

phenomena and their interactivity (correctly emphasized by Briceño-León) may be associated in some way. However, at least based on the Brazilian studies on the subject, we know that the relationship between poverty and homicides is not linear, and that extreme poverty levels, including those in urban areas, are not the ones that stand out as factors for homicides. Following the level of spatial-temporal aggregation that Briceño-León intends to adopt, rightfully and pertinently, the treatment of the hypotheses raised is virtually worthless, methodologically speaking. In fact, based on a simple visual inspection of Table 6, invoked by the author, one cannot conclude in favor of the rigor of his hypothesis. Based on a superficial test using the author's own Table 6, these relationships, as I will illustrate next, prove to have very little explanatory power, even though they may be interesting. Based on the data from Table 6, we calculated the following multiple regression equation:

$$H = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_1 X_2 + E,$$

where H represent the homicide rates and X_1 and X_2 represent poverty and urbanization, respectively. Despite the calculating problems based on $n = 16$ (very small), the results are: a precarious adjusted R^2 of 0.074; the betas, even with the model's precarious overall adjustment, are interesting and lend some credit to Briceño-León's theory: -1.67 for poverty, -0.76 for urbanization (both negative!), and finally a positive beta of +1.59 for the multiplicative interactivity term. None of the coefficients is significant at 0.05.

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From various social spaces, members of society have called attention to the gap between 1) the magnitude and omnipresence of violence in the lives of Latin American peoples and 2) the level of output of systematic knowledge and capacity for social and political response to such a disturbing phenomenon, which blocks the potential of individual and societal projects. This situation calls for a renewed social and political commitment by researchers and society at large.

The combination of the categories violence, the urban, public health, and Latin America and their interrelations constitute a highly suggestive set. This combination appears to be in the minds of many researchers, but few have dared (like the author) to propose an alternative that links (within a single view) the question concerning the threatening nature of the Latin American city and the growth of violence.

The author's distinction between two levels of social life as the point of departure for establishing an explanatory framework for social reality represents an important methodological wager. To a major extent it corresponds to the need to relate the structural and situational dimensions in order to propose explanatory connections for violence. The author tackles the trends that propose explanatory theories focused exclusively on the social structure and others that rely on the situational to establish linear causal equations.

What really stands out is the proposed explanatory structure between the three levels of social event, i.e., macro, meso, and micro-social, with a differential explanatory potential between that originating violence, that which foments it, and that which facilitates it. The limitation is that these categories are treated with a high level of generalization and with such a nonspecific empirical reference that it would be difficult to reach agreement among researchers on the pertinence of the proposed levels of determination and about which factors belong to one category or another.

Focusing on the basic concepts, we emphasize the field's complexity and the need to establish Latin American consensuses on the basic concepts, in order to spawn rapid and productive exchange among the researchers. The perspective that violence does not represent merely a pathological event produced by various factors that are exogenous or alien to the development of societies and their collective existence, but on the contrary, that it is a phenomenon that accompanies the development

of the widest range of relations ¹ in both the private and public spheres, stems from the article's approach (unless we have misread it) to violence as a kind of disorder that parasitizes a society, that acts as foreign body in it and is therefore something to be extirpated. This point of view has consequences for the final focus of research and the localization of violence in specific geographic areas of cities, and in certain human groups, like youth and the poor, in certain regions of the country, placing the rest of society in the position of victims, which at least in the Colombian case has generated an infernal circular perpetuation of violence.

The other concept refers to the urban. The author's reflection on the distinction between "city, citizenship, and violence" is highly interesting. What is out of sync is that he has introduced something as a footnote which in our opinion should link the overall argument together, due to its huge explanatory potential. In our opinion ², urban violence does not relate necessarily to the topography where it occurs, but to the violations of various types of rights and freedoms that occur in interactions among citizens, and between the latter and the state or other organizations (all of whom are actors in our contemporary urban society); to the logics and dynamics woven into the construction of the urban and the city and its characteristic as a horizon for conflicts that gives rise to violence as a multifaceted and ubiquitous phenomenon.

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In his article, Briceño-León develops the analysis of what he calls "*the stage for a silent and undeclared war*". The eloquence of the data and their relevance to almost any city in Latin America show the recurrent horror portrayed in the majority of the articles dealing with the issue of violence at the population level. But what should be done with such horror? How

can the silence of this undeclared war be broken? By speaking, generating one, two, a thousand, a million conversations to break this tragic muteness, this paralysis resulting from the horror. Such conversations must change the sense and meaning of what is said when talking about violence, proving that things can also be done with words. Violence is not a state, it is a process. Enough of cowardice!

We agree that in our countries the city of law has become the city of fear. That urbanization and television have democratized expectations, but that the result is inequality and exclusion, the connected and the disconnected. That violence and its consequences are reproduced numerically in the statistical reports, and that the subjective level increases the perception of becoming possible victims of violent acts. In his attempt to analyze the "object", Briceño-León develops a structuring proposal that he assumes as a non-universal model. This proposal has been used in the health sector, ranging from the Situational Strategic Planning logic of Carlos Matus ¹ to the work of Pedro Luis Castellanos ², who links Matus' logic to the study of the health-disease process under a structure of the general, the particular, and the unique. These interpretative processes are highly useful to approach the logic of actors and scenarios, so as to avoid crystallizations or simplifications that justify technocratic norms, or on the other hand the kind of inaction that results from economic over-determination.

Models, structures, and classifications, but what purpose do they serve? Yes, fine, if they hierarchically organize the interpretations of citizenship on the problem. No, not if they are to achieve "scientific explanations" that crystallize such a complex and dynamic process as violence. The risks of medicalizing violence are still present. By classifying the problem, to what extent do I accept it as part of my field of knowledge? If I accept it, to what extent do I problematize it at the social level? Or do I include it as an object of investigation in such a way as to ensure my reproduction as investigator? Is this a valid dilemma? Is this always the situation?

We should not simplify the process of violence. To avoid the temptations of graphs and to tackle complexity is part of being honest as researchers. Of course complexity should not be measured merely by speeches, but by acts (which include words) and better still, by their impact. Words and acts are nothing more than actions by subjects. Individual and/or collective subjects. Subjects of language.

It is difficult to take a step back as the discussant of a theme that affects us as deeply as