

EXAMINING DRUG TRAFFICKING AS A HUMAN SECURITY THREAT IN VIETNAM

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Abstract

Largely based on secondary data analysis in combination with data acquired from 6 semi-structured interviews (Interviewees in this research consist of 2 anti-drug trafficking police officers (coded as PO1; PO2), 1 staff from Department Against Social Evil (SE), 1 staff from Hanoi MOLISA (HM), 1 researcher on drug trafficking in Vietnam (RE1) and 1 father of drug addict (FA1), this article examines the nexus between drug trafficking and human insecurity in the context of Vietnam. By adopting the worldwide well-known analytical framework of human security developed by UNDP, this paper reveals that in Vietnam drug trafficking has mounted to an considerable multifaceted threat to human security particularly on the dimensions of economic, health, personal, community and security. In relation to the training of the anti-drug trafficking police, these revelations suggest that the crime should be considered as not only a criminal problem but also an important issue of non-traditional security. This infers that the police training could be undertaken by both police and security academies. With regard to the training curriculum, it should pay more attention on powering its potential victims to develop their resilience and capacity to escape from the victimization. Concerning the methods for policing drug trafficking, since the crime is determined as a security threat, it could be reasonable to utilize some strategies of governing human security issues in order to better control the crime.

Keywords: Drugs, Drug Trafficking, Human Security, Police Training, Vietnam

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Introduction

Drug trafficking is a well-documented topic worldwide. It is estimated that in recent years the trafficking of illicit drugs has accounted for over 3% of world trade (Klein, 2008), and that the total value of the black industry mounted to 1 trillion USD annually (Jojarth, 2009). The crime's severe impacts have been also addressed across the world decades ago. The Parties to 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, recognized: *“Deeply concerned by the magnitude of and rising trend in the illicit production of, demand for and traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, which pose a serious threat to the health and welfare of human beings and adversely affect the economic, cultural and political foundations of society”* (UN, 1988:1). The consequences of drugs, while not confine within any countries or regions, seem to be more formidable in underdeveloped and developing countries. Irrespective of this magnitude, in Vietnam there have not been a study that examines such impacts in a systematic manner. Against this backdrop, this paper employs a broad theoretical framework of human security in order to examine the consequences of drug problems including drug crimes in Vietnam. It begins with the overview of the concept of human security for the purpose of establishing a theoretical paradigm to gauge the consequences of drug issues in a systematic fashion, followed by the provision of an overall picture of drug addiction and drug crime in Vietnam. Subsequently, diverse pitfall of drugs on seven dimensions of human security will be revealed. Finally, the paper suggests a number of implications for the training of anti-drug trafficking police.

The Concept Of Human Security

The first introduction of the concept of “human security” was in 1994 by The United Nation Development Program (UNDP, 1994). Based on a normative humanism and ethical responsibility, human security aims to “re-orient security around the individual”, not states, though the latter remains an indispensable means for ensuring individual rights, producing economic opportunities, and guaranteeing good governance (Dodds and Pippard, 2012:29). As with other concepts, the formulation of the concept of human security serves certain purposes; the uppermost of which is an attempt to raise robust attention to human security issues in an “insecure and globalising world” (Dodds and Pippard, 2012:35). Pragmatically, it attempts also to invest resources much more significantly in human security issues, rather than military activities (Kerr, 2007). In fact, while globally, up to \$900

billion was spent for military goals by 1985, it would cost only \$30 billion to provide water for people worldwide. At the same time, the costs for re-foresting the damaged tropical forests and combating desertification, which directly benefit human lives and the environment, would be only \$1.3 and 4.5, respectively (Nsiah-Gyabaah, 2010). Recently, USD 25 billion are spent annually for poverty reduction, which accounts for only 2% of the total military expenditure. That said, while the world spends 2 USD to save lives, it invests 98USD to produce deadly weapons (Vu, 2009).

Even though there is a long pre-establishment of, increasing policy attention to, and sizable academic investments in, human security, the methodological, definitional and conceptual debates have provided no “real consensus” on the exact meaning of human security and the application of the human security paradigm (Hampson, 2008:230). There are a number of individual efforts to provide definitions of human security. Alkire (2003:2), for example, provides a working definition of human security that “the objective of human security is to safeguard the vital core of all human lives from critical pervasive threats, in a way that is consistent with long-term human fulfilment”. However, some scholars consider human security as a “paradigm”, while others see it as a description, a concept, a doctrine, a theory and an ideology (Fukuda-Parr and Messineo, 2012). All of these considerations, however, have a highly agreed starting point that security policy and security analysis, if they are to be operative and legitimate, must revolve around the individual as the referent and primary beneficiary, and that state security is only one of the means to achieve human security (Newman, 2010). This has a further implication that the safety of the individual is the key to national and global security; thus, when the safety of individuals is threatened, so too is state and international security (Hampson, 2008).

In parallel with the convergence that the primary referent of security is not the state, but individuals, in the course of determining what specific threats should be securitised, there is an analytical divergence in which two main ramifications are offered. On the one hand, the narrow approach to human security taken prominently by the Canadian government focuses on armed conflicts and the political violence posed to civilians by repressive governments and situations of state failure (Human Security Centre, 2005, MacFarlane and Khong, 2006). This perspective reflects the negative link between human security and state security, arguing that failed states can no longer provide effective governance of, and invariably fail to obtain, human security. Even worse, at times “outwardly aggressive and inwardly repressive regimes can be major sources of human insecurity” (Lodgaard, 2000:3).

On the other hand, the broad approach to human security is concerned over not only threats from political and armed violence, but also non-armed, non-state, even non-human-induced threats to human integrity such as endemic diseases, natural disaster, starvation and severe poverty. Thus, the values to be secured in this approach cover not only “freedom from fear”, but also “freedom from want”. This approach is heavily influenced and inspired by the Human Development Reports, especially by UNDP (1994), in which human security, as summarised by Commission on Human Security (2003:4), means, first, “safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression; and second, protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life - whether in homes, in jobs or in communities”. To demonstrate the concept of security, UNDP (1994:23) cites how individuals around the world regard security: *“A fourth-grade schoolgirl in Ghana: “I shall feel secure when I know that I can walk the streets at night without being raped”. A shoe-mender in Thailand: “When we have enough for the children to eat, we are happy and we feel secure”. A man in Namibia: “Robberies make me feel insecure. I sometimes feel as though even my life will be stolen...”*

As explicitly clarified in UNDP (1994), human security is constituted by seven interrelated components consisting of economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security. UNDP suggests that there are substantial links and overlaps between these different elements of human security, which means “a threat to one element of human security is likely to travel - like an angry typhoon – to all forms of human security” (UNDP, 1994:33)¹. The common understanding of human security is developed and clarified in the General Assembly Resolution 66/290 on 10 September 2012:

- (a) The right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair. All individuals, in particular vulnerable people, are entitled to freedom from fear and freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential;
- (b) Human security calls for people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all people and all communities;
- (c) Human security recognizes the interlinkages between peace, development and human rights, and equally considers civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights;

¹ Similar to the broad approach of UNDP are a number of proposals including Nef (1999) who suggests five elements of human security: (1) environmental, personal, and physical security; (2) economic security, (3) social security, (4) political security; and (5) cultural security.

- (d) The notion of human security is distinct from the responsibility to protect and its implementation;
- (e) Human security does not entail the threat or the use of force or coercive measures. Human security does not replace State security;...²

The concept of human security is questioned by some critics. The two most noted questions on human security are: (1) as a result of the expanded notion of security, how can human security, especially its broad version, be reliably measured and (2) how, therefore, can human security be practically useful? (MacFarlane and Khong, 2006, Newman, 2010, Paris, 2001). The consequence is that human security approach would do little to understand the causes of threats, the operative mechanisms and means to achieve security (Fukuda-Parr and Messineo, 2012).

Irrespective of these critiques, the use of the broad human security approach has been increasingly widespread in various fields worldwide, which has “chalked up significant accomplishments” (Paris, 2001:88). Specifically, thanks to this approach, key global governance institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank pay increasing attention to the field of human security with poverty and inequality increasingly seen as threats to national, regional and global security (Thomas, 2001). What is more, the construction of human security helps establish an umbrella norm for a variety of national security policies, international treaties and conventions (Kerr, 2007). Foreign policy in Japan and Canada, the security policy in Europe, the establishments of the International Criminal Court, the International Campaign to Ban Land Mines and the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty are “solid achievements”, which prove that the human security approach formulated by UNDP has had a “significant role” to play in foreign policy (Fukuda-Parr and Messineo, 2012:14).

² Three more clarifications of human security in Resolution 66/290 were:

(f) Human security is based on national ownership. Since the political, economic, social and cultural conditions for human security vary significantly across and within countries, and at different points in time, human security strengthens national solutions which are compatible with local realities;

(g) Governments retain the primary role and responsibility for ensuring the survival, livelihood and dignity of their citizens. The role of the international community is to complement and provide the necessary support to Governments, upon their request, so as to strengthen their capacity to respond to current and emerging threats. Human security requires greater collaboration and partnership among Governments, international and regional organizations and civil society;

(h) Human security must be implemented with full respect for the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, including full respect for the sovereignty of States, territorial integrity and non-interference in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of States. Human security does not entail additional legal obligations on the part of States;

It is argued in this paper that although the broader approach in human security may have to somewhat sacrifice its analytical strength, adopting this “emancipatory and empowering concept” (Voelkner, 2012:19) in the security agenda may well satisfy the actual aspiration of, and bring benefit for, the vast majority of citizens worldwide. Indeed, any individual worldwide can benefit from a security policy that is in privilege for all people, and is extensive and intensive enough to address core values of these people. For instance, rather than investing massively in costly arms races, as observed by MacFarlane and Khong (2006), securitising various issues such as health and the environment to ensure human security has resulted in more policy attention to, and resources for, these domains that are essential to all people. This theoretical framework will be employed in this research to investigate the impacts of drug problems particularly drug addiction and drug trafficking in Vietnam. Prior to looking into these impacts, it is worth gaining an overall understanding on these problems in the country.

Drug Addiction and Trafficking In Vietnam

Vietnam is located next to “Golden Triangle” - one of three most critical drug manufacturing centres worldwide³, and neighboured to the huge drug market of China. In the last over two decades, drug problems especially drug trafficking has remained an increasingly complex issue in Vietnam, seeing substantial changing patterns with a decline in the average age of users, an increase in female users, and a rapid transition from smoking to injecting. Indeed, before mid-1990s, the prevalence of drug use in Viet Nam was moderately low and mainly involved opium and cannabis smoking and some localized abuse of pharmaceuticals. By 1994, opium use accounted for 86% of registered drug addicts, but in 2000, 80% were heroin users (Nguyen & Scannapieco, 2008). Recently while around 70% of drug addicts still use heroin, the rapid increase in the addiction by young drug users of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS)⁴ has become a particular concern in Vietnam. ATS are now the second-most popular class of illicit drugs of use in the country, taking over opium. In some provinces, 85-90% of new addicts only use ATS (UNODC 2012a, MPS 2016). By 1995, only 42% of drug addicts were under 30, but by 2010 this figure was 70% (Department against Social Evils, 2013). The vast majority of the drug addicts are now male (95%), while the percentage of female drug users grew from

³ “Golden Triangle” covers the overlap of the mountains of three countries of Myanmar, Laos and Thailand. In 2015, Myanmar accounted for 20% (55,500 ha) of the total area under opium poppy cultivation worldwide (UNODC, 2016).

⁴ Most popular ATS in Vietnam include methamphetamine, crystalline methamphetamine and ecstasy (UNODC, 2012a)

2% in 2001 to 5% in 2010 (UNODC, 2012b). The principal route of drug administration is through injection (70 to 85%), followed by smoking and then sniffing. Opium smoking is mainly found among the elderly in rural highland areas; whereas heroin remains the most commonly used drug among younger people particularly in metropolitan areas (UNODC, 2012b).

By the end of 2016, there were in Vietnam 210.751 drug addicts⁵ registered by the state authorities, indicating an increase of 10.617 addicts by 2015 (MOLISA, 2016). Among those addicts, 67.5% live in community compared to 13.5% who are treated in detoxification centres, and 19% who are detained in jails and compulsory schools for drug users (MPS, 2016). In the last ten years, on average the number of drug addicts in Vietnam consistently increase by 5 - 10% every year (Police Department of Drug Crime Investigation, 2015). One of the most worrying issues related to drug addiction in Vietnam is the relapse rate remains very high, up to 95%; even some estimate 99%, which greatly deteriorates the drug problem in Vietnam (FO1, SE, HM).

Concerning drug trafficking, despite internationally recognised significant achievements in drug control by Vietnamese law enforcement agencies, the crime remains a noticed problem in the 90-million-plus-population country. Viet Nam is currently not considered as a major drug producing country, but rather a location where drugs are smuggled through for local consumption and to third countries especially China (US State Department, 2010). Thanks to effective measures to eradicate opium poppy inside Vietnam, it is estimated that about 95% of illicit drugs transported to the country are smuggled from neighbouring countries (UNODC, 2012b). Recent years, drug smuggling from Laos to Vietnam has increased drastically with the amount of ATS smuggled across Vietnam-Laos border in 2016 being four and a half times higher than that in 2015 (MPS, 2016). The techniques of cross-border and domestic drug trafficking have been steadily more sophisticated and organized. The traffickers take advantage of the long and porous land borderline and the coastline to smuggle drugs from neighbouring countries; while more complex tricks have been employed to transport drugs by airplanes (Luong, 2015).

⁵ According to the Vietnamese laws, drug addicts are those who regularly use one or more than one kind of drugs, are dependent mentally and/or physically on drugs, causing changes in the users' behavior, always need drug to satisfy the struggle of lacking drugs (Act of Drug Prevention). Drug addicts do not include those who use several times but are not dependent on drug use.

In the last five years, from 2012 – 2016, the numbers of drug criminal cases and offenders detected by law enforcement forces remain high and relatively stable. On average every year about 19,000 criminal cases of drug crime are detected and investigated, with around 28,000 offenders arrested (Police Department of Drug Crime Investigation, 2017) (see Table 1). By 2016, law enforcement agencies seized 876.8 kg of heroin, 152 kg of opium, 637.3 kg of cannabis, 1.030 kg and 635.681 tablets of synthetic drugs, 20,8 kg of cocaine (MPS, 2016) (see Table 2). Viet Nam is also increasingly vulnerable to the threat of precursor chemical diversion and local illicit drug production, given its location in the neighbourhood of the world's major hubs of synthetic drug manufacture, especially China (UNODC, 2012b).

Brief overview of the typology of drug problems in Vietnam has been provided, it is now time to reveal the consequences of the crime on different aspects of human security in the country.

Table 1: The numbers of arrested criminal offenders and detected cases in Vietnam from 2012 – 2016, sources: Police Department of Drug Crime Investigation, 2017.

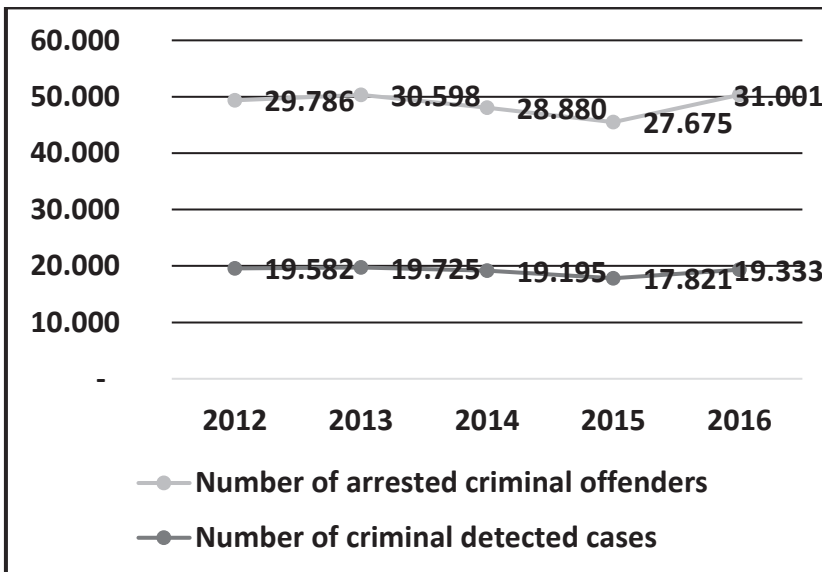
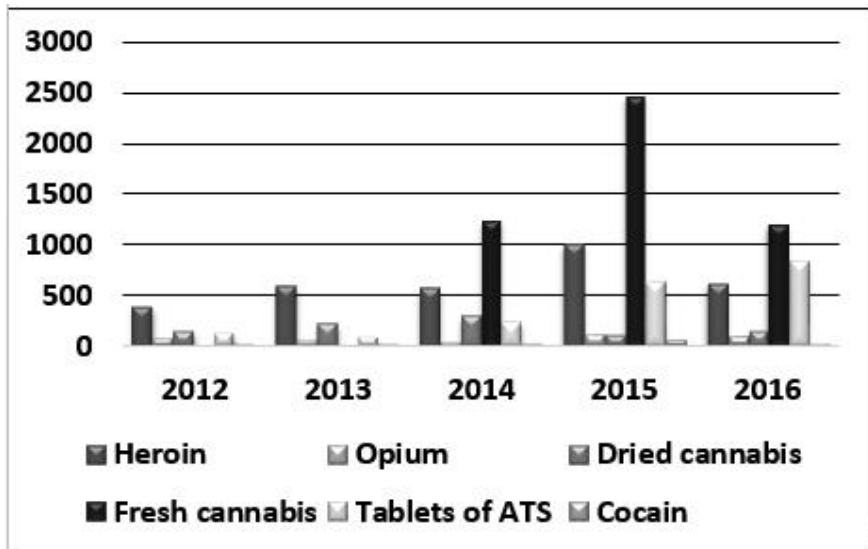


Table 2: The amounts of different drug types seized in Vietnam from 2012 – 2016, sources: Police Department of Drug Crime Investigation, 2017.



The Impacts of Drug Trafficking On Human Security

Economic and Food Security

Economic security in the conceptual framework of human security firstly requires “an assured basic income - usually from productive and remunerative work or in the last resort from some publicly financed safety net”, whereas food security calls for all people at all times to “have both physical and economic access to basic food” (UNDP, 1994:25&27). The economic and food security dimensions are briefly recapped by the Commission on Human Security (2003:73):

“When people’s livelihoods are deeply compromised—when people are uncertain where the next meal will come from, when their life savings suddenly plummet in value, when their crops fail and they have no savings—human security contracts. People eat less and some starve. They pull their children out of school. They cannot afford clothing, heating or health care. Repeated crises further increase the vulnerability of people in absolute or extreme poverty”.

Under this conceptual framework, it is suggested that drugs could generate severe threats to the livelihoods of drug users. Indeed, drugs can curb the users' employment prospects, both by curtailing the opportunity of getting a job and by decreasing the productivity in the workplaces (Badel & Greaney, 2013). This can be in part explained by the fact that drug addicts suffer from many serious personal, health, lifestyle and other problems and are often dearth of qualifications, low levels of skills and poor employment records (UNODC, 2016). This drug-employment relationship has been found across the world. For instance, a study that looked at the relationship between drug use and employment in the US found that on the statewide scale, states with higher number of drug users often also experience high rates of unemployment (Promises Treatment Centers, 2013). Statistics for 30 European countries show that, by 2013, at least half all people in the labor age who receive treatment for drug use disorders were unemployed (cited in UNODC, 2016).

This scenario may even be worse in Vietnam since the social stigma on, and discrimination against, drug addicts are very intensive with almost all employers finding it extremely difficult to accept drug addicts as employees (PO1, HM, FA). A study by Department against Social Evil (2013) shows that over a half of the addicts surveyed are unemployed. Only one in five has a stable job and others have some kinds of low-paid, part-time or precarious works. Generally the main income of drug addicts in Vietnam stems from family members. However, this income even plus legitimate earnings only account for averagely one third of the total cost for buying drugs, meaning that a significant number of addicts must find unlawful incomes for drug purchase.

Additionally, severe deterioration of mental and physical health as a result of drug addiction leads the drug users to considerable losses of working productivity resulting in not only the loss of worker's income, but also company's output and therefore country's GDP. In the US, by 2011 the loss of productivity owing to labor non-participation by drug abuser is significant, mounting to \$120 billion USD equivalent to 0.9% of the country's GDP (International Narcotics Control Board, 2013). Similar studies discovered the losses of 0.3% and 0.4 % of GDP in Australia and Canada, respectively. It was also estimated in these two countries that owing to morbidity, ambulatory care, physician visits and other related consequences, the cost of lost productivity was 8 and 3 times higher, respectively, than health-related costs.

Along with the loss of productivity, massive amounts of funding have been allocated to control drug and to fix its dire consequences. If spent on human

welfare, this funding would greatly improve the status of human security. Globally, estimates by UNODC (2014) are that 35 billion USD are spent annually for treatment of 4.5 million drug users worldwide. This is however only one in six drug users who have the treatment opportunity. Accordingly, if all drug users had received treatment in 2010, an estimated \$200 billion - \$250 billion, or 0.3-0.4% of the global GDP are needed for such treatment. At national level, the costs arising both directly and indirectly from the drug problem ranged between 0.07 and 1.7 % of GDP of the countries studied (UNODC, 2016). The US governments, for example, has spent 150 billion USD on the four-decade-long 'War on Drugs' (Robinson, 2011).

In the context of Vietnam, spending on the dealing with drug and policing of drug trafficking is believed to be extremely costly, which is even far higher than the expenditure on many other social issues and types of criminal offences (PO1, SE, RE). To be sure, to cope with drug, especially drug trafficking, a larger number of law enforcement and governmental agencies have to take part in the work mainly including police, forces of social affairs, treatment institutions, local authorities, market inspection, customs and border army, which collectively is costly for the state budget to maintain. Vietnam now, for instance, has approximately 10,000 law enforcers intensively specialized on combatting drug trafficking, including over 6,000 police officers, 3,000 border army officers and 1,000 customs officials (Police Department of Drug Crime Investigation, 2017). Apart from the expenditure for staff salary, the annual funding for fighting drug trafficking from central government is around 10,000 billion Vietnam Dong (480 million USD) (PO1). Additionally it is estimated that on average the Vietnamese governments have to spend at least 20 million VND (890 USD) on the treatment and management of one single drug addict annually⁶; accordingly, every year the drug treatment and management for about 211.000 Vietnamese drug dependents costs the governments at least 190 million USD. At individual perspective, everyday each drug addict spends averagely 230,000 Vietnam Dong (over 10 USD) buying drugs (SE, HM, FA); thus the annual expense for drug by Vietnamese drug addicts are approximately 770 million USD which is equivalent to the total annual income of nearly 370.000 Vietnamese (about 0.4 % of Vietnamese population)⁷.

⁶ At the moment, Vietnam has 123 compulsory detoxification centers with over 7,000 member of staff in addition to 180 Mathadone treatment centers in 42 provinces treating 42,000 drug addicts (Police Department of Drug Crime Investigation, 2015).

⁷ According to World Bank, GDP per capital of Vietnam is approximately 2,100 USD by 2015 (World Bank, 2015).

Health and Environmental Security

Good health is surely both essential and instrumental to achieve human security. It is essential because the very heart of security is protecting human lives and health. Health security is, therefore, at the vital core of human security; and illness, disability and avoidable death are “critical pervasive threats” to human security (Commission on Human Security, 2003:96). Against this conceptual backdrop, it could be expected that drug-related death is surely the most extreme form of human insecurity resulted from drug use.

Globally, it is estimated there are about 211,000 drug-related deaths annually, and that drug-related deaths account for between 0.5 and 1.3% of all-cause dead toll for people aged 15-64 years (International Narcotics Control Board, 2013). UNODC (2014) reports that mortality rate of the drug addicts is nearby 40 deaths per million persons aged 15-64 with younger drug users facing higher risk. In Europe, for example, the average age of death among drug users is in the mid-30s (International Narcotics Control Board, 2013). Drug overdose is the principal reason for the global drug-related deaths, and opioids (heroin and the non-medical use of prescription opioids) are the leading drug type associated with those deaths (UNODC, 2014). In addition to deaths, severe morbidity can be another consequence of drug overdose, resulting in prolonged hospitalization, brain damage and disabilities (UNODC, 2014).

What is more, unsafe drug injecting especially when sharing contaminated injecting equipment leads to extremely serious health impacts especially the transmission of blood-borne infections such as HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C. The Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS informs that the number of new cases of HIV among drug injectors remains high, accounting for up to 40% of new infections in some countries (UNAIDS, 2013). It is estimated that among 14 million injecting drug users worldwide are 1.6 million who are living with HIV. By 2010, via premature death as a result of HIV infection, unsafe drug injection led to the loss of 1,980,000 years of life with a further 494,000 years of life were lost worldwide by reason of hepatitis C infection. Data available in the 49 countries shows that the prevalence of HIV among drug injector is at least 22 times higher than among the general population, and in 11 countries, it is at least 50 times higher (cited in UNODC, 2014).

The similar situation is found in Vietnam where history of drug injection is seen as a predictor of HIV seropositive among drug addicts, meaning

that the longer the addict had been involved in injecting drugs, the higher his or her probability of HIV seropositive has been (Nguyen & Scannapieco, 2008). UNODC (2005, 2012b) estimate that in Vietnam needles were shared by 80 – 85% of all drug users, leading to the fact that drug injection makes up half of all reported cases of HIV and that Vietnam is one of few countries in South-East Asia with the highest rates of HIV infection among drug addicts. Recent estimates report that drug injection constitutes up to 70% (in some provinces 96%) of new cases of HIV infection⁸, while prostitution is responsible for 30% of HIV cases (Do Tuyet, 2013, PO1). Research by Hayes-Larson et al (2013) indicates that mortality rates among male drug injectors in Vietnam are 13.4 times higher than the general male population.

In addition to HIV prevalence, drug use can also significantly contribute to hepatitis B and C which cause liver diseases such as cirrhosis, liver cancer and death. Hepatitis C is highly prevalent among drug injectors and is transmitted via sharing needles and syringes even more easily than HIV. By 2012, it is estimated that there were 6.6 million drug injectors aged 15-64 who are living with hepatitis C, meaning that the rate of drug injectors suffering from hepatitis C is up to 52.0%. Also in 2012, the global rate of people aged 15-64 who inject drugs living with hepatitis B is 6.7 %, corresponding to 850,000 people (UNODC, 2014).

In Vietnam, among 309 injecting drug users surveyed in a case-control study by Quan et al (2009), the HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C prevalence was 42.4%, 80.9%, and 74.1%, respectively. Among these, only 11% reported having been vaccinated against hepatitis B. In the past six months, 63.8% of drug addicts engaged in indirect sharing practices, including sharing drug solutions, containers, rinse water, and frontloading drugs (Quan et al, 2009).

The impacts of drug trafficking on human health security could also be looked at the number of dead traffickers as a result of severe penalty imposed on drug offenders. Vietnam is one of the countries that impose very harsh penalties on drug crimes. In 10 years, from 1993 – 2003, 266 drug offenders have been sentenced to death (Vu, 2010). In 2016 alone, 342 drug traffickers were sentenced to death or life imprisonment (MPS, 2016). In one single trial in 2014, 30 out of 89 Vietnamese drug traffickers who smuggled 5,000 cakes of heroin and thousands of drug tablets from Laos

⁸ HIV cases have been reported nationwide in all 63 provinces and cities of Viet Nam. According to Viet Nam Authority of HIV/AIDS Control, by December 2011, there were 240,055 people living with HIV/AIDS in the country (UNODC, 2012b).

to Viet Nam and China were sentenced to death with a further 13 defendants were given life in prison (The Telegraph, 2014, VietnamNews, 2014).

Another dimension of health insecurity could be seen at the death and injury of law enforcement officers caused in the fights against drug tricking. A noted instance is the Colombian Medellín cartel who during the 1980s killed many public officials in Colombia, including elected politicians, judges, presidential candidates, journalists and over 3,000 military and police officers (Jojarth, 2009). In Vietnam thus far, 22 police officers have been killed in deadly fighting against harsh traffickers. Besides, the numbers of police officers who have been severely wounded and transmitted HIV in the confrontations against drug trafficking have been over 100 and 900, respectively (PO1, PO2).

Concerning environmental security, International Narcotics Control Board (2013) observes that as a consequence of the precursor chemicals, active ingredients and substances used for drug manufacture and the producing process itself, illicit manufacture and disposal of drugs generate substantial environmental contamination. Besides, in some countries such as Bolivia, Colombia and Peru, illicit cultivation of coca bush and opium poppy has often led to the clearance of forests and severe degradation of biodiversity. In Colombia, for instance, over the period 2001-2014, every year, 22,400 ha of forest have been cleaned for coca bush cultivation (UNODC, 2016).

In the context of Vietnam, because of the small scale and scattered nature of drug production, environmental impacts do not appear to be substantial. Indeed, in the last 10 years only about 20 cases of production of synthetic drugs have been detected, which has not rendered large amounts of contamination. In the meantime, Vietnam now has only around 10 hectare of opium puppy planted dispersedly in the Northern provinces, which against does not cause significant forest clearance (PO1).

Personal Security

Personal security is chiefly concerned with physical safety from, and psychological wellbeing against, violence particularly from violent crime (Commission on Human Security, 2003, UNDP, 1994). In the context of drug trafficking, violence often directly involves the crime with professional traffickers employing extreme violence to support their illicit business and to compete rival gangs during the turf wars over drugs. Violence also occurs as a consequence of the fighting among users and sellers over

deals gone askew. Over the last 10 years, this scenario has been a particular concern case in Latin America, especially in Guatemala and Mexico, but it has also been the case in every continent across the world (International Narcotics Control Board, 2013). A study by Calderón et al (2013) evaluates in detail the violence involved in drug trafficking in Mexico, indicating that in this country, there were 50,000 drug-trafficking-related deaths in 2011 with the overwhelming majority of these toll caused by the fighting between drug cartels for the control of smuggling routes and drug markets. The study concludes that in Mexico there were “inter-narco wars” that generally started with a wide array of executions among hostile trafficking syndicates, worsened by disorder and dramatic surge of murder, robberies, kidnappings, extortion and violence threat⁹.

Very little documentation on extreme violence involved in drug trafficking in Vietnam has been conducted except some cases prevented by law enforcement forces. However, it is reported that drug addiction is one of the primary causes of committing violent and poverty offences in Vietnam (PO1). An estimate is that around 70% of drug addicts have links to these offences and the vast majority (about 95%) of cases of property robbery by snatching are committed by drug addicts (PO1). Violent fights among rival gangs of drug smuggling are reportedly not prevalent although the bulk of professional large-scale drug traffickers equip with guns to protect their business.

In addition to violence, drug trafficking is reported to connect with international terrorism and other forms of trafficking such as human smuggling and arm trafficking, which could also be a threat to personal security. The line between profit-driven organized crime groups and ideologically-motivated rebels and terrorists has increasingly blurred over recent decades, merging the spheres of crime and warfare (Jojarth, 2009). In the Madrid bombings in 2004, it was suspected that explosives used for the attack were bought from the profit gained from the sale of hashish (cited in Goodwin 2007). In Vietnam, no official evidence on the connectedness between drug and terrorism has been found yet. There are however some instances to show that drug traffickers smuggle drugs together with arms but this does not seem to be widespread (PO1, PO2). By 2016 alone, law enforcement agencies in Vietnam seized 230 guns, 3,305 bullets (Police Department of Drug Crime Investigation, 2016).

⁹Another exemplary of the heinous violence that can explode within the illicit drug trade, toward the end of 2005, Peter Philips, National Security Minister of Jamaica, announced that over 1,400 people had been killed during the year in a country which only has a total population of 2.7 million. This was not a unique year as there had been over 1,400 homicide deaths on the island the previous year as well (as contrasted with 900 in the year 2000) (cited in Singer, 2008)

Community Security

Community security is chiefly concerned (1) with membership of a community that “can provide a cultural identity and a reassuring set of values”, and (2) with the safety from oppressive community practices and ethnic conflict (UNDP, 1994:31). To be more operational, community security can be considered as the freedom from threats to key community values particularly cultural norms, rules, regulations and behaviors. It is revealed in this study some community values are endangered both tangibly and intangibly by drug trafficking.

Firstly, drugs can ruin family’s self-esteem and happiness which is the core value of each community. This aspect does not appear to be very well examined among international publications in this topic but it is an important dimension when mentioning impacts of drugs in Vietnam. Research by Department against Social Evil (2013) unveils that in Vietnam, over one third of drug addicts have serious conflicts and irreconcilable dispute with their family. The rate of family separation and divorce among drug dependents is relatively high, representing about 20% of the married drug addicts. Survey by MOLISA Hanoi (2014) reports that by September 2014, the capital of Vietnam has 16,000 registered drug addicts, and almost all of these addicts’ family face serious financial crisis or bankruptcy, 27% of these addicts experience family breakdown and 24% are permanently abandoned by their family members. A senior member of MOLISA Hanoi staff believes that a family has two sons, if one becomes addicted, almost certainly the other one is also gradually addicted (HM). A father of a drug addict talks about his son:

“Drug addiction is always loathing in our community. We’ve lost almost everything since my son got addicted. Sometimes, he seems to lose his humanity nature, willing to commit horrible things. Material or economic losses are huge but the cost of our self-esteem and social values to the community is incalculable” (FA).

Secondly, drugs would beget long-term pernicious effects to children and the youth’s development which is very important value of any community. Research has been consistently shown that children exposed to drugs face extensively higher level of peril of both physical and sexual abuse as well as neglect and they often experience higher rates of anxiety, depression, delinquency and educational and attention problems (International Narcotics Control Board, 2013). One study reports that kids of parents with drug use disorders are seven times more likely than their peers to grow up with

drug and alcohol problems (cited in UNODC, 2016). In some countries, many children sale of illicit drugs as a means of survival in a hostile, un-supportive social environment (Singer, 2008). In some Southeast Asian countries, including Vietnam there are “substantial populations of street children [involved in] consuming drugs, living precariously with little or no family support or guardians” (cited in Singer, 2008:44). Research by MOLISA & UNDCP (2001) reported that the level of drug abuse among street children in Vietnam was 17.3%. These homeless children receive no parenting support or education or training that would allow them to participate in future development.

Political Security

The root causes of political human insecurity are political repression, human rights violations, lack of rule of law and justice. Based on this conception, drug and drug trafficking could impact human security in a number of dimensions. Firstly, drug significant contributes and closely links to widespread corruption which weakens the rule of law, hence building an environment where the governments may not be able to ensuring security to its citizens (Goodwin, 2007). There has been extensive evidence proving the “drug-corruption” connection at all levels of law enforcement and government across the world, resulting in the erosion of the confidence on the justice and rule of law (Singer, 2008; International Narcotics Control Board, 2013). Robinson (2011:105) observes that:

“The entry of drug money into an economy can play a key role in undermining vulnerable regimes by encouraging official corruption amongst political and military leaders, and the judiciary. As well as corrupting individuals this can damage the overall structure of government by encouraging corrupted branches to violate separation of powers through interference in other spheres, e.g. military interference in government, or political interference in the judicial process”.

This situation has been of particular concern in West Africa where governments have been progressively helpless in dealing with security challenges, particularly the powerlessness to arrest identified drug barons who, in some cases, patronize local regimes (Goodwin, 2007). Accordingly, UNODC notifies a number of states in West Africa that, “risk becoming shell-states: sovereign in name, but hollowed out from the inside by criminals in collusion with corrupt officials in the government and the security services” (UNODC, 2008: 2). In the context of Vietnam, there have been

certainly instances of drug trafficking which involve corrupt officials particularly in police, border army, customs and local authorities. At least, for example, three police officers have been sentenced to capital punishment owing to deeply partaking in large-scale drug trafficking (PO1). However, there have not been instances when drug barons patronize, damage or control local authorities.

Implications for Police Training

The foregoing revelations on drug trafficking and its impacts on human security suggest a number of implications for the training of the anti-drug trafficking police. To begin with the perception on drug crime, the crime should be considered as not only a criminal problem but also an important issue of human security. This is to say, the combat against drug trafficking plays an important role in protecting non-traditional security; accordingly, together with police, security forces should seriously involve in dealing with the crime. This infers that the training of anti-drug trafficking policing could be undertaken by both police and security academies.

With regard to the training curriculum for drug trafficking policing, it should pay more attention on curbing the victimization from drug crime. Additionally, when designing curriculum, the number of module and the size of credits on drug control particularly ATS drug in police academies should be increased for both specialized anti-drug trafficking police and other forces of police forces. This is surely needed in Vietnam where survey by UNODC (2012c) reveals that when asked to describe the effects of ATS on the user, overall the understanding by the majority of police officers is poor, particularly the understanding on the psychological and physical effects and the prevalence of use of ATS in their communities.

Regarding to the methods for policing drug trafficking, since the crime is determined as a human security threat, it is suggested that some strategies of governing human security could be utilized to better control the crime. From an operational perspective, strategies to ensure human security involve people-centered, multi-sectorial, comprehensive, context-specific, and prevention-oriented measures (Human Security Unit, 2016). Some of these measures could be applicable to tackle drug trafficking. For example, people-centered measure means that human security is ensured by empowering people so as to develop their resilience and their capacity to mitigate and respond to current and future crises. This strategy could be used to proactively prevent drug trafficking by enabling victims of drugs and drug

trafficking to better cope with the crime. This could be achieved via delivering effective grassroots propagandas and investments to ensure livelihood and enhance welfare and knowledge of local residents who are vulnerable to drug abuse. Human-centered also recommends that training curriculum should include sufficient contents to strengthen police officers' bravery to resist the temptation to receive benefits from massive illicit profits. Also important is to recruit well-bodied police officers with master military skills and martial arts to tackle harsh violent drug criminals, which could reduce the potential harm to the police officer's health security. It is also necessary to keep regular training for law enforcers to acquire knowledge on new kinds of illegal drug and criminal tricks and to obtain skills in using advanced technologies to support the criminal investigation.

Likewise, multi-sectorial suggests that the work of dealing with drug trafficking should go beyond the mere responsibility of police, but the engagement of many different sectors and actors in society. It should diversify and broaden the sources of trainees. Since the types of stakeholder interested in human security are very diverse, the sources of trainees in combating drugs should not be confine in law enforcement and governmental officials, but rather should really target wide range of actors such as victims, grassroots community members, business people, students and NGOs.

Conclusion

It could be hyperbolic to considered drug trafficking as a direct major threat to national security in the traditional perception of security. It is unlikely scenario that drug traffickers plot to overthrow a government, or render portions of a sovereign country uncontrollable (UNODC 2008). However, under the framework of human security as a non-traditional security approach, at the global perspective, it is reasonable to conclude that drug smuggling is considered "one of the major threats to human security, impeding the social, economic, political, and cultural development of societies worldwide" (Goodwin 2007). It has "stalled progress in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals", particularly in cases where most or all of the abovementioned impacts emerge in tandem (Singer, 2008).

In the context of Vietnam, it is almost certain to confirm that the extent and scope of impacts of drugs in Vietnam are less formidable compared to some countries especially the ones in West Africa, South America, Golden

Triangle and Golden Crescent. Nonetheless it is also rational to argue that drug trafficking is impacting a wide range of aspects of Vietnamese society in considerable albeit varying degrees. Indeed, drugs generate immeasurable economic consequences, severe harm on public health and safety, threaten traditional values of many communities. An understanding of these costs is necessary to develop policies that reduce such costs. One of the important policies is to design and administer appropriate policing training programs to effectively deal with drug problems. These programs could adopt some relevant strategies in governing human security to the course of controlling drugs. Finally, this research is only an initial exploration in to this topic. Surely more research on security implication of drug and drug trafficking should be conducted.

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