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Venn Diagram of the Borromean Knot: The Route of Planning in Latin America

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Objectives: To outline a critique of the development of planning through the Venn diagram and the Borromean knot as examples of complexity.

Methodology: Analytical and interpretive

Results: The Venn diagram is a mathematical proposition that shows a new vision of Cantor's Set Theory which represents the relationships of two sets in a two-dimensional plane. This idea was very successful as a graphic representation for different disciplines. In their development logic, the mathematics needed to represent configurations of three sets using the Borromean knot, where the absence of a circle means the others cease to be united. This led to ideas such as: a) however original an idea is, it still barely rearranges existing materials; b) an error may remain for a long time, and it could create many mathematical errors and c) a fact may exist for long periods of time before its usefulness is revealed.

For the authors, its application in the field of public health is based on the acceptance that it [public health] is related to a scientific conception that refuses to accept the evidence of the complexity and persistently absurd simplifications such as magic. During the 1960s a health planning model was displayed that was used years earlier in economics. For this reason, criticism was directed more to the failure of the plans when it should rather have been attached to application methods. This last option facilitates the advancement of social movements to generate proposed changes in the health field.

The decades following the public health approach focus on three different record types: a) diagnosis of the real, b) the target or utopian image, and c) the symbolic.

Conclusions: For the authors it is necessary to integrate the three types of records so that they do not remain separated from real life. They warn that to continue with practices criticized in this article means continuing with the main cause of why planning fails.