Abstract

In this paper I analyze the components and main effects of what I characterized as a process of criminalization of youth in poverty, in the case of Uruguay. I argue that this process occurs through a series of discursive operations (in different levels: police, judicial, political and technical- scientific), which stigmatize the social reference group, placing them as a threat to society. To investigate this process, I analyze journalistic texts, testimonials and an advertising campaign, covering the following actors: a member of the national Parliament, the editorialist of the highest circulation newspaper in Uruguay, the Director of the largest hospice psychiatric in the country, and the Uruguayan Interior Ministry (police force). I conclude that in Uruguay started up a stigmatization process which place youth in poverty as a threat to society, and that this process involves the deepening of police approaches of the security problems, obscuring the conditions of social injustice behind them, and consecrating fear as the main principle of the social relationships. This situation also challenges to the social sciences, and in particular to psychological disciplines, by posing the challenge of finding new answers, both theoretical and methodological, alternatives to the stigmatization and police security approaches.

Keywords

Criminalization; Youth; Poverty; Social harmony.