

VOVES, Petr. Úloha Světové zdravotnické organizace v případě epidemie viru eboly na území západní Afriky v roce 2014. Praha, 2017. 95 s. Diplomová práce (Mgr.) Univerzita Karlova, Fakulta sociálních věd, Institut politologických studií. Katedra mezinárodních vztahů. Vedoucí diplomové práce PhDr. Irah Kučerová, Ph.D.

Abstract

The M.A. thesis deals with the World Health Organization's response to the outbreak of the ebola virus disease in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in 2014. The spread of the disease is mapped from its very beginning at the end of December 2013 until the creation of UNMEER in September 2014, which was the first international medical mission ever created by UN Security Council. The purpose of this thesis is to evaluate the particular problems, which limit WHO's role in a timely and effective response to the public health threats of international concern (PHEIC) under the reformed International Health Regulations (IHR).

The response of WHO representatives to the spread of the disease is evaluated taking into account the available material and competence capacities of the organization as well as its previous practice in this field. The specific misconduct of WHO representatives is explained in the context of longstanding WHO's problems, which are mainly linked to the vertical fragmentation of decision-making bodies and the structure of financing the organization itself. From this particular case, more general problems of the currently set international health system of the timely and effective response to the unexpected crisis situations associated with PHEIC are deduced.

The emphasis is placed especially on the nature of the relationship between the WHO and its Member States in responding to unforeseen crisis situations related to PHEIC. The issue is explored by the Principal – Agent Theory with an emphasis on the nature of the so-called collective agent in the principal – agent relationship. Such an approach allows to operate with the fragmentation problem of international organizations. The principal – agent relationship is further supplemented by a so-called fragmentation trap model, which allows to examine the given issue taking into account the previous setting of the decision-making competences within the organization, its long-term functioning and the established practice.

The reaction of WHO representatives to the spread of ebola virus disease in the territory of all three affected states, especially from the second half of May 2014, once again pointed to a long-standing problem in the relationship between organization as such and its Member States.

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Representatives of the regional office and the WHO headquarters primarily gave preference to minimal conflict policy with the representatives of Member States, which considerably limits the impartial assessment of seriousness of particular situation and the independent decision-making of individual WHO bodies. At present, WHO does not have sufficient capacities, organizational culture and self-confidence to fulfill the role of a primary, timely and effective public health emergency response. The reaction to the ebola virus disease has, above all, reiterated the long-standing reluctance of Member States to comply with IHR obligations and to respect the role of the WHO in the field of public health protection related to PHEIC.

Keywords

Ebola virus disease, World Health Organization (WHO), Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Principal – Agent Theory, collective agent, fragmentation of international organizations, International Health Organizations (IHR), Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)