VIOLENCE

An Interdisciplinary Approach to Causes, Consequences, and Cures

BANDY X. LEE

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To my mother, the healer whose work I continue
To Dr. Howard Zonana, in gratitude

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Preface

This volume aims to be an introductory textbook on a single topic that is an offspring of many fields—a topic of rapid growth in information and research but lacking in overall guidance. It may surprise some that a single author should undertake a text of such wide-ranging disciplines. However, as even a thousand-page thesis should be summarizable in a sentence, so should this project be possible. It seems indispensable for coherence and consolidation in this day of disparate scholarship. No doubt there will be compromises, since it will not be possible to do justice to every topic, but my hope is that the benefits are many: what we greatly need in our day is a unified framework capable of bringing our knowledge to completion and not just ever more pockets of complete knowledge.

Such a framework, I believe, is akin to teaching students to fish and feeding them for a lifetime. Students will learn to build a perspective for placing existing knowledge and advancing information in context, and this will prepare them for new developments, which are swiftly to come. It is natural for specialists of every area to believe that theirs is of central importance, but with the burgeoning of fields and subfields, an ability to integrate knowledge and to converse with other fields, more so than knowing more and more about less and less, has become an essential skill. Eventually, students will develop better ways to fish.

Human violence is a phenomenon that disciplines us in this way, due to its complexity and urgency—which require all our capacity for sufficient understanding and efficient application. We now know more than ever about the genetic, interpersonal, cultural, and structural causes of violence. Yet, seldom are the advances of multiple disciplines brought together under a single rubric. The purpose of this text is to present an integrative and interactionist, rather than a reductionist, approach to the study of violence, so as to prepare the student for such integration.

Aristotle observed that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, to which I would add that synergy works better than fragmentation. While there will always be a need for new and better data, it is equally important to take an occasional pause to appraise the data we already have. A coherent body of knowledge—insofar as is possible—can give the student bearing with respect to what is important, which questions to ask, and how everything fits together. Persistent practice that builds on such groundwork may even go beyond knowledge to achieve wisdom.

This text assumes no previous exposure to the study of violence. It might serve as a comprehensive overview before delving into whatever field students choose: criminal violence reduction, conflict resolution, legal interventions, global health ethics, or human rights advocacy. It can also be a guideline for bringing together the disparate information one ordinarily has to study piecemeal. In order to make the material accessible, as well as to encourage an interdisciplinary conversation, this book has a unique structure: it starts not with a list of topics but domains of research, starting with the most basic but not implying a

hierarchy in either direction. Each chapter attempts to explain how its topic relates to the others.

This volume contains enough material for a one-year course. It could also be taught as a semester course, with an emphasis on broad concepts. Each chapter constitutes a unit of understanding with an overview, summary, and discussion questions. The progression of the chapters goes from a general introduction (Part I) to the intra- and interpersonal framework (Part II) to the social and societal framework (Part III) to consequences (Part IV), interventions (Part V) and prevention (Part VI), and then back to a general synthesis and integration (Part VII). Thematically, it covers biological, psychological and symbolic, sociocultural and political, and structural and environmental perspectives on violence; consequences of violence; and legal, medical, and nonviolent approaches to preventing violence, before putting it all together.

The purpose of a textbook is to compile existing information and to present it in the most reasonable way based on current knowledge. I expect that this will entail a letting go of many doctrines inherent in the particular fields and a deeper look at human nature than may be initially comfortable. It will challenge our ordinary notions of responsibility and require us to expand our notion of boundaries to include wider segments of scholarship as well as of society. However, the point is to equip the aspiring student with a broad range of material and an analytical armamentarium that will bolster efforts to arrive at one's own conclusions—and to cultivate that ability.

I believe in my institution's motto: *Lux et Veritas*, or light and truth. The purpose of education is not to inculcate a certain "truth" but to provide the learner with the "light" that is required to see one's own truth. If this text fulfills its purpose, it will not only teach content but the tools for learning, which the student can apply to other areas of life. A body of knowledge can change entirely over the course of a career, but this aptitude remains. True knowledge transcends mere accumulation of facts to become understanding, and inner sight. Therefore, while this is perhaps the first text of its scope for an emerging field, my hope is that it will not be the last—for each new generation has the task of restructuring and redefining knowledge for itself.

No ideas are freshly one's own. This applies especially here, for I am fortunate to stand on the shoulders of many giants: first and foremost, my long-term teacher, mentor, colleague, and friend, Dr James Gilligan, who taught me everything I know, and whose many thoughts I echo, however imperfectly; Dr Robert Jay Lifton, who gave me light in times of darkness; Dr Leon Eisenberg, who was my first inspiration and terrific mentor; Dr Arthur Kleinman, who encouraged me to do my own scholarship; Dr Kathy Sanders, who saw me through that transition; Dr Judith Herman, who accompanied me through another transition; Drs Howard Zonana and Madelon Baranoski, who gave me a home and nurtured my growth; Dr John Young, who came to all my lectures and supported me; and Dr Bruce Wexler, who guided and believed in me from my very beginnings as a medical student. I appreciate Drs Sylvia Kaaya, Jessie Mbwambo, Gad Kilonzo, and the villagers of Chamazi who gave me glimpses of the level of humanity that is possible, in peaceful Tanzania. I am also grateful to Drs Kaveh Khoshnood, James Leckman, and Catherine Panter-Brick for being my chief partners on this topic, as well as Drs Alexander Butchart, Etienne Krug, Christopher Mikton, and Berit Kieselbach at the World Health Organization Violence and Injury Prevention Department. I owe a great debt to the guest lecturers of my course who gave me feedback and offered essential guidance in their disciplines: Drs John Strauss, James Leckman (biology), Elijah Anderson (sociology), Francesca Grandi, David Simon (political science), Thomas Pogge, Atty James Silk (human rights), Dr Amity Doolittle (environmental studies), Prof Jonathan Schell (nuclear violence and nonviolence), Dr Michael Reed-Hurtado, Attys Fiona Doherty (criminal justice), Noah Zatz (public interest law), Drs Maya Prabhu (international law), Kathryn Falb, Kaveh Khoshnood, and Unni

Karunakara (public health). In terms of editorial and research help, I am greatly indebted to Dr Grace Lee, Morkeh Blay-Tofey, James Tierney, Nick Oliver, and Liz Seif. I would also like to acknowledge the student deciding to embark upon this text to get to the heart of a problem that is the source of much of humanity's suffering.

All that I do has one consistent guide: my mother, Dr Inmyung Lee, who taught me half of all the medicine I know, even before I entered medical school; she also showed me that the impulse to serve humanity offers a compass for all knowledge. Because of her, I could model my life after my grandfather, Dr Geun-Young Lee, whom I never met but who came to stir my vision of healing, including of society. My mother came to play a crucial role in the work that culminated in this book. When I was originally aiming for publication in 2015 while teaching and attending a busy clinic, she offered to spend an exceptional few months with me in the spring of 2014 and helped with literature searches, brought me books, collated thousands of pages of notes, and created indices for navigation. Like the parent who helps one to give birth of one's own, she was critical in my giving birth to this book. Most influential was her wellspring of ideas and lifetime of insights, which became the rock and the foundation of this volume. Although I put my name to it, she is more the book's author than I. She would not come to see its publication, but I trust that the student will benefit from her spirit as much as I. Here is one lesson from her: "Play, play with your subject of study—by the time you learn it, this will have been the shortcut!"

To close, I wish to thank all the students, patients, and prisoners who have taught me about human potential, who have shown me reasons for hope and convinced me of possibilities. They, above all, have demonstrated to me how we are all interconnected and could learn from one another. Finally, I also thank all my other colleagues at the Harvard Department of Social Medicine and the Yale Law and Psychiatry Division, my grandmother Eun-Suk Jang, my uncles Drs Soon-Hyung Lee and Sun-Hyung Lee, and my father Dr Yoo Sung Lee, as well as my sister and family: Patricia, Alan, Mirabelle, and Blake. I also cannot leave out my spiritual family: Frank O'Cain, Rebekah Samkuel, Anne Davenport, Leon Golub, Regis DeSilva, Luc Mahieu, Franck Rolin, Sophie Dupey, Hacène-Thierry Larbi, and my beloved J.

Overview

Part I   General Framework

1

Introduction

A Brief Introduction

> Both were remembering. Thinking of Hector, killer of men,
> Priam wept, abased at the feet of Achilles.
> But Achilles wept, now for this father.
> Now for Patroclus. And their sobs resounded through the house.
>
> —*Homer,* Iliad *(Eighth century BCE)*

Human history is mired in violence. Tracing its origins would mean going back to the beginnings of humanity. Being one of the most familiar phenomena around us, hardly any society, community, or individual is immune to its influence. Yet it is also one of the most unfathomable. Even a single instance can be overwhelming—be it homicide, suicide, legal violence in the name of "justice," warfare that devastates a society, terrorism that turns our worldview upside down, or systematic injustices that become a silent killer we call "structural violence." Yet we do not experience one episode at a time but over 3,800 violent deaths per day—1.4 million a year—worldwide. Of these, more than half (56%) are the result of suicide, one-third (33%) are from injuries caused by another person, and slightly more than one-tenth (11%) are due to war or some other form of collective violence (World Health Organization [WHO], 2017). Many millions more suffer from nonfatal injuries, non-injury health consequences, and less visible forms of psychological and social trauma. For every death, there are dozens of hospitalizations, hundreds of emergency room visits, and thousands of clinic appointments (WHO, 2008). Medical technology buffers us from bigger numbers, as a large proportion of wounds that would have been fatal in the past no longer are (MacKenzie et al., 2006; Monkkonen, 2001). The true tragedy is therefore greater than what our imagination can grasp.

For the most vulnerable populations—women, children, and the elderly—nonfatal forms of violence are more frequent and consequential, and its devastating effects reverberate through generations as a major health, human rights, and human development problem. Not yet calculated, furthermore, are the diverted energies for human creativity and civilization. Ninety percent of violent deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, which draw our attention to the extreme deprivation of certain regions, while alerting us also to the dangers of high economic disparities. More subtle are the effects of concentrated poverty, low education, harsh and inconsistent parenting, and violence-promoting social norms that impede thriving in general.

We need not, however, be fatalistic about violence: as much as it is human-generated, it has human solutions. It is understandable and preventable. To this end, this text is intended to be

as comprehensive as possible, bringing together the scholarship on violence that has largely been confined in academic silos until now. We live in an era when violence has reached, perhaps for the first time in history, a level of magnitude and sophistication that is astonishingly close to being incompatible with humanity's ability to continue surviving on earth. Yet, our awareness of the gravity of violence has also grown. If we combine the knowledge we have gained about it in many fields of study, we may attain a level of understanding that equips us with the ability to deal with the problem in new and creative ways. There may be no more urgent task for humankind than to figure out, above all, *how to think about violence* (Gilligan, 1996), which in turn will direct us in *how to understand violence*. Understanding brings clarity, and clarity is power—capable of bringing solutions to problems the way light illumines darkness.

This introductory chapter lays the groundwork, first by developing a broader definition for violence and then by proposing a model that can anchor all the multiple, disparate perspectives that arise from an interdisciplinary study. Along the way, it will delineate how different forms of violence are closely interrelated; help us to recognize that our violent potential changes according to the consciousness we bring to it; and outline a comprehensive course for integrating all research. Our goal is to learn how to think about violence in a ways that suit the complex, *human* nature of human beings. The comprehensive understanding we aim for will require theory, evidence, and storytelling, the last of which the student can expect to encounter in the form of case scenarios and vignettes.

Defining Violence

Violence is vast and varied, and before studying its parts, it is important to have a clear perspective of the whole. The study of violence suffered from a lack of uniform definition for a long time, which hampered measurement, characterization, and even identification. Having no agreed-upon definition can make a field fragmented and chaotic. In pursuing clarity, however, a definition can become too narrow or fixed. An ideal definition would therefore be clear but also be flexible and hold up over time as well as across different domains.

Much confusion ended when the WHO published its landmark *World Report on Violence and Health* (Krug et al., 2002). Assembling all available evidence up to that point, it defined violence as:

> the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation *(Krug et al., 2002, p. 5).*

This new concept of violence has revolutionized our thinking about violence and has shaped approaches to the topic ever since. This sequence is worth mentioning for understanding the history and trajectory of the field and therefore how best to formulate a future course.

Some of the innovations are as follows. First, the definition emphasizes intentionality, thereby emphasizing process over outcome. Second, it includes not only physical force but also power, widening its scope to include important types of violence that may be hidden but are far more destructive, such as the violence of deprivation or unequal sharing of resources. Third, it states that the intentional act may be threatened or actual, clarifying that the focus should be less on the overt act, which may be incidental, than on the psychological state.

The inclusion of psychological harm, maldevelopment, and deprivation allows for consideration of some of the worst forms of abuse: psychological abuse, rejection, and neglect, which are less

visible but may be more enduring than physical abuse (Hildyard & Wolfe, 2002). It has also made clear that sexual violence is not merely violent sexual behavior but primarily a manifestation of violence and domination (Bastick, Grimm, & Kunz, 2007). Whether violence is direct or indirect came to matter less, although intentionality matters: human-generated events are clearly more traumatic than natural calamities (Galea, Nandi, & Vlahov, 2005; Norris et al., 2002). Sociocultural influences play a large role in human behavior and are capable of creating epidemics of individual violence (Lee, Wexler, & Gilligan, 2014).

A broad definition of violence has many advantages. It allows for recognition of the full scope of the phenomenon, which can help prevent neglect of the topic when, for example, a familiar form recedes from view. A common danger of a narrow definition is mistaking the "decline" in one form for an overall decline, when expression may have merely shifted from one type of violence to another (e.g., from interstate wars to low-intensity civil conflict, or from murder epidemics to widespread suicides). Another danger is assuming that different types of violence are unrelated or neglecting to consider large areas because of different labels, when different types can also clearly rise and fall together (e.g., suicides and homicides, or homicides and collective violence) or combine in ways that elucidate larger patterns (Lee et al., 2014). Whether a general tendency for violence directs against the self, another, or a group depends on complex factors, and hence considering all forms together would be the first step to a clearer understanding.

A comprehensive definition helps with this. A consensus needs to develop on how properly to measure and compare concepts across fields of study while such scholarship should adapt to growing bodies of research and shape future inquiry. Where violence begins and where it ends—whether it includes psychological injury, verbal abuse, rape, property damage, or accidents—are questions we have answered through careful examination of research evidence. We now know, for example, that verbal aggression can be just as traumatizing as physical violence; that sexual assault is about dominating and overpowering, not about sexuality; and that harming a person has distinct motivations exceeding those of property damage, unless the latter is to threaten or to intimidate. We also know that accidents due to general recklessness or neglect share risk factors and similar characteristics as violence, even if we do not yet categorize them as violence.

Redefining Violence

We propose a slightly expanded definition, not because of any defect in the WHO definition but because of its strength: it has allowed research to advance widely and rapidly, and therefore may require updating. For example, we know far more about *structural violence*, so called because it refers to the avoidable limitations society places on groups of people through structures that prevent them from meeting their basic needs (Gilligan, 1999). It is the most lethal form of violence and calls for foremost consideration in any definition. Structural violence may at first seem a misnomer, for it concerns structures that are relatively stable and contrasts sharply with the dramatic manifestations of behavioral violence; however, it is a product of human decisions and ultimately has effects similar to those of individual violence (Morgan et al., 2014). Market globalization, furthermore, has given rise to a more rapid flux in existing structures as well as to new ones, creating opportunities for a redistribution of rights and goods.

A second major aspect to consider is our mounting capacity for catastrophic violence, through the proliferation of thermonuclear weapons and the desecration of our natural environment.

These have reached the point of qualifying as *collective suicidal behavior*. It means little to note that we engage in fewer high-intensity battles or deadly warfare when what we now face, more than ever, is the possibility that all of humankind could be wiped out instantaneously (Drell & Goodby, 2008). The extinction of our species—as well as most other life on Earth—will now more likely result from our own actions than from forces over which we have no control. This must be part of our consideration. Human violence, therefore, is not only a serious problem but may be the *most urgent problem* that humanity now confronts, as it places our entire species at greater immediate risk than any other single phenomenon (Rosenbaum, 2011).

An updated definition should reflect this urgency so that it can capture conceptually significant dimensions of violence to guide our thinking, research, and action. The literal definition is not as important as its theoretical ability to stimulate thought and increase awareness, as we will show later in this chapter is of central importance in preventing violence. To suit the complexity of violence, a definition should be broad enough to include the most important types but still specific enough to allow for concrete application. We propose the following new working definition:

> intentional or threatened human action, either direct or through structural neglect and diminution of others, that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in human deprivation, injury, or death, or contributes to the extinction of the human species *(Lee, personal notes, 2014).*

This modifies the WHO definition by avoiding use of the word "power," despite the concept being helpful in ways that we noted earlier. Ultimately, violence is *the guise* of power rather than true power, which is its opposite (Arendt, 1970). We will cover in Chapter 3, "The Psychology of Violence," and again in later chapters how violence is a guise to ward off feelings of powerlessness.

Examples of Violence

The Iliad

The Ancient Greek tale of Homer's *Iliad* places humankind in a violent world and depicts one of its recurrent themes: war. War is taken for granted and heroism in war is hailed as the greatest of honorable acts. However, the *Iliad*'s status as a classic perhaps depends on the fact that it does not shy away from ambivalence. In doing so, it illustrates well a central characteristic of violence: *complexity*. Force is as pitiless to its possessor as its victim, and conquerors are inseparable from conquered persons. They have in common only the refusal to believe that they both belong to the same species.

The grand battles of the Trojan War echo through smaller conflicts between characters, while the smaller battles between individuals add up to the larger one. There is disruption of society and everyday life due to war, but the soldiers still carry their skills and their humanity into it. There is brutal chaos of the spirit in the classical hero just as there is in a present-day murderer. At times, warfare is portrayed as murder due to crises of the human condition, such as in the cycle of revenge.

Hector, not expecting Achilles to rejoin the battle, has ordered his men to camp outside the walls of the city of Troy, but when the Trojan army glimpses Achilles, it flees in terror behind the city walls. Achilles kills every Trojan he sees. Finally, Achilles confronts Hector outside the walls, chasing him around the city's periphery three times until Hector

finally turns to fight. Achilles kills Hector, attaches the body to the back of his chariot, and drags it across the battlefield to the Achaean camp. Upon his arrival, the triumphant citizens honor Patroclus, whom Hector had slain, with a long series of athletic games. Each of the next nine days, Achilles drags Hector's body in circles around Patroclus' funeral bier. Priam, Hector's father, then tearfully pleads with Achilles to return Hector's body (Homer, 1990).

The Khmer Rouge

The cycle of violence is confined neither to antiquity nor to the Global North. Many societies have endured autocratic and repressive governments in their transition to modern nation-states; among the most notorious is the Khmer Rouge. From 1975 until 1979, they ruled the Democratic Republic of Kampuchea, now Cambodia. Pol Pot and Ieng Sary were prime minister and deputy prime minister under their Communist-based regime. Supporters of the former regime, including soldiers, officials, and civil servants, as well as students, professors, scientists, and members of opposition organizations, were brutally exterminated on a massive scale. Approximately four million people were herded into "communes"—disguised concentration camps where men, women, and children above the age of 10 were put to hard labor.

Mass killings happened alongside the abolition of religion, destruction of economic and cultural structures, and devastation of family and social relations. Tens of thousands were viciously tortured, their bodies cut open and subject to electroshock and live surgery. Forced marriages and rape were commonplace. Children were put to death, eaten, or recruited into armed units to fight. Vietnam launched an attack to overthrow the Khmer Rouge in January 1979, and in August 1979, the Revolutionary People's Tribunal of Cambodia found Pol Pot and Sary guilty of genocide. Executions and the combined effects of strenuous working conditions, malnutrition, and poor medical care had caused the deaths of approximately a quarter of the Cambodian population, or an estimated one to three million people (Boulet, 2009).

A Case of Child Neglect

Some of the most tragic cases of abuse occur within private homes, to those who are the most vulnerable. Allan (the name has been changed for confidentiality purposes) was 4 months old when he was removed from his home by a child service agency following a report of life-threatening neglect. He was placed in foster care, as no relatives were available to take him. Soon thereafter, upon referral to a home-based program by the agency, the court authorized periodic returns home. Despite the services provided to his mother, Allan returned to the foster home after supervised visits with very dirty diapers and the appearance of being underfed, according to the foster parent. Shortly before a court hearing when the mother was expecting Allan to be returned to her custody, the case manager together with an agency worker informed her that they would recommend continued foster home placement with extended visits home. The mother became upset, threatening to kill the case manager. The agency worker called 911, and the police arrived, removing Allan from the mother.

The agency worker reported the conditions of the home: the house was unkempt, and two other children were largely unsupervised and dressed in dirty clothing. There were concerning signs of the mother's unsatisfactory relationship with Allan, whose needs for food and diaper-changing often went unmet. When she interacted with him, she showed little response to his cooing or crying. At the court hearing, the judge ordered that Allan continue in foster care and that visits home be scheduled twice weekly with an evaluation in 1 month to consider overnight

visits. At the next court hearing 1 month later, the mother promised that she would be more responsible in caring for Allan. The judge ordered that the child be returned home immediately. Because of budget cuts, the social service agency determined the case closed without follow-up. Five months later, a news report announced that his home had burnt down while he and all family members were in it. Allan and his mother died of smoke inhalation, and the two other children sustained severe burn injuries. It was suspected that the older children, ages five and four, were playing with the stove while the mother was intoxicated with alcohol.

Suicide by Gun

Human violence takes many forms. In 2010 in the US, 19,392 people committed suicide with guns, more than the 11,078 who were killed by others with guns. Though gunshots are not the most common suicide method, they are the most lethal. About 85% of suicide attempts with a firearm end in death (Drexler, 2013).

Emily's 21-year-old husband, Ryan, shot himself with a semiautomatic in November 2008, soon after bringing a lawsuit against a priest who had molested him during his teenage years; the priest had been convicted in 2007 and sentenced to 30 days in jail. Ryan was one of the top five salespeople for a major national company but had struggled with nightmares since the molestation. He had never used a gun before. Pregnant at the time with their second child, Emily walked into the gas station where her husband had bought the gun and asked the owner about the process for selling a gun and whether they screened people for mental illness. The owner showed little emotion, and did not say he was sorry.

Kristyn is a detective. Her father, Bruce, a dentist, shot himself in August 2003, at the age of 63. Bruce had a great sense of humor and a thriving dental practice, but he had suffered for years from undiagnosed depression. After several rounds of drinks late one evening, he took cartridges from an open box of ammunition on a neighbor's refrigerator. He inserted them into an antique hunting rifle that had long been in the family and triggered the deadly blow.

Janyce is a school lunch worker. Her 23-year-old son, Zachary, killed himself with a firearm in 2008—hours after his first drunken driving arrest. He may have been afraid of losing his commercial driver's license, of which he was very proud. He was happy-go-lucky; loved his family, his sisters, and his nephews and nieces; and still lived at home. There were guns in their home because Janyce's husband owned hunting rifles. She was not a gun lover, but several family members owned guns, and she believed there were people who can be trusted with guns for the right purposes. Zachary was impulsive but not particularly more so than others his age. In this instance, an impulsive act cost him his life.

Connecting the Dots

Violence, as a whole, seems a phenomenon of such irrationality and perplexity as to be indecipherable, but putting together the different forms can help. What commonality does suicide have with homicide, and individual violence with warfare? What do the events of global violence as reported in the media have to do with what occurs in the privacy of the home? Much of the study of violence has taken the approach of creating smaller and smaller "niches" in the belief that the narrow scope will circumvent the complexity of the problem. However, with human violence, the exact opposite is true: attempts to divide the field into discreet units of observation have only made the topic more wieldy. The more we accept this complexity and consider the wider context, on the other hand, the more coherent and logical the

patterns become. When a student says, "It works in theory but not in practice," one is really saying, "The theory does not work." In the case of violence, a workable theory requires that we relinquish artificial subdivisions in order to confront the complex reality.

For the past couple decades, there has been a growing interest in the study of violence, with an accompanying explosion of information. One of the reasons we have not made more progress in understanding violence so as to prevent it more effectively is that we have fragmented the subject among disciplines that often do not speak with one another. An Indian parable about blind men describing an elephant—the man who feels a leg says it is like a tree trunk; the man who feels the tail says it is like a rope; the man who feels the trunk says it is like a hose; and so forth—implies that a single viewpoint is inherently limited if it fails to account for the totality. This illustrates what has happened in the study of violence: like six blind men (or 60 blind men if we count all the subfields), we have tried to understand the elephant of violence that has been affecting all of humankind throughout history, each according to our own limited point of view. Until very recently, homicide has been studied almost exclusively by criminologists; suicide just as exclusively by psychiatrists; warfare by political scientists and historians; capital punishment by criminal law specialists; and culturally specific forms of violence, such as genital mutilation, by anthropologists, all without much interdisciplinary dialog.

The WHO's *World Report*, by contrast, has placed the different types of violence under the same rubric, welcoming efforts to understand the different types of violence—that is, self-directed, interpersonal, and collective violence—not just separately but in totality, with an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Consequently, we have dramatically expanded our understanding of the causes, manifestations, and prevention of violence. This simple concept has generated great progress for the field.

Yet, at a time when we need a global perspective to deal with the problem on a global scale, our information is coming from more and more sharply delineated sources. This obscures the magnitude of the problem. How we bring together the knowledge we now have, and how we think about violence and respond to it, will determine humanity's future—and possibly whether or not we will have one. Returning to the scenarios of the previous section, what do ancient warfare, state oppression, child abuse, and suicides have in common? They may not seem like events that naturally go together, but in the *Iliad*, we see how the Trojan War leads to individual campaigns and vendettas. Observing Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, we see how entire populations can vanish under dictatorship. In the case of Allan, we see how injury from child maltreatment is tied to the availability of social services. The suicides by firearm show us that what seem largely personal struggles are connected to gun policy. In order to understand fully how violence occurs and how to prevent it effectively, it is necessary to move away from assigning simple causes and solutions to considering multiple risk factors and layers of interventions. Throughout this text, we will explore how to connect seemingly unrelated events and to find commonalities among them.

In order to organize our thinking to this end, we will first propose the *bio-psycho-socio-environmental* model. An extension of the bio-psycho-social model of illness and health (Engel, 1977), this perspective means that human conditions require a broad view involving all of these different levels. The *biological* denotes processes that happen at the level of the physical brain or the body. The *psychological* encompasses the mind's function and human behavior. The *social* involves relationships, social interactions, and society. Finally, the *environmental* implies the surroundings in which all the other processes occur, be they natural or human-produced. This complex model serves as a tentative reminder that many factors contribute to violence and that we can draw from different disciplines to find solutions at multiple levels. No one field of study has all the answers. The study of violence, furthermore, is an art that involves the integration of knowledge and scientific research.

The model is tentative: a complex whole with components in constant interaction is still difficult to conceive. Concerted influences of simultaneous action are characteristic of the environments human beings live in but are not what research designs study the most. Still, the complex nature of violence makes this conceptualization primary in importance. Consistency through simple reductionism, or compilation of data that do not illuminate the whole, does not advance our understanding of violence. Violence studies make clear that knowledge is abundant but wisdom is lacking—but the most critical problem confronting humankind, its own violence, requires no less than the greatest insight of which we are capable. It is best, therefore, to let the nature of violence guide our efforts.

The addition here of the environmental level to the customary schema helps account for effects that are not from direct social interactions, although they may derive from them. There is the natural physical environment, for example. Then there are institutions and "spiritual" traditions we may inherit. Meanwhile, we will prepare to apply the bio-psycho-socio-environmental model to a more systemic representation in the ecological model in Chapter 12's "Public Health Approaches." We conclude that, while there will always be a need for more and better data on the multiple causes and cures for human violence, an even greater need exists for theories capable of integrating the considerable body of information that already exists. The purpose of this book, therefore, is to take an unprecedented but necessary look at violence from an interdisciplinary, global perspective, in order to bring the scholarship of violence to a new stage.

A New Field

While we have made enormous advances in identifying the causes of and cures for most life-threatening processes, from infectious diseases to cancer to heart disease, we are only beginning to make similar progress in understanding causes and cures as they relate to violence. Why is this? Success in other areas of health and medicine have raised the average life expectancy to a level dramatically higher than a century ago, not just in high-income but also in most middle- and low-income countries (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003). Now, we are in the process of wiping out those gains in some regions of the world because of violence. Why have we failed to prevent violence with anything close to the success we have achieved in preventing or curing other causes of death and disability? The twentieth century was "the most violent century in human history" as measured by the rates of deaths and injuries resulting from violence (Hobsbawm, 1994), and the potential for future violence dwarfs the scale of violence that has already occurred.

Our failure to prevent violence has already resulted in its rise in rankings of worldwide causes of death (Vos et al., 2016). The contrast is even starker if we take into account potential years of life lost (YLL) (Kassebaum et al., 2016), since violence truncates the lives of the young more frequently than degenerative diseases, which primarily kill people nearing the end of their life cycle.

The reasons for our failure to make a more significant dent in our own violence are varied and mutually reinforcing. First, there is the matter of political and economic will. In the United States, for example, despite the fact that violence causes more years of life lost than cancer and heart disease combined, funding for violence research is miniscule compared to other leading causes of death, while funding for gun violence research has been virtually eliminated (Ladapo et al., 2013). Second, violent cultures do not deal with violence seriously. US culture, for instance, treats violence largely as a source of entertainment, pride, or even solution to threats (murder mysteries, violent video games, war heroes, and preemptive defense). Third, powerful economic interests benefit from a continuation of violence. The gun lobby in the US is one of the more explicit examples: no quantity of mass shootings, massacres, innocent

deaths, and grieving parents has been able to force passage of substantial gun control laws that would limit commercial profitability (Goss, 2010). The military industry is similarly lucrative, with arms sales of the top one hundred largest arms-producing companies estimating at 395 billion US dollars per year (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2012).

Finally, violence brings political advantage. Certain political groups have risen to power as a result of high levels of violence; in the US, they support racism (against non-whites), sexism (against women), classism (against the poor), ageism (against younger people), and militarism (against the public). Creating divisions in the population also allows for easier control, and given this advantage, there is little real motivation to reduce violence. All of these forces fuel a continued neglect of violence as a valid subject for research and study, perpetuating the problem.

The more we learn about violence and its variations, the more it becomes clear that its study calls for an examination of complex connections within a coherent theory. We go so far as to propose here that *we cannot fully understand even one form of violence without understanding all the others*. This is because these different phenomena are directly related to one another. In order to understand an individual fully, the entire ecological system of the person's development needs to be taken into account; in order to understand individual violence fully, social, structural, and environmental violence must enter the equation.

Another problem with a fragmented approach is that the temptation to abandon the study will be great once the urgency of the topic has passed. Like the individuals who become involved, violence has long been an orphan subject, relegated to the margins of every field. Psychiatry may seem a logical discipline within which to study violence, but it has long considered violent individuals as intractable and outside the domain of healing. Anthropology would appear appropriate, but its researchers have avoided addressing violence with the populations they are trying to befriend. Political science seems natural, but it has not been at ease with violence outside the sanitized structure of war. Law seems practical, but advocates often wish to divert attention from the flaws of those they are representing. While public health has been prominent in some respects, violence is still a marginal topic for the field, and many public health schools do not even teach a course on it. In this manner, everybody's business becomes nobody's business.

Shall we, then, risk being caught off guard if and when another massive world war breaks out, with greater-than-ever lethal potential? Just before the bloodiest battles of the twentieth century, it was believed that humankind had "civilized" itself beyond such violence (Elias, 1939). Following the end of the Cold War, we believed that we had eliminated the major social, historical, political, cultural, and economic risks for worldwide violence (Fukuyama, 1992)—only to be met with a newly fractious and turbulent world. If we have anything to learn from history, it is that violence seldom remains constant—in degree or in form—and each catastrophic eruption has followed a period of complacency. Therefore, it seems that the problem of violence is closely related to our own level of awareness. In recent years, the study of violence has enjoyed a level of popularity as never before (Kurtz, 2008; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). Harnessing this opportunity would entail finding a way to establish steady, persistent study so as not only to continue our relatively peaceful interim but to enhance it.

We thus propose here that *violence studies* become a discipline in its own right. With a potential for extreme violence that sets us apart from every other species and from humans at any other point in history, we must take every opportunity for preventing violence seriously. That seriousness could help avert instantaneous annihilation of human civilization, as in the case of thermonuclear war. Or it could help avoid a more gradual but pervasive and permanent destruction of our habitat, as through human-generated climate change. Violence may be the most important subject matter we could study—to prepare during any lull, if we can call it this—to form structured

and enduring ways of strengthening the conditions for peace. It is clear that any change to this perennial human problem must happen consciously.

As long as we engage in it, human violence remains a mystery that gives rise to a battery of questions. What makes people violent? What does it take to become nonviolent? What induces humanity's tendency to engage continually in irrational, self-destructive behavior? In spite of mounting research, we do not have the answers to the most basic questions. Therefore, this book is about violence but also, more than that, it is about the fundamental puzzle of human existence: why human beings engage in violence against others and against themselves. What an in-depth study of violence can achieve is the understanding of violence not as an event but as the final outcome of a long developmental process that takes place over the course of an affected individual's lifetime or a community's entire history. We can learn to recognize the many underlying causes that can culminate in a variety of behaviors. Thinking more clearly and consistently about the nature of the multiple causes and manifestations of violence will reduce much of the confusion as well as make prevention more possible.

The field of violence studies should include aspects of criminology but not be confined to that discipline, since most violence is not criminal and most crimes are not violent. It should also include the study of practices causing injuries and deaths that are permitted or even required by the law, as some laws can be violent. It would benefit from the knowledge of human behavior and disease that medicine can provide, since it is the field chiefly concerned with enhancing wellbeing and preventing deaths. It also needs to extend to institutional and structural forms of violence that are far more lethal than any direct violence.

Violence studies ought to complement *peace studies*, which have historically aimed to generate reconciliation and conflict resolution, while violence studies have striven to understand phenomenology and therefore prevention of violence before it happens. Violence studies deal with biological, psychological, sociological, and ecological causes and cures, whereas peace studies have traditionally dealt more with international relations, diplomacy, political science, and economics. That said, the two approaches have been converging as they share a common goal and as the different levels of violence prevention merge. They differ from but are closely related to the study of human rights, which primarily concerns itself with moral principles and may offer a useful perspective on systematic injustice.

All that having been said, the emphasis must lie with the conceptualization of humans as consisting of body, mind, and social-symbolic being, such that fulfilling human needs addresses all these levels as complementary and interacting counterparts. If we are truly to lift ourselves out of violence, we must learn to traverse the full extent of the human experience. By meeting the challenge in its depth and complexity, violence studies can be a foundation for deep-rooted peace-building efforts, as it excavates the human capacity not only for curbing violence but for accessing resilience and regenerative creativity.

A New Awareness

We have seen how a change in awareness has been able to produce the kind of scholarship that has drastically curtailed violence around the globe over the past couple decades. We have learned that we have the intelligence and the ability to deal with our own violence, but as is often the case with all-pervasive conditions, our awareness of violence as a problem needing attention has lagged. Indeed, for much of human history, individuals and societies have accepted it as an inevitable part of life, something we needed to tolerate, if not actively engage in. Naturally, the degree to which people participate in it and bystanders condone it (Latane &

Darley, 1970) corresponds to the extent to which it is accepted. Technology has produced the capacity for widespread violence, but our psychology controls the weapons, or fails to control them, and determines what we will do with that physical power. Therefore, a lack of awareness of violence as a problem has contributed to the problem—to the point where it is the most significant source of the problem.

This means that recognizing violence as a problem, not a solution, allows for the beginnings of a solution. As with any change of behavior, acquiring awareness of the behavior affects the behavior itself (Bergin & Garfield, 1994; Grant, Franklin, & Langford, 2002; Prochaska & DiClemente, 1986). As we have noted, we are arriving at a critical time when our level of conscious awareness of violence could determine future human survival. We will term different potential degrees of awareness as alarm consciousness, lack of consciousness, and studied consciousness.

Alarm consciousness is a response to major escalations of violence. Complacency during a period of relative peace gives way to alarm and a sudden awakening to the danger after extreme violence, as with the Napoleonic Wars, whose impact rose to the level of roughly five to seven million deaths (Esdaile, 2014). The most significant escalations in recent history, without doubt, are the two World Wars, the invention of the atom bomb, and the hundreds of regional conflicts that have characterized the hitherto most violent century. The two World Wars claimed over 100 million lives, and many smaller battles additional hundreds of thousands, while governments murdered an estimated 170 million of their own people (Fink, 2010). Toward the end of the century, the US saw an increase in violent crime of more than 560%; around the world, homicide increased by 15% in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, by 80% in Latin America, and by 100% in the Arab world (WHO, 2015).

Widespread peace movements accompanied the emergence of great thinkers such as Emma Goldman, Simone Weil, Hannah Arendt, Bertrand Russell, Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, Václav Havel, Eqbal Ahmad, and Rigoberta Menchú, to name just a few. From the shock of the worst wars known to history, this era established a new norm of peace and an awareness that helped to propagate it for decades. Yet it came to a close. Without incorporating the awareness of violence into our institutions, such as adopting it as a field of regular education and study, this consciousness depended on alarm to fight an uphill battle against the structures of war, such as the military-industrial complex. Also, the more that 3000 who perish every day through suicide and homicide, in far greater number than in any war, year after year, do not raise alarms but are tolerated in our homes, our neighborhoods, and our society. Meanwhile, as the memory of the alarm faded, so did the awareness—and a wave of wars (with a US-led "war on terror" in Afghanistan and Iraq ushering in a new era of violent conflict and further need for war) began anew.

In contrast, *lack of consciousness* is due to a psychic numbing (Lifton, 1979), often commensurate with the scale of the problem, when the difficulty, tragedy, and often intimacy of the violence are too much for the mind and lead to denial. It could also manifest as complacency, or, in its latest form, investment in the belief that violence is less and less of a problem because it is declining (Eisner, 2003). Popular "scholars of violence" have seized the opportunity to pander to a public desire for reassurance in ways that contribute to the problem (Pinker, 2011). This response is particularly prevalent in the UK and the US, which are among the regions of the world recently experiencing dramatic relief from epidemics of violence. It is easy to think that violence levels are going down—war deaths, homicides, and the most overt forms of brutality have indeed diminished. However, what sense does it make to quantify violence in this way, when a single nuclear weapon contains the explosive force to wipe out the entire human species, and we continue to amass and to develop these weapons?

Rigorous science requires more than simplistic enumeration of numbers, and where violence is concerned, it may require taking into account our own role in its generation. Counting only a narrow form of violence, such as overt warfare or murder, and extrapolating the trends within Europe and North America to all the world for all time, promotes a Global North-centric view that can become an ingredient for violence. Also, while comforting in thought, the decline does not include suicide, which dwarfs all other types of violence and has reached historic highs, or the far more consequential structural violence present at an unprecedented scale of escalation. Only with undue simplification can we come to the premature and dangerous conclusion that violence is no longer a problem.

Such a claim is also inaccurate. Historians agree that the exact number of even the most objectively measureable violence—deaths—cannot be known with any precision (Gohdes & Price, 2013; Lacina & Gleditsch, 2005): even in the last 150 years, when measurements started to improve, estimates in the most developed parts of the world vary by millions. Thus, drawing conclusions about deaths thousands of years into the past based on current measurements is speculative at best, and to pretend otherwise is irresponsible. Even if the numbers could be known, the changing forms of combat alone make clear the fallacy of such comparisons, since most deaths no longer occur on the battlefield but rather through the famine, disease, dislocation, and insurgencies that accompany war. The toll of war also manifests in upsurges in one-sided violence (e.g., genocidal campaigns such as the Holocaust or the Armenian Genocide), in criminal violence (e.g., increases in crime following the collapse of local policing in post-Baathist Iraq); and in hidden violence (e.g. domestic violence against women and children). As noted, lack of consciousness makes us veer away from serious examination at the present that could help us understand and alleviate the problem where violence rates are rising, such as in Central America (WHO, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, & United Nations Development Programme, 2014). Through the omission of important areas, it not only fails to allow for a global assessment (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2013; Violence Prevention Alliance, 2012) but also misrepresents science (Ferguson, 2013; Mitzen, 2013; Rose, 2013; Stone, 2014) and translates directly into a barrier to moving beyond the problem (Lifton, 1987).

This brings us to the third type of consciousness, which we will call *studied consciousness*: being fully cognizant of the ongoing threat of violence while investigating it thoroughly so as to prevent it effectively. The common approach throughout the world is to wait for spikes of violence to happen, and then to respond retroactively; this approach deals with it proactively. This level of consciousness is especially necessary with the nature of the violence that we face today. We confront perhaps the greatest perils humankind has ever known in the history of human existence in that we have the capacity for instantaneous and complete, or more prolonged but more certain, self-annihilation. However, the sheer magnitude of this unprecedented risk makes it difficult to grasp and tempting to deny and ignore, especially when it is far from everyday experience. A studied consciousness, therefore, also requires steadiness and calm. It is a well-informed awareness of the risks, taking on the vigilance of alarm consciousness and the placidity of lack of consciousness, to approach the topic with composure, even in times of peace. Establishing an independent field devoted to its study can help form a framework for regular practice.

Studied consciousness, through steady research, is likely to reveal processes underlying violence that allow us to focus less on whether overt events of violence are occurring and more on whether the conditions for peace are present, so that we can prevent violence from happening in the first place. Foremost, it accepts that violence is a problem and that existing levels are already unacceptably high—whether or not they are plaguing us in our geographic or chronological moment, since the presence of causal elements means eruptions can occur at any time.

Consistent study detects patterns that are not immediate, such as interrelationships between different types of violence. Suicide and homicide can be the same destructive tendency manifesting differently according to culture or circumstance, for instance, and sometimes the two combine. We all read news stories about somebody who kills a partner or parent and then kills oneself, too. Massacres often conclude with suicide, and suicide bombers combine the two. If we wish to understand these events, we need to understand not only what causes homicide but also what causes suicide. Studied consciousness prepares us for changes in how violence manifests according to situation and time—with change as a constant in all human behavior—so that a change from interstate wars to guerilla warfare and terrorism, or combat warfare to home-grown massacres, does not surprise us.

It takes care not to exclude relevant types of violence that are not obvious on the surface: for instance, the last few decades saw an alarming rise in structural violence between high-income and low- or middle-income countries, as well as within most countries (Ortiz & Cummins, 2011). Structural violence needs consideration not only for causing the greatest rate of excess, premature deaths and damage (Köhler & Alcock, 1976), but because under its conditions, the rise of other forms of violence is only a matter of time (Butchart & Engström, 2002). Educating oneself, therefore, is the preventive against counterproductive actions. Ignorance does not just lead to misdirected action but actively contributes to the problem. A conscious decision to pursue nonviolence allows for preparation, prevents overwhelm, and activates the most effective form of violence reduction, even if the results are not immediately available. Studied consciousness thus ultimately builds on the optimism that violence is not insurmountable, underscoring the extraordinary opportunity to build on our growing understanding and capacity to make a difference.

Further examination will quickly reveal that our era is not placid by any measure. Many countries are struggling with rising food costs, and growing income inequality is affecting high-, medium-, and low-income societies alike. The global financial crisis and recession have generated widespread unemployment and impoverishment. The spread of democracy has had an enormous effect in generating peace (Doyle, 1983), but growing research suggests that this is not a result of the political system *per se* but because of the reduction of structural violence that accompanies it. Caution is therefore necessary when global capitalism shortly follows with a system of privileges capable of offsetting the gains of democracy (Hertz, 2002). The rapid rise in inequality between individuals and between nations not only becomes one of the most important causes of premature deaths and disability, it threatens to be a potent cause of other forms of violence. As the exploitation, intimidation, and greed inherent in structural violence corrode the general health of society, the capacity for a society to examine itself also diminishes. A correction of course then becomes increasingly difficult. Studying and nurturing awareness while we still have the capacity is therefore critical if we are not to be caught off guard in a spiral of violence.

Structure of the Text

With the aim of integrating and synthesizing existing scholarship on violence in an orderly way, this text will progress largely from causes to consequences to cures. We will roughly follow the sequence of studying the major bio-psycho-socio-environmental perspectives on violence. After this current Chapter 1, "Introduction," we present the following chapters:

2) The Biology of Violence
3) The Psychology of Violence

4) The Symbolism (or Spiritual Causes) of Violence
5) The Sociology and Anthropology of Violence
6) The Political Science and Economics of Violence
7) Structural Violence
8) Environmental (and Nuclear) Violence
9) Consequences of Violence
10) Criminal Justice Approaches
11) International Law Approaches
12) Public Health Approaches
13) Global Medicine Approaches
14) Nonviolence Approaches
15) Synthesis and Integration

We can group the progression from an intra- and interpersonal framework (Chapters 2 through 4) to a social and societal one (Chapters 5 through 8), before going into the life cycle (Chapter 9) and the various mechanisms we have at our disposal for preventing violence (Chapters 10 through 14). Our goals are twofold: First, we aim to summarize information that sheds light on a human propensity that takes many forms depending on the context. Doing so also helps to distinguish the diverse etiologies of even a single form of violence. Understanding these requires a multidisciplinary methodology. Second, we aim to change the way we think about violence. This applies both in the way we approach it as a research subject and in what we recognize as violence.

To do so, we give special attention to the most lethal form of violence, structural violence—a term that the Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung (1969) coined. The inequalities that divide populations into rich and poor, or weak and powerful, determine access to social goods, criminal justice, basic safety, healthcare, and other material and symbolic needs that mitigate if not prevent violence. Relative poverty causes far more deaths than any other form of violence. Studies have shown that the rate of deaths from relative poverty was already in the range of 14–18 million per year 40 years ago (Høivik, 1977), overwhelming the 1.4 million per year from all behavioral violence—such as suicide, homicide, and collective violence—combined (Fitzmaurice et al., 2017). More importantly, as we will demonstrate, structural violence is not only the deadliest form of violence, it is also the most powerful cause of other forms of violence, such as behavioral violence. We call it violence because it is something we as a society choose when we decide on how to distribute or not to distribute, or how to share or not to share, the collective wealth and income that each society produces.

We give urgent attention to the greatest threat of our time, *nuclear* and *environmental violence*, and relate it to the *human* characteristics of violence. First, distinguishing us from other animals, and our time from other periods in history, is the fact that human violence has the potential to bring about the extinction of our species. That is to say, because of the destructive power of the weapons that we have developed, and the extent to which we can alter our environment so as to throw our entire ecosystem off balance, our decisions can have enormous—terminal—consequences. We will address the ramifications of our failure both to learn to curb our own violence and to implement what we have learned so far. We will face squarely our standing as the first species in evolutionary history to risk bringing about its own extinction through its own behavior. Previous extinctions have been due to changes in the natural environment or other uncontrollable forces. Secondly, human violence is complex because of *human* complexity. This lies not just in our ability to attain the technical capacity for violence on a scale that can threaten our collective survival, but also in our capacity to hinder the awareness that is necessary to prevent our own annihilation.