

## Introduction

This issue of INTERFACE places before our readers an urgent and necessary reflection: VIOLENCE, in the highly varied forms in which it manifests itself. This approach adds to the many other studies and communication elements that are multiplying throughout the country. The visibility bestowed upon the theme over the last ten years through the media, scientific disclosure and political debate has become substantially greater than all the intellectual reflection that had taken place in the preceding decades of the present century, both in Brazil and in the world.

This debate agenda, which I regard as a necessity, has been explained in many ways by those who have studied this theme. According to philosophers such as Domenach and demographers such as Jean Claude Chesnais, the concern with violence grows within societies in parallel with the development of an awareness of citizenship, because the worth of individuals as such, through the internalization of their rights, leads to lending a greater value to life and to the rejection of all forms of dominance, oppression, discrimination, or restrictions to freedom, as well as of physical and psychological injuries. Therefore, according to the above authors and many others, publicizing the theme of VIOLENCE does not necessarily represent an increase in violence.

In 1995, the Latin American Center for Studies on Violence and Health (Centro Latino Americano de Estudos sobre Violência e Saúde - CLAVES/ENSP/FIOCRUZ), to which I belong, assessed the domestic production on this theme in Brazil. Through a near-exhaustive review of bibliography, it found that 85% of all of the intellectual property on the subject in Brazil had been written as from the eighties. The output increased toward the end of that decade, illustrating the fact that violence had become a theme relevant to national consciousness. Furthermore, the epidemiological data corroborated the concern, demonstrating that, at the end of that same decade, violence — labeled “external causes” under the International Classification of Diseases (CID - Classificação Internacional das Doenças) — had become the second cause of death in the country, second only to cardio-vascular diseases. Furthermore, as regards the population aged 5 to 49, external causes, since then, have evolved into the top ranking general cause of death. This transformation, which meant (for youth in particular) the exchange of position with infectious and parasitic diseases (which have undergone a substantial drop since the sixties) has led public authorities, scholars and society at large to become concerned. Violence as a concrete manifestation of deaths, injuries, losses, suffering, fear and anguish has become an inseparable part of our social drama.

The endeavors of the publishers of INTERFACE in raising this theme are praiseworthy for several reasons. Firstly, because although it is the object of studies, research, debate, proposals and social and political programs, no one holds a monopoly of truth. Given its multifaceted and controversial character, violence cannot be dealt with through any pre-established scheme. It remains forever a subject for reflection. Secondly, given that this is a vehicle intended to provide reflections on communication, it must take part in the unconcluded debate on the role of the media in the production, amplification, and banalization, as well as in the prevention, of violence. Thirdly, in dealing with education, it is very important that this journal bring to public debate some of the fundamental issues currently included in the agenda of interests of our society: the hidden webs that strengthen the relations between the individual and society, enabling civilized and dialogical interactions and vice-versa; the construction of the basis for equal opportunities, whose gateway is access to formal education; and, finally, the role of schools in building the awareness of citizenship. Because the reverse of violence is not the lack thereof, but CITIZENSHIP.

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