School Shootings

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Editors

School Shootings

International Research, Case Studies,
and Concepts for Prevention

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Preface

The subject of this volume is disturbing in several respects. Why do these mostly male adolescents extinguish the lives of others—fellow students, teachers, even police—in so extreme an act of armed violence?

Why does this occur in and around an institution that is supposed to be preparing young individuals for life in a competitive society, strengthening their personalities, and fostering peaceful coexistence among adolescents from different social milieus and ethnic groups?

And finally, can we successfully identify causes, remedies, and countermeasures with respect to warning signs and triggers? Can we pin down structure-changing concepts within the institution itself? Can we avoid pathologizing the perpetrators and stop isolating them from their surrounding social circumstances?

These are the underlying questions addressed by 31 international authors in 22 chapters in the four sections of this volume. The volume begins in Part I with theories, explanatory models, and empirical findings, which are deepened in Part II by various case studies. Part III addresses media and public reactions, and the volume ends in Part IV by examining a broad spectrum of opportunities for prevention and intervention, as well as their limitations.

In terms of its range of content and theoretical and empirical perspectives, the international overview provided by this volume is a novum.

My young colleagues Nils Böckler and Thorsten Seeger came up with the idea for the book in the course of their work on Germany and developed it into the published form in collaboration with Peter Sitzler.

We should like to extend our sincere thanks to all our contributing authors and reviewers, who required no great persuasion to participate.

And finally, our heartfelt thanks to our translator and copyeditor Meredith Dale, and to Katie Chabalko at Springer for her patience and encouragement throughout the entire preparatory phase.

Bielefeld, Germany

Wilhelm Heitmeyer

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Nils Böckler is a member of the Group-focused Enmity graduate college which is funded by the German Research Foundation and associated with the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence at Bielefeld University. His PhD project (science of education) examines patterns of online hate and radicalization focusing primarily on adolescents.

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