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Prohibition, privilege and the drug apartheid: The failure of drug policy reform to address the underlying fallacies of drug prohibition

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Abstract

It appears to be a time of turbulence within the global drug policy landscape. The historically dominant model of drug prohibition endures, yet a number of alternative models of legalization, decriminalization and regulation are emerging across the world. While critics have asserted that prohibition and the ensuing 'war on drugs' lack both an evidence base and legitimacy, reformers are embracing these alternatives as indicators of progressive change. This article, however, argues that such reforms adhere to the same arbitrary notions, moral dogma and fallacious evidence base as their predecessor. As such they represent the 'metamorphosis of prohibition', whereby the structure of drug policy changes, yet the underpinning principles remain unchanged. Consequentially, these reforms should not be considered 'progressive' as they risk further consolidating the underlying inconsistencies and contradictions that have formed the basis of drug prohibition.

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