



## The Spread of Narcotics in Southeast Asia: ASEAN's role in tackling drug trafficking

Radja Pratama Nasution<sup>1</sup>, Gili Argenti<sup>2</sup>

Universitas Singaperbangsa Karawang

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### Abstrak

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*Transnational crime is a type of crime that involves perpetrators or effects that cross national borders. These crimes often involve organized criminal networks operating in multiple countries, taking advantage of legal differences, law enforcement weaknesses and political instability to further their illegal activities. One of them is Drug Trafficking. This journal uses the theory of Securitization, in international relations (Copenhagen School) is the process of changing the subject into a 'security' issue by the state. This is an extreme version of politicization that allows any means to maintain security. Securitized issues are not always issues that determine the survival of a state. A securitized issue is precisely the issue when someone succeeds in turning an issue into a matter of life and death (existential). Securitization theorists assert that subjects that are successfully securitized receive more attention and resources than subjects that fail to be securitized, triggering greater human losses. Securitization studies seek to understand "who securitizes (the actor), on what basis (the threat), for whom (the referent object), why, how the outcome is, and what are the conditions." Securitization theory in international relations is a concept derived from the Copenhagen School, which was pioneered by Barry Buzan. This journal discusses how ASEAN's role in tackling the spread of drugs.*

**Kata Kunci :** *Security , ASEAN, International*

(\*) Corresponding Author:

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## INTRODUCTION

Transnational organized crime is one of the most complex forms of crime because it involves actors across national borders through structured mechanisms. This type of crime operates by looking for loopholes in every state's security, considering that the state always pays attention and monitors various criminal efforts, including the spread of drugs. For example, the spread of drugs has been monitored through airports, ports or land borders to secure its spread, which includes technological equipment to detect, authorized security officers to supporting equipment when there is an indication and detection of drug abuse. This is why criminals need extra effort to penetrate these defenses by creating a series of organized mechanisms through external forces.

These crimes often Involve organized criminal networks operating in multiple countries, taking advantage of legal differences, law enforcement weaknesses and political instability to further their illegal activities. One of them is Drug Trafficking. Drug trafficking is an activity that includes the illegal production,

distribution, sale, and consumption of narcotics. It encompasses the entire supply chain from the manufacture of illicit substances all the way to the hands of end users. Plants such as cannabis, opium (poppy), and coca are grown in different regions of the world. Example: Afghanistan as a major opium producer, and Colombia as a major coca producer. Manufacture of synthetic drugs such as methamphetamine and ecstasy in illegal laboratories. Drugs are smuggled across national borders through various means, including by land, sea and air. Smugglers use techniques such as concealment in vehicles, ships, planes and even human bodies (human couriers). Organized criminal networks are often involved in regulating drug distribution channels from producers to consumer markets. Drug dealers act as intermediaries between suppliers and end users. Dealers can work at various levels, from high level who handle large quantities, to street level who sell small quantities. Drugs are sold on the black market, which can involve places like nightclubs, the streets, or even online through the darknet.

Transnational crime in Southeast Asia encompasses various forms of illegal activities involving several countries in the region. Since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, methamphetamine production has increased in the region. Myanmar is one of the main producers of methamphetamine in pill (yaba) and crystal (shabu) form. Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand form a region known as the “Golden Triangle,” one of the largest opium and heroin production centers in the world. In recent decades, methamphetamine production has also increased sharply in the region. Drugs are often smuggled via land, sea and air routes to other countries in Asia as well as to Australia and North America. The Philippines is one of the markets and also a production site for methamphetamine. The country also has a major problem with domestic drug trafficking. Indonesia is also a major drug market and also an important transit point in international smuggling routes. The countries have large domestic drug markets, with high demand for heroin and methamphetamine.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

Methodology in a general sense, is the logical and systematic study of the principles that direct research. The method or scientific way of working in research is a means or tool to achieve research objectives.

In this case the author uses the *Yuridis Normatif* research method in writing this paper. *Yuridis Normatif* is a legal research method that is carried out by examining library materials or secondary materials by utilizing sources such as books, journals, scientific papers and other literature. Data collection in this paper uses a literature study method which aims to enable the author to obtain information relevant to the current title.

And also this research uses the case study method which is a method of knowing and understanding someone using inclusive and thorough or comprehensive practices.

That way, this research is a Normative Juridical Research The Spread of Narcotics in Southeast Asia: ASEAN's role in tackling drug trafficking

### **Theoretical Foundation**

## **SECURITIZATION THEORY**

Securitization in international relations (Copenhagen School) is the process of transforming the subject into a matter of 'security' by the state. It is an extreme version of politicization that allows any means to maintain security.

Securitized issues are not always issues that determine the survival of a state. A securitized issue is precisely the issue when someone succeeds in turning an issue into a matter of life and death (existential). Securitization theorists assert that subjects that are successfully securitized receive more attention and resources than subjects that fail to be securitized, leading to greater human losses. An example often used by theorists is the discussion of the threat of terrorism in various security discussions, whereas the threat of traffic accidents and diseases is much greater.

Securitization studies seek to understand "who securitizes (actors), on what basis (threats), for whom (objects of reference), why, how the results, and what are the conditions."

Securitization theory in international relations is a concept derived from the Copenhagen School, pioneered by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde. It emphasizes on how certain issues can be perceived as security threats through discursive processes.

**Securitization Process:** An issue becomes "securitized" when a political actor (such as a state or leader) declares it as an existential threat to the survival of an entity (state, society, economy, etc.). This is done through public speeches or declarations stating that the issue is a security threat.

**Actors of Securitization** The main actors in the securitization process are those who have the authority and legitimacy to make security claims, such as governments, military officials, or international organizations.

**Audience** Security claims must be accepted by relevant audiences, such as the public or political elites. Without acceptance from the audience, securitization efforts will not succeed.

**Consequences of Securitization** If successful, securitization can result in extraordinary measures that would not normally be allowed in normal situations. This could include the use of military force, the implementation of emergency policies, or the restriction of civil rights.

**Referent Object** The object that is considered threatened and needs to be protected. This could be the state, national identity, the environment, or others.

**Security Sector,** Securitization theory identifies several sectors where securitization can occur, such as military, political, economic, environmental, and social sectors. Examples of securitization can be found in many contexts, such as the war on terrorism after the 9/11 attacks, where the US government and its allies declared terrorism an existential threat that required extraordinary measures, such as stricter security laws and military intervention abroad.

This theory provides a critical perspective on how security is defined and understood, showing that security is not just about objective threats, but also about social construction through language and politics.

### **1.1 Security**

Security is one of the most complex topics discussed in the study of international relations, so security is one of the most discussed concepts in the

world. Security is the basis of human life, so the concept of security often changes with the times.

The field of security is one of the most highlighted fields in the study of international relations because after the end of the cold war, there was globalization which is currently happening massively in the economic, social and cultural sectors, as well as other non-traditional security threats such as terrorism that threaten social life.

In addition, there is also human trafficking, illegal arms trade, illegal drug trade, and so on. Currently, the involvement of actors is not only the state, but also other actors who have a greater capacity for action such as international crime organizations, intergovernmental organizations, and international non-governmental organizations, as well as multinational companies that more or less affect the policies of a country. The short definition of security is the absence of threats or dangers, creating a calm condition without anxiety.

#### Concept Change

The realist perspective dominates the paradigm of international security studies. The realist perspective focuses on a narrow or limited concept of security. According to Walt, the study of security can be defined as the study of the threat or control of military forces. This view fits with the realist perspective, which is called traditional security (TS) or conventional security.

In the traditional approach, security is defined in geopolitical terms and is limited to interstate relations and issues related to the use of military force, nuclear and military strategies. In short, traditional security interprets threats as relating to the state and physical threats from outside.

When the realist perspective is compared with the pluralist and constructivist perspectives, issues related to security are viewed by the pluralist and constructivist perspectives in a broader and more varied manner. In both approaches, threats are not only seen in the category of military threats and not only state-to-state interactions, but also other actors who are also active in international relations such as Intergovernmental Organizations (United Nations, European Union, ASEAN), International Non-Governmental Organizations (WWF, Greenpeace),

Multinational Corporations (Unilever, CNN, CNBC), Transnational Organized Crimes (Yakuza), and International Terrorist Networks (ISIS)), as well as individuals who also have an important role in making a policy in the international world.

The concept of security has also changed from being limited to military aspects, now it has experienced an expansion of categories and targets non-military categories commonly called non-traditional security (NTS) or non-traditional security. The issues contained in nontraditional security have a wider scope in different categories and sometimes have interrelationships with each other such as threats to security regarding the environment, food, economy, energy, human, maritime, and others.

Human, national, regional and international security have a relationship and impact shared by these issues. International actors and security issues that are developing today make world security interactions have many variations and become more complex.

## **1.2 Regional Security**

Regional Security Complex Theory is a theory that emphasizes its attention on the significance of regional elements in understanding the dynamics of international security, namely through the formation of Regional Security Complexes. Security complex is defined by Buzan as a group of countries that for one reason or another have proximity,

Which then makes the primary security of these countries combined and inseparable from each other!. The definition of region/area in the Regional Security Complex Theory is more seen from a security perspective so that an area is defined based on the range of

Its influence on a security issue-. Region in this concept does not refer to the notion of region in terms of territory alone, but rather to a set of units that have a process of securitization, desecuritization, or both at once, which are connected to each other, which then causes the security problems of these countries cannot be analyzed separately from each other'. There are also those who say that region is understood as a supranational subsystem of the international system'. An analysis of the Regional Security Complex (RSC) includes elements such as Geography, ethnicity, and culture of the people in a region. These three factors will influence the development of the economy, and the political system, which in turn will lead to interdependence between regions.

Lead to interdependence between one country and another which will lead to the emergence of a regional security defense system. An important element in the formation of this RSC, according to Barry Buzan, is the existence of interdependence and security cooperation relations between countries in the region. Despite the establishment of interdependence and security cooperation relations between the RSC countries, Buzan does not deny that there will always be a relationship that is colored by competition, power balance, and security.

Colored by competition, power balance, various forms of alliances, and the entry of external forces into it.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **The spread of drugs in Southeast Asia**

The development of political studies between countries today has changed the issue of the concept of security which is traditionally still very focused on war and conflict between countries and even focuses on international security issues such as the arm race to create security dilemmas in the international political arena to the present which focuses on non-traditional security (human security). The concept of security explains the condition of military security at the highest level (high politics), namely the issue of state security (state centrics) which is the main focus, while in a non-traditional perspective or point of view, the limitation of security issues does not only focus on military issues but has begun to evolve in more specific forms such as narcotics as security issues in international politics.

One of the areas that has become a focal point of world attention is the cooperation of countries in the field of security in the Asia Pacific and Middle East regions, especially in combating transnational crime.

is the cooperation of countries in the field of security in the Asia Pacific and Middle East regions, especially in combating transnational crime, which is driven

by technological developments, ease of transportation and the development of the world economy, which has resulted in organized transnational crime has developed with very rapid growth and reached a very worrying stage. These transnational crime networks have equipped themselves with increasingly sophisticated technology and implemented cell system organizations that are increasingly difficult to trace.

To date, narcotics has become one of the most profitable business commodities and involves transnational criminals who cross national borders. Narcotics trafficking and smuggling in the world is growing globally. Some regions in the world that have become one of the places of narcotics trafficking in the world are the Latin American Continent (Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela and Brazil as a place of money laundering for drug cartels) and the destination areas for illegal exports of narcotics are countries in the United States and Europe. As for the Asian continent, Southeast Asia and Central Asia are potential areas for massive drug production. The Central Asian region is also one of the largest drug trafficking and smuggling areas in the world, also known as the "Golden Crescent" which is an area that is also located in the border area of three countries between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Since opium was consumed by various communities in the Asian region, people in the Southeast Asian region began to plant this opium plant in several regions of the country at that time such as in various regions of China. So that with the mass planting of opium by the community and supported by the topography of the Southeast Asian region which is in the mountains, it resulted in this opium plant growing lushly and began to be consumed by Asian people en masse.

In its development, this regional area is very famous for the basic opium plant which is used for herbal medicines. However, since the colonization by the British, at that time the British who came to East Asia made this opium plant a complement to a party and was not used as the initial essence for traditional medicine but for intoxicating activities and even in its development began to trade in opium plants, so that from then on the opium plant was misused and became a very profitable business commodity.

Based on the explanation of the dynamics of transnational drug trafficking in Southeast Asia, starting from drug production in Southeast Asia, drug smuggling to drug smuggling routes in Southeast Asia, it can be explained that the acceleration of drug abuse in Southeast Asia until 2016 shows a very significant and dangerous development. ASEAN NARCO data explains that until 2015 the Southeast Asian region became one of the areas of cultivation, production (manufacturing), and trafficking of illegal narcotics with five types of narcotics that are familiar in the Southeast Asian region such as marijuana, heroin, opium, amphetamine tablets, crystal amphetamine (ice). The ever-changing types and types of narcotics and the increasing ease of use of narcotics have resulted in the handling of narcotics becoming more difficult to do..

#### **ASEAN's role**

A number of ASEAN countries attended the 3rd Meeting of ASEAN Airport Interdiction Task Force (AAITF) in Pecatu - Bali, on May 20-21, 2013, to discuss cooperation in drug eradication in airports, ports and border areas. AAITF is a forum established by Indonesia, to implement cooperation among ASEAN

countries. The meeting, initiated by the ASEAN Secretariat and BNN, was the third in a series of meetings attended by ASEAN and non-ASEAN members. The first and second meetings took place in Bangkok, Thailand, on May 1 - 3, 2012 and November 1, 2012, respectively. The objective of this forum is to build a network of cooperation and collaboration among ASEAN countries in the field of interdiction, especially airports interdiction, in order to break the illicit drug trafficking network.

In addition, it also aims to provide real meaning and concrete activities for the joint efforts of ASEAN countries in achieving ASEAN Drugs Free 2015, as well as bringing direct benefits to efforts to Prevent and Eradicate Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (P4GN) in Indonesia. Interdiction itself means an operation to break the national and international drug syndicate network by pursuing or stopping people, ships, aircraft or vehicles suspected of carrying Narcotics or Narcotics Precursors, for the arrest of suspects and confiscation of evidence and assets. From ASEAN member countries, in addition to Indonesia, delegations from Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines were also present. Also present were several observer countries, such as Japan, Australia, and India. Other participants from the national scope were the Heads of the Provincial National Narcotics Agency (BNNP), the Director of Drugs of the Regional Police throughout Indonesia and representatives of 10 related government agencies. In this meeting the delegates also discussed to be able to finalize the terms of reference (TOR) which will be a reference for the framework of cooperation for ASEAN member countries and partner countries. said BNN Chief Anang Iskandar during the opening ceremony. In order to add insight, each delegation had a session to explain about efforts that can be done together in terms of capacity building and cooperation, as well as sharing experiences in terms of operations in the field. The implementation of AAITF becomes important when we refer to the ASEAN Leaders Declaration, regarding the commitment of a Drug-Free ASEAN by 2015. AAITF has a strategic role in cutting the illicit traffic of Narcotics and Narcotic Precursors, from or into the territory of ASEAN countries and partner countries. Indonesia, in this case BNN, has a high commitment in preventing and eradicating illicit drug trafficking, especially those that occur in airspace, sea, inland waters, and across borders.

This was marked by the issuance of the Decree of the Head of BNN, Number: KEP 516/XI/BNN/2012, dated November 28, 2012, concerning Technical Interdiction Operations, which became the basis and technical guidelines for Integrated Interdiction Teams at the central, provincial, and district/city levels in carrying out operations in the field. For information, in the future Indonesia also seeks to be able to further maximize the existence of the Interdiction Task Force, from 6 (six) task forces that have been established at this time will be increased to sixty-eight (68). The six established task forces are located in Jakarta, Medan, Manado, Bitung, Batam, and Bali. As we know, the threat of drug trafficking in Indonesia has reached an alarming stage. Indonesia has also become a destination for drug syndicates to import various types of drugs, especially amphetamine type stimulants (ATS), ecstasy and crystal methamphetamine. UNODC data from 2011 states that there are around 3.7 - 4.7 million drug abusers in Indonesia. Of that number, 1.2 million people are crystal methamphetamine users, while 950,000

people consume ecstasy. Therefore, it is important for us to maintain our commitment to the success of this form of cooperation, as well as to share and learn about the approaches or experiences of each ASEAN country in terms of implementing interdiction operations in their respective jurisdictions.

### 1.3 Conclusion

To date, narcotics has become one of the most profitable business commodities and involves transnational criminals who cross national borders. Drug trafficking and smuggling has grown globally and affected many regions of the world. The Latin American continent, particularly countries such as Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela, and Brazil, has become a money laundering site for drug cartels and one of the places where narcotics are widely circulated. Meanwhile, countries in the United States and Europe have become destinations for illegal drug exports. On the Asian continent, Southeast Asia and Central Asia have great potential as massive narcotics producers. The Central Asian region is also a vulnerable area for drug trafficking. With the increasing global narcotics trafficking, more serious efforts and close cooperation between countries are needed to tackle this problem. We must all recognize that drugs have become a real threat to public safety and health. We must work together to address this and combat drug trafficking so that we can create a better world for future generations.

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