. The second page concerns the bibliography.

Finally, please, give a short description of your person, your institution and your current activities.

zutrittsbarrieren im Printbereich haben zu keinen nennenswerten politischen Maßnahmen geführt (vgl. Kopper 1984). Politische Steuerung im privatwirtschaftlichen Sektor kann sich ohnehin eher generell, also zumeist indirekt sowie entlang ökonomischer Konfliktlinien und über merkative Institutionen, vollziehen. Bezogen auf den privatwirtschaftlich organisierten Pressemarkt erweist sich das politisch-administrative System mit seinem traditionellen Steuerungsinstrumentarium insgesamt als (relativ) unfähig zur aktiven Gestaltung und zur vorsorglichen Intervention (vgl. Jarren 1996). Insbesondere strukturreformierende Maßnahmen lassen sich unter diesen Bedingungen nur schwer durchsetzen. Grund hierfür ist die in empirischer Hinsicht schwierige Feststellung von publizistischen „Fehlleistungen“. Zudem kann dies kaum eine Angelegenheit des Staates selbst sein. Vielmehr bedarf es dazu staatsferner, unabhängiger Organisationen. Ein weiteres Problem ist, dass die Feststellung von „Fehlleistungen“ öffentlich erfolgen und auch eine gewisse öffentliche Zustimmung erhalten muss, wenn sie für die Politik handlungsrelevant werden soll. Die Politik ist damit zum einen auf die Feststellung von Fehlleistungen durch Dritte und zum anderen auf die Thematisierung entsprechender Befunde in den Medien angewiesen. Doch um die medienkritische Berichterstattung und Reflexion innerhalb der Medien ist es bekanntlich nicht gut bestellt (vgl. Neidhardt 1994: 11f.): So ist durch Fallstudien empirisch belegt, dass in medienpolitischen Fragen die Darstellung innerhalb der publizistischen Produkte eines Konzerns relativ homogen ist. Zudem folgt die Kommentierung vielfach den Interessen des Unternehmens (vgl. Weiß/Gramatin 1985; Weiß 1988).

Zu den größeren Regelungsproblemen in der Pressepolitik der Bundesrepublik gehörten die Pressekonzentration (vor allem Regional- und Lokalzeitungen) und die Erhaltung „publizistischer Vielfalt“ (z.B. durch Absicherung der „inneren Pressefreiheit“). Erst durch die Thematisierung in der Gesellschaft wurde der Problemkomplex zu einem relevanten politischen Thema. Doch seit der großen öffentlichen Debatte um die Folgen der Pressekonzentration in den 60er und 70er Jahren sind – abgesehen von Änderungen in Landespressegesetzen (u.a. im Saarland) – keine nennenswerten politischen Initiativen mehr ergriffen worden. Das trifft auch auf das Entstehen von zahlreichen Zeitungsmonopolgebieten in den neuen Bundesländern nach der Vereinigung der beiden deutschen Staaten zu (vgl. Schneider 1991). In der pressepolitischen Akteursstruktur haben sich in jüngster Zeit durch die Beteiligung von Zeitungsverlagen am Rundfunk sowie durch die Beteiligung branchenfremder Gruppen an Pressehäusern Veränderungen ergeben. Das „cross-owner ship“-Problem ist zwar erkannt, aber bislang noch nicht medienpolitisch angegangen worden (z.B. Rundfunkstaatsvertrag) (vgl. Engels 1996). Pressepolitische Fragen haben an öffentlicher Aufmerksamkeit verloren.

4 Medienpolitische Kommunikation: Akteure und Kommunikationsformen

Sowohl in der Presse- als auch in der Rundfunkpolitik kommt für politische Aktivitäten des politisch-administrativen Systems öffentlichen Debatten eine zentrale Bedeutung zu. Pressepolitik als „reaktiv-kasuistische“ Politik (Saxer 1981: 78) ist sogar in beson-

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and the Deviant; a Radical View, and has edited or coedited *Madhouses, Mad-Doctors, and Madmen; Social Control and the State; Durkheim and the Law; and Research in Law, Deviance, and Social Control*, Vols. 6-9. His articles have appeared in leading journals in sociology, history, psychiatry, and law. In 1976-1977 he held a fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies at the University of London. He was a fellow of the Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies at Princeton University during 1978-1979, and a Guggenheim Fellow in 1981-1982.

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