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Abstract

Since the end of the Cold War, the security agenda has shifted from a strictly state-centric focus to one focusing on protecting individuals and the international community. The nature of the new security threats has challenged national security, thus encouraging joint regional and international cooperation. One of the significant risks posed to security is the rapid proliferation of organised crime, which entails a variety of different activities that pose a danger humankind.

With illicit trafficking being a substantial financial resource for organised crime groups, along with the significant societal and health risks of illegal drugs, this paper focuses on one of the main trafficking routes from Afghanistan, the world's leading opium producer, to Central Asia. While the number of known trafficking routes is always changing, there are several general routes that are used to smuggle Afghan drugs, the Balkan, Northern, and Southern routes. Since becoming independent in the 1990s, the Central Asian countries are still in the development stages of both establishing their legal systems and exercising effective policies, while at the same time being challenged by chronic economic underdevelopment, high levels of corruption, and transnational threats. Thus, this research will study anti-drug efforts in Central Asia, along the Northern route. To provide a complex overview of the anti-drug efforts, the cross-boundary nature of the illicit drugs has instigated the need to study policies and procedures applied at the state, regional, and international levels.

A thematic analysis of anti-drug efforts has suggested that the Human Security approach is the predominant theoretical approach applied within the region, with some efforts being channelled through securitisation theory. However, the empirical findings indicate that while Central Asian countries cooperate to develop their anti-drug policies and measures, they predominantly employ the drug threat as a way to attract and increase outside financial aid. Thus, the predominant focus of anti-drug measures is driven and enforced by regional and international actors. This further suggests that, while international projects are aimed at developing the region and enhancing its resilience to illicit narcotics, effective results are hindered by state governments exploiting the drug threat to attract financial assistance; thus never, in fact, addressing the drug phenomenon, as eliminating it completely would dry up the source for further financial gain.

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Introduction

The end of the Cold War has become a turning point for both state focus and the diversification of security threats. States have shifted the focus of their national security strategies away from a ‘state against state’ view. The nature of security threats has evolved from the national to the regional¹ and global levels. As a component of various security threats, organised crime has predominantly undermined the state’s ability to maintain national and international security. Globalisation has also had a major effect on the expansion of organised crime. This was explained best by Mark Galeotti, who stated that ‘globalisation of the legal economy has also globalised the underworld, prosperity fuels the demand for many illicit services, and improved policing ironically forces criminals to become more organised to survive’ (2005, p. 2). While many organised crime groups carry out a wide range of activities, drug trafficking is considered to be among the foremost activities that support organised crime groups’ agendas (European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction and Europol, 2016; *How Illegal Drugs Sustain Organised Crime in the EU*, 2017; Makarenko, 2012). Illicit drugs have a proven track record of exposing the world to danger on many different levels: from the health of an individual, to the societal and psychological well-being of a nation, to the overall economic and political stability of a region, to the prosperity of the entire world (UNODC, 2017).

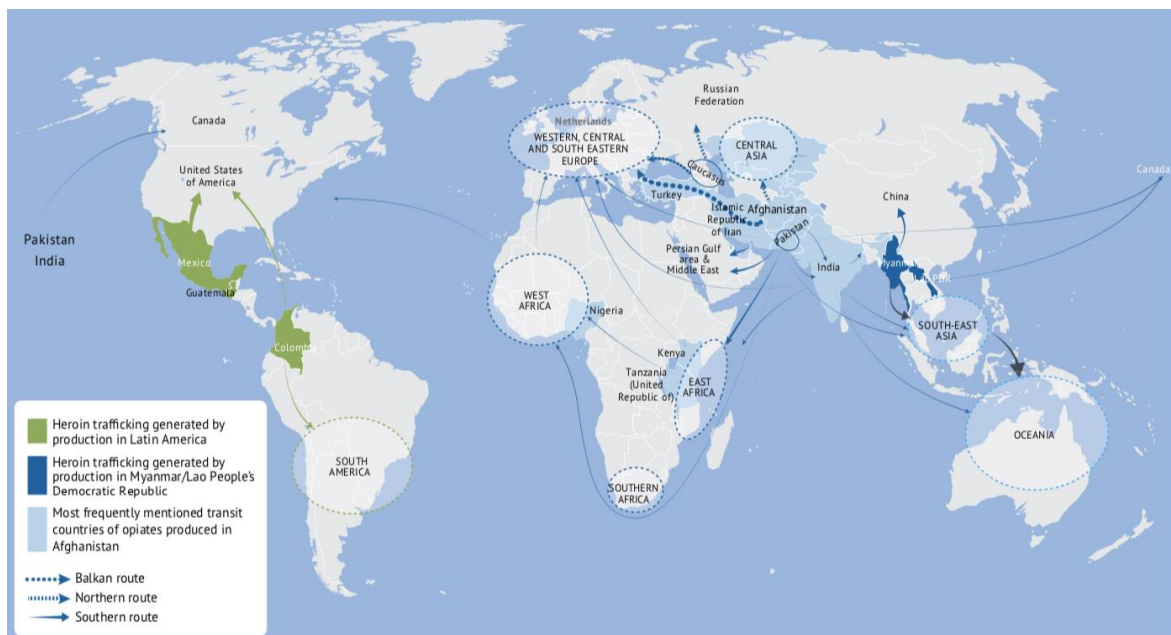
Given the secretive nature of illicit drug trafficking, it is difficult to estimate the real value of the global illicit drug market. Furthermore, the absence of a unified definition of drug trafficking results in states using different approaches to measure the true extent of the activity, leading to challenges when comparing data across different regions. The most recent data has shown that drug trafficking is the second-highest market among illicit activities, after counterfeiting, and was estimated to be worth between \$426 billion and \$652

¹ In this paper the term ‘region’/‘regional’ will be used in a broad sense and will refer to groups of countries within a region of the world

billion in 2014 (Mavrelis, 2017). While a wide variety of illicit drugs are trafficked across borders, this research will specifically focus on the illicit drugs from Afghanistan.

The world's primary opiate supply sources are known to be Afghanistan, the Golden Triangle network in Southeast Asia, and the Mexico-Columbia network (Miltenburg, 2018). While some countries become hotbeds of organised crime due to them being the source of the illicit product, other countries and regions become involved in trafficking by being either a transportation route or a destination market for these illicit goods (Shelley, 2010). The data available on the origins, trafficking routes, and amount of trafficked drugs predominantly reflect the results obtained from monitoring the cultivation trends of these illicit crops, as well as being based on drug seizures taking place along the trafficking routes (UNODC, 2018a). The multiple geographic origins of opiates requires this research to narrow its focus on the illicit drugs originating in Afghanistan, which accounts for more than 75% of global opium production (UNODC, 2018a).

Map 1 Main opiate trafficking flows 2011-2015



Source: UNODC report, 2018

With Afghanistan being the world's leading producer of opium poppies and having multiple destination markets around the globe, means that organised crime employs numerous routes to illicitly traffic drugs. This is shown in the Map 1, which was included in the UN's World Drug Report (UNODC, 2017).

While there are several major trafficking routes, this research will concentrate on the northern route which travels through the Central Asian region. The importance of maintaining a particular focus on Central Asia is derived from the region being made up of newly independent countries that are all currently still in the developing stage of both establishing and exercising their laws and policies to govern the states. The importance of law enforcement has been highlighted by the former United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi A. Annan. In his speech at the opening of the UNTOC conference, he stated the need for cooperative law enforcement to address the transnational organised crime (2000). Since the threat posed by drug trafficking presents a global challenge, it requires a global response – cooperation in combating drug trafficking (Annan, 2000). The impact of law enforcement on the proliferation of drug trafficking requires an assessment of the effectiveness of Central Asian legislation against drug trafficking in further reducing drug trafficking within the region, as well as worldwide.

Since drug trafficking is international by nature, this study will investigate state, regional, and international efforts to counter drug trafficking in Central Asia and analyse narratives that have been employed to explain anti-drug trafficking efforts. This research will provide the basis for evaluating progress in counter drug trafficking efforts in this region, thus allowing future comparison studies. This research will further allow discussion of how transnational threats, particularly drug trafficking, are dealt with within academic and political frameworks.

This research hopes to contribute to the existing scholarly literature on drug trafficking through a critical analysis of the attempts that have been made to counter the flow of illicit drugs in Central Asia. This research will provide an

overview of the policies and procedures applied at a state, regional, and international level, when it comes to countering drug trafficking in this region and will reflect on these approaches.

This research will hope to accomplish the following objectives:

- Identify the anti-drug trafficking policies and procedures in place within a three-level framework within Central Asia
- Identify how countering drug trafficking is framed within the region and provide an analysis of the different theoretical narratives informing anti-drug efforts in the region
- Provide a critical analysis of whether the region's current framing of the drug trafficking threat applies to other developing/less developed countries

This thesis will address the following research questions:

- What are the current policies and practices at a local, regional and global framework which inform counter drug trafficking efforts in Central Asia?
- What are the various ways in which the issue of drug trafficking is conceptualised?
- Is the dominant framing of the drug trafficking threat applicable to developing/less developed countries?

To address the research questions mentioned above, this thesis will first concentrate on theoretical concepts related to drug trafficking. The first part of this thesis will consist of a review of existing literature on drug threat. It will provide a historical perspective on the introduction of critical security approaches. It will provide an overview of how changes in the security dimension after the end of the Cold War and the inability to address newly arising global issues has contributed to states reconsidering the scope of their security policies and broadening their security agenda (Buzan, 1997; Buzan and Hansen, 2009a; Sheehan, 2005; Steans et al., 2010). While there are multiple approaches to security that promote changes in the security agenda based on

questions of ‘Security for Whom? Security for What?’, this research will narrow its focus on securitisation theory and the human security approach. The literature review will provide overall ideas and understandings of these two theoretical concepts and further proceed by analysing the theoretical narrative that these concepts have to offer the effort against drug trafficking. In conclusion, the literature review will provide an overview of the existing academic literature focusing on drug trafficking in Central Asia; this will allow me to identify a gap in the literature, which this thesis intends to fill.

The second part of this thesis will consist of an overview of the current policies and practices that Central Asian countries practice at the state, regional, and global level in an attempt to counter the flow of illicit drugs from Afghanistan. The cross-boundary nature of drug trafficking requires regional cooperation, as well cooperation with the broader international community to decrease the amounts of illicit drugs being trafficked into the region, as well as the negative effects they have on the wellbeing of people and society. Furthermore, this paper will reflect on the various narratives in which anti-drug trafficking efforts have been conceptualised. The outcome of this research will make it possible to determine if the threat of illicit drugs has been framed in a unified way throughout the region, and it aligns which the global perspective on this security issue. The assessment of the drug trafficking narratives employed in the Central Asian countries will make it possible to assess the current stage and conditions set out by governments to counter the flow of illicit goods and allow researchers to assess whether success requires more focus from both regional states and the international community. It will also present suggestions for the future development of anti-drug trafficking efforts in Central Asia.

Drugs as a Threat to Security

One of the most prominent threats facing the security and safety of states and regions is organised crime. The illicit activities carried out by organised crime may include terrorism, human trafficking, arms and weapons trafficking, drug trafficking, and others (Hübschle, 2011). While many organised crime groups carry out a wide range of activities, drug trafficking is considered to be among the top activities that fund organised crime (European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction and Europol, 2016; *How Illegal Drugs Sustain Organised Crime in the EU*, 2017; Makarenko, 2012; Stoica, 2016). Illicit drugs have a long history of causing problems on many different levels: from damaging the physical and mental health of individuals, to causing major social problems, to threatening the economic and political stability of individual states and broader regions and potentially having worldwide effects (UNDP, 1994; UNODC, 2017).

The UNODC's latest data suggests that the number of opiate users around the world has increased significantly, reaching 19.4 million in 2016, the highest figure since the late 1990s (2018a). The world's primary known opiate sources are known to be Afghanistan, the Golden Triangle network, and the Mexico-Columbia network (Miltenburg, 2018). The origins of the illicit drug supply and the amount being trafficked are primarily determined by monitoring cultivation trends of illicit crops, as well as tracking drug seizures along known trafficking routes.

The most recent report on the cultivation and production of opium in Afghanistan notes that even with a 20% decrease in opium poppy production in 2018 compared to 2017, the total for the last two years is still the highest since 1994 (*Afghanistan Opium Survey*, 2018). The significant increase in opium poppy cultivation since the monitoring program was introduced was reported in 2017, when worldwide cultivation increased by 37% compared with the previous year, with Afghanistan occupying more than three-quarters of the illicit

opium cultivation area (UNODC, 2018a). Moreover, global opium production reached record high numbers in 2017, in which Afghanistan accounted for 86% of production (UNODC, 2018a).

Map 2 Main Afghan opiate trafficking flows 2011-2015



Source: UNODC report, 2018

As shown on the above map prepared by the UNODC, drugs from Afghanistan are predominantly trafficked along three main pathways: the Balkan, Southern and Northern routes (2017). The Balkan route has historically been considered the primary route, as it offers the shortest and most direct access to Europe, via Iran and Turkey (*Opioid trafficking routes from Asia to Europe*, 2015). The amount of illicit drugs seized along the Balkan route accounts for 37% of the total amount of heroin and morphine seized worldwide, excluding the seizures that took place in Afghanistan itself (UNODC, 2018a). Groups from Pakistan and the Gulf countries play a significant role in trafficking illicit drugs through the Southern route, employing various different modes of transportation (*Opioid trafficking routes from Asia to Europe*, 2015). Opiate trafficking via the southern route accounted for 9% of all opiate seizures reported in European countries (UNODC, 2018a). Last, but not least, the final globally recognised opiate trafficking route starts in Afghanistan and leads through Tajikistan,

Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan towards the target markets of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. Large quantities of heroin are transported along this route, which travels through the closely integrated states of the former Soviet Union. The countries along this route rank among the top 20 in the world in terms of large heroin seizures (*Opioid trafficking routes from Asia to Europe*, 2015).

Overview of theoretical approaches

With the shift in the security agenda that took place after the end of the Cold War, the focus of the international community shifted to a different set of threats affecting national security and well-being. The predominant focus of states before and during the Cold War was to safeguard their national sovereignty based on a narrow definition of security, which exclusively focused on maintaining a balance of military power between the different state actors in the international system (Walt, 1991). The unpredicted end of the Cold War, followed by various events including the dissolutions of the USSR, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia, and, most importantly, the introduction of UN Development Report in 1994, have initiated the shift of the security agenda towards such threats as migration, access to healthcare, and other components of so-called 'human security' (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2010).

Furthermore, the acceleration of globalisation has challenged the traditional state-centric security agenda with its focus on military power. In its place, new, non-traditional threats have arisen. These include: the progressively declining health of the environment; the outbreak of global epidemics, such as HIV/AIDS; rapidly evolving organised crime syndicates that have become increasingly sophisticated in areas such as human and drug trafficking; and the growth of increasingly violent terrorist groups that now have a global reach. With international politics being increasingly concerned with global and transnational issues such as rapid population growth, environmental pollution, and challenges brought about by the advancement of technology, it has become

evident that to maintain peace and stability in the world, threats must not be perceived merely through the spectre of war (Steans et al., 2010). The new nature of these threats has demonstrated that the traditional security approach is unable to overcome the problems facing the world today (Buzan and Hansen, 2009b).

Increased concerns within academia regarding the relevance of traditional security strategies in a changing political environment have resulted in the emergence of critical approaches to security studies and new ‘broadening’ and ‘deepening’ discourses surrounding the security agenda (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2010, p. 7). The broadening of the security agenda entails a shift from a purely military conception of security towards a more holistic approach including political, economic, environmental, and societal security that can be thought of as the non-traditional security threats (Buzan et al., 1998; Crawford, 1994; Roberts, 1990; Ullman, 1983; Weiner, 1992). Furthermore, critical security approaches employ the concept of a ‘deepening’ security agenda, which also refers to the shift from the traditionally focused state-centric approach to security towards concentrating on both individual human security and an overarching notion of global security (Booth, 2005; Buzan, 1991; Grant, 1992; Rubinstein, 1988).

Various scholars have introduced multiple approaches to security over the past several decades. The security agenda of each theoretical perspective differs depending on their approach to the questions – ‘Security for Whom? Security from What?’ This paper will concentrate on the theoretical concepts of securitisation theory and human security as introduced by researchers coming from a critical security studies background.

Securitisation theory

The Copenhagen School represented in works of Barry Buzan, Jaap de Wilde, and Ole Wæver, has provided a unique approach towards security issues

and has made a substantial contribution to security studies overall. In their work, many authors have argued that ‘security is about survival’ against a presented existential threat (Buzan et al., 1998). Buzan, however, disagrees with the notion that war and force are the central agenda of security studies and has instead argued that other issues are also important and should also be taken seriously as threats to security (Buzan, 1997).

The proposed approach aims to broaden the focus from traditional security studies, which have traditionally concentrated on the military sector, towards a multi-sectoral approach concentrating not only on the military but also on non-military threats to security (Emmers, 2016). The Copenhagen School has outlined the rise of threats beyond the military sector and has introduced five categories of security: military, economic, political, and environmental securities. Furthermore, securitisation theory has contributed to security studies by providing a guideline to understanding and analysing the process of how a problem becomes a security issue (Buzan et al., 1998).

Scholars of the Copenhagen School have introduced securitisation and desecuritisation models to provide a comparative and systematic approach towards security threats. Which states that an issue becomes ‘securitised’ when it is presented as an existential threat to the referent object by the securitising actor. Securitisation theory expands from the idea that security consists of issues that concern the state towards any issues that concern ‘things that are seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival’ (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 36). These include issues of state stability, national sovereignty, national economies, ideology, healthcare and collective identities. The issues are primarily presented through the implementation of ‘speech acts’ by securitising actors, which include political leaders, governments, lobbyists, governments, and pressure groups (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 40). A speech act occurs when a ‘securitising actor declares a referent object to be existentially threatened and makes a persuasive call for adoption of emergency measures to counter this threat’ (Elbe, 2006, p. 125). Securitisation theory does not define a

threat but allows the relevant actors to determine the issue that threatens the referent object (Buzan et al., 1998). The variety of threats has permitted the implementation of securitisation theory to address issues ranging from minority rights, migration, HIV-AIDS, environment, and trafficking (Elbe, 2006, 2005; Huysmans, 2006, 2000; MacKenzie, 2009; Roe, 2004).

The Copenhagen School has developed a securitisation spectrum that indicates whether an issue is non-politicised, politicised, or securitised. Any matter is considered to be non-politicised when it is not an issue of public debate; once it becomes a topic of the standard political debate, the issue is politicised (Emmers, 2016). When a politicised issue is presented as an existential threat, and the public accepts the idea that it is an existential threat, the issue then becomes securitised. The act of securitisation is done by presenting the issues 'according to the particular logic or grammar of the security speech act' (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 25). A securitised issue is considered to be a more extreme version of politicised issue, in which a state's leaders are permitted to adopt extraordinary measures outside the normal political procedures (Buzan et al., 1998). Securitisation allows for prioritising the issue, thus requiring the attention of influential policy-makers, and allows for the additional allocation of funds (Buzan et al., 1998).

The Copenhagen School also describes the opposing process of desecuritisation, which involves the 'shifting of an issue out of emergency mode and into the normal bargaining processes of the political sphere' (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 4). However, Copenhagen School scholars have been comparatively less focused on the concept of desecuritisation (Aradau, 2004). Case studies of the implementation of securitisation theory have in some cases suggested possible routes towards the desecuritisation of an issue, but, in other cases, have concluded that the desecuritisation of some issues is virtually impossible (Huysmans, 1995; Roe, 2004).

The predominant theoretical criticism of Securitisation theory has focused on its overemphasis on the meaning of security (Huysmans, 2006;

Neumann, 1998; Stritzel, 2007; Williams, 2003). Several scholars have noted that the general presumption of securitisation is to view it as a practice (Hansen, 2000; Vuori, 2008; Williams, 2007), rather than to focus on the context, practice, and power relations within securitisation (Balzacq, 2011). Furthermore, securitisation theory has been criticised because of the absence of a detailed methodological framework, as well as for its lack of a clear definition of successful securitisation (Abrahamsen, 2005; Roe, 2008; Vuori, 2008).

Human Security Theory

Another approach developed in the post-Cold War era as a component of critical security studies is the Human security approach, which aims to provide an operational framework to address newly emerging security issues that do not fall under the traditional definition of security issues. The approach derives from the intersection of human rights, human development, and conflict resolution discourse (Uvin, 2001). The security agenda within this theoretical perspective focuses on the shifting of the primary referent object from the state level to the individual level. Human security has conceptualised the term 'security' to mean focusing on and ensuring the security of an individual in order to achieve global security and peace.

This concept has made it possible to widen the spectrum of security from external threats to the safety and stability of the state to threats from both inside and outside a state. The human security-based approach has highlighted the importance of and has considerably focused on threats that do not come from any single identifiable enemy, but where the well-being of people can nevertheless be jeopardised (Hamill, 1998). Several scholars have noted that human security provides the opportunity to address politically marginalised issues, as well as addressing the globalisation of international policy on a broader scale (Acharya, 2001; Owen, 2004a).

The use of this approach and the absence of a standard definition has been widely contested by various authors (Duffield and Waddell, 2006; Paris, 2001). In broad terms, human security refers to when the welfare and well-being of people are prioritised over the security of the state (Duffield and Waddell, 2006). While there is no particular school that has presented this approach, the *Human Development Report 1994* is the earliest document that has defined the human security concept and presented it as an alternative security concept where the focus shifts from traditional threats to the state to the actual issues that threaten the wellbeing of people (Owen, 2004a). The UNDP has defined human security as

‘...first, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. And second, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruption in the patterns of daily life – whether in jobs or in communities’ (UNDP, 1994, p. 23).

UNDP’s report has addressed the importance of universality and mutual dependence. It has furthermore identified seven elements that human security encompasses: economic security, health security, food security, environmental security, community security, personal security, and political security (UNDP, 1994). The variety of these elements have made it possible to maintain a broad definitional boundary and maintain ‘all-encompassing and integrative qualities’ of the human security concept (Paris, 2001). The UN Commission on Human Security has further defined human security to protect the ‘fundamental freedoms... they are protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations’ (Ogata, 2003, p. 4). Thus, the human security concept provides security through addressing issues that affect freedom from want and freedom from fear.

While the holistic vision of human security encompasses the issues that the UN is focused on addressing, the Human Security Network has suggested narrowing down the focus of human security to the eradication of ‘the use of, the threat of, force and violence from people’s everyday lives’ (Krause, 2007,

p. 4). With focusing on threats to the people, some scholars have argued that human security should focus on the protection of civilians in emergencies through humanitarian assistance (Hampson et al., 2002), whereas others have contended that organised violence and the absence of the rule of law are the principal threats to human survival (MacFarlane and Khong, 2006).

The most prevalent criticism of the human security concept is the absence of a precise definition (Duffield and Waddell, 2006; Krause, 2004; Paris, 2004, 2001). It makes it possible to apply the theory to any issue from global governance, environmental degradation, and pollution to social underrepresentation and political insecurity. The lack of a proper definition leads to extensive broadening the concept, to the point where it risks losing its usefulness. Thus, every issue becomes prioritised, and once everything is prioritised, then, in fact, nothing is (Khong, 2001). Furthermore, human security is criticised for linking development and security, which might have the effect of disempowering underdeveloped countries, by dividing the world between states that can and cannot provide security for their citizens (Duffield and Waddell, 2004; McCormack, 2008). The connection between development and security further allows acting through the norm of ‘the responsibility to protect’, which provides greater freedom to more powerful states and institutions to intervene in weaker states (McCormack, 2008).

Drugs as a source of non-traditional threat to the security agenda

With critical security studies widening and deepening its agenda through the increase in theoretical perspectives introduced after the Cold War, international concerns have been raised about the security threat caused by drug trafficking. This issue threatens everything from the health of the individual, to the societal and psychological well-being of a society, to the economic and political stability of the state and region, to the prosperity of the entire world (UNODC, 2017). While there are various critical security approaches, varying

from feminist security studies to poststructuralism and postcolonialism, this research will focus on the securitisation and human security approach to the drug phenomenon.

Securitising the drug trafficking issue

The Copenhagen School approach is a socially constructed concept of security in which an existential threat is based ‘on a shared understanding of what constitutes a danger to security’ (Emmers, 2016, p. 140). In order to impose extraordinary measures in addressing a security matter, the drug issue has to be portrayed as a threat to the referent object and the securitising actor has to convince the audience that the issue poses an existential threat.

The narrative around the drug issue as an existential threat has been predominantly constructed around the drugs themselves, drug producers and users, and drug traffickers. The development of this discourse has portrayed the threat of drug use and drug production to the mutual global identity and humankind (Bewley-Taylor and Jelsma, 2011; Lines, 2011). The initial narrative has argued that the threat for the referent object is from the drug users themselves, who destabilise and undermine society, and national identity (Grayson, 2008).

However, the narrative has since evolved to focusing on ‘others’, such as drug trafficking organisations, as the primary societal threat (Herschinger, 2011). The shift in what is considered to be an existential threat has made it possible to propose introducing a global drug prohibition regime and promoting a global approach towards fighting the drug epidemic. The move towards securitising drugs has prevalingly been aimed at raising the urgency of the issue within the international community to increase awareness and political support; and therefore, convincing the audience that additional resources and extraordinary measures are required.

The securitisation of the drugs discourse has created a shared international identity that understands the danger of drugs (Costa, 2008). The global approach to drugs has positioned all of humankind, in other words the global community, as morally right crusaders against an ‘evil’ enemy, personified by drugs and their producers (Bewley-Taylor and Jelsma, 2011; Lines, 2011). International support for the Single Convention’s plan for a global drug prohibition regime was derived from the internationally agreed stance on illicit drugs as a threat, which required the regulation of production, use, and trade (Costa, 2008).

The initial attempt to securitise drugs has been employed through the adoption of the UN Single Convention of 1961. It is within this treaty that the UN has addressed the existential threat of drug addiction to society, as a referent object (United Nations, 1961). It has urged the world to think of ‘addiction to the narcotic drugs as a serious evil’ (1961, p. 83) and established the need for protection from this threat within the moral framework. It has addressed the issue to the UN member states and, subsequently, implemented extraordinary measures to tackle the threat by introducing the global drug prohibition regime. The regime significantly differed from previous treaties regarding drug control, by including a regulation that controls and prohibits the cultivation of certain plants (Bewley-Taylor and Woodiwiss, 2005; Crick, 2012; Jelsma, 2011). As an outcome of the Single Convention to monitor the implementation of drug control the International Narcotics Control Board was established (Crick, 2012).

Several decades after the adoption of the Single Convention the illicit drugs market has exponentially grown and is now predominantly under the control of organised crime (Jelsma, 2011). The threat of organised crime has led to a second attempt at targeting drugs within the securitisation framework. The 1988 UN Convention has shifted the existential threat from drug addiction towards drug production and trafficking and further linked it with organised crime and terrorism, thus targeting organised drug trafficking groups. Furthermore, this act has explicitly declared that organised criminal activities

threaten the stability and sovereignty of the state, thus presenting the state, rather than humanity, as the referent object (United Nations, 1988). Underlining the threat to the security of states and broader regions under this Convention was predominantly the drug trade and the economic impact that it has on the proliferation of organised crime (Crick, 2012). It has laid out the narco-terrorist nexus, where the illicit drug trade has financed organised crime and insurgencies and jeopardised national security by contributing to corruption.

With the end of the Cold War, the Soviet threat to the West was eliminated, this has made it necessary to present a new enemy for militaries and intelligence agencies. At the same time, the increase in globalisation has also influenced the rise of transnational criminal organisations that have made it possible to present a globally supported campaign against drugs (Campbell, 1992; Sheptycki, 1996). This approach has allowed the Convention to adopt extraordinary measures through the militarisation of drug eradication programmes and law enforcement strategies. The US has taken a lead in training and equipping law enforcement agencies, as well as using trade and aid deals as a bargaining chip for the adoption of its preferred counter-narcotics measures in other countries, where they can have adverse outcomes (Bewley-Taylor and Woodiwiss, 2005; Herschinger, 2011; Hesselroth, 2005). The extraordinary measures adopted by the 1988 Convention have required nations to include criminal sanctions in their domestic legal systems in regards to the possession of illicit drugs (Crick, 2012; Jelsma, 2011).

Both of the conventions have predominantly been influenced by Western perspectives. Nadelmann highlights that the global drug prohibition regime, under the Single Convention, has reflected the political and economic interests of the leading countries that have shaped the illicit drugs discourse (1990). The US is presumed to be the driving force of the global drug prohibition regime, which has urged negotiations and consolidations of new drug control treaties (Bagley and Rosen, 2016; Bewley-Taylor and Jelsma, 2011; Bewley-Taylor, 1999). Furthermore, scholars have considered that

international drug policy aligns within the global norms established by the USA and Europe, which govern the legality and illegality of certain drugs (Andreas and Nadelmann, 2006; Bagley and Rosen, 2016). The influence of the US was also seen in the 1988 Convention, in which the UN suggested that every nation employ the same enforcement policies as the US, thus framing the global issue of illicit drugs through a US law enforcement perspective (Bewley-Taylor and Woodiwiss, 2005).

Securitisation of the illicit drugs problem has predominantly been executed through speech acts of the US-led UN conventions. These conventions have addressed the security of humankind and the state from the existential threat of drug addiction and drug production and trafficking linked to organised crime groups. The existential threat linking drug trafficking and organised crime has led to a militarised approach towards targeting the revenue from drug proliferation. Thus, the securitisation of the drugs issue has focused on countering an existential threat derived from the narco-terrorist nexus and aims to provide security for both humankind as a whole and the state. The UN conventions have further required states to implement a global prohibition regime, as well as adopt certain law enforcement and eradication policies.

While some scholars provide in-depth employment of the securitisation framework through assessing UN conventions, other scholars point out the negative impacts of securitising illicit drugs. The successfully securitised issue gives the securitising actor the ability to deflect the focus away from the specific issue (Crick, 2012). Within both conventions, the securitising actor is able to frame the issue on a global scale, diverting attention from inter-state issues. The move towards securitisation made under the Single Convention has presented drug addiction as evil in a way that has allowed it to gain attention above the national interest by presenting the urgent need for drug control around the world (Bewley-Taylor and Jelsma, 2011). Furthermore, criticism of the securitisation narrative of drug trafficking has derived from the threat posed by the implementation of measures. The eradication of the cultivation and production

of illicit drugs poses a threat to the economic security of people who depend on illegal income to maintain their livelihood. Geographical and ecological characteristics of the areas where illicit crops have been cultivated also challenge the cultivation of alternative crops, which can be implemented through crop substitution programs (Peterson, 2002).

The Human Security prospective on drug trafficking

Another critical security approach addressing the drug phenomenon was derived from the security threats posed by illegal narcotics production, trafficking, and consumption. Due to their nature these threats are difficult to address through the traditional approach with its focus on state power and state security. The proliferation and growth of illicit drug production and trafficking are linked to several factors, such as weak governmental institutions, underdevelopment, poor economic conditions, and others. The cultivation of the opium poppy, marijuana and coca-based on their illegal nature are predominantly situated in regions with weak law enforcement and ‘typically poor countries which have significant internal security problems’ (Seccombe, 1997, p. 288).

Through the introduced human security approach, security threats posed by drugs can be addressed by shifting attention away from the territorial and political security of the state to the physical safety of individuals and societies (Kaldor et al., 2007). The human security narrative makes it possible to address the drug threat by focusing on the needs of the people and underlines the challenges that the state needs to address (Paris, 2001). It challenges the securitisation approach of the War on Drugs, whereby policies have focused on drug trafficking organisations, rather than addressing the underlying factors influencing the production and trafficking of drugs (Arias, 2017; Gautreau, 2012). Human security does not eliminate the threat posed by drug trafficking criminal organisations but also aims to address the drug threat by focusing on

the health, economic, political, personal, and environmental security of an individual.

The drug trade influences the increase in human insecurity by being closely linked to criminal and physical violence. Drug violence can be observed through different process related to drug crime, from the initial phases of producing, towards crimes committed by buyers and sellers in the consumer market. To control the cultivation of illicit crops, producers must ensure that the state does not have control over the area in which the crops are grown; which in turn contributes to the occurrence of insurgent groups (Gautreau, 2012). Moreover, insurgent groups and drug trafficking organisations pose threats to the security of the communities located near the production areas, through employing armed organisations, regional armed control, local gangs, and other illicit activities to maintain the security of their illicit cultivation operations (Arias, 2013; Arias and Rodrigues, 2006; Auyero et al., 2014; Venkatesh, 1997). Furthermore, to ensure secure passage for the illegal products, including drugs, the previously mentioned activities contribute to concentrated violence along the supply routes (Dube et al., 2013). While violence accompanies the production and trafficking of illicit drugs, drug consumers may also pose a threat to individuals. For example, the mind-altering nature of narcotics may lead to increased occurrences of domestic violence (Campbell, 2002).

One of the major focal points of the human security field is the health of the individual and the community. The rapidly evolving health threats vary but include air and blood-transmitted diseases, cross-boundary epidemics and psychological and physiological health issues. Previous and ongoing research provide substantial evidence supporting the health dangers derived from drug consumption (Wilson, 1990). The consumption of illicit drugs leads to serious physiological and mental issues, such as addiction, depression, overdose, and anxiety (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014). Moreover, the lack of sterile conditions and re-use of syringes for the use of injectable narcotics facilitates the transmission of multiple blood-related

diseases including but not limited to HIV and AIDS (Arias, 2017). Such diseases pose an extreme threat to developing and under-developed countries with weak public health systems and a lack of access to the required treatment (Ball et al., 1998; Biehl and Eskerod, 2005). While the direct threat from drug use harms the users themselves, it also leads to the indirect threat of disease transmission, thus placing the population of nearby areas under threat (Csete et al., 2016).

Another human security perspective on the drug trade is derived from the significant effects that drug trafficking can have on economic development in producer countries. Drug trafficking can generate conflicts that lead to infrastructure destruction, increased criminal violence, the emergence of non-state paramilitary forces, and the economic burden of relying on the black market. Several scholars have outlined the correlation between high drug trafficking and organised private military forces and the occurrence of chronic civil conflicts (Arias, 2017; Thoumi, 2003). The immediate results of conflict encompass regional instability and can lead to a refugee crisis (Cullen and Levitt, 1999; Van Dijk, 2007), and in the long-term perspective, they can deflect national and foreign investment in local development (Metelits, 2010). From another point of view, economic development in the areas intertwined with drug trafficking is influenced by pre-existing factors such as high unemployment and poverty, thus resulting in a lack of funding for supporting the livelihood of people in very poor places (Hill, 2010; Kelly et al., 2005). Furthermore, some authors highlight the negative impact brought by the War on Drugs on the economic security of the local people in production countries, whose survival is based on income from illicit cultivation (Gautreau, 2012; Peterson, 2002).

The drug trade and illicit trafficking also contributes to political insecurity within a region and is intertwined with the economic insecurity of the individuals. Due to low levels of economic development, drug traffickers can often interfere with political elites, through bribery, corruption and racketeering, to secure the drug trade (Arias, 2017, 2014). Scholars highlight the ability and

evidence of the drug trade not only influencing security forces but governments as well; thus influencing both local and higher levels of the state (Brands, 2010; Felbab-Brown and Forest, 2012; Vulliamy, 2008). Corrupt and criminally allied political party members can divert development funds and undermine policies based on the interest of drug trafficking organisations (Arias, 2017). On the other hand, the insecurity of citizens can also be caused by the state's efforts in combating drug consumption, cultivation, and trafficking. State officials and police can exercise power and violence in the name of eradicating drug trafficking (Felbab-Brown and Forest, 2012). These can be observed through anti-drug violence implemented by the US and Western countries within the global drug prohibition program (Arias, 2017). Thus, the drug trade has a significant influence on the political insecurity of the individual; not only through poor internal governance within the state, where government and state forces are intertwined with corrupt support from drug trafficking organisations; but also through the state exercising violence against drug users and local people who are involved in drug production and trafficking, but do not have higher ranks within the criminal organisation.

The drug phenomenon and illicit trafficking in Central Asia

The geographical location of Central Asia has allowed the region to be a part of the Silk Road commercial route from Asia to Europe. The fall of the Soviet Union and independence of the Central Asian countries has resulted in a revitalisation of historic trade routes for commercial use. The insecurity of the newly emerging countries along with their close proximity to highly volatile Afghanistan, the world's leading opium poppy producer, has provided an opportunity to smuggle illicit drugs and transport them to Russia and onward to Eastern Europe.

Before the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States and the spread of the War on Drugs to that region, Central Asia was largely ignored in the

international community (Luong, 2002; Zabortseva, 2012). However, the increased threat derived from the ongoing instability in Afghanistan has directed international security concern towards the Central Asian region. Scholarly literature on drug-related research has predominantly focused on providing the descriptive origins and factors influencing the increased drug trafficking phenomenon in the region (Behera, 2013; De Danieli, 2014; Fenopetov, 2006; Zabortseva, 2012).

The proliferation of drug trafficking in Central Asia was predominantly influenced by a combination of circumstances that were present after the collapse of the USSR. The territorial organisation implemented during the Soviet era provided a fertile ground for drug trafficking organisations (De Danieli, 2014). Internal mobility promoted by the Soviet authorities contributed to the organisation of the regional infrastructure system being done in a way that led to the perception of internal borders as mere administrative requirements (Suny and Martin, 2001). Thus, enforcement of the borders between the newly-independent Central Asian states of the region has presented a significant challenge for governments. The challenges of implementing stronger border control are predominantly derived from the geographical characteristics of the region. The national borders introduced after the collapse of the USSR have divided districts and villages and prevented the region from maintaining the pre-existing transnational integration (Megoran, 2006). The large sheer length of the international borders of Kazakhstan, were particularly challenging to that state, hindering its efforts to provide active border policing and control (Golunov and McDermott, 2005).

Moreover, sheer prominence of corruption during the Soviet collapse has enabled the creation of a major drug trafficking corridor across the region. The prevalence of the shadow economy during the final phase of the Soviet Union, as well as pre-existing connections have facilitated the creation of drug-related networks (De Danieli, 2014). The political situation in the USSR has provided an ample opportunity to accumulate financial wealth for

administrative workers, senior officers in the military and security agencies, law enforcement officers, and entrepreneurs. These individuals can succeed by employing violence and illegal actions (Handelman, 1995). Moreover, with the collapse of Soviet authority, the state governance and security institutions in the newly emerging countries were filled by members of the same groups, who were preoccupied with ideas of accumulating personal wealth. Thus, during the state formation period in the newly independent post-Soviet countries, collusion between political power, business, and criminal elements has increased drastically (Favarel-Garrigues, 2010; McCarthy, 2011). Once Central Asia became a favourable transit region for drug trafficking, it began providing grounds for drug-related organised groups to establish trafficking networks in collaboration with state actors and under the protection of state security agencies, who also financially benefit from the drug trafficking (Berdikeeva, 2009; Townsend, 2006).

The world leading narco-terror nexus has also influenced the dynamics of drug trafficking research taking place within Central Asia, by characterising the increased drug trafficking in the region and highlighting its correlation with organised crime and terrorism (Björnehed, 2004; Cornell and Swanström, 2006; Makarenko, 2001). During the Tadjik civil war of 1992, Islamist opposition forces implemented drug trafficking to financially support organised criminal networks in the region (Peyrouse, 2009). Furthermore, the activities of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan have contributed to the link between narcotics and terror. These activities were mostly based on the drug-related operations carried out in 1990 and 2001 (Cornell and Swanström, 2006; ICG, 2001; Olcott and Udalova, 2000). However, with the relocation of the Islamic Movement to Afghanistan after 2001, the activities of militant radical groups in the region have been reduced, thus decreasing the correlation between drugs and terrorism in the Central Asian region (Kazemi, 2013; Nash, 2007).

Furthermore, drug-related research has focus on assessing regional and international cooperation in region. Scholars note that multiple threats to the

stability of the region require stronger cooperation to address issues related to ecology, ethno-religious relations, and security (Zabortseva, 2012). While Central Asian states aim to cooperate against the drug trafficking that finances the international terrorist organisations (Nichol, 2010), it is evident that the region lacks the means and the resources to address the problem by itself (Behera, 2013). The participation of international actors in fighting the drug flow from Afghanistan is challenged by the diverging interests of each of the actors involved (Zabortseva, 2012). Several authors have focused on outlining the international and regional efforts in combatting drug trafficking through outlining initiatives and international cooperation (Behera, 2013). However, inconsistency in structure and strategies in combating the drug trade between different countries, international organisations, and NGOs has resulted in the use of vast numbers of approaches from different perspectives. Other researchers have provided bases for criticism of securitisation theory through analysis of the OSCE, UNODC, and other international actors' motivations in their attempts to address drug trafficking in the region (Jackson, 2006). Some authors have focused their research on the application of securitisation in one particular Central Asian country (Wilkinson, 2007) or focused on cooperation between an international actor and a single state within the region (Kosdauletov et al., 2014).

This literature review of drug related research discussing Central Asia suggests that there have been a number of studies aimed at identifying and specifying the drug phenomenon, illicit cultivation, and trafficking as significant challenges to the states in the region. While a number of scholarly articles and books have focused on this threat to the region, it is evident that there is no previous research that has analysed the implemented policies and procedures within Central Asia at the state, regional, and international level. Moreover, this research gap also suggests the absence of applicable theoretical narratives informing the anti-drug policies and measures; no dominant narrative has so-far been identified. Therefore, this research will aim to fill the research

gap by focusing on the analysis of the policies, procedures, strategies, and measures designed to counter the drug phenomenon in Central Asia, identify the narratives informing them, and pinpoint the leading narrative.

Methodology

The instability in Afghanistan and the increased production of the opium poppy has increased the role of the Central Asian countries as a significant drug trafficking route. The in-depth literature review in the previous chapter has allowed for the identification of a research gap in the studies related to drug trafficking in Central Asia. The existing scholarly literature predominantly focuses on the origins and factors influencing the drug trafficking flow in the region (Behera, 2013; De Danieli, 2014; Fenopetov, 2006; Zabortseva, 2012). These research papers have also focused on the actions of the international community within the region, through outlining different initiatives and outside actors' cooperation with states in the region (Behera, 2013). Coherent anti-drug trafficking attempts are challenged by some of the underlying interests of the involved actors, such as the state, international organisations, and NGO's, resulting in inconsistent structures and strategies. This research aims at understanding the dominant narrative of policies and procedures targeting drug trafficking within the region and assessing if narratives of actions taken at the state, regional and international level are coherent.

Thematic analysis

Based on the identified gap within the scholarly literature, the theoretical perspective and general logic of the studies, this research will fall under the qualitative methodology. This particular category of methodology allows us to analyse and interpret the data by encompassing and considering the social context that influences it (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). A qualitative research methodology makes it possible to address and answer the research questions ('where?' 'what?' 'when?' etc.) based on the researcher's perspective (Crabtree and Miller, 1999; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011), while quantitative research is driven by statistical data. Furthermore, using a qualitative research methodology

allows researchers to explore the context of the problem and build a complex picture to understand the phenomena by employing and reflecting on philosophical perspectives, assumptions, and approaches within the research (Creswell, 2013; Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Qualitative research employs several different methods and approaches to achieve an in-depth understanding of the phenomena, such as ethnography, narrative, discourse content, and thematic analyses (Given, 2008; Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

Given the various options presented by the many possible qualitative approaches and considering the nature, aims, and research questions of this research, it is evident that employing an exploratory approach is appropriate. To understand the narratives within the counter drug trafficking efforts, it is essential to understand the policies and reports and analyse the common narratives informing these documents, through identifying their ‘thematising meanings’, thus employing thematic analysis (Holloway and Todres, 2003, p. 347). While thematic analysis is widely employed, it does not have a universal agreement on the definition and the steps in the use of this approach (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Boyatzis, 1998). Braun and Clarke (2006) give the most comprehensive and straightforward definition of thematic analysis. They define this approach as ‘a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data’ (2006, p. 79). The general approach to applying thematic analysis revolves around two primary ways to identify patterns within the data: the deductive approach and the inductive approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The deductive approach is a ‘top down’ approach used to test a known theory in a different setting (Boyatzis, 1998; Elo and Kyngäs, 2008; Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). For the purpose of this research, an inductive approach will be used to identify the themes within the collected data. Since the absence of previous research on this topic requires a ‘bottom up’ approach, patterns are observed from the analysis of collected data (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Such an approach will allow for the identification of the themes that are linked to the data itself and are not defined using pre-existing frameworks (Patton, 2002).

The thematic approach is a method that allows the researcher to analyse the data and unravel the underpinning patterns informing the data, through focusing on the discourses and factors influencing it. Since the scope of this research paper aims at analysing and identifying the main theoretical narratives that inform anti-drug trafficking efforts, considering the fact that the number of implemented policies and procedures is significant, thematic analysis will make it possible to provide an overview of the content and will make it possible to study the underlying key patterns and narratives within the policies and procedures used in Central Asia. Moreover, such a methodological approach suits the current research by providing a flexible approach to studying detailed and complex data (Braun and Clarke, 2006; King, 2004). The flexibility of the approach allows for in-depth understanding and examining of the data by outlining the similarities and differences, which further enables the identification of different narratives informing anti-drug efforts within the region.

Data collection

Data collection will employ the use of primary and secondary sources available through the electronic resources provided by the University of Glasgow, as well as sources that can be freely accessed by the public. An overview of the flow of illegal drugs from Afghanistan through the Central Asia via the 'Northern Route' will be presented based on the statistical data available from official reports issued by governmental and non-governmental organisations. As for the data required for the thematic analysis, it will be collected from primary sources available for public access; including electronic resources provided by the Central Asian states themselves and official online resources of governmental, non-governmental, and international organisations. Due to the lower integration of electronic resources among Central Asian governments compared to their Western counterparts, the availability of

information about policies can be limited. As mentioned, this will require the incorporation of other sources such as the international media and local press. The collected data outlining state and regional efforts will consist of governmental policies, laws, reports, policy summaries, and publications available as primary resources. The data related to the narratives presented by the international organisations in the region will be collected from primary resources provided by organisations such as the United Nations and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, as well as data available through organisations funded by the European Union, the United States, and Japan. Further data will be collected through the use of secondary resources, such as academic books, scholarly reviewed journal articles, historical archives, and mass media.

Research into the drug trafficking topic is highly controversial, and sometimes policies and practices are manipulated to suggest a particular outcome. Hence, it is essential to conduct research objectively without displaying biases. Since this research does not involve research on human subjects and does not require a collection of personal details it does not require ethical approval. However, respect for the dignity of the different actors shall be maintained through the analysis. In order to address this aspect, the data collected for this research will primarily be accumulated through publicly available official public statements, policies, and reports.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis will involve in-depth study and analysis to identify common themes and patterns across the collected data (DeSantis and Ugarriza, 2000). The absence of a unified data analysis process of thematic analysis leads to diverse perspectives on the use and implementation of such approaches. The conventional view of this method is that it aims to examine narratives and patterns from the collected data by analysing and grouping the text into smaller

sub-themes (Sparker, 2005). Based on the specific research purpose of this paper – to analyse the narratives of drug trafficking in Central Asia – this research will follow an inductive content analysis method, as mentioned above. Due to the absence of previous studies on the narratives shaping the policies and procedures of anti-drug trafficking efforts within the region, inductive content analysis will allow readers to study and analyse the texts of the collected data and categorise them independently (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). However, considering the scope of this dissertation and the research time frame, as well as the main narratives in drug trafficking identified during the literature review, this research will seek to identify whether ‘securitisation’ and ‘human security’ theoretical approaches inform the anti-drug efforts within the region.

The comprehensive and most self-explanatory process of the thematic analysis is presented by Braun and Clarke with the initial step being familiarisation and understanding the context of the collected data (2006). Once the content of the text becomes familiar, it is required to identify initial interesting features and codes within the data, through re-reading the data and noting the ideas presented by each analysed document. The predominant focus of the coding/grouping process has been generated based on the focus and aims of the implemented policies, thus employing descriptive, as well as more detailed questions. Within the systematic analysis of the collected data, this research has focused on thorough reading and analysis of each data item individually and has highlighted the repeated ideas, which, as Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 89) note, ‘may form the basis of the repeated patterns (themes) across the data set’. The next phase, searching for recurring themes across the data set, has first generated a brief description of each code and then used mind-maps to organise the data items into ‘theme-piles’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 89). Once initial themes have been identified, data analysis requires the review and refinement of these themes, to ensure that data is coherently interpreted within the theme and that the identified themes do not overlap (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 90). To fulfil the aims of this research, once the theoretical narratives

informing the anti-drug policies and procedures have been identified, the overview of the emerged narratives will be provided through visual interpretation. This will make it possible to identify the dominant theoretical framing of the drug phenomenon in the region, thus allowing further discussion on whether it is applicable to developing and less developed countries.

Research limitations

While thematic analysis is widely employed in qualitative studies, it is evident that there is an overlap with other approaches, such as interpretative phenomenological analysis, content analysis, grounded theory and discourse analysis. Such overlap leads to a lack of literature focusing specifically on thematic analysis, which may cause an underestimation of the process of thematic analysis (Nowell et al., 2017). The lack of literature on thematic analysis creates confusion with other methods used to analyse the text and the content of the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) note that thematic analysis is frequently portrayed in academia as a simple approach which does not require a sophisticated data analysis process. However, other scholars distinguish the difference and the ability of thematic analysis to apply a systematic approach to content analysis, which will further allow the research to analyse and interpret the data within a particular context (Loffe and Yardley, 2004; Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Thus, it is essential to consider possible confusion within the other data analysis methods and focus on the thematic data analysis process, which as Braun and Clarke argue ‘can produce an insightful analysis that answers particular research questions’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 97).

Another concern, raised by the academic community, regarding the thematic analysis approach is the flexibility of the method. The method is criticised for its flexibility, noting that increased flexibility can lead to a lack of coherence and inconsistency (Holloway and Todres, 2003; Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Such criticism follows qualitative methodologies in general and can lead

to difficulties for the researcher to outline the focus within the data. However, it is essential to keep in mind that the flexibility of the method allows for implementing a wide range of analytical options, and, as highlighted by Braun and Clarke, such flexibility makes it possible that ‘the potential range of things that can be said about your data is broad’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 67). Therefore, this criticism of thematic analysis can also be seen as an advantage when studying an under researched topic, such as anti-drug trafficking efforts in Central Asia.

It is also crucial to understand and acknowledge the limitations of the research derived that arise due to the nature of the research and its focus on the field of illicit products. It is evident that the illegality of the drug trafficking field is followed by a need to cultivate in remote rural areas, the implementation of illegal smuggling networks, and extensive syndicates for refining raw materials into consumer-ready drugs, as well as activities needed to support the drug trafficking industry (Morales, 1989; Stares, 1996). The secretive nature of drug trafficking, the substantial use of the shadow economy, and illicit activities prove to be a challenge with regards to finding data on the extensiveness of drug trafficking and the real flow of drugs through trafficking routes. The data related to the flow of drug trafficking will be articulated through incorporating official reports issued by state and international organisations. Considering this limitation, the research focuses on analysing the official policies and procedures related to drug trafficking that are carried out by state activities, regional cooperation, and international involvement. Furthermore, due to the focus area being Central Asia, availability of the policies and procedures within the state level in the English language can be considered a limitation to the research. However, my knowledge of Russian and one of the region’s local languages will be a helpful asset in conducting this research.

The literature review of the drug phenomenon in Central Asia has allowed this research to identify the lack of previous research on the analysis of implemented policies and procedures and the absence of an understanding of

the theoretical narratives informing them. The following research will address the identified research gap by employing thematic analysis and implementing an inductive approach to identify the theoretical narratives that inform anti-drug policies and procedures within the region at the state, regional, and international levels. While the selected approach can raise concerns, it is evident that, if implemented correctly, it can be perceived as a strong asset. It is essential to consider the limitations derived from the selection of the research topic and the region in question, which is addressed by collecting data on the drug issue from official reports and state sources. As previously mentioned, this research does not involve human subjects and therefore does not require ethical approval. However, to execute a strong analysis, the data collected for this research will predominantly be obtained through publicly available documents outlining official policies, strategies, and statements made by state, regional, and international actors.

Policies and practices of countering drug trafficking in Central Asia

Current situation in the Central Asian states

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, newly independent Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan have all agreed on Central Asia as a collective designation for these countries (Akiner, 1998). The World Bank also adopts the same regional designation for these countries, identifying them collectively as ‘Central Asia’ within a broader group designated as ‘Europe and Central Asian countries’ (World Bank, 2018). However, to assess these countries along with the Northern route, which is the primary area of focus for this research, this dissertation will focus only on Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, excluding Turkmenistan, which is not part of the Northern route for trafficking narcotics from Afghanistan to Russia and Eastern Europe. Even though neighbouring countries in Central Asia share a common history and are located next to each other, it is essential to note that since the fall of USSR in 1991 and the states’ subsequent independence, each country has followed their own path of governance, leading to differing levels of political and economic development, different foreign relations, and the exposure of Central Asia to multiple security threats. This chapter will begin with an overview of security threats, focusing on the drug threat specifically. Then, it will provide an outline of the anti-drug policies, programmes, and projects implemented in the region by various actors. Lastly, identified anti-drug efforts will be grouped based on their focus: drug control, countering illicit trafficking, drug prevention, and rehabilitation of drug users.

Threats to the stability of the region

The contemporary political conditions in the Central Asian states have evolved significantly since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, allowing former

leaders of the Communist parties to establish as leaders of the newly independent Central Asian states, developing new national ideologies, predominantly under authoritarian regimes. The only country in the region where the political leadership has changed frequently is Kyrgyzstan, as a result of popular uprisings in 2005 and 2010 and elections in 2017. However, other countries' regimes have remained remarkably stable. In Uzbekistan, leadership has only changed once, after the death of president Karimov in 2016. In Kazakhstan, the presidency was only handed over to the prime minister after the resignation of aging president Nursultan Nazarbaev in March 2019, who nevertheless remains chairman of the security council and leader of the dominant party in parliament, therefore maintaining de-facto power over the country (Roth, 2019). Meanwhile, in Tajikistan, political rule has not changed hands since President Emomali Rahmon gained power in 1994, whose subsequent rule has been seen as 'an emergence of a totalitarian system focused entirely on the president' (Schmitz, 2019). Such political leadership creates tensions within the region, and political instability has been evident on further occasions since independence. The abuse of power, along with ethnic and sectarian conflicts, have been predominant critical factors for driving different events, such as the Tajik civil war between 1992 and 1997, ethnic conflicts in the South of Kyrgyzstan in 1990, the Andijon uprising in Uzbekistan in 2005, and two Tulip revolutions in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 and 2010 (Batsaikhan and Dabrowski, 2017).

Along with its political instability, the region is further influenced by economic conditions, which are not only a threat to the well-being of the states but also overflow and influences other security threats within the region. Economic development in the region since independence differs significantly, with Kazakhstan being a upper-middle-income economy, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan maintaining lower-middle-income economies, and the least-developed country, Tajikistan, being classified as low-income according to the World Bank (2018). Furthermore, economic development suffers significantly

from the high proliferation of corruption. All four states scored below 30 points and were among the bottom six countries in the region according to the Corruption Perception index for 2018 (Transparency International, 2019). The weak economic situation, accompanied by high poverty rates, has had a considerable impact on the public health and the quality of the healthcare system in the Central Asian states (Salvage, 2002). Their fragile governments, weak economies, and high levels of poverty, as well as their geographical proximity to Afghanistan have led to ideal conditions for illicit drug trafficking through the Central Asian states.

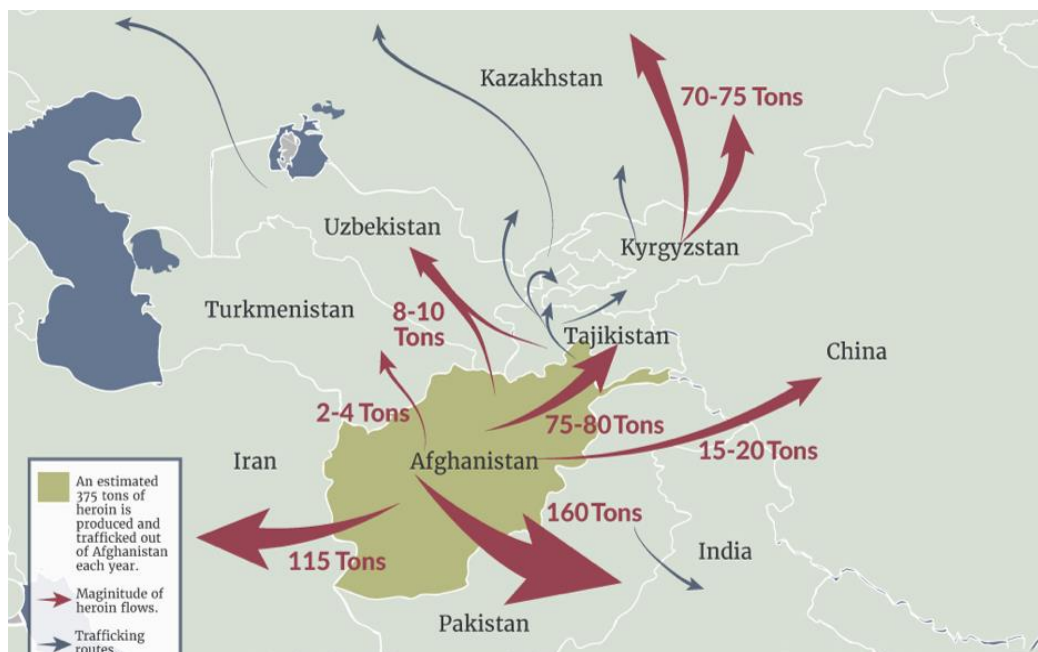
Drug trafficking from Afghanistan: The Northern Route

The global tendency of drug trafficking has long been that drugs flow from less developed to more developed countries through transit states with weak governments and weak security enforcement (Behera, 2013). Already weak political, economic, and social conditions in Central Asia have allowed for the proliferation of illicit activities, such as national separatism, religious extremism, and drug trafficking. Furthermore, geographical conditions, including their proximity to Afghanistan, the world's leading opium producer, has enabled drug trafficking organisations to employ Central Asian states during the transitional period after the collapse of the USSR. The common border introduced during the Soviet Era has made it challenging for the newly-independent states to enforce border controls due to their lack of prior experience in handling borders within the former Soviet Union. Therefore, the lack of effective border control has also assisted in the proliferation of illicit drugs (Behera, 2013; Suny and Martin, 2001). With weak enforcement of border security, Central Asian countries have been challenged by the length of some of their borders, along with many borders running through remote mountainous terrain in some areas and dividing districts and towns in others (Golunov and McDermott, 2005; Megoran, 2006).

With organised crime employing multiple different paths to traffic illicit drugs out of Afghanistan, drug trafficking research has identified a number of passages, which have been explained in the previous chapter. Considering the weak political and economic situation, along with the transport infrastructure connecting Afghanistan to the Russian Federation, the situation in Central Asia has led to the creation of the third largest trafficking route, which is called the northern route (UNODC, 2018b).

Based on information about illicit cultivation and drug seizures, the northern route travels through Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan to the Russian Federation and beyond.

Map 3 Drug flow from Afghanistan



Source: Reconnecting Asia, 2017

UNODC has estimated the annual flow of opiates along the Northern Route to be between 42.5 and 74.5 tons, based on drug consumption data and seizures of illicit drugs along the route. However, considering the perceived size of the cultivation, the real numbers are probably much higher, at around 75-80

tons, as shown on Map 3. It is essential to understand that since there is no reliable data due to the nature of the activity, the presented numbers are estimates provided by the UNODC.

Overview of the anti-drug policies, procedures and projects in Central Asia

Considering the importance of the drug issue and the rising global threat of illicit trafficking, it is essential to study and analyse the state, regional, and international efforts that are being made to minimise the supply and demand of narcotic drugs, as well as suppress illicit trafficking. While it is evident that the Central Asian States are in a transitional period and are recently established independent states, their governments do employ efforts to minimise the drug flow through their territories by implementing policies on the state level and cooperating amongst each other on the regional level. Moreover, the geopolitical importance of the region, based on its strategic central location, and the hazardous effects of the drug problem, the international community supports anti-drug trafficking procedures both through international organisations and bilateral agreements. The later part of this section will provide an overview of the state, regional, and international policies, procedures, and projects addressing the drug phenomenon.

State policies and procedures aimed at narcotic drugs and drug trafficking

Within a few years of gaining their independence after the dissolution of the USSR, all four Central Asian countries covered in this study joined three UN conventions aimed at drug control: The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961), the Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1997), and the UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988). General state laws aimed at ‘narcotic drugs, psychotropic substance and pre-courses’ were first adopted in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan in

1998 and were adopted in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan a year later. While there are insignificant differences in the names of the adopted laws, they all entail government policy towards the drug phenomenon that focuses on regulation and control of legal drug production, supply and transportation, and medical assistance with drug-associated problems, as well as efforts to combat illegal supply and distribution. Furthermore, state efforts at suppressing the drug phenomenon are further stipulated through programmes and strategies implemented within each state individually. The list of adopted laws and implemented programmes and strategies is shown in Table 1. below:

Country	Type of the document	Name of the document	Number of the document	Date enacted
Kazakhstan	Law	About narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, their analogues and precursors and measures to counter their trafficking and abuse	No 279-I	July 10, 1998
	Strategy	To combat drug abuse and drug trafficking for 2006-2014	No. 1678	November 29, 2005
Kyrgyzstan	Law	About narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors	No 66	May 22, 1998
	Programme	Government Antinarcotic program	No 54	January 27, 2014
Tajikistan	Law	About narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors	No 873	December 10, 1999
	Strategy	National strategy to combat drug trafficking for 2013-2020	No 1409	February 13, 2013
Uzbekistan	Law	About drugs and psychotropic substance	No 813-I	August 19, 1999
	Programme	National programme of comprehensive measures to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking for 2011-2015	No 11/11	June 8, 2011

Table 1 Adopted policies, programmes and strategies in Central Asian States

The predominant focus of these laws and programmes is to outline the state's duties and procedures related to the drug trade, specify specific agencies that are entitled to execute these state duties to regulate and control the legal drug market, outline the scope of the actions aimed at illegal drugs, as well as establishing state agencies specifically aimed at drug regulation, drug control, and the suppression of illicit activities. Furthermore, they provide a list of prohibited narcotic drugs, narcotic drugs used for medical purposes under strict regulation, controlled drugs used for the medical purposes, and a list of chemical and natural substances used in unlawful production of drugs and psychotropic substances.

Cultivation or the use of the narcotic drugs for a recreational purpose is prohibited by the state unless the consumption is for medical purposes. The fertile grounds of the Central Asian countries lead to the proliferation and growth of semi-wild plants. This therefore has led all four countries to highlight the illegality of the wild cultivation of narcotic plants and require landowners to destroy illegal crops. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan exclusively specify the prohibition of the opium poppy, cannabis, coca bushes, and other narcotic plants, and urge landowners to report and eliminate these crops. Furthermore, the state reserves the right to execute the destruction of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, and their analogues and precursors.

Furthermore, each state has adopted and implemented programmes of complex countermeasures aimed at illegal narcotic drugs. All antinarcotic programs and strategies practiced by the Central Asian states are focused on minimising drug proliferation within their borders and suppressing illegal drug trafficking. Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan highlighting the importance of the drug prevention measurements through both preventive and treatment measures, while Tajikistan is mainly focused on incorporating a healthy lifestyle and drug-free mindset into its citizens. All four countries acknowledge the need for improving and enhancing the technical equipment and infrastructure of their border control agencies, while only Tajikistan plans to increase the number of officers patrolling its national borders.

Regional Cooperation to counter drug flow

Due to the cross-boundary nature of the illicit narcotics trade, regional cooperation is a crucial factor in combating illegal trafficking from Afghanistan through Central Asia. The list of policies implemented on the regional level within Central Asia is provided in Table 2. below.

Organisation	Name of the document	Leading actor(s)	Date enacted
Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and UNDCP	Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation in the Control of Illicit Production, Trafficking, Abuse of Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursors	UNDCP	May 4, 1996
Collective Security Treaty Organization	Anti-Drug Strategy of the Member States for 2015-2020	Russia	December 23, 2014
Shanghai Cooperation Organization	Agreement between the Member States on cooperation in the fight against illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors	Russia and China	June 17, 2004

Table 2 Adopted agreements and strategies in Central Asia on anti-drug efforts within the regional level

The first step towards regional cooperation was introduced through the ‘Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation in the field of control of illicit production, trafficking, abuse of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors’ signed by all Central Asian countries, as well as the United Nations International Drug Control Program, in Uzbekistan on 4 May 1996. The signed memorandum focuses on coordinated actions by implementing several regional projects and procedures but predominantly focuses on enhancing consistent drug control laws within the region, forming data analysis centres for exchanging information on a sub-regional level, joint countermeasure actions to suppress illicit trafficking, and educational training to improve the professional skills of officers in the drug control agencies. Furthermore, in 2004, the participating states agreed on the establishment of the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC) as a part of the UNODC Project RER/H22. The centre has focused on facilitating data exchange, information analysis, coordination of the various activities of law enforcement agencies, as well as professional development training for drug control officers in Central Asian countries.

Regional cooperation under the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, which was introduced after the dissolution of USSR and driven by the Russian

Federation, implements an anti-drug strategy within the member states. The strategy is focused on countering the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances through monitoring and analysing narcotic industry development within the region, improving the coordination mechanism between the authorised counternarcotic agencies, and detecting and blocking illicit drugs trafficking. The adopted strategy also focuses on minimising the use of narcotics through coordinating medical and rehabilitation treatments within the participating countries and introducing yearly conferences between narcologists, which have taken place since 2013. The organisation introduced an ongoing antinarcotic regional operation called 'Kanal' in 2003, seizing 335 tons of narcotic substances ("From agreement to an Organisation," n.d.). The regional countermeasures include detecting and identifying trafficking routes through investigative methods by state drug control agencies, as well as monitoring for suspicious financial transactions. Moreover, the organisation implements yearly tactical military training to improve the coordination between the Border Services, law enforcement, and military forces of the participating countries.

Further regional cooperation between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Russia, and China was introduced in 2001 with the creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. This regional organisation has significant influence not only within political and economic fields, but also in the fight against illicit drug trafficking. It has also pursued countermeasures through joint cooperation to suppress the illicit smuggling of narcotic and psychotropic drugs, professional development training for the officers of the law enforcement agencies and conducted educational and scientific operations to minimise the narcotics trade.

While understanding the importance of regional cooperation, the Central Asian countries face difficulties as they are still in the transitional phase of their political, economic, and social development, which shifts the state's focus away from the drug threat. This leads to regional cooperation against the drug

phenomenon being primarily driven by regional coordination through the Collective Security Treaty Organisation and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. The greater threat posed by the drug phenomenon and its negative impact on national, regional, and global well-being and security draws the world's attention and motivates international assistance to improve the anti-drug efforts of the Central Asian countries.

International involvement and support aimed at countering drug trafficking

The recent independence of the Central Asian countries in addition to their transitional political and economic environment creates difficulties in implementing comprehensive governance policies and programmes. The states' limited economic capabilities create a need for external assistance through means of bilateral agreements, programmes, and projects often coordinated by international organisations. The main focus of international involvement revolves around assisting in state development in different fields: political, economic, environmental, social, and infrastructural. External assistance to Central Asia in countering the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, and their precursors is provided through both international organisations such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, as well as individual actors, such as the European Union, United States of America, and Japan. The focus of UNODC assistance in the region on countermeasures against illicit narcotics trafficking is implemented through multiple different projects aimed to develop effective legislation, analytical capacity building, infrastructure enhancement, and drug prevention programs. Meanwhile, the OSCE and EU are focused on assisting Central Asian countries in developing and enhancing border management. At the same time, the EU is focusing on prevention and

treatment, as well as harm reduction. The list of international projects focusing on drug phenomenon in Central Asia is shown on Table 3. below.

Organisation	Project	Leading donors
UNODC	Project KGZ/K50 Strengthening the State Service on Drug Control of the Kyrgyz Republic	USA, Russia
UNODC	Project H03 "Tajikistan Drug Control Agency (DCA) - Phase II"	USA
UNODC	Project RER/H22 "Establishment of a Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC)"	US, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Turkey, United Kingdom
UNODC	Project F23 "Strengthening drug law enforcement systems for criminal intelligence collection, analysis and exchange"	USA, Austria, Italy, Canada, France, Norway, Turkey, United Kingdom
UNODC	Project XAC/K22 "Countering the trafficking of afghan opiates via the Northern Route by enhancing the capacity of key border crossings points (BCPs) and through the establishment of border liaison offices (BLOs)"	Japan, USA
UNODC	Project E24 "Strengthening Control along Tajik-Afghan Border"	USA, Russia, Japan, United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Canada, France
UNODC	The Families and Schools Together (FAST) Programme	USA, France Japan, Sweden, and Spain
UNODC	Strengthening the Family Program 10-14year olds (SFP 10-14)	USA, France Japan, Sweden, and Spain
OSCE	Border management assistance in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan	OSCE funds
EU	Border Management in Central Asia - Phase 9 (BOMCA 9)	European Union
EU	Central Asia Drug Action Programme –Phase 6 (CADAP 6)	European Union

Table 3 List of the international anti-drug projects in Central Asia

The importance of the ‘rule of law’ and the evident urge for developing national governance to help it counteract illicit trafficking in the region has made it easier for international actors to focus their activities on assisting with the legal framework and strengthening state agencies. UNODC assists in the development of the law enforcement capabilities of Central Asian States to counter human and firearms trafficking, and illicit drug trafficking and money laundering. The European Union is also playing a pivotal role in providing

national authorities with European experience in dealing with drugs and assisting some Central Asian governments in reviewing and drafting national strategies and legislation to reduce drug harm and prevent the illicit trafficking of narcotics.

These external actors play an essential role in increasing regional analytical capabilities to suppress illicit trafficking. UNODC has enabled regional cooperation by establishing the aforementioned CARICC, which facilitates regional cooperation among its member states' law enforcement agencies, and its project which focuses on developing law enforcement systems for the collection, analysis, and exchange of intelligence between the states in the region. The European Union is also supporting the Central Asian states in implementing a comprehensive data collection programme that facilitates the collection of hard statistics outlining the true drug situation in the region; thus, facilitating data-supported policies.

The region's lower financial capacity and poor infrastructure creates the need for international involvement and assistance in border control. UNODC assistance in border management and control is implemented by enhancing the capacity of border crossings and strengthening the capacity of the border authorities by providing equipment and infrastructure. At the same time, improving border management is further developed through OSCE-facilitated professional development programmes in each Central Asian state. European Union assistance in border management mainly focuses on institutional development and eliminating illicit narcotics trafficking through improving border management by enhancing infrastructure with the latest equipment and introducing an integrated border management system to provide communication channels among the border agencies of the region.

The international stance on empowering human rights and eliminating discrimination issues; as well as drug prevention, treatment, and harm reduction also influences the focus of the Central Asian anti-drug projects. UNODC implements several projects in Central Asia, in line with the Sustainable

Development Goals, to prevent drug use, minimise drug dependence, and reduce harm. UNODC has collaborated with states to increase the flow of state funding towards key HIV prevention programmes. With yearly conferences and events dedicated to World AIDS Day, UNODC aims to inform the population regarding the harms of drug use, as well as to reduce the stigma and discrimination facing people with drug addictions. The European Union, as well, works closely with healthcare agencies under the CADAP project to inform and increase social awareness of harm from narcotics.

Furthermore, drug prevention in Central Asia is also promoted by implementing two projects under the patronage of the UNODC: the ‘Families and School Together programme’ focuses on increasing the well-being of children in elementary school by strengthening the relationships between community, family, home, and school and minimising stress factors; while the ‘Strengthening the Family Program 10-14year olds’, targets and facilitates the reduction of family-related risks in order to prevent substance abuse in young adolescent children by improving relationships within the family. The European Union project, on the other hand, works closely with healthcare providers and social welfare systems to assist states with treatment and harm reduction programs by sharing and employing European practices.

The focus of the anti-drug policies and measures implemented in the region

The second reading and understanding of the collected data has entailed a two-level coding process, where initially the policies, programmes and projects were analysed through preliminary and descriptive questions to understand their scope and note repetitive answers, which can suggest an emerging theme. The second step has entailed more detailed and interpretive questions to understand the particular qualities and narratives appropriate to the themes.

The descriptive questions make it possible to paint an overall picture of the data, focus on the main features, and outline the purpose, objectives, and important aspects of the policies implemented at the state level, the agreements and strategies developed at the regional level, and the projects taking place at the international level. The state-level policies, programmes and strategies, in these four Central Asian countries, are all drafted and developed by the respective agencies in each government, which also facilitate the implementation of these laws. The economic situation of the Central Asian countries been in the transitional phase, characterised by substantial shortages. Therefore, it is critical to understand which financial sources cover the implementation of these policies and measurements. The laws governing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances each only specify that free rehabilitation from drug use is guaranteed by state healthcare services and does not provide a more detailed financial source for the implementation of this law. As for the state antinarcotic programmes and strategies of these countries, the primary source of funding is the state budget. However, both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan also consider foreign investments and donations through the framework of international organisations to be an additional financial source for implementing the measurements. The adopted laws in these countries predominantly carry a normative value to provide the framework of the state approach to narcotic drugs. The significant similarities between the different laws addressing narcotic drugs are especially vivid.

The state has adopted laws ‘about narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, and their analogues’ to outline the state regulations and organisation of drug control activities, to state the aspects of the legal use of narcotic drugs, and to tackle and suppress the smuggling of narcotic drugs. All countries in Central Asia, except Kazakhstan, highlight and focus on the need to minimise drug use. Their national strategies and antinarcotic programmes also focus on ensuring effective drug control, suppression of illicit trafficking, primary

prevention of drug addiction, and the treatment and social rehabilitation of addicts.

Moreover, these strategies and programme documents provide a brief analysis of the drug situation and emphasise the hardships derived from the poor economic conditions seen in the region. The state laws, strategies, and programmes intended to minimise drug harm employ different counter measurements, such as technical and organisational improvement of drug control, development and enhancement of border control efforts, suppressing trafficked narcotics, and developing a system to detect and deal with the people involved in drug trafficking and money laundering. Unsurprisingly, all four countries suggest implementing drug prevention measures through increasing the awareness of drug harms starting from a young age. However, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan highlight the proliferation of western culture and ideology, which allegedly harms the minds and ethics of society, subsequently increasing drug use.

Within the regional attempts at drug control and countering illicit drug trafficking, the descriptive questions make it possible to identify that they are driven by a foreign actor, or by the leading state in a regional organisation (often Russia and/or China). All agreements and strategies at the regional level suggest and promote the need for cooperation between the drug control agencies of the states, as well as improve tactical information exchange. One can note that the focus of the agreement and suggested measurements of regional cooperation differ due to the differing leading actor. The regional memorandum driven by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime highlights the need for an agreed and coordinated legislative framework of drug control in Central Asian countries. Furthermore, it highlights the need for a central agency both for purposes of information coordination and database sharing, as well as for the tactical analysis of regionally collected data.

On the other hand, the anti-drug strategy of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, while still highlighting the importance of monitoring and

analysing the development of the narcotic industry in Central Asia and the importance of inter-state coordination, is predominantly concerned with the eradication of narcotic crops and the suppression of trafficked narcotics along the border crossings in the region. As for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the agreement on cooperation in the fight against the illicit trafficking of narcotics entails the development of the regional cooperation, improvement, and enhancement of the exchange of information and experiences and, importantly, cooperation with the Collective Security Treaty Organisation's eradication and tactical suppression operation 'Kanal'. Thus, efforts at regional anti-drug trafficking cooperation within Central Asia can be grouped into information exchange, analytical information measurements, and hard-line eradication operations.

As for international actors' involvement in the region, the descriptive questions have allowed for highlighting the UNODC, EU, and OSCE to be involved in addressing the drug threat. Due to the nature of international and external influence, the successful implementation of the project depends on close cooperation with local governments and addressing the expectations of donors. The scope of the UNODC's work in the fight against illicit trafficking can also be grouped into strengthening the legal and legislative framework; establishing a coordinating system for intelligence, information, and analysis exchange; strengthening border control, and developing preventative anti-drug projects. The majority of the measures employed by the UNODC projects consist of providing support for the development of Drug Control agencies, providing legal and legislative support for policy-makers, enhancing information-gathering and exchange systems, and assisting with the national border management strategies. Moreover, all of the UNODC projects, except for the drug prevention programmes, raise the importance of the provision of the required technical equipment, improvement of infrastructure, and professional development through training programmes. While six out of eight UNODC projects mainly focus on enhancing drug control and countermeasures

against illicit drugs, the two other projects are focused on providing educational training for children and young adults. The main focus of such drug prevention projects is to reduce family-related risk factors and increase the social skills of children to prevent substance abuse and reduce stress via a course of family training sessions. The involvement of the OSCE within drug control and anti-trafficking efforts is predominantly executed through close cooperation with governmental agencies and international projects and mainly consists of assisting in professional educational training and training anti-drug and drug control officers.

Last but not least, the European Union plays a key role as an international actor involved in anti-drug operations in Central Asia by implementing two significant programmes. While implementing a lower number of projects than the UNODC, the focus of the EU projects is still coherent with the UNODC agenda. One of the projects specifically focuses on border management and works closely with the border control agencies to develop a legal framework and procedural instruments for coherent and unified border management in the Central Asian region, as well as to introduce measures and techniques used within the EU to improve the efficiency of border crossing checks and procedures. The project entails assistance to states in the institutional development of border management through round tables and conferences, as well as developing the professional skills of the Central Asian border authorities. The focus of the second project is to assist the Central Asian states in strengthening their national resilience and capacity to address the drug phenomenon at multiple stages, such as the implementation and improvement of drug policies and measures to reduce the demand for and supply of drugs. Moreover, the project provides substantial assistance to these four countries to develop and improve the state-led approach to drug prevention and empowers a more comprehensive drug treatment approach through sharing the European experience in dealing with drug prevention and rehabilitation issues.

Overall, the descriptive review of adopted laws, policies, and projects at the state, regional, and international level suggests that the focus of the suggested or employed measures to counter the drug threat revolve around addressing the four main strands shown in Chart 1. Below:

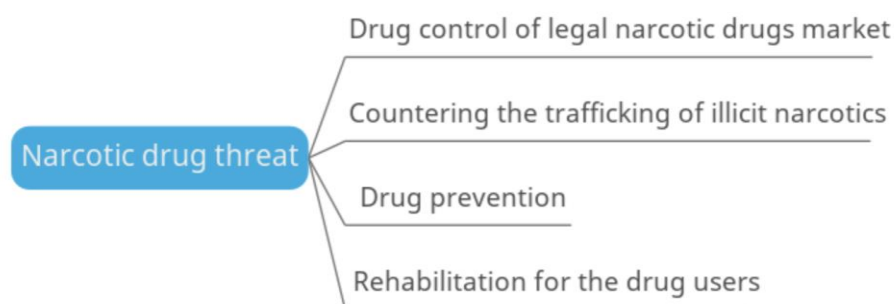


Chart 1 Main strands of the anti-drug measurements

Moreover, to deliver a clear picture of the drug-related situation in the region and state, regional, and international efforts to counter the drug phenomenon it is essential to provide a list of the implemented and suggested measures, available in Table 4., Table 5., and Table 6. below:

Drug control	
	Assistance in development and refinement of legislative and normative aspects of the drug control
Countering the trafficking of the illicit narcotics	
	Improve border control through procurement of the infrastructure/technical equipment
	Improve border control professional development of the border control officers
	Support the coherent system for the information collection/storage and exchange
	Introduce and improve analytical skills of the border control officers
Drug prevention	
	Skills training programmes for the children and young adults
	Assistance with drug prevention programmes and event to increase awareness caused by drug use
Rehabilitation system for the drug users	
	Empower the development of the drug rehabilitation treatment

Table 4 Focus of the international anti-drug projects in Central Asia

Drug control	
	Monitoring and analysing the narcotic industry development within the region
Countering the trafficking of the illicit narcotics	
	Operations to eradicate illicit cultivation of the narcotic drugs
	Develop coherent system for the information collection/storage and exchange
Rehabilitation system for the drug users	
	Coordination on exchange of the medical insights for the rehabilitation

Table 5 Focus of the anti-drug measures implemented at the regional level

Drug control	
	Control of the activities related licit narcotic drugs
	State monopoly on the main activities related to legal narcotic drugs
	Requirement of the state licencing for the activities related to trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors
	Requirements and conditions for the import/export, transition and use of narcotic drugs within the legal scope
	Condition terms of the use of drugs with narcotic substances for the medical and research purposes
Countering the trafficking of the illicit narcotics	
	Development of the border management
	Support the regional information exchange
	Operations to eradicate illicit cultivation of the narcotic drugs
	Develop and improve the detection of the money laundering schemes
Drug prevention	
	Develop the Educational curriculum: to include classes/meetings to provide the information on the drug use harm
	Increase awareness of the harm of narcotic drugs in the society
	Focus on creating the strong national identity and suppress the influence of the Western culture
	Create unfavourable view of the drug use/addiction
Rehabilitation system for the drug users	
	Improve medical check-up and rehabilitation conditions

Table 6 Focus of the state implemented anti-drug measures

The collapse of the USSR has challenged the Central Asian countries to emerge as independent states and has led to the region being in the transitional phase of political, economic, and social governance. Geographical proximity to Afghanistan, a weak economy, and high levels of corruption have subsequently helped drug trafficking organisations to employ the region as one of the world's major trafficking routes of illicit narcotics. The absence of prior experience of border control between the post-Soviet states, enhanced by the geographical distinctions of the region (high and inaccessible mountain ranges and lengthy borders) have challenged the states in many different ways, including in dealing with illicit trafficking. With the four countries all being considerably young, they have all joined the three major UN conventions aimed at drug control and have implemented state laws and programmes aimed at drug control and countermeasures against drug abuse and illicit trafficking. Furthermore, there are regional measures that have been implemented in enhancing the cooperation and countermeasures in suppressing illicit narcotics, as well as a number of international projects aimed at developing, improving, and enhancing the capacity of Central Asian countries to control the drug epidemic and fight against illicit trafficking. While all of the policies, programmes, and projects are aimed at drug control and countering the illicit flow of narcotics, each of them embodies the interest of individual states, as well as regional and international organisations. The next chapter will analyse the narratives and focus of the mentioned policies, programmes, and projects to understand whether the implemented measures are coherent or if they differ too greatly from one another.

Thematic analysis of drug trafficking policies and procedures in Central Asia

Throughout the data collection process, it was evident that there are a number of various policies, procedures, and programmes aimed at countering and suppressing drug trafficking and the harm from drug use. This chapter will proceed with employing the thematic analysis that will enable the identification and analysis of the implemented activities and countermeasures within the region, thus presenting the emerging patterns and narratives of the policies, programmes and projects. The exploration and analysis of the themes and patterns within the anti-drug measures will allow for assessing whether the employed policies and projects are coherent or driven by the differing interests of the states and foreign actors present in the Central Asian region. This section analyses the patterns of the narratives behind the implemented policies and projects to minimise the drug threat, taking into account the focus documents, strategies, projects, or programmes and considering the countermeasures and activities employed in the region. It will begin by introducing interesting aspects of the collected data and will further proceed by grouping the data, based on its focus and suggested measurements, into more prominent clusters. The emerging patterns and themes will further be displayed in a comprehensive mind map with a brief description of each code. Finally, after the review and refinement of the themes, this chapter will conclude with identifying the broader theoretical approaches under which the emerging narratives are employed.

The focus of the political agenda and implemented countermeasures

The first review of the collected data has provided an overview of the adopted laws, employed programmes and implemented projects, their focus and the measures used to improve drug control of legal narcotic drugs and the suppression of illegal trafficking and drug harms. During the process of review and descriptive coding, it was noted that there are several interesting aspects to

the state, regional, and international efforts to counter drug trafficking, which require more in-depth and interpretive review. The descriptive questioning of the collected data has made it possible to classify the measurements implemented in the region based on the broader focus, which is presented below in Chart 2:

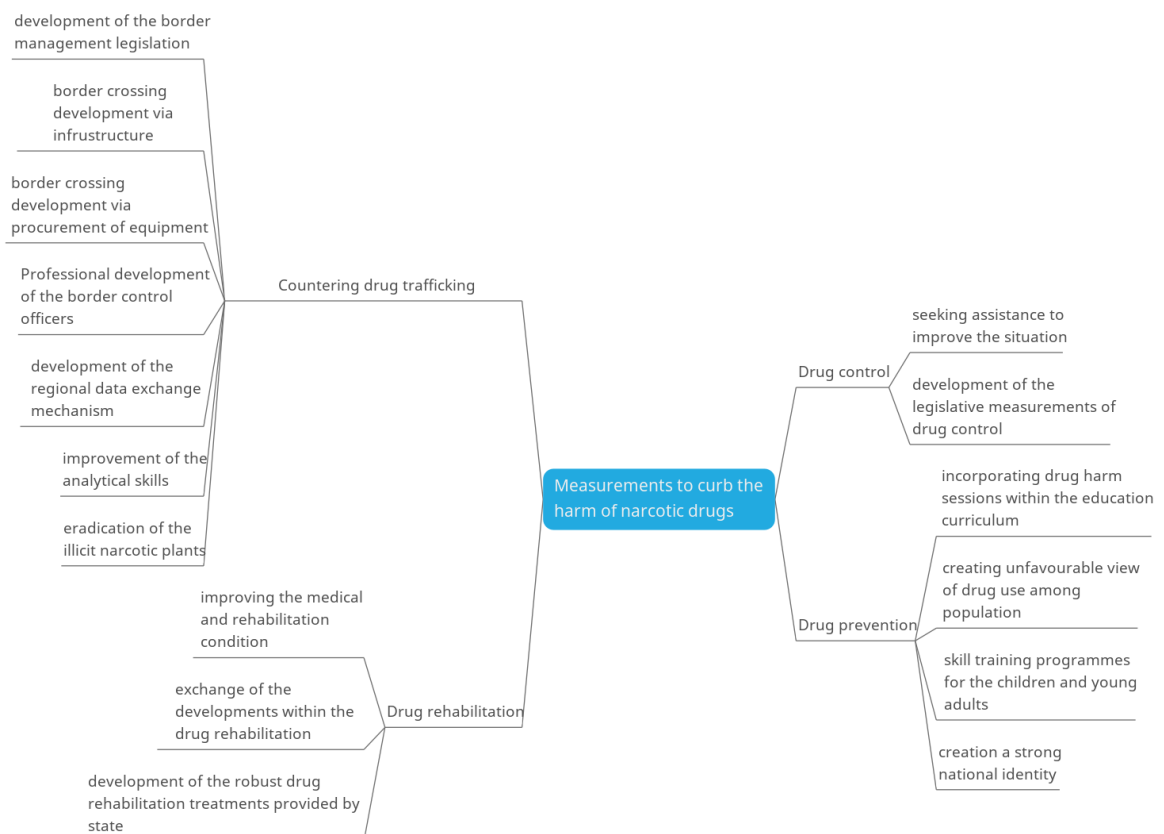


Chart 2 Classification of the implemented anti-drug measures

Efforts to counter drug trafficking are detected at all three levels, including state, regional, and international activities to limit drug trafficking within the region. The measurements implemented aimed at countering the drug phenomenon have commonalities across the different levels of implementation. It is evident that regional and international measurements are echoed within the state suggested measurements, leading to the understanding that within the

countertrafficking efforts, the state is implementing procedures that have been suggested by external influence. The measures to counter the illicit trafficking of narcotics, employed in the region, can be grouped into the following categories: development of border management strategies, enhancement of infrastructure and technical equipment for border control, professional development of border control officers, regional data collection and exchange, improvement of analytical skills as a component of information exchange, and eradication of illicit narcotic plant cultivation. While the implemented measurements are different based on the intentions of the implementing actor, they are all aimed at minimising drug flow and improving Central Asia's counter-trafficking efforts.

The development and enhancement of the legislative framework have considerable importance. Thus, the suggested and implemented measurements are aimed both at developing the legislation of drug control and improving the legislative framework of border management. Considering that both of the preliminary themes revolve around developing and improving institutional and legal capacity, the themes initially separated based on the specific field in legislation, can be integrated into the joint group and present legislative and institutional development of the Central Asian states to deal with the drug phenomenon.

Furthermore, it is evident that all of the involved actors raise the significance of the current conditions at their border crossings and implement measures aimed at improving the capacity of their border crossings. Thus, measurements aimed at enhancing border crossings through the improvement of infrastructure and procurement of technological equipment can be integrated into the broader theme of enhancing border crossings. Considering that professional development is also a crucial ingredient for developing the regional strength to counter the drug problem, state, regional, and international actions focus on improving the professional skills of border control officers. Keeping in mind that developing analytical skills of the officers is a part of professional

development, the overlap between the first themes is evident. Thus, the two themes shall be integrated into one; that of developing and improving the professional development of border control officers.

The focus and the measurements, applied to address the drug phenomenon, suggest that the drug threat is also addressed through the scope of drug prevention and drug user rehabilitation, to minimise the demand for drugs and the harm done by the use of illicit narcotic drugs. Drug prevention efforts are mainly implemented at the state and international level and can be assembled into the following themes: incorporating drug harm sessions into the education curriculum, increasing society's awareness of the harms of narcotic drug use, fostering an unfavourable view of drug use among the population, promoting skill training programmes for children and young adults to increase their resilience against narcotic drugs, and lastly, creating a strong national identity not influenced by Western culture. The state aims at portraying drug use as a negative phenomenon and leading to the creation of an unfavourable view. Through the organisation of events, markets and conferences to increase awareness of the harms of drug use, states also incorporate the importance of national identity. As for the measures as part of the efforts to assist those with drug addictions, efforts at all three levels are aimed at improving medical and rehabilitation conditions, sharing new research regarding drug rehabilitation, and development of robust drug rehabilitation treatments provided by the state. State policies and strategies aim to minimise the drug demand and harm, through a focus on improving medical and rehabilitation centre infrastructure. As the regional and international efforts are focused on improving rehabilitation treatment by exchanging experiences, they can be organised as a common theme focused on improving the rehabilitation system.

While numerous measures have been implemented to combat the drug phenomenon, the diagram below provides a visual interpretation of the implemented measures, as well as portrays the leading actors involved in employing particular countermeasure through colour marking. Blue is state

involvement, yellow is regional organisations and green refers to the measurements taken under the international projects.

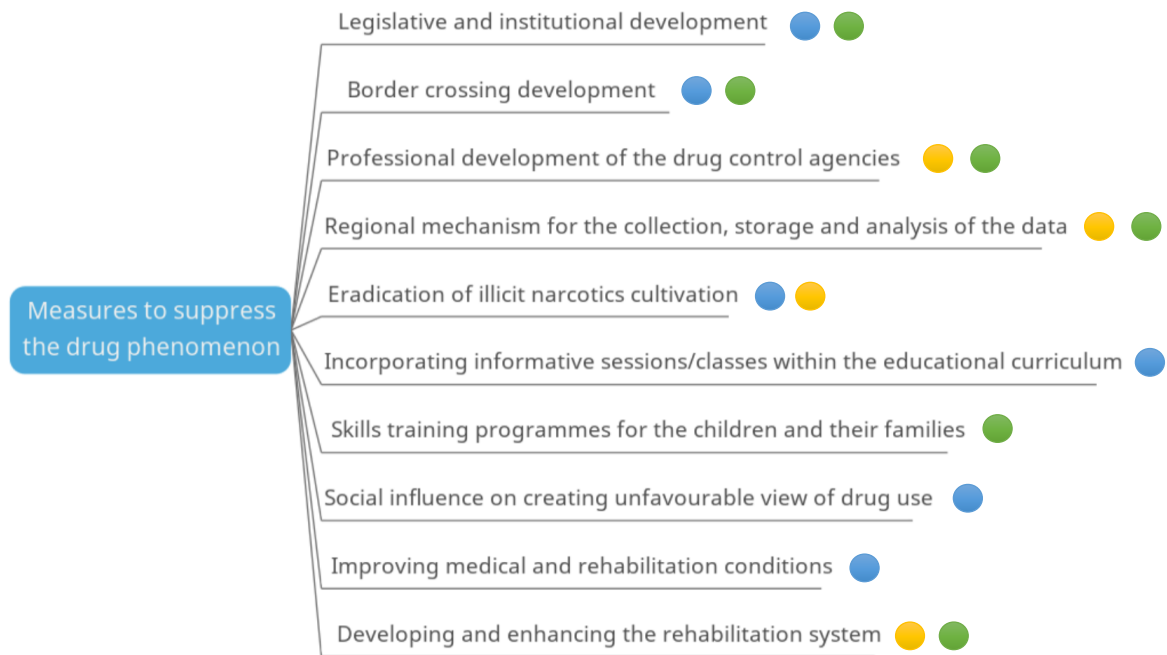


Chart 3 Anti-drug measures and involved/leading actors

The above chart gives a simplified overview of the predominant patterns and measurements in the attempts to suppress the drug phenomenon. It is evident that some of the implemented measurements overlap across the state, regional, and international levels. State policies and procedures give an incentive that the current drug situation in the region requires urgent international financial assistance, thus prompting international involvement in border crossing development, which requires a substantial financial investment. On the other hand, international actors emphasise the development and improvement of the legislative and institutional framework, thus influencing state involvement in the process.

Both regional and international involvement raises commonalities and differences between the measures and the focus of the activities. The similarities

among the implemented measures are predominantly aimed at improving and enhancing the professional skills of the border control and anti-drug agency officers, introducing and maintaining the regional mechanism for the collection, storage, and analysis of the data and to improve the rehabilitation system and treatments used in Central Asia. However, there is a significant difference within the other suggested measures; regional actors are implementing eradication programmes to suppress narcotic plant cultivation, thus leading to a lesser number of drugs being trafficked. Interestingly, Central Asian states support and cooperate in such programmes, since they depend on regional cooperation organisation in many areas, not just the drug issue. Therefore, cooperation within such an approach in this field has a positive impact on other agreements and programmes implemented in the region within other fields.

Lastly, it is essential to underline that both state and international actors highlight and implement drug prevention measurements. However, the scope and focus of their activities differ, with state actors focusing on developing academic curriculum including educational sessions on drug harm and promoting a healthy national identity and unfavourable view on drug use within society. On the other hand, international actors are aiming at developing drug resilience among children and young adults and strengthening family and community links to reduce stress and risk factors.

Emerging possible patterns and themes

The exploratory analysis of the policies, projects and strategies implemented in Central Asia to counter drug trafficking has allowed the research to present an overview of the measures and involved actors and has also facilitated the identification of possible emerging themes, such as donor aid, securitisation, policy transfer, development, and drug prevention.

The state laws governing narcotic drugs in the Central Asian countries are predominantly structured to explicitly showcase state efforts at

implementing the internationally required measures. Such an approach to the structure of state law suggests that governing bodies are employing state policies to inform international actors of their compliance and desire for further cooperation in countering the drug threat. Moreover, the Central Asian governments include the analysis of the current situation, and strongly emphasise the importance of economic challenges and the underdevelopment of border crossings to the state policies and programme documents. Such use of information within the official state documents suggests that governments are attempting to highlight the need for external assistance to solve drug-related threats, within both the legal and illegal aspects of narcotic drugs. The state employs policies and procedures to attract more attention from international organisations to the issue, subsequently leading to an increase in financial assistance. The analysis of the current development of the drug threat executed by state officials and used in the national strategies or programmes focuses significantly on the underdevelopment of border crossing infrastructure and the inability to procure expensive state of the art technical equipment to improve the quality of border checks and vehicle searches. The analysis of the policies and procedures at the state level has led to the understanding that governments in Central Asia are developing legislative and normative regulations and addressing the narcotic drugs issue in various ways. However, the way states employ official documents suggests that policies and strategies are used and structured to show that the state follows international guidelines but requires significant assistance in terms of the financial resources channelled through development projects. Moreover, states encourage financial assistance to be focused on the areas that they hope to develop, through enhancing aspects of the problems within the region to minimise the harm from the drug threat.

The global approach to the drug phenomenon, channelled through multiple UN conventions, has predominantly focused on measures pertaining to drug control, countering illicit trafficking, drug prevention and drug rehabilitation. The detailed descriptive overview of the implemented policies

and strategies at the state level within all four countries highlights the obvious similarities between the implemented measures and the states' overall approach to drugs. This suggests that the initial phases of drafting and adopting policies within the region were both initiated through the same events and were intended to confront a mutual threat and adopt the requirements of the international community. International projects in the region raise the importance of the legislative aspects of regulating the legal and illegal narcotic drug supply and address it through focusing on cooperating with state officials in drafting and preparing state policies and strategies. Thus, it is essential to note that international requirements prompt the policy transfer phenomenon both among the states in Central Asia and within the international community. Furthermore, it is essential to highlight that while states have adopted multiple policies and implemented several procedures and strategies to counter illicit drug trafficking, the actual execution of the countermeasures is predominantly informed and driven by regional or international involvement. This suggests that policies and procedures are implemented in Central Asia merely to project the state's view on drugs and to portray their cooperation with regional and international actors within the global fight against illicit narcotics.

As for the regional efforts, in Central Asia, to minimise the drug supply and the harms of drug proliferation, the descriptive review suggests that regional cooperation, among the four Central Asian countries, is motivated and empowered by external actors, either through international involvement or regional organisations. The predominant aspect of the regional and international efforts is the creation and development of regional communication channels to cooperate and gather information and exchange and analyse data across the whole region, rather than within an individual state. While regional efforts do underline and focus their efforts on developing and improving the analytical aspects of minimising drug trafficking and implementing effective drug control, it is interesting to note that the efforts employed also reflect the interest of the leading actor. With the Collective Security Treaty Organisation being a

significant actor at promoting cooperation within the region and executing joint tactical operations to combat drug proliferation, the efforts are predominantly aimed at eradicating the narcotic plant's cultivations. Furthermore, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation is supporting and cooperating with the CSTO on the eradication programmes within the more prominent anti-narcotic efforts. Such hard-line measures to suppress narcotics trafficking are incorporated within the region through the influence of Russian attempts to minimise drug proliferation. The Russian government has attempted to increase awareness of the Afghan opium threat to global peace and security and encouraged NATO to deploy forces to eradicate poppy fields (Crick, 2012). While Russia was not able to encourage extraordinary measures within Afghanistan from global leaders, it was able to employ its influence within the Central Asian region and securitise the illicit drug phenomenon, further incorporating the eradication programme executed yearly. The Central Asian states' cooperation with such a perspective on the drug phenomenon is also echoed within their own policies, where all four countries have criminalised narcotic plant cultivation and require the eradication of wild narcotic crops on private fields, which further emphasises policy transfer between regional actors.

As for actions taken by international organisations in the region, they are predominantly driven by a human security perspective. Channelling the focus of the international projects to fulfil the needs of the Central Asian states from a human security perspective can be observed by paying significant attention to development, drug prevention, and drug rehabilitation. The focus on the development aspect of human security can be observed through international involvement to develop and enhance border management through various means. Their activities are involved in assisting and developing the legislative and normative framework, developing the infrastructure of the physical border, and enhancing the technological aspects of border control and the professional development of border control officers. Such measurements can be addressed as a traditional narrative of the drug trafficking issue due to

the predominant focus on enhancing border capacities within the region through improving physical infrastructure and providing newer and more sophisticated equipment to detect illegal activities at border crossings. However, it is important to highlight that these activities are largely executed under the development aspect of the international community. The development agenda is further employed through international projects encouraging governmental cooperation in enhancing the professional development of officers, both regarding the standard requirements of the anti-drug agencies and the analytical and communication skills necessary to enable coherent data exchange and analysis within the region. The core of professional development of the border, customs, and drug control officers revolves around providing skills and enabling the improved performance of the individual; thus, focusing on the development agenda within the human security perspective.

As previously mentioned, involved actors aim at minimising demand and the harm caused by the use of illicit narcotic drugs, through addressing the drug phenomenon with variety measures including drug prevention and rehabilitation from drug addiction. The drug prevention measures are predominantly executed through information sessions on drug harm both for children and the older population, creating an unfavourable view of narcotics substance abuse in society by focusing on the inheritance of traditional cultural values, and increasing resilience to drug use among younger generations through skill training programmes. The major commonality within these efforts is not only the fact that they are within the scope of drug prevention, but that they also focus on the security of the individual rather than the state. Furthermore, a similar narrative can be observed within the drug rehabilitation efforts. All actors across the three levels realise policies, procedures, and projects aimed at improving the medical and rehabilitation condition, sharing new research regarding drug rehabilitation, or developing robust drug rehabilitation treatments provided by the state. While the measures of drug rehabilitation differ from focusing on the infrastructure in medical and

rehabilitation centres to improving rehabilitation treatments through exchanging experiences of the regional and international levels, they all focus on minimising drug harm to the individual. With both drug prevention and drug rehabilitation measures mainly focusing on providing support and security to the individual, it is clear that a human security narrative of the drug phenomenon is emerging.

There are a number of various measures aimed at the drug phenomenon, each with a different focus and underlining motivation. It is evident that all of the implemented actions are informed or within a particular theoretical framework of security studies. While previous paragraphs have provided more detailed information on the measures and their overarching theoretical narrative, the diagram below presents an overview of the emerging theoretical narratives and the employed measures that fall under it:

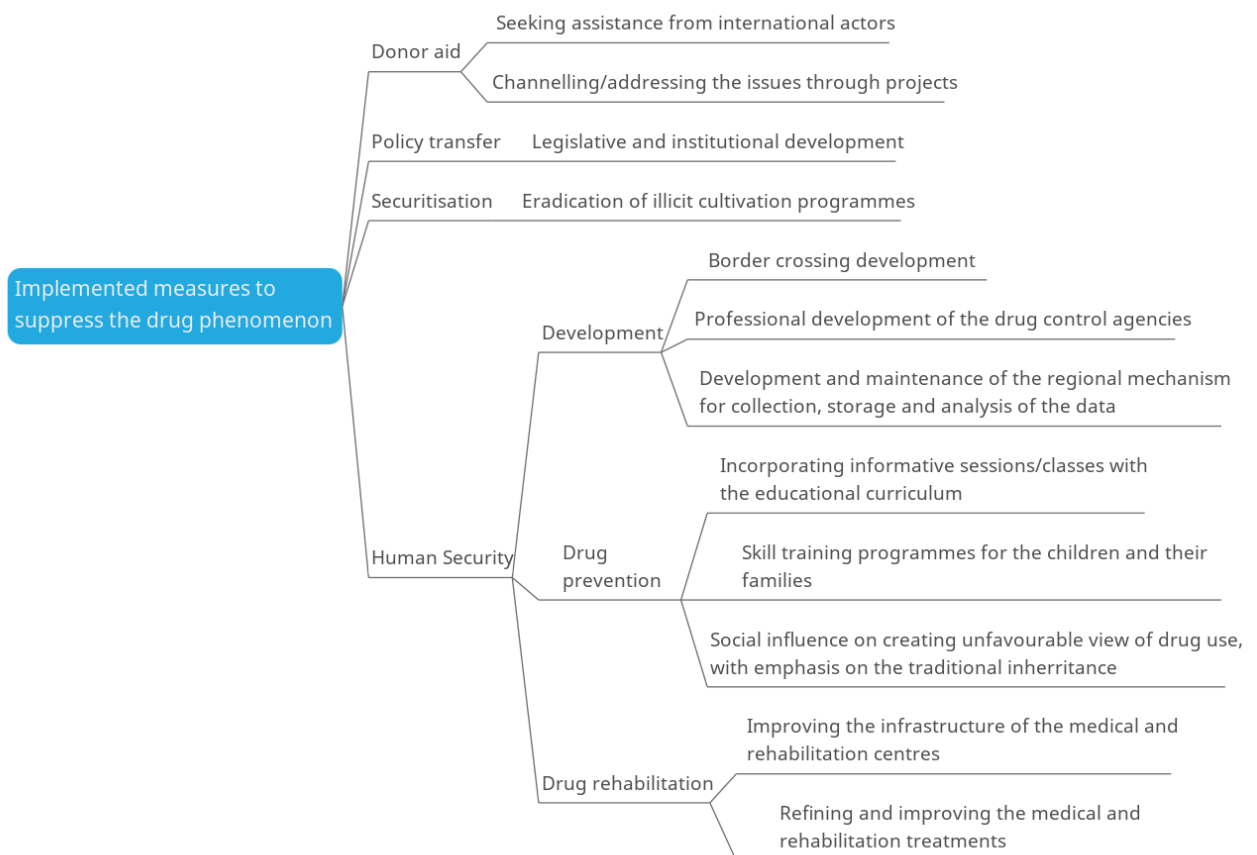


Chart 4 Emerging narratives informing drug phenomenon in Central Asia

Analysis and refinement of the emerged narratives

The descriptive and exploratory analysis of the policies, programmes, strategies, and projects implemented in Central Asia to address the drug problem has allowed us to identify several overarching theoretical narratives. While the number of the employed measures is significant and they are all focused on addressing different stages of the drug phenomenon, the current analysis made it possible to group them according to theoretical perspectives. The previous section has pointed out that the current policies are predominantly influenced by theoretical perspectives of donor aid and policy transfer, while the measures implemented to curb the drug threat are predominantly narrated through securitisation and human security frameworks. While the link between the emerging narratives and the implemented measures has been established, this section is aimed at providing more in-depth understanding of the theoretical background influencing the implemented policies and the theoretical narratives informing the countermeasures taken against the drug phenomenon.

Narratives informing the anti-drug policies and strategies

To understand the theoretical narratives informing the anti-drug measures, it is essential to comprehend the policy-making process and the factors influencing it. During the implementation of state policies, programmes, and strategies, several perspectives emerged, which influenced the making of drug policy in Central Asia. The obvious similarities between the structure and wording used in official documents suggest significant external influence and the occurrence of policy transfer, both from the international actors to states, as well as between the different states in the region. Moreover, the structure and focus of the implemented policies and state strategies and programmes suggests that Central Asian countries employ the recommendations in these official papers in order to emphasise the severity of the problem and highlight the economic challenges that limit the capacity for state action to curb drug

trafficking. This part of the research will first provide an analysis of the policy transfer which has influenced state policies and strategies and will further focus on the way states employ these policies to prompt foreign assistance in the form of donor aid.

The dissolution of the USSR, followed by the independence of the Central Asian countries has prompted the emergence of the independent state governing framework in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. As the world becomes more globalised, it is clear that ‘no nation in the industrialized or industrializing world can insulate its economy from global economic pressures’ (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000, p. 5). Therefore, it was imperative for the Central Asian states to enter the international community and commence cooperation with other international actors. While Central Asia is cooperating on many different fronts, the ratification of the three predominant drug-related UN conventions has instigated a joint fight against the global narcotics threat. The ratifications of the UN conventions have instigated the development of state policies to counter the drug phenomenon, thus suggesting that a policy transfer has occurred. Policy transfer, in this context, refers to where international knowledge and experience ‘about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political setting (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political setting’ (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000, p. 1). The policy transfer is evident when examining the structure and focus of state laws against narcotic drugs in Central Asia. As mentioned in the literature review, several scholars highlight the predominant Western influence on the UN drug related conventions and that they reflect the political and economic interests of the UN’s leading countries (Bagley and Rosen, 2016; Bewley-Taylor, 1999; Nadelmann, 1990). Thus, the ratification of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961) and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1997) have ensured that the focus of policies and suggested measures will be executed through strict drug control policies and mechanisms adhering to the global

norms on drug policy established by USA and Europe (Andreas and Nadelmann, 2006; Bagley and Rosen, 2016). Use these two international documents as a basis for their policy making, Central Asian states have predominantly addressed drug trafficking within the legislative framework, by developing anti-drug agencies, implementing strict drug control of legal narcotic drugs, and adopting strict requirements for the transportation, export, and import of narcotic drugs, as well as use of narcotic drugs for medical and research purposes.

At the same time the UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (United Nations, 1988) has not only prompted cooperation with the international community to curb the flow of illicit drugs, but also influenced the criminalisation process of narcotic drug use and the implementation of internationally-accepted approaches to counter drug trafficking. The states started to develop mechanisms for screening, searching, and detecting the smuggling of illegal narcotics, as well as establishing a legal framework which prescribes criminal charges against individuals and organisations involved both with illicit drug trafficking and with money laundering schemes. Whereas such a policy transfer was not executed deliberately, it was evident that in order to join the globalised international community, Central Asian countries needed to ratify the UN conventions. This, therefore, led the region to develop internal legislative, normative, and criminal frameworks under the significant influence of international norms and the Western experience, which can be vividly observed throughout the initial policy making processes, as well as the subsequent development of the legislation.

With all the international influence on the policy making process on drug control in Central Asia, it is also essential to understand and analyse the content of the policies and procedures themselves. The predominant part of the laws on narcotic drugs in Central Asia is aimed at developing legislation that adheres to international norms and that the state implements programmes and strategies that are informed by standard countermeasures to address the drug phenomenon.

However, it is essential to note that the content of the state programmes and strategies is not limited to the state actions to curb drugs, but that they are also used to inform regional and foreign actors about the current state of the drug market and drug related issues in the region. Central Asian policy makers understand the importance of the drug threat to the entire international community, thus emphasising their inability to cope with the trafficking problem in the region, due to the underdevelopment of their border control infrastructure as a result of the lack of financial resources. Such an emphasis on the desire to fight drug trafficking, but an inability to do so based on poor economic conditions further influences international involvement in the region through donor aid, where financial resources are transferred in the form of donations either through bilateral agreements or via donor agency in the form of project aid (Moyo, 2010). With the practice of foreign donor aid having both positive and negative impacts, it is necessary to note that donor aid is only vaguely regulated and that a significant component of it is being diverted to rogue and corrupt individuals. Moreover, much of the literature published on foreign aid suggests that it creates dependency on bilateral and international donations on the part of the recipient country (Moyo, 2010). While such a tendency is difficult to identify through policy analysis, it is essential to note that within the scope of countering drug trafficking, Central Asian countries are structuring the framework and content of their state policies and programmes with the aim of attracting increased amounts of international interest; in other words, financial resources from outside actors. However, as was discovered during the literature review, the leading countries in the global fight against drugs employ give out donor aid as a bargaining chip to adopt particular counternarcotic measures (Bewley-Taylor and Woodiwiss, 2005; Herschinger, 2011; Hesselroth, 2005). Such a tendency can be also observed within Central Asia, with both regional and international actors employing their financial resources and political means to highlight and encourage the states to focus on particular aspects of the drug phenomenon within the region. The most vivid

example of it can be observed through the projects implemented by the United Nations and the European Union aimed at improving and enhancing the legal and normative framework of drug control, criminal prosecution of the illicit trafficking of drugs, and development of legislative requirements for drug rehabilitation programmes; as well as through Russian influence on the inclusion of drug eradication operations in Central Asian state policies.

Narratives informing the implemented anti-drug measures

With the previous part focusing on the process of policymaking and highlighting the influence of policy transfers and theoretical perspectives of donor aid, it can also be noted that these theoretical perspectives only inform the structure and content of the adopted state policies. While the policies are not only used to provide legislative requirements and criminal punishments, they also provide clear guidelines for employing procedures and measures to curb the drug phenomenon. Thus, it is crucial to analyse the procedures and identify the theoretical narratives that stimulate and inform a particular focus within the anti-drug measures implemented in the region. As was noted in the process of identifying the emerging narratives, the measures employed in Central Asia conform to the academic perspective on countering drug trafficking through securitisation and human security theories.

Securitisation

Along the lines of the securitisation theory proposed by the Copenhagen School, which frames a particular issue as an existential threat constituting a danger to society, and makes it possible to impose extraordinary measures to address it (Emmers, 2016), one can note that the global experience on narcotic drugs has been transferred to the Central Asian states as well. While Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan were not the only

participants in the anti-drug campaigns that prompted the UN conventions, the later ratification of these treaties can suggest that the Central Asian states have adopted a similar stance on the drug phenomenon. As mentioned earlier, the UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961), which presented drug addiction as an existential threat and a serious evil, has introduced a drug prohibition regime across its signatory states, leading them to adopt regulations regarding drug control and the prohibition of the cultivation of narcotic plants (Bewley-Taylor and Woodiwiss, 2005; Crick, 2012). A further development of the securitisation perspective discussed in the scholarly literature was the 1988 UN Convention, which linked narcotic drugs to organised crime and has presented drug production as an existential threat to the stability and sovereignty of the state (Crick, 2012; United Nations, 1988). With the ratification of UN conventions related to drugs, Central Asian states were not only influenced by policy transfer, but have also adopted the same political stance against narcotic drugs, implementing strict drug control, prohibition of the cultivation of narcotic plants, criminalisation of the possession of narcotics, and vigorous campaigns against illicit drug trafficking, smuggling, and money laundering. Therefore, one can note that the global securitisation perspective on narcotic drugs and illicit trafficking was also adopted in Central Asia once the newly independent states joined the global fight against drugs.

Furthermore, Russian perspectives on countering narcotics at the initial phase of drug production, through eradication operations to curb the cultivation of the narcotic crops, have also prompted Central Asian states to take a hard-line approach. Russia has attempted to raise Afghan drug production as a threat to global peace and security in the UN Security Council and has suggested the eradication of the Afghan opium crop through its 'Rainbow-2' plan (Crick, 2012). With the USA and UK disregarding the threat of the illicit production and trafficking of narcotic drugs from Afghanistan and suggesting that, instead, internal problems in Russia are influencing the rise in heroin use, the international community rejected Russia's eradication proposal. The attempt to

securitise the Afghan drug production issue was not entirely unsuccessful, however, since Russia has targeted multiple audiences from the general public to international, national, and regional political and military elites. The subsequent cooperation of the Central Asian countries in executing the eradication operations conforms with the scholarly view on the relative power of the securitising actor and importance of the audience's reaction to the securitisation move (Balzacq, 2011; Collins, 2005; Crick, 2012). The political and economic power of Russia over the Central Asian countries has also played a significant role in creating and supporting the strategies of the regional organisations, such as the Collective Security Treaty Organisation and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. Moreover, the regional influence of the Russian perspective has further encouraged the Central Asian states to implement eradication operations within their own borders, criminalise narcotic plant cultivation, and urge the destruction of wild narcotic plants grown regardless of the entity owning the land on which they grow. Thus, while Russia was not able to convince the more powerful foreign actors, it was able to push its preferred measures through its regional influence in Central Asia by influencing the anti-drug strategies of regional organisations.

The political stance of Central Asia against the drug phenomenon and the measures it implements to minimise drug proliferation may not have originated from the securitisation approach led by these four countries. However, it is essential to understand that the influence of the global approach and fight against drugs, which were part of the securitisation of the drug threat, were a significant influence on the current hard-line Central Asian approach to narcotic drugs. Furthermore, the regional influence of Russia has also led to the adoption of similar approach in Central Asia to curb narcotics through implementing both interstate and regional joint eradication operations to suppress the cultivation of narcotic plants.

Considering that the scope and focus of the implemented anti-drug procedures and projects are not limited to eradication programmes, it is essential

to analyse the narratives influencing other drug related activities. The next part will focus on analysing the theoretical narratives that inform the programmes and projects aimed at development, drug prevention, and drug rehabilitation measures implemented in the region.

Human Security

The literature review on drugs suggests that the proliferation of illicit drug production and trafficking are closely related to several factors, including weak governmental institutions, poor economic conditions, underdevelopment, and weak law enforcement. Furthermore, in general, the cultivation of the opium poppy, marijuana, and coca predominantly occurs in weaker and poorer regions, 'which have significant internal security problems' (Seccombe, 1997, p. 288). While the region's close proximity to Afghanistan has led to the proliferation of drugs, it is essential to understand that the above-mentioned factors have also had significant impacts on the flourishing illicit market, thus subsequently, to minimize the drug proliferation they need to be addressed. The overview of the measures suggests that the human security perspective is primarily observed through programmes, strategies, and projects focusing on development, drug prevention and drug rehabilitation aspects of the fight against drugs, as part of a campaign addressing political, economic, personal and health security. The ability of concerns for human security to address factors influencing drug proliferation is further supported by several scholars who note that the theoretical approach of human security makes it possible to address politically marginalised issues and threats without an identifiable enemy, where the well-being of people is in jeopardy (Acharya, 2001; Hamill, 1998; Owen, 2004b).

Political and economic security is predominantly addressed under the human security perspective through a variety of measures concerning the development of legislative and normative frameworks, projects aimed at

developing border crossing infrastructure, training and enhancement of the professional skills of anti-drug officers, and through improvement and maintenance of information collection, storage, exchange, and analysis methods within the region. All of the actors at the state, regional, and international levels adopt and implement measures aimed at assisting the development of Central Asia, thus enabling its power to withstand the narcotics. While development of the legislation, improving the infrastructure and technical aspects of border control and the mechanism to exchange and analyse drug related data does not directly provide security to the individual, it narrows the focus of human security to the eradication of ‘the use of, the threat of, force and violence’ (Krause, 2007, p. 4) from people’s daily lives; subsequently addressing the freedom from want and freedom from fear. Furthermore, the focus on developing and improving legislative frameworks, enhancing border control by providing financial assistance for the construction of infrastructure and the procurement of technical equipment, as well as creating and maintaining the regional exchange mechanism to comprehend and analyse data from across the Central Asian region are indications that the drug threat is being addressed along the lines of human security theory. Therefore, this approach can address security threats by shifting the focus on territorial and political security within states and tackling the challenges which are to be addressed by states (Kaldor et al., 2007; Paris, 2001).

Considering that the health security of the individual and the community is a significant aspect of the human security focus, it is evident that several measures to counter the drug phenomenon within the region are channelled within this theoretical approach. The extensive research proving the substantial health damages derived from drug consumption (Wilson, 1990) suggests that, in order to suppress drug related damages, it is essential to implement drug prevention measures. Both state and international actors highlight their actions to suppress the use of drugs by providing more in-depth information on the harms of drug use within the school curriculum, as well as to the community in general.

The involved actors highlight the importance of a societal understanding that consumption of illicit drugs can not only lead to serious physiological and mental issues (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014), but that drug use also leads to the potential for disease transmission between partners (Csete et al., 2016). Drug prevention measures implemented in Central Asia are not only aimed at minimising drug use, but also providing substantial evidence as to the consequences of the transmission of blood-related diseases through intravenous drug use using unsanitary syringes (Arias, 2017). The international involvement in drug prevention is predominantly focused on encouraging children and young adults to be resilient to drugs and minimise the risk factors within their families. As Campbell has noted, the use of narcotics has a mind-altering nature that can subsequently lead to violence within the drug user's household (2002).

Furthermore, considering the extreme threat posed by drug related disease in developing and under-developed countries with weak public health systems (Ball et al., 1998; Biehl and Eskerod, 2005), it can be noted that efforts to minimise drug harm through focusing on drug rehabilitation also fit within the human security narrative. State-implemented measures predominantly focus on improving the medical and rehabilitation conditions for drug users, and thus can be seen as part of the development and drug rehabilitation aspects. However, since it addresses the drug threat by focusing on the health, economic and personal security of the individual and society, it can be noted that the overarching perspective is through the human security lens. Regional and international involvement is mainly focused on improving the public health system and developing the required treatments for drug users and also focusing on the health security of both the individual and society in the Central Asian countries.

The broader definition of security employed by human security theory makes it possible to address the drug threat through multiple and various measures. The drug threat in Central Asia is addressed by state, regional, and

international actors through the human security lens by focusing on the improvement of ineffective drug control policies, minimising drug demand through drug prevention measures, and enhancing access to drug rehabilitation programmes for drug users and their families.

Refinement of the emerged narratives

Considering the overview of the implemented policies and programmes, as well as the specific strategies and projects, it is evident that there are different narratives influencing the making and implementation of policy. The chart provided below provides a more coherent and refined overview of the emerging narratives, grouping the implemented narratives more precisely.



Chart 5 Finalised narratives informing anti-drug policies and procedures in Central Asia

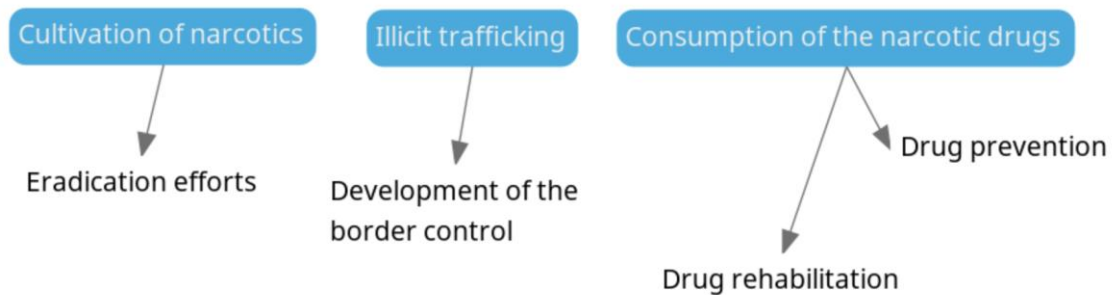
While the previous sections of this chapter have provided in-depth information on each emerging narrative, it is essential to provide a brief description to make this chart easier to for the reader to understand. The

thematic analysis of the available data suggests that narratives influencing the anti-drug efforts in Central Asia can be grouped into two primary categories: narratives informing policies and their structure and contexts; and narratives informing the measures and focus of the procedures.

The structure and context of the policies adopted by the Central Asian states are influenced by donor aid and policy transfer narratives. Donor aid refers to the use of policies to emphasises the state's current efforts to control and counter illicit drugs and highlight the economic and financial challenges in attracting external donor assistance to improve Central Asian states' resilience against the drug problem. Furthermore, the implemented policies and their similarities across the region, as well as their similarities with the global approach has suggested that the policy making process has been significantly influenced by the policy transfer narrative, echoing international methods to counter drug trafficking, seen in the policies adopted by all four of the Central Asian states covered in this study.

With a significant focus on the drug phenomenon and employing a number of different measures, the emerging narratives suggest that the implemented strategies and measures are informed by securitisation and human security theoretical approaches. On the one hand, securitisation is seen through regional cooperation and external influence from Russia, and its influence on campaigns to eradicate illicit narcotics cultivation in Central Asia. On the other hand, the human security perspective is predominantly driven by international actors and focuses on development, drug prevention, and drug rehabilitation efforts to counter and suppress illicit trafficking and the harm derived from the drug phenomenon.

The complex structure of the drug phenomenon and different stages at which it can be addressed necessitates a visual overview of the emerging narratives and the stages at which the fight against illegal narcotic drugs takes place. This is shown in the chart below.



*Legislative framework addressing and focusing on all stages of the drug phenomenon

Chart 6 Stages of the drug phenomenon and implemented measures

The visual portrayal of the identified narratives in the above chart suggests that the dominating narrative informing attempts to suppress the drug threat and illicit trafficking within Central Asia is the human security approach. While regional cooperation is predominantly instigated by regional and international actors, it is worth it to note that regional efforts to securitise the drug issue only provide a one-time solution. Rather than targeting economic underdevelopment or trying to eliminate poverty, which is the primary underlying reason why individuals engage in illicit activities, actors prefer to execute early eradication operations. It is also important to outline that programmes, projects, and measures implemented through the prism of the human security approach are predominantly driven and facilitated through the external influence of international actors. This suggests that while Central Asia is influenced by leading regional actors in political and security aspects, the campaign against drugs and the efforts to suppress illicit trafficking are predominantly induced by international actors through international organisations and bilateral cooperation. Therefore, the Central Asian states are primarily adopting a Western perspective on anti-drug measures in the region. As for the Central Asian states themselves, while they adopt multiple policies

and strategies, their efforts are predominantly implemented to project the image that they are taking robust measures to counter the drug phenomenon, so that additional foreign financial aid will be provided. In order to effectively address the issue of illicit narcotics in Central Asia, it is essential that all involved parties are working on actually combatting illicit drugs, rather than merely employing this threat as a possible source of financial aid, much of which will inevitably be syphoned off by corrupt government officials.

Conclusion

Since the end of the Cold War, the proliferation of organised crime has significantly undermined national security and international peace around the world, with drug trafficking being among organised crime's top illicit activities. Drug use and drug trafficking is a proven threat to the health of individuals, the psychological well-being of society, the economic and political situation of the broader region, and humankind as a whole. For these reasons, a more in-depth focus on the drug phenomenon is required. While there is significant drug-related research, it has predominantly been focused on the Mexican drug flow to the USA. This leaves Afghanistan, the world's leading opium producer, under-researched. While there are several major drug trafficking routes leaving Afghanistan, the local knowledge and personal experience of the researcher has channelled this research to focus on the Northern route, by which drugs are trafficked through Central Asia. The significance of the focus on the Central Asian region is to understand the drug phenomenon through the experience of newly independent countries, which are within the under-developed or developing stage in their political and economic development, as well as their external relations.

The first part of this work has focused on executing a thorough literature review of the existing books, academic articles, and publications focusing on the drug threat, as well as the conceptualisation of this threat through the Securitisation and Human Security approaches. Furthermore, the literature review has specifically studied existing papers on the drug phenomenon in the Central Asian region, which has identified a research gap within the existing academic literature: namely, the absence of in-depth research on the drug phenomenon, anti-drug efforts, and the theoretical narratives influencing the fight against drugs in the region.

To achieve this, research has focused on summarizing the drug-related policies and procedures adopted at the state, regional, and international levels, and has presented a global overview of the anti-drug efforts taking place within

the region. The data for the research was obtained through academic papers, publicly available databases, and the official web-pages of the state, regional, and international actors involved in the anti-drug campaign in Central Asia. The preliminary data overview noted that state policies and procedures usually echo either a regional leading actor or the international consensus on the drug phenomenon, while adopting measures to fulfil externally-imposed requirements. The detailed study of the collected data has made it possible to identify a common focus of the anti-drug measures and has classified them as efforts to control the use and distribution of legal narcotics, measures of countering illicit drugs, and drug prevention and rehabilitation efforts. Furthermore, this research has implemented thematic analysis to identify the patterns within the data and analyse the emerging theoretical narratives that have framed the anti-drug efforts taking place in Central Asia.

The inductive approach to the research and data analysis has identified multiple theoretical narratives and has separated them between narratives influencing the structure and content of state policies and narratives informing the focus of anti-drug measures implemented within a three-level framework in the Central Asian region. Data analysis has led to the narratives influencing policymaking and policy content being identified as following the theoretical frameworks of policy transfer and donor aid. Policy transfer occurs as Central Asian countries adopt international conventions on drug policy and narrow their official stance on the drug phenomenon to comply with dominant Western views. Policy transfer is also seen as Central Asian governments adopt and fulfil the requirements of regional leaders and international organisations to present and position themselves as cooperating in the fight against drugs. The structure and content of the policies themselves are further employed by Central Asian states to highlight the importance and the danger of the drug threat, and their inability to counter it through state means, thus urging international involvement through financial donor aid assistance. As for the theoretical narratives informing the focus of the implemented anti-drug measures, programmes, and

projects, the data analysis of this research has identified two key influencing narratives: Securitisation and Human Security approaches.

While the securitisation of drugs in Central Asia was not driven by securitising actors from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan or Uzbekistan, it is essential to highlight that a strong anti-narcotic political stance was influenced by the development of the international approach, where the drug threat was securitised during multiple stages of the global campaign against drugs and was addressed through UN Conventions. Furthermore, the regional influence of Russia and its attempts to securitise the Afghan opium issue in the international community have led the Central Asian countries to embrace the Russian anti-drug agenda and suppress the cultivation of narcotic plants through interstate and joint regional eradication operations.

However, the thematic analysis of the policies and procedures implemented to curb drugs in the region has concluded that the dominant theoretical narrative informing the anti-drug measures is Human Security. The danger posed by drugs is not limited to one state or region but poses a threat to the health of the individual, the societal and psychological well-being of the nation, the economic and political stability of the state and region, and the general prosperity of the entire world. Therefore, the broader spectrum of security introduced through the human security approach makes it possible to address the drug phenomenon through multiple and various measures. The anti-drug programmes, strategies and projects implemented in Central Asia are mainly concerned with the development of a robust legislative framework, improvement of weak drug control and border control enforcement, curbing drug demand through prevention methods, and enriching the accessibility and the effectiveness of drug rehabilitation for drug users and their families.

Considering the complexity of the drug phenomenon and the multiple actors involved in suppressing the illicit drug trade in the region, this research has concluded that while Central Asian countries cooperate and develop their own anti-drug policies and measures, they predominantly employ the drug

threat as a way to attract and increase financial donor aid. Thus, the predominant focus of the anti-drug measures is driven and enforced by regional and international actors. With Russia being a leading regional actor, it is essential to note that the securitisation of the Afghan drug issue and campaigns to eradicate the cultivation of the opium crop provide only a temporary solution, without addressing the underlying factors that lead individuals to engage in illicit cultivation of opium. As for the other anti-drug measures, they are implemented and facilitated through international projects and focus on maintaining the security of the individual under the human security narrative. The international efforts to address the needs of Central Asian countries to suppress the illicit proliferation of narcotic drugs can be observed by paying significant attention to issues of development, drug prevention, and drug rehabilitation. The focus on the development aspect of human security can be observed through the international community's substantial involvement in helping to develop and enhance border management through various means. UNODC, OSCE, and EU projects are involved in assisting and developing the legislative and normative framework, developing physical border infrastructure, and enhancing technological aspects of border control and the professional development of the border officers. The security of the individual is also addressed through drug prevention campaigns, which consist of information sessions on drug harm both for the children and adults, promoting an unfavourable view of substance abuse in society by focusing on traditional cultural values, and increasing resilience to drug use among younger generation through skill training programmes. Furthermore, a similar narrative can be observed within the drug rehabilitation efforts. While all actors across all three levels adopt policies, procedures, and projects aimed at improving medical and rehabilitation infrastructure, it is the international projects that particularly focus on improving medical and rehabilitation access for drug users and their families, as well as developing and enhancing a robust drug rehabilitation process.

The empirical findings of this research suggest that, while Central Asia is influenced by leading regional actors in political and security aspects, the fight against drugs and efforts to suppress illicit trafficking are predominantly induced by international actors through international organisations and bilateral cooperation. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan do cooperate and attempt to fight the drug phenomenon through the adoption of multiple policies and strategies; but their efforts are predominantly implemented merely to provide a visual narrative that they are fighting to counter the drug phenomenon, without doing the hard work of eliminating the root causes of the problem, in order to attract additional financial aid from international donors. The significant influence of external actors, which are a substantial financial resource for development projects, leads to the Central Asian states applying a Western perspective to their anti-drug measures. While international projects are aimed at developing the region and enhancing its resilience to illicit narcotics, their effectiveness is challenged by governments employing the drug threat to attract additional financial assistance, without properly addressing or attempting to eliminate the problem as doing so would remove a lucrative source for financial gain.

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