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Drug trafficking: threat or risk?
A comparative analysis of drug policies in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran

Abstract

Drugs and drug trafficking has commonly been termed as a 'new threat' in security studies. Recently, the concept of 'risk' has been proposed as describing the problem more appropriately. However, the discussion about appropriateness of either term remains controversial. Political elites of several countries call for a 'war on drugs'. This reaction cannot be considered reasonable when accounting for the basic concept of 'risk'. Furthermore, the utility of traditional means of defence in combating new threats should be questioned.

The current paper focuses on the above mentioned discrimination between the concept of threat and risk. Since Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran play a central role in opium production and opium trafficking, these countries were selected for the analysis. It is sought to compare these countries in respect to how their political elites perceive drug trafficking and which policy strategies are used to deal with resulting problems which are often underestimated. The paper may as well be seen as a test for the metatheoretical consistency of both concepts. It seeks to conclude which one of the proposed concepts makes most sense in light of elaborations on matters of perception and used strategies.

Introduction

Drugs and drug trafficking has commonly been termed as a ‘new threat’ in security studies (see Chalk, 2000; Swanstrom, 2007). The United Nations Security Council for example classifies the international drug trafficking as part of the threat of organized crime (United Nations, 2004). The European Union calls cross-border trafficking in drugs a key threat to the security in Europe (European Union, 2003). Recently, the alternative concept of risk has been applied more frequently. However, the discussion of appropriateness of either term remains controversial. Political elites of several countries call for a ‘war on drugs’. This reaction cannot be considered reasonable when one accounts for the basic concept of ‘risk’. Furthermore, the utility of traditional means of defence in combating new threats should be questioned.

The current paper deals with the idea of making drug trafficking an issue of security. It focuses on the above mentioned discrimination between the concept of threat and risk. Since Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran play a central role in opium production and opium trafficking these countries were selected for the analysis. It compares these countries in respect to how their political elites perceive drug trafficking and which policy strategies are used to deal with resulting problems that are often underestimated. The paper outlines if matters of perception and strategies used for combating drug trafficking rather suit the concept of risk or if it makes more sense to apply the concept of threat. It may also be seen as a test for the metatheoretical consistency of both concepts. Finally, this paper aims to test the appropriateness of applying both western concepts of risk and threat to international drug trafficking. It elaborates on the question if drugs, respectively drug-related problems can be considered a security issue in non-western countries as well.

1. Theoretical and analytical framework

Although the discrimination between risk and threat is crucial on an analytical level, their distinction generates also pivotal practical impact. Each term is predicated on a paradigmatic presumption. Both terms are based on an intrinsic definition of security and accordingly, determine a specific set of strategies in the formulation of security policy (see Daase, 1993:70-83).

According to Wæver (1995), there is a lack of an explicit definition of the term threat. Broadly, he equates threat with security problems which he defines as ‘developments that threaten the sovereignty or independence of a state in a particularly rapid or dramatic fashion, and deprive it of the capacity to manage by itself. This, in turn, undercuts the political order. Such a threat must therefore be met with the mobilization of the maximum effort’ (Wæver, 1995:54).

However, the conceptual meaning of the term ‘threat’ is not as clarified as others, for example the concept of security. Both concepts have been neglected due to a lack of conceptual literature (see Baldwin, 1997 and Buzan, 1991). Wallander and Keohane (1999) suggest a

conceptual definition of threat by illustrating it along the security dilemma as discussed by Herz (1951) and Jervis (1978). Therefore, the authors refer to the territorial integrity of states and the use of military forces. In line with that, states, respectively state leaders, are considered to face a threat when ‘another state will either launch an attack or seek to threaten military force for political reasons’ (Wallander/Keohane, 1999:25). As stated by Wallander and Keohane (1999) threats relate to actors that possess the capability to harm the vital interests of others and are considered by their targets as having intentions to do so. Hence, the conceptual definition of threat consists of three essential components: an actor, his hostile intentions and his potential to constitute a threat. Paradigmatically, the conceptual definition as suggested by Wallander and Keohane (1999) is predicated on the intrinsic presumption that security is characterized by the absent of such a threatening actor. In line with this assumption, defence against menace is pivotal for the formulation of security policy (Daase, 1993:70).

The concept of ‘risk’, however, is defined by the absent of a substantial threat. Some authors define the meaning of risk by differentiating it from the concept of threat (see for example Daase, 1993; Wallander/Keohane, 1999; Friesendorf, 2001). As Wallander and Keohane state, the distinction between the two concepts may be summarized along with the security dilemma. The authors regard risk as a condition when either state or non-state actors do not have the intention or the capability to harm the vital interests of others, but nevertheless do face insecurity (Wallander/Keohane, 1999:25). If only one component of the threat triangle is missing, the security problem could be classified as risk. However, this might remain unsatisfying if the conceptual definition of risk is only derived by the definition of threat and by identifying the missing components of the threat triangle. This seems not to be in line with the criteria for explication of concepts as summarized by Oppenheim (1981) and Baldwin (1997)¹.

To fill the gap in the field of theory of international relations we can refer to sociological definitions of risk. As Beck (1992) suggested, risk is a generic term which refers to the combined measurement of the potential harm and probability of a specific event. Since such measurement or calculations are based on past experience, knowledge or assessment, risk can be regarded as a result of social construction. Therefore, risks are constituted by cultural perception and definition (Beck, 1999:135). On a practical level, referring to the formulation of security strategies, it might be inferred, that the probabilistic and constructivist concept of risk entails that dangers can only be managed, not contained or eliminated. The prevailing strategies will thus be analysis of the causes of a risk and in derivation the prevention of it. In essence, security policy focuses on non-military means rather than military elimination (Daase, 1993:70).

¹ One can consider the conceptual explication of the term threat along with a set of criteria summarized by Oppenheim (1981) and recommended by Baldwin (1997). Baldwin (1997:7) reviews the following criteria for explication of concepts: 1.) concepts should be operational, 2.) concepts should establish definitional connections with other terms, 3.) concepts should draw attention to theoretically important aspects of the subject matter that might easily be overlooked, 4.) concepts should not preclude empirical investigation, and 5.) concepts should remain reasonably close to ordinary language.

In sum, we can discriminate between both concepts on an analytical level by differentiating the underlying paradigm, the referent object, source of danger, intensity, range and geographical scope of its potential effects, temporal delimitation, means of defence and calculability. Table 1 illustrates the conceptual differences between the concept of threat and risk.

Table 1: Discrimination between concepts of threat and risk

distinctive feature	concept of threat	concept of risk
under lying paradigm	paradigm of defence against an external threat; traditional realist assumptions	paradigm of prevention; constructivist assumptions
referent object	State	individual, society, domestic groups, state, regions, and international system
source of danger	external and specific	external or internal and diffuse (mostly global)
intensity of its potential effects	clearly identifiable consequences in weight and scope	wide scope of consequences with spill-over-effects
geographical scope of its effects	territorial limited	territorial unlimited
temporal delimitation	temporal limited (temporary), temporal delimitation identifiable	temporal unlimited, temporal delimitation not identifiable, long-term effects possible
means of defence	military forces	non-military more preventive means, focus on diminishing the causes
Calculability	clearly calculable and identifiable by triangle of threat (actor, intention, potential)	incalculable by the triangle of actor, intention, potential, sometimes only measurable by technical means

How can we deduce variables for conceptual discrimination between both terms? Friesendorf (2001) elaborated that three factors influence risk or threat policies on the national level of analysis of drug-related problems. First, the construction of causes of drug problems. Second, the construction of consequences of drug problems and third, the level of repression and militarization. These three factors are used with variables for investigating drug trafficking in

the selected region of the Golden Crescent². According to the distinction between the concepts threat and risk, two forms of peculiarity of the variables can be discriminated for each factor. Correspondingly, each of the two distinct forms of peculiarity of each variable acts as an indicator for one concept, either threat or risk. Furthermore, each form of peculiarity of the variables can be classified into one category of perception of drug problems and one category of used strategies of drug policy. Conclusively, four forms of peculiarity of each of the three variables remain, which adds up to twelve variables in total. Table 2 shows the classification of the variables and their forms of peculiarity according to the conceptual discrimination of threat and risk.

Table 2: Operationalization of the variables

Variables	forms of expressiveness of the variables in the category of perception		forms of expressiveness of the variables in the category of used strategies	
	indicator for threat	indicator for risk	indicator for threat	indicator for risk
construction of causes of drug problems	attributing drug problems primarily to external causes	Attributing drug problems primarily to internal causes	focus on supply-oriented strategies	focus on demand-oriented strategies
construction of consequences of drug problems	attributing drug problems as acute and provoking serious harms	Attributing drug problems as not acute at present, but could provoke serious harms in the future	focus on intense fight against drugs; strategies which refer to eliminating the drug problems	focus on prevention and diminishing the causes
level of repression	to taboo drug problems and drug addicts, stigmatizing drug users and addicts	shed light on drug abuse and addiction as well as on drug related harms	high level of repression of drug-related offences	Lower level of repression of drug-related offences

2. How does drug trafficking affect security in the three selected countries?

Since drug trafficking can not be seen as being separated from the production and consumption of prohibited substances, actors on all levels of analysis are affected by drug trafficking. According to Buzan (1991) and (1998), security can be divided into five relevant sectors: the military, political, economic, societal, and environmental one. As table 3 indicates, drug problems have a general effect on each of these security sectors.

² One of Asia's two main illicit opium producing areas is called Golden Crescent. The name refers to the area located at the crossroads of Central, South and Western Asia. This area covers three nations; Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran (see Chouvy, 2002 and 2003).

Table 3: five security sectors and the impact of drugs on them

Security Sector	How it is defined	How drugs have an effect on it
Military Security	Refers to military capabilities of states or non-state actors to ensure their territorial integrity	Terrorist and other insurgent groups and/or networks can finance themselves through drug profits and can therefore challenge a country's military capacity and destabilize the territorial integrity.
Political Security	relates to the stability of political systems	The drug business can undermine political stability by increases of corruption, violence and crime as a side product of drug trafficking. Further a state is not able to protect its citizens anymore, that in turn affects the state's credibility and legitimacy.
Economic Security	Deals with ensuring stability and welfare within a given economic system	The huge profit traffickers are generating through the drug business destabilizes the global economic market by money laundering, shadow economy and corruption payments. Moreover, the drug industry poses a big productivity loss and high costs of health care.
Societal Security	Refers to retaining a specific (socio-cultural) identity and cohesion within a given society	As a result of drug industry and efforts to stop it, the increase of violence, crime and human rights violations sap social coherence and undermine social identities. Further, consumption of drugs puts a strain on the health care system and leads to the spread of diseases like HIV/Aids, hepatitis that in turn deteriorates health care conditions.
Environmental Security	is related to the maintenance of natural conditions for ensuring the human survival and well-being	On the one hand, environmental security is violated by chemicals dumped in rivers, and at roadsides after using it in the process of chemical production of drugs like heroin, cocaine, morphine. On the other hand, fumigation of cultivation fields with chemicals causes a pollution of natural habitats.

Sources: Buzan/Wæver/de Wilde (1998); Kenney (2005) and Kumar (1996)

While drug production, trafficking, and consumption cause numerous problems, each of the selected countries of the current study is facing its own specific security problem. Afghanistan has been reputed to be the world's leading opium producer for more than 15 years now. In 2007, around 93 percent of global opiates stems from poppy cultivation in Afghanistan (UNDCP/Government of Afghanistan, 2007; Jaffe, 2007). Thus, with regard to its status in international drug trafficking Afghanistan may be classified as a drug producer state. Pakistan and Iran however are commonly considered to be transit and/or drug consuming states. It has been reported that both states, aside from post-soviet Central Asian countries, suffer mostly from trafficking in illicit drugs received from Afghanistan. In 2006, 53 percent of all opiates left Afghanistan via Iran, 33 percent via Pakistan and 15 percent via Central Asia (UNODC/Government of Afghanistan, 2006). Both countries are experiencing also an increase in consumption of heroin and other opiates (UNODC, 2007). Although, different statistics of opiate addicts are given³, Iran is considered to have the highest prevalence of abuse of opiates in the world. The UNODC country office in Tehran stresses that of the general population aged between 15 and 64 years 2.8 percent engages in opiate abuse (UNODC, 2007). Moreover, the Pakistani prevalence rate of drug abuse is high, even though

³ According to different ministries and organizations in Iran, the range of their statistics varies from 2 to 7 mio. drug users in the country (personal communication with an Assistant Professor, Iranian National Centre for Addiction Studies, August 2005).

it does not seem to harm the country the same way as it does in Iran. Additionally, while the prevalence rate with the number of 640,000 opiate users in Pakistan has been stable over the last six years, figures of drug abuse in Iran are constantly rising (UNODC, 2007).

As a drug producer country, Afghanistan faces various destabilizing as well as preliminary stabilizing effects regarding the drug industry. For instance, one stabilizing effect in the economy sector may be the booming drug business which creates jobs and brings prosperity. Unfortunately, the impact does not lead to a sustainable economic stability. On a societal level, the traditional pattern of cultivation, production and consumption of drugs sustain social coherence, although in turn an increase of violence and crime as by-products of the drug industry sap social cohesion. As transit and drug consuming states, Pakistan and Iran have to cope with a wide range of corruption, money laundering, shadow economy, a destabilized economy and an undermined political system. It seems that in transit and drug consuming countries destabilizing prevail stabilizing effects (Brunelli, 2006).

Furthermore, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran are influenced by western interference in different ways. This fact may as well present a relevant factor in the perception of drug problems of the country. In the light of all prior mentioned differences it may be assumed that the current study will find dissimilar perception and combating drug strategies in the three selected countries.

3. Research questions

According to the theoretical and analytical framework the current paper highlights three questions:

- 1.) Is the perception of drug trafficking among political elites in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran in line with the concept of risk?
- 2.) Which policies and strategies are used in the three countries to fight the regional drug economy?
- 3.) Do the policies and strategies in the three countries rather suit the concept of risk or would it make more sense to apply the concept of threat?

4. Data analysis

To investigate the research questions the current paper presents a case study. As stated by Yin (2003:2), 'the distinctive need for case studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena'. Hence, a case study research design seems to be the most appropriate way to answer how and why questions to a complex contemporary phenomenon like drug

trafficking (Kohlbacher, 2006:14). According to Yin (2003:21ff.), five components are of crucial importance when conducting a case study: research questions, its propositions, the units of analysis, the logic linking of the data to the propositions and criteria for interpreting the finding (see also Kohlbacher, 2005:18).

The units of analysis of the current study are determined by the utilized sources of evidence. For each of the three selected cases documents, archival records and semi structural interviews with governmental and non-governmental officials working at drug related institutions, like the ministry of health and the ministry of counter narcotics were used as sources of evidence. In general, each single interview or written document constituted the unit of analysis. The unit of code was defined as the smallest part of a text (written or oral) which is related to one of the variables.

The logic linking of the data to the propositions as well as the criteria for interpreting the finding result from the method of data analysis used in the current study. The chosen data analysis was based on qualitative content analysis developed by Mayring (2000). The data of the current paper was analysed according to the proceedings of structural or dimensional data analysis proposed by Mayring (2003). Since the study aims to discriminate the analytical terms of threat and risk regarding the security issue of drug trafficking on a more practical level of perception and policies, it seems appropriate to use a two dimensional discriminating procedure. Mayring's structural content analysis (or valence analysis) allows for the development of a two-dimensional categorical system that structures the complete set of qualitative data (Mayring, 2003:90-99). Furthermore, this method defines the distinction of both analytical terms (threat and risk) according to the respective peculiarity of the variables. The classification of relevant categories is carried out according to a two-dimensional level that discriminates between risk and threat. The categories are based on theoretical variables which are derived from the above mentioned definition of both terms. Qualitative content analysis is used for the data analysis because of its advantage of strict methodological control and of stepwise analysis of the material.

5. Results

The following results represent preliminary outcomes of the ongoing study. Therefore, only the analysis of data of the case study of Iran can be presented in a way that fulfils the analytical premises of the above discussed framework.

5.1. Afghanistan

5.1.1. Perception of domestic drug trafficking

The Afghan authorities and policy decision-makers differ in perception on drug problems as well as in their opinion about the causes of their country's drug industry. The following

statements illustrate a variety of arguments given for the causes of drug problems in Afghanistan. It can be seen that domestic factors are considered crucial for the country's drug industry.

The Deputy Interior Minister General Mohammad Daud Daud states:

'I reject the assumption that most of farmers grow poppies due to widespread poverty in the country [...] Not a single plant was grown in the country's poorest provinces of Maidan-Wardak, Kapisa, Panjshir, Paktia and Paktika this year. Instead, those people or landlords were growing poppies who wanted to become rich overnight (August 16, 2007, Pajhwok Afghan News).'

The Minister for Rural Rehabilitation and Development of Afghanistan Mohammad Ehsan Zia states:

'The traffickers and the international mafia are making big money. Opium cultivation and drug trafficking are the major reasons for instability in Afghanistan. Drug cultivation may look very lucrative, but it really contributes to poverty – and increasingly so. When there is no security in a country, how can there be economic prosperity?' (Interview in 'Development and Cooperation', July, 2006)

The Managing Director of the Afghan Civil Society Forum Aziz Rafiee:

'Today the most sustainable economy is the poppy economy. It does not need investments or foreign assistance and it is based on local resources and facilities, available without huge payments. People know how to cultivate poppy and have invested in it for the last twenty years.' (Interview by Marion R. Müller, Heinrich Böll Foundation Kabul)

5.1.2. Drug policy

The newly established government of Afghanistan first launched a national drug control strategy in 2003 and updated it in January 2006. The Afghan National Drug Control Strategy marks four priorities: demolishing drug trafficking, strengthening and diversifying legal rural livelihoods, reducing the demand for drugs by preventive measures and treatment, and establishing state institutions for prosecuting drug offenders (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, 2006a:19). Based on these priorities, eight pillars of activities were determined: public awareness, international and regional cooperation, alternative livelihoods, demand reduction, law enforcement, criminal justice, eradication and institution building. This strategy reflects a wish list rather than well-defined strategies and priorities (Transnational Institute, 2006:15).

According to the first priority, demolishing the domestic and regional trafficking in illicit drugs a zero-tolerance approach in terms of trafficking and possession of illicit narcotics was enacted by the new counter-narcotics law. Additionally, the drug control strategy includes

eradication to reach the target of demolishing drug production and trafficking. In order to implement eradication activities, the Afghan government had been establishing a couple of different law enforcement bodies with assistance of the international community. First, the US-controlled Afghan Eradication Force (AEF) which is responsible for eradication of poppy fields. Its mobile divisions with air support are deployed in areas where local authorities seem to enforce the poppy ban. Second, the UK created eradication unit under the Ministry of Interior in consultation with the Afghan government, which is called Central Eradication Planning Cell (CEPC). Third, the Afghan Special Narcotics Force (ASNF) was established as a paramilitary unit which works under the Ministry of Interior. The ASNF is equipped and trained for the deployment in sensitive interdiction operations. It tackles special operations 'against hard targets' with assistance of the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) (US House of Representatives, 2006).

As a supplement, the Poppy Elimination Programme (PEP) was set up in 2005 to assist eradication activities with public information, alternative livelihood and governor-led eradication programs at the provincial level. PEP teams consist of about ten national and international experts and work in key poppy cultivating areas. Their tasks are, among others, to inform the public by attracting attention by campaigns and to assess, monitor and verify eradication operations. PEP teams give direct report to the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (Transnational Institute, 2006). Although only 57 percent of claimed governor-led eradication could be verified in 2006, it represents the biggest portion of eradication carried out. In 2007, its portion accounted yet for 84 percent of overall eradication (UNODC/Government of Afghanistan, 2007). According to the UNODC, there seem to be agreements between farmers and eradication teams about where, when and how fields will be destroyed by governor-led eradication programs. Furthermore, the UNODC asserts that the quality of eradication performed by US-controlled AEF 'was generally of a much higher standard than Governor-led eradication' (UNODC/Government of Afghanistan, 2006:59).

Moreover, several organizations exist that are responsible for interdiction, investigation and intelligence lead-managed by the Counter-Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA), which belongs to the Deputy Minister of Interior Muhammad Daud Daud. On operational level, this includes the National Interdiction Unit (NIU), which tackles structures of organized trafficking on the mid and high level. Around 110 NIU officers are deployed and work with assistance of the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and with support by US air force. According to the US Embassy in Kabul, in collaboration with the DEA, the CNPA seized about 50 metric tons of opiates in 2005 (Transnational Institute, 2006:17). Compared with figures of seizures in countries neighbouring Afghanistan like Iran, which annually confiscates between 150 and 200 tons of opiates (see UNODC's World Drug Reports up to 2007), these outcomes seem to constitute minor incidents. But regarding the demolition of opiate laboratories, its impact may be considered more effective. Until the end of August of 2006, 248 laboratories, mostly in the border areas had been destroyed (UNODC/Government of Afghanistan, 2006:95).

In July 2005, the justice system of the Afghan government created a special Criminal Justice Task Force (CJTF) exclusively dealing with narcotics related cases. It aims to judge drug

producers and traffickers on a mid- to high-level. The CJTF includes police officers, judges and prosecutors, each specialized in drug related delinquency. Cases trialed by the CJTF will be prosecuted before the Central Narcotics Tribunal (CNT), which serves as the central court based in Kabul. Only cases of trafficking that affect more than 2 kg of heroin, 10 kg of opium, or 50 kg of hashish or precursors are supposed to be transferred from provincial courts to the CNT (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics 2006b). The establishment of all mentioned state institutions for prosecuting drug offences is also in line with priority four of the National Drug Control Strategy.

In attempt to accomplish priority two, strengthening and diversifying legal rural livelihoods, providing alternative livelihoods is another strategy of the Afghan drug policy. Activities in this scope vary from crop substitution by providing seeds and fertilizers to road construction, renovation of irrigation systems and building of infrastructure. Unfortunately, participatory processes are almost neglected, which implies that it is not ensured that these projects are helping those who are desperately needing them (Transnational Institute, 2006:16).

Although the National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS) emphasizes repressive campaigns predominately focusing on the supply side, there are efforts to achieve priority three (reducing the demand for drugs). It highlights three aspects of demand reduction: treatment, harm reduction and prevention. Therefore, the NDCS calls for establishing community-based and residential treatment services for dependent drug abusers. Furthermore, it calls for implementation of harm reduction measures for injecting drug users in order to prevent the transmission of blood-borne diseases like HIV/Aids and hepatitis. Finally, the Afghan government aims to strengthen preventive programs like drug awareness and prevention campaigns to be targeted at high-risk groups to stop people from starting drug consumption (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, 2006a:19).

5.2. Pakistan

5.2.1. Perception of domestic drug trafficking

Pakistan's authorities and policy decision-makers represent a congruent picture when it comes to their construction of causes of the country's drug industry. They predominately attribute drug problems to external factors like for example geographical circumstances such as a long border with the world's leading opium producer. Furthermore, decision-makers that are in charge of the drug policy stress that the country's drug proliferation has to be considered a big threat. Accordingly, they conclude that Pakistan is at war on it. The following statements exemplify this assumption.

The Secretary of the Ministry of Narcotics Control Ismail Hassan Niazi:

‘The huge amount of drugs reaches our country because of our long and impassable border with Afghanistan, the biggest poppy cultivator in the world. The border area between

Afghanistan and Pakistan is one of the poorest regions in the world' (personal communication, May 5, 2006).

The Director General Anti-Narcotics Force Major General Zafar Abbas:

'The poppy cultivation is reaching unprecedented levels [...] and Pakistan is facing a dual challenge in such a situation: Whereas the threat of drug proliferation is increasing, the funding for the Anti-Narcotics force is being drastically slashed' (The News, April 7, 2003).

The Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz:

'This [the spread of narcotics in the country] is a war and needs to be won, as it knows no boundaries and can damage the society' (The News, February 18, 2005).

5.2.2. Drug Policy

These prevailing perceptions are reflected in the country's drug policy. In 1997, the responsibility for interdiction and eradication of drug trafficking and cultivation was transferred from the police to the military force (Government of Pakistan, 1997a) because of the greater competence and reputation of the military (personal communication with a German police officer based in Islamabad, May 2006). Hence, the federal Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) was created while the former Pakistan Narcotics Control Board and the former Anti-Narcotics Task Force are merged in it. Superintendence and administration of the ANF is vested in the federal government, specifically, under the control of the Ministry of Narcotics-Control. The function of the ANF is enacted by the Anti-Narcotics Force Act for inquiring into, investigating and prosecuting all offences that are related or connected to the preparation, production, manufacture, transportation, trafficking or smuggling of intoxicants, narcotics and chemical precursors (Government of Pakistan, 1997a). Furthermore, the ANF possesses the competency to trace and freeze assets of drug offenders, maintain liaison with national or international counterparts, authorities and organizations as well as to represent Pakistan on international stages in cases of narcotics related matters (Government of Pakistan, 1997a:90). Among the various ANF agencies exists a further unit responsible for governmental activities in demand reduction in general. The Drug Abuse Prevention Resource Centre (DAPRC) coordinates all efforts of nongovernmental organizations and local activities. Generally, all counter-narcotics strategies are coordinated and monitored by the Narcotics Control Division (NCD). It directly reports to the Ministry of Narcotics Control.

The anti-drug law in Pakistan prescribes a zero-tolerance regarding the possession and consumption of illicit drugs. Perpetrators that were found to possess more than 20 grams of heroin or one kilogram of opium face imprisonment for life (25 years). However, it has been proposed that penalties may also be effectively reduced by combining them with a fine (Government of Pakistan, 1997b:104). Although the Control of Narcotic Substances Act evidently calls for treating addicts like patients, there are no clear regulations or interpretations of the anti-drug law regarding the sentences imposed upon drug users or

addicts (Government of Pakistan, 1997b; Reid/Costigan, 2002:164; personal communication with an UNODC country representative, May 4, 2006).

To reduce drug demand different kinds of treatment centres exist. First, a range from 70 to 80 centres offer free treatment for affected people in the private sector. In fact however, these centres are known to operate for commercial profits. Second, there are about 300 governmental hospitals; most of them concentrate on detoxification and medical treatment rather than on rehabilitation. Not surprisingly, the relapse rate is usually between 80 and 90 percent. The majority of governmental hospitals exist in urban centres which makes sense under consideration of the fact that the prevalence rates of drug abuse are higher in Pakistan's large cities. Third, health care services and treatment are further offered by nongovernmental organizations. Nationwide, about 100 programmes and 200 centres provide primary health care, treatment services, outreach, counselling and social services. In spite of all mentioned services, the number of treatment centres is still inadequate when taking into account the enormous number of drug addicts (personal communication with a NGO director, May 3, 2006). On the contrary, drug users are usually charged a fee to cover food costs in the NGO sector (Reid/Costigan, 2002:164).

It has been reported that the Pakistan government acknowledges the spread of HIV and other blood-born viruses among injecting drug users as a result of high risk behaviours like sharing of injecting equipment and unsafe sexual relationships. However, harm reduction activities remain on a minimum: currently, there are no government-funded needle exchange or methadone-maintenance programmes (Reid/Costigan, 2002:165; personal communication with UNODC and Nai Zindagi, May, 2006).

5.3. Iran

5.3.1. Perception of domestic drug trafficking

The governmental bodies which are responsible for supply reduction blame unanimous external factors as main causes for the drug problems in Iran. It is important to note that trends of external attribution and blaming foreign forces increased over the last two years. These changes date back to the start of presidency of the radical conservative Mahmud Ahmadinejad. The following statements of Iranian officials give an example of this presumption:

The Minister of Intelligence and Security Gholam Hussein Mohseni-Ejei:

'The drug smuggling has worsened since U.S. forces were deployed in Afghanistan. By increasing the level of insecurity, US is trying to justify its presence in the region and it is for this reason that America supports the smuggling [of drugs] and the creation of insecurity, because the establishment of security will mean the end of the American presence in the region.' (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, December 27, 2005)

The Foreign Ministry spokesman Mohammad-Ali Hosseini:

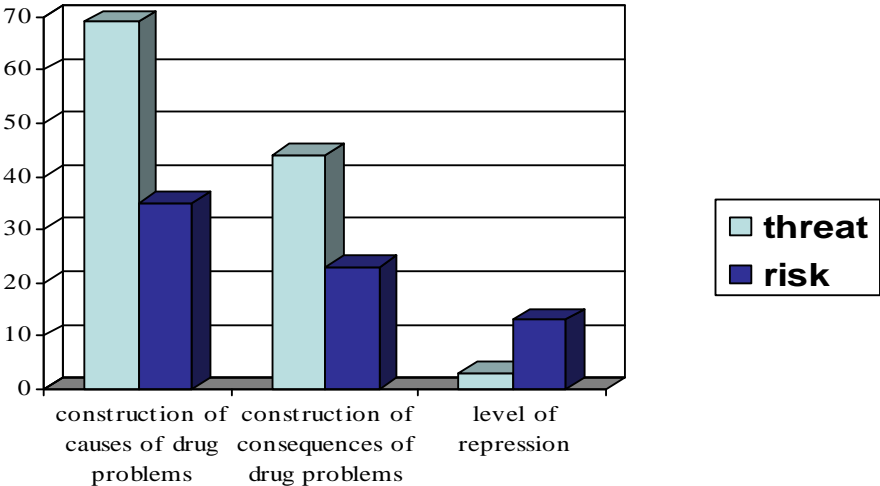
‘The presence of Britain and other occupying powers in the region on the pretext of fight against terrorism and smuggling of narcotic drugs but aimed at plundering the regional natural resources, had reverse outcome. The moves of the occupying forces only resulted in escalation of terrorism, insecurity and drug smuggling.’ (IRNA, June 3, 2007)

Colonel General Ashrafi, chief of the Law Enforcement Force in Mahabad:

‘During the past four months 30m psychotropic pills and vials have been seized in the district. This high volume of psychotropic drugs slipped into the country is proof of large-scale enemy plans against the youth of our country and our social norms. [...] After their [hostile foreign forces] failure to confront the Islamic Republic of Iran the enemies are resorting to such practices to prevent the workforce of the country from endeavouring to develop the country.’ (IRNA, August 7, 2007)

To the contrary, ex-president and reformist Ayatollah Khatami tended to base his argumentation on domestic rather than external factors when seeking to explain problems related to illicit drugs. Even reactions of the law enforcements were in line with this less radical approach by emphasizing the need for international aid and technical as well as financial assistance. It may be stated that the public discourse on drug trafficking and drug addiction as well as on drug related harms was rather open during the time of his presidency. Drugs were no longer a taboo in Iran. Furthermore, the public discourse focused on internal factors for the rising drug consumption and addiction rates. The results of the data categorization are summarized in Figure 1 according to the variables ‘construction of causes of drug problems’, ‘construction of consequences of drug problems’ and ‘level of repression’ into the category of perception.

Figure 1: data categorization according to the variables into the category of perception



5.3.2. Drug Policy

A harsh anti-drugs campaign was implemented in Iran following the revolution that established the Islamic Republic in 1979. The Iranian law menaces with high penalties for drug-related offences. Individuals convicted for the possession of drugs will receive fines, imprisonment as well as corporal punishment (Nissaramanesh/Trace/Roberts, 2005). For example, people found guilty for the possession of more than 30 gram of heroin or more than 5 kilogram of opium will receive the death penalty. After the 1979 Islamic Revolution public health services for drug abuse were initially closed despite evidence that drug use were on the rise. Drug abusers were either send to the prison or to compulsory rehabilitation camps (Nissaramanesh/Trace/Roberts, 2005). According to official statistics, a total of 1,700,000 people have been imprisoned for drug offences during a period of twenty years (State Welfare Organization, 2000, cited in Nissaramanesh/Trace/Roberts, 2005:4). The anti-drug campaign focused on supply reduction strategies to curb the drug trafficking in the country.

Since the mid-1990s, it had become obvious that the rigorous law enforcement measures have failed in both, to stop the flow of illicit drugs through and the availability of drugs in the country as well as to prevent a further increase in drug use. The consistently increasing prevalence of drug abuse and addiction, an over burden prison system and a high infection rate of HIV/Aids among injecting drug users were among the grave outcomes of the former drug policy of the Islamic Republic. Sharing needles and other equipment used for the injection of drugs in Iran's prisons aggravated the situation (Nissaramanesh/Trace/Roberts, 2005:3; personal communication with General Director of Health and Treatment of the Drug Control Headquarter and Iran Prisons Organization, August 23, 2005). Anti-drug authorities had to acknowledge the limits of law enforcement strategies as means for reducing the amount of drugs in the country and to prevent the demand for illicit drugs. As a result, a gradual shift in the drug policy in Iran in terms of moving the focus from anti-drug trafficking activities to responding to drug-related harm can be noticed since 1997/98. Conversely, the legal framework has not been liberalized; in fact the anti-drug law was tightened in 1997. Judiciary authorities still prescribe and sentence the capital punishment but the frequency of its execution significantly decreased during Khatami's presidency. Furthermore, the regime has been reluctant to enforce this legislation. Instead of imposing imprisonment, authorities refer drug addicts to treatment centres. Paradoxically, while the anti-drug law changed over time that penalties increased, actual convictions turned out less delicate.

In the Iranian anti-drug law treatment is defined by the law authorities. In fact, medical and welfare centres get a free hand to define what therapy is supposed to entail for the treatment of drug addicted individuals. Authorities have defined needle exchange programs constitute an effective strategy for future harm prevention. An addict who injects substances with a needle that he received from a drop-in centre will automatically be regarded as to be in treatment. There is a contradiction between the current anti-drug law and its actual execution. While the law is still considering drug abuse a crime, addicted individuals are in fact treated as patients. Because of this incongruence there is an ongoing debate about changing the anti-drug law. It has been proposed however, that making drug addiction a medical rather than a juridical issue by focusing on treatment and intervention offers contributes to more beneficial

and effective outcomes in the long run (personal communication with an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Iranian National Centre for Addiction Studies and Department of Clinical Sciences/Tehran University of Medical Sciences, August 16, 2005).

Treatment programs in Iran vary in their quality as well as in their therapy target. Treatment methods range from purely abstinence oriented to detoxification and substitution programs (Razzaghi/Nassirimanesh/Afshar/Ohiri/Claeson/Power, 2006). In the mid-1990s, a small number of governmental therapeutic communities provided abstinence-based group work programmes for drug addicts that had been referred from by the court. It is estimated that 25,000 to 30,000 addicts have been treated in these centres until 1999 (Razzaghi/Rahimi/Hossen/Chatterjee, 1999). Concomitantly, numerous outpatient clinics were relaunched. Until 2006, about 200 private and more than 120 governmental treatment centres were erected. Additionally, efforts to establish nationwide 'narcotics anonymous' support groups were made. Central to the 'narcotics anonymous' program is its emphasis on complete abstinence from all drugs. However, growing concern has been expressed about standard and effectiveness of these treatment methods. By the end of 1990s, the Iranian authorities started to realize that the Iranian treatment community might benefit from the exchange of medical knowledge with international experts. Therefore, they encouraged medical and welfare professionals to collaborate with drug treatment experts from other countries. As a result, more advanced and progressive treatment programs, like methadone maintenance and outreach programs can be found in Iran at the current point of time. Furthermore, efforts to implement harm-reduction programs by governmental and non-governmental organizations have been made (Nissaramanesh/Trace/Roberts, 2005). The government of Iran launched preventive programs for using drugs during the last couple of years, like media awareness and educational campaigns. This contributed to shifting the issue of drug use and addiction from a taboo into a widely discussed contemporary subject.

6. Discussion

Although the presented results are preliminary it may be concluded that the perception of drug trafficking is considerably different among the political elites of the three countries. While Afghan decision-makers tend to emphasize the importance of the huge profits coming from mid- and high-level drug business, underscore Pakistani politicians the geographical facts like a long and inaccessible border with adjoining Afghanistan. Iran's authorities however underline the influence of foreign, mainly hostile powers on the inflowing amount of illicit drugs to undermine social norms and cohesion. Despite these differences, it seems that all three countries refer to external factors when explaining origins and consequences of drug-related problems.

Contradicting expectations however, the repression of drug problems is significantly lower in Iran compared to Afghanistan and Pakistan. With reference to question one, it may be concluded that the current status of perception of drug trafficking in the three countries rather reflects the theoretical framework of threat than risk.

Concerning question two the following results can be derived from the analysis: in Afghanistan, the anti-drugs law is basically built on western concepts of illicit drugs and neglects Afghan traditions like using opium for medical purpose or opium stocks as saving accounts. Its 'foreign' character is further reflected in the fact that alcohol is not included in the list of prohibited drugs although it is seen as more harmful and 'haram' than hashish or opium in the Islamic culture (Transnational Institute, 2006:19). Furthermore, the Afghan drug policy is marked by a lack of an authentic fight against corruption and high-level drug traffickers. Thus, the Afghan president seems to move but not remove large-scale drug traffickers in his administration and high-level officials in his government involved in the drug business.

Broadly, it can be said that there is a lack of ownership in the process of decision-making and a complex architecture of different counter-narcotics organizations with overlapping responsibilities. In sum, among others, these circumstances prevent the Afghan government to deal with the drug economy in an effective way.

In Pakistan, the drug policy is dominated by the military. As a consequence, the focus of its strategies lies mainly on supply reduction. Not surprisingly, the knowledge of the military about drug demand is very limited. Therefore, drug policy in the form of strategies of demand reduction remains on a minimum. It can be concluded that Pakistan's drug policy needs a more sustainable, sophisticated and elaborated approach that is a more balanced and appropriate reaction to the country's drug problems. Generally, it can be said that the drug policy in Iran can be estimated as very progressive and liberal compared to Pakistan and Afghanistan, and to some extent in comparison with some western countries.

Regarding question three, it may be concluded that, on analytical level, the Afghan drug policy is rather in line with the concept of threat. The strategies used to fight the drug industry in Afghanistan are marked by a dominance of repressive means like the deployment of law enforcement bodies, the military and paramilitary units. Moreover, the lack of activities of demand reduction bolsters the assumption.

Since the drug policy in Pakistan almost exclusively consists of military means accompanied by a lack of demand reduction strategies, it can be deduced that, it corresponds to the concept of threat. Although we have a more sophisticated and demand reduction oriented (and prevention oriented) drug policy in Iran we can not clearly label it as a risk policy according to the concept of risk. In fact, some aspects, e.g. its progressive demand reduction activities the Iranian drug policy, suit the concept of risk. Other facets however, like the harsh anti-drug policy including death penalty and involvement of the military as well as paramilitary units in supply reduction strategies, the Iranian drug policy is well in line with the concept of threat.

For a theoretical debate about the conceptual explication and application of both terms it can be derived from the analysis that the perception of transnational drug trafficking as well as the policies used to diminish or eliminate it are rather in line with the concept of threat in all three countries. Certainly, this conclusion may be due to the intensity and strength of the drug economy in the region of the Golden Crescent. Besides that, it is supposed that drug

trafficking does not suit the concept of risk here because of its deep-rooted existence as a security issue as well as long-standing weight and scope of its effects in the region. Hence, the paradigm of prevention, the concept of risk is basically built upon, does not seem to match the specifics of drug trafficking in the three countries. Furthermore, preventive strategies from drug trafficking in the Golden Crescent seem to be obsolete. However, further research in the field of risk and drug trafficking is required. In particular, studies on drug policies in countries which are hit by drug trafficking to a lesser extent than the three chosen countries of the current paper. Finally, it may be concluded that further studies on the conceptual explication of risk are needed in order to solve the issue of application to analysis in security studies.

7. Literature

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