

Rupture in the Paradigm of the International Policy of Illicit Drugs in the Field of Public Health and within the Framework of the World Health Organization, 2001 to 2016

Authors : Emy Nayana Pinto, Denise Bomtempo Birche De Carvalho

Abstract : In the present study, the harmful use of illicit drugs is seen as a public health problem and as one of the expressions of the social question, since its consequences fall mainly on the poorer classes of the population. This perspective is a counterpoint to the dominant paradigm on illicit drug policy at the global level, whose centrality lies within the criminal justice arena. The 'drug problem' is internationally combated through fragmented approaches that focus its actions on banning and criminalizing users. In this sense, the research seeks to answer the following key questions: What are the influences of the prohibitionism in the recommendations of the United Nations (UN), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the formulation of drug policies in member countries? What are the actors that have been provoking the prospect of breaking with the prohibitionist paradigm? What is the WHO contribution to the rupture with the prohibitionist paradigm and the displacement of the drug problem in the field of public health? The general objective of this work is to seek evidence from the perspective of rupture with the prohibitionist paradigm in the field of drugs policies at the global and regional level, through analysis of documents of the World Health Organization (WHO), between the years of 2001 to 2016. The research was carried out in bibliographical and documentary sources. The bibliographic sources contributed to the approach with the object and the theoretical basis of the research. The documentary sources served to answer the research questions and evidence the existence of the perspective of change in drug policy. Twenty-two documents of the UN system were consulted, of which fifteen had the contribution of the World Health Organization (WHO). In addition to the documents that directly relate to the subject of the research, documents from various agencies, programs, and offices, such as the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which also has drugs as the central or transversal theme of its performance. The results showed that from the 2000s it was possible to find in the literature review and in the documentary analysis evidence of the critique of the prohibitionist paradigm parallel to the construction of a new perspective for drug policy at the global level and the displacement of criminal justice approaches for the scope of public health, with the adoption of alternative and pragmatic interventions based on human rights, scientific evidence and the reduction of social damages and health by the misuse of illicit drugs.

Keywords : illicit drugs, international organizations, prohibitionism, public health, World Health Organization

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