

Thugs and thieves: the differential etiology of violence

Savage, Joanne, author

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Abstrak

Why do some individuals commit violent offenses while others restrict themselves to nonviolent crime? Most people probably assume that criminologists know a great deal about the causes of violent offending. It might surprise them to know that there is little consensus about what distinguishes violent offenders from those who commit less serious crime. Further, most criminological theory and research applies mainly to lesser criminal offenses and most of the work published in developmental psychology applies best to general conduct problems, not necessarily physical aggression. The purpose of this book is to narrowly delineate the causes of violence and physical aggression as they contrast with the causes of other forms of antisocial behavior. In each substantive chapter, we select one potential cause of violence (attachment insecurity, parental rejection, low intelligence, school problems, child abuse, poverty, community disorder, and substance use) and assess the state of published evidence related to its ability to differentially predict violent behavior. To that end, we conducted extensive literature searches to unearth all existing relevant empirical work, published in English, for each topic. While the book is first and foremost a scholarly contribution to the fields of developmental psychology and criminology, the early chapters introducing the problem, discussing the development of violent behavior, and reviewing the sociological views of violence and motivation, will make it suitable for use as a text for an advanced course on violence or as a secondary text in an introductory criminology course.