Transnational Narcotics Trafficking and Law Enforcement: A Vietnam Perspective

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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February 2017
Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Hai Thanh Luong

2nd February 2017
Acknowledgement

This study would never have been implemented were it not for noble people I encountered in the study process. First and foremost, I am especially indebted to my senior supervisor, Associate Professor Paul Battersby, Deputy Dean, School of Global, Urban, and Social Studies (GUSS), RMIT University, for providing me with keen insights, which have improved my understanding of research, for your extensive critique of each paper and draft, and for your support throughout the academic journey. Additionally, I would also like to express my profound gratitude to my associate supervisor, Dr Warren Aiden, Senior Lecture at GUSS with helpful recommendations during I complete all my three milestones.

I would like to express particular thanks to the 165 Vietnamese Project for funding my PhD study. My appreciation also goes to the School of Graduate Research and GUSS, RMIT University for the financial supports provided to me to do fieldworks and attend conferences. Besides that, I would like to thank so much for unlimited supports and useful assistances of my colleagues at the Faculty of Criminal Investigation, the Faculty of Anti-Narcotics Police, Department of International Cooperation (the People’s Police Academy of Vietnam) and the Criminal Investigation Police on Drug-Related Crime Department at six province shared borderland with Lao PDR during the process of data collection.

This dissertation is sincerely dedicated to both my wife’s and my own family. Their wholehearted support encouraged me to pursue my goal. I am also deeply grateful for the love and loyalty of my wife, Anh Chu, who provided me with the confidence and emotional supports. This work is also dedicated to my two “naughty boys”, Thien Luong and Tai Luong, who gave me inspiration and motivation to complete my study.
Credits

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<tr>
<td>AIFOCOM</td>
<td>The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly Fact-Finding Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIPA</td>
<td>The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assemble</td>
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<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>The Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
</tr>
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<td>ATS</td>
<td>Amphetamine-type Stimulants</td>
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<td>CCV</td>
<td>Criminal Code of Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIPDRC</td>
<td>Criminal Investigation Police on Drug-Related Crimes</td>
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<td>DTOs</td>
<td>Drug Trafficking Organizations</td>
</tr>
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<td>INCSR</td>
<td>The International Narcotics Control Strategy Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
<td>The Lao People’s Democratic Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEAs</td>
<td>Law Enforcement Agencies</td>
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<td>M.O</td>
<td>Modus Operandi</td>
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<td>MMR</td>
<td>Mixed Methods Research</td>
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<td>MPS</td>
<td>Ministry of Public Security of Vietnam</td>
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<td>SNA</td>
<td>Social Network Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>SODC</td>
<td>The Standing Office on Drugs and Crime of Vietnam</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOC</td>
<td>Transnational Organized Crime</td>
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<td>TransNT</td>
<td>Transnational Narcotics Trafficking</td>
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<td>UNODC</td>
<td>The United Nations on Drugs and Crime</td>
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Abstract

Close proximity to the major production zones, porous borderlands, mountainous frontiers and long coastlines offer advantageous conditions for trafficking narcotics. The illicit drug situation has become much more complex in Vietnam with the growth in amphetamine-type stimulants production and trade. Even so, empirical research and analysis of the organization and operation of transnational narcotics trafficking (TransNT) remains limited. The purpose of this thesis is to present the first detailed inquiry into the nature of TransNT across the border between Lao PDR and Vietnam using an exploratory approach which draws upon qualitative and quantitative methods. In particular, the thesis presents findings from case studies of cross-border trafficking between Vietnam and Lao PDR in the period of 2003-2013 combined with interview and survey data from criminal investigation police and drug-related crimes officers (CIPDRC) from six border provinces who are directly and indirectly involved in investigating these cases.

The findings of this study indicate that drug markets in Vietnam are not controlled by monopolistic, hierarchical organizations or ‘cartels’. The structures of TransNT entities operating across the Lao-Vietnam border are small, based on family ties and fellow-countrymen relations, are fluid and loosely organized. They are very adaptable and sophisticated with diverse modus operandi and multiple divisions of labour. This presents particular challenges to law enforcement agencies (LAEs).

This thesis questions to capacity of Vietnam’s police to enforce the government’s zero-tolerance anti-narcotics policy. The study highlights practical problems and specific barriers in combating TransNT. LEAs in Vietnam and Lao People’s Democratic Republic (PDR) operate without effective mechanisms to cooperate and share information. It is also the case
that traffickers often have more sophisticated equipment at their disposal to help them avoid arrest. Police forces work within national structures and yet are faced with the task of combatting transnational crime. This reality affects law enforcement capacity at a national as well as regional level, but Association of the Southeast Asian Nations member states have yet to establish effective structures for dealing with this non-traditional security challenge. Based on these findings, therefore, the thesis proposes recommendations to enhancing the effectiveness of LEAs in dealing with TransNT across Vietnam’s border with Lao PDR.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Illicit drugs and drug-related crimes challenge the capacities of law enforcement agencies (LEAs) the world over. For developing countries like Vietnam, illicit drug production and trafficking, directly and indirectly, threaten social stability and economic welfare. Moreover, transnational narcotics trafficking (TransNT) negatively affect relations between Vietnam and its neighbours and the wider international community. An international anti-narcotics regime has emerged to criminalize and eradicate the trade in harmful substances, principally heroin, cocaine, cannabis and illicit amphetamines and methamphetamines such as “ecstasy” and “ice”. The United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (U.N Convention 1961), the Convention on Psychotropic Substances (U.N Convention 1971) and the Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (U.N Convention 1988) called for international cooperation to combat illicit drugs, but compliance and implementation at the national level has proven difficult, even for developed countries. While economic growth and regional integration bring many positives such as the increased mobility of goods, services, people and money, they also provide opportunities for transnational organized crime (TOC) groups to threaten human security and challenge the rule of law. In fact, drug trafficking entities take advantage of the globalization of transportation and communications technologies to build their connections and organize criminal operations across state borders. Criminals have transnationalized, but LEAs remain contained within national state structures which inhibit efforts towards transnational policing cooperation (Madsen
2012, 137, Williams 1998, 156). Furthermore, the development of a common global framework to address this trend, which is arguably the aim of the Convention Against TOC is complicated by differences in the cultures and modus operandi of organized crime entities in different geographical areas, and by differences in law and investigative approach of different national jurisdictions (von Lampe 2012, 182). Therefore, there is an ongoing challenge for LEAs to develop innovative methods of investigation and interdiction, and improve international policing cooperation to fight TransNT activities (Goldsmith 2012, Goldsmith and Sheptycki 2007).

This research found that the growth of TransNT into and through Vietnam is a consequence of a series of interrelated factors stemming from Vietnam’s relatively recent economic modernisation, and the underdeveloped nature of Vietnam’s law enforcement capacity. Narcotics present quick income-generating opportunities that are appealing to those “addicted” to a life of crime, and to people marginalised by their geography and ethnicity (Goldsmith 2012, von Lampe 2012). Drug trafficking usually occurs through distributed networks of small-scale producers who supply raw materials to drug dealers for sale to affluent young users in Asian metropolitan centres and countries in North America, Western Europe, Africa, and Oceania (Jenner 2014, Reuter 2014). Cross-border networks tend to have a fluidic structure with a sophisticated modus operandi from preparation stages to later stages of activity that enable the criminal networks/syndicates to achieve their goals. Patterns evidence similar practices to those employed by TransNT in Latin America, but TOC in the Asian region is a distinctive category (Roderic and Vy 2013, Chouvy 2013a). TransNT entities spanning the Vietnam-Laos border are different again from the Yakuza and Triad gangs that have traditionally characterized so-called “Asian Crime”
(Broussard and Teetzen 2013). To ensure criminal cooperation, localised groups in Vietnam are usually formed around bonds of kinship in one family, locality of birth and upbringing in the same village, as well as language and ethnic identity, which in turn has a major bearing upon organizational structure, internal relationships, and modus operandi of TransNT entities.

One of the more effective approaches to control TransNT for law enforcement agencies therefore is to develop a deeper and broader understanding of group and network structures and modes of operation in the dynamics of organized criminal groups operating across national borders. However, conventional analyses of TransNT have not adequately examined the micro-processes of cross-border mobility and networking (von Lampe 2012, 187). This project therefore, also assesses a range of possible effective LEA responses, and proposes recommendations to improve regional cooperation in drug control between Vietnam and Lao PDR. This thesis draws upon an extensive body of literature and a wide range of analytical frameworks generated by research into TransNT in Asia, Latin America, Oceania, the United States (U.S.), and Europe, to formulate the first comprehensive study of the characteristics of TransNT, with a focus on organizational structure and modus operandi of TOCs, operating across the Vietnam-Laos border.

1.1. Background and statement

1.1.1. Background

In today’s borderless world, transnational security threats and challenges are connected, and must be addressed at the global and regional as well as national level, and require governments everywhere to ‘see, think, and act globally’ (Flanagan 2001,
The illicit drug trade, primarily the trade in heroin, cocaine, and illicit amphetamines and methamphetamines, has grown substantially as an issue of major social concern in many countries, and will continue to undermine the rule of law at all levels (Fedetov 2016, INCB 2016). TransNT and organized crime entities therefore, present a persistent and significant threat to human security, which is defined here to include human health, welfare, social life, and individual freedom (UNGA 2016, Battersby and Siracusa 2009). As a result, TransNT has received the most attention from criminologists (Jenner 2014, 65, Dorn, Levi, and King 2005, 1), political scientists working in the field of international security studies (von Lampe 2012, 180), and LEAs in recent times (Andreas 2009).

Police cooperation was not, until relatively recently, a core priority for the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), even though national security concerns defined its agenda at its inception in 1967.\textsuperscript{1} The Southeast Asian region is witnessing rapid economic and political changes, ensuing from the end of cold war confrontations and the incorporation into ASEAN of Vietnam, Lao PDR, Cambodia and Myanmar in the 1990s, and the adoption of market/export oriented economic policies. Globalization, across social, cultural, political, and economic spheres, to an extent creates a ‘borderless world’ with impacts on individual, local, national, regional, and international scales (Ceglowski 1998, Ohmae 1995, Steger, Battersby, and Siracusa 2014). Globalization’s observable but unpredictable impacts, caused by increased international interactions, and increased social and economic connections, all facilitated by the introduction of new technologies and the integration of regional

\footnote{Accordingly, in 1997, between the ASEAN’s members adopted the ASEAN Declaration on Transnational Crime at Manila, Philippine which recognized transnational crime’s threats and its specific types to impact on regional security, particularly with trafficking in illegal drugs.}
transport and communications networks, facilitate more complex and extensive linkages between organizations – including criminal organizations. To contribute to the task of tackling transnational crime at a regional level, ASEAN proposed the Plan of Action on Transnational Crime in 1998. Accordingly, through the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), the highest policy making body on ASEAN cooperation in combating transnational crime, and the ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD), the highest consultative forum to regional drug control cooperation, ASEAN states hoped to create an ASEAN “Drug Free-Zone” by 2015 (Sovannasam 2011). After a decade of steady decreases in trafficking and production, however, the illicit cultivation of opium poppy has risen each year since 2006 in Laos PDR and Myanmar and to a much lesser extent in the mountainous provinces of Vietnam (UNODC 2014d). Further, the emergent trends of Amphetamine-Type Stimulants (ATS) production and trafficking in ASEAN member states, including Vietnam, has further exacerbated challenges to drug control and suppression region-wide (AIPA 2014a, 2015b). As a result, it could lead to the failure of ASEAN’s efforts toward a ‘Drug Free-Zone’ by the end of 2015.

TransNT is not a hypothetical security threat because the human impacts of trafficking are becoming increasingly evident and significant in every world region. Illegal drug use does not only damage the sustainable development of the society and impact directly on the growth of the younger generation, but also becomes a potential factor to attract drug traffickers to respond to increased demand for the drug trade (Kramer et al. 2014, Reuter 2014). Such a complex mix of crime and security challenges requires a more sophisticated set of governance strategies to enhance effective coordination of LEAs through increased collaboration between countries.
Furthermore, in combating TransNT it is necessary that responsibility be shared and strategies consolidated into a law enforcement network (Hufnagel 2011, Coyne 2014, Lemieux 2010a). By doing this, LEAs can create a flexible mechanism for gathering and sharing information on TransNT networks and their modus operandi to render cooperation and collaboration more effective (Morselli 2009, Lemieux 2010b). Institutional and legislative measures, to be effective, however, must be based upon an informed appreciation of the nature of illicit drug production and trafficking activities. Various multilateral treaties so far have been concluded to coordinate the global efforts against the heroin and cocaine trade. This study therefore also presents an analysis of the obstacles and challenges faced by efforts to implement regional anti-narcotics regimes, particularly between countries with shared borderlands such as Vietnam and Lao PDR.

In 1909, the International Opium Commission convened in Shanghai to discuss the possibilities of affecting international agreements aimed at restricting the trade in narcotic drugs to the scientific and medical communities. This resulted in the Convention relating to the Suppression of the Abuse of Opium and other Drugs 1912. The next significant international efforts were made at The Hague in December 1911 with the Convention of 1912 to control the production, manufacture and distribution of opium, certain opiates, and cocaine, both nationally and internationally. This Convention, however, did not establish the international mechanisms necessary to detect, interdict, and enforce sanctions against criminal groups. Many more agreements were reached in subsequent decades with the aim of reducing drug
manufacture and trafficking. Not until the U.N Conventions of 1961 and 1971 was careful attention given to controlling illegal drug production and use, but the scope was only for the transfer of narcotic substances used for medical and scientific purposes, into the black market. Though these instruments managed to garner much international support, their emphasis was mainly on the administrative regulation of the production and movement of the drugs themselves. In fact, they were not law enforcement conventions dealing with the trafficking of drugs or with sanctioning the ensuing profits.

During the 1980s, the international community intensified efforts to develop an adequate legal framework and effective law enforcement response to combat illicit drug trafficking. The most significant achievement was the 1988 U.N Convention, which provided strengthened mechanisms for extradition and the transfer of criminal proceedings, and tracing, freezing and confiscating the proceeds of crime. The cooperation against the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances is set firmly within the established principles of international law by the provisions of Article 2, which asserts the principle of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other states, outlaws the exercise of extra territorial jurisdiction, and provides a secure basis for the structure of mutual assistance. At least, it created a framework for enforcement that targeted the structure and members of ‘criminal organizations’ and ‘international drugs traffickers’ rather than individual offenders

These include the Agreement concerning the Suppression of the Manufacture of, Internal Trade in, and Use of, Prepared Opium 1925; the International Opium Convention 1925; the Convention for Limiting the Manufacture and Regulating the Distribution of Narcotic Drugs 1931; the Agreement concerning the Suppression of Opium Smoking 1931; the Convention for the Suppression of the Illicit Traffic in Dangerous Drugs 1936; the Protocol Bringing under International Control Drugs Outside the Scope of the Convention 1931 for Limiting the Manufacture and Regulating the Distribution of Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the Protocol 1946 and the Protocol for Limiting and Regulating the Cultivation of the Poppy Plant, the Production of, International and Wholesale Trade in, and use of Opium 1953.
(Schloenhardt 2009, 16). However, the multilateral regimes to suppress TransNT did little to assist law enforcement at the operational level (General Assembly 2010, 2). One specific flaw that was not adequately accounted for, was the increasingly diverse and horizontal structure of criminal syndicates, or the growing nexus between organized crime, corruption, and money laundering (Mandel 2011, Williams 2001a).

To deal with these obstacles, some criminologists have called for new ideas to promote international law enforcement cooperation (Andreas and Nadelmann 2006, 7, Madsen 2012, 123). However, although existing international LEAs such as Interpol and Europol have been continuing to cooperate and collaborate in this battle, their functions and responsibilities were only to gather and exchange information (Fazey 2007, 757). For example, Interpol is not a police force and has no powers of arrest, search, or seizure, and can only offer advice or suggestions for the 190 members (Martha 2010, 114, Schondorf-Haubold 2008, 1720). Furthermore, the inability of law enforcement efforts to combat the networked trafficking of drugs, which “stems from a failure to understand fully the structure of these networks”, limits the capacity of LEAs to disrupt and interdict the shipment of illegal narcotics (Williams 1998, 154). Therefore, it is argued that a comprehensive and reflexive understanding of organizational structure and modus operandi of TransNT as a transnational social and economic phenomenon is the most effective way to build legal and institutional frameworks to facilitate cooperation.
Researching on TOC and its specific crimes has become an academic challenge with scholars since many last years.\(^3\) Notwithstanding, to comprehensively understand how or why those involved in criminal activity choose to cooperate or associate with other criminals as co-offending networks still requires deeper research in all world regions (Reiss 1988, 117, Weerman 2014, 5173, Heber 2009, 1). In particular, analysing the nature of drug trafficking groups based on their structure and operation is an attractive topic with many governments, policy-makers, and criminologists, particularly at Australia, Canada, China, Colombia, Italy, Mexico, the U.S., the U.K., and the Netherlands, (Vy and Lauchs 2013, Beittel 2011, Paoli and Reuter 2008, Matrix Knowledge Group 2007, Kenney 2007a). However, researching with LEAs, who are involved directly or indirectly in combating TransNT, and may hold unique perspectives to identify distinct characteristics of TransNT networks, has not yet received much attention in practice, particularly across shared border areas (Nadelmann 1997, Andreas and Nadelmann 2006). Only knowledge generated in reports and statements by LEAs about illicit goods and movements have been reflected in their practical programs; meanwhile, deeper analysis of the structure and operation of entities used by TransNT networks to aid them, is entirely lacking (Andreas 2009, Andreas and Nadelmann 2006, von Lampe 2012).

In Vietnam, empirical research into organizational structure and modus operandi of TransNT is severely limited. Few Vietnamese or foreign scholars have researched the illicit trade in narcotics from other disciplinary perspectives such as a health or rehabilitative framework to drug users (Rapin 2003, Van and Scannapieco

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\(^3\) Klaus von Lampe is considered as one of the unlimited contributors to raise this question and deal with it through establishing and designing his website with at least over 180 definitions of organized crime around the world (http://www.organized-crime.de/organizedcrimedefinitions.htm)
2008); drug policy in addict treatment (Vuong et al. 2012); legislative implementation by Vietnam of its obligations under the U.N Conventions (Hoa 2008); and suppressing illicit opium production and its intervention policies in Vietnam (Windle 2016, 2012). Additionally, some of reports of government, non-government organization, and LEAs have presented and analysed overall patterns and trends of illegal drugs in Vietnam in recent times. Notwithstanding, anything focuses on identifying and examining organizational structure and modus operandi of TransNT across the border between Vietnam and Lao PDR.

1.1.2. Statement of the problem

The global synthetic drugs assessment of UNODC in 2014 recorded a rapid rise in seizures at many Asian countries, especially in the Southeast Asia region, and in particular, mainland China, where the amount of detected illegal methamphetamine has risen annually from 6 tons in 2008 to more than 16 tons in 2012, making up about 45 per cent of the total methamphetamine seizures for the region that year (UNODC 2014a, 20). ATS seizures have also increased in Thailand, from about 2 tons in 2008 to more than 10 tons in 2012 and in Myanmar from 0.1 tons to 2 tons. Meanwhile, LEAs detected and seized from 0.7 tons to more than 2.1 tons in Indonesia and between 0.1 tons and 0.9 tons in Lao PDR in the period of 2008-2012 (UNODC 2014a, 20).

The illicit drug situation has become much more complex in Southeast Asia, with rapid increases in local consumption linked to growing affluence and social expectations generated by the so-called ‘Asian economic miracle’ (Dupont 1999, Chouvy 2013a). Traditional producer and corridor or transhipment countries for
narcotics bound for Europe and the U.S., especially the Golden Triangle countries, Myanmar, Thailand and Laos, are now significant consumers of illicit substances, from traditional opium and heroin to illicit amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) and variants (Chouvy 2013b, Kramer et al. 2014). At a regional level, the increase of drug users in Southeast Asian nations has been creating complex patterns and trends in drug use in recent years (INCSR 2013, 23). For example, based on primary data, Blickman (2009, 53) found the synthetic drug market in Southeast Asia expanded, and has changed rapidly because such substances are much easier to transport and can be more readily concealed; while opium and heroin use decreased between the mid to late 1990s. Synthetic drugs are an established part of youth entertainment culture in Asia as they are in Western developed countries (Kramer et al. 2014, 52). The increasing ease with which (in theory) anyone can become an ATS drug producer is a phenomenon of global technology advances, which are lifting the capacity of individuals to manufacture their own consumer goods, with pill presses likely to be superseded by 3D printing technologies in the near future which will further enable those wishing to produce their own drugs to do so (UNODC 2014d). Yet, illegal narcotics are sold to patrons at social and sporting events, in bars, nightclubs and other entertainment venues and, alarmingly, in increasing quantities to students at secondary school or university in Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, and Indonesia (Blickman 2009, 57, UNODC 2014a, 21-22). With respect to ATS trafficking in and through Southeast Asia, there is a considerable increase in trafficking by air along national and international routes such as from Malaysia to Brunei (UNODC 2012b, 45); the Islamic Republic of Iran to Indonesia (UNODC 2012b, 63); from South Korea into Thailand (INCSR 2013, 60); from Northern or North-eastern Thailand provinces
directly into Burma, or through Laos and/or Cambodia (INCSR 2014, 64). The flexibility, scope, and dynamic of the trafficking entities, of course, have been increasingly challenging to the capacities of LEAs (Kramer et al. 2014, Williams 2010, Mandel 2011).

*Doi Moi* has brought about a general increase in living standards in Vietnam. However, while economic growth and regional integration bring many positives, such as the increased mobility of goods, services, people and money, they also provide opportunities for TOC to threaten human security and challenge the rule of law in Vietnam (Hai 2017, 2014a, 2015, 2014b). Furthermore, improvements in infrastructure, communication, and transportation have created new opportunities for traffickers to operate transnationally (Williams 2013, Williams and Godson 2002, von Lampe 2012). Additionally, taking advantage of the differences in legislative regulations and the limitations of border controls between countries, cross-border traffickers have been able to expand their range of illicit activities (Williams 2013, 2010, Morselli 2014). Figure 1 shows the rapid increase, both of cases (126,078) and offenders (187,353) related to drug trafficking in Vietnam in the seven years 2008 to 2014. One noticeable point from this figure is the number of cases and offenders involved in drug trafficking increases every year.

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4 The Sixth Party Progress of Communist Party of Vietnam (1986) considered and firmed that the policies of *Doi Moi* consists of three inter-related fundamental pushes, including 1) shifting from a bureaucratically centralized planned economy to a multi-sector economy operating under a market mechanism with State management and a socialist orientation; 2) democratizing social life and building a legal state of the people, by the people, and for the people; and 3) implementing an open-door policy and promoting relations between Vietnam and all other countries in the world community for peace, independence, and development. This section was published by Hai, Thanh Luong 2017, ‘Drug Trafficking Trends and Its Responses: A Case Study of Vietnam’ in Viano, Emilio (ed), “Cybercrime, Organized Crime, and Societal Responses: International Approaches”, pp. 201-218 Switzerland: Springer
Proximity to the Golden Triangle, porous borderlands, and a long coastline offer advantageous conditions for trafficking illicit drugs. Transit of illicit drugs through Vietnam has increased considerably over the last two decades (SODC 2013b, AIPA 2013, INCSR 2014, AIPA 2015b). Statistics on seizures and drug-related arrests from LEAs confirmed that in the 1990s, Vietnam faced increased societal risks posed by heroin and opium, and is more seriously concerned with ATS in the present time (UNODC and SODC 2012, 2, 4). Besides that, as a transit point, traffickers used Vietnam to ship the drugs into Australia (UNODC 2011b, 76), Europe, West African countries (UNODC 2013e, 56, INCSR 2013, 318) and the U.S. (INCSR 2014, 324).

The UNODC notes that:

With efficient opium poppy eradication efforts, it is estimated that as much as 95% of illicit drugs being transported inside Vietnam, for either transit or domestic consumption, have been smuggled in from neighbouring countries. Cross-border and domestic drug trafficking rely on increasingly organized and sophisticated methods. The traffickers take advantage of the long
and porous land borderline and the coastline. Heroin, opium and amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) are smuggled into Viet Nam across the north-western, central-northern and southern borders. Heroin and cannabis are trafficked from Viet Nam into China. Inside the country, drug hot spots are mainly located in the cities (6-7).

Figure 2: Heroin flows to Vietnam and the rest of the Southeast Asia region from the Golden Triangle area (To be adopted by UNODC, 2013)

The above map (figure 2) gives an indication of the scope and direction of drug movements across mainland Southeast Asia, covering Vietnam’s borderland and the borderland of its neighbours. Most particularly, amongst the borderland routes, Vietnam is grappling with the complex challenge of drug trafficking activities across the Laos’s border in its North-west and Central-northern regions (AIPA 2010, 2012b, 2013, 2014a, 2015b, 2011). Alongside with the Vietnam-Lao PDR border region,
there are around 2,340 kilometres and stretches 10 Vietnamese provinces adjacent to 10 southern provinces of Laos (National Border Committee 2011, 2010). Most borderland areas between Vietnam and Laos are defined by mountain ranges or lowland tropical forests (National Border Committee 2010). Border region populations are diverse and are mostly comprised of ethnic minorities living in widely dispersed villages (Michaud 2009). Transport and travel between the two sides of the border areas is very difficult, and almost no motorized traffic can pass, except for at a few densely populated border-crossing points (Lintner 2008, Hoang 2007). Across this remote mountainous terrain, many villagers have exploited these conditions to produce a sizable proportion of Southeast Asia’s poppy crop (Griffiths 2006, Michaud 2000a, UNODC 2013b). Ethnic minority groups, such as Hmong, Thai\(^5\) and Laotian Hmong are spread across nation-state borders, and some within these minorities have turned to commercial poppy cultivation to earn cash income (Rapin 2003, Michaud 2000b). These local minorities have traditionally grown poppy crops for self-use, for medicinal purposes and recreation, but cultivation expanded rapidly during the colonial era (McCoy 1972, 2003). As Rapin (2003, 2) and his colleagues in their fieldwork for a contextual analysis of the drug use and harm in six communes of ethnic minorities from Sonla, Laichau, and Laocai emphasize, the cultivation of opium poppies possess ‘a body of mythical tales about the origin of the plant and the origin of the consumption of the substance that is extracted from it’. Consequently, it is also likely to become one of the potential factors used by traffickers for enlisting people from these groups into their TransNT activities.

\(^5\) This thesis does not mention Thai population of Thailand. Otherwise, Thai in this context is one of the ethnic minorities’ groups of Vietnam’s populated groups who are mostly living across the Vietnam’s borderland areas, including with Laos borders.
Taking advantage of geographical features, forest trails, streams, and rivers across Vietnam’s borderland with Laos, offenders use obscure trafficking routes to evade LEA’s detection of the stockpile, transport, and trade of illegal drugs. Accordingly, as drug couriers, people from ethnic minorities use variable modus operandi and have become more flexible and unpredictable (UNODC and SODC 2012). For example, one official document of the Supreme People’s Prosecution of Vietnam (SPP) released that between May 2011 and April 2013, LEAs in Vietnam investigated and prosecuted over 5,700 drug related cases and arrested more than 7,300 drug-related offences across Vietnam’s borders with Laos, which accounted for approximately 17 per cent of total national drug cases (MPS 2014). Moreover, drug traffickers have armed themselves to resist capture by LEAs (SODC 2012, 2013b, MPS 2015). Along this route, many cases of heroin were illegally trafficked into Vietnam by armed criminal groups; especially ethnic minority groups living close to the borderlines between Vietnam and Lao PDR (Thanhniennews 2013, Rapin 2003, 80-81, Tuoitrenews 2013). Among them, some members of Hmong and Thai (Vietnamese nationality) local ethnic groups in Vietnam colluded with Laotian drug trafficker to establish syndicates and networks for trafficking illegal drugs across the border from Laos into Vietnam (AIPA 2012b, MPS 2012). Further, Laotian drug traffickers maintain contact with their accomplices/confederates through family relationships and friends in Vietnam, to facilitate drug transportation into Vietnam’s borderland before spreading out into other domestic markets (Xuyen 2010, SODC 2012). Thus, it was created the complicated nature of drug trafficking’ networks across the Vietnam and Laos’ frontier zone, more particularly at international
gateways’ checkpoints, economic corridors and unofficial pathways in the forest (MPS 2012).

Stretching the Vietnam/Laos borderland, a number of TransNT groups integrate closely with local drug traffickers to store a significant amount of drugs so that they can then be trafficked into Vietnam whenever a suitable time is found (Cong an Nghe An 2013). Under professional reconnaissance and investigative profiles of the Criminal Investigation Police on Drug-Related Crimes (CIPDRC) of Vietnam, there are at least two main border crossing routes that are considered to be hot spots for drug trafficking. Firstly, the North-West route with particular provinces along the No.6 Highway and Laos border, involving Dienbien, Laichau, Sonla, and Hoabinh are where illegal drugs are often transported and traded between drug trafficking groups (SODC 2012). Accordingly, from Laos via the small trails and inter-district roads to the No.6 Highway, both shipments of ATS tablets and heroin have been frequently combined into one transportation timeline to transport to local drug markets in Vietnam (UNODC and SODC 2012, 16). Secondly, it is the Central-Northern route, taking in the five provinces of: Thanhhoa, Nghean, Hatinh, Quangbinh, and Quangtri which were identified as the main points to supply illegal drugs from Laos to Vietnam (Griffiths 2006, UNODC 2007b, MPS 2014). Moreover, the launch of the East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC) connecting Northeast Thailand, Central Lao PDR, and North Central Vietnam, known as the Asian Highway by the Eight Greater Mekong sub-region Ministerial Meeting (GMS) held in Manila since 1998 (ADB 2010), not only facilitates licit and illicit trade opportunities with these countries, but also paradoxically, creates opportunities for cross-border crime to be tackled more effecting (Giang 2012b, 78). The international border-gates and economic corridors
most at risk from non-traditional crime threats, especially TransNT, including Nam Kan – Nam Can, Nam Phao – Cau Treo, Na Phao – Cha Lo, Phoukeua – Bo Y, and Namon – Thanh Thuy (Cong an Nghe An 2013). Stricter policing of borders is one response to these crime threats in Vietnam.

1.2. Research purpose and question

1.2.1. Aims

The purpose of this thesis is to present the first detailed analysis of the nature of TransNT between Lao PDR and Vietnam. Applying “criminal network theory” and “crime script analysis” to Vietnam’s crime context, generalizations are made to form a unique conceptual framework about the organization and modus operandi of TransNT entities. To do this, the thesis draws upon findings from multiple case studies of cross-border trafficking between the Vietnam and Laos. Additionally, through analysis of the sharing of information by CIPDRC officers at provincial areas of shared borderland with Lao PDR, who are directly and indirectly involved these cases, the study distinguishes key characteristics of drug trafficking in Vietnam such as family ties and follow-countryman association relationships in the recruitment process of drug couriers and their associates. Yet, although the data collection and analysis focus only on TransNT cases in Vietnam, to some extent, its key findings contribute to knowledge about the nature of cross-border drug trafficking in the Southeast Asian region, with valuable comparisons to be made with cross-border trafficking in other world regions.

Alongside with analysis to distinguish characteristics of TransNT entities in Vietnam, this research also identifies practical challenges and specific barriers that
LEAs face. There are numerous difficulties for CIPDRC officers in combating TransNT, including lacking an effective mechanism for cooperating and sharing information between LEAs Vietnamese and Laotian, porous borders, lacking capacity for building cooperative instruments, limiting of LEA’s contributions between two countries, and increasing the adaptable movements of transportation and goods in the region. These factors are considered as among the most specific concerns for both Vietnam and Laos in efforts towards combining with the rest of the ASEANs members and moving toward a Community in 2020. Particularly with the process of preventing and fighting TransNT networks, it is requested that cooperation and coordination between LEAs at both regional and national levels be boosted. Through these findings, therefore, this thesis will propose main recommendations to enhance the effectives for combating TransNT at Vietnam and Laos’ border points.

1.2.2. Question of research

This thesis concentrates on TransNT operating across the Vietnam borderlands with Lao PDR. Reflecting the relatively under-researched nature of this topic area, at least in the contemporary era, the central question was necessarily very broad. The thesis asks “What are the distinctive characteristics of transnational narcotics trafficking operating across Vietnam’s border with Lao PDR? What specific challenges to Vietnam do they pose and how effectively can they be addressed?”

In order to better understand this central question, two key sub-questions are addressed:

1. What are the distinguishable characteristics of organizations engaged in TransNT in Vietnam, with a focus on structure and modus operandi?
2. What are the law enforcement challenges and institutional obstacles to combatting TransNT and how can LEAs improve international cooperation to address these?

Based on the findings, this thesis contributes to the cumulative body of knowledge on drug trafficking, particularly across borderland zones. It builds upon an expanding body of theoretical knowledge on the structure and operation of TransNT. TransNT is considered a typical form of TOC activity and thus, findings on the organizational structure and modus operandi of drug trafficking across the Vietnam’s borderlands with Lao PDR can share approaches to understanding the nature of cross-border drug trafficking in the Southeast Asian area. The development of a conceptual framework will support LEAs in designing and applying their strategies to monitor, disrupt, and anticipate TransNT’s activities. It will also help to illustrate barriers, challenges to combatting TransNT. To some extent, though this thesis is not focused on regional policy aims, recommendations and priorities are relevant to the respective law enforcement challenges of both Vietnam and Laos, and the Association of Southeast Nations.

1.3. Scope and definition

1.3.1. Scope of research

The thesis focuses on two groups, including Vietnamese and foreign accomplices who commit drug-related crimes in Vietnam under the definition of the crime of drug trafficking as stated in the Criminal Code of Vietnam (CCV). In particular, this study concentrates on transnational drug cases involving Vietnamese offenders colluding with Laotian groups to transport and trade illegal drugs through
Laos to Vietnam in the period of 2003-2013 with specific case studies. To answer research questions and achieve research aims, the study is governed and controlled by the following delimitations:

- **Main illicit drugs markets**

Lao PDR, bordering Myanmar, and one of three nodes of the Golden Triangle, had been considered as one of the largest opiate producers in the world, particularly of heroin. Besides that, the production of illicit amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) have also been increasingly booming in Lao in recent years. Meantime, Vietnam is recognized as not only the destination route but also the transit point of TransNT to heroin and illicit ATS trading (UNODC 2012c, 6-7). Thus, the current study focuses exclusively on two these main illegal drugs, which are the most prevalent illicit drugs commonly trafficked across Vietnam’s border with Laos.

**Heroin**

Heroin is defined as a semi-synthetic drug that is filtered from the opium poppy and belongs to the opiates group of drugs with various colours such as brown, white, and pink (UNODC 2011b, Glossary, xvii). According to UNDOC’s data, Afghanistan maintained its position as the number one producer and cultivator of opium globally (2011b, 30), meanwhile, Myanmar reached second place for opium production worldwide (Paoli, Victoria, and Reuter 2009, 111, UNODC 2011b, 59). The heroin producing area of the Golden Triangle is central to the Southeast Asian drug trade (Chin 2009, 8, Zhang and Chin 2015, 58-9). Most heroin production of the Golden Triangle occurs in the Shan State and Wa State of North-Eastern Burma, extending to

*Synthetic drugs*

According to the UNODC, there are two categories of ATS, namely 1) amphetamine-group substances including amphetamine, methamphetamine (methylamphetamine) and methcathinone; and 2) ecstasy-group substances such as MDMA (ecstasy) and its analogues (UNODC 2011b, 127). Differing with opium and coca plants, ATS production is mobile and adaptable and thus, ATS laboratories are frequently located in close proximity to illicit markets to meet ATS’s high demand (UNODC 2011b, 146). Regarding the manufacture process, ATS is likely to be created in many forms such as powder, paste, liquid, tablets or crystals. In the Southeast Asia region, booming demand for and consumption of ATS is “an example of what can be described as ‘displacement’: a campaign against one drug (opium and heroin) [which] can lead to the rise of an equally or more dangerous substitute (methamphetamine)” (Blickman 2009, 52). At national scale, most ATS is smuggled into Vietnam from regional countries, including Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Thailand; whilst in the meantime, there was investigation by national authorities of clandestine methamphetamine manufacture in domestic territories (UNODC and SODC 2012). Accordingly, in recent years, the ATS market in Vietnam has continued to expand and the drug has become second only in popularity to heroin and, especially favoured among younger drug users whose numbers have increased alarmingly (INCSR 2013, 2014).
- The operational challenges of policing in border zones

Regional borders are still commonly conceived as clearly demarcated lines drawn on a map that determine the extent of sovereign jurisdiction. However, in the post-colonial world especially, borders frequently impose ‘artificial’ divisions between people of shared ethnicity, including language, are recently determined and largely so by the interests of former colonial powers rather than by popular mandate (Andreas 2009). Social and economic ties across these borders between Vietnam and Lao PDR can be strengthened by a sense of cultural affinity and by residual extended family connections. However, these ties pose significant operational challenges to LEAs with regard to monitoring border and control immigration. Yet, differences in law and criminal procedure are two significant barriers faced by LEAs from both sides. Mutual legal assistance, although possible by agreement or memorandum of understanding, in practice has to overcome either political barriers or customs and manners of ethnic minority groups at the common borderland areas.

- The capacities of law enforcement agencies (LEAs)

Law enforcement capacity means the capacity to mobilise government agencies to enforce the laws of the land, apprehend offenders and prevent or deter criminal behaviour. Although there are four LEAs in Vietnam, namely the police, border guard, customs, and maritime force, this study focuses on analysis of the role and function of the CIPDRC as the most front-line forces to investigate TransNT cases across Vietnam’s borderland with Lao PDR. Their capacities and responses will be also explored in the analysis of the six selected TransNT case studies. On the other hand, lack of data collection from last three agencies (border guard, customs, and
maritime force) is a constraint for this thesis, as this limits scope to assess in depth the wider capacities of LEAs in Vietnam to combat TransNT.

1.3.2. Definition in this research

Definitions of key concepts in terms of TOC are contested amongst scholars, policy-makers, and practitioners. TransNT, as a sub-set of TOC, is a diverse category and there are inevitably numerous conceptions of ‘drug trafficking’. The current research adopts the definition of an ‘organized crime group’ as stated under Article 2 of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) to analyse the nature of TransNT and its scope. Accordingly, an ‘organized crime group’ is defined as:

...a structured group of three or more persons existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences established in accordance with this Convention in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit.

This definition incorporates both structural elements and the objectives that organized crime groups aim to achieve through their activities. In the study, a definition of “trafficking” is also obtained from Article 3 of the U.N Convention 1988, which describes various activities that constitute the act of ‘trafficking’, namely:

The production, manufacture, extraction, preparation, offering, offering for sale, distribution, sale, delivery on any terms whatsoever, brokerage, dispatch, dispatch in transit, transport, importation or exportation of any narcotic drug or any psychotropic drug contrary to the provisions of the 1961 Convention, the 1961 Convention as amended or the 1971 Convention
In accordance with the scope of this thesis, producing, manufacturing, and, extracting any narcotic drugs or any psychotropic drug are excluded due to lack of available data in Vietnam. The rest of the above activities are inclusive of offences examined in the research process. In particular, this study covers any illegal stockpiling, transporting, trading in or appropriating of narcotics or related activities cross Vietnam’s borderland with Laos without discriminating for gender, nationality, or position. Accordingly, each of the above offenses will include several forms of criminal conduct, the execution of one of which is sufficient to be convicted of the drug-related crimes under Article 249, 250, 251, and 252 of the 2015 CCV. Depending upon the level of seriousness of drug-related offences, the severest punishment for trafficking illegal drugs, including the death penalty, will apply.\(^6\)

### 1.4. Synopsis of the thesis

This thesis is organized into six chapters beginning with this introduction. Chapter two reviews the literature on concepts of TransNT, with a particular focus on the current state of research into drug trafficking activities within national, regional, and international perspectives. The literature review examines the cross-border concerns and their impact on TransNT issues. In addition, specific debates on the criminal network and its application in TransNT will be analysed in this chapter, with

\(^6\) On 21st December 1999, Vietnam passed the criminal code in 1999, with effect from 1st July 2000. Drug-related crimes are specified in Chapter XII with 10 charges, from article 192 to 201, of which there are 3 charges of the death penalty, including paragraph 4 of article 193, 194, and 197. However, the Resolution No.33/2009/NQ-QH12 of the National Assembly amended this Chapter with 2 change, one do not apply the death penalty for organizing the illegal use of narcotics (Article 197) and other remover the crime of illegal use of narcotic substances (Article 199). At current time, one amended version of CCV passed on 27 November 2015, it divided article 194, the 1999 CVV, into four independent acts, including stockpiling (article 249), transporting (article 250), trading (article 251), and appropriating (article 252). Among of four criminal behaviours, the highest punishment – death penalty will be applied into the second and third one; meanwhile, the first and last one is life punishment if offender catches up with its relevant regulation in the 2015 CCV. This new CCV enforced as of 1st July 2016.
a particular focus on the structural organizational and individual roles and actors in the network. Accordingly, this chapter highlights issues with two practical typologies of drug trafficking entities, model based on organizational forms and model based on functions/tasks.

Chapter three outlines the research design and methodology. This chapter discusses the previous methods applied from criminology and criminal justice in relation to drug trafficking topic before introducing the current method in this thesis. To utilize the mixed method research exploratory design, the chapter describes the process of data collection and stages of data analysis through three phases, including the qualitative stage first, quantitative step second, and the synthesis of findings in the last section.

Chapter four presents the qualitative results of the study. The first section provides descriptive statistics as per the selected case studies. In addition, based on transcriptions of interviews with police officers, this chapter expands on the details that were identified in the individual case descriptions such as offender, related actors, age, role, drug quantity, and methods. These characteristics are also catalogued into two main themes, organizational structure and modus operandi of TransNT entities, which are components of a conceptual framework of TransNT in the Vietnamese context.

Chapter five analyses the quantitative findings of the study. Using the SPSS software version 23 to test Chi-square for independence, qualitative finding’s themes regard to organizational structure and modus operandi of TransNT groups and networks in Vietnam will be gauged based on statistical data from survey
questionnaires. A key outcome of the finding will rank these factors in each core themes to reflect on the nature of TransNT in Vietnam under the CIPDRC cross the six Vietnam’s borderland provinces with Laos’ provinces. Combining these findings and other secondary data, some barriers, challenges, and its implications faced by LEAs will be also identified. Chapter six interprets the nature and structure of TransNT in Vietnam. It is derived by drawing comparisons between Vietnam’s context and those of different nations from previous literature. Additionally, some recommendations and priorities are also mentioned to contribute to improving regional cooperation between LEAs of Vietnam and Lao PDR.

Chapter seven restates key findings and contributions to knowledge from this study. Furthermore, this chapter identifies limitations and outlines possible governance and law enforcement strategies to address the risks and the realities of TransNT that this thesis brings to light. It is evident that TransNT in Vietnam, particularly across Vietnam’s borderland with Lao PDR, exhibits different characteristics in relation to drug trafficking to other well-known transnational criminal entities in Asia, namely the Triad in Hong Kong, the Yakuza in Japan, and the Mafia in Italy. With respect to structure and modus operandi of TransNT entities in Vietnam, this thesis finds fluidity, adaptation, and flexibility of movement, as key challenges to highly centralised, bureaucratic, and inward-looking law enforcement systems. This parallels in some of the ways developments in narcotics networks in Latin America without the existence of large and centrally coordinated “cartels”. Without a more adaptive, outward-looking and better resourced approach, police forces, not just in Vietnam but across Southeast Asia, will struggle to stem the rising tide of drug and drug-related crime.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Chapter overview and objective

This chapter reviews the scholarly literature on transnational crime as it relates to cross-border drug trafficking between Vietnam and Laos. It is divided into five sections. The first section looks at how borderlands are conceived of as specific sites of state vulnerability and criminal activity. The second section makes clear the role and contribution of social network analysis as applied to criminological fields in particular with regard to drug trafficking studies. It also highlights the implications of criminal network factors for research into TransNT cases. The next two sections address the modus operandi of TransNT, and are based on criminal network theory and crime script analysis. The last section will review previous and current models of TransNT to identify a suitable framework that can be applied to the current context of Vietnam. The chapter as a whole builds a global analytical perspective with which to approach the task of investigating and understanding transnational crime networks operating at the cross-border level in mainland Southeast Asia.

2.2. Cross-border concerns and their impact on transnational narcotics trafficking

Border region and cross-border studies have become a subject of interest in many fields of research, including politics, sociology, geography, economics, anthropology, and criminology (Duany 2011, Diener and Hagen 2009, Caparini and Marenin 2006, Coyne 2015). There are many conceptions of “border”, “frontier”, and “boundary” in the social sciences that are discussed and analysed under different
approaches such as globalization, migration, security and sovereignty (Donnan and Willson 1999, 4). Cross-border’ issues, normally, are examined and evaluated according to question of law, sovereignty, and discipline expertise to assist scholars, policy makers and law enforcement officers gain a full understanding of trans-border issues (Coyne 2015, Espach and Haering 2012). For example, through the number of casual and formal conversations with local people across the borderland between the U.S. and Mexico, Martinez (1994) conceptualized that:

A border is a line that separates one nation from another or, in the case of internal entities, one province or locality from another. The essential functions of a border are to keep people in their own space and to prevent, control, or regulated interactions among them. A borderland is a region that lies adjacent to a border. The territorial limit of a borderland depends on the geographic reach of the interaction with the “other side” (5).

More specifically, based on three dimensions, including geographical, administrative, and subjective, Glinos and Baeten (2006, 7) classified two main types of borders, ‘fluid borders and rigid borders’. The first one will be identified as a border which is physically and geographically easy to transfer and cross, which does not present an administrative barrier and which is not perceived as separation as such (Bedolla 2005, 2). In contrast, the second form is characterized by geographical and natural elements which create a physical separation, such as mountains or water, by heavy administrative access procedures which limit citizens and other individuals’ rights and activities on each side of the border vis-à-vis each other (Glinos and Baeten 2006, 7). Seemingly, all boarders are different and have distinct border characteristics and which require different approaches for meaningful analysis of social relations in respective borderlands.
On the one hand, based on the various conditions of cross-border movement, involving the shape of nation-states, political relationships, and sustainable development’ figures (e.g. ethnicities, cultures, and languages), Martinez (2001, 1-2) divided borderlands interaction into four paradigms, namely ‘alienated borderlands’, ‘co-existent borderlands’, ‘integrated borderlands’, and ‘interdependent borderlands’. In which, the last form – interdependent borderland, is the current kind of borderland existing between Vietnam and Laos, which permits ‘borderlanders on both sides of the line to stimulate growth and development’ based on ‘relatively stable international relations’ in order to maintain close ties in foreign capital, markets, and labour (Martinez 2001, 4). Inevitably, movements across national borders within one or all of these four paradigms affect national policies, on immigration and customs primarily, but also law enforcement. Also, in border regions, personal identities can be more fluid, challenging the definitions of citizenship, sovereignty and national identity (Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992, ix). As Donnan and Willson (1999, 4) pointed out ‘transnationalism has become central to many interpretations of post-modernity, and has as one of its principal referents international borders, which mark off one state from another, and which, sometimes, but not as often as many people seem to suppose, set off one nation from another’. However, putting transnational trends in relation to social networks and international relations to prove the advantages of this term, Duany (2011, 3) emphasized that globalization will create and maintain multiple social ties across borders and boundaries. Consequently, it brings advances in transportation, telecommunication, and the increasing movement of goods, capital, ideas, markets, people, and cultural practices across borders (Ceglowski 1998, Battersby 2014b). Some scholars have suggested that the world is
‘borderless’ since the Post-Cold War era (Thomson 1995, 217, Friedman 1990, Ohmae 1999). However, borders still matter, and geography still matters in a globalizing world (Shelley 2006, Williams 2010).

Battersby (1998, 473-474) commented that ‘a question of borders, boundaries, and frontiers’ still needs critical analysis and assessment. Their persistence is proof that border are not being swept away by globalization. The dynamics of interactions across border zones is however changing as a consequence of multiplying transnational social and economic connections (Battersby 1998, 487-8). Furthermore, Berdal and Serrano (2002, 3-4) noted that border relations are the most competitive in the criminalized elements of the global economy, such as the drugs trafficking and illegal migrant labour sectors. In other instances, processes of globalization have created a ‘dark logic’ (Mandel 2011) with intensified interconnectedness in the economic, political and cultural spheres also allowing criminal networks to become global (Battersby 2014a, 702-05, van Duyne 2002, 11). Therefore, in some kinds of cross-border situations, identifying and evaluating relations between transnational crime and economic liberalization, are considered as ‘a politically sensitive topic, and is too often either conveniently ignored and glossed over, or exaggerated and distorted’ (Andreas 2002, 38).

Particularly, porous borders are likely to create serious tensions in relations between states that share them, because criminal activities pose a threat to stability (Goldsmith 2012). Furthermore, tensions may escalate into military conflicts between countries with common borders (Crepeau 2012, Finlay 2012, Caparini and Marenin 2006). Break down in border governance may also lead to proliferation and easy availability of illicit drugs caused by increased drug trafficking (Bagley 2012,
Battersby 2014b); as well as increased firearms smuggling (Loise 1995, Lock 1999, Cook, Cukier, and Krause 2009); increased levels of sex work (He 2012, Kam 2004); illegal movement of goods and people (Grant 2011, Weber and Pickering 2011); and trans-border terrorism with a factor of support from other countries (Ugalde and Vega 2011, Shelley 2006). In this borderless world, the inability of government to coordinate responses to crime, down to the cross-border level, contribute to the growths of the transnational crime challenge, particularly illicit drug trafficking.

In short, with the understanding of borderless states, TransNT can relatively easily transport illicit drugs from one nation to another across weakly regulated borders. Accordingly, loosely controlled checkpoints and points of weak border management could become one of the most targeted areas for traffickers hoping to implement their drug trafficking activities; areas fitting this description include the borderland of ten provinces between Vietnam and Lao PDR in the Mainland Southeast Asian region. As Williams (2001b, 58) considers that in the era of globalization, TransNT networks tend to employ their operations on a trans-national scale with predictable yet simple formula: ‘go where the opportunities are high and the risks are low.’

2.3. Applying social network analysis to drug trafficking studies

In the book of Crime and Networks, seven edited by Carlo Morselli (2014), the preface highlights that ‘to establish more systematic methods and theoretical paths for identifying key patterns in a wide range of criminal networks…. Crime and Networks

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7 This book includes pioneer’s scholars in the area of crime and network analysis and is edited by Carlo Morselli. It is the first book to focus on social networks across a diversity of crimes and theoretical frameworks. In addition, moreover, at a more general level, this book also takes researchers to focus on new and innovative approaches to the study of crime.
is not simply a methodological reference. As a theoretical and substantive contribution, it would be suitable in any specialized class on the crime phenomena’ (p. xi-xii). This thesis researches and examines criminal networks using network theory to help understand the nature of cross-border crime. Social ties, family, community, alliances, partnership and more are tangible social realities, and human social life are all considered when analysing the research data (White 2008, 112). The concept of the network is, however, an invention. As Latour (2005) explains:

> Network is a concept, not a thing out there. It is a tool to help describe something, not what is being described. It has the same relationship with the topic at hand as a perspective grid to a traditional single point perspective painting: drawn first, the lines might allow one to project a three-dimensional object onto a flat piece of linen; but they are not what is to be painted, only what has allowed the painter to give the impression of depth before they are erased (p.131).

In Latour’s analysis, the network is a conceptual tool used to assist in creating an impression of social relations and movements of people around the world. However, in order to use network as methodological approach there is a need for complete datasets in terms of structural relationships between nodes on whole network (McGloin and Kirk 2010, 170-1). This requirement is due to a lack of objectiveness and transparency within such a sensitive field as organized crime, particularly when countries restrict public access to official publications and research of specific criminal activities, as do Vietnam and Laos (Roderic and Vy 2013, Chouvy 2013a, Broussard and Teetzen 2013). For this reason, this thesis does not attempt to apply social network analysis software (SNA) to the analysis of cross-border crime networks. Instead, the study will be based on theoretical perspectives of
social network theory to provide a conceptual analysis on the presence of networks in
the data.

However, with regards to criminology and the criminal justice field, SNA plays
an important role in establishing a number of key concepts and its individual
responsibilities within the relationships within the whole of the network (Morselli
2009, 4, Sparrow 1991, 225, Carrington 2011, 235), including:

- **Actor/node**: which may be individual natural persons, corporate, or collective
  social units, however, the term actor does not imply that these entities necessarily
  have volition or the ability to ‘act’ (Wasserman and Fraust 1994, 17). Otherwise,
  SNA tends to explain the ties between actors/nodes within a network’s scale (Knoke
  and Yang 2008, 6).

- **Relational tie**: in an optimal network, a relational tie will be established to link
  or connect between two nodes or actors (Wasserman and Fraust 1994, 18, Easton and
  Karaivanov 2009, 47, Knoke and Yang 2008, 7). Actors and relations between actors
  in combination constitute a social network in which, it may be either directed, where
  one actor initiates and the second actor receives, or undirected, where mutuality
  exists. It is a bi-directional or reciprocal relationship (Easton and Karaivanov 2009,
  49).

- **Dyad**: At the most fundamental level, this is a connection, linkage or
  relationship between two nodes or actors. Similarly, a *triad or subgroup* is a subset of
  three actors or a subgroup of actors and the tie(s) among them, respectively
  (Wasserman and Fraust 1994, 17-8). Furthermore, many types of network analysis,
  including criminal networks, are concerned with understanding ties among
relationship with each other, e.g. co-offenders, street gangs, and transnational drug organizations. All of these approaches used the dyad, triad, or subgroup as the unit of analysis (Wasserman and Fraust 1994, 18).

- **Structural hole/broker:** This refers to the “gaps” between two disconnected individuals, subgroups, or groups in a network. In other words, the separation between “non-redundant contacts” are connected by a structural hole that is “a buffer, like an insulator in an electric circuit” to provide network benefits rather than overlapping (Burt 1992, 18). These gaps are identified and recognized as the strategic power relationships within networks i.e. the brokers who will fill in the gaps control the flow of information, resources, or operation between the unlinked nodes of the network (Easton and Karaivanov 2009, 43, Papachristos 2006, 112). In addition, a broker’s position is beneficial for resource pooling and coordination with other actors in their network because they come to rely on them (Burt 2005, 7, 11, 16, Morselli 2009, 15-6). Moreover, within the scope of criminal networks, brokers contribute to as a ‘trade-off between efficiency and security’ in specific drug trafficking activities (Morselli 2009, 16) and even, create a higher degree of sophistication or organization (Coles 2001, Williams 1998, Klerks 2001).

- **Central player:** it is the actor/node with the most connections with others (or highest degree of centrality) within a network (Morselli 2009, 14, Carley, Lee, and Krackhardt 2002, 85). In a criminal network, the central node often holds a position of power and strength within a network (Sparrow 1991, 263-4).

- **Leader:** A leader was conceptualized as the actor/node with the “highest cognitive load”, or the network participant who shows the most qualities associated
with potential leadership’s abilities, powerfullness, and responsibilities (Carley, Lee, and Krackhardt 2002, 84, Morselli 2009, 14). They are likely to possess some or all of the attributes common to leaders, such as cognitive ability, conscientiousness, self-esteem, hardiness, moral reasoning, physical fitness, prior influence experiences, extroversion, resourcefulness, high stress tolerance, strong, openness to new experiences, and willingness to delegate duties (Carley, Lee, and Krackhardt 2002, 84, Morselli 2009, 14).

Over the past twenty years, since Sparrow’s proposals and realities became more prominent and commonly applied as the standard concepts and tools of network analysis in the field criminal intelligence, SNA has been used extensively to understand the nature of crime and its structure and operation (Sparrow 1991, 252-3, Bruinsma and Bernasco 2004, 92). Organized crimes are planned and committed by several offenders working together, particularly with transnational drug trafficking networks, which need coordination and collusion by several traffickers’ to be successful (Tenti and Morselli 2014, 22, van Mastriet and Farrington 2009, 1, Lantz and Hutchinson 2015, 1). Leaning in this direction, SNA views criminal networks as inside, outside or flexible, and as ‘dynamic processes’ in which actors/nodes and their relational ties have the ability to set up, grow, adjust, evolve, adapt, and expand (Knoke and Yang 2008, 6, Morselli 2009, 9, Bruinsma and Bernasco 2004, 80). Thus, in regards to crime prevention and suppression strategies, SNA theory helps formulate insight into how criminal networks deal with law enforcement disruptions, and also to understand how organizations re-shape and consolidate after individuals join or leave them (Dorn, Murji, and South 1992, 65, 217, McIlwain 1999, 319). However, one further supplementation should be explained in more detail, and that is of applying
SNA to criminal networks in general and drug trafficking studies in particular in which its concepts, such as leader, brokers, and dyad, are used to make clear the adaptation of the abilities of traffickers in their structure and operation. By doing this, it is likely to contribute the knowledge of the field of TransNT and understanding of the nature of TransNT through utilizing the SNA perspective.

2.4. Criminal networks and their implications to drug trafficking

As far back as 1930s, Edvin Sutherland, one of the pioneering social scientists applied an understanding of criminal networks to his studies, and observed that professional thieves interact regularly with each other through ‘inter-personal networks’ grounded in shared norms and a common language and knowledge foundation. These networks, according to Sutherland, formed a kind of criminal association, ‘not organized in the journalistic sense, for no dictator or central office direct[ed] the work of the members… Rather it [was] organized in the sense that it [was] a system in which informal unity and reciprocity may be found’ (Sutherland 1937, 209). Although, only focusing on inter-personal networks of affiliation of professional thieves’ interactions, Sutherland pointed out that these characteristics are common across all forms of networks (Kenney 2007a, 237).

Following on from Sutherland’s explorations, many social scientists have highlighted how entrepreneurs coordinate their activities through associational networks, often based on ‘family and friendship ties’, whether engaged in legal businesses or illicit activities (Cressey 1967). Accordingly, the network is more than a bureaucratic organization and can be distinguished by private rules and tacit decision-marking hierarchies (Cressey 1969). Amongst them, models of Italian and American-
Italian crime groups in 1960s are one of the clearest examples to support this argument. In his ethnographic research of an isolated village in Western Sicily, Anton Blok gauged the social networks Mafiosi formed with triangulated participants, namely ‘peasants, landlords, and politicians’ (Blok 1974). The author noted that these inter-personal networks, which relied heavily on memberships, social connections and economic interdependencies, were significant to understanding how absentee property owners and the Mafiosi controlled their real estate holdings. Based on these relationships, they were likely to manage peasants’ access to land in exchange for their political support, and in the process, sabotaging the Italian government’s weak administration in terms of land policy at the time (Blok 1974).

Applying anthropological methods, Ianni (1972) and Albini (1971) concentrated on an Italian-American organized crime family in New York, namely La Cosa Nostra. The former argued that the Lupollo family is as ‘a traditional social system’ with their hierarchical system based on a pattern of relationship among individuals (Anderson 1979, 47). The Luppolo’s criminal activities were organized around a long-standing kinship network, patrimonial ties among members of the network, and shared cultural values reflecting the family’s historical roots in Southern Italy (Ianni 1974). The latter, with a similar view, argued that organized crime was not based on ‘rational hierarchies’ but a fluid system of power relationships established through local and ethnic ties (Albini 1971). In support of Cressey’s analysis (1969), Albini (1971) argued that La Cosa Nostra’s organized crime groups were operated and characterized by loosely structured, patron-client networks in which participants acted out of self-interest. Over fifty years later, when researching on organizational structure of Southeast Asian drug trafficking groups in Australia, Vy and Lauchs (2013) found
this classic trait, first identified by Ianni and Albini, in these groups that were not controlled by hierarchical organizations and cartels as Colombian drug trafficking networks were. Instead, they were often small groups formed like a “family unit” that connect to other family members in order to sustain their operations (Vy 2013, 316). Furthermore, some family members formed a core unit or ‘hub’ that controlled a peripheral network of dealers and runners through a ‘family patriarch or matriarch’ framework in which it did not need to use of violence or operate within a defined territory as a standard hierarchy model (Vy 2013, 325).

During the 1990s, some researchers argued that the nature of the organization structure of drug trafficking entities could be divided into two basic organizational forms, namely ‘highly structured and loosely structure’ (Natarajan and Belanger 1998, 1006). Actually, there are many forms of criminal organization, large and small, however, as Ruggiero and South (1995, 10) explained in English case that one of the distinguishing points of both of these models is the hierarchical nature of the organization, which is ‘crime in organization’ and ‘crime in association’. The former implies an industrial or corporate style structure within crime groups; meanwhile, the latter refers to a horizontal and non-hierarchical structure within criminal networks (Ruggiero and South 1995, 10). One of the common characteristics of the two models is that these forms of organization are often organized and operated by several offenders working together rather than by isolated individuals, especially within TOC (Bruinsma and Bernasco 2004, 79). There are many forms of criminal organization, large and small. When assessing upper and middle market drug distributions in England, Pearson and Hobbs (2001) argued that these are own by small groups and often led by one or two individuals. In these small-scale networks, one will control
the money and others will contact with a small number of producers or wholesalers, respectively (Pearson and Hobbs 2001, vi, 2, 12). These individuals employ small teams of runners, sometimes on a casual basis, who collect and deliver batches of drugs to customers (Natarajan 2006, 172); even some of them were “informal, small, mutating and decentralized” and individuals either operated alone or in temporary partnerships by Colombian drug entrepreneurs in the Netherlands (Zaitch 2002b, 297). Furthermore, with different research carried out between 2000-2009, based on SNA applications, some international scholars also supported this argument and considered drug traffickers as operating within fluid, loosely organized, and adaptable social networks (Natarajan 2006, 172, Abele 2004, 34, Bruinsma and Bernasco 2004, 91, Mackenzie 2002, 3). Thus, if using SNA theory to analyse relational ties of nodes and the role of leaders, brokers, and central players, it could support criminologists to assess the organizational structure and modus operandi of TransNT entities (Heber 2009, 4, Kleemans and de Poot 2008, 75). Importantly, SNA enables us to conceive TransNT in terms of multiple small-scale networks linked by common commercial interest.

Increasing numbers of scholars turned to the use of SNA to analyse criminal networks. Focusing on Chinese organized crime groups in America, McIlwain (1999) demonstrated how professional Chinese American crime groups relocated opium smuggling, gambling, and prostitution networks to New York City and San Diego between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Arlacchi (1986) shows how entrepreneurial Mafiosi could be stronger when running their establishments and organizations based on kinship and friendship networks in Southern Italy to engage in illegal activities, including extortion, heroin trafficking and kidnapping and to control
commerce between the countryside and cities. Shared ethnicity and language can be binding factors but not necessarily so from inter-firm network approaching. Baker and Faulkner (1993, 884) emphasize how white collar criminals in the American electrical equipment industry engage in disruptive price-fixing systems through creating ‘sparse and decentralized networks’. More particularly, from a coalition-based operation between politicians, law enforcers, businessmen, union leaders and racketeers, Chambliss analysed that organized crime in Seattle does not follow a pattern of established criminal networks with a ‘godfather’ but rather, are a ‘network in which people come and go, dominant offices shift and change, roles vary and fluctuate, but the system goes on’ (Chambliss 1978, 9). This fluid model is suggestive of the nature of a scale-free network, which is often characterized by a large percentage of nodes in the network and has just a few links and a small percentage of the nodes have a large number of links (Xu and Chen 2008). Furthermore, this network often contains relatively few hubs linked to many peripheral nodes, which are themselves poorly connected.

To apply SNA to transnational and trans-border criminal activities, both Phil Williams and Michael Kenney are regarded as pioneers. Several of their studies have focused on proving how criminal organizations from different countries used organizational networks to coordinate and collaborate a range of criminal activities, involving drug trafficking, immigrant smuggling and money laundering. Phil Williams, focuses his research on the establishing and creating of the various typically found characteristics of criminal networks, including ‘network cores’, ‘network peripheries’, ‘criminal network as defensive structure’, ‘criminal network as facilitators of cooperation’, ‘criminal networks as boundary spanners’, ‘criminal
networks as creators and exploiters of corruption’, ‘criminal networks as robust and resilient organizations’, and ‘criminal networks as synergistic organization’. From the wider approach within the global and regional perspective, Williams (2010) developed and applied network theory to transnational crime, and the so-called ‘transnational criminal network’. Based on the vast of analyses and testing of ‘big cases’ in terms of narcotic trafficking’ routines from Colombia, Mexico to the U.S., Williams argued for four types of network. The four types include directed network, mesh network, transnational network and flux network. Each of the networks is summarized below:

- **Directed network**: It is formed and directed by a group of ‘core organizers’ for a specific aim. The core of the network is the hierarchical participant who acts as a ‘steering mechanism’ to direct and co-ordinate the network as a whole.

- **Mesh network**: These networks are ‘decentralized and self-organizing’. Actors implement distinct responsibilities and transact directly with other participants without the need for a core layer. This type of network is best characterized by horizontal rather than vertical relationships between nodes.

- **Transactional network**: These types of network rely heavily on ‘brokers’ or ‘middlemen’ who play a prominent role at each stage of a ‘transaction’. They have the potential to become a flexible or a compulsory part of a ‘directed network’.

- **Flux network**: These networks are highly unstable, small in size and have few established organizational structures. As a result, it leads to limited confidences between participants and they appear to dissolve more easily if compared with other

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8 See more detail at Williams (2001c, 72-78) ‘Transnational Criminal Networks’, in J Arquilla and D Ronfeldt (eds), Networks and Netwars: the Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy, RAND Corporation, Pittsburgh, PA, the U.S., pp. 61-97
networks. Groups operating in these networks frequently cooperate for specific criminal activities or single projects.

Some trafficking groups might operate initially within one network typology and then adjust or amend their modus operandi to evolve into a different network type (Williams 2010). Thus, network structure depends on the types of criminal activities and processes employed by a group, and it is possible for one group to be comprised of numerous network types. The Cali and Medellin cartel of Colombian drug industry are special examples of the various and distinct typology of a directed network (Williams 1994, 1995). The former was shown to be particularly innovative, expanding its product range to include heroin in Western Europe, utilising core groups to manage and control their operation with very highly ‘compartmentalized’ divisions as ‘a low-profile business corporation rather than as a high-profile criminal organization’ from domestic to overseas markets (Williams 1994, 102). The latter, meanwhile, has displayed not only a fundamental willingness to use violence, but also a concern for proficiency in its use through utilising ship drug trafficking cargo to ‘export’ to other markets and import significant amounts of weapons into Colombia (Williams 1994, 103). Although Williams assumed that traffickers are able to do their planning with ‘more flexible, fluid network structures’ than formal organizations, the intent of this research was not to focus on mutually exclusive categories within the four network typologies mentioned above. For instance, ‘transactional network’ could be operated within a ‘directed network’ (Williams 2010). On the other hand, it is expected that a ‘flux network’ would be difficult to identify given its small, unstable structure, amorphous nature and the ease with which its participants are likely to join and exit the group. Williams also acknowledges that, because of their
variable nature, flux networks are difficult for law enforcement agencies to infiltrate and monitor (Williams 2010, 1998).

Drawing upon interview data from convicted criminals engaged in the drug trade between the U.S. and Colombia, Michael Kenney constructs operational network models of Colombian drug trafficking groups. He looks through the lenses of organizational design, organizational learning and competitive adaption to examine the methods that these organizations use to thrive, in the face of massive wars waged against them. The structure of the organizations tends to be one of two types, ‘wheel and chain network’ (Kenney 2007a, 242-5).

- Wheel network: It is comprised of a core group that manages and controls the overall enterprise and peripheral nodes. Kenney highlights that core groups are led by veteran traffickers who have often spent a long time in a drug trafficking career with previous convictions (Kenney 2007a, 2009). Their experience gives them full functions and rights, and they exploit their resources to contract the services of different peripheral nodes that perform the same response, including multiple transportation syndicates, distribution groups and money launders. In other words, through ‘transnational wheel network’, a hub of leaders coordinate the overall network’s activities of the supply chain (Kenney 2007b). With multi-task enterprises, Kenney states that at a minimum, the core nodes cover six main responses. These are 1) organize transactions among different hubs; 2) supply finance, equipment, and other critical resources; 3) manage and arrange financing for important drug shipments; 4) control and negotiate disputes among memberships; 5) bribe criminal justice bodies and LEAs officers; and 6) collect intelligence about law enforcement activities and criminal competitors (Kenney 2009, 2007b). Thus, they play an
important role in the whole of network ‘as the steering mechanism for wheel networks, facilitating communication and coordinating relations among peripheral groups’ (Kenney 2007a, 243).

- **Chain network**: It is decentralized and ‘self-organizing’ with independent nodes that perform specific tasks and transact directly with other nodes without the supports of mediation and the core group’s management (Kenney 2007a, 2009). This second type, a ‘decentralized chain network’, involves a series of independent nodes in which decision making is delegated to ‘trusted confidants’, in order to buffer the kingpins from local prosecutors in their area of operations (Kenney 2007b). In order to ensure the effectiveness of drug shipments, this network utilizes a series of arms-length transactions among independent nodes with the supports of bribed local officials so that their activities can be coordinated (Kenney 2007c). One of the most different characteristics of chain networks in comparison to wheel networks is that relations among groups are characterized by horizontal rather than vertical accountability which means that there is no central coordinating hub to plan, organize and to manage conflicts within or between network nodes (Kenney 2009). As a result, Kenney argued that this feature may require chain networks to have more time to re-arrange, following law enforcement disruptions to individual nodes (Kenney 2007c).

Kenney’s research into trafficking patterns out of Columbia evidence another kind of network arrangement. Drug shipments from Colombia to the U.S. are facilitated through a number of arms-length transactions between independent nodes that coordinate their activities based on special regulations of ‘Arturo’, who is head of a U.S. distribution cell for a Colombian network with five distinct roles, including transportation, storage, distribution, pick-up and delivery, and money laundering
This kind of network arrangement is less vulnerable to law enforcement agencies detection since there are no ‘core leaders’ to arrest and if so, those who are detained are not difficult to find substitutes for (Kenney 2007a, 245). One of the main characteristics of both of these networks, however, is their capacity for concealment of their illegal TransNT activities from law enforcement and illicit competitors which this process was divided many *narcos* into their operations by alternative ‘working groups, sometimes called *cells*’ (Kenney 2007a, 245). Depending on typical distribution, these cells will incorporate persons with clearly defined and often multiple roles under the direction of ‘Arturo’ (Kenney 2007a, 245). After all, some of the distinct characteristics from both of these typologies, such as the role specialization of ‘core leaders’ in small trafficking networks, the unique management levels within wheel networks, and the rules of drug trafficking will be examined and compared in relation to Vietnam’s TransNT entities in data collection and analysis. The above literature is also represented in Appendix I.

In short, the fundamental contribution of these studies is to emphasize the enhanced capacities of criminals who operate within a network structure, especially with cross-border capabilities between two nations with common frontiers. However, to fully understand the nature of the organizational structure of these illicit networks, these roles and functions should be gauged more specific in TransNT entities through applying social network theory to the field of drug trafficking, and is further examined and reviewed in 2.6 following the review of the modus operandi of drug trafficking.
2.5. Modus operandi in drug trafficking script’s stages

It should be emphasized that in order to identify and examine modus operandi of TransNT groups, apart from examining their organizational structure, it is necessary to analyse activities and describe their modus operandi by dividing the drug trafficking process into distinct stages (Lavorgna 2013, Leclerc 2014). This process of description captures the diverse functions and roles that group or network members employ in a TransNT operation (Morselli 2010). Through detailing the stages involved in TransNT, it will contribute as a point of reference and comparison for characterizing the modus operandi of the processes and individual roles in TransNT operations found in the data (Chiu, Leclerc, and Townsley 2011, Levi and Maguire 2004, Cornish 1994, Felson 2006).

There are various approaches to gather information on the modus operandi of criminal groups, particularly those involved with drug trafficking. Depending on different objectives of crime groups, researchers can undertake documentary analysis of criminal biographies, case law, police profiles, court records, government reports and various types of intelligence statistics in order to achieve the desired outcome their research understand criminal networks (Hagan 2010, 204, 215). For example, based on a case from Howard Marks’ autobiography of his 20-year participation within and around importation connections in the cannabis trade, Marks (or “Mr Nice” as he is also known) was arrested by the Spanish National Police in July 1988. Morselli (2001, 203) illustrated the organizational structure and modus operandi of his entrepreneurial ventures. Through Marks’ data, Morselli (2001) emphasized Marks’ ability to mobilize drug smuggling for others and serve as ‘a network vector between key suppliers and buyers in [the] early links of several cannabis trade chains
[which] led him to play the brokerage position within a specified network of participants to an increasingly greater extent’ (p.226).

Another approach to analysing the modus operandi of drug trafficking groups is the structured layer matrix, used by Chung to assess operations of ‘the Big Circle Boys’ (BCB), a Chinese Mafia-style organization involved in large-scale heroin trafficking. Mostly, this group operates in the U.S., Hong Kong and Canada to control and manage the transport and trade of illegal drugs. Chung (2008) analysed the structure and operation of transnational drug trafficking activities using a criminal memoir by Johnny Yu-Leung Kon, leader of the Flaming Eagles under title – The Dragonhead, and testimonial evidence by him at a U.S. Congressional Hearing (Chung 2008, 308). From these data sources, Chung was able to extrapolate BCB’s structure and operation under Kon’s visualized mapping with three distinct levels, including ‘leader (Kon)’, ‘associates (BCB and non-BCB)’, and ‘underlings (BCB associates’ soldier)’ (Chung 2008, 312). By doing this, Chung also asserted that the BCB exists as ‘a criminal group’, which does not like ‘a criminal firm’ (Chung 2008, 327). Yet, one of the modus operandi of this group that makes it primarily responsible for much of the exportation and transport of Southeast Asia’s heroin to the U.S. and Canada markets is through having no clear division of labour, except for the important roles of drug couriers (Chung 2008, 315-6). For example, to transport heroin from Thailand to Canada, Kon’s drug couriers used boats to carry heroin shipments by sea routes from Bangkok to Canada via Malaysia and Singapore. In his criminal memoirs, Kon and his accomplices confessed that they delivered over 1000 pounds of heroin (0.45 metric tons) into the U.S. in the period of 1984-1987 and also
laundered his multimillion-dollar heroin proceeds by investing them in many nations around the world (Chung 2008, 310, 327).

However, to generate, organize, and systematise information about the procedural aspects and needs of crime commission, crime script analysis is considered as one of the most effective tools to use (Cornish 1994, 160, Cornish and Smith 2003, 3, Morselli 2009, 104). Crime scripts map a logical sequence of decisions and actions and modus operandi before, during, and after the commission of crime (Beauregard et al. 2007, 1071, Chiu, Leclerc, and Townsley 2011, 356, Levi and Maguire 2004, 409). Yet, the most significant contribution of crime script analysis is that it provides a framework in which to systematically investigate all of the stages of the crime commission process of a specific crime and in as much detail as existing data will allow (Cornish 1994, 160).

Crime script analysis can be used to reconstruct the complete sequence of instrumental decisions and actions prior to, during, and following the criminal act and further can be used to identify the modus operandi of crime. As Cornish and Clark (2002, 47) emphasized that ‘all crimes, even the simplest, involve such chains of decisions and actions, separable into interdependent stages, involving the attainment of sub-goals that serve to further the overall goals of the crime’. Among these stages, the level of ‘permutation’ in a script illustrates the degree of adaptation in the process of crime commission (Morselli 2009, 104). For example, when illicit drugs are transported into areas of high demand from the supply routes, dealers often distribute the drug in large, kilogram sized quantities among wholesale distributors, so that it can then be separated into multiple bags with relevant amounts in boxes or bags before it is yet again re-packaged into ‘small bags’ in preparation for street selling
Furthermore, the heroin is often cut multiple times, depending on owner’s decisions and calculations, before reaching the drug user (Matrix Knowledge Group 2007, Paoli, Victoria, and Reuter 2009). As a result, this process leads to increasing the drug’s perceived quantity as well as the overall profits obtained from street selling, but significantly reducing its purity (Vy 2013, 104, Chiu, Leclerc, and Townsley 2011).

Crime scripts on drug trafficking are expected to have a high degree of variation because there are multiple methods of stockpiling, transporting, and trading drugs. To fully understand the modus operandi of traffickers, particularly with TransNT entities operating across shared borderland countries such as Vietnam and Lao PDR, this thesis accumulates crime script data from interviews with LEA officers who investigated directly TransNT cases. By doing this, to some extent, it not only assesses the nature of operation of TransNT in Vietnam, but also identifies the difficulties and challenges that LEAs have to face with these drug-related crimes in practice.

2.6. Typologies of transnational narcotics trafficking

Apart from conflicted political issues, drug trafficking has still proven more lucrative than any other illicit markets around the world (UNODC 2011b, iv). Albanese (2012, 4) considers that concentrating on criminal markets rather than groups or networks TOC can better help researchers to explain and examine them, either by the activities in which these markets benefit or by the groups they include.

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9 With respect of the political conflict is exampled with the disintegration of political order in Afghanistan in the 1990s that lead to increase in opium production to fund ‘warlord’ interests and to assist arm the Taliban (Edwards 2010, 974); other instance is the Burma in the 1960s when opium production increased markedly to fund revolutionary and separatist movements (McCoy, Read, and Leonard 2003)
Therefore, a brief review on the global and regional market of both heroin and ATS with consideration of their production and consumption should be assessed before identifying TransNT’s typologies.

Currently, the majority of the world’s opium is cultivated in three regions, namely South West Asia’s ‘the Golden Crescent’ (Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Islamic Republic of Iran), South East Asia’s ‘the Golden Triangle’ (Myanmar, Lao PDR, and Thailand) and Central and Southern America (Columbia and Mexico). Of these regions, South-western Asia accounts for the most cultivation, with over 85% of the world’s opium cultivation in 2014 attributed to Afghanistan, - approximately 6,500 tons out of around 7,500 tons globally (UNODC 2015c, xiii). According to UNDOC’s data, Afghanistan maintained its position as the number one producer and cultivator of opium globally; meanwhile, Myanmar reached second for opium production (UNODC 2015c, INCSR 2015). The heroin-producing area of the Golden Triangle is central to the Southeast Asian drug trade (UNODC 2012d, 1, INCSR 2013, 18, Chin 2009, 8). According to Annual International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR 2013, 225), most heroin production of the Golden Triangle extended from the Shan hills of North-eastern Burma through to Northern Thailand and to the Hmong highlands of Laos, and even some of these quantities were trafficked into Vietnam from Laos. Lao PDR, sharing a borderland with Vietnam, is currently the third largest opium cultivator in the world after Afghanistan and Myanmar and produced two per cent of the world’s opium in 2014 (UNODC 2015c, xiii).

Differing to opium and coca plants, ATS production is adaptable and the places of its production are changeable and thus, ATS laboratories are frequently located in close proximity to illicit markets to meet ATS’s high demand (UNODC 2011b, 146).
To date, the UNODC warned that the global ATS seizures had risen to the highest levels ever recorded, with 123 tons seized in 2011 compared with 74 tons in 2010, proportional around a 65 per cent increase, which is notable especially given that globally, 71 per cent of ATS is Methamphetamine (2013e, 49). At a regional scale, Blickman (2009, 52) also warned that the ATS boom in the Southeast Asia is ‘an example of what can be described as “displacement”: a campaign against one drug (opium and heroin) can lead to the rise of an equally or more dangerous substitute (methamphetamine)’. More complexly, one of the current concerns to appear is new psychoactive substances (NPS) compared with the United Nations Conventions of 1961 and 1971, such as synthetic cannabinoids, synthetic cathinones, ketamine, phenethylamines, piperazines, plant-based substances and others (UNODC 2013e, 59-60, 2015c, 74). Unofficial reports of Vietnamese authorities regarding NPS notwithstanding, the most ‘traditional ATS’ are smuggled into Vietnam from Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Thailand (UNODC 2012b, 117). In fact, no clandestine methamphetamine manufacture had been reported in Vietnam until 2005 but, the ATS market has continued to expand and diversify with a 65 per cent increase in the country’s methamphetamine pill seizures in 2011, and especially the number of youth users increasing (INCSR 2013, 318). The ATS market is second only to the heroin market, the first ranking of illicit drug markets in Vietnam in terms of market size (UNODC 2013e, 52). Vietnam is also increasingly vulnerable to the threat of precursor chemical types, given its position in the neighbourhood of the world’s major hubs of synthetic drug manufacture, particularly Lao PDR (UNODC 2012c, 3).
In the nature of globalization, defining exactly typology of TransNT has become as one of the controversial issues within the national, regional, and global context. von Lampe (2003, 1) and Albanese (2011, 7) note that making sense of the typology will assist researchers perceive more comprehensively the complexity of organization and operation of illicit drug networks. However, according to Eck and Gersh (2000, 243) the structure of illegal drug markets is not easily conceptualized. One of the reasons is lack of practical research on the nature of drug trafficking which, even on a domestic scale, ‘has not received extensive empirical scrutiny by social scientists’ (quoted by Karchmer 1992, 243, Adler 1993). Another reason is disregard for both fluctuations in drug markets over time and differences from market to market (Curtis and Wendel 2000, 122).

In addition, the dearth of agreement and integration on a single definition and its nature and context is also a problematic issue that hampers the conceptualization of models of TOC in general and TransNT in particular (Pankratz and Matiasek 2012, 42). Yet, highly diverse and different forms, degrees, and locations of transnationality of crimes will lead to difficulty in establishing and presenting exactly what the typologies of TransNT are (von Lampe 2011, 3-4). Notwithstanding, reviewing from theory to practice in drug trafficking research shows that there is two main typologies drug markets recognized by scholars. One is based on the organizational form and structure of the network; meanwhile, the other relies on the functions or responsibilities adopted by the members in network such as leader, broker, courier, and so on.


2.6.1. **Typologies based on organizational form**

There are different frameworks to approach about organizational structure of drug trafficking groups that could lead to not well define about its nature (Neuilly 2010, 366). One of the most significant reasons is limited up-to-date intelligence on the modus operandi and networks of drug trafficking groups, meanwhile, ‘both change in drug markets over time and variation from market to market’ make any findings subject to soon being out-of-date again (Curtis and Wendel 2000, 122). However, based on organizational form, there are likely to be classifications for different typologies of each drug market entity with its relevant structure.

Applying related ethnographic methods, Curtis (1996, 262-268) built a typology of drug distributors with four categories, including ‘freelance distributors’, ‘family business’, ‘community-based organizations’, and ‘corporate-style distributors’. The first one is composed of small non-hierarchical entrepreneurial groupings of individuals and no division of labour (Curtis and Wendel 2000, 132). The second category is comprised of ‘cohesive groups with clear structures and authority derived from family ties’ (Hough and Natarajan 2000, 7); meanwhile, the third item is “flexible groups bound by a common tie”, involving ethnicity (Hough and Natarajan 2000, 7), kinship, race, nationality and/or neighbourhood (Curtis and Wendel 2000, 133). The last one is a formal hierarchy and a clear defined division of labour (Curtis 1996). Speaking generally, however, these typologies were only established from a study of the street-level drug market on a domestic scale and thus, its generalizability may be limited and insufficient in its persuasiveness to be applied to TransNT markets within regional scales such as the Southeast Asian area.
Regarding the ‘corporate-style distributors’ of Curtis’s typology, Natarajan (2000, 273) used data from wiretap records as her methodology to examine this category through 39 drug trafficking groups prosecuted in New York City’s federal courts.\(^\text{10}\) She argued that this typology demotes large organizations in which there is a well-defined specialization based on skills rather than family or ethnic ties. Consequently, this method also proved that the relationship shown on ‘the organization chart’ between external connects (the roles of the Bosses in Colombia) and internal rings (the roles of the Chief Operator in New York City and their cabinets) are flexible and ‘peripheral’ operations (Natarajan 2000, 289). Similar to Natarajan’s research focussing on the drug trafficking market between the U.S. and Colombia, utilizing participant observation/field research methodologies as a primary source, Kenney (2007a) clarified that TransNT’s organizations in Colombia are derived by two main forms of networks, ‘wheel and chain network’ (p.236).\(^\text{11}\)


\(^{10}\) Natarajan explains wiretap data relating to his cases, a “third source of data about trafficking”, were analysed using a hypertext software program, which allowed qualitative data to be converted to a quantitative format 2000, p.274-275.

\(^{11}\) This was mentioned specifically at section 2.4.

\(^{12}\) Meantime Kenney only conducts to interview with dozen of hard-to-reach informants, both Ruggiero and Khan used to interrogate with diverse participant’s background, including: British South Asian drug offenders in custody for drug supply related offences; drug dealers and users outside prison, unknown to official agencies; ‘key individuals’ with working knowledge of drug use/distribution amongst British South Asian communities; law enforcers based in Britain; law enforcers based in Pakistan; treatment staff based in Britain; treatment staff based in Pakistan.
meanwhile, the second type is combined by individuals of the same ethnic background and often is ‘ephemeral’ in operation (Ruggiero and Khan 2006, 482). The other types are comprised of an ‘executive layer, middle management and a number of employees’ and already recruits new members from amateurs to professional dealers – the third one (Ruggiero and Khan 2006, 482); and coordinates alliances with groups that can potentially increase their profits – the fourth one (Ruggiero and Khan 2007, 274). Meanwhile, Vy (2013, 85) evaluated that these typologies are not ‘mutually exclusive’, for instance, between ‘family networks’ and ‘mono-ethnic networks’, members can be switched and exchanged, especially those from the similar ethnic groups. Seemingly, this point maybe creates new network theories, such as the so-called ‘transnational family’\textsuperscript{13} (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002) or ‘transnational diasporas networks’ (Mandaville and Lyons 2012). Thus, it can be inferred that drug markets and trafficking organization types are varied. Furthermore, models or concepts applied to the analysis of each overlap considerably.

Regarding to organizational structure of Southeast Asia drug trafficking groups in Australia, based on a vast of data from three different jurisdictions, New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria, Vy (2013, 321) pointed out a few of the distinct characteristics of models of Southeast Asia groups. One of the key findings indicated that Southeast Asian drug offenders, normally, operated in ‘small groups, partnerships or as individual dealers or suppliers’ and ‘operated largely in isolation from each other…[with] very few links between groups and individuals’ (Vy 2013, 324). Referring to ‘family basin’ - theory of Morselli (2005, 33), a typical case was

\textsuperscript{13}According to Bryceson and Vuorela, “transnational families” are defined here as families that live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely ‘familyhood’, even across national borders (p.3)
extracted from the descriptive statistics of three jurisdictions, New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria for identifying the relationship between family-based factors and their criminal activities. The author proved that small groups or partnerships involving family members contribute to make sense of the current models of drug trafficking groups in Australia, particularly focusing on the supplied drug trafficking network more than the imported data (Vy 2013). For example, Vietnamese offenders and their family ties were covered in 136 out of the 159 cases, accounting for 85% of the data with all levels of drug distribution levels (Vy 2013, 198, 206, 322). Another case study from the Netherlands, using survey data on the heroin trade of overseas trafficking groups, Bruinsma and Bernasco (2004) concluded that Turkish groups tended to have strong family ties, involving fathers, sons, nephews, cousins and brothers-in-law, and are mostly homogenous in nature and consequently have greater cohesion (p.87). Family-based ethnicity needs to be considered as one of the distinct characteristics both Turkish and Vietnamese groups in narcotic trafficking networks; however, all authors have still not yet examined the strength of network connection between traffickers and their country of origin.

In summary, it can be seen that these above typologies are based on organization form and build and draw drug trafficking groups as incorporating network or hierarchical structures or a mixture of both structures. A gap in the exiting literature is that there is no focus criteria on how to gauge the utility of these typologies and even ‘oversimplifying and distorting the complexity and operation of drug trafficking organizations’ (Desroches 2007, 829). In addition, the majority of these typologies of higher level drug traffickers published from those scholars have little or no empirical connection to the reality of drug markets (Vy 2013, 85,
Desroches 2007, 829). Moreover, almost all of these research projects were employed and implemented from European, America to Australia domain with its distinct data sets, which involve different types of narcotics and some drugs are uncommon to the Vietnam’s context. In fact, these barriers will unavoidably influence the generalizability of the typologies issuing from these studies and thus, some of these models will be suitable to conduct with transnational narcotics traffickers in Vietnam.

2.6.2. Typologies based on functions/responsibilities

According to Gautam Basu (2013, 315), a significant point of perceiving the models of transnational smuggling operations is to assess the personal role adopted by ‘a key enabler’. Within the scope of a criminal network, distinguishing tasks and roles provides the researchers with information to understand a drug supply chain, incorporating those who have a direct connection with the drugs and who have no contact with the drugs whatsoever (Decker and Chapman 2008, 90). One of the main factors to determine functions and responsibilities of individuals in a drug value chain, including supply and distribution scale, is based on the node’s position in a criminal network value chain. A value chain here is defined and understood as a series of tasks to be performed in a specific order, each requiring a specific capability (Toth et al. 2013, 1413). Pursuing the logic of this argument, this section reviews critically a number of research projects on drug trafficking, which established and developed typologies based on functions/responsibilities.

As one of the pioneering experts in organized crime and TransNT fields over three decades, Williams (1998, 155) notes a network is likely to assist researchers and policy-makers perceive a series of connected nodes, including individuals,
organizations, and firms within closed linkages together. He also considered that one of the closely related strengths of TransNT networks is their capacity to flow around physical barriers and across legislative systems or geographical boundaries through their members’ functions (Williams 1998, 157). Moreover, the role of individual memberships are ‘rarely so specialized that substitutes cannot readily be found’ (Williams 1998, 158). Accordingly, their specific functions can be accounted for as below – table 1.

**Table 1: Williams’s typology based on functions or responsibilities**

*(re-introduced from Williams 2001c, 82-83)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function/Responsibility</th>
<th>Relevant duties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizers</strong></td>
<td>Core personal and groups provide the “driving” policies and operations for the network. Organizers decide the scale and scope of activities and provide instructions and guidance for its execution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insulators</strong></td>
<td>Network’s members have to respond and take care of the core from risks by infiltration and compromise. They communicate leadership viewpoints to the periphery of the network. Additionally, they also must ensure communication flows from the periphery and do nothing to compromise the core.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communicators</strong></td>
<td>As “information deliverer”, they ensure communication flows smoothly between other nodes in their networks as a whole. From time to time, both insulators and communicators are at odds due to overlapping functions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guardians</strong></td>
<td>They proactively enforce the security of their ring against potential harm, threats, and risks from external sides. Guardians serve and take care of member recruitment, combined with measures to ensure loyalty, involving rituals and coercion to limit defection. If so, they are responsible to control and reduce with minimized damages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extenders</strong></td>
<td>Those whose function is to extend the network through recruiting new participants, by negotiating with other networks, and by encouraging defectors form legal businesses, bodies of government and law enforcement agencies. In addition, they play an important role to create a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“portal” between the licit and illicit worlds, and to establish a “bridge” between new members and officials to collude with them.

### Monitors

They are accountable for informing potential weaknesses and problems in the network to the core organizers, who will initiate remedial action. Monitors have to guarantee that corrective measures are implemented wherever necessary in order that the network can adjust in response to new situations.

### Crossovers

People selected as members of criminal networks but who continue to work in legitimate institutions. Their responsibilities are to collect and inform helpful messages from the legal sector.

Based on William’s typologies, including core and ‘external’ roles, it is not only possible to identify personal functions and individual positions within and between each node in a drug trafficking network, but also explore what ‘potential’ actors can be covered in these networks. Therefore, in this thesis, this role-based typology will be applied and compared in the Vietnamese context to examine functions/responsibilities of drug offenders in TransNT networks across the Vietnam – Lao PDR’s border.

Based on the interview techniques, a qualitative research project conducted with both prisoners and informants, 15 persons convicted of serious offences with regards to the drug-related importations into the United Kingdom, and with 10 informants of Her Majesty’s Customs, respectively. Dorn, Oette, and White (1998, 540-541) were able to issue a simple categorization of levels of involvement in drug smuggling, with classification as follows:

**Number 1:** That is a planner and organizers who may be associating alone or in cooperation with one or more assistants;
**Number 2:** That is a trusted assistant who is unlikely to share any incriminatory information about their number 1 contact and commits as a “cut out” between the number 1 and number 3; and

**Number 3:** That is one who provides specific services under the strict instruction and exclusive requirement of a number 2 that is not associated directly with number 1. The number 3 knows little about number 1 and is unlikely to provide any information, which may incriminate or endangered number 1’s roles and responsibilities. In this circumstance, it may be understood that number 3 acts like a runner, or courier.

The study aimed to examine how number 1s manages strategic risk on their own or by using number 2s and number 3s to control the distance between themselves and the drugs. A concern with this typology is that the roles described are relatively vague. This means that a number of individuals could occupy a number 1, 2, or 3 role and there appears to be a lack of clear factors to identify how an individual would be catalogued as a number 1, 2, or 3. Therefore in this thesis, this typology will be not included at the stage of data analysis.

Nearly one decade later than Dorn, Oette, and White’ findings, in 2005, the United Kingdom Home Office commissioned Matrix Research and Consultancy (at present, Matrix Knowledge Groups) and the London School of Economics to undertake one of the largest qualitative studies in the U.K. with high-level drug dealers through face-to-face interviews with 222 individuals in 22 prisons across England convicted of serious drug-related offences (p. iv; 1). In order to identify how high level drug dealers operate and how markets for illicit drugs work, Matrix Knowledge Groups utilized three basic tools, including business analysis, economic scale, and social networks analysis. With the first two approaches, focus on the
responses of those directly involved in the buying and selling of drugs and descriptions of how, and explanations why, prices in illicit drug markets vary over four elements, namely drug type, market levels, time, and space, respectively (Matrix Knowledge Group 2007, 8). The last one, meanwhile, assist to understand how individuals relate and work with each other and why they enter the market and how and where they operate within it (Matrix Knowledge Group 2007, 8-10). In this context, SNA is defined as putting the individual and their relations at the centre of analysis, rather than groups, norms or institutions and thus, typologies of TransNT based on role can be illustrated as follow:

*Figure 3: Roles defined by enterprise structure*
The above diagrams show the roles and functions of individuals in each of four main markets, including international, national level, local wholesale, and retail level (Matrix Knowledge Group 2007, 27). The first market is implemented by dealers who bring drugs into the U.K. and thereby cross an international border, including the
large areas supplied by the source drug, such as Europe, South America, and Asia. Meanwhile, this current study only focus on the nation of the drug source from Lao PDR to Vietnam and thus, the typology of Matrix Knowledge Group (2007) are not suitable for application to the stage of data analysis.

Being similar to the Matrix Knowledge Group’s methodologies, Decker and Chapman (2008) directly interviewed 34 high-level drug smugglers incarcerated in U.S. Federal prisons out of 73 participants involved in the interview process. Combining with the Sample of Presentence Reports of the Monitoring Division of the Sentencing Commission, which provides demographic information, information on the instant and related offenses, criminal history, and a computation of the adjusted offense level and roles of each offender that the authors have drawn a number of roles adopted in a drug smuggling operation, including (90-94):

*Organizers:* Organized the transportation of drug shipments. Organizers play an important role with multiple stages of the drug operation, including linking to foreign contacts and structuring multiple methods of transportation.

*Brokers and intermediaries:* Brokers and intermediaries acted as “go-betweens”, brokering for goods and services. Some were also responsible for laundering money or providing warehouse space and personnel.

*Airplane pilots:* Serving to deliver drug shipments by air.

*Off-loaders:* Serving to remove the drugs from the boats in which they were transported and transferring the drugs from one mode of transportation to another or alternatively, to provide storage for the drugs.
Boat captains: They have a solid working knowledge of the seas and boating patterns. Further, they also engineer secret compartments on their boats to conceal drugs.

Although this study focuses on cocaine smuggling similar roles would be present in a heroin trafficking operation, the main method of transportation of smugglers being either air or sea routes. Meanwhile, the current study only concentrates on land routes between two nations with shared borderland (Vietnam and Lao PDR) and thus, this typology will be excluded at the stage of data analysis. However, some of specific modus operandi in the stockpile and transportation steps should be examined with this study’s findings and compared.

Regarding cross-border domains in TransNT, between the U.S. and Colombia, from achievements in interview techniques, Kenney (2007b, 33) identified numerous roles filled by participants of a small cocaine and heroin trafficking networks through table 2’s illustration.

**Table 2: Kennedy’s typology based on functions and responsibilities**
*(re-adapted from Kenney 2007b, 33)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function/Responsibility</th>
<th>Relevant duties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leader</strong></td>
<td>Control thoroughly all of the operations, providing managerial assistance as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Investors</strong></td>
<td>Invested budget in the enterprise’s drug shipments (at least two individuals filled this role)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buyer</strong></td>
<td>Purchased drugs from processing labs (this enterprise did not process illicit drugs, preferring to buy them fully refined)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recruiter</strong></td>
<td>Prepared human couriers and supported them with the obligatory travel documentation, including passports and visas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Packer</strong></td>
<td>Squeezed cocaine and heroin into digestible capsules using a hydraulic packing press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enforcer</strong></td>
<td>Used intimidation and violence to enforce transactions and resolve disputes,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
including coercing people that owed money for drugs to pay their debts to the enterprise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Trainer</strong></th>
<th>Prepared human drug couriers in swallowing capsules, dealing with law enforcement, and avoiding problems in airport security</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Couriers</strong></td>
<td>Transported small amounts of drugs from Colombia to the US or Spain, sometimes by way of Aruba or Venezuela, most couriers ingested drug-filled capsules and hid narcotics in their personal luggage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Receiver/Whole sale distributor</strong></td>
<td>Received couriers in the U.S. or Spain, transported them to stash houses where they could ‘expel’ their cargo. They were also obligated to sell drugs to independent wholesalers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To some extent, though these individual roles were identified based on a small illicit trafficking network from Colombia to the U.S. markets, these key enablers will be similar if not equivalent in function or role in most drug trafficking operations. As Williams (2001c, 84) presumed that these functions are general with most criminal networks however, with groups of different background will have clearer and more particular responsibilities. Yet, depending on ‘scope’, some of these networks will require more specific tasks (Williams 2001b, 78, 2001c, 83-84). Thus, this research will seek the applicability of these categories to apply into TransNT activities across the Vietnamese borderland with Lao PDR.

Based on research findings from different contexts, scholars have endeavoured to classify TransNT typologies to provide structured more detail about the organizational forms of drug trafficking. There are many limitations to the analytical typologies developed and used, not least being their considerable overlap, and resulting lack of distinction and clarity. Empirical research testing the typologies in practice in other drug markets to produce mutually exclusive categories has yet to be
done. More importantly, databases tend to be orientated towards Australia, the U.S., the U.K., the Netherlands, Mexico, and Colombia scenario, which are not comparable with Vietnamese drug markets.

2.7. Summary of chapter

Research into TransNT is extensive and multidisciplinary. Analysts have drawn upon historical, economic, sociological and ethnographic approaches to chart the emergence, operations, and social consequences of transnational criminal entities. Numerous studies into drug trafficking identify an evolving pattern of loose, flexible and network-oriented structures that can adapt to opportunities and risks presented by the globalization of economic and social relations. There are many available typologies of TOC, however, there are still many gaps in our knowledge that can only be filled through rigorous empirical research. Apart from government and non-government organizations’ reports (e.g. AIPA, UNODC and INCSR), there is a lack of academic research into TransNT in Vietnam. This state of affairs is attributable to three main reasons. Firstly, global crime studies, such as those provided annually by UNODC, focus on macro-level drug production and market trends, drug users, and harm prevention, but offer limited insight into the organizational structures and operations of drug trafficking groups. Secondly, research is inhibited by challenges such as data access, ethics, personal safety and political instability, reliability (or unreliability) of official sources at a national level (UNODC 2007b). Thirdly, the complexities of societies, including the nature of national and local politics, linguistic and cultural diversity, mean that local level research can only be effectively done by persons with increasingly rare combinations of skills, including fluency in multiple local languages and dialects. Where such researchers are active, inquiry tends to focus
on intra-state or national topics and issues. Hence the motivation for this research project, and the need for a finely-tuned exploratory research framework with which to approach the analysis of TransNT in the Lao PDR-Vietnam border zone.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1. Chapter overview and objectives

This chapter explains the research design and the processes involved in data collection and analysis. Before describing the mixed methods research design used in this thesis, the first section will address different approaches to TransNT research. Section 3.3 of this chapter explains why mixed methods of research were selected to be applied to this study. This is followed by a section on Mixed Method Exploratory Sequential Design which sets out the research methods employed in this thesis project. The research design incorporates both qualitative and quantitative data collection and interpretation utilizing multiple case studies to establish one conceptual framework of organization structure and modus operandi of TransNT in the Lao PDR-Vietnam border zone (section 3.4). Section 3.5 argues the grounds on which the study satisfies the criteria of mixed method reliability, validity, and limitations. The chapter, as a whole, sets out in necessary detail a context-sensitive research framework that is rigorous enough to gather reliable data but also flexible enough to capture and accommodate variations in structure and form.

3.2. Researching transnational narcotics trafficking

The literature on both organized crime and upper level drug trafficking, including internal markets and cross-border activities by traffickers, have a tendency to be based on media resources, government reports or accounts given by LEAs (Dorn, Levi, and King 2005, 1-2). To some extent, these sources “sensationalize or de-contextualize” organized crime activities (Ganapathy and Broadhurst 2008, 4), and
only reflect single-channel outcome in fighting them of drug law enforcement (Wills, Anderson, and Homel 2011). However, Wills, Anderson, and Homel (2011, 3) argued that assessments of drug law enforcement, frequently, concentrates on the use of drug seizures and arrest data as the measure of effectiveness rather than basing that judgement on various data sources from multiple channels which are able to provide enough information for each indicator source to provide a more balanced view. Additionally, while TransNT activities with highly mobilized operations and borderless scale, the process of investigation in some cases of LEAs requires secretive factors when using reconnaissance skills and covert tactics (Desroches 2007, 828). Therefore, these data from both qualitative and quantitative sources are needed to assess objectively and prudently before choosing a suitable research.

Over the last four decades, within criminology and criminal justice fields there have appeared many different research methods that default along either qualitative or quantitative lines (Kleck, Tark, and Bellows 2006, Tewksbury, DeMichele, and Miller 2005). The debate between qualitative and quantitative methods is certainly not new for criminologists, however, individual approaches have distinct features and different strengths and limitations (Popper 1972). The advantage of qualitative methods is that they provide a depth of understanding of crime, criminals and justice system operations. To some extent, Berg (2007, 3) emphasized that ‘quality refers to the what, how, when, and where of a thing – its essence and ambience. Qualitative research, thus, refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things’. Moreover, serial techniques of data collection in qualitative methods assists in the process of data gathering of more
various research, so its outcomes are more valuable and reliable (Tewksbury 2009, 38).

Meanwhile, by generating important descriptive information to describe the origins, patterning, and response to crime and criminal activity, quantitative methods play a significant role as the heart of social science research generally, and in criminology/criminal justice in particular (Blumstein 2010, v-vi). One obvious evidence to prove the predominant application in the top five criminal justice journals for a five-year period (1998-2002) of Tewksbury, DeMichele, and Miller (2005, 274) pointed out approximately three-quarters (73.1%) of all articles published in the top five journals during this time applied quantitative methodologies. Moreover, as Piquero and Weisburd (2010, 1) introduced in their Handbook of Quantitative Criminology, it is “not only to deal with the advances in longitudinal, experimental, and multilevel data structures but also to study substantive methodological or evaluative concerns of interest in the criminology/criminal justice community”.

In fact, the data that is utilized in qualitative and quantitative research commonly comes from a range of collection methods, with three principal sources. This includes 1) participant observations with three viewpoints, as ‘complete observer’, ‘observer as participant’, and ‘disguised observation’ (Bayens and Roberson 2011, 144); 2) interviews with participants either as the primary method or as a supplementary methods in addition to survey method (Yin 2009, 63), and 3) the retrieval of information stored electronically or in hard copy (Curtis 2005, 33). Of

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course, each of the methods often differs in the sources of information within
different situations and scenarios for collecting and analysing data.

First, *observation* is a form of field research in which the researcher studies a
group of individuals in their natural setting examining the actions and interactions of
people and systematically extrapolating from these observations. Although this
method is considered as an approach to data gathering that looks quite uncomplicated
and straightforward, it is actually a challenging technique for collecting systematic
information about people, places, and things (Maxfield and Babbie 2012). When little
is known about a phenomenon, the researcher must immerse themselves into a
particular situation. For criminological research however, observation is doubly
problematic when investigating the practices and ‘inner workings’ of drug trafficking
networks (Campbell 2005, 326). Researchers who establish research on observational
data do so in one of two general ways, visibly in which they openly admit to those
being observed that this is what the researcher is doing, and invisibly, when the
research ‘spies’ on the practices, scenarios and practices that they are researching
(Tewksbury 2009, 44). Whether the first way or second way, however, von Lampe
(2012, 181) is concerned that this method frequently leads to increased risks to
personal safety for ethnographic researchers.

Overcoming these barriers, the ethnographic approach allows a more
comprehensive picture to emerge that incorporates various shapes of the market, such
as the different roles and structures of the market; the marketplace dynamics,
involving the interactions between actors; and social and cultural norms in individual
illicit drug markets (Ritter 2006, 454). Depending on the researcher’s objectives and
methods, there have been many ethnographic or qualitative studies of illicit drug
markets, which have largely focussed on the local retail level. In the U.K., through a qualitative research study involving interviewing a significant number of traffickers, police, police informers and user-dealers, Dorn, Murji, and South (1992) has drawn a picture of the retail drug market in which it was established and operated by seven different types of trafficking ‘firms’: trading charities, mutual societies, sideliners, criminal diversifiers, opportunistic irregulars, retail specialists, and state-sponsored traders. After more than ten years spent classifying a number of different types of retail markets, including closed, open, crack/dealing house, social network, and pub and club-based (semi-open) markets, that were identified by May and Hough (2004). They considered that although each operated differently and had different features, the importance of both technology and law enforcement activity affected directly and indirectly on the type of illegal drug markets and their operations (May and Hough 2004, 553-554). Using similar approaches in ethnography and observation method, Natarajan and Belanger (1998, 1008-1009) classified differences between organizational structure and tasks in 39 New York drug trafficking groups. The former was structured by four types, including freelance, family businesses, communal business, and corporations; meanwhile, the latter was identified by five tasks, namely grower/producer, manufacturer, importer/smuggler, wholesale distributor, and regional distributor. One important thing concluded from the researcher’s observation was that ‘in the majority of cases, organizations seem to specialize quite narrowly in the tasks undertaken, but there was only a weak relationship between organizational types and these tasks’ (Natarajan and Belanger 1998, 1019).
Ethnography can be used to assess and gain a broad picture of how drug markets operate. Using a confidential report from the Association of Chief Police Officers (the U.K.) that contains accounts of the development of drug markets from the 1960s to the 1990s, Dorn, Murji, and South (1992) pointed out that drug markets are invariably volatile, fluid and flexible because weav[ing in and out of the trade is often dependent on adaptation and adjustment of both traffickers and users. From other sides, May et al. (2005, 7) interviewed 68 drug sellers, 60 police members, 64 community members, conducted 200 street interviews and engaged in participant observations in four drug market sites. The authors drew several significant conclusions about the nature and differences between four local drug markets in England, namely Byrne Valley, Sidwell Rise, Midson Vale, and Etherington. Accordingly, in all these four markets, heroin and crack could be bought seven days a week, 24 hours a day through closed markets, where buyer and seller arranged deals in advance (May et al. 2005, vii). Yet, most transactions were conducted by mobile phone, with exchanges taking place in public space (May et al. 2005, viii-ix). In particular, selling in Byrne Valley is conducted by small clusters of hierarchal dealing networks, which are tightly controlled by local families or through other social networks; meanwhile, the markets in Sidwell Rise and Etherington operate much more on free-market principles and in the Midson Vale appears to be a mix between the two, having a structured dealing-house market and a less organized street market (May et al. 2005, 10, 12, 14). These examples of ethnographic research provide relevantly sufficient descriptions of various drug markets, particularly with the local drug markets’ domain, through establishing typologies of drug markets based on
collecting data in terms of price, price-mark-ups, profits and types of participants (Ritter 2006, 455, 2005, 6).

Secondly, another common method in qualitative approach used in studies of drug trafficking groups is interviewing those directly involved in criminal’s activity. *Interviewing* can refer to a variety of face-to-face scenarios in which the researcher orally dialogues with the subject to get responses to specific questions (Hagan 2010, 148, Dantzker and Hunter 2012, 126). Researchers use different terms to describe the interview, including structure, unstructured, and in-depth interview. Given this method, interviews were used either as the primary method of data gathering or as a supplementary method in addition to various other data collection approaches (Decker and Chapman 2008). One remarkable study by Benson and Decker used interview techniques with offenders to analyse and evaluate the organizational structure of international drug smugglers in the U.S. In order to make sense of clearly structural parameters of those smugglers, 135 ‘high level’ drug smugglers located in federal prisons, the authors interviewed 34 federal prisoners by semi-structured interviews with open-end questionnaire techniques that concentrating on six thematic issues, including hierarchy, statement of rules, communication, adaptability, specializations or coordination and recruitment or promotion procedures (Benson and Decker, 132). Based on this, the authors concluded that ‘the structure of drug smuggling organizations, places little emphasis on the impact of organizational structure on operational processes’ (Benson and Decker 2010, 137, emphasis added).

In this thesis, prisoner interviews were not used, primarily for ethical reasons to do with the potential consequences for convicted drug traffickers and their families in a country, which imposes the death sentence for serious drug crime. In addition, there
are also grounds for treating information provided by offenders and their accomplices with caution, given the power relationship between interviewer and interviewee, and the possible motivation of offenders to provide erroneous details on matters that they do not fully comprehend (Foddy 1993, 3, 8). It is one of the concerning issues to be faced and overcome with researchers who focus on this topic (Tourangeau and Yan 2007, 859, Marquis, Marquis, and Polich 1986, 381), particularly with drug traffickers and their networks (Dudley 2013, Beittel 2013, Adler 1993). Therefore, this study will not focus on interviews with offenders but only approach anti-narcotic police officers in order to examine TransNT structure and operation. This issue will be more specifically mentioned at the next step of research design.

Thirdly, archival information, both electronic and hard copy documents can also be gathered and used to research TransNT. Archival records include public records, personal diaries and other historical documents which provide primary data that can be used as raw data. Archival information also encompasses secondary data sources which present analyses, syntheses, and evaluation of relevant personalities, organizations, and events (Lutzker and Ferrall 1986). Amongst these data sources, recorded wiretap conversations between offenders in prosecution cases can be analysed to identify the structure and operations of a TransNT. To illustrate this, between 2000 and 2006, Natarajan analysed two different cases relating to drug trafficking activities in New York City. One analysis, of cocaine trafficking, relied on wiretap surveillance recorded in around 600 pages of transcriptions of 151 telephone conversations, ranging in length from two to ten minutes (Natarajan 2000, 275-6). The latter concerned heroin trafficking, and was based on information extracted from 2,408 wiretap dialogues recorded in over 2,000 pages of transcriptions from 21
telephone conversations of between one and ten minutes duration (Natarajan 2006, 176). From these data sources, the authors were able to extrapolate structures, numbers of participants, hierarchies, broker networks and divisions of labour (Natarajan 2000, 285-6). However, as the author recognized that wiretap records have limitations to analyse specifically about criminal organizations because suspects target for wiretapping might not be significant members of a criminal group for example and might not therefore have deep knowledge of the criminal entities to which they are involved (Natarajan 2000, 293). In other words, the records might not be representative of organizational reality. Another specific difficulty to use this method in TransNT cases involving foreign persons, is the language barrier, because offenders often spoke in their mother tongue or slang during interview, thus, translation in transcription may result in loss of crucial information (Natarajan 2006, 178). Furthermore, the records of conversations are not also maintained in a complete form to support and assist the analysis process, thus, this current research will be not imitating Natarajan’s methods. Unfortunately, wiretap transcripts were not available for this thesis.

It can be seen clearly that the qualitative and quantitative methodological research adopted in the reviewed studies above all created fruitful, in-depth, descriptive data on drug trafficking activities or groups/firms. However, all of these publications focused on drug trafficking within a national scale, except for Natarajan’s cases regarding drug routes between the U.S. and Columbia but not cross-border. The primary aim of this study is to draw conclusions about the distinct characteristics of TransNT in Vietnam based on case studies occurred across the Vietnam-Lao PDR border’s domain. Yet, to fully understand the nature of TransNT in
Vietnam, it was necessary to speak to anti-narcotics police officers (CIPDRC), who are representative of LEAs in Vietnam and who have investigated directly and indirectly into selected case studies. Therefore, to analyse the organizational structure and modus operandi of TransNT cross Vietnam’s borderland with Laos, this study adopts a mixed methods approach.

3.3. Mixed methods research (MMR)

According to Wheeldon and Ahlberg (2012), the MMR researcher collects and analyses both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or in multiple phases of the research. In so doing, this approach draws on the strengths and minimizes the weaknesses of both forms of research (Driscoll et al. 2007). As the “third methodological movement” in social research, this mixing quantitative and qualitative techniques brings many advantages to the researcher (Creswell and Clark 2007, 13).

Currently, there are six types of core mixed methods with distinct features, namely the convergent parallel design, the explanatory sequential design, the exploratory sequential design, the embedded design, the transformative design and the multi-phase design (Creswell and Clark 2011a, Creswell 2011, Bryman 2013, Wheeldon and Khlerg 2012, Tashakkori and Teddlie 2010, Onwuegbuzie and Collins 2007). As Creswell and Clark (2011a, 68) raise and comment on the expectation of ‘researchers to carefully select a design that best matches the research problem and reasons for mixing in order to make the study manageable and simple to implement and describe’. To identify and generalize characteristics of TransNT across Vietnam’s borderland with Lao PDR, this thesis employed exploratory sequential design for reasons as follows:
First, assessing the nature of a drug trafficking group/network, particularly with cross-border scale, is a complex task with many uncertain dimensions that limit the kinds of data that can be gathered. Thus, an integrated approach using qualitative and quantitative is more likely to assist the researcher in achieving their goals. Through a mixing of methods and data sources, research findings are likely to achieve a fine grained analysis (Wheeldon 2010, 88).

Second, a mixed research method allows researchers to generate theory by utilizing qualitative research and then examining and evaluating these outcomes using quantitative techniques (Driscoll et al. 2007, 19). For instance, a qualitative research method is used to collect qualitative data to explore and understand one basic phenomenon and also can generate hypotheses that can be used to build a survey instrument to test these hypotheses through quantitative analysis (Creswell and Clark 2011b, 5). In addition, the benefit of a quantitative approach is that it is possible measure the reactions of a great many people to a limited set of questions, thus facilitating comparison and statistical aggregation of the data (Patton 1990, 14). Qualitative methods, in contrast, typically produce a diversity of specific information from and about a much smaller number of people and cases (Patton 2002, 14).

Thirdly, Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) emphasized that mixed methods research allows researchers to answer a broader range of research questions and to gain a deeper insight into social phenomenon. Thus, in this study, qualitative methods are used to ascertain basic factors that reflect the structure and operation of TransNT across Vietnam’s borderland with Laos. Quantitative methods are then used to test these findings with larger survey population. In this thesis, this is surveying CIPDRC officers with investigative experiences of drug trafficking cases in Vietnam.
Fourth, one of the most ambitious aims of this research is to establish a conceptual framework to better understand TransNT entities in Vietnam. This is done by examining organizational structure and modus operandi based on selected case studies, while also assessing TransNT’s impacts on law enforcement. Through conducting MMR, this study will assist LEAs comprehend more thoroughly the nature of TransNT in Vietnam.

Finally, combining assessments of interviewees (in the Phase 1) and opinions of surveyors (in the Phase 2), who were CIPDRC officers with experience investigating drug-related crime in the selected case studies, this study highlights the obstacles and challenges LEAs face in combatting TransNT. This section is considered as one part of the contribution of this research design for understanding in more detail about the practicalities of TransNT from a CIPDRC perspective.

3.4. Mixed method exploratory sequential design

3.4.1. Understanding the exploratory model

As is illustrated in figure 6 (below), the Mixed Methods Sequential Exploratory Design (hereafter the Exploratory Model) is comprised of a two-step approach, beginning with qualitative exploratory inquiry leading into a quantitative phase. At the most basic level, the purpose of this design is to use quantitative data and the results of the data analysis to interpret qualitative findings (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004, Creswell and Clark 2007, Tashakkori and Teddlie 2010). As argued, the two-step approach helps when the researcher wants to generalize qualitative results (Morse 1991) and to test aspects of a distinct theory or classification (Morgan 1998), or to
explore a characteristic/phenomenon in depth based on quantitative design (Creswell and Clark 2007).

The advantages of this design are considerable for a research project of this nature. Firstly, data collection in the qualitative phase can determine ‘salient score’ and identify potential relationships in order to build a conceptual framework (Wheeldon 2010, 87). The conceptual schemes that derive from the qualitative finding of the research can be tested in the quantitative analysis in the next phase. Secondly, the qualitative phase can be employed to consolidate and refine assessment tools for application in the quantitative study (Trahan and Stewart 2013, 63). Thirdly, quantitative analysis supports the researcher in deciding whether the results of the qualitative phase can be generalized (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004, 21). Fourthly, researchers can access local ‘socio-cultural’ knowledge that assists them to develop and improve those conceptual understandings and hypotheses most relevant for their relevant research area (Kelle 2006, 307). For all the above reasons, the exploratory method is used in this thesis to analyse the distinct characteristics of TransNT in across the Vietnam-Lao PDR border.

**Figure 6: The mixed method exploratory sequential design**

![Diagram of mixed method exploratory sequential design](source)

(Source: To be adopted by Creswell and Clark (2011a, 69)

3.4.2. *Mixed methods data collection and analysis*

Field research was completed in three major phases, summarized in figure 7 (below). As the figure shows, this design starts with the collection and analysis of
qualitative data to explore drug trafficking across Vietnam’s border with Lao PDR (Phase 1). Based on multiple cases, which were sourced from the Court judgements regarding TransNT in Vietnam, this study utilizes thematic and content analysis as the main method to analyse data at this qualitative phase. Subsequently, the findings of this analysis were used to construct a theoretical model that was then tested in the subsequent quantitative phase (Phase 2). In the second phase, the quantitative strand examined salient themes derived from conceptual framework using a survey questionnaire. One such questionnaire was designed and conducted in collaboration with CIPDRC officers.

Depending on the research question and design, in many mixed methods approaches, it is possible for participants to continue to contribute across different phases. However, with respect to the Exploratory Model, Creswell and Clark (2007, 123) note that this is not necessary due to ‘the individuals in the first stage of the data collection are typically not the same participants as those in the third stage. Because the purpose of the quantitative stage 2 is to generalize the results to a population, different and more participants are used in stage 3’. Therefore, although at the initial design state, this research did not eliminate the participants from the qualitative phase (interviewees in the selected case involved) in the quantitative phase (questionnaire); their attendance was not a compulsory factor to impact on the final findings in the second phase.
Figure 7: Flowchart of the basic procedures in implementing an exploratory design

Phase 1: Qualitative Approach
- Designing and selecting case study (Multi-case design)
- Data Collecting (Interview and Complete Observation)
- Data Analysing (Interview’s Transcription through Cross-case synthesis)

Phase 2: Quantitative Approach
- Constructing the Questionnaire
- Sampling
- Data Collection (Multimode survey)
- Data Analysis (SPSS binary test)

Phase 3: Synthesis
- Quantitative results
- Interpreting the Connected Results (Discuss to what extent and in what ways the quantitative results generalize/test the qualitative results)

- Questionnaire Design
- Translation from English to Vietnamese versions
- Stratified random sampling approach
- Mail survey
- Face to face
- Formatting a data file
- Coding and data entry
- Data cleaning
3.4.2.1. Phase 1 – qualitative data collection and analysis

This section describes the qualitative phase of this research project, focusing on the process of design and selection of case studies. The second part focuses on data collection stages, including participant observation and in-depth interviews. Finally, a brief introduction to data analysis is given.

- Designing and selecting case study

Case studies can be helpful when a phenomenon is broad and complex, when in-depth investigation of a holistic nature is needed, or when a phenomenon cannot be studied outside the context in which it occurs (Yin 2009). The case study, in essence, is a suitable method for answering research questions that ask ‘how’ and ‘why’ (Punch 2014), and particularly when ‘little is known about a phenomenon, and current perspectives seem inadequate because there have little empirical substantiation’, as argued by Eisenhardt (1989, 548). Researching multiple cases allows researchers to explore ‘the intensity and magnitude of concern’ (Bayens and Roberson 2011, 33) and provides a means of discovering the ‘dark figure of crime’ \(^{15}\) (Noaks and Wincup 2004, 11).

Regarding the quantity of selected cases, Robert Yin proposed selecting a few cases (two or three), a few other cases (four or six), a pair of six and 10 or nine and 12, depending upon research aims and objectives (Yin 1984, 2009). Another consideration is ‘which cases are likely to lead us to understandings, to assertions, perhaps even to modifying of generalizations?’ (Stake 1995, 4). With drug-related cases spread out across Vietnam, it was impossible to cover everything in the current study. Consequently, the researcher ‘hand-picked’ cases on the basis of whether they corresponded to an established criterion (Champion 2006, 178). The research focus was guided by informal conversation and dialogue with

\(^{15}\) As explanation of Coleman and Moynihan (1996, p.146) stated that the ‘dark figure of crime’ can be defined as ‘the figure for unrecorded crime or undetected offenders, that is to say those not included in official statistics’.
CIPDRC officers, who highlighted the geographical distributions and types of drug-related offences. The Northern, Central Northern Coast, and Southern regions are considered as three of the most complicated drug trafficking areas in Vietnam. Vietnam border with Laos is particularly problematic. Based on the nature of drug-related cases using criteria set out in the Criminal Code of Vietnam (CCV), only ‘particularly serious cases’ were chosen, and the geographic focus limited to at Dienbien (North-eastern region), Quangbinh, Quangtri, and Nghean (Central Northern Coast), and Ho Chi Minh City (Southern region).

Application was made to view the court transcripts of each case with the Provincial People’s Court of Ho Chi Minh City, Dienbien, Nghean, Quangtri, and Quangbinh. All cases were extracted from these court judgements after completing both trial and appeal stages. During the data gathering process, many cases were excluded from the final sample for a number of reasons. The most common reason for exclusion was not meeting established criteria for selection, especially because of insufficient evidence and supplementary documents to illustrate structure and operation of TransNT. Accordingly, the researcher selected two cases in Nghean, one case each in Dienbien, Ho Chi Minh City, Quangtri, and Quangbinh, respectively. In total, there were six selected case studies to collect data in the period of 2003-2013. To respect human rights, all real names in each case study were coded with numeric listing for defendant or initials were used for related actors.

- Data collection

Yin (1989) recommends six types of information sources that can be used to collect research data, including documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observations, and physical artefacts. These can be used individually, or they can be used in combination, and where more than one data source is used the rigour of research can be significantly increased (Creswell 2007, 75). This thesis uses participant observation and in-
depth interviews to gather primary data on cross-border TransNT cases, supplemented with data drawn from official documents.

**Participant observation**

Participant observation is considered as one of the useful methods in a variety of ways. Utilizing this method, Jorgensen (1989, 12) notes that it is possible to draw conclusions about ‘what goes on, who or what is involved, when and where things happen, how they occur, and why – at least from the standpoint of participants – things happen as they do in particular situation.’ This method is particularly suitable for identifying and assessing instances where ‘the phenomenon is hidden from public view’, for example crime and deviance, secretive groups and organizations, such as drug users and dealers (Jorgensen 1989, 13). Bayens and Roberson (2011, 144) divided participant observation in three ways: ‘complete observer’, ‘observer as participant’, and ‘complete participant.’

In this thesis, there were obvious concerns that prevented ‘complete participant’ or ‘observer as participant’ approaches in criminal trials. First, all of the selected cases were prosecuted by the courts and attracted the death penalty and consequently, the researcher was not able, and would not have been permitted, to interview defendants. Second, this study was implemented when the researcher was resident in Melbourne. Third, to ensure personal safety and to avoid complicated or dangerous situations that may occur during the fieldwork, the researcher did not join as ‘observer as participant’ in drug trafficking investigations with LEAs. Therefore, from these limitations, only ‘complete observer’ techniques were applied, principally through attending the Workshop of Anti-Narcotics Police Force: Experiences and Exchanges in September 2014 (hereinafter referred to as the Workshop) hosted by the People’s Police Academy of Vietnam (PPA).
As the highest ranking and most important institution in recruiting and training police officers for the Ministry of Public Security of Vietnam, the PPA plays a central role to educate senior police officers, investigators, and undercover agents, including criminal investigation on drug-related crime. In parallel with educating and training all levels of professional degrees, involving bachelors, masters, and doctor of philosophy in criminal justice and the criminology field, based on topics and its urgent priorities, the PPA also organizes annual workshops, seminars, and roundtable meetings. Accordingly, one workshop with 45 CIPDRC participating officers, who were representatives of LEAs involved in the prevention and investigation of drug-related crimes, was organized by PPA over a two-day period in September 2014. In order to attend the Workshop, the researcher contacted the board of directors of the PPA and its representatives at the Higher Education Faculty to identify the specific dates to visit and join this workshop when the researcher come back Vietnam to fieldwork. All participants are working at the CIPDRC headquarters in Hanoi as well as other provincial levels, including some locations with shared borderlands with Lao PDR such as Dienbien, Nghean, Quangtri, and Quangbinh.

Regarding the restricted nature of issue discussed in this Workshop, no information was permitted to be recorded or transmitted via any kind of recording or electronic equipment. Therefore, field notes were used to record information of value in this thesis (DeWalt and DeWalt 2012, Guest, Namey, and Mitchell 2012). Therefore, while carrying out this observation study, the researcher had to maintain a high level of attention to make high quality field notes of essential data. Based on complete observation at the Workshop, a number of key themes and its main opinions of Workshop’s participants about organization structure and modus operandi of TransNT in Vietnam were recorded. To limit mistakes in the note-taking process, follow-up discussion were conducted with the Workshop participants to clarify points and confirm the substance of lack of deliberations.
Interviewing

Interviewing is considered as one of the most important data collecting techniques for qualitative researchers in business and management (Myers 2009), social science (Bryman 2012) and criminal justice (Noaks and Wincup 2004). Interview is a research strategy that involves one person (the interviewer) asking questions of another person (the interviewee) to gather information that can be turned into research data. Moreover, as a basic skill for qualitative researchers in criminal justice and criminology, interviewing contributes to assisting researchers deal with questions about how LEAs perceive the complexity of TransNT (Vito, Kunselman, and Tewksbury 2008). In addition, interview data can provide extensive contextual information relevant to the broader research themes (Tewksbury 2009, 44).

Regarding types of interview, there are three core techniques, namely structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interview (Kvale 1996, Bryman 2008, Myers 2009, Bayens and Roberson 2011).

Table 3: Types of interviews (re-used from Myers (2009))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structured interviews</td>
<td>The use of pre-formulated questions, strictly regulated with regard to the order of the questions, and sometimes regulated with regard to the time available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>The use of some pre-formulated questions, but no strict adherence to them. New questions might emerge during the conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstructured interviews</td>
<td>Few if any pre-formulated questions. In effect interviewees have free rein to say what they want, often no set time limit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This study employs principally semi-structured interviews and in-depth interview techniques. CIPDRC participants involved in the in-depth interview processes were divided into three specific subject groups. One was a commander-in-chief; another was an investigator, who is a uniformed police responsible for criminal investigation under the Criminal Procedure
Code; and the rest were undercover police agents who cover professional reconnaissance skills and techniques that are of a different level of competence when compared with that of investigators. Participants not only provided information on drug trafficking operations, but also expressed their opinions about difficulties and barriers that limited their effectiveness in combating TransNT. For example, the person responsible for planning to anti drug operations, the commander-in-chief has deep background knowledge of the cases for which be irresponsible. Meanwhile, based on functions and responsibilities of each force, both investigators and undercover police agents posses detailed knowledge not only about organizational structure and role characteristics in the trafficking process, but also the modus operandi of trafficking entities in stockpiling, transporting, trading, and communicating. It is one of the main reasons why the researcher only chose six key participants in six selected case studies in lieu of numerous interviewees. One interviewee comes from Ho Chi Minh City, Quangtri, Quangbinh, and Dienbien and two at Nghean. Nghean is a special instance because it is considered not only the largest province of Vietnam having shared borderlands with Lao PDR, but also the one of the most complicated provinces in terms of drug trafficking.

Alongside Ho Chi Minh City, it is considered the largest consumer of narcotics in the Vietnam market (MPS 2014, UNODC and SODC 2012, SODC 2013b). In particular, there is a vast amount of illegal drug trafficking and trade between wholesalers and retailers at Ho Chi Minh City’s markets after being transported from Laos via the Central Northern regions.

In terms of questioning style in semi-structured interviews, open-ended questions were used to facilitate ‘an informal conversational interview’ (Patton 2002, 349). This approach is likely to create closed and trusting relationship between researchers and interviewees to discuss their experiences with TransNT (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009). The researcher speaks

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16 Although they are separated with three roles under the current regulations of Vietnam’s criminal justices, we used the police agent/officer in order to illustrate all of them in this study for simple writing.

17 Nghean has 6 districts, namely Quephong, Tuongduong, Kyson, Concuong, Anhson, and Thanhchuong, to share borderland areas with 3 Lao PDR’s provinces, namely Huaphanh, Xiengkhuang, and Bolikhamsay
Vietnamese, and thus interviews were conducted in that language and, because I am an experienced translator, transcripts were not sent to a third party. Where interviews could not be recorded, note taking from main information of the interviews were used (Kieren and Munro 1985). Though it is simple, quick, and inexpensive, this method has several disadvantages, particularly that field notes are not a verbatim record of discussions (Wengraf 2001, Ashmore and Reed 2000). In this circumstance, there are questions about the validity and reality of field notes. Burnard (1991) suggested researchers should:

…return to the people interviewed and asking them to read through the transcripts of their interviews and asking them to jot down what they see as the main points that emerged from the interview. This produces a list of headings which can then be compared with the researchers and the two lists can be discussed with the respondents (p.465)

To follow the above procedure and avoid mistakes and interruptions, personal mobile contact via free chatting voice software was utilised after the official interview meetings to verify field notes with permission of interviewees even when the researcher had returned Melbourne, Australia.18

With respect to the timeline to conduct interview, there were two slots for each meeting; one’s focus was on the organization’s structural issues and the other concentrated on the modus operandi of TransNT. The separate interview meeting was conducted, lasting around 30 and 45 minutes. One flexible schedule was needed to confirm and inform with interviewees before implementing. The procedure of in-depth interviewing was adapted from guidelines of Kvale (1996) with seven stages, namely thematising, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, verifying, and reporting. The interview questions are attached in Appendix 4.3.

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18 Apart from popular software free-of-charge such as Viber, Skype, and Tango, I used to Zalo software as one of the most popular Vietnamese free social contact apps. It was designed and developed by Vietnamese information technological experts.
**Data analysis**

As a core method, thematic analysis not only assists researchers in identifying and describing patterns (themes) of each case study, but also allows them to use these themes to analyse interview data (Joffe and Yardley 2004, 57). Moreover, with ‘a novice qualitative researcher’ (Braun and Clarke 2006, 98), it is also a relatively uncomplicated technique which permits the researcher to construct a model that best suits their data and the scope of their research questions (Trahan and Stewart 2013, 64).

There are two primary directions themes or patterns taken in thematic analysis: an inductive approach and a theoretical deductive approach. With the former approach, the researcher aims to code data without seeking to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame due to the themes identified being strongly connected to the data themselves (Braun and Clarke 2006, 83). In this method, thematic analysis allows for a rich description of the data set related to a broad research question, enabling the specific research question to evolve through the coding process. By contrast, in the latter analysis proceeds according to the researcher’s theoretical interest, and is more explicitly analyst-driven (Braun and Clarke 2006, 84). As a result, this form of thematic analysis tends to provide a less content rich description of the data overall, and instead focuses on a more detailed study of one aspect of the data, for example coding for a specific research question (Braun and Clarke 2006, 84). In this study, an inductive thematic analysis approach was utilized to identify organizational structure and modus operandi of TransNT based on multiple case studies. This allowed the researcher to identify main themes during interviews with CIPDRC officers. Yet, one conceptual framework, which covers factors (themes) of both structure and operation of TransNT in Vietnam, will be discussed in the interpretive chapter of this thesis.
3.4.2.2. Phase 2 – quantitative data collection and analysis

This phase focuses on design of the survey questions, based on the first phase’s outcomes, conducted with the CIPDRC officers. The first part presents the process of survey design, including developing a questionnaire and selecting population. Next, it is the process of data collection, which shows the process of selecting the survey team to support the researcher in deploying the questionnaire to respondents. Finally, data analysis will be deployed through validating data by the Chi-Square test.

- Survey design

Groves et al. (2004, 2) describe survey research as ‘a systematic method for gathering information from (a sample of) entities for the purpose of constructing quantitative descriptors of the attributes of a larger population of which the entities are members’. It can assist researchers to collect information about experiences, values, and attitudes from surveyors (Foddy 1993, 1). With this study, the purpose of survey research is to evaluate the nature of TransNT via CIPDRC officers’ perspectives. In order to apply survey research into the study, constructing the survey/questionnaire schedule is considered to play a central role of this phase.

- Constructing the questionnaire

Based on two themes found by qualitative phase, including 1) organizational structure and 2) modus operandi of TransNT, all questionnaires were categorized under two similar headings for the large-scale sections. The questionnaire version for this study is simply designed with three sections with the first section focusing on personal information of respondents. To identify and classify whether to relate or not relate the experience for combating TransNT cases in Vietnam, the current questionnaire used filtering to identify suitable participants. Thus, only those who answered “yes” were invited to continue with the next two sections, which covered two components: organizational structure and modus
operandi of TransNT. The number of questions in each section was equal to number of factors identified in these two components from the first phase. Questions were designed in form of nominal level and thus; collection data is in binary style.

- **Sampling**

The target population for this study consists of the CIPDRC officers previously mentioned. Identifying a suitable sample plays an important role in forming a well-developed questionnaire. In theory, there are two methods/designs to establish a sample technique in a survey process, namely non-probability and probability sample design. With the former, it is a sampling technique where the samples were gathered in a process that did not give all the individuals in the population equal chance of being selected through the several techniques, such as reliance on available subjects, purposive sample, snowball sample, and quota sample (Groves et al. 2004, de Vaus 2002). In contrast, with the latter, it is a sampling technique where the samples are gathered in a process that gives all the individuals in the population an equal chance of being selected through the number of methods, including simple random, systematic, stratified, and cluster sample (Groves et al. 2004, de Vaus 2002). Of course, each of them covers advantages and disadvantages of employing survey data collection and analysis (Daniel 2012).

In this study, probability design with multi-stage sampling techniques with the four stages as follows was used:

**Stage 1:** Stratified select surveyed CIPDRC groups (strata)

**Stage 2:** Purposively select CIPDRC Division in selected group

**Stage 3:** Randomly select surveyed CIPDRC officers in CIPDRC Divisions

**Stage 4:** Investigate surveyed CIPDRC officers
As mentioned in chapter 1, introduction of Vietnam’s background, there are 10 provincial areas with 35 districts and 138 communes in Vietnam shared common border with Lao PDR. According to CIPDRC regulations, Vietnam has relevant 10 CIPDRC Divisions in these provinces to play a pivotal role in combating drug trafficking. This study aims to focus on TransNT cases with complex circumstances such as, that they involve collusion between Vietnamese offenders and Laotian subjects, known as ‘particularly serious cases’ under the 2015 CCV. Under the criminal investigation regulations of Vietnam, these cases belong to responsibilities and functions of the CIPDRC’s provincial level, not at districted and commune level. Based on geographical distributions and CIPDRC’s distribution of MPS in Vietnam, accordingly, there were three groups (strata) involved in stratified sampling, namely the CIPDRC at North-western (Dienbien and Sonla), Central Northern (Nghean, Quangbinh, and Quangtri), and Highland Coast region (Kontum). Totally, there were six CIPDRC divisions invited to participate in the survey process. A simple random sampling with these six groups is conducted in the next stage 3 before sending survey questionnaire in stage 4.

Every effort was made to ensure that sampling was balanced equally across all six selected locations. There were three main criteria used to decide whom to approach. First, they were representative of LEAs at “hot spot” drug trafficking routes across Vietnam’s borderland with Lao PDR and cover their background and experiences to prevent and combat drug trafficking at their relevant province in Vietnam. Second, with the functions, roles, and responsibilities, when any drug trafficking cases, including TransNT committed by Vietnamese and Laotian subjects, occurred at their provincial locations, they were directly involved in investigation either partly or wholly this syndicate from start to finish. Thus, they were likely to understand the nature of these TransNT cases rather than other police forces. Third, some were police agents who understand organizational structure and modus operandi of TransNT through their accumulated professional experience in border policing. In addition, the rest of
participants play an important role to apply criminal investigation measures, particularly at interviewing/interrogating the accused of traffickers.

Further, all CIPDRC officers in this survey were contacted by the researcher via official letter of the PPA. This letter is considered as one of the compulsory procedural stages of Vietnam’s internal regulation between research academy and practical department in the police force. In accompanying with this letter, one formal invitation letter to participants, which was approved by the RMIT Human Research Ethic Committee, was also attached.

- Data Collection

There are varieties of questionnaire designs to serve data collection in survey process. To date, social scientists and criminologists are likely to select one of four techniques or combine, namely self-administered questionnaire, face-to-face interviews, telephone surveys, and computer-assisted forms on the Internet (Nardi 2006, de Vaus 2002, Groves et al. 2004). Depending on a research topic, set of questions, costs and durations, suitable and effective method to data gathering will be identified and applied to contribute construction a reliable and valid questionnaire. Among of these four methods, designing questionnaires for respondents to complete on their own is one of the most common methods due to this can be mailed and returned at a later time in person or by mail (Dornyei 2003, de Vaus 2002). Furthermore, the anonymity of self-administered questionnaires via mail survey permits respondents, ‘to be more candid, yet researchers do not always know if those responding are who they say they are and if they are answering honestly’ (Nardi 2006, 68). Therefore, to survey a large and diverse population of the CIPDRC’s provinces, the mail surveys method was chosen as the primary data collection strategy for the cross-border survey. Cover letters sent directly to CIPDRC Division of four selected provinces. Respondents were suggested kindly to mail or fax the survey to the Faculty of Criminal Investigation (FCI) of the PPA. The researcher received the survey outcomes from the Head of FCI at the PPA during implementing the second fieldwork.
To increase the response rate in this survey’s process, face-to-face interviews formed as a second strategy, which had the distinct advantage in permitting direct contact with survey participants (Groves et al. 2004, 192). This was implemented in two selected CIPDRC provinces. This process was supported and assisted by four PPA staffs who formed a survey team. Ideally, according to Weiss (1994, 119-120) a survey team should be 1) familiar with surveyed areas (priority to local people); 2) knowledgeable about drug trafficking and policing aspects; and 3) skilled in social communication. Based on these criteria, the survey team comprised members from PPA, selected from two faculties related to anti-narcotics police education, including the FCI and Faculty of Anti-Narcotics Related Crimes Investigation. They were divided into two groups to assist the researcher to conduct interviews in CIPDRC provinces where they were lecturing at in-service police classes. All survey team members were trained in a short course with a guidance of the principal investigator (de Vaus 2002, Groves et al. 2004). In this course, they were generally introduced to the project as well as some basic information about TransNT activities across Vietnam’s borderland with Laos.

-A pilot test

As a logical step of developing a questionnaire, pilot testing the draft questionnaire is a necessary requirement in survey process. This piloting of questionnaire should give to people similar to target sample who will participate the sampling has been designed for (Dornyei 2003, 63). This pretesting also permits the researcher to collect feedback about the instrument employed and its validity, reliability, and relevance. However, as Nardi (2006, 96) highlighted that these testing’s participants should not be part of research’s final sampling due to, at least, they have already known the questionnaire and thus, when they get it a second time, their responds could be bias the outcomes. Therefore, in this stage, one sample includes 25 participants in one in-service police class, who were studying at the PPA be invited to trial. They cover a variety of background in police force from different locations of Vietnam. Some
of them were anti-narcotics police officers at borderland’s provinces between Vietnam and Lao PDR.

- Data analysis

The target of this step is to measure validity and reliability of data collected from the CIPDRC questionnaire survey. There are many tests to analyse and validate data, so they are selected based on (1) goals of research and (2) characteristics of data (e.g. types of variables). Firstly, the goal of this research is to identify the nature of TransNT in Vietnam with focusing on organizational structure and modus operandi. In this process, these two themes needed to examine using data from six selected CIPDRC groups based on data from the CIPDRC questionnaire survey. Secondly, all data from this survey was designed in nominal variables, which are one of the types of variables with two or more categories. Due to these issues, Chi-square test for independence was selected to analyse and measure validity of data from the CIPDRC officer survey questionnaire.

The Chi-square test for independence, also called Pearson's Chi-square test or the chi-square test of association, is used to determine if enough evidence exists to infer that two nominal variables are related and that differences exist among two or more populations of nominal variables (Walker and Maddan 2009, 162-3, Kremelberg 2011, 124). In this research, Chi-square test is used to assess relationship between TransNT’s factors (organizational structure and modus operandi) factors and surveyed areas. When choosing a Chi-square test for independence to analyse data, it is needed to make sure that the data have to pass two assumptions (Pallant 2013, Walker and Maddan 2013a). They are:

- **Assumption #1**: Two variables should be measured at an ordinal or nominal level.
- **Assumption #2**: Two variables should consist of two or more categorical, independent groups.
In the study, TransNT’s factors and surveyed areas were considered as two variables of the Chi-square test. Regarding to the former, all data of organizational structure and modus operandi factors generated from the questionnaire of CIPDRC are within nominally expected variables (see more detail at the Appendix 4.4), thus they satisfy the first assumption. Similarly, the survey was conducted in six independent areas at three different regions in Vietnam, so the latter also fits requirements of the two assumptions.

Chi-square test was conducted via the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 23. The SPSS is a Windows based program that can be used to perform data entry and analysis and to create tables and graphs for comparing its variables. It is also capable of handling large amounts of data and can perform all of the analyses covered in the text and much more (Field 2009). To apply the Chi-square test of independence into SPSS, one null hypothesis is needed to involve. This null hypothesis was that two tested factors were independent or there was insufficient evidence to indicate relationships between TransNT’s factors (organizational structure and modus operandi) and studied areas (six provinces). The level of significance in this test was set at 0.05. The p-value from Chi-square test was used to test the above null hypothesis.

There are at least two main requirements for using Chi-square test in SPSS. First, the \( N \) for the crosstab should be five times the number of cells (Walker and Maddan 2009, 2013a, b). It guarantees that there is ample data from which to draw conclusions concerning the relationship between independent and dependent factors. In this study, there are 12 questions for 12 sub-themes (five for organizational structure and seven for modus operandi), which asked for three options per each (nominal variables). It means that there includes 18 cells.\(^\text{19}\) In other words, the sample size in this study should be at least 90 (18 cells x 5 = 90). The second

\(^{19}\) According to Nardi (2006, 154) cells are the locations where each row’s values and each column’s values intersect, and the number of them is quickly calculated by multiplying the number of row by the number of columns. In this study, there are six rows for six selected survey areas and three columns for three options per rows to choice. Therefore a 6x3 table has 18 cells in this study.
requirement of Chi-square is that 80% of the cells should have expected frequencies greater than five (Walker and Maddan 2009, 2013a, b). However, an alternative assumption by Roscoe and Byars (1971) is that the average expected count greater than two for testing with 95% significance that will ensure the objectivity of final outcomes (Greenwood and Nikulin 1996, 20-21, More 1986, 71-72, Larntz 1978, 255).

3.4.2.3. Phase 3 – Synthesis (Mixed Methods)

Recommending on how to mix the two different types of data sets in the mixed research study, Creswell and Clark (2007) state:

A study that includes both quantitative and qualitative methods without explicitly mixing the data derived from each is simply a collection of multiple methods. A rigorous and strong mixed methods design addresses the decision of how to mix the data, in addition to timing and weighting (p.83).

There are two basic concepts to assist understanding when and how mixing occurs: the point of interface and mixing strategies. With the former, it is a point within the process of research where both of qualitative and quantitative strands are mixed (Morse and Niehaus 2009). Accordingly, at least, there are four possible points during a research process, including interpretation, data analysis, data collection, and design. Meanwhile, with the latter, it is employed in relate to these points of interface and there are also four mixing strategies that can apply, namely 1) merging the two data sets, 2) connecting from the analysis of one set of data to the collection of a second set of data, 3) embedding of one form of data within a larger design or procedure, and 4) utilizing a conceptual framework to bind together the data sets (Creswell and Clark 2011a). The current study connects the data at both of qualitative and quantitative phases’ analysis stage and merges them at the interpretation and discussion stage. When mixing the data through interpretation and discussion, the researcher address each

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20 This argument is supported and consulted by Ruben Geert van den Berg from Amsterdam, the Netherlands via his official website for an SPSS tutorial (http://www.spss-tutorials.com/spss-chi-square-independence-test/). Our exchanges have included discussions on his website and email sharing since April 2016.
variable/code/theme by discussing both qualitative and quantitative outcomes and how data from both sets compare and contrast with one another. Furthermore, using this mixed style not only allowed a systematic examination of the nature of TransNT in Vietnam, but also illuminated additional findings in terms of barriers, challenges and implications for LEAs involved in combatting TransNT.

3.5. Some constraints and solutions

There are multiple limitations of both qualitative and quantitative approaches when viewed as separate entities. In mixed methods research, the purpose is not to view them independently; instead, assessing them for what they support and the richness both approaches bring to the study. Thus, when utilizing the Exploratory Model in this study, to achieve goals of the research, some constraints are unavoidable and some solutions to overcome these difficulties are proposed.

3.5.1. Practical concerns

Interviewing is not a simple activity with both interviewer and interviewee. With the former, interviewers must establish dialogue, understanding and empathy with interviewees. Cultural, linguistic variations, and their environmental working are important, and every community has special language, custom and culture norms and this affects significantly the quality and quantity of data collection process. With the later, as stated, interviewees were representatives of CIPDRC officers involved in the process of criminal investigation into drug-related crimes. They were employed in law enforcement in Vietnam, and had different views and worked under different regulations compared to the researcher’s host country (Australia). As mentioned above, all interviews were recorded with handwritten notes in lieu of tape-recording methods because interviewees were concerned about confidentiality. To some extent, consequently, this limitation has impacted on the quality of interview transcriptions,
particularly from non-English (Vietnamese) to English content. In other words, some of personal bias was unavoidable to analyse these data sources. To overcome this constraint and to reduce gaps between interviewer and interviewees, one official dispatch introduction of internal document in police forces as one of the formal forms of administrative management policy to connect and exchange between the Ministry of Public Security’s agencies in Vietnam, which has issued by PPAs which the researcher suggested, were necessary to implement this stage. Using this dispatch helped the researcher (interviewer) easier to contact with CIDRCP officers (interviewees).

3.5.2. Ethical concerns

Research may lead to discomfort, harm, and inconvenient feelings for participants and others. Further, as of the compulsory requirements with more than low risk study, all methods in this thesis have to match up the highest ethical standards in compliance with the RMIT HREC ethics approval, particularly with interview and survey process. For example, in Vietnam, when a low-ranking officer (interviewer) interviews a high-ranking police officer (interviewee), he has to be highly respectful towards them under traditional behaviours and regulations of police forces in Vietnam. Therefore, moral considerations and political respectabilities will be matched between researchers and interviewees.

3.5.3. Political concerns

Working in the community in Vietnam means that a research project needs to be approved by all stakeholders, including the Government of Vietnam. Particularly, all participants involved this study is CIPDRC officers, including high ranking and senior officials. Therefore, when implementing fieldworks, the researcher relied upon PPA to provide internal letters to recruit participants.
3.6. Summary of chapter

This chapter draws on the overall view about research design and its approach to drug trafficking concerns with a number of diverse methodologies. Research into drug trafficking activities and networks are impeded by concerns relating to access data, ethics, personal safety and the unreliability of sources, particularly in media and government agencies. Yet, most of these studies are deployed by scholars in the Western region and developed countries, not too much in Asian areas, particularly at Southeast Asian domain, including Vietnam and Lao PDR. Apart from either official government documents or annual non-government reports in terms of criminal justice and LEAs at formal inaugurations of President and regional workshops, both of Vietnamese and Laotian researchers found limitations in the statistic database on drug-related crime and its specific analyses. Furthermore, academic publications that focus on researching organizational structure and modus operandi organized crime in general and drug trafficking specifically, did not encourage scholars to immerse themselves this field due to its inherent risks and challenges, particularly the process of data gathering (von Lampe 2012). Meanwhile, use of the Exploratory Model which uses combining between qualitative and quantitative approaches to analyse the nature of TransNT entities in Vietnam is not available in both theory and practice.

The thesis adopted an exploratory mixed method approach. To begin with, designing case study approach and “hand pick” sampling techniques to identify six typical criminal court cases relating drug trafficking offences across five jurisdictions, which represents three regional areas that have shared borderlands between Vietnam and Laos. These selected cases were identified based on regulations of criminal law to stipulate “particularly serious crimes” and criteria of Ministry of Public Security of Vietnam to classify “typical drug trafficking cases”, including TransNT offences, which searched from the People’s Court of Ho Chi Minh City, Nghean, Quangbinh, Quangtri, and Dienbien province. Further, it was also advised and
recommended by CIPDRC agents, who are experienced in this field. Yet, those investigators or police agents in each these CIPDRC divisions were also invited to be involved in interviewing. Besides that, to fully understand on organizational structure and modus operandi of TransNT, as a completed observer, the researcher attended the Workshop hosted by the PPA to collect further information. Next, the multiple stratified sampling techniques to select and invite large CIPDRC officers at six provinces having shared borders with Laos joined in the survey. This survey’s design was constructed and built by using conceptual framework factors, which is extracted from initial findings of qualitative phase. All final findings of the Exploratory Model used in this study are presented in the next two chapters.
CHAPTER 4: KEY FINDINGS

4.1. Chapter overview and objectives

This chapter presents the findings from interviews conducted with CIPDRC officers involved directly in drug-related investigations in the six selected case studies. To support the main arguments and key assessments, data was also extracted from the Workshop, where the researcher conversed with CIPDRC officers about their experiences of combatting TransNT. All of these case studies were collected from across five court databases for Ho Chi Minh City, Nghean, Quangbinh, Quangtri, and Dienbien. Appendices outline the cases in chronological order with case-by-case presentation from the case study CS1 to CS6. Section 4.2 provides the descriptive statistics per jurisdiction and type of offence. The descriptive statistics present an overall picture of drug logistics and offenders’ personal characteristics and backgrounds such as ethnicity, age, gender, criminal record, education and occupation. Section 4.3 provides key findings of structural components that cover size group, the central actor, relationship-based organizing, division of labour, and geographical distributions of fellow-countrymen associations. In addition, section 4.4 presents main characteristics of operation and the tricks of traffickers in all selected case studies within the scope of script crime analysis, from preparation, pre-activity, and activity to post-activity of TransNT. In the final section, as one partly interpretation of qualitative phase in the Exploratory Model, one conceptual framework will be issued based on the initial outcomes of data analyses. It is a fundamental element to support for survey question design in the quantitative phase.

4.2. Descriptive case studies

4.2.1. Background of selected cases
Given its shared land borders with China, Laos and Cambodia, and its growing economy, Vietnam is a prime retail and transit market for narcotics produced in the Golden Triangle. According to the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) and UNODC, Vietnam is used as a transit point and storage domain for a variety of illegal drugs, more particularly for heroin and ATS manufactured in the Golden Triangle (UNODC 2011b, 160, INCSR 2012, 462), being smuggled into Australia (UNODC 2011b, 76), Canada, Europe, West African (UNODC 2013e, 56, INCSR 2013, 318) and the U.S. (INCSR 2014, 324). Of the three nations in the Golden Triangle, Vietnam shares over 2,000 kilometres of border with Laos, spanning 10 provinces (Hai 2017, 2016). Drug trafficking ‘hot spots’ are found in densely forest areas, criss-crossed by small serial roads, narrow valleys, and shallow streams (Hai 2017, 2016). These geographical features pose barriers and challenges to border control for LEAs; whereas, for traffickers, these advantage’s features are allowing them to operate between both sides of the border.

As mentioned at section 3.4.2.1, six selected cases are divided into three different regions in Vietnam, namely Central Northern provinces (Nghean, Quangbinh, and Quangtri); North-western province (Dienbien); and Southern area (Ho Chi Minh City). Within the areas covered by these six case studies, LEAs have investigated and successfully prosecuted 86 offenders. Of these, 59 individuals were arrested to temporary detention for serving trial court and appeal process; meanwhile, the rest are still at large. As one of the countries with the toughest anti-drug laws in the world, in Vietnam, anyone found guilty of possessing more than 600 grams of heroin, or more than 20 kilograms of opium, can face the death penalty. Accordingly, all six cases are categorised as ‘particularly serious crimes’- under the CCV. Thus, in regards to punishment, strict sentences were applied to 28 offenders, with some executed before this

research project began. In addition, there were 18 offenders punished with life imprisonment, and 13 offenders imprisoned from between seven months to 20 years. Basic information on all of these cases is provided in the appendices at the end of this thesis.

4.2.2. Drug logistics

Heroin is the main drug type in all six cases. In addition, amongst of them, apart from heroin, traffickers also covered ATS and Opium in two cases. All six court’s judgements confirm that heroin was sourced from external routes, particularly in Lao PDR. For three cases involving synthetic drugs (i.e. ATS), two involved shipments from Laos and the other shipped from Cambodia. Opium was for sale to persons from local ethnic groups in Dienbiendong district, Dienbien province, Vietnam. Furthermore, at the time of seizure, this quantity of 1.97 grams of opium was identified for stockpiling purpose, with no clear evidence to prove illegal trading. Heroin was sourced from locations in Laos for sale in Vietnam, with a considerable quantity brought in from Cambodia in case study CS1.

Table 4: Drug type by case study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Drug type</th>
<th>Heroin (kg)</th>
<th>ATS (tablets)</th>
<th>Opium (gram)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CS1</td>
<td></td>
<td>823.90</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS2</td>
<td></td>
<td>339.50</td>
<td>5,040</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>N/A(^{22})</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS4</td>
<td></td>
<td>89.25</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS5</td>
<td></td>
<td>46.20</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{22}\) This case is conflicted between final appeal judgement and defendant’s statement at the criminal investigation police agency and the court. Although, the offender CS3-No.1 confessed his other different times to trading both heroin and ATS in the past, no any legal evidence is supported this issue due to lack of his accomplice’s statements who are still at large, including S and N.T (Related actors). Thus, in this situation, the quantity and type of illegal drug is only identified by arresting him red-handed.
According to court judgements, the drug quantities for all of types of drugs identified in the six cases ranged between 1.97 grams and 823.90 kilograms. In total, there were around 3,927 blocks of heroin, with the equivalence of approximately 1,374.45 kilograms of heroin, with each block estimated to weigh about 350 grams (Kramer, Jelsma, and Blickman 2009, 46-47). In particular, the smallest quantity of illegal narcotics in the case CS3 was eight blocks, approximately 2.80 kilograms of heroin, whereas, the largest number of heroin in the case CS1 accounted for 2,354 blocks, the equivalence of over 823 kilograms of heroin. Meanwhile, one small quantity of synthetic drugs was recorded with the total of 6,361 tablets in which comprised by 1,000 tablets of amphetamine in the case CS1; 5,040 tablets of methamphetamine in the case CS2; and 321 tablets of methamphetamine in the case CS6, respectively. This does not account for 4,600 tablets of methamphetamine in the case CS3 because of insufficient evidence to prove CS3-No.1’s involvement in the illegal transportation from Laos and sale in Vietnam. Most cases involved multiple shipments. Generally speaking, the cases with lower drug quantities involved couriers who ingested or carried drugs in their baggage, meanwhile the cases with higher drug quantities involved more sophisticated methods of delivery such as concealment in the panels of trucks or trailers.

### 4.2.2. Characteristics of offenders

Characteristics of drug trafficking offenders across Vietnam’s borderland areas with Lao PDR, particularly at selected provinces in this study, namely Nghean, Quangtri, Quangbinh,
and Dienbien are varied. However, using demographic data analysis, some specific characteristics can be identified.

Identification and ethnic background

With respect to the offenders’ background, the majority in all cases were Vietnamese citizens, with 56 offenders, the equivalence of nearly 90%, meanwhile the rest of non-Vietnamese nationality is only around 10% with six offenders.

Figure 8: Identification of offenders

![Pie chart showing the percentage of Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese offenders.](image)

(Source: This statistic is collected and extracted from six drug-related cases)

Amongst these, people from the Kinh ethnic group predominate with a larger number of traffickers than all other ethnic groups (combined) (Figure 8). People from this ethnic group play important roles and hold senior positions in their drug networks, such as big boss, first lieutenant or leader’s sub-coordinators. Apart from one identified trafficker of Chinese origin, in the case CS1, who lives in Ho Chi Minh City (CS1-No.29), the remaining Vietnamese offenders were from minority groups living across the Lao-Vietnam border. Principally, these

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23 This offender was of Chinese ethnicity, but bearing Cambodian citizenship documentation when committing drug-related crime in Vietnam’s territory.
were from the Hmong ethnic minority group, including one offender who was born and resident in the Huoikeo commune, Muongkhamcot district, Bolykhamxay province, Lao PDR (CS6-No.9) and another was born in Kyson district, Nghean province, Vietnam but resident at the Lacxao commune, Muongkhamcot district, Bolykhamxay province, Lao PDR (CS6-No.10). In addition, some of accused (related actors) who were prosecuted but escaped arrest warrants were also from the Hmong ethnic minority in Dienbien province, Vietnam such as L.A.H and L.A.T in the case CS5. With the scope of organizational structure of drug trafficking groups, based on traditional culture, knowledge, and language, they often either contribute as drug couriers or act as brokers between Laotian drug suppliers and Vietnamese retailers and consumers. With similar manner and customs in clans and local communities, they have a distinct advantage in connecting with Laotian nodes for collecting and transporting illegal narcotics into Vietnam.

**Figure 9: Ethnic classification of Vietnamese offenders**

![Ethnic classification of Vietnamese offenders](image)

(Source: This statistic is collected and extracted from six drug-related cases)

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24 “Blurred identity”- issues is one of the specific concerns between two governments, Vietnam and Laos, in identifying original birthplaces for their native citizens, particularly at “blurred interconnection’s points” of two sides where most of ethnic minorities’ groups of both Vietnamese and Laotian have a long relationships and traditional culture in the past and still present. Yet, this flexible movement permitted residents of both countries go-to-back as one of the forms of “freedom migration”, and furthermore, many of those have already married without registration with local authority, known as “illegitimate marriage”. Accordingly, both these concerns are also recognized as one of the difficult issues when LEAs of two sides need to identify exactly suspect’s identification to prosecute their criminal act under hosted country’s criminal law.
A small percentage of offenders, approximately 10 per cent or six persons, were foreigners. These offenders can be divided into two categories; one is a foreigner who bears only their identification certificate and the other comprises Vietnamese citizens with dual nationality. Accounting for defendants, only six foreigners were charged directly by Vietnam’s courts in three case studies. There were three foreigners, including two Laotians in the case study CS6 and one Cambodian in the case study CS1; and three dual citizens, including two Vietnamese with U.K. citizenship and one Vietnamese national with Laotian citizenship in the case study CS2. Some of those offenders were considered high ranking in their TransNT network, known as “Godfather” (Ông chú or Bố già) in Vietnamese language) such as CS2-No.4 in the case CS2 who lived more than 20 years at Laos with his professional disguises (i.e. Laotian innovative business entrepreneur with his close relationship to local community). On the other hand, if also calculating offenders who evaded capture and prosecution but were subject to arrest warrant, those of foreign backgrounds were more numerous, including Chinese in the case study CS4, CS5, and CS6; Cambodian and Thai in the case study CS1; and Laotian in all of six cases. It shows that although Vietnamese offenders contribute to the main percentage in TransNT cases, non-Vietnamese subjects of diverse origins are significantly involved in drug trafficking activities across Vietnam’s borderland with Laos.

*Gender and age of offenders*

The breakdown of offender by gender in selected cases indicates an imbalance between males and females engaged in drug trafficking. Overall, traffickers were mostly male, with 42 male offenders (71%) as compared to 17 women (29%) (*Figure 10*). Women occupy roles at many different levels within trafficking groups, including the role of “big boss” (P.T.T in the case CS2; N.T – Laotian in the case CS3), drug brokers (N.T.Th) or couriers in the case CS1.

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25 Within the scope of this thesis, a “foreigner” is understood as a non-Vietnamese nationality under the Law on Nationality of Vietnam
Furthermore, in these cases, although no women were prosecuted directly at trial and appeal, there were many female trafficking suspects who evaded warrant capture. In the case study CS5, the position of the highest-ranking position in the drug network was held by women. Both co-offenders’ leaders in this case, CS5-No.1 and CS5-No.2, contributed to the design and establishment of their organization and guided its operations throughout the drug supply chain. Under their direction, heroin was sourced, drug couriers recruited, logistics issues addressed, to achieve a smooth operation in which their employees merely executed or aided their plans, notably CS5-No.3, CS5-No.4 and CS5-No.8.

Regarding age, the offender was aged between 22 and 71 years old in which the youngest is the offender CS1-No.10 (Vietnamese) and the oldest is CS2-No.4 (Vietnamese -Laotian). According to the current CCV regulations, persons aged 16 and above bear penal liability for all crimes they commit, including unlawful stockpiling, transporting, and trading narcotics. It is also presents at the below charts.

Figure 10: Gender and age of offenders

(Source: This statistic is collected and extracted from six drug-related cases)

In the current study, ages subject to penal liability were separated by three groups, including full 16 to<30 years with offenders, 30 to<45 with offenders, and over 45 years with
offenders. There were nine offenders at the first group, 42 offenders at the second group, and 8 offenders at the third group with the equivalence of around 15.25%, 71.20%, and 13.55%, respectively. In fact, the age of traffickers mostly varied with the type of functions and responsibilities adopted in the distribution chain. For example, at the highest positions in all six cases, was held by people in the second age group; whereas, nobody less than 30 years old held an important senior role in their syndicate. The offenders who held a managerial position, such as lieutenants, supervisors, recruiters and principals, were generally aged in their mid-30s to mid-40s. Meanwhile, on average, the drug couriers and drivers were predominately younger offenders, aged fewer than 30. However, the age of couriers in the CS1 and CS5 were older than this average, both of CS1-No.7 (male) and CS5-No.5 (female) were aged in 50s. This again underscores the wide variability in offender profiles and the structure of drug-trafficking groups and distribution networks.

Criminal records

Not all offenders in the selected drug trafficking cases were recidivists. In fact, only 14 defendants had criminal records, accounting for 23.70%, in comparison to 45 participants with no prior record. In only two cases, CS1 and CS2, were there defendants with criminal records, 10 in CS1 and four in CS2.

26 Under the Criminal Code of Vietnam (CCV), ages subject to penal liability divided into two cases, one is that persons aged full 16 or older shall have to bear penal liability for all crimes they commit; and other is that persons aged full 14 or older but under 16 shall have to bear penal liability for very serious crimes intentionally committed or particularly serious crimes. However, crossing all of six selected cases, no anyone belong to the latter group. Thus, in this research, we assumed that age of offender would be started at full 16 years old, which is satisfies with the former groups.
In the remaining cases, most defendants were first-time offenders. The fourteen ex-convicted offenders can be divided into two groups, one being those charged by Vietnamese courts and the other those sentenced by courts outside Vietnam, including courts in the U.K. and Laos. The former is the larger group, with 11 defendants in cases CS1 and CS2, that is 78.5% of defendants, compared to three defendants in the case CS2, namely CS2-No.2, CS2-No.5 (by U.K. jurisdictions), and CS2-No.4 (by Lao PDR court).

Criminal record correlated with seniority, but only weakly. Amongst of ex-offenders, four leaders in the case study CS1 (i.e. CS1-No.1, CS1-No.2, CS1-No.3, CS1-No.4) and two organizers in the case study CS2 (i.e. CS2-No.1 and CS2-No.4) were also classified as occupying the highest position in their drug trafficking networks. All had more than two previous convictions and were wanted in person by LEAs in their criminal profile. One offender (CS2-No.1) was charged with the death penalty for his drug trafficking crimes but escaped.
In the case CS1, there were four defendants with minimal previous convictions, namely CS1-No.8, CS1-No.15, CS1-No.27, and CS1-No.29 with only one previous conviction; whereas, the offender CS1-No.26 had the highest number of convictions, being jail, 1986, 1992, 1995, 1996, and 2001 prior to this case. In the case study CS2, three recidivists had been convicted outside Vietnam, being CS2-No.2 and CS2-No.5 sentenced 12 times and seven times by U.K. tribunals and courts, respectively; meanwhile, their co-offender (CS2-No.4) was also high on the wanted lists of Interpol by Laos Police, and the Vietnamese Police Force. In fact, for the case with Laotian offender involvement that is often very complex. In foreign citizenship and strong local community ties among foreign defendants posed significant diplomatic and bureaucratic problems for Vietnamese LEAs, because the Lao PDR government and Laotian communities were very eager to protect their citizenship’s rights. (MPS 2014, Cong an Nghe An 2013, AIPA 2013).

Education and occupation issues

Educational levels of drug-related offenders varied greatly in all selected cases. In Vietnam, although the general education system can be identified and approached with “innumerable perspectives” (Jonathan 2011, 47); basically, it can divided into three levels: primary, lower-secondary, and upper-secondary education. Of defendants in the six cases, eight people (13%) had only primary education. This is the lowest percentage in comparison to both of latter groups in which the lower-secondary level is the highest number with 46%, or 27 offenders, and the upper-secondary level with 41% or 24 offenders.
Regarding to education of the 11 leaders/organizers identified in these case studies, educational attainment also varied across all three levels, for example primary education in the case study CS1 and CS2, lower-secondary education in the case study CS4 and CS5, and upper-secondary education in the case study CS1, CS2, CS3, and CS6. However, seven offenders in this category graduated at upper-secondary level (CS1-No.2, CS1-No.3, CS1-No.4, CS2-No.1, CS2-No.3, CS3-No.1, and CS6-No.1), suggesting that educational attainment is in some ways related to the capacity to coordinate complex leadership tasks in the drug trafficking world.

Regarding to different positions in drug trafficking network (i.e. broker, courier, lieutenant, supervisor and so on), education levels are also diverse. Most of those lower-ranked participants completed their education between primary to upper-secondary. Particularly, one offender (CS4-No.4 in the case CS4) was achieved professional skills with education degrees teaching at lower-secondary school at their local district before succumbing to the temptations of crime. This is perhaps an indication of the financial rewards to be gained from trafficking.
compared to wages earned as a government employee. Besides that, at least, there were 10 offenders in the case CS1, CS2, and CS3 those who were ex-military (CS1-No.7, CS1-No.13, CS1-No.17, CS1-No.22, CS1-No.27, CS2-No.8, and CS3-No.1) and ex-police officers (CS1-No.3, CS1-No.5, and CS1-No.25) before committing as drug-related offenders. Amongst them, both of CS1-No.3 and CS1-No.5 were anti-narcotics police officers of one mountainous district in Nghean province, in which the former is police captain and head of this squad, meanwhile, the latter is his colleague. It illustrates the vulnerability of people in key positions of trust to the financial allures of drug crime. Their motivation was purely money. Otherwise, they were deliberately compromised by traffickers to force them into a life of crime when they have involved drug trafficking activities in the past.

In this study, based on court judgements, occupations of offenders were divided into six main groups, namely farmer, business, driver, staff, “unstable”, and others. Amongst cases, in the case CS2, there are two offender cover more than two occupations. In particular, the offender CS2-No.2 is a driver and run a business; meanwhile, the offender CS2-No.8 is a driver, a businessman, and a builder. Thus, those offenders are categorised as dual career. Meanwhile, the category of “others” means all other defendants with single occupations not previously listed, such as tailor, or teacher.

**Table 5: Occupation of offenders in the selected cases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name case</th>
<th>Unstable</th>
<th>Farmer</th>
<th>Driver</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Trader</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CS1</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CS2</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CS3</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27 According to anti-narcotics police’s criminal profile, both CS1-No.3 and CS1-No.5 have been expelled from the Vietnamese Police Force since becoming addicted to drugs in 2001. After this event, they escaped and connected with drug trafficking groups in the Southern markets before joining in the CS1-No.1’s syndicate.

28 An unstable job is one that is likely to be terminated at any time. In this current context, offender could be considered as different occupations and skills before committing a drug-related offence.
A farmer is defined as someone with an agricultural background and knowledge of agricultural production, such as sweet potato or cassava growers (CS1-No.18, CS5-No.4, CS6-No.5, and CS6-No.6), livestock farmers (CS1-No.8) and rice growers (CS4-No.3 and CS4-No.5). Person from these groups generally washed as either “drug couriers” or bodyguards with proportion of around 18.65%, 11 farmers out of total offender’s career, except for the offender CS4-No.3 who played the role of “broker” between “Mr Big” his associates and retailers.

Business is not a formal occupation category and is a very broad term covering very small scale to very large-scale independent market entrepreneurs. Offenders in this category were either co-founders or managers in private restaurants, such as offender CS2-No.5, or as employee of a trading company before joining a drug trafficking network (CS2-No.3 and CS5-No.6 for example). Besides that, some of them ran small goods and furniture shops in their local community in order to establish a public reputation as an honest, law-abiding person, such as offenders CS2-No.4, CS4-No.2 and CS4-No.6. However, offenders CS3-No.1 and CS6-No.1 are in a different category again. As network organizers and leaders, both used legitimate businesses as a front to disguise their illegal activities. Holding roles executive director of companies, they were considered economic professionals. Both were also cultivated public persons by engaging in charitable activities in their local communities.
Several defendants were also professional drivers in Vietnam. It contributes as the second position in compare to the rest of careers with 14 offenders, accounted for about 20.35%. Accordingly, all participants in this group comprised of two types; the first type has full driver functions and responsibilities and the other is assistant driver or second driver who assists with technical issues or logistic supports during drug transportation. The former plays an important role to deliver drugs from abroad (Laos and Cambodia) to domestic markets. They also arrange for heroin to be concealed with other goods before re-entering Vietnam, such as the offender CS1-No.12, CS2-No.6, and CS6-No.2. The latter provides active support in gathering “goods” (known as **hàng** in Vietnamese) before concealing with other goods or equipment to avoid detection. They also escort and protect accomplices and “goods”, as exemplified by offender CS1-No.10, CS2-No.8, and CS6-No.4

Regarding “staff”, case study CS1 covers 8 offenders individually contracted to work for one enterprise, including a technical officer (CS1-No.13), communications person (CS1-No.14), railway staff (CS1-No.16, CS1-No.20, CS1-No.22, and CS1-No.23), security officer (CS1-No.21) and clerk in paper manufacture’s company (CS1-No.17). No specific evidence proves that they used their professional status to commit drug-related crime. For example, no railway staff delivered heroin via rail in case study CS1.

‘Unstable’ employment is a category that refers to persons with no fixed occupation. It covers people who were formerly employed in a recognized occupation but not working in that role at time of arrest, such as ex-soldiers and ex-policemen in the case study CS1. Those offenders contribute with the highest percentages compare with the rest of occupations, accounting for around 25.40%, with 15 participants. Among of them, they play as organizer or leader in their drug trafficking network. For example, in the case study CS1, the four most senior positions were offenders with unstable occupations.
Others in occupational classification cover diverse background, including tailor (CS6-No.8), builder (CS1-No.28), and teacher (CS4-No.4).

4.3. Structural components in transnational narcotics trafficking entities

Many criminologists apply social network analysis as a methodological tool to map criminal entities, such as drug supply networks, youth gangs, organized crime groups and terrorists networks (McGloin and Nguyen 2011, Sageman 2008, Morselli 2009, Calderoni 2011). The initial contributions of those authors have illustrated the considerable value of Analyst Notebook or comparable software to assist both scholars and LEAs to develop a comprehensive picture of crime groups under investigation (Dijk and Spapens 2013, 8). Unfortunately, in Vietnam, it is not possible to make full and effective use of these technologies largely because there is paucity of data, no accessible database system, and limited information infrastructure and technical skills to support one (UNODC and SODC 2012, UNODC 2013a). Thus, this thesis analyses criminal networks by extrapolating key indicators, namely size of group; centrality of actors; relationship between offender and their associates; position, skill, and role of key members, network nodes, and network adaptability.

4.3.1. Group size

Size is considered as one of the most fundamental factors when researching criminal networks in general and TransNT entities in particular. In fact, depending on whether the drug trafficking activities involved a single shipment or multiple shipments, the size of group will be established from the number of group members and network density rather than scale of activity (Vy 2013, Dijk and Spapens 2013, Morselli 2009). Accordingly, within the scope of simple understandings, the density of a TransNT network is measured by the actual number of ties between actors and by the possible number of nodes (Morselli 2009). The assumption in that there will be “more than one relation in a social network data set” with “multi-relational
networks, which could include both directional and non-directional relations” (Wasserman and Fraust 1994, 73). In other words, network density emphasises the portion of the potential connections in a network that are actual connections, as best as can be established with the available information (Lemieux 2003).

TransNT groups are classified according to three general sizes, small, middle, and large size. First, in terms of small size, it is often created by at least one principal offender and their related actors (associates), numbering less than six persons. With this size, as a leader of network, he/she establishes and manages his/her organization by himself/herself through connecting with both of “input”-and-“output” sources. In this situation, to propose “the group hazard hypothesis”, Hindelang (1976) argued that the presence of two or more offenders is likely to increase the number of potential mistakes than for one person acting alone, which also increases the possibility of detection and arrest by the police. Co-offenders might betray each other leading to arrest or by disclosing information to LEAs when arrested (Morselli 2009, McCarthy, Hagan, and Cohen 1998). The formation of any criminal group involves a decision that the benefits of cooperation vastly outweigh the risks. In TransNT, one person cannot be responsible for all aspects of a drug operation. In Vietnam context, organizers not only contact directly with narcotics suppliers in Laos markets, but also exchange directly with drug buyers or customers in Vietnam’s retail markets (one representative of Group #1). Adaptability is thus vital to group survival. Networks if exchanging between Vietnamese and Laotian traffickers are often fluid and loosely organized, even where group size is small. As one investigator for case study CS3 explains,

In this case, although we only prosecuted and arrested one defendant (CS3-No.1) with fully legal evidences, other related actors (N.T in Laotian and T in Ho Chi Minh City’s retail dealing) have still

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29 This terminology – ‘related actor’, in this context means that any suspects have a direct relationship with core criminals or their sub-coordinators in the TransNT entity. Yet, they involve some or all activities of these drug trafficking groups/networks in practice. Some of those related actors have been prosecuted by LEAs for their criminal abilities, but they were still at freedom; meanwhile, others would not identified without legal evidences.
continued at large…uhm thus, I think that size of this case is small one but dense network ties have been employed many times to collect and integrate shipments of narcotics from Laos to Vietnam (Interview #3)

Accordingly, although this relates to a small size group with a limited number of participants, with at least two offenders, the density of network ties between primary offender and associates is high. It is possible that the principal offender (leader) collaborated with other related actors (accomplices) but there is no available evidence of this. With respect to Laotian criminals, because of legal barriers including extradition regulations and transfer of sentenced persons between Vietnam and Laos, knowledge among Vietnamese LEAs is limited even if suspicions appear to be well-grounded. As the investigator continued,

At least, through interrogating with CS3-No.1, we can confirm that there are 14 times to contact between he and N.T (related actors) from Vietnam to Laos with purpose of depositing and purchasing heroin and ATS; and 12 times to exchange about prices and methods of narcotics delivery between CS3-No.1 and D (related actors) from Quangtri to Ho Chi Minh City. Thus, at least, we had to spend around 150 days to prove all of these information and documents before prosecuting this case. Although Laotian Police did not succeed to continue for identifying her criminal abilities, we recognized that she was one of the most important nodes to provide illegal drugs to him to transfer to Vietnam’s domestic markets (Interview #3)

A middle-sized group ranges from six to 10 participants, in the Vietnamese context. Apart from potential partners among Laotian drug suppliers, this sized group is often established with one organizer/leader and their associates who will focus on their operations in Vietnam. In this way, the organizer finds it easier to control and guide the drug trafficking supply chain process. For example, in the case study CS4, apart from the Mr Big boss (N.C.H – related actor), still at large, all of five offenders had to comply strictly and fully with their boss’s requirements (CS4-No.1). In addition, based on either fellow-countrywoman\(^{30}\) (between CS4-No.2 and CS4-No.3) or family relatives (between CS4-No.4 and CS4-No.5), they created a closed circle for sharing information, and exchange of details of operations. Furthermore,

\(^{30}\) This terminology – “fellow countryman”, will be explained and analysed more detail at section 4.3.6
almost all of their activities involved internal interactions with minimal external assistance. As one of the investigators for CS4 stated:

One of the most prioritized principles in this drug trafficking group is the more crowded, the more complicated! Thus, from collecting drugs at Laos areas to delivering return Vietnam, all their actions and plans were established and implemented with minimal stages and limited conversations. I can show you an interested situation that on 27 June 2012, with only one mobile phone call from primary offender (Mr. Big boss – N.C.H) to his associate (CS4-No.2) for requesting to find drug courier, she connected immediately to her fellow-countrywoman (CS4-No.3) to ship 10 blocks of heroin in this day (Interview #4).

These mid-size groups were likely to change over time their modus operandi to source and collect from Laos using sophisticated tricks to avoid LEA pursuit. “With this close knit form, they can maintain their activities for a long time. Thus, though at least after five years monitoring we can break this case, I think N.C.H and his accomplices have transported and traded substantial quantities of drugs in the past” (Interview #4). Information sharing in this scale of organizations is more effective, particularly if they come from the same local community, and have grown up together (one representative of Group #1). Traffickers prefer to use informal codes in their communications and so group stability is essential (Benson and Decker 2010, Morselli 2009). As in the case study CS5, investigator states that, although this case is not really big size with large members, it was established and operated based on one “closed knit group” with six out of seven defendants grew up and shared their childhood in Thanhuyen commune, Dienbien district. I think that it makes their network more confident and interactive together during commit a drug-related cycle process. The process of communication sharing is only applied by local language or short slang such as “gạo” (means heroin), “tũi” (means packages for quantity), or “cơm thiu” (means that heroin is not good for quality) (Interview #5)

The third category, large size, comprises over 10 persons, again, for the Vietnamese context. The shape of this scale of network is often controlled and managed by an organizer or core organizing group, similar to the wheel network in Kenney’s typology (Kenney 2007b, a)
and criminal network in Williams’ classification (Williams 2001b, 1998). Furthermore, this group’s size is comprised of multiple subgroups, with individual sub-group heads under management and control of one leader/organizer. For example, in the case study CS1, there were three subgroups with 29 defendants prosecuted directly in court, with an estimated 24 related actors who avoided arrest, making the largest case during the period of 2003-2013 in Vietnam (MPS 2014). As an investigator in the case study CS1 states,

> Until I have been required to join this operation, I did not possibly imagine about the real size of this organization. To be honest, I was really surprised at the volume of members in this network and if we success to arrest all of offenders related, at least, there are 47 accused. They are combined by diverse background and professional criminal profile before joining to become as one of the biggest and most complicated transnational drug trafficking in the 2000s (Interview #1)

Accordingly, given the size of the group, functional division of labour was necessary – one seen by a ‘Mr Big’. Functional roles covered all necessary stages from purchase and delivery of drugs to their re-packaging, blending and distribution. Although not establishing their organization as a formal hierarchy structure with clear levels of authority under the UNODC’s typology (2002), either vertical or horizontal organization, in this large group, the central actor maintains several control.

> In my opinion, I assume that more crowded offenders in the criminal network, more complicated and sophisticated structure. With the larger participant in this case, it is divided as clear as possible into three subgroups, including supplier; re-packagers and delivers; and distributors and commander. Of course, the role of CS1-No.1 plays a central position to control the whole of his network during over 5 years (Interview #1)

In short, different sized groups will be organized around power. Group size or network ‘density’ does not determine structures and modus operandi. Furthermore, individuals and their co-offenders will often be distributed with specific duties and roles in the process of drug transportation. Some group members might also be part of other trafficking networks, making
their activities difficult for LEAs to monitor, particularly when their roles change depending upon in which network and which operation they are engaged. It is the flexibility of these TransNT entities with diverse modus operandi, variable organizational scale and influence with peers that makes the task of law enforcement so complex, especially at the cross-border and regional levels. As Reuter (2014) notes that ‘since drug markets are so large… the nature of the enterprises in drug markets varies greatly across countries, drugs, and levels of distribution in terms of their size, durability, and relation to other criminal activities’ (p.359). Thus, to map the degree of an organization and its structural characteristics we need to identify central actors and their group boundaries, focusing on the role of leader in identified groups.

4.3.2. The central actors

Similar to the graph approach in social network analysis, in criminal network analysis we need to identify the most important actors within a criminal network. Wasserman and Fraust (1994) highlight that actors who are the most important or the most prominent are usually located in strategic locations within the network’ (169) and even, ‘the ties of the actor make the actor particularly visible to the other actors in the network’ (169, 172). With respect to criminal networks, Sparrow (1991, 263-4) argues that seeking the centre of a criminal organization helps to identify those offenders who are ‘vital, key, or pivotal, and target them for removal or surveillance’ in which, ‘centrality is an important ingredient (but by no means the only one) in considering the identification of network vulnerabilities’. In defining centrality, Morselli (2009, 12) stresses that ‘at the individual level, [it] could be measured simply as the number or proportion of contacts with whom a participant is directly connected within a network’. However, as will be illustrated, centrality in TransNT networks is often very difficult to

31 As an illustration in this thesis, among of two cases, CS1 and CS2, the offender CS2-No.1 play as a dual role, one is a broker in the case study CS1 for connecting between demanders (Vietnamese) and suppliers (Laotian) in several drug trading and other is a core offender in the case study CS2 for leading the whole of his syndicates from Laos to Vietnam.
determine because leaders prefer to disguise their identities, even from those with whom they work and trade.

In order to make sense of the role of the central actors, Freeman (1979) suggests three notions of centrality, which were re-stated by Sparrow (1991) and Wasserman and Fraust (1994). These are, degree centrality, closeness centrality, and betweenness centrality. Centrality measures determine key nodes based on their connections, contacts, and positions in a network (de Nooy, Mrvar, and Batagelj 2005, Scott 2000, Hanneman and Riddle 2005, Tayebi and Glasser 2012, Tayebi et al. 2011). To determine degree centrality, one identifies the nodes with the most direct and ‘thick’ or dense connections in the network (Brantingham et al. 2011, Tayebi and Glasser 2011). In other instances, it is based on the number of direct ties between one actor and other actors in the TransNT entities, either primary offender or their accomplices (Lemieux 2003). Of course, the actor with the greatest number of direct connection is labelled as the centre of the network or ‘leader’. Notwithstanding, in TransNT network, this could not suitable circumstance for all cases because drug offenders tend to work through others to plan a drug-related operation (Xu and Chen 2003). Proximity also influences centrality is calculated by the number and ‘distance’ of links between actors in a network (Lemieux 2003, Brantingham et al. 2011). Accordingly, when the central actor establishes the closest proximity, he/she will play a strategic position with regard to the effective direction of a network. In particular, the node with the lowest total distance is assumed to be the most central since it is closer to all other nodes in the network (Iwanski and Frank 2014). Thus, to some extent, both degree and closeness centrality will indicate the importance and influence of the central node and then actor in a network. Betweenness centrality is the number of times a node appears on the shortest line between two other nodes. This is a measurement of the significance of the ‘intermediary position’, sometime known as ‘key intermediaries’ in the criminal network chain, held by actors in a network (Morselli 2009, 12).
Instead of approaching the software infrastructure of criminal networks to determine the centrality of an actor based on various multi-relations between nodes in a network, this research instead extrapolates central actor’s impacts through identifying the role of leaders in TransNT activities. A leader, as Morselli (2009, 14) conceptualized those who are participant with the ‘highest cognitive load’ or the network member who manifested the most qualities associated with leadership potential such as prior experience, cognitive ability, resourcefulness, openness to new experiences, and willingness to delegate tasks. Accordingly, based on case-by-case studies, connections/ties between leader(s) and their trafficking accomplices in the whole of operation, including recruitment, stockpiling, delivery, drug extraction or distribution will be examined to interpret their degree, closeness, and betweenness centrality.³²

Degree centrality is often reflected in a leader’s ties with their accomplices in the network. In particular, they not only want to exercise deep influence but also affirm this role a leader throughout the trafficking process (Jankowski 1991). Either they are “always big boss to with ultimate power” (interview #5) or “are closely ranked with their big boss as a first anchor, who protect their boss and look out for them” (interview #6). A powerful leader will control the trafficking process from start to finish, either directly or indirectly (one representative of Group #1). In the five selected studies, CS1, CS3, CS4, CS5, and CS6, leaders/organizers were the central actors who sought to manage their network with the greatest degree of centralization. They checked the send-and-receive process to ensure both the quality and quantity of drug shipped (Interview # 3, 4). Another was to assert leadership was to make the shortest connections between suppliers and other network actors. As an investigator in the case study CS1 states:

³² Note that closeness centrality in the criminal network was not presented in this section with two main reasons. First, we cannot account specifically the total length of the shortest connecting one actor to other actors in the network without stable statistics from LEAs. Second, offender’s confessions about their ties and connections for communicating and exchanging information about their drug trafficking activities at trial and appeal court are sometimes conflict with their confessions at police office.
The offender CS1-No.1 is very appropriate with his position in this case, ‘boss of boss’. Why I can make this conclusion? I can tell you one typical example to show his abilities to connect with potential accomplices for serving his criminal ambitions. For the organizer’s group, he connects directly to CS1-No.4 with the purpose of not only trading heroin but also urging to find his beneficial partner when he wants to wider expand domestic drug market. For supplier’s group, in order to maintain an efficient drug quantity, he combines with CS1-No.2 to purchase heroin and ATS from Cambodia, but also cooperates with both T.V.H (related actor) who shipped 515 blocks of heroin and CS1-No.7 who transported over 12 times with 892 bricks of heroin to him from Laos. For drug courier’s group, he not only requires sub-coordinators to transport drugs from his partners (CS1-No.12 who got 919 blocks from both T.V.H and CS1-No.7; and CS1-No.15 who shipped 80 blocks from X in Cambodia and Vietnam borderland – related actor), but also connects his ties to distribute drugs for his retail lords (CS1-No.13 who transferred 710 block to V.T.N.B – related actor; and CS1-No.15 who delivered 81 bricks to P.V.C and 102 blocks to CS1-No.4). For drug demanding groups, just as an octopus’s tentacles, he connects with his dynamic customers to supply immediately their needs (CS1-No.4, V.T.N.B, and H.T.T). You can see, incredibly, all of these ties were made directly by himself, but it is true (Interview #1)

In the remaining cases, the leader very rarely appeared directly in any drug transactions in Vietnam. One hypothesis is that degree centrality is not really relevant in criminal networks where leaders generally have fewer direct connections than other network members, with the purpose being to avoid LEA monitoring and minimise the chances of detection (Lemieux 2003, 8). As officer of the case CS2 illustrate that,

Though P.T.T (Ms Big boss – related actor) does not live in Vietnam and always stay at overseas, mostly in Hong Kong and the United Kingdom, she still plays a lead role in manage her drug trafficking network. Some of her complicities (CS2-No.2 and CS2-No.5) are also more between international locations as well, such as Thailand, Laos, Australia, and the United Kingdom; others (CS2-No.3, CS2-No.7 and CS2-No.8) will wait for her leadership in Vietnam via telephone conversations. I would like to stress that they implement their plans as a “ply to and fro” journey (con thoï) to avoid detection and investigation. By doing this, they travelled extensively and even, changed their regular trips from Vietnam…uhm we were
exhausted to keep on their trail during a long period to investigate the routes of around 1,000 blocks of heroin and 5,000 tablets of ATS (Interview #2)

Yet, an offender’s criminal activities in a TransNT network can be blurred or hard to distinguish due to their interchanging roles in practice.

Of course, we recognized the offender CS5-No.1 and CS5-No.2 as one of Ms Bosses in this case but they are not control the whole of network. Why I can assert that? Because in some situation, both of them have to work as drug couriers; in other situations, they are broker to find new partners and markets for trading. Yet, you can see that even, CS5-No.1 works also as storage organizer to keep heroin while they connect with new customers (Interview #5)

With regard to betweenness centrality in TransNT, to achieve the greatest effectiveness in connecting with traffickers (nodes) in Lao PDR markets, leaders/organizers in Vietnam commonly seek out intermediaries with track records of involvement with Laotian drug rings. Commonly these intermediaries or brokers are persons known through prison contacts, known as “friend-in-prison bonds”, or are people who grew up with them in their home commune, known as “follow-countryman”. Both offender CS1-No.1 and CS1-No.7 are from Nghean province and spent time in prison together. In the case study CS2, the core offender (Ms Big boss - P.T.T) only choose to work with her countrymen (CS2-No.2, CS2-No.3, and CS2-No.8) and countrywomen (N.T.Th and N.T.M – related actors) to run their operations in Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and China. “For example, with the offender CS2-No.2, under our views and records, though he only plays a professional broker regarding a drug’s quantity, quality, and price, his contributions are unlikely to account exactly for this network” (Interview #2).

Second, to connect faster between their Vietnamese node and Laotian partner, leaders only select from their sub-heads to serve this purpose. Accordingly, terms and conditions of those betweenness centrality’s participants have to “understand about geographical locations and expertise to connect with drug suppliers” (Interview #5). By doing this, they contribute
more effectively to the process of collecting and transporting drugs from Laos to Vietnam and
furthermore and to assist their network to avoid detection. The role of offender CS4-No.6 in
the case CS4 is one of the typical evidence for this position. As a proxy for big boss’s
requirements (N.C.H – related actor), she rights to contact with Laotian drug trafficker (X.D –
related actor) as short directions as possible to communicate about the quantity and pricing
process before they integrate the final ways to send and receive “goods” (Interview #4).
Investigator in the CS4 continue

It is wise modus operandi to ship drugs from Laos to Nghean by ethnic minority groups who are living at
the common borderland of two nations. Since born and grew up between mountains and forests closed with
Laos, furthermore, she (CS4-No.6) took easier advantages of geographical characteristics of both sides to
transport illegal drugs to internal Nghean areas (Interview #4)

Direct involvement in all aspects of a group’s operation by a central leader places the
leader at greater risk of detection. Thus, in order to minimize this risk, central actors make only
limited ‘appearances’ and instead exercise control at a distance from actual operation. This is
more evident, because possible, in larger trafficking groups, in which leaders can delegate
responsibility to trusted confederates.

4.3.3. The flexibility of the organizational networks

As the above discussion indicates, TransNT consists of multilateral exchanges of
inherently illegal commodities between producers, distributors, and consumers across borders.
The process of drug trafficking involves serial stages including sourcing and negotiating the
supply of the drugs from Laos to enter Vietnam’s market before transporting, storing, and
distributing. In fact, depending on the type and quantity of illegal narcotics, traffickers rely on
the flexibility of their operations to establish secure plans for transporting from Laos to
Vietnam. In other words, in order to limit the risks police monitoring and to achieve their
eventual goals, groups change their modus operandi ‘on their feet’.
Adaptations by trafficking networks are shaped by improvements in law enforcement techniques and technologies, domestic market changes and the personal attributes of drug traffickers. First, changes to law enforcement operations to prevent and combat TransNT, is as one of the most significant factors to impact on the adaptation of drug trafficking entities. For nearly two decades, as one of the academic research projects to focus on the relationship between price of illegal drugs and law enforcement’s policies, both Jonathan Caulkins and Peter Reuter (1998) argued how policy affects prices of drug trafficking with four broad statements that,

1) Prohibition plus some modest but nontrivial amount of enforcement can drive prices far above their legal levels. 2) Interventions such as crack-downs and interdiction can create short-run scarcity that leads to substantial price increase with corresponding benefits. 3) Enforcement can create price differentials between different sources of drugs, thereby shifting distribution patterns. 4) After a certain point, further intensification of enforcement has only modest effects in further raising the price of drugs in the long run (604).

Although this current study is not focused on the price of illegal drugs as one of the decisive factors affecting the adaptation of TransNT entities in Vietnam, it is not denying a relationship between LEAs’ activities and the process of flexible adjustments by drug trafficking operations. Improvements in law enforcement techniques impact on traffickers. This point was discussed during a warm-up discussion at the anti-narcotics police officers Workshop, when many local police representatives shared that TransNT entities have become more sophisticated in adapting to improve policing methods (one representative of Group #1).

Reviewing the process of nearly two years in pursuit of case study CS1, one detective highlighted that,

Although there is over one decade past, as one of the biggest studies until now, this case studies have shown drug trafficking organizations themselves to be clever businesspersons capable of adapting to market conditions. When we focus our special strategies on targets in one area (at Ho Chi Minh City), they
shift their activities to a different area (Dongnai and other provinces in Vietnam’s Southern region). In order to cope with our campaigns, almost of core subjects, particularly with Big Four Godfathers, including the offender CS1-No.1, CS1-No.2, CS1-No.3, and CS1-No.4, have changed as frequently as their residential places and private vehicle. In fact, our task force has never faced with these difficult challenges from their adaptations and changes alike this case in the past (Interview #1).

As there is no jury system in Vietnam and thus, if a person is arrested and prosecuted by their drug-related offences, the chance of conviction is very high. With the highest punishment being the death penalty for drug trafficking under the current CCV’s regulations; therefore, cross-border traffickers and wholesale distributors in Vietnam domestic markets are particularly vulnerable to harsh sentences by State authorities (one representative of Workshop Group #1). Accordingly, as a control measure against increased risk, any trafficking group will seek to downsize if they get too big. Maintaining flexibility and adaptability is essential to longevity. As a high-ranking anti-narcotics police officer in Quangbinh, involved directly in the case CS2’s operation, stated

One of the consistent policies of Vietnam’s Communist Party and Government that is not permit and tolerate the existence of such criminal groups in general and drug-related crimes in particular. Consequently, it is likely to lead that there may be limited time drug leader/organizer who wants to maintain continuously their drug trafficking organization and operation when police start their campaigns. Between our intelligence operations and information from local people, we would have heard something in relation to their illegal drug activities. In addition, utilizing references or informants who will “assist” us to meet and explore the “potential players”, eventually we will infiltrate their ring (Interview #2).

Second, in respect of changes in drug market conditions, traffickers also seek to adjust the flow of supply (Decker and Chapman 2008, Reuter and Haaga 1989). Law enforcement efforts to reduce volumes in the domestic drug market, impact upon the size of shipments sent through groups and networks under surveillance, with the effect that supply is routed elsewhere (Benson and Decker 2010). As a result, when enforcement eliminates one group of dealers at
this marketplace, supply is shifted (Interview #6). To explain this situation more detail, in the case CS4, police officer argued that,

It is sometimes we called the “balloon effect”. As you can image that when you pinch a balloon in one area, the air in the balloon simply moves to a different part of the balloon. Here I can show you in this case study that when we increase drug enforcement in one district (Quephong), the other branches of this drug network flew through a different area (Tuongduong or Kyson). All of these zones are shared with Huaphanh province of Laos with the vast of small roads and mountainous hills where are suitable for drug couriers to drug delivery from Laotian territories into Vietnam (Interview #4).

Third, in order to ensure the process of concealment and delivery of illegal drugs from Laos to Vietnam, drug traffickers need to build up their personal attributes. Within the scope of this research, personal attributes mean that one trafficker needs to have requisite skills, connections, abilities, or knowledge, which can be used to not only benefit the drug trafficking activities, but also assist them to avoid police investigation. In other words, trafficking groups are also ‘learning organizations’.

Crossing all selected case studies show that traffickers are often take advantage of legal business activities, commercial exchanges, and import-export trade, to facilitate delivery. At least, four out of six selected case studies (CS1, CS2, CS3, and CS6) evidenced this adaptation. Accordingly, drug traffickers established and created a official cover under a legitimate business company in which they are also play a central role as executive director or manager (for example, the offender CS3-No.1 and CS6-No.1). In this way, they enjoy freedom of movement between Laos and Vietnam in order to contact with potential drug lords before deciding whether or not to cooperate. Vietnamese traffickers also look to Laotian partners to discuss, exchange, and negotiate price and transportation. The better a drug trafficker is in concealing his or her identity, the more difficult it is for LEAs to intercept drug shipments. As one officer notes, “they were very hard to recognize precisely because the boundaries between
a successful businessman and a dangerous criminal are not always apparent” (Interview #3). A senior police officer illustrated this point in the case study CS6:

Through creating covert missions as one international business to invest in importing wood from Laos to Vietnam, its mitigating circumstance assisted him (CS6-No.1) to cover the whole of his movement for purchasing, transporting, and trading drugs over a 5 year period. Accordingly, he established many business activities in commercial service in order to rationalise his frequent travel abroad. As a result, obviously, it is a clever way to ensure his operations remained hidden to avoid our concentrated efforts…uhm…that why we call him is T “wood” (gỗ in Vietnamese)! (Interview #6)

Similarly, in the case study CS3, the primary offender (CS3-No.1) with diverse background over 20 years, was considered as a Vietnamese businessperson, well informed about Laotian culture and society. In addition, his Laotian language is very fluent making it easy to connect with Laotian trading partners. To make it easier still, he also legally registered a cooperative partnership with Laotian enterprises in travel business and hotel trade. “He took the advantage of bilateral cooperation in economic activities between two countries to go frequently at Laos’ markets and to find out his suitable partner (N.T) for discussing their exchange’s process” (Interview #3).

In contrast, some offenders chose to establish themselves in an “ordinary lifestyle and career” to avoid suspicion. One such offender is “Ms Big” in the case CS5 (Interview #5). Unlike big bosses CS3-No.1 and CS6-No.1, the offender CS5-No.1 created a profile as a “peasant farmer”, who is a poor and simple-minded woman. To under this disguise, she directed drug trafficking activities with great effect. As a “peasant farmer”, she was able to adapt her plans to stockpile, transport, and trade for six years without detection until be arrested in 2012 (Interview #5).

As stated, taking advantage of a licit company front, offenders were able to smuggle narcotics into Vietnam. In the case study CS1, in 12 round-trips driving from Laos to Vietnam,
CS1-No.7, one of the most important drug couriers in his network, concealed 890 blocks of heroin to blend with recyclable wastes in order to transport by long-truck. In so doing he delivered this entire benefitted from authorization to trade under bilateral trading agreements between the two nations. “He (CS1-No.7) designed and invented extra ‘secret trays’ in fuel cell and equipment-contained boxes to disguise heroin inside” – Investigator in the case CS1 emphasized.

In short, to complete drug trafficking stages from Laos to Vietnam, the structure of TransNT entities had to be and proved to be highly adaptable. These adaptations demonstrate flexible responsiveness to LEA strategies, changes in market conditions, and the personal attributes of those involved in drug trafficking activities. To overcome pressures and connections maintain with their counterparts across the borders, Vietnamese traffickers adjusted their plans of action and arranged accomplices’ roles in TransNT to stay one step ahead.

4.3.4. Offenders and their family relationships

In criminal network theory, one major focal point of concern is to ‘know’ which offenders, to have ‘contacts’ and ‘connections’ with their partners, or co-offenders (McGloin and Piquero 2009, Andresen and Felson 2010, Carrington 2009, Weerman 2003, Reiss 1988). Connections enable the combination of specialized skills and knowledge that make certain offenses possible (Morselli 2009, Felson 2003). Finding ‘suitable co-offenders’ is considered as one of the motivations to create more sophisticated and organized crime groups (Tremblay 1993, Morselli, Tremblay, and McCarthy 2006, Kleemans and Bunt 1999). In particular, as Tremblay (1993) argues, there are two main criteria to decide which co-offenders are suitable namely: ‘trustworthiness and usefulness’ (pp.25-7). Among potential partners, family members
are often preferred by traffickers to ensure operational coherence and TransNT organizational structure.

Regarding this definition of ‘family’, depending on individual views and approaches, this can have various meanings. Within the scope of this thesis, conceptualization in The Vietnamese Family in Change: The Case of the Red River Delta is applied, Bich (2013, 1999) states that

It could be said that in Vietnam, the family is a group of people who are related by blood and marriage; who often live together; and who co-operate economically to satisfy the basic needs of their life: production, consumption as well as those of human reproduction – childbearing, child raising, caring for the elderly, etc. In its most common form, the family usually includes a man and a woman and their children, whether their own or adopted (p.2).

Accordingly, family ties are given an abroad definition that covers immediate family members related by blood, by relatives and by spousal relationship, not excepting for de-factor partners (Bich 2013, 1999). In the TransNT chain distribution and trading cases in both the U.S. and the U.K. context, some offenders collaborated with family members who occupied various tasks/roles in the operation (Cressey 1967, Ianni 1972, Natarajan 2000, Desroches 2005, Natarajan 2006). The existence of family relationships in drug trafficking activities does not mean that it is automatically a standard criterion in the process of recruiting a co-offender or associate (Paoli and Reuter 2008, Vy 2013). The presence of family ties indicates a preference in selecting accomplices, particularly in countries like Vietnam where family relations are highly valued and accorded high priority in cultural tradition. In comparison to non-familial ties in a TransNT network, these ‘blood ties’ between father and soon, uncle and nephew, brothers or cousins are most likely to establish a solid network, upon which to recruit and plan for operations (Luspa 1983, 74-6). To some extent, crossing all six cases studied in
this thesis were at least three main contributions of family-based members, including 1) parent and child; 2) siblings; and 3) marital partners.

As said, first, the parent-child relationship is considered a pillar of social order in Vietnam. Respect and obedience from younger to elder is culturally sanctioned and expected. Sons must obey fathers and fathers must look after their sons (and daughters) (Bich 1999, Nowak 2005). Familial hierarchy is clearly defined with the father at the apex of the family followed by wife and mother, eldest to youngest children. An investigator in the case study CS1 used to the example of two father-and-son offenders, CS1-No.7 and CS1-No.10 to prove this argument that,

As you may know, in Vietnam, we have common proverb to show family’s sentiment that ‘blood is thicker than water’. This phrase is usually used to remind family members that their allegiance with family should always remain first and outside acquaintances second. In addition, the father has been responsible for the well being of family members and the ultimate decision-maker and provider. Thus, when the offender CS1-No.7 asked CS1-No.10, his son, for assisting him to conceal heroin in the car to transport from Laos to Vietnam, he had to obey. It is an obvious nature (Interview # 1)

Second, with regard to brotherly relationships, age determines status in descending order based upon date and time of birth. Specific terms of address and reference are used for older brother (anh) and older sister (chị); meanwhile there is only one term for younger brother (em) to indicate the lesser status (Tess 2005, 174, Bich 1999, 22). In this relationship, those who are older exert considerable power over younger siblings. Further, sibling ties are implied in metaphor as legs and hands of body that have to share and help face shared difficulties in life (Jamieson 1993, Bich 2013, 1999). In cases studied in this thesis, there are examples of such loyalty. As one interviewee relates

When we asked the offender CS1-No.5 why you induced your younger brother (H.D.T – related actor) to join in the TransNT network, he answered categorically that brother-foster live and die together, nothing
more, nothing less. What do I do, he has also to do. That is why, when I received 515 bricks of heroin from my bosses (CS1-No.1 and CS1-No.4) on the way, I called my brother for help in preparing to collect and conceal inside his home (Interview #1).

There were also several brother-in-law relationships, known as uncle-and-nephew ties. For example, offender CS1-No.4 used two main groups to establish and support his drug trafficking activities. One covered drug delivery and other contributed to mixing and blending heroin with other ingredients for making up “new ones with much quantities” (Interview #1), including CS1-No.16, CS1-No.19, CS1-No.20, CS1-No.21, CS1-No.22, and CS1-No.23. Three first offenders, namely CS1-No.16, CS1-No.19, and CS1-No.20 played important roles in both these groups. Though all of them began from different backgrounds, they joined CS4-No.4’s groups under similar circumstances, that is to share family duties (Interview #1). “They assisted with carriage and processing, for which they were paid well” (Interview #1). There was no evidence of coercion by the offender CS1-No.4. As the investigator of the case CS1 emphasized, “in for a penny, in for a pound; thus, after the first time, collaboration became easier” (Interview #1).

In the case CS4 also covers sibling’s relationship between offenders in one group. However, in this case CS4 differs from case CS1 with blood brother between three sister-in-law relations in one poor family at mountainous district of Nghean province. Offender CS4-No.6, who is the oldest sister-in-law, operated as a professional broker between her group and X.D’s representatives (Laotian traffickers – related actors) collecting 70 blocks of heroin from Laos, known as a professional broker. Offender CS4-No.4, the youngest one, was a “conduit” for information between CS4-No.5 and other subordinates such as offender CS4-No.1 and N.C.H (Mr Big boss – related actor). Lastly, offender CS4-No.5 was responsible for drug carriage from Quephong district to Vinh City in order to transport Ho Chi Minh City. As a CIPDRC officer in this case affirmed “in this sibling ties, the older (CS4-No.5) is
more influential than younger (CS4-No.4), and thus, when the former asked to join her syndicate to solve financial debt, the latter approved immediately” (Interview #4).

Third, the martial relations also have distinct characteristics in the Vietnamese family’s structure (Linh and Harris 2009). In Vietnam, in positive context, the husband plays an important role to make decisions; meanwhile, the wife is considered as one of the most significant partners to support and assist her husband to overcome difficulties, barriers, and challenges (Bich 1999, 2013). Conversely, in negative situation, when husband commits a crime, wives can be held responsible, because they did nothing to stop their husband, and treated as an accomplice (one representative of Group #1). Offender CS2-No.3 and CS2-No.7 exemplify husband-wife cooperation in the TransNT activities. “One prepared equipment to pack and hide inside, other guarded outside. Their cooperation was very smoothly to collect 126 blocks of heroin, packaged and concealed in boxes at their rental house in Laos before hiring offender CS2-No.6 to transport to Vietnam via the Chalo International Border Gate” (Interview #2).

There are two cases of person in a de facto relationship behaving as if were a married couple in pursuing TransNT activities. For example, in the case study CS4, offender CS4-No.2 was considered as spousal partner of Mr Big boss (N.C.H – related actor), “even though her partner was in prison for life for drug-related crime” (Interview #4). She played as “dual role”, bridging directly between high-ranking members (N.C.H and CS4-No.1) and sub-associates to control operations, working as “supervisor”, or receive-and-send manage for shipments from Nghean area to distribute across the countries. Other case is spousal relationship between Ms Big boss (P.T.T – related actor) and CS2-No.2 in the case CS2. “He was really appropriate for her partner’s needs to manage their network in Laos and Vietnam, spending long periods overseas; while, she steers everything from the outside, either from Hong Kong or the U.K.” (Interview #2)
Friendship ties are also important factors that contribute to understanding the structure of TransNT in Vietnam. There are different forms of friendship ties, but generally friendship bonds result in two unrelated offenders treating each other ‘as family’. “Foster brother” ties can form between persons in prison especially, the concerned question of whether prisons function as “school of crime” has long been a subject of discussion from a variety of different views (Roxell 2011, Tremblay 1993, Reiss 1988, Weerman 2003, Andresen and Felson 2010, Felson 2003). In the context of explanations of recidivism, Roxell (2011, 367) notes that the effect of time spent in prison, when length of incarceration makes it easier for bonds to form between people who might not otherwise have met. This is illustrated by the strong friendship relationships evident in case study CS1. As one investigator highlights,

During re-researching their criminal records and their prison profiles (CS1-No.1 and CS1-No.7) over the period 1983-1995, we recognized that their time in prison was actually a time of opportunity to make contacts and exchange information and skills. After completing their prison terms in 1995, CS1-No.1 offered 2.000.000 VND to CS1-No.7 as his grateful behaviours when he faced to poor economics. In my experience, I think that this action was not only maintain their strong ties but also became firm partners and cooperate in drug trafficking networks whenever they can (Interview #1)

Ex-convicts have often become the main recruiters for TransNT entities. Chin and Zhang (2007, 36) observed in Southern China that those who have served time in prison for other reasons are main source of new traffickers to became they reassemble their prison connections once their sentences are complete. This can be understood as a ‘natural’ progression in the evolution of an ex-convicts social networks because they seek to assemble like people they can trust, who are familiar with prison subculture, and who ‘understand’ each other (Roxell 2011, Tremblay 1993, von Lampe and Johansen 2003, Zhang and Chin 2015).

In short, in all of above cases, the presence of family/sibling/spousal relationships was evident at all of three drug trafficking stages, namely concealment, package, and transport. In
particular, based on specific situations and individual operation, recruiting and colluding between familial participants arrange roles and distribute responsibilities in order to seek drug sources and to prepare necessary conditions before delivering drugs from Laos to Vietnam. Although the data mainly covers offenders in only small-scale drug trafficking schemes, it indicates the role of kinship and family ties in the TransNT as one of the preferred priorities in the process of recruitment. Relatives contributed through different roles, drug courier, supervisor, and security escort, selected on their personal attributes. In addition, to familial relationships, prison friendship bonds were also noticeable in the structure of TransNT groups in Vietnam. These ties are also re-examined in the analysis of survey data in the next chapter.

4.3.5. Age, task, function, and responsibility

This thesis finds that the majority of offenders were aged between task and responsibility. Some scholars argue that the age often impacts on criminals through variations, such as time, place, demographic, subgroups, peers, or type of crime (Empey 1978, 391, Allen et al. 1981, 234-5, Warr 1993, 20, 24, Jensen and Rojek 1980, 70-71). Others, on the other hand, consider that the age effect “cannot be explained with available concepts” and even, its conceptualization is “largely redundant or misleading” (Hirschi and Gottfredson 1983, 556, 573). Accordingly, though age is everywhere correlated with crime and may be inferred from demographic correlates of crime, “it is not useful in predicting involvement in crime over the life cycle of offenders” (Hirschi and Gottfredson 1983, 581). In criminal network theory, a relationship is distinguished by many characteristics, including “age, sex, education, criminal record, physical strength or temperament” which are likely to be significant in the structure of a network (Bruinsma and Bernasco 2004, 80-1). Amongst these, age is related to task, function, and responsibility of those participants in a drug trafficking networks (Kleemans and de Poot 2008, 73, 78, 83).
Within the scope of current data collection, this study focuses on two main groups, *leader* and *drug courier*, in order to assess the division of labour in TransNT’s structure. With respect to leader’ position, first, offenders in their mid-40s to over 50s were more likely to adopt supervisory or principal positions in the network. The current data shows that no leader in all six selected cases was less than 40 years old. In particular, five out of six cases involved offenders aged around 45 years old and one covered with over 50 years old who occupied managerial role and executive leadership in the operation. Accordingly, their roles reflect their criminal records and professional experiences in the field of crime, involving drug-related offenses in the past. For example, in the case study CS1, the investigator detailed sophisticated activities of the offender CS1-No.1 with many modus operandi, such as “to avoid a detection, he always changed his location as much as possible, moving address every couple of days and then escape” (Interview #1).

Leaders also have specialist knowledge and skills such as economic, cultural, linguistic, and social field to support their criminal operations acquired over long time. Of course, this knowledge is established from a number of personal efforts and further; it is also accumulated through life experience, employment and other opportunities to learn. Organizers in case CS3 and CS6 are typical of this. They spent a long time in Laos seeking drug suppliers under give of being entrepreneur. As one investigator stated “his language and knowledge were very ‘natural’. Aged in 53 (CS3-No.1), initially, we thought that he was a successful businessman, not a criminal” (Interview #3). “His knowledge of transportation routes between Laos and Vietnam gained through legal and illegal trading made it possible to disguise drug trafficking business (Interview #6).

Leaders who are *related actors*, work as “steering mechanisms” of a network (Williams 2001c, 82). For example, P.T.T is 48 years old, was arrested in 2004 but at large during case CS2, was considered one of the “leading architects” of the operation in case study CS2
(Interview #2). As a foreign citizen, she was internationally mobile, and unpredictable as because she could not be tracked while moving between node’s outside Vietnam. In addition, through using mobile phone, she was able to monitor drug sourcing, payment and transport from Laos and Thailand into Vietnam. “Though I have never faced directly with her, through criminal profiles and reconnaissance documents I think that she was really a particularly serious offender who we need to continue to pursue” (Interview #2). In another case, N.C.H was 43 years old, if is arrested in 2012, and he was known as the “conductor of the orchestra”, who took the whole of drug collecting, transporting, and trading (Interview #4). He established drug supply network in Laos via his accomplices (CS4-No.6 and P.T.K), and distributed heroin in Ho Chi Minh City’s markets via “S”-node (related actor). In addition, he provided vital instructions to subordinates about flexible ways to transport drugs, including road, railway, or airline routes. Furthermore, he also used his de facto partner, CS6-No.2, to contact other wholesale nodes to open market in the Northern region, particularly at Langson province which borders with China. “It is very difficult to confirm where he is now. He is a ghost, sometime he appears, and then he disappear” (Interview #4).

Although the majority of principals or supervisors are middle-aged, some appear relatively young to hold senior rankings in their network. In the case study CS6, the offender CS6-No.2 was only 30 years old when he deputized for his leader (CS6-No.1) to implement a plan to ship 58 blocks of heroin, equivalent to over 20 kilograms, from Laos to Nghean. Yet, though he was not an organizer, he played a central role in building specific plans to evade CIPDRC road patrols. “Seemingly, he was very an excellent driver. Just as we think we can catch up with him, suddenly, he calls for his accomplices to change to other cars and even, using one car to block our pursuit. He changed a total of four different cars” (Interview #6). In the case CS2, the offender CS2-No.1 was less than 30 years old and had three arrest warrants out for him. He was involved directly with big bosses in the case study CS1 for transporting 50
blocks of heroin to CS1-No.4 and 515 bricks to CS1-No.1, respectively. “This guy is really a wise owl! In both cases (CS1 and CS2) were unable to arrest him. We had to organize one special operation to go to Laos. It was a very tiring time” (Interview #2).

In terms of drug couriers, second, there was wider variation in age across the six selected case studies, from young participants to ageing offenders. In fact, though there is specific evidence to support for the variety of their positions in transporting narcotics’ process. These offenders were recruited as drug couriers/mules or induced to serve as accomplices in TransNT network. Across the six cases, nine offenders, 15.25% of total were relatively young when involved drug trafficking activities, that is aged between 16 and 30 years old. Amongst them, five were drug couriers in cases CS1 and CS6. In the case CS1, the evidence indicates at four offenders were aged between 20-30 years old. All of them were a mere courier, except for offender CS1-No.20 (29 years old), who was charged with dual functions, drug courier and abettor who played not only a part in delivery tasks but also contributed to repacking the drug to create “new packages with larger quantities” (Interview #1). Meanwhile, in the case CS6, the offender CS6-No.6 (Laotian citizen), prosecuted as a drug courier role aged only 23. In this case, he received $500 for fuel expenditures by his uncle, H.N.C – the biggest partner of CS6-No.1, for delivering 58 blocks of heroin and 321 tablets of ATS from Laos to Nghean.

Apart from the young offenders involved drug delivery’s tasks, some of the second group, aged between 30-45 years old were also recruited to ship drug with the variety of different motivations. For example, the offender CS5-No.3 (36 years old) was a drug addict and had incurred significant debts to various financial institutions and family members. Further, excluding the majority of relatively young drug mules on above analysis, there are at least two offenders, one male (CS1-No.7) in the case CS1 and one female (CS5-No.5) in the case CS5, recorded in the third age group, over 45 years old. They were at 50 years old at time of investigation.
In short, the issues of age, experience, charisma, and role of offender in these six selected cases were significant in determining their functions and responsibilities. Two main offender groups demonstrate this relationship between age and task. First, high-ranking positions commonly belonged to older offenders who were knowledgeable and experienced because of their long-term involvement in the drug trade. In addition, they were more likely to have access to the drug resources and personal networks needed to control and manage their TransNT activity. Second, with drug courier’s role, this was more commonly given to young offender with various circumstances and motivations to become a courier. Some of them were recruited for strong economic motivations, including financial hardship, debts or drug addiction; meantime, others were “conscripted” based on close family relationships. This data suggests a clear age-related division of labour within TransNT networks operating across the Vietnam-Laos border. After all, although these statements need to generalize and test in the survey process with wider variation of CIPDRC’s opinions (the second stage), there are shown that division of labour in the TransNT network in Vietnam is relatively clearly.

4.3.6. Offenders and geography-based distribution

Geographical distribution connected of crime sites has been used as a criminal investigative methodology that permits LEAs to identify the most probable area of offender residence (Rossmo 2014, Ratcliffe 2010). Accordingly, LEAs can utilize geographical profiling’ applications and software to identify the place the offence was reported, which for the most part will coincide with the location where the offence was committed (Heber 2009, Rossmo and Rombouts 2013, Piquero and Weisburd 2010, Ratcliffe 2010).

Using a different approach, this study pursued geography-based distribution by analysing the locations where offenders were born and grew up together with their co-offenders in their network. Further, those offenders groups where come from similar areas in one local
community with same language, manners and customs, including village, commune, and district of one province in Vietnam, demonstrated the role of proximity in TransNT network formation. Yet, as discussed, common habits, standards and shared life-experiences, viewpoints and approaches are significant in Vietnamese TransNT networks. This is different to the nature of fellow-counrtymen ties in the Sicilian Mafia, the Triads, the Yakuza, the Colombian cartels who have built up their branches all over the world (Williams 1994, 1995, 1998). The distinction underscored the different scale of Vietnamese criminal network.

*Ensuring trust for co-offending*

Trustworthiness is recognized as one of the most necessary aspects to establish and maintain co-offending criminal activities, particularly with transnational crime (Lantz and Hutchinson 2015, Tenti and Morselli 2014, Carrington 2011, van Mastrigt and Farrington 2009, Morselli 2009). Where two or more people commit an offence, we can extract from evidence information ‘about relationships and social patterns that govern the collective behavior of offenders’ (Weerman 2003, 399). Accordingly, group influence, social selection, instrumental perspectives, and social exchange theories are useful in interpreting co-offending relationships (Weerman 2014, 2003). Research in organized crime by von Lampe and Johansen (2003) highlights that “trust” is one of the specific factors to explain why individuals decide to co-offend in crime. In a simple understanding, trust has to do with how people cope with risk and uncertainty and cooperate to commit a crime together.

The role of trust is evident in relationship between a trusting person, “the trustor”, and a trusted other person, ‘the trustee’ (von Lampe and Johansen 2004, 168). At least, based on interview analyses in this research, there were two noticeable contributions to illustrate this

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33 Luhmann (2000, 64) argues that ‘trust has never been a topic of mainstream sociology’. Both classical authors and modern sociologists do not approach the term in a theoretical context. For this reason, the elaboration of theoretical frameworks, one of the main sources of conceptual clarification, has been relatively neglected. Thus, to fix with the objectives of this study, the concept of trust will be understood alongside with the study of crime.
element between compatriots, including moral and physical support. Moral support could be understood as a personal motivation with the trustor believing that cooperating with the trustee is a good way will create moral sharing and maintain their friendship (Williams 1990). Accordingly, the basis for individualized trust of trustee could be their previous behaviors, special influences, and moral characteristics that persuaded trustor to follow them because these factors confer a degree of charisma – possibly charismatic authority (Gambetta 1988, 232, von Lampe and Johansen 2004, 169). Evidently, a leader’s reputation is as important in illicit business as it is in the world of legitimate business. Reputation can be the “sheet anchor” in drug trafficking operations (Interview #2).

As Williams (1990) explains, physical support could be another motivations for trustor to collaborate with trustee. Further, if the relationship promises to offer economic or other material benefits, the trust is more likely to be given and be reciprocal (Gambetta 1990). Trust can however be difficult to distinguish from obligation. For example, with situation of the offender CS4-No.3, nobody help her to overcome economic debts, except for her countrywoman (CS4-No.2) and thus, “when required to deliver drugs with around $500 and $2,500 per time from Nghean to Ho Chi Minh City; of course, she did” (Interview #4).

The trusted person here wins loyalty by sharing benefits or paying rent for their accomplice to ensure trust. When interviewing LEAs, we raised a question about main means by which trust is gained and given. There were many different explanations such as, “it is a very simple answer since he has never postponed paying their wages” (Interview #1); “they want to separate monetary policies, though they are fellow compatriots” (Interview #2); and “in

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34 Under Williams’s view, the mechanisms which motivate cooperation in any form of human endeavour include four main factors, namely coercion, interests, values, and personal bonds which lead to people may decide to cooperate 1) for fear of sanctions; 2) for enhances their mutual economic interests; 3) for believe that cooperation is good irrespective of sanctions and rewards if they have general reasons such as cultural, moral, or religious; and 4) for close relatives of either kinship or friendship ties (Williams 1990, 7-9).
some circumstances, a trustee provides support without any requirements” (Interview #1, 4). Again, trust and obligation seem closely aligned in the cases studied for this thesis.

von Lampe and Johansen (2004, 178) stress the role of trust in criminal entities, although trust here is of a different kind to that found in legitimate business relationships. Trust-based cooperation among criminals may occur on a very precarious basis, trusting could be also categorized as distinguished testing of trustworthiness or reliability. In fact, although there is no evidence to affirm that trust is “a compulsory condition” or “principal requirement” in TransNT activities, it obviously has value (Interview #1, 2). When trust is not maintained in drug trading process, ‘either a lack of trust or by mistrust’, relationships are also likely to be disrupted and even suspended (von Lampe and Johansen 2004, 165). Further, the price of distrust in organized crime activities can be high ‘a devastating effect… even to the collapse of market exchange’ with mistrust having a potentially between trustors and trustees and possibly violence (Gambetta 1990, 169, 171).

In Vietnam context, the evidence and level of violence were “not clear clues” as to the nature or absence of trust in TransNT activities, particularly with fellow-countryman groups (Interview #4). In particular, when A does react to distrusted behavior of B, the response does not necessarily consist of a termination of the cooperation with B, either by limiting the ties to B or by eliminating B (one representative of Group# 1). Instead, intermediate reactions are possible, with cooperation continuing with B, but on a lower level of risk, for instance, by reducing the level of cooperation through seeking other partners who were also born in the same birthplace with them. The case CS1 was a good example that when both H.T.T (customer) was not fair and impartial to payment and T.V.H (drug courier) was not ensure to

35 With the potential impact of either mistrust or lack of trust in criminal relationship, von Lampe and Ole Johansen (2004) hypothesis that the former illustrate to a circumstance in which A recognizes that B could harm A, but A has not really determine whether or not B will harm A; meanwhile, the latter would exist when A recognizes B to be capable and willing to harm A. However, in this section, our study focuses on closed relationships of fellow countryman groups in which trust is considered as one of the evident factor to build up their structure, thus, a lack of trust will be not analysed.
transport heroin, Mr Big bosses had to look for new substitutions. Though they were both from Nghean province, “the offender CS1-No.1 and CS1-No.2 urged CS1-No.4 to find new drug consumers (V.T.N.B – related actor) for replacing H.T.T and colluded to CS1-No.7 to seek drug sources at Laos for substituting T.V.H; of course, both V.T.N.B and CS1-No.7 were also their fellow compatriots” (Interview #1). This was done not only to protect the secrecy of their operations, but also so as not to disrupt expectations of their group.

Establishing close-knit community

Most interviewees were in agreement that fellow countryman ties were fundamental elements in cooperation when offenders were living far from their place of birth. A close-knit community becomes more important when operation far from home. As one police officer in the case study CS4 explains that,

As faithful henchman of the Mr Big (N.C.H), all of them (CS4-No.4, CS4-No.5, CS4-No.6, and P.T.K – related actor) obeyed his orders without conditions, to contact Laotian drug lords gather drugs and delivering to Nghean for distribute into Ho Chi Minh City and Langson province. Of course, their boss has never paid them all that well duties. Yet, he always cares and encourages them with both moral and physical support anytime they encounter difficulties in their lives (Interview #4)

In the Vietnamese drug trafficking context, this collaborative relationship of those compatriots are reflected in the process of either 1) recruiting co-offenders to drug delivery or 2) selecting potential partners to trade drugs (wholesalers). Out of six case studies, approximately 84% indicated a strong fellow countrymen factor in the recruitment of drug courier, with five cases, except for the case CS3. Accordingly, all interviewees in these studies considered that potential drug couriers were recruited with promises and opportunities from their compatriots before joining into drug trafficking activities. For example, in the case CS4, when the Mr. Big required offender CS4-No.2 to look for a suitable drug courier, she remembered immediately from her childhood friend (CS4-No.4), who was born and grew up at
the same village - Bangvan commune, Nganson district, Backan province, and induced her join in their group. Leaders also carefully identify their prospective wholesalers preferring people with same birthplace to them. Case studies CS1 and CS2 evidenced this is the selection of partners to trade heroin and ATS.

One noticeable point in this case I can affirm and show you that the biggest branches for drug trading in this case are organized by Nghean offenders and their fellow countrymen accomplices. Further, all drug suppliers are from Nghean … uhm and thus, when the CS1-No.1 and CS1-No.4 (Mr. Big bosses) want to transport drugs from Laos to Ho Chi Minh City and Dongnai province, they only connect directly with Nghean’s partners in Laos, such as T.V.H, N.T.T, T.T.H, and N.D.H (related actors). ‘No birth at Nghean, no join in group!’ is their confirmation to answer my interrogations (Interview #1).

Meanwhile, in the case CS2 in the whole of TransNT activities, the offender P.T.T (Ms. Big boss – related actor, Haiphong’s birthplace) only recruited people born in Haiphong into enter in her group. “One of her main purposes is to establish a Haiphong gang (CS2-No.2, CS2-No.5, P.T.T and N.T.M – related actors) to control all stages of procurement, exchange and distribution from sourcing drugs at Laos and Thailand to preparing for transportations to Vietnam before transshipment to China” (Interview #2). Of course, many of them were selected for relevant positions under her decisions, including supervisors, lieutenants, principals, or drug couriers. “It is a simple reason, they want to create a fellow-countryman network” (Interview #2). This confirms the view that shared locality of origin is important to creating trust and building confidence to form a TransNT group as a clos-kit community.

In short, though this research is not focuses directly on assessing degree of fellow countryman’s strengths in comparison to others, selecting those born in same village or district of one province in Vietnam should be recognized as one of the specific features in the process of trafficker’s recruitment. To distinguish it as a characteristic reflecting the nature of ties of
co-offending of TransNT entities in Vietnam, however, further quantification with large scale of survey CIPDRC is required.

4.4. Crime script analysis

Crime scripts are step-by-step accounts of the strategies adopted by offenders to commit crimes (Cornish 1994). Cornish defines briefly this process with four main stages, including, preparation, pre-activity, activity, and post-activity:

Preparations, often made outside the crime setting, are followed by entry to the setting, and the awaiting, or establishment, of conditions under which the crime in question can be committed. Various instrumental actions then occur, to be followed by the consummately activities which comprise the main action. Actions associated with the aftermath of the main action then follow and, lastly, the players exit from the crime scene (Cornish 1994, 161-2).

The most important value of the crime script concept is that it provides a framework to systematically investigate all of the stages of the crime commission process of a specific crime in relation to existing data allow (Cornish 1994). Accordingly, crime script analysis is a “cost-effective tool” that can facilitate specifically understanding about complex of crime and its various modus operandi (Brayley, Cockbain, and Laycock 2011, Borron 2013). Through analysing and identifying key scenes in the whole of crime commission process, it has the potential to seek ‘weak spots’ which may support and assist LEAs against crime more effective (Levi and Maguire 2004, Ekblom 2001, 2010, 2003, Cornish 1994, Cornish and Clark 2002). Further, it also helps to identify the decisions and actions of offenders at each step of their crimes with relevant modus operandi, from preparation, target selection, commission of the act, escape to aftermath (Cornish 1998, 1994).

Approaching Smart Art Tools in Microsoft Word 2010 with “Linear Venn”-computer animation uses intersecting circles to illustrate relationships between groups, but also
highlighted overlapping relationships in a sequence. As the figure below illustrates, the four stages evident is TransNT scripts overlap in a continuous flow. However, in the Vietnamese six case studies, not all stages appeared in all cases.

**Figure 13: Crime script analysis framework for TransNT**

![Crime script analysis framework for TransNT](image)

Source: Adapting from Cornish (1994) with adjustments to fix up with Vietnam’s scale

### 4.4.1. Preparation

There are, at least, three main points in the preparation process of TransNT activity. First, finding a drug source/supplier before determining the price and payment between suppliers and buyers. Second, traffickers focus on sale-and-buy agreement based on their exchanges and integrations before deploying. Third, they build up their ‘cover’ to disguise the transportation process from Laos to Vietnam.

#### 4.4.1.1. Exploit drug sources

Vietnam has a long history of opium cultivation, but since 1975, the government has sought to eradicate poppy cultivation (Hai 2016). Accordingly, at least, the size of opium cultivation decreased dramatically from over 12,000 hectares in 1992 to around 30 hectares in 2004 (Kramer et al. 2014). As a result, domestic drug sources have declined considerably (Windle 2016). According to LEAs in Vietnam, most drugs are supplied from external sources, particularly across Vietnam’s borderlands with Lao PDR (MPS 2015, 2014, Cong an Nghe An
A little amount of opium cultivation has been continuing at Northern West and Northern Central Coast region, particularly in the minority ethnicity group’s locale. Drug traffickers took advantage of mountain-and-forest conditions and features to stockpile and deliver drugs productions into Vietnam. Thus, there were at least two main ways to source drugs.

First, it was sourced from the ‘blurred frontier’ between Vietnam and Lao PDR where people of similar ethnic groups live across borders. Geographically, there are many places along the Vietnam-Laos border where it is not easy to recognize exactly where the borderline is. People have for centuries moved easily across this frontier where cultural similarities and trading ties remain strong (Imai, Gaiha, and Kang 2011, Michaud 2009). Legislatively, both governments signed and ratified bilateral agreement in terms of trading, movements, and migration to improve the communal solidarity of both nations, particularly for those living across borderland areas (National Border Committee 2010, Hanh et al. 2009, Baulch et al. 2007). “Paradoxically, at these areas, with good conditions and climatic features are very suitable and convenient terms to grow and cultivate opium. It is a true if comparing to other borderland zones of two countries” (Interview #4). Although there was a small percentage to re-cultivation opium in some Southern and Northern central region’s areas, including communes and villages of mountainous districts of Nghean, Dienbien, and Sonla, no evidence could be found that drugs produced there were collected by TransNT activities in any of the selected cases used in this thesis. Thus, most of illicit drugs were delivered via this “blurred interconnection’s points” into Vietnam’s market. To explain this drug source’s route at this “blurred point”, one investigator of the case CS5 confirmed in his operation that “through passing trails, pathways or forest’s tracks at these places, the Laotian drug suppliers shipped drugs directly to Dienbien province” (Interview #5).

Second, in the six cases in this research, Laos is the source of drugs for Vietnam’s markets, with illegal drugs passing through border checkpoints or along hidden mountain
tracks. Accordingly, communes and districts in provinces along the Laos border in the North Central Coast and Northern West regions of Vietnam, including Quangtri, Quangbinh, Hatinh, Nghean, Thanhhoa, and Dienbien, were targeted by traffickers as key areas to be exploited (MPS 2015, 2014, Hai 2017). Cultural and ethnic ties between people on both sides of the border, particularly the Hmong and Thai ethnic minority groups, meant frequent lawful cross-border interaction (Hoang 2007, McCoy, Read, and Leonard 2003). Long established cross-border commodity trade, particularly between Nghean, Dienbien, Quangbinh, and Quangtri of Vietnam and Phongsaly, Luangprbang, Borikhamxa, Huaphan, Xiengkhuang, Savanakhet, and Khammuane of Laos (John 2001, Stuart-Fox 1980, Rapin 2003). But the commodity trade is paradoxically a source of vulnerability for Vietnam, because illicit and licit commodities are easily mixed and disguised in these cross-border ‘flows’ (Interview #6).

This is not to say that heroin and ATS originated in Laos. Most likely, it comes from third countries and is shipped through Laos into Vietnam’s market. As discussed at the Workshop, drugs could be transited through Laos from third countries, but also through other countries with which Vietnam shares a border, namely Cambodia and China, or with the Golden Triangle, including Thailand and Myanmar, being the main place of origin (one representative of Group #2).

4.4.1.2. Sale-and-buy agreement

Once drugs have been sourced, negotiation, move into exchange and integration stage where price and payment are important. Payment options appear to be flexible and take three main forms. These are 1) payment before, 2) payment after, and 3) payment in cash at time of transaction.

36 Except for the case CS1, only one partly drug sources were exploited from Cambodia areas to deliver into Vietnam, 225 blocks of heroin from Cambodia compared to 2,129 blocks from Laos.

37 This thesis does not mention Thai population of Thailand. Otherwise, Thai in this context is one of the ethnic minority groups of Vietnam’s populated groups who are mostly living across Vietnam’s borderland areas, including with Laos borders.
At the start of their first transaction, leaders of both sides, supplier and purchaser, meet directly to discuss quantity, quality, and price. For example, in the case CS3 and CS6, both offenders CS3-No.1 and CS6-No.6 travelled to Laos to negotiate with their suppliers. “Once there, they checked drug quality first and ordered quantity second” (Interview #3). In some situation, brokers are used. For example, in the case CS2, Ms Big boss (P.T.T – related actor) always operates at a distance, with her trusted principals (CS2-No.2 and CS2-No.3), with their knowledge and connection in Laos and Thailand, relied upon to source supplies, check quality and negotiate price and payment. “They moved back and forward, taking their time … and based on trustfulness, respectfulness, and prestige, they accepted payment first, collection later arrangement” (Interview #2). In other situations, after completing the first transaction, traffickers placed standing with trusted drug supplier. Use of brokers indicates high degree of trust, as does return business. Subsequent transactions are then organized and payments agreed on an “order first and payment latter” basis (Interview #1). Depending on drug quality, and consumption rates of Vietnam, payment cash in moved to being cash-in-hand. “Sometimes they paid full contract, other is only partly. Everything is very flexible transfer when they integrate game by themselves” (Interview # 4, 6).

Location of financial exchange depends on specific cases and degree of ‘integration’ of supplier and purchaser. Purchaser pays money for drug in Laos by himself (e.g. CS3-No.1 in the CS3), or through assistants (e.g. CS2-No.2 and CS2-No.3 in the CS2), or brokers (e.g. P.T.K – related actor in the case CS4 and the offender CS1-No.7 and T.V.H – related actor in the case CS1). On the other hand, suppliers collect payment when they or their subordinators deliver drugs into Vietnam. “When we interrogate, they (CS6-No.5 and CS6-No.6) confessed that they collected money from their partner (CS6-No.0.1 – leader) via his helper (CS6-No.2 – executor) at Vinh City, Nghean province” (Interview #6). Again, there is much flexibility to do it. Sometimes suppliers accepted payment “on the way”, or in “hotels/motels” or at “their
private/rental properties” (Interview #1, 2). Otherwise, traffickers received drugs and paid money “on the edge of dense forest areas which cannot be identified by Vietnamese LEAs as clearly in Vietnam or Laos (Interview #4, 5). Sometimes, payments are made in very public areas, such as bridge or pavement on the road (Interview #6).

4.4.1.3. Protecting drug operations against interdiction

Using personal experience, professional background, and protective abilities, traffickers build up their operations with a series of sophisticated modus operandi, known as “shell-proof” activities. For the purposes of avoiding detection and ensuring the effectiveness to stockpile, transport, and trade illegal narcotics, they need to create a variety of different forms and flexible ways to conduct business. Further, these protective measures are applied at every stage of the trafficking chain.

In all six selected cases in this study, there were at least three approaches to establish protective shells. First, in concealment which as discussed before takes the form of disguising or hiding drugs, for heroin hidden in iron-waste materials (Interview #1) or concealed in motorcycle equipment (Interview #2); or in bed frames (Interview #3). Besides that, there were two cases offenders disguise drugs into nylon bag to deliver (Interview #4 and 5); whereas, traffickers in the CS6 selected to store drugs into ‘extra holes’ in car (Interview #6).

Second, payments can be concealed as legitimate banking transactions, filtered through legal banking services. For example, assessing the role and modus operandi of the offender CS3-No.1, one CIPDRC officer in the case CS3 states that, “he was an economic expertise in trading and investment in Laos and thus, he was also easier movements between two sides to employ his activities, including purchasing drugs” (Interview #3). Some offenders were experts in logistics and legal transportation companies operating across the border, taking advantage of free movement between Laos and Vietnam under bilateral agreement. “He (CS1-No.7) was a
sly fellow when using his sons profile (CS1-No.10) to apply to the Authority Traffic and Transportation Service to register their semi-trailer to shipping goods from Laos to Vietnam, which they then used to conceal heroin” (Interview #1). Others used private legal personal businesses to get rights of free movement. “He (CS6-No.1) registered tax file number and economic investment which allowed him to import timber from Laos to Vietnam” (Interview #6).

Third, another form of protection is creating favourable public profile, by contributing to their local community. In so doing, they build up an impression of charitableness and goodness with the local population that in quite different to their real personality (Interview# 3, 6). For example, both leaders in the case CS3 and CS6 invested or gave their profits as voluntary donations and contributions to charitable foundations, sponsorship of community events, especially cultural festivals (i.e. Lunar New Year). To contrast, others chose to build up their profile as simple and plain people keeping their distance from neighbours. For instance, with the offender CS5-No.1, “she often posed as a poor famer, speaking only about rice farming and the price of rice” (Interview #5). These are some of the ways that traffickers build a protective shell around their operations.

4.4.2. Pre-activity

In this stage, offenders focus on two main concerns: 1) identifying suitable ways to pack and conceal drugs and 2) selecting effective transportation routes.

4.4.2.1. Packing and Concealing

Depending on the specific circumstances of each case study, this process is separated into two different stages, firstly packing and concealing for shipment from Laos and secondly, repacking for distribution in Vietnam.
Before “goods” arrive in Vietnam

Taking advantage of the favourable conditions of socio-economic factors across the shared borderland’s areas between Vietnam and Laos, especially with transportation of goods, drug criminals in four of the six cases analyse, namely cases CS1, CS2, CS3, and CS6, packed heroin in shipments of legal goods, for delivery via an official border crossing. For example, in the case CS1, both the offender CS1-No.7 and CS1-No.10 took advantages of investment business of T.V.B and B (related actors) to pack 890 blocks of heroin and conceal it into recyclable irons to transport on the heavy-duty truck. “In 12 shipments from June 2002 to Jun 2003, they used this form of concealment, crossing through the Cautreo International Border Gate and the Laobao International Border Gate” (Interview #1). In other situations, traffickers wrapped drugs and mixed with goods’ boxes after then, they hired a haulier to transport into Vietnam via official gates.38

Yet, traffickers separated drugs into multiple small quantities to be carried physically across the border into Vietnam at uncontrolled crossing points. Small packages could either be 1) hidden on their bodies and carried along small tracks over rocky hills, and mountainous terrain (Interview #4) or be 2) concealed on motorcycles to drive along narrow trails and forest paths (Interview #5).

Other examples show the ‘smart skills’ of traffickers in shipping illegal drugs from Laos to Vietnam via legal means such as tourist travel services at the International Border Gates.39 Offender CS3-No.1 colluded with his drug source’s supplier in Laos (N.T – related actor) to

38 In this case, those drivers should be considered as an innocent participant in this offence because they were not aware these illegal drugs were on board. Thus, in the case CS2, although the offender CS2-No.6 (driver) agreed to ship these packages, including illicit productions (heroin and used motor equipment) and legal goods (new motorcycle tools, cotton wool, and clothe fabrics), he did not know exactly these boxes covered 199 bricks of heroin. “We cannot suggest a drug trafficking’ activity for him due to it is only an illegal cross-border transportation of goods under our criminal law’s regulations” (Interview #2).
39 At these highway’s routes of two sides, any full legal documents in tourism services are permitted to transport customers and goods at both countries under bilateral agreement between Vietnam and Laos. For example, in this case, one 24 seater’s car, known as Coaster’s bus, is allow to pick up and drop persons and goods from Vietnam (Danang) to Laos (Vientiane) and converse.
pack heroin and ATS into multiple small bags and conceal in built-in storage holes wooden bed frames. “To avoid search and arrest, they frequently changed the name of transportation services to using either Vietnamese or Laotian tourism cars” (Interview #3). Otherwise, Laotian drug supplier (H.N.C – related actor) hired their relatives (CS6-No.5 and CS6-No.6) to carry drugs from Laos to Vietnam by private car registered in Laos. In this way, drugs could be moved at variable times of the day, making it still harder for LEAs to track and intercept (Interview #6).

It can be seen that traffickers use a variety of carefully thought through pack-and-conceal strategies giving them the flexibility necessary to evade authorities. Though concealment and transport are independent stages, the former is fundamental to the successes of the latter.

*Receipt and handling in Vietnam*

Within the scope of this research’s cases, after drugs were packed, concealed, and shipped to Vietnam, they were stored in secret location or ‘before the eyes’ of authorities. Again, techniques used demonstrate a high level of planning – underlining the sophistication of trafficking operations.

Anti-narcotics police participants at the *Workshop* highlighted that one of the most important capabilities of drug groups was the capability to invent ingenious disguises to avoid law enforcement monitoring (one representative of Group #2). It was catalogued with two general locations to hide drugs being either inside or outside a private property. This is illustrated in the table below.
**Table 6: Locations for concealing drugs before distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Inside private properties</th>
<th>Outside private properties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Owner’s house</em></td>
<td><em>Family’s relative’s house</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS2</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS3</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS4</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS5</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS6</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: This statistic is collected and extracted from six drug-related cases)

From this table can show clearly that in most of the studies, offenders used more than two types of location to concealed drugs before shipping to their final destination. In all cases but CS6, offenders used private residences either directly owned or belonging to a relative. Other privately owned locations used in transportation’s process, including hostel of secondary school and private vehicle. For example, in the case CS4, all drugs were transported from Laos to Nghean provincial zones, particularly at districts Quephong, Thanhchuong, and Kyson before stored at a house belonging to CS4-No.2 in Vinh City. Private properties, while preferred, were supplemented with ‘external’ or private modes of concealment. The highest level of secrecy could be gained by burying drugs in forest locations, some distance away from the peering eyes of local residents. In cases, CS4 and CS5, offenders hid heroin inside a small forest cave with a distractive geographic signature. “During the process of concealment heroin in the forest, traffickers were always in communication about distinct features of places for keeping goods in forest’s areas so that they could easily recognize location and retrieve” (Interview #5). Meanwhile, in the case CS6, the offenders CS6-No.2 and CS6-No.7 selected
their boss’s company address to store 58 blocks of heroin after evading an LEAs’ pursuit. Besides that, other offender in this case, CS6-No.4 took the rest of ATS’s bags to hide under lavatory basin of a hotel.

4.4.2.2. Transporting

In the process of transporting drugs, to ensure the effectiveness of delivery, traffickers calculated routes and pathways before deciding the best transportation’s vehicle to suit with each stage.

From Laos to Vietnam

As discussed, to deliver drugs from Laos to Vietnam across Vietnam’s borderlands with Laos, traffickers use road transport or otherwise arrange carriage by foot. Road transport is most appropriate for large quantities of drugs with multiple packages, at least 30 blocks or more, such as in the case CS1, CS2, and CS6. To do this, they used either a heavy-duty truck or passenger car. “In all 11 successful transports, 712 blocks were hidden into recyclable irons to put on large truck to deliver on the Vietnam-Laos Highway” (Interview #1). With mid-size quantity, fewer than 10 bricks, offenders concealed in a single package to carry by road and the case CS3 was a typical example to illustrate the process of concealment eight blocks of heroin inside bed frames and hotel’s equipment. These ‘products’ were shipped by passenger car from Vientiane (Laos) to Danang (Vietnam) and (Interview #3).

Small quantities were covered on foot by couriers or ‘mules’ in small package along forest trails. Accordingly, drug’s packages were transported through trails in the woods between Vietnam’s borderlands and Laos’s areas. As one investigator in the case CS4 shared “while patrolling along Quephong district, Nghean province border with Xamtay district, Houaphanh province (in Laos), we noted how the rugged terrain with dense mountainous forest
and mixed deciduous forest with stands of bamboo, assisted couriers. Denseness of forest made it impossible to see far ahead or to see movement further along mountain tracks (Interview #4). Besides that, to ensure the safety for people and goods when walking in the forest, leaders suggested their associates to organize a group of three and five members bring personal equipment, weapons and tools during carrying drugs (representative of Group# 2).

**In Vietnam**

When drugs arrived in Vietnam, they were distributed to local markets through several ways. Crossing all six selected cases shows that there were two main forms to transport, by road and by rail. Whether using rail or road, suitable vehicles had to be arranged for delivery, reception, and distribution to Vietnamese retailers or even as far between Vietnam’s borderland and China (in the case CS6). Out of six cases, there were five cases used roads as the main transportation’s method; other used both road and rail as “a dual strategy to create flexible option” in the case CS4 (Interview #4).

In terms of road transportation, current data shows that couriers used to a variety of vehicles, including four-wheel drive, light truck, and motorcycles. Vietnamese road system is extensive the total length being about 222,179 km covering a variety of road types, including highways, provincial roads, district roads, urban roads, and commune roads. This creates a number of advantages for drug couriers (Giang 2013, Hai 2016). When interviewees were asked: “What the main routes drug couriers in your case to apply and why they selected it?” they replied that “shipping via roadway is the number one choices with traffickers due to it is very flexible and easy to move and adjust” (Interview #1, 2). In addition, “it is possible stop anywhere on the road to change routes and to put police officer off the trail” (Interview #5). In some circumstances, drug couriers chose railway to change suddenly their modus operand in order to avoid police’s monitors. For example, to turn in the case CS4, courier (CS4-No.3)
used national rail network running between Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, which passes through 21 cities and provinces of Vietnam, to carry at least five times with 140 blocks of heroin.

4.4.3. Activity

4.4.3.1. Exchange processes

Researching six selected cases, there were two main elements of exchange. One is the location for exchanging drugs and the second relates to methods.

With respect to location, this could be in Laos, in Vietnam or in the ‘blurred’ frontier zone between both countries. There are two hypotheses for how drugs are collected for exchange in Laos. One is that drugs shipped into Laos-Vietnam border areas come from the Golden Triangle, including Myanmar and Thailand; the other is that Laotian drug lords consolidate drug shipments before selling to foreign buyers, including Vietnamese traffickers. In respect of the first hypothesis, this is a growing concern not only for Laotian government but also with ASEAN partners and Greater Mekong Sub-region states (INCSR 2014, Kramer et al. 2014, UNODC 2014d, Chouvy 2013b). However, this point excludes in the current thesis’s scope. With respect to the second hypothesis, both the Laos and Vietnamese governments recognize that Vietnam-and-Laos border area poses a major challenge to drug control authorities (AIPA 2014b, a, 2015b, a).

Place or location of exchange has implementation for law enforcement effectiveness. The Vietnamese offender’s group, who are either living in Laos as dual citizens (Vietnamese and Laotian) or residing at Vietnam but travel to Laos as frequently as possible, acquired drugs at exchange location in Laos. As a result, gathering information about the final source of TransNT’s suppliers in Laos is recognized as a major challenge for LEAs of Vietnam (SODC
2012, 2013a, AIPA 2014a). “In some situation in our case, although we have suggested kindly to Lao PDR’s anti-narcotics police task force to share data about relationships between Laotian drug lords and Vietnamese brokers, this does not happen often and so were are unable to use Laos police evidence to widen our counter-narcotics campaigns” (Interview #2).

Exchanges in Vietnam are very mobile. In the case CS2, Vietnamese offenders always move frequently on the road with different types of vehicle. “Sometimes they use their own cars or others rent taxi drivers to come to appointed places” (Interview #2). With case CS6, traffickers exchanged drugs at public places, such as railway station, hotel, motel and private properties, such as a house, in a garden or even on the road. Communications are good because offenders share information via personal mobile phones (Interview #6). However, all interviewees affirmed that, secrecy is the prime concern for offenders when selecting an exchange location. Locations are frequently checked in advance and changed if there is any suspicion that cover is not secure (Interview #4, 6).

The third location, in ‘blurred’ frontier areas, presented the toughest practical challenge to LEAs. Here, gathering evidence is difficult because of the terrain and because Vietnamese LEAs are unsure if they have jurisdiction, that in where Vietnamese jurisdiction starts or ends along the Laos-Vietnam border. This challenge should ideally be recognized and acted upon by both governments because such areas are likely ‘hot spots’ for drug trafficking.

Suppliers and buyers need to carefully choose effective methods of shipment and payment. Many scholars in the criminology and criminal justice field, argue that this should be considered as one of the most important decisions made along the drug trafficking supply chain (Zaitch 2002a, b, Kenney 2007a, b, c, Natarajan 2006, 2000, Natarajan and Belanger 1998, Morselli 2009). In Vietnam context, almost of interviewees in this study noted that to sure the safety for “goods”, money, and people, traffickers often used the most sophisticated modus
operandi with its various ways. It is concerns with three main issues: scheduling, communication, and payment.

With regard to scheduling, the majority of offenders often did not choose any fixed times for exchange. Instead, a general schedule was adjusted as required. At least four interviewees in the case CS1, CS2, CS5, and CS6 emphasize that adaptation in scheduling was done to evade LEAs monitoring. In some circumstances, to keep information secret about the time and place of exchange decisions about precisely when were made only hours before receipt and transfer. The case study CS4 is recorded as a specific example when N.C.H (Mr Big boss) only informs time and location pick up “goods” with his associate (CS4-No.3 - drug courier) when she was on the way to go Nghean province. “In lieu of sending goods to her on the afternoon, he changed to the evening to correspond with the South-and-North Railway timetable the purpose being to allow time to catch the train that night” (Interview #4).

Regarding communication during the exchange process, offenders used a variety of old and new technologies, including cell phones, and the Internet, or through intermediaries and in person, face to face. This combination allows traffickers to stay one step ahead of LEAs (May et al. 2005, Kenney 2007a, b, Zaitch 2002a, Grabosky 2007, Coles 2001, Lavorgna 2013). In this study’s context, to maintain information flows between Vietnam and Laos, according to interviewees, offenders were often equipped with personal mobile phones. As one investigator in the case CS1 states that, “they are very seldom to use only one phone number. They are changed frequently to avoid our monitors. It is a very simple issue in Vietnam, where anyone can get more than one number without personal contract” (Interview #1). By doing this, traffickers notified each other about the shipment route, hints, and signals and often “using slang or ethnic language to communicate from prepared stages to transporting steps” (Interview #5). Also, supplier used code, “secret signals” or “silent letters” for recognizing correctly the characteristics of potential or actual buyer (Interview #2). Particularly, in case with the large
amounts of drug, offenders needed to manage information carefully. An investigator of the CS4 explains that,

Before sending a package, buyer (N.C.H – Mr Big boss and P.T.K - related actors) will check the quality of sample drugs; meanwhile, supplier (X.D – Laotian related actors) will examine finances - money. When everything is fine and both sides are also happy, they will order a quantity of drugs at an acceptable price… of course, (laughing) and exchange information time, location, and other necessary matters (Interview #4)

Similarly, in the case CS6, between offenders was stipulated location to send and receive drug as before they do.

I can show you that in circumstance of send and receive “gift” as follows: first, two of their groups (CS6-No.2 and CS6-No.8) drive car to carry a suitcase containing 60 cakes of heroin from Laos back to Vietnam. Second, when entering Nghean province, Vietnam, they look for a suitable place to conceal this suitcase and then calls leader to tell their organizer where it is. After that, the leader (CS6-No.1) follows the information given by co-offender (CS6-No.4) and drives to collect their share. Finally, CS6-No.2 returns to the place to pick up this suitcase in another car and then drives with CS6-No.4 to other points of exchange (Interview #6)

Payment methods also vary in all six cases used in this thesis. For example, in the case CS4, all 10 shipments of 264 blocks of heroin were dispatched and received in area near the closed border between Quephong and Huanphanh (Laos) between N.C.H, P.T.K, and CS4-No.6 and X.D (Laotian drug supplier) where money was paid in the spot. Sometimes delivery and payment occur separately, and at different locations. In the case CS5, this process was applied based on “pick up goods at here, drop money at other” by traffickers (Interview #5). It means that the offender CS5-No.1 collected heroin from drug source’s suppliers (L.A.H and L.A.T – related actors) on the way or appointed places near with school or shops; whereas, money was paid at different locations. “Locations and methods are never stable” (Interview #5). Depending on the level of trust, payment can be made once drugs have been on-sold to
Retailers and consumers (Interview #1). Again, and as discussed in relation to other factors in the drug supply process, flexibility is critical (Interview #2).

4.4.3.2. Cutting

Cutting, the process of separating drugs into smaller quantities, and usually occurs after drugs have been brought into Vietnam. Depending on either organizer’s requirements or demander’s needs, this step is approached in different ways and on a flexible scale. There are two main methods, one is to separate bulk shipments into smaller packages – as small as a single box; the other is to unpack and re-pack in different sized packages, depending upon retailer requests.

With the former method, it is normal modus operandi of traffickers to store and sell on behalf of their boss (Interview #4). In this case, there is unlikely to be much change in either the quantity or quality of drugs in comparison to original packages. In the case CS2, shipments with a total of 126 blocks of heroin, after receiving drugs from Laotian’s drug lord; “they (CS2-No.3 and CS2-No.7) sorted it out into individual bricks to hide into motorcycle’s equipment before hire drug courier (CS2-No.6)” (Interview #2).

As stated, quantities vary according to the needs of retailers. Again, only quantity is altered, not the quality. One consequence is that LEAs do not know the total quantity of drugs (until arrest are made) distributed through drug networks. “When we seize 40 bricks of heroin at CS4-No.5’s private house, we knew that it was separated from the total of 70 blocks purchased from Laotian suppliers and re-packed in other boxes or bags to transport one by one” (Interview #4).
The ‘purity’ of drugs is another issue to consider at this stage. This form of cutting increases the quantity of a drug package but dilutes its narcotics content.\(^{40}\) In this way, new blocks are made by mixing heroin with some other chemical elements (Interview #1). Apart from people with skills in mixing, this process needs equipment tampering with the purity of a block of heroin can have serious implications for trust (UNODC 2005a). If a brick of heroin varies from standard size, this is likely to cause suspicion. “That’s why some situations, wholesale partner (S – related actor) of the offender CS4-No.1 and CS4-No.2 returned goods and subtracted money due to the poor quality of heroin” (Interview #4). Case study CS1 illustrates the process in detail,

From Cambodian partners’ sharing and guidelines, (X- related actor), they (CS1-No.1 and CS1-No.2) broke original heroin packs and mixed with caffeine powders. After that, they fill a prepared mould with the dimensions of a standard brick of heroin. They also buy a plastic cover with ‘AAA’ or ‘999’ –brand name of heroin, and prepare a juice operator, a mask and a car’s plumb bob, which are necessary tools to make ‘new products’. In so doing, they made 203 blocks from 185 original bricks (Interview #1)

Offenders sometimes engaged in crude and desperate measures to cover mistakes. For example, when rain damage part of a heroin shipment, to repair the damage, traffickers crushed and then used a juice machine to blend and mix before squeezing out the liquid. “Only one different point with the offender CS1-No.1 and CS1-No.2, the offender CS1-No.4 was that they did not put any impurities into the mix. Thus, after blending process produced to 103 repaired bricks and added to 711 undamaged blocks that made up 814 blocks. The final size is an equivalent in quantity to the original shipment!” (Interview #1)

The opportunity to increase quantity and change price at the cutting stage is what attracts traffickers to devise advantageous re-packing strategies (Interview #1, 2, and 4).

\(^{40}\) One block of heroin in Southeast Asia region, mostly at Myanmar, is weight around 350 grams (Kramer, Jelsma, and Blickman 2009, 46–47).
4.4.4. Post-activity

4.4.4.1. Distribution

Once drugs have been delivered to a buyers/suppliers and cut, plans have to be made for distribution. In the cases researched for this thesis, two cases involved distribution to Chinese drug lords and four involved distribution to Vietnam retail markets.

With respect to China as a destination, firstly, either a representative of Chinese node makes contract with a supplier in Vietnam or an intermediary is used. In both circumstances, the pivotal person will be Vietnamese. Thus they find drugs sourced in Laos, being trafficked into and cut in Vietnam for on-sale to China, rather than Chinese trafficking making their own connections. According to police agents in the case CS4 and CS6, drug source in Lao PDR is always initial priority for drug traffickers in Nghean province (Interview #4, 6). And so the chain of supply follows paths already mapped out earlier in this chapter but with the addition of a Chinese node to the trafficking network.

Depending on specific circumstances, either those leaders connect directly to Laotian drug lord based on their long-termed relationships or touch in up them via an intermediary. For example, in the case CS4, to contact with X.D (Laotian drug lord – related actor), N.C.H (Mr Big boss – related actors) had to use his accomplices to bridge, namely P.T.K (related actor) and CS4-No.6, and of course, “between all of them have never met each other in the past” (Interview #4). Whereas, in the case CS6, the leader CS6-No.1 and H.N.C (Laotian partner – related actor) were business partners in the past and their dealings are based upon trust and respect. “Anytime he orders drugs, his partner also provides full services without initial deposit. Alternatively, they only inform and integrate exactly on quantity and price via personal mobile phone. It is very simple way to trade for them but very difficult way to identify their traces for us” (Interview #6). On the other hand, in the case CS2, the process of
transporting drugs from Laos to domestic Vietnam before re-sale to Chinese drug lord nodes that was separated by the multiple layers (Interview #2).

Thus, to distribute drugs to China markets from Laos via Vietnamese’ traffickers, specific middleman carries information in lieu of direct communication. Using M.B.D (related actor), as a go-between, the offenders CS4-No.2, CS4-No.6, and N.C.H (Mr Big boss) shipped 130 blocks of heroin from Laos via X.D (Laotian drug supplier – related actor) to deliver to Langson province before transferring to Chinese drug lord’s partners. “They are very sophisticated in communicating quantity and cunning in the selection of locations to receive goods. They either deposited drugs on the way or selected places in a narrow mountain valley. This could be done because no direct and immediate this payment of money was required” (Interview #4).

Distribution in Vietnam also operates through networks of intermediaries, usually wholesales more so than retailers or street dealers. Key organizers are often involved in the first exchanges with a new partner after which his/her accomplices will continue contact. Group leaders sometimes chose to be directly involved at the beginning of a new distribution partnership. This is done as a display of power, to earn respect and trust. For example, in the case study CS3, the offender CS3-No.1 played as all-in-one role, from seek drug source’s supplier in Laos to deal with them about prices and methods to transport to Vietnam before he ships “goods” to spread out other domestic markets in Ho Chi Minh City, Danang and others. “It was an extremely tight circle and that’s why we had very difficulty to identify his accomplices (D – related actor) in this network” (Interview #3). In other cases, group leaders preferred to work at arms length, for example the high-ranking positions in the case CS1, CS4, and CS6 were seldom involved directly. As the investigating officer explained,

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41 As I mentioned at the chapter 1, this thesis excludes to analysis deeply the domestic scale with respect to retailers and street dealers as well. Alternatively, both of these markets in Vietnam’s territories are considered as the part of TransNT process, particularly after traffickers shipped successfully from Laos into Vietnam.
In order to avoid our monitors and surveillances, of several shipments to deliver 565 blocks of heroin sale to H.T.T and V.T.N.B (related actors), the CS1-No.1 (Mr. Big boss) only involve at the first time with 4 sample bricks for meeting and discussing quality, quantity, and prices with his partners. Then the rest of shipments were managed by his followers (Interview #1)

**4.4.4.2. Illegal profits**

Many scholars, policy-makers, and practitioners assumed that TransNT activities bring huge benefits for traffickers in comparison to other TOC’s fields (Reuter 2014, Jenner 2014, von Lampe 2012). Drug traffickers have to find suitable directions to launder their money, through the legal banking system if they can, so that they can continue their criminal activities. (Muller, Kalin, and Goldsworth 2007, McFadden et al. 2014). Money laundering provides further illicit finance and allows criminals to protect and consolidate their funds. Laundered funds can also deliver profits, if invested is illegal or legal business activities, such as real estate (Ferragut 2012, Williams 2001a, Shelley 2013, AUSTRAC 2015). And Vietnam is no different.

All interviewees in our research affirmed that no evidence shows symbiotic relationship between drug trafficking and terrorism through laundering criminal found in Vietnam. Besides that, there is not much evidence prove that a Vietnamese traffickers laundering their proceeds overseas. There is evidence, from successful prosecutions of Vietnamese offenders at Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, the U.K., the U.S. (Vietnamese citizen, non-Vietnamese citizen or dual nationalities) laundering proceeds of crime-related drugs in their hometown (Schoenmakers, Bremmers, and Wijk 2012, Silverstone and Savage 2010, Silverstone 2011, Hai 2014a, Chat 2014).42 Although these countries have criminalized money laundering and

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42 Focusing on Vietnamese community in overseas related cannabis growing, the author has analysed and compared within the size of five countries, including the U.K, the Netherlands, Canada, the Republic of Czech, and Australia. It has also published with the title “Based on the ‘Ethnic’ Factor to Understanding the Distinct Characteristics of Cannabis Cultivation: A Review of Overseas Vietnamese Drug Groups”, *GSTF International Journal of Law and Social Science*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 75-86
instituted banking regulations to deter money laundering and made it easier to detect and seize the assets of criminal activity, in Vietnam, foreign investment activities were often ‘welcome’ which could be changed by transnational economic crime (Chat 2012, 385). Yet, national financial sectors with limited regulatory controls and lack of formal legal provision against money laundering prove attractive to criminals, particularly those engaged in drug-related operations (Chat 2013a). Additionally, the relatively loose laws, weak principles financial system, and a cash-based economy in Vietnam have contributed, either intentionally or unintentionally, to increase the vulnerability to money laundering from TransNT activities (Chat 2014, 2013b, a, 2012). Thus, it is not surprising that there are no money laundering related drug trafficking cases prosecuted under the CCV and Law on Anti Money Laundering in Vietnam, though these laws entered into force in 2009 and 2013, respectively.43

Therefore, within the scope of this research, though the term of “money laundering” in relation to drug trafficking activities will be not contextualized as international standard as Vietnam ratified,44 the process of transform the monetary proceeds from TransNT activity into revenue with an apparently legal source of traffickers are recognized as a form of money laundering.

43 During the period of 2003-2013 when I collected case studies for this Thesis, no money laundering related crimes are prosecuted by LEAs in Vietnam. In Vietnam, although the term of “money laundering” was not defined and applied in any formal legal documents, a number of activities related to its boundaries were fist criminalized in article 250 and 251 of the 1999 Criminal Code of Vietnam. In 2005, the term “money laundering” (“rút tiền”) and the general legal framework of anti money laundering in Vietnam were first stipulated in the Governmental Decree No. 74/2005/ND-CP[3]. In May 2007, Vietnam joined the Asia/Pacific Group (APG) on money laundering. Furthermore, the crime of ML (“tội rút tiền”) is criminalized as an independent offence at article 324 in the 2015 CCV. Yet, the Law on Prevention and Suppression of Money Laundering was passed by National Assembly of Vietnam in June 2012, and take effect in January 2013 (National Assembly, 2012). Other anti money laundering legal regulations are scattered in various domestic laws.

44 The 1988 U.N Convention is the first international legal instrument to embody the money-laundering aspect of this new strategy and is also the first international convention, which criminalises money laundering. Accordingly, money laundering shall be considered under domestic law when criminal offences committed intentionally as follow: 1) conversion or transfer of property, knowing that such property is derived from any offence or offences established in accordance with drug trafficking activities (be regulated at subparagraph a of paragraph 1 article 1 of this Convention) or from an act of participation in such offence or offences, for the purpose of concealing or disguising the illicit origin of the property or of assisting any person who is involved in the commission of such an offence or offences to evade the legal consequences of his actions; and 2) the concealment or disguise of the true nature, source, location, disposition, movement, rights with respect to, or ownership of property, knowing that such property is derived from an offence or offences established in accordance with drug trafficking activities (be regulated at subparagraph a of paragraph 1 article 1 of this Convention) or from an act of participation in such an offence or offences (United Nations 1988).
laundering. Money laundering has been defined as ‘…to knowingly engage in a financial transaction with the proceeds of some unlawful activity with the intent of promoting or carrying on that unlawful activity or to conceal or disguise the nature, location, source, ownership, or control of these proceeds’ (Genzman 1997, 342). Accordingly, under the current criminal law in Vietnam, these properties, including object and money, have to confiscate for State funds. Assessing proceeds of drug trafficking offences in this research was based on two main sources, including 1) final decisions of court about confiscation of objects and money directly related crimes and confiscation of property of the sentenced person in drug cases, and 2) supplemental sharing of law enforcement views extracted from their surveillance operations.

### Table 7: Forms of launder illegal drug profits in selected cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study</th>
<th>Illegal cross-border transportation of currencies</th>
<th>Investing in jewellery/Owner cars/weapons</th>
<th>Enjoying illegal gambling</th>
<th>Transferring to bank credit systems</th>
<th>Investing in real estate</th>
<th>Doing business activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CS1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS2</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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45 According to the 2015 CCV, the issues of confiscation of property is stipulated clearly at article 45 as follows: Confiscation of property means to confiscate part or whole of the sentenced person's property for remittance into the State's fund. The property confiscation shall apply only to persons sentenced for serious crimes, very serious crimes or particularly serious crimes prescribed by this Code. When all their property is confiscated, the sentenced persons and their families shall still be left with conditions to live.

46 According to the 2015 CCV, the issue of confiscation of objects and money directly related to crimes is stipulated clearly at article 47 as follows:

1. The property confiscation for State funds shall apply to:
   a) Tools and means used for the commission of crimes;
   b) Objects or money acquired through the commission of crime or the trading or exchange of such things;
   c) Objects banned from circulation by the State.
2. Things and/or money illegally seized or used by offenders shall not be confiscated but returned to their lawful owners or managers.
3. Things and/or money of other persons, if these persons are at fault in letting offenders use them in the commission of crimes, may be confiscated for state funds.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study</th>
<th>Illegal cross-border transportation of currencies</th>
<th>Investing in jewellery/Owner cars/weapons</th>
<th>Enjoying illegal gambling</th>
<th>Transferring to bank credit systems</th>
<th>Investing in real estate</th>
<th>Doing business activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CS6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: This statistic is collected and extracted from six drug-related cases)

In Vietnam, one of the similar characteristics with other countries in the Southeast Asia region in deploy proceeds of drug-related benefits that is these proceeds will be often invested into real estate, commercial activities, and even used to gambling events (Phansumrit 2011, FATF 2010, Shelley 2013).\(^{47}\) Parallel with drug trading activities, traffickers seek to suitable opportunities to transform proceeds of crime (Watkins et al. 2003). However, it is difficult to prove money transfers are proceeds of crime. Of six cases, only in case CS1, through combining investigative operations of police forces and interviewing process at the court, criminal justice’s agencies in Vietnam identified clearly laundering of drug profits. The rest of studies have not concluded finally ways to transfer illegal profits by drug traffickers, apart from their confessed statements to LEAs and courts.

In the case study CS1, there were diverse approaches to the use of illegal profit by drug dealers. “They invest in multiple ways, particularly with general investments by leader’s group” (Interview #1). With from the over 2,354 blocks of heroin in the period of 2000-2003, senior group leaders invested in things likely to assist their trafficking enterprises. Significantly these drug dealers never register an investment in person so as to avoid criminal responsibility” (Interview #1). The investigator explains that,

\(^{47}\) For instance, in Thailand, the greatest percentages of crime proceeds are derived from the drugs trade, particularly with trafficking of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS). This money is also laundered to various channels, including deposit the proceeds in family members or associate’s bank accounts, buying real property and investing in bogus businesses (Phansumrit 2011).
Proceeds of drug-related activities in this case were used for different purposes. I can show you one example that when they sale 515 blocks of heroin bought from T.V.H to H.T.T, they got US$ 487,000. Individual benefits were separated based on personal position and contribution, the rest of these proceeds were invested in real estate with 41,008 square meters, bought a Toyota Land Cruiser and a Ford Escape, a sporty motorcycle. All these vehicles were registered different owner (Interview #1)

Investment decisions reflect personal preferences but crime proceeds seem to be directed towards a few standard items, including real estate, gambling, luxury cars, and jewelries or weapons.

All benefits from drug trafficking, the offender CS1-No.2 were invested in real estate with one luxury villa at Go Vap district Ho Chi Minh City, around US$ 103,000 for land and about US$ 500,000 for architect and building; with one private house at Binh Chinh district where became as headquarter for drug collecting and blending; and one land with 1,200 square meters at Nha Be district, around US$ 600,000. In the past, when cooperating with Mr. Big boss (CS1-No.1), he also got one land at Dongnai province and bought one car BMW series 5 with price of US$ 72,000. Further, he also bought military weapons to protect them and to resist police’s detection, including 5 short guns, 64 bullets, 2 grenades, and 3 silencers. Meanwhile, the offender CS2-No.4 invested two special houses with wood-based infrastructure where he concealed 814 blocks of heroin to trading. Besides, he owned one farm with 18,000 square meters and a number of precious jewelries (Interview #1)

With the remaining five cases, it was difficult for police to prove how proceeds of crime were spent or invested. For cases CS3 and CS6, investigators, involved directly in these cases from start to end, believed that drug money was used to open a hotel, restaurant and timber import company. One investigator in the case CS3 shared with his quite disappointments

It is an obvious point that the offender CS3-No.1 has never confessed his utilizations of proceeds to invest real-estate interests, including private house and restaurant. That is why we only required distraintment of property with two above real estate for executing court judgment. It is not confiscate objects or money directly related to crime. However, one of the most concerns in this case is that we have not strong
instruments to prove original resources in his properties, if not by illegal profits. I think it is also common
difficulties with us when facing to drug-related offences (Interview #3).

Similarly, in the case CS6, according to court judgment, his background was a
professional gambler with heap up debts and had to go way the village in the long time. Suddenly, in 2006, he had returned to invest his imported wood company with huge properties after 10 years. Police officer added

During 6 years from 2006 to 2012, under our surveillance’s operations and interrogated meetings with him and his cohorts, at least, we could affirm that illegal profits from his drug trafficking activities are estimated around 3 trillion VND (approximately 150,000,000$). With cash resources, he paid not only his cabinet’s salaries for drug mules or couriers, but also invested for other drug trade’s times with his Laotian partner (H.N.C – related actor). It is only legal evidences based on our investigation. Although with his several real estates, including private house, wood company, and other lands could not prove its original source, we asked ourselves that how can he gain it if not from drug trafficking…uhm (short of breath) (Interview #6)

In three cases CS2, CS4, and CS5, there was no evidence to suggest what exact step drug traffickers took to invest their illicit drug’s benefits. In the case CS4, “though the offender CS4-No.1 admitted to us that he has suggested his wife and brother-in-law to open bank account for transferring money to play casino gambling, both CS4-No.1’s relatives answered that they did not know exactly his original source’s money” (Interview #4).

This crime script analysis of TransNT supply chains in Vietnam indicates the intricacies and sophistication of trafficking offenders. Evidence and police interviews detail the lengths to which drug criminals will go to evade police attention and disguise their operations. The analysis breaks TransNT into a structure of activity: 1) establish network, 2) stockpile and conceal 3) transport, 4) send and receive, 5) communicate, 6) evade detection, and 7) money laundering. These were coded and used in the survey questionnaire in the quantitative phase.
4.5. Summary of chapter

Through multiple selected-case studies, as the first step, this study identified the main issues with respect to the nature of TransNT in Vietnam. In particular, it identified how groups and networks of groups are formed and how trafficking operation are sustained. The research establishes main components in terms of organizational structure and modus operandi of TransNT in Vietnam.

First, evidence supports the view that TransNT entities are structured in a manner similar with drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) in Colombia and Mexico. Depending on the number of drug traffickers involved, the size of Vietnamese groups can be separated into small, middle, or large scale. Although these groups maybe fluid, diverse, and adaptable, this does not mean their modus operandi are unsophisticated. Second, drug traffickers operate in loosely connected networks where communication is informal and where a variety of special languages and secret codes and signs are employed. However, one salient characteristic is the central coordinating role of the group leader. These leaders can either engage directly in trafficking, or they work through their accomplices and brokers. Third, membership of these groups reflects strong kinship ties, friend bonds, and fellow countryman’ relations indicating that familiarity is optional. People are not randomly ‘hired’. Four, these TransNT entities in Vietnam were highly adaptable to match changes in their operating environment, both in Vietnam and Lao PDR’ territories. The environment included challenges from LEA’s strategic operations and border patrol; changes in domestic market conditions; and the personal attributes of those involved in drug trafficking. Fifth, though the levels of specialization of drug trafficker’ positions and its members in TransNT syndicate is not really clear and sufficient to fit with William’s classification (2001), the flexibility of those functions is very evident. Role and seniority were based on age, charisma, experience and skills but seriously also reflected Vietnamese social norms, especially the norm of respect for elder family members and age.
Last but not least, data from this first stage indicates that drug markets in Vietnam were not controlled by monopolistic, hierarchical organizations or ‘cartels’ as in Mexico, Colombia, the U.S. and Europe. That said, Vietnamese groups are sophisticated enough to coordinate extensive networked trading relation across several countries. These groups posed significant challenges to LEAs by virtue of the modes of operation, location, and methods of exchange. Although LEAs are not the focus of this research, it is evident that there are many obstacles to law enforcement in border across arising from terrain, jurisdiction and the fluidity of border relations.

Although all of above characteristics of TransNT in Vietnam were examined in representative case studies based on court judgments interviewee’s assessments and the Workshop, there is still a need to examine the validity of qualitative findings with a larger survey sample. In the next chapter, quantitative findings, the bulk of law enforcement officer’s analyses are examined from data gathered through survey questionnaires completed by CIPDRC officers. This data in then used to corroborate the findings presented in this chapter.
CHAPTER 5: LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ASSESSMENTS OF TRANSNATIONAL NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING IN VIETNAM

5.1. Chapter overview

Based on the key findings in the qualitative approach, an instrument questionnaire with larger population designed to test these outcomes at the second phase. This Chapter shows result from the process of survey at six different provinces in Vietnam where shared their relevant borderland with Laos. One of the main purposes of this Chapter is to examine the nature of TransNT in Vietnam in terms of two main themes, organizational structure and modus operandi, through assessing of the CIPDRC officers. This survey was conducted at three regional areas covered its neighboured borderlands with Laos territories, from the Northern West, Northern Central Coast to the Highland Coast. In order to ensure the statistical significance of the analysis of questionnaire responses, the Chi-square Test for independence is applied to identify the relationship between dependent factor (sub-themes) and independent factor (surveyed areas). The survey outcomes show that all twelve factors, including five for the theme of structural organization and seven for modus operandi’s theme, are assessed and clarified with their different views from CIPDRC officer’s sharing.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into four sections. The preliminary outputs of the survey, including CIPDRC division selection and CIPDRC officer selection, are described in Section 5.2. The main section of this chapter, Section 5.3, presents and compares the outputs of survey’s data at both regional and provincial level of CIPDRC divisions. Based on these outcomes and combined with initial findings in the first phase, as one partly of the Exploratory Model’s useful supplements, in Section 5.4 calls for main barriers, challenges and its
implications to LEAs for combating TransNT in Vietnam. Section 5.5 contains a summary of the work done in this phase of the research.

5.2. Survey implementation

5.2.1. CIPDRC division selection

Six CIPDRC divisions were selected where differences in assessment about the nature of TransNT in Vietnam might be expected. In each division, the survey administered, was informed by two criteria: organizational structure and modus operandi, as discussed in chapter 4. Four main descriptors were used to guide selection of the divisions: population, geography, region, and volume of drug-related cases at each surveyed area. The six CIPDRC divisions selected were: Sonla, Dienbien, Nghean, Quangbinh, Quangtri, and Kontum. Their descriptive characteristics and location are indicated in Table 8.
Table 8: Characteristics of the six selected CIPDRC divisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CIPDRC Division</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Volume of Drug-related cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sonla</td>
<td>1,149,300</td>
<td>Located in North-eastern mountainous areas, covering 19 communes with shared borderlands with 2 provinces in Laos, Luangprabang and Huaphanh where there are existing main “hot-pots” to transport drugs from Laos to Vietnam such as “Mocchau” and “Vanho”</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dienbien</td>
<td>527,300</td>
<td>Located in North-eastern mountainous areas, including 17 communes with shared borderlands with 2 provinces in Laos, Phongsaly and Luangprabang with at least three complicated locations for drug trafficking, namely “Na-U”, Muong Nha, and Phin Ho</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nghean</td>
<td>2,978,700</td>
<td>Located in Central Northern coast with the largest sizes in Vietnam, covering 26 communes with shared borderlands with 3 provinces in Laos, Huaphanh, Xianghoang, and Borikhamxay with the drug-markets of most concern, namely “Tuongduong” and “Kyson”</td>
<td>Central Northern</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quangbính</td>
<td>863,400</td>
<td>Located in the Central Coast, including 8 communes with shared borderlands with 2 provinces in Laos, Saravane and Savanakhet where traffickers often ship drugs via the Chalo International Border Gate</td>
<td>Central Northern</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quangtri</td>
<td>612,500</td>
<td>Located in the Central Coast, covering 10 communes with shares borderlands with 2 provinces in Laos, Khammuane and Savanakhet; the Laobao International Border Gate is considered as one of the potential targets for drug trafficking</td>
<td>Central Northern</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kontum</td>
<td>473,300</td>
<td>Located in the Highland area, covering 7 communes with shared borderlands with Sekong and Attapeu provinces in Laos; at that time TransNT was not a major concern for LEAs, only drug-related crime with small scale and simple nature.</td>
<td>Highland Coast</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Based on official information and data of the General Statistic Office of Vietnam and the CIPDRC Headquarter in Hanoi)
According to the General Statistic Office of Vietnam (GSO), on 1st July 2013, the Vietnamese population is estimated to be 89,708,900 people, of which the population of 10 provinces bordering Lao PDR is 13,908,600 people, or 15.5% of the total population. The six selected border provinces in this study are home to 6,604,500 people.\(^{48}\) The most salient common characteristics of these six provinces are 1) representativeness of three regions of Vietnam (i.e. North-western; Central Northern; and Highland Coast) with the largest size (Nghean province with 16,492.7 kilometres square) and the smallest size (Quangtri province with 4,739.8 kilometres square); 2) most of population inhabits at mountainous areas, close to communities with which they share an affinity in Laos, particularly minority groups which span the border, notably the Hmong, Dao, and Thai; 3) significant economic disadvantage, including lack of transport in infrastructure; and 4) limited opportunities for education, training, and skills program for local people (Rapin 2003, Yem 2003, UNODC 2005b).

Although Vietnam’s government has encouraged the country to build relevant programs and do specific planning for improving the quality of life, social conditions, and infrastructure in these provinces during the last two decades, local ethnic groups have remained particularly vulnerable to the attraction of organized crime, particularly drug-related crimes (UNODC 2007b, Van and Scannapieco 2008, Michaud 2009, Vuong et al. 2012).

Between these six selected provinces, there were variations in the level of drug-related crime. While Nghean had one the highest rates drug-related cases compared the other provinces in this study and Vietnam as a whole; drug trafficking in Kontum was limited to a few small cases with no connection to TransNT groups or networks across the Kontum’s borderland with Attapeu and Sekong areas (Laos) (Cong an Nghe An 2013). Anti-narcotic authorities in Vietnam recognize both Sonla and Dienbien as major thoroughfares for drugs sourced in Laos for distribution to Northern drug wholesalers and the rest of Vietnam (MPS

\(^{48}\) See more detail at http://www.geohive.com/cntry/vietnam.aspx
In fact, drug-related crimes in these six provinces are increasing due to huge profits stemming from the illegal trade which logically increases the incentives for local people to be recruited into TransNT groups (MPS 2016, 2015). Given these similarities and differences, the cases selected from these six CIPDRC Divisions, provide a varied cross section of TransNT in Vietnam.

5.2.2. **CIPDRC officer selection**

As mentioned in the Chapter 3, the criminal acts addressed in this research project are defined as “particularly serious crimes” (2015 CCV, Article 9). According to classification and responsibility of investigator’s level in the Law on Organization of Criminal Investigation Agency (2015), in Vietnam, only CIPDRC officers are qualified to investigate and so only CIPDRC officers were invited to participate in this survey.\(^{49}\) This raised issues to

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\(^{49}\) Criteria of investigators under Vietnam’s regulations was promulgate from article 45 to 49 of Law on Organization of Criminal Investigations (2015), as follow:

1. Vietnamese citizens who are loyal to the Fatherland and the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, have good virtues, are non-corrupted and honest, have security university, policy university or law university degree, investigating operation certificates, have the practical work duration prescribed by this Ordinance, have good health to ensure the performance of assigned tasks can be appointed to be investigators.

   In cases where due to operation demands, persons having university degrees in other disciplines, satisfying the above criteria and possessing investigating operation certificates may also be appointed to be investigators.

2. The investigators are classified into three grades, being elementary investigators, intermediate investigators and senior investigators:

   a) Those who satisfy the criteria prescribed in Clause 1 of this Article, have been engaged in law-related work for four years or more, are police officers or army officers in active service, people's procuracy officials, capable of investigating cases involving less serious or serious offenses can be appointed to be **elementary investigators**;

   b) Those who satisfy the criteria prescribed in Clause 1 of this Article, have worked as elementary investigators for at least five years, are capable of investigating cases involving very serious or exceptionally serious offenses and capable of guiding investigating activities of elementary investigators can be appointed to be **intermediate investigators**.

   In case of personnel demands, the persons who satisfy the criteria prescribed in Clause 1 of this Article, have been engaged in law-related work for nine years or more, are capable of investigating cases involving very serious or exceptionally serious offenses and capable of guiding investigating activities of elementary investigators can be appointed to be intermediate investigators;

   c) Those who satisfy the criteria prescribed in Clause 1 of this Article, have worked as intermediate investigators for at least five years, are capable of studying, synthesizing and proposing anti-crime measures, capable of investigating cases involving very serious, exceptionally serious, complicated offenses, capable of guiding investigating activities of elementary investigators and intermediate investigators can be appointed to be **senior investigators**.

   In case of personnel demands, the persons who satisfy the criteria prescribed in Clause 1 of this Article, have been engaged in law-related work for fourteen years of more, are capable of studying, synthesizing and proposing anti-crime measures, capable of investigating cases involving very
do with relevance and accuracy given that some survey question did not apply to all provinces or cases. Then, to solve this issue, the survey employed “skip patterns” and to use “contingency questions” (Nardi 2006, 74). Lanier and Briggs (2014, 182) note “contingency questions and skip patterns direct the respondent to skip certain questions or items, which are used on a questionnaire if some of the questions do not apply to all respondents”. This filtering allows for a more accurate portrait of those holding views about a subject with which they are familiar, and it eliminates the likelihood that questions will be answered carelessly and mechanically (Nardi 2006, 2013).

Based on these techniques, one contingency question and skip pattern were used before each of the next two sections of this survey. Only those answering “yes” were invited to continue with the third and fourth section, which covers two components, defined by the two key criteria: organizational structure and modus operandi of TransNT. The number of questions in each section is equal to number of factors identified in this component. Questions were in Vietnamese and designed in form of nominal level, as one of the requirements to apply the Chi-square for Independence Test in SPSS. After collection data was translated into English by the researcher.

5.3. Survey findings

5.3.1. Descriptive information

5.3.1.1. Response rate
Based on the standard criteria to select sample size for inviting survey questionnaire process (*see section 3.3.2.2*), not all the CIPDRC officers in these six provinces were involved. Under Vietnam’s Criminal Procedure Law and Law on Criminal Investigation Organization Agency, only detective officers and police agents are permitted to conduct and investigate drug trafficking cases. In all, 147 CIPDRC officers were invited to participate. However, with the filtering question – “Have you investigated any TransNT case in the last 5 years?” 26 officers responded “no” and thus, only 121 participants involved, or 83.30%, of the initial sample eligible to participate in this research project.

The Table 9 indicates that of these, 19 were from Dienbien (15.7%), 19 from Kontum (15.7%), 22 from Nghean (18.3%), 19 from Quangbinh (15.7%), 21 from Quangtri (17.3%), and 21 from Sonla (17.3%). Though sample size in the quantitative phase (*N*=121) is small, it was still deemed large enough to draw relevant statistical assessments related to the qualitative data and research question.

*Table 9: The CIPDRC participant’s contributions based on surveyed area*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Area</th>
<th>Participant (Officer)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Per cent (With the total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Dienbien</em></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kontum</em></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nghean</em></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Quangbinh</em></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

50 According to CIPDRC Headquarter, if calculating at all CIPDRC staff of these six provinces, there is 234 staff. However, only 147 CIPDRC officers are permitted to investigate drug trafficking cases under law. Of 87 officers, they are administrators, drivers, and logistic responsibilities and not involve conducting drug-related crimes (MPS 2015).
Of 121 respondents, the majority of CIPDRC are policeman with 111 officers accounting for 91.7% of the sample. Policewomen account for only 8.3% of the sample, or 10 officers. As the bottom table indicates there were no policewomen in the field of anti-narcotics across Vietnam’s borderland with Laos serving for 10 years and over. In particular, of the 121 CIPDRC officers, only three women at Dienbien, Nghean, and Quangtri served from five to 10 years, accounting for 2.5%. The rest of anti-narcotics policewomen (N=7) were working in four provinces, Dienbien (N =2), Kontum (N =1), Quangtri (N =1), and Sonla (N =3); meanwhile, there were no women in this field at Quangbinh’s CIPDRC. There were seven assistant detective staffs, which serve in criminal investigation less than five years and are not classified “senior detective”, “immediate detective” or “elementary detective”. Those policewomen were not permitted to investigate, but be allowed to apply their professional reconnaissance skills in TransNT cases.

Table 10: The percentage time for serving and detective classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Length of Serving (T)</th>
<th>Detective Classification (D)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$T_1$</td>
<td>$T_2$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Length of Serving (T)</td>
<td>Detective Classification (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T1</td>
<td>T2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In which:*

- T1: under 5 years
- T2: 5 years < time < 10 years
- T3: 10 years < time < 15 years
- T4: over 15 years
- D1: Senior Detective
- D2: Immediate Detective
- D3: Elementary Detective
- D4: Assistant Detective

(Source: Data is based on annual report of CIPDRC at six surveyed areas)

Data reflects a significant gender imbalance, with over three quarter of CIPDRC officers being male, with 27 staff of 10 and 15 years experience (around 22.3%) and six officers involved over 15 years (approximately 5%). Of the 69 assistant detectives are mostly anti-drug undercover police agents with nearly 90% of them having served less than five years (62 officers). One hypothesis could be posed that, given the specific nature of anti-narcotics operations, seemingly, detective work is not considered suitable for a policewoman. This gendering of police roles is not addressed in this thesis but the issue warrants further research.

5.3.1.2. To validate data

To validate data collected from the CIPDRC officer questionnaire survey, the Chi-square test for independence was used to determine relationship between variables, including themes (dependent factor) and surveyed areas (independent factor). The null hypothesis of this test established to indicate relationships between two tested variables, representing factors and studied areas (McHugh 2013, Walker and Maddan 2013b). The level of

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51 One specific explanation to apply the Chi-square Test for Independent in this thesis was presented at section 3.3.2.2 of Chapter 3.
significance in this test is set up as 0.05. The p-value from the Chi-square test was used to test the above null hypothesis. If the p-value > 0.05, the null hypothesis was accepted or the two tested variables were independent. Conversely, the p-value ≤ 0.05 was that the null hypothesis was rejected or there was enough evidence at the 5% significance level to indicate relationships between two examined variables (McHugh 2013, Walker and Maddan 2009).

Within the scope of SPSS’s application in the Chi-square test, there are two main “dependence’s groups”, organizational structure and modus operandi (M.O). The first includes five factors, namely 1) group size, 2) the role of leader, 3) recruitment process, 4) adaptability, and 5) division of labour. The second covers seven factors, namely 1) M.O to explore drug source, 2) M.O to conceal drugs, 3) M.O to transport, 4) M.O to send and receive drugs, 5) M.O to communicate, 6) M.O to against police, and 7) M.O to launder money. These 12 factors were tested with six studied areas, as “independent assumptions” when deploying the Chi-square test in SPSS. The detailed outputs of Chi-square test are described in Appendix V. Table 11 presents the p-values of the 12 factors in two components.

**Table 11: The P-value of the Chi-square Test for independence in the SPSS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>ρ –value</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 1 – Organizational Structure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Group size</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The role of leader</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Recruitment process</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Adaptability</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Division of labour</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 2 – Modus Operandi (M.O)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. M.O to explore drug source</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Factors | $\rho$ –value | Note
--- | --- | ---
7 | M.O to conceal drug | 0.03 | (Based on 6 selected provinces)
8 | M.O to transport drug | 0.00 |
9 | M.O to send and receive drug | 0.02 |
10 | M.O to communicate | 0.02 |
11 | M.O to against police | 0.01 |
12 | M.O to launder money | 0.03 |

Table 11 shows that a series Chi-square tests were performed to identify the relationship between twelve factors and the six surveyed areas. Most of the indexes have their p-values smaller than 0.05, which shows a significant correlation about the relationship between data collected in the surveyed provinces and all 12 factors. These 12 factors reflect the specific characteristics associated with organizational structure and modus operandi of TransNT in the research area. In other words, none of these factors were rejected by respondents when assessing TransNT’s characteristics.

The outcome of this test satisfies two main requirements for the Chi-square (see more detail at ‘data analysis’ at section 3.3.2.2). Firstly, in terms of sample size in theory, requirement of sample size ($N$) for using the Chi-square test for independent “should be five times the number of cells” (Walker and Maddan 2009, 170, 2013a, 202). Accordingly, the sample size in this study should be at least 90 (18 cells x 5 = 90). However this data set (CIPDRC officer) has an $N$ of 121, this requirement was met. Secondly, regarding to expected frequency index, the chi-square test requires all expected counts should have greater than 5. So following this rule of thumb, this study found an alternative assumption supported by Roscoe and Byars (1971). According to their arguments, when testing at 95% significance (or p-value $\leq 0.05$), an alternative requirement is that the average expected count is at least 2.
Accordingly, with the minimum expected count for each cell is 6.7 (121 sample size/18 cells = 6.7), this alternative requirement was met in this study.\textsuperscript{52}

5.3.2. Criminal investigation for drug-related crime police officer’s assessments on the nature of transnational narcotics trafficking in Vietnam

5.3.2.1. An overview of the survey outcome

To assess the overall patterns of CIPDRC officer responses, this study used the measure of central tendency in the SPSS’s application. It is not only to identify the average frequency distribution between variables in each relevant survey area, but also to examine where the central value is the distribution’s most typical type (Walker and Maddan 2009, 80). Furthermore, it is significant to know certain information in the survey to compare each factor across survey areas utilizing the Mode (symbolized by Mo), which determines the category with the greatest number of cases (Weisburd and Britt 2014, 66). Table 12 presents the Mo of each CIPDRC province and its relevant region.

\textsuperscript{52} This argument is supported and consulted by Ruben Geert van den Berg from Amsterdam, the Netherlands via his official website for SPSS’s tutorial (http://www.spss-tutorials.com/spss-chi-square-independence-test/comment-page-5/#comments). Our exchanges have discussed on his website and email’s sharing since April 2016.
### Table 12: Average of the frequency distribution between variables and surveyed areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Mo –value</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Theme 1 – Organizational structure (O.S)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>North-Western</td>
<td>Central Northern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dienbin</td>
<td>Sonla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Group size</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The role of leader</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Recruitment process</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Division of labour</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Theme 2 – Modus operandi (M.O)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>M.O to explore drug source</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>M.O to conceal drug</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>M.O to transport drug</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>M.O to send and receive drug</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>M.O to communicate</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>M.O to against police</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>M.O to launder money</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (*) these themes are only two out of three options in question’s listing selected by respondents

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Table 12 describes the factor with the greatest number of selections ($M.O$) at each location (CIPDRC Division) of three regions, including the Northeaster (Dienbien and Sonla), Central North (Nghean, Quangbinh, and Quangtri), and Highland Coast (Kontum). Based on this information, the main characteristics of the surveyed CIPDRC are:

- All CIPDRC officers involved this survey gave an individual assessment based on their experience. Almost of CIPDRC’s responses were derived by diverse options in the questionnaire’s listing; only two themes (No.6 and No.10) were focused on only one option.

- No CIPDRC officers in this survey believed that drug could be manufactured at Vietnam’s domestic territories (with $Mo=3.00$) when are asked “where were drug source often exploited by drug traffickers across Vietnam’s borders with Laos?” With this factor, respondents only selected from among two options: either “from Laos territory” (with $Mo=1.00$) or “at ‘blurred frontiers’ between Vietnam and Laos” (with $Mo=2.00$), with the former receiving the highest number of responses from all six CIPDRC Divisions.

- Similarly, when CIPDRC respondents were questioned “which is the most popular form of communication between traffickers from Vietnam to Laos?” most selected from the first two options, namely “face to face” (with $Mo=1.00$) and “by mobile phone” (with $Mo=2.00$). Conversely, the Internet (with $Mo=3.00$) was not recognized as a widely used means of communication.

- Fundamentally, there was no significant difference between CIPDRC officers with regard to their individual opinions about modus operandi (M.O) of TransNT in Vietnam. A similar percentage or responses was recorded for the highest selection ($Mo$) at five out of seven components in the M.O theme from three regions, including No.6.
(with $Mo=1.00$), No.9 (with $Mo=2.00$), No.10 (with $Mo=1.00$), No.11 (with $Mo=2.00$), and No.12 (with $Mo=2.00$). The remaining themes were reflected in the variety of choices of respondents at both provincial and regional levels when asked about M.O conceal drugs (No.7) and M.O. transport drugs (No.8) from Laos to Vietnam.

5.3.2.2. For organizational structure theme

- Group size

Based on initial findings of the first phase regards to the relationship between group size and organizational structure, respondents were asked to indicate their opinion about this issue. The question required CIPDRC officer to consider which is the most important impact of group size on the structure of TransNT among of three hypotheses. Group size in TransNT entities will 1) increase scale of group, 2) contribute diverse modus operandi of network, and 3) create dominant influence of group with peers in market?
Figure 14: Group size’s themes vs surveyed areas

Utilizing SPSS to measure central tendency to examine the central value with this variable (group size), this study applied the Mode (symbolized by \( Mo \)) to identify the category with the greatest number of cases (Walker and Maddan 2009, 80). The \( Mo \) of this variable is 2.00 being “to contribute diverse modus operandi of group”, which received the greatest number of responses to the question, “which is the most important contribution of numbers of membership to structure of TransNT?” The above bar chart shows that there were a dominant percentage of CIDRC officers, with 71 respondents out of 121, who assert to argue that the number of offenders is likely result in a diverse modus operandi of TransNT entities, accounted for 58.7%. Notably, double the number of Quangtri respondents chose this option to their colleagues in Dienbien province, 16 respondents to seven.
The second ranked choice of respondents linked groups size to scale of TransNT entity. Thus, 31.4% of respondents (N=38) selected “number of group members increases scale of operations”, with largest responses from CIPDRC officers in Dienbien (N=11) and the smallest in Sonla (N=3). While these findings seem to confirm they believe that the amount of participant in a group are likely to lead to group strength or organizational complexity, within the scope of this research, it was not possible to gather data on changes among of TransNT group size. Only a small percentage of survey respondents believed that “group size is linked to a dominant influence of group with their peers” (third choice), with only one respondent in each of five provinces selecting this option, including Dienbien, Kontum, Nghean, Quangbinh, and Quangtri, and seven for Sonla. Perhaps, in some situations, authority, power, and influence of one TransNT group does not depend on the number of member but; instead, it depends on their leader’s reputation and operational scale of network compared with their peers in the market place (Morselli, Turcotte, and Tenti 2011, 183, Paoli and Reuter 2008, 24).

- The role of leader

Respondents were asked to assess the role of leaders in the organizational structure of TransNT groups. Based on the initial findings from selected case studies and its assessments of interviewees in the first phase, there were three main options given to CIPDRC respondents. Reviewing their most significant cases over the preceding five year period, officers were asked to identify “which is the most important contribution of leader in drug trafficking activities?” among of three choices, namely 1) to establish organization structure, 2) to build a specific plan, and 3) to adjust modus operandi.
The second option - “to build a specific plan”, received the greatest numbers of responses asked. Around half of respondents considered that the leader was primarily responsible for locating drug supplies and for arranging transport and delivery of drugs into Vietnam for distribution in domestic drug markets (50.41%, N=61). Meanwhile, there were fifty-two (N=52) respondents, who believed that leaders were primarily responsible for determining 42.98%; whereas only 6.61% out of respondents believed that the leader is likely to adjust modus operandi (third option) of their group and network during stockpiling, transporting, and trading drugs from Laos to Vietnam (N=8). It means that although there were different statistics to assess the significance of leadership, clearly, the role of leader in TransNT activities is a decisive factor in shaping plans, structure and modus operandi. The
research findings from this phase thus confirm longstanding assumption about the role of ‘Big men’ or ‘Big women’ in organized crime (Jankowski 1991).

- Recruitment

In regard to the recruitment process, respondents were questioned “what is drug traffickers’ most prioritized characteristic when looking for recruits?” Respondents considered three options: 1) fellow-countrymen, 2) family ties, and 3) friend-in-prison bonds. These three choices were also coded from 1 to 3, respectively, to serve analysis in SPSS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellow-countrymen</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family ties</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>89.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends in prison</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Utilizing the function Analyse in the SPSS software, the above table indicates which option all respondents (N=121) chose as most relevant. The Mode index identifies the category with the most frequent number of choices of respondents, that is 2.00 – “family ties” (Mo=2.00). There were 75 CIPDRC officers who found that offenders often selected members on the basis of family relationship and either used force or economic incentives. This rate reinforces the important role of “trustworthiness and usefulness” in selecting suitable co-offenders (Tremblay 1993, 25-7). Confirming data obtained from interviews and case records, among potential partners familiar relatives are often preferred by traffickers for building close-knit TransNT entities. As Paoli and Reuter (2008, 25) observe that “strong family and local ties ensure not only the cohesion of the trafficking group but also its impermeability to police enquiries.” This first option accounted for 62% of responses, more than double the
second option – “fellow-countryman” with 33 anti-narcotics police officers selecting (27.3%). From the police perspective, those were born in similar places, including village, commune, district, and province, while important were less attractive to traffickers. Only 12.4% respondents in this survey to identified fellow-countrymen priority (N=12 officers). The last option, friends in prison, received the lowest numbers of responses, around 10% of respondents (N=13 interviewees).

Reflecting and confirming interview data from the first phase, kinship is most strongly correlated with trustworthiness, followed by fellow-countrymen ties and prison friendships. CIPDRC officers evidently rationalise the behaviour of traffickers in terms of risk minimisation, for which reason drug criminals are not random occurrences but the product of carefully constructed recruitment processes based upon trust networks (von Lampe and Johansen 2004, 2003).

- Adaptability of network

To identify the most conditioned stimulus to impact upon network adaptation, respondents were given three options to choose from, namely “changes in drug market”, “police operations and monitoring”, and “personal attributes of traffickers”.
The majority of CIPDRC officers stated that their police investigations and monitoring were causally related to adjustments in drug trafficking patterns and modus operandi of TransNT groups. The Mode index to measure the central tendency of this variable shows that the first option ($Mo=1.00$) and second one ($Mo=2.00$) received as the highest percentage responses in all six provinces.

In all, there was 47.11% of responses ($N=57$ respondents) indicated that traffickers often changed their structure in keeping with drugs consumption patterns and drug user’s needs. To realise and sustain profits from drug trading, and maintain regular market flows, fluid adjustments were made to group and network arrangements to adapt to changing market conditions (Caulkins and Reuter 1998, McSweeney, Turnbull, and Hough 2008). Thus, according to anti-narcotics police officer, particularly at Nghean, Quangbinh, and Sonla with nearly 65% out of 57 respondents ($N=37$ CIPDRC officers), changes in drug markets, such as fluctuations in prices and in supply-and-demand, were considered the primary causes in making TransNT arrangements more flexible.

Figure 16: Selected percentages for adaptability’s theme

![Pie chart showing percentages for adaptability's theme](image)
Meantime, the intensive efforts of CIPDRC units to pursue operations and effective counter-narcotics strategies to disrupt TransNT activities led changes and flexibilities of traffickers. In other words, to avoid police anti-narcotics campaigns, traffickers adjust their structure and operations to manage risks (Benson and Decker 2010). This tendency is confirmed by 49 CIPDRC officers, around 40.50% responses, focused on Dienbien, Kontum, and Quangtri. Only 15 police officers (12.40% of responses) believed that personal attributes are likely to impact on changes in organizational structure of TransNT network. Evidently, looking through police perception of trafficker behaviour, if a trafficking group is highly depended upon the skills, connections, abilities and knowledge of one person, the group will struggle to adapt (Dorn and South 1990, Dorn, Murji, and South 1992, Curtis and Wendel 2000, Zaitch 2002a, Paoli, Victoria, and Reuter 2009).

- Division of labour

This study found at least three main factors determine roles and responsibilities of traffickers within TransNT entities, including experience, charisma, and age. \(^{53}\) There were different opinions between CIPDRC officers in Vietnam when deciding the most significant factor to influence decide the process of task classification among of traffickers. Overview, the *Mode* index to measure the central tendency of this variable shows that the second option \((Mo=2.00)\) was achieved as the highest percentage from survey responses from all six provinces. When connecting with their specific TransNT case in the five past years, around half of respondents judged that task and role of trafficker are often based on their experiences which cover their professional skills and personal attributes to traffic drugs \((N=60 \text{ CIPDRC officers})\). Most of them believed that to ensure effectiveness of each individual trafficker, leaders are often selected based on experience and expertise in stockpiling and transporting drugs and also their success in evading capture.

\(^{53}\) Terminology “charisma” in this context should be understood as a spiritual power or personal quality of one offender that gives an individual influence or authority over large numbers of their co-offender or accomplices.
Figure 17: Division of labour based on Surveyed areas

However, role is also influenced by charisma. In all, 48 CIPDRC officers, around 40%, argued that the level of individual charismata should be considered as important. In Dienbien, 12 CIPDRC officers agreed with this explanation (N=12 out of 48 supporters, around 10%). In contrast, the rest of interviewees disagree with both of these issues. They nominated aged level decided to relevant positions of traffickers (N=13 surveyors, be contributed to 10.7%). Perhaps, they believe that age’s factor of trafficker would be reflected their charisma and experiences with other co-offenders or partners in drug trafficking activities network.
(Kleemans and de Poot 2008, 73, 78, 83). This raised some issues to do with the power of charismatic individuals in TransNT. Clearly, a charismatics figure is important in a group, but if their personality is so overpowering then this could well affect a group’s capacity to adapt.

5.3.3.2. For modus operandi theme

- M.O. to explore drug source

As mentioned at the first section of pre-activity stage in the TransNT script analysis (see section 4.4.1.1), both Vietnamese and Laotian offenders used multiple strategies to source illegal drug from Laos. No evidence proves that heroin and ATS have been produced by Vietnamese offenders. Conversely, almost of these illegal drugs were transported from Laos by TransNT groups.\(^5\)

Therefore, based on previous data collected from police agents in the qualitative phase, this survey questioned CIPDRC officers about “where was often drug sourced by drug traffickers across Vietnam’s borders with Laos?” There were three main options: 1) Laos’ domestic territories, 2) at “blurred frontiers” between Vietnam and Laos, and 3) from within Vietnam.

The cross tabulation between “drug source exploitation” (coded by M.O to explore illegal drug source) and surveyed areas with six CIPDRC officer’s provinces shows that none of those surveyed agreed with third option. All CIPDRC officers affirm that both heroin and ATS have not yet been manufactured by Vietnamese traffickers for the Vietnam market operating in their areas (third option). As a result, thus, respondents focused on the first two options, either from Laos’ domestic markets or at “blurred interconnection points” across Vietnam’s frontier with Laos. The Mode index in the SPSS analysis indicates that the first option ($Mo=1.00$) was selected most frequently. Accordingly, 78.51\% of 121 responses

\(^5\) Although according to anti-narcotic police agencies of Vietnam asserted these type of drug are also delivered from China and Cambodia, the study is not cover two these borderland with Vietnam. Thus, it is also not mention and analysis at this thesis. It is reported by UNODC and the U.S. Department of State that there is same ATS production in Vietnam, but very limited and confined to urban areas (INCSR 2014, UNODC 2014a)
indicate that illegal drugs were sourced in Laos for import to Vietnam (N=95 CIPDRC officers).

Survey responses indicate and confirm that Nghean is one of the main thoroughfares for illicit drugs, particularly the mountainous districts of Quephong, Tuongduong, and Kyson (MPS 2015, 2014). From these “hot-spots”, both Vietnamese and Laotian traffickers colluded to induce local people from minorities such as Hmong and Thai, to be couriers to carry illegal drugs into Vietnam (Cong an Nghe An 2013).

On the other hand, in terms of second hypothesis – at ‘blurred frontiers’ between Vietnam and Laos, nearly one-fifth of interviewees argues that the porousness of the Lao-Vietnam border and its poor or ambiguous demarcation created difficulties for law enforcement, and made it easier therefore for traffickers to outmanoeuvre police (N=26 CIPDRC officers, accounted for 21.49%). There are differing views between police across the three regions with regard to this option. More than half of respondents who made this choice

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*Figure 18: M.O. to exploit drugs based on survey areas*

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were from CIPDRC forces at the Northern Central divisions, including Nghean, Quangbinh, and Quangtri ($N=14$ respondents out of 26 supporters). This illustrates that geographically specific nature of Vietnam’s vulnerabilities, and police responses to this survey confirm the significance of border demarcation and cooperation issues (MPS 2015). It is imperative for mainland Southeast Asian states to quickly reconcile disputed border areas and agree upon border demarcations in order to remove this policing gap and allow LEAs to more effectively intercept drug shipments and break down the networks that support TransNT groups.

- M.O. to concealment and evasion

As elicited from the analysis of qualitative data, to avoid counter-narcotics police, traffickers used diverse means to transport drugs into to Vietnam. All survey respondents were asked, “Which is the most popular form of concealment for drugs transported from Laos into to Vietnam?” Based on initial findings in the qualitative phase (see section 4.4.2.1), there are three specific options in the survey questionnaire. These are 1) illicit drugs were mixed with licit goods 2) illegal drugs secreted on their person, including ingestion, and 3) drug shipments were concealed in the bodywork of a single vehicle (one car) or more than one vehicle (over two cars). Among of these options, the Mode index in the SPSS indicates that the second choice ($Mo=2.00$) was considered as the highest proportion. Accordingly, there was 58% of 121 respondents considered that keeping illegal drugs into body’s parts was often selected by drug couriers to deliver return Vietnam’s markets via Laos domestic routes.
Figure 19: M.O to conceal drugs based on Surveyed areas

It would appear that the preferred mode of carrying drugs is on foot cross the mountains, with more than half of respondents agreed \( (N=70 \text{ CIPDRC officers of 121 respondents}) \). This method of movement is most prevalent in Quangtri and Dienbien receiving the lowest number of responses.

With the second option, thirty-eight respondents argued that traffickers combined legal goods such as commercial materials, electric equipment or industrial products with illegal goods such as heroin and ATS to transport from Laos to Vietnam \( (N=38 \text{ respondents}, 31.4\%) \). Particularly, at the Northern Central Coast region with three international border gates, namely the Chalo, Laobao, and Namcan, at three provinces, Quangbinh, Quangtri, and Nghean, respectively, traffickers took advantage of relaxed border controls on bilateral trade.
to conceal illegal drugs in legal shipments into Vietnam (MPS 2015, Cong an Nghe An 2013). For 19 out of 38 responses, this disguising of illicit drugs presented a significant law enforcement challenge. Meanwhile, in the North-eastern region, which includes the international gate (Taytrang of Dienbien province) and national gate (Longsap of Sonla), there was at least 13 CIPDRC officers who asserted that many tracks were used to carry drugs via these border gates between Vietnam and Laos through forests to the Mocchau and Vanho’ drug markets (MPS 2015, 2014). On the other hand, though the BoY’s international border crossing at Kontum province is a new economic zone between Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and not complicated with TransNT cases, CIPDRC officers considered that this method would be used extensively to traffic illicit drugs into Vietnam in the future, unless of course more resources were given to police in all three countries and border relations improved to allow deep cooperation (N=6 ideas).

When both of these above options are not possible for delivering drugs from Laos to Vietnam, the last way to conceal illicit drugs is to hide small packages in the bordergrames of motor vehicles. Only thirteen CIPDRC officers selected this option (N=13 respondents, around 10.7%), but then again, this merely confirms the flexibility of drug trafficking groups. This mode of concealment and transport was most prevalent in Sonla, the North-eastern region. Interestingly, no respondent believed mode of concealment could be implemented by drug couriers at Nghean, though this province had the highest number of participants in this survey (N=22). The survey data further confirm the finding that cross-border drug crime does not follow a random of criminal acts but consists of well-coordinated and carefully planned and targeted operations.

- M.O. to transport drugs

Among the three countries which share land borders with Vietnam, only Laos is landlocked. While modes of transport have increased as Mainland southeast Asia states have
integrated their transport infrastructure, air freight, rail especially, in the Laos-Vietnam border zone roads and mountain tracks remain preferred transportation’s modes for traffickers (AIPA 2015b, SODC 2013a). This finding was confirmed by survey responses from CIPDRC officers who were asked to identify “which is the most popular form drug courier to transport drugs from Laos to Vietnam?” This question offered three options: 1) by roadway, 2) by foots via mountainous pathways and forested lands, and 3) by railway. All 121 respondents in this survey showed their different views based on their specific TransNT case experience over 5-year period, 2010-2014).

Among of these three options, the Mode index in the SPSS analysis indicates that the first choice \( Mo=1.00 \) and second choice \( Mo=2.00 \) received the highest preferences whereas last option \( Mo=3.00 \) was only selected by officers in one location. Accordingly, there was 48.8% of responses overall confirmed that all of drug couriers in their TransNT cases transported illegal drugs by foot over the mountains \( N=59 \) officers). The rest of the sample group agreed the most popular direction for drug couriers to deliver drugs from Laos to Vietnam is by road, including national highways, provincial roads, and district lanes \( N=54 \) respondents, 44.6%). Whereas, only eight respondents at Quangtri province nominated rail transport operating between Caysone Phamvihane town (Savanakhet province, Lao PDR) and Laobao town (Quangtri province, Vietnam). This last response also reflects the reality of an available rail option. Still, the distribution of responses indicates that security rather than speed in the prime concern of traffickers.

In terms of the second choice, 54 CIPDRC officers confirm roads as the second popular option. Among of three region’s CIPDRC representatives, more than half of anti-narcotics police officers from the North-western region selected this option \( N=11 \) out of 19 respondents in Dienbien and \( N=13 \) out of 21 officers in Sonla). Remarkably, as the largest province in Vietnam, with two international border gates between Vietnam and Laos, namely
Thanhthuy and Namcan, Nghean has a diversity of official transport routes and a large number of unofficial pathways crossing the frontier zone (Cong an Nghe An 2013, Giang 2013). It is the region of most acute vulnerability to TransNT groups operating across the Laos-Vietnam border (MPS 2015, 2014).

- M.O. to dispatch and receive

All respondents were asked to select the most popular location to implement dispatch-and-receive processes. Building upon case studies and interviews from the first phase and as evidenced by survey responses in respect of drug sources, there are at least three specific areas targeted by traffickers. It may be 1) at Laos’ domestic territories, 2) at “blurred interconnection points” between Laos and Vietnam, and 3) at Vietnam’s territories. Among of these three hypotheses, the Mode index in SPSS indicates that the second choice (Mo=2.00) was most commonly selected by CIPDRC officers. Accordingly, a majority of respondents (61.2%) assessed that all drug couriers in their TransNT cases took advantage of blurred interconnection points places between the two countries to dispatch and receive drugs (N=74 officers). Almost all respondents confirm that send and receive stages involve closed relationships between suppliers and purchasers, with carefully chosen and coordinated locations, time, and methods of shipment. This is further evidence to the effect that undemarcated borders create avenues for TransNT groups to thrive and operate in secret. This explains why more than half of CIPDRC officers surveyed selected this option, particularly 76% of anti-narcotics officers at Sonla (N=16 respondents out of 21).
Table 14 conveys the seriousness of Vietnam’s border vulnerability and the challenge posed by weak law enforcement in Laos. Of CIPDRC officers surveyed, 35 identified Laos as the location where traffickers prefer to conduct dispatch and receive operations. Both Vietnam and Laos impose the death penalty for drug crime but in Laos, the scope or secure evasion of law enforcement authorities is greater (AIPA 2014a, 2015b).

- M.O. to communicate

Communication patterns share similar characteristics with any TransNT networks in other regions. Communication is of course essential for the trafficking of drugs along complex supply chains. Streamlined and secure communications is vital to drug traffickers. Question about communications in this survey focused on how traffickers contact their suppliers, customers, and each other between Lao’s and Vietnam scenario. In particular, respondents were asked to determine the most popular form to communicate between traffickers from Vietnam to Laos and converse for exchanging information. From the initial findings in qualitative step, there are at least three main communication means: 1) face to face, 2) by mobile phone, and 3) by the Internet.
Of these three means, the *Mode* index in the SPSS analysis indicates that the first choice ($Mo=1.00$) was considered the most frequent whereas, the third means, Internet ($Mo=3.00$), did not receive a single responses. By a very large majority respondents indicated communication between traffickers in all stages sourcing in Laos to sale in Vietnam, was coordinated using mobile phone ($N=96$ respondents out of 121, or 79.34%). Case of use and multiple applications make communications between traffickers and other groups is quick and more secure than written exchange (Decker and Chapman 2008, Benson and Decker 2010). Accordingly, phones are only used to exchange vital information on problems and connection points employing coded message forms to ensure secrecy (Harris 2014, Lavorgna 2013). Based upon CIPDRC officer responses, the data from this study indicates that mobile phone communication is the highest in Quangtri (representative of the Central Northern area), Dienbien (representative of North-western area) and Kontum (representative of Highland Coast).

![Figure 20: Communicating information of traffickers based on selected survey](image-url)
In contrast to elaborate and sophisticated patterns of organization, TransNT in the Laos-Vietnam frontier zone is still very ‘low-tech’. CIPDRC agents consider that face-to-face form, including meeting in person or through intermediaries are kept to a minimum with only 25 respondents selecting this option. Perhaps, to ensure trafficking operations take place as quickly as possible, thereby limiting the LEA opportunities to monitor and detect, only critical transactions are discussed directly in person by traffickers. As Morselli, Giguère, and Petit (2007, 145) emphases “networks in which consistent action is a priority and time-to-task is shorter must act… and networks in which action may be delayed for an extended period (longer time-to-task) have less efficiency at the core, but are able to operate within more secure settings.” Thus, TransNT groups and networks must find an acceptable balance between speed and security – and there is no one hundred per cent secure form communication (Benson and Decker 2010). Hence the switching between face-to-face communication processes and mobile technologies were also applied into specific circumstance by traffickers. The data suggests, or at least, it might be surmised, that face-to-face communication between intermediaries and couriers will be higher because more immediate in place and time (Morselli 2009, 2010). Group leaders or ‘Big bosses’ are more likely to communicate at a distance and carefully choose where and when to meet with other group members and suppliers. As discussed in the relation to the first phase findings, use of Internet resources in these border areas is limited – restricted by poor Internet infrastructure on both sides of the border.

- M.O to evade capture

This study identified there are three main methods used to evade CIPDRC officers by traffickers: 1) dispose of drugs and flee, 2) resist against police arrest, and 3) accept arrest. Of these, the Mode index in the SPSS indicates that the second option (Mo=2.00) was considered as the highest proportion. Accordingly, there was 62.8% out of all CIPDRC officers assumed
that in seventy-six TransNT cases investigated by their involvement at six different areas, all traffickers have often tried to resist arrests ($N=76$ respondents). Only a small number of anti-narcotic police officer claimed traffickers accept arrest, that is surrender to police ($N=12$ participants).

![Figure 21: M.O to resist capture based on surveyed areas](image)

In particular, resisting arrest operations is recorded as the highest percentage at the Northern Central Coast region, with 42 out of 76 CIPDRC officers selecting this option. Confirming data achieved from interviews with investigators and selected case records, there were a variety of forms to resist anti-narcotics police agents of traffickers, such as applying
vituperative language to provoke and revile police; using bricks, sticks, and sand to throw police; and even using fire-armed and other personal weapons (e.g. knife, sword, and hamper) to attack police, which was recorded as one of the most dangerous situations CIPDRC faced in serious TransNT cases. Among surveyed provinces, armed resistance was most prevalent in Quangtri, with approximately 38% of this region (N=16 respondents of 42 supporters). The number of traffickers using military weapons against CIPDRC officer at Nghean and Quangbinh at Central Northern area was also higher than Dienbien, Sonla, and Kontum. Annual reports from CIPDRC Headquarter of Ministry of Public Security in Vietnam is also recognized that at these “hot-spot” locations across the Central Northern region such as Nghean, Quangbinh, and Quangtri, where many ethnic minorities (e.g. Hmong, Dao, and Thai) have been already recruited to join drug’s shipments of both Vietnamese and Laotian traffickers, have higher rates of injury and death from gunshot wounds among CIPDRC officers combating TransNT than for the rest of Vietnam combined (MPS 2015, 2014, Cong an Nghe An 2013).

Disposing of illegal drugs with the purpose of evading arrest was the second preferred strategy of traffickers according to respondents. Most traffickers in Vietnam recognize that capture with drugs in their possession can result in death by execution. Evidently, loss of income through rapid disposal of illicit drugs is preferable to the consequences of arrest. At Nghean, 10 officers selected disposal as the main tactic used to evade arrest, five times higher than Sonla (N=2), and twice as high as Kontum (N=5).

For obvious reasons, few traffickers willingly accept arrest. Only 12 experienced this behaviour. In ‘hot-spot’ areas in the North-western and Central Northern regions, it was very rare that traffickers would surrender to CIPDRC negotiators. At Dienbien and Nghean participants responded that no trafficker accepted arrest without resistance. Eight respondents in Sonla, the highest number out of total for in this option, believed traffickers had prepared
weapons to resist but then surrendered to anti-narcotics police when they knew there was no escape. This seems to be characteristic of TransNT groups using violent means as in Mexico and Colombian drug trafficking networks (Beittel 2013, Kenney 2007b).

- M.O. money laundering

Within the scope of this study, when analysing modus operandi to use “dirty” money by traffickers, there are five main methods identified at the initial findings. There include either 1) to invest real estate, 2) to buy luxury cars, 3) to send the bank, 4) to play gambles, or 5) to trade military weapons. These hypotheses were consolidated into three options in the survey of CIPDRC officers, including 1) gambling, and 2) investment (including the first three above choices), and 3) purchase military weapons, coded from Code=1 to Code=3 for ease of selection.

Of these three options, the Mode index in the SPSS analysis indicates that the second proposal (Mo=2.00) was preferred and whereas, the third option received the lowest percentage of all responses. Accordingly, a majority of CIPDRC officers stated that the profits from drug trading was invested in real estate, luxury cars and laundered proceeds deposited in the formal banking system (N=77 respondents). The highest preferences for this option were regarded by CIPDRC at both Northern Central and North-western region, with over 83.1% (N=64 out of 77 supporters); over half of respondents in the Highland Coast region chose this option (N=13 out of 19 Kontum CIPDRC officers). Thus, without clear documentary evidence as to how proceeds of crime are laundered, there appears to be a clear preference among traffickers to use cash to purchase legal goods which can then be converted back into cash (Shelley 2013, 140). With a large cash economy, this option offers the most secure way to aware wealth in Vietnam. Of course, money laundering through organized crime is particularly problematic, especially when it is directly related to TransNT because of the personal and social harm caused by illicit drugs.
Scholarship suggests a symbiotic relationship between gambling and drug trafficking. Logically, unregulated border casinos are ideal places in which to launder cash from the sale of drugs (Smith, Wynne, and Hartnagel 2003, Ferentzy and Turner 2009). Still, survey responses indicate a lower preference for this mode of laundering. Again, this way well reflects the availability of evidence and the capacity of CIPDRC officers to track illegal gambling as well as online or Internet gambling. This is not to deny the “strong association”, in which gambling provides not only “the main motivation for drug-related crime”, but also offers “the opportunity them routinely facilitated their entry into illicit drug markets” (Le and Gilding 2016, 149). In particular, traffickers observe gamblers in pubs and clubs and cultivate friendships with their potential customers, who are gambling addicts who lose large sums of money and to whom traffickers will offer a cash loan (Le and Gilding 2016, Wang and Antonopolous 2016). In this modus operandi, traffickers continue lending money and do not require repayment immediately; instead, the problem gambler is asked to engage in TransNT to repay the loan if they cannot repay on time (UNODC 2011a). As a result, those problem

Figure 22: M.O. to launder illegal benefits based on surveyed areas

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gamblers will be depended and involved TransNT activities without any formal contracts. However, the current context is not focus on this issue due to lacking of statistic data.

The use of crime proceeds to purchase military weapons – the third option, draws attention to the common practice of exchanging firearm for drugs in other parts of the world (Goldstein 1985, Blumstein 1995, Mouzos and Borzycki 2006, Oscapella 1998). Firearms are a major factor in the regulation of the illegal trade in drugs, ‘including protecting shipments of drugs, intimidating customers or competitors, enforcing debts, resolving disputes, eliminating competition, and killing or injuring informants’ (Oscapella 1998, 8). Using data collected as part of the Drug Use Monitoring in Australia (DUMA) program, Mouzos and Borzycki (2006) explored the link between weapons, drugs and crime, with a specific focus on weapon ownership and possession in Australian context. They found that around 44% out of 2,323 weapon detainees own a firearm for protection and/or self defense as one of the most common reasons (Mouzos and Borzycki 2006, 3). Accordingly, to protect and/or self defense during drug trading; traffickers in Vietnam use their profits to buy firearms, including military weapons. This was a significant activity according to 12 CIPDRC officers.

5.4. Barriers and challenges to combat transnational narcotics trafficking

The ASEAN Leaders’ Declaration on Drug-Free ASEAN 2015 adopted in 2012 to intensify efforts to eradicate illicit drug production, processing, trafficking and abuse by the year 2015 (ASEAN 2012). However, the 2008 mid-term progress report by the ASEAN Secretariat and UNODC Regional Programme for East Asia and the Pacific (2008, 6) pointed clearly out that the drug-free ASEAN goal was set without even defining what drug-free meant, thus hindering progress. Except for policy-makers and leaders, who believe “the commitment of achieving a drug-free ASEAN by 2015 is still valid”, most scholars believe that this goal will be very difficult to achieve on time (Chouvy 2013a, 50, Kramer et al. 2014, 101, Kramer, Jelsma, and Blickman 2009, 89, Sovannasam 2011). Alternatively, while the
goals of a drug-free world or drug-free ASEAN will almost certainly never be achieved, efforts can and should be made to minimise the harm caused by illicit drug production, trafficking, and consumption. This brings together question of institutional supports for police operational effectiveness.

This section does not intend to examine and analyse limitations and weaknesses for implementing ASEAN’s plan for a drug-free zone. Instead, within the scope of the research objectives, as one part of the findings of the Exploratory Model, this research only focuses on identifying barriers and challenges in bilateral cooperation between Vietnam and Lao PDR. To do this, based on key findings in the qualitative and quantitative phase, the study filtered out five main barriers, challenges, and its implications are needed to concentrate on. There includes 1) border control; 2) data and information sharing concerns; 3) incapacity in building cooperative instruments; 4) uneven of distributions of law enforcement; and 5) increased transportation and trade between nations with shared borderlands.

**5.4.1. Porous borders**

In the Lao-Vietnam ‘border game’, border crossings, both official and unofficial, have become specific targets of TransNT groups to transport illegal drugs from producer and distributor to local consumer. Thus, effective border control via improving LEAs’ capacity for managing cross-border movements is, therefore, one key element in tackling TransNT.

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55 In 1998, at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Drugs (UNGASS), the international community decided to “eliminate or significantly reduce the illicit cultivation of the coca bush, the cannabis plant and the opium poppy by the year 2008”, known as forwarding on drug-free world by 2008. However, after one decade, having implemented their road maps with various plans, programme, and provisions, they had clearly failed to achieve these goals when ‘war on drugs’ continued to need more time and action.

56 This terminology was illustrated by Peter Andreas in his useful book in terms of policing the U.S.-Mexico border post 11 September event, where is recorded as the busiest in the world, the longest and most dramatic meeting point of a rich and poor country, and the site of intense confrontation between law enforcement and law evasion. As Andreas (2009) explains, in some ways it is still interfere between old border game and new game with more difficult to manage, with more players, played out on a bigger stage, and with higher stakes and collateral damage.
Six countries, Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam, are part of a geographical region, known as the Greater Mekong Sub-Region (GMS), with approximately 12,000 kilometres, where is acknowledged as one of the world’s major locations for illicit drug productions, including heroin and ATS (Hai 2016). These illegal drugs are manufactured in clandestine laboratories operated by colluding organized crime groups, particularly in sparsely populated areas where the national borders of the region become a specific focus for trafficking (Williams 1998, 2001c, Chin and Zhang 2007, Chin 2009, Chouvy 2013a).

Vietnam and Laos have faced the challenges of drug trafficking challenges to bilateral relations and regional integration. Among of practical conditions and potential causes, the highly porous and insufficiently patrolled crossing both sides of the borderland have been considered by the two national LEAs. While there was little evidence to affirm the process of opium cultivation in Vietnam’s side in recent years, the situation is different in Laos with vast areas under opium cultivation close to the border with Vietnam (INCSR 2015, UNODC 2014e, UNODC and SODC 2012). Perhaps, it is one of the main reasons to support CIPDRC officer’s argument at these six provinces that there isn’t any clear evidence to recognize these drug sources as being exploited in Vietnam’s domestic areas. Whereas, all 121 police agents confirm that either Laotian domestic territories (N=95 officers, accounted for 78.51%) or “blur points” between Vietnam and Laos’ borderland (N=26 CIPDRC officers, accounted for 21.49%) that were sourced to provide drugs for Vietnam’s consumption. Further, based on experiences and lessons to investigate TransNT cases from Laos to Vietnam, many research participants note that most heroin and ATS had been transported from the Golden Triangle region into Vietnam through Laos border provinces, namely Phongsaly, Luangprabang,

Huaphanh, Xiengkhuang, Savanankhet, Khammuane, and Bolykhamxay provinces (Interview # 3, 4, 5, 6).

As discussed, illicit drugs are delivered via a variety of routes linking producers, refiners and drug users. To reach land-linked markets from where illegal drugs are bought and shipped, traffickers often move across numerous border pathways (AIPA 2015b, UNODC and SODC 2012, INCSR 2013). As one interviewee from the CIPDRC Department of Nghean’s Police Force shared his opinion of border control that:

Stretching Nghean’s borderland with Huaphanh, Xiengkhoang, and Bolykhamxay districts (Lao PDR), we have around 420 kilometres borderlands with the terrain are mostly mountainous, with steep slope and interlaced with streams. Population is very sparse, mainly ethnic minority groups, who are often poor with limited education. Further, both foot and transportation’s vehicle roads go and back extremely hard. Taking these advantages, drug traffickers recruited local citizens for delivering illegal drugs from Laos to domestic Nghean’s areas. Moreover, many Laotian traffickers have induced Vietnamese ethnic minority groups such as Hmong and Thai to immigrate over the border and join in their TransNT activities. Drug crime situation more complicated when the other side of Nghean’s borderland that have established manufactures with the purposes for producing, processing, and blending additives to create heroin and synthetic drugs before trading. They are often structure with small-scale groups as mobilized cluster along border of Samto district (Houaphanh province) Noongxet district (Xiengkhoang) and Khamcot (Bolikhamxay) (Interview #4).

Improving the effectiveness of combating drug trafficking and cross-border cooperation were recognized as the initiative importance by countries with shared border, such as Vietnam and Laos. The UNODC has helped facilitate cross-border cooperation via the Border Liaison Offices (BLOs) mechanism since 1993. BLO officers patrol the borders and serve as focal points for relaying important intelligence to their counterparts. It is not only “to foster cooperation between different national border LEA units working at the borders for improved multilateral law enforcement but also to strengthen and facilitate the regional intelligence
network on illicit drug trafficking to prevent illicit trafficking at the borders” (UNODC 2010a, 7).

Although BLOs have been continuing to expand and strengthen as they are seen by some as the initiative method to improve regional cooperation to combat drug trafficking, it were ‘often far less efficient or useful than can be expected from stated goals’ (Chouvy 2013a, 51). In several fieldwork visits to nine points of entry into Cambodia border (along the Thai, Lao, and Vietnam borders), Chouvy (2013a, 27, 51) observed that there was an extreme lack of material means, barely existent cross-border cooperation and lack or absence of professional staffs. Yet, the insufficient toolkits and out-dated equipment at these BLO’s location, no except for at international border gate between two sides, was created not only to limit the effectiveness of prevention and control drug, but also to lead the difficulties in exchange information and sharing data among of LEAs (UNODC 2012c, 2013a). In addition, when the ASEAN Connectivity Master plan establishes in the coming decades, entry and exit points at borderland crossings will be increasingly pressed by the need to ensure timely and efficient movements which will also foretell increased opportunities for TransNT groups to traffic illicit drugs across borders (UNODC 2014d, Mi Xay Xay Song Kham 2016).

These factors, to short, thus, improving technology at border checkpoints should be recognized as the first recommendation. (As will be discussed in the next chapter).

5.4.2. Data and information sharing

One of the specific barriers to policing TransNT is the lack of knowledge and understanding of the nature and extent of drug trafficking. The success of an investigation into TransNT, is largely dependent on having specific types of knowledge: knowledge about the criminals, their relationships and organization (if any); knowledge about the transport and financial infrastructures which facilitate TOC; knowledge about the criminal laws; and
knowledge about illicit markets (Harfield 2008, 486-7). Thus, to improve effectiveness in fighting TransNT requires, among other things, information sharing, close communication, and data exchange among LEAs.

In terms of data sharing, the national data collection levels of LEA and Vietnam are different. The data collection networks of Lao PDR have been established only recently and their sustainability is still not assured. Vietnam faces the principal problem of the inability to make institutional arrangements to centralize data (UNODC Regional Programme for East Asia and the Pacific 2008, 17). For example, regarding the annual law enforcement statistics of both two countries, information is poor, and there is a lack of transparency in the data on drug investigation outcomes (INCSR 2014, 2015). Data on all forms of drug-related crimes is unavailable publicly in Vietnam due to slow update information based on regional standard criteria’s requirement, particularly ATS (Global SMART Programme 2011, 141); meanwhile, except for the available statistic of heroin in 2009, LEAs of Laos PDR published clearly their efforts to combat ATS trafficking in this time.58 Paradoxically, their drug seizures are reported on the official website of the Asia and Pacific Amphetamine-Type Stimulants Information Centre (APAIC), which is an online drug-data collection and sharing system for ASEAN countries and China (Global SMART Programme 2011, UNODC 2015a). This inadequacies and inconsistencies have to be conducted through in the interests of more effective policing and police cooperation.

It is easier to understand why two these nations have signed important agreements in terms of drug control however, the quality of information sharing are still unsatisfactory, as stated, particularly in cross-border cooperation between LEAs. As disappointed thoughts of police agent in the case CS3 share that:

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58 See more detail at http://www.apaic.org/index.php?option=com_dainap&view=dainap
Combining between the offender CS3-No.1 confessions and our professional surveillances methods, we affirm that N.T (Laotian suspect) is the core drug’s source to supply heroin and ATS for him. Based on our agreement on mutual legal assistance, although we have suggested to Laos anti-narcotics enforcement agencies via Interpol channel, there are very limited information to pursuit her traces. Until the court took him at both trial and appeal time, no any further documents provide her relations from our partner (Interview #3).

Furthermore, although both sides have ratified an agreement on mutual legal assistance in civil and criminal matters since 1998, there are still gaps in information sharing in practice. In terms of sharing information on offenders, who committed a criminal act in partner’s territories, there are many obstacles to overcome before suspect criminal profiles are exchanged (Cong an Nghe An 2013, MPS 2014). This of course hinders police operations on both sides of the Laos-Vietnam border. As investigator in the case study CS5, who cover over 10 years to involve TransNT crossing the Dienbien’s borderland (Vietnam) and Phongsaly and Luongprabang provinces (Lao PDR), shared their difficulties to obtain information and data of trafficker’s suspects, as follow:

Almost of warrant wanted in terms of drug trafficking at alongside of Vietnam’s borderland with Laos are Hmong. In fact, the Hmong ethnic minority group is often concerned with outsiders and scared to revenge. Thus, to some extent, they are also often flinches to contact with LEAs for providing information of those warrants. Besides that, the identification and archives systems in terms of ex-conviction’s profiles of those traffickers at local police are limited and insufficient document which led to barriers and difficulties for pursuing drug traffickers when they escaped (Interview #5).

While the irony is that most traffickers can take advantage of new communications technologies to communicate with their partners beyond the border as fastest as possible, border control officers at mainland Southeast Asian countries, including Vietnam and Lao PDR, are often ill equipped to identify and interdict illegal movements of TransNT activities, even at international checkpoints (UNODC 2013a, Roderic and Vy 2013, AIPA 2014b). This concern is identified as one of the major deficiencies in the process of border monitoring by
LEAs on both sides (Broussard and Teetzen 2013, Chouvy 2013a, Douglas 2014). In the survey CIPDRC officers, the majority of participants regarded traffickers as very flexible and very well connected in communications terms (N=96 respondents out of 121, with 79.34%). Therefore, if LEAs do not technologies to intercept trafficker conversations, police operational effectiveness is severely restricted. Information sharing with counterpart LEAs would be one way to compensate for this vulnerability.

In short, *establishing mechanisms to improve data collection and sharing* should be prioritized at the intergovernmental level.

### 5.4.3. Incapacity of building cooperative instruments

Scholars and policy professionals are convinced that controlling TransNT requires increased bilateral and regional collaboration between LEAs (Cockayne 2007, Lemieux 2010a, Madsen 2012). However, the obstacles faced are substantial. These include 1) hindering of BLO mechanisms, 2) absence of an effective mutual legal assistance channel and extradition agreement, and 3) ‘distance’ in domestic legal system between respective. Such irregularities or incongruences require extensive intergovernmental cooperation to address, but despite expressions of intent ASEAN states have not made progress on this front.

First, in respect of cooperative mechanism of BLO, this is one part of the memorandum of understanding on drug control, it ratified by six countries in 1993 (Hai 2016). In 2010, UNODC enhanced support for them through a new program, known as the Partnership against Transnational Crime through Regional Organized Law Enforcement (PATROL) which coordinated and cooperation between multi LEAs, incorporating police force, border and customs units and military authorities. Accordingly, the border is one location where LEAs operations can be effectively focused against TransNT – however; differences in capability between different LEAs is a major challenge. For example, permanent staff of BLOs in Lao
PDR generally come from either the counter-narcotics department of the District Police or provincial branches of the Lao National Commission on Drug Control and Supervision (Broussard and Teetzen 2013, Mi Xay Xay Song Kham 2016). It is very different to Vietnam’s BLOs which are often comprised by various LEAs, including the Border-guard, Customs and Police forces with the major contribution coming from CIPDRC officers (UNODC 2010b, AIPA 2013, SODC 2013b). This non-corresponding BLO staffing increases the likelihood of misunderstandings about functions and tasks. To some extent, one of the main conclusions drawn from the large survey of five countries in the GMS, including Lao PDR and Vietnam, with 369 participants noted that ‘the performance of a BLO is mostly uncorrelated to the performance of other BLOs along the same border’ (UNODC 2013a, 7). This strongly suggests unrealised potential for combatting cross-border crime.

Second, the absence of effective regional mutual legal assistance and extradition arrangements also affects cooperation between Vietnam and Lao PDR. In enabling prisoner transfer, government can, in effect, enable the transfer of information, assuming that extradited offenders are prepared to talk (Newburn 2011, Lewis 2007). Ironically, although one multilateral agreement on mutual legal assistance among ASEAN member states entered into force in 2004, it did not apply to important key matters (Sovannasam 2011, Ganapathy and Broadhurst 2008). This includes the transfer of persons in custody to serve sentences, the arrest or detention of any person with a view to the extradition of that person, and the transfer of proceedings in criminal matters (Nuansyah 2015, Paek 2012, Cryer, Friman, and Robinson 2010). Furthermore, after 10 years since this Treaty, the quantity of requests from/to other ASEAN countries to tackle criminal matters that have not increased to any considerable degree (Paek 2012). In fact, there have been no requests from Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar,
Thailand, and Vietnam directly towards other ASEAN states during the period 2005-2012. At least six members, namely Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam have not yet requested mutual legal assistance from other ASEAN countries in criminal matters at this time.\footnote{It further details on official website of ASEAN Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters with note of last updated on 15\textsuperscript{th} May 2012, retrieved from http://www.agc.gov.my/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=922&Itemid=395&lang=en} This slow pace of institutional evolution illustrates the weaknesses of the ASEAN model, with its emphasis on non-interferences in the internal affairs of member states.

Besides that, while international agreements incorporating extradition obligations have been widely adopted and every state in the region has criminalized their domestic extradition legislation, ASEAN extradition frameworks were often ‘out-dated and/or underutilized’ due to lack of sufficient mechanisms, procedures, and provisions to apply into extradite suspected or convicted criminals (Spencer 2012, 143). With this provision, both Vietnam and Lao PDR may refuse an extradition request, or a request extradition to arrest or detain a suspect (Article 2). This is caused by significant differences in culture, language, legal systems and criminal law and procedure between countries, which lead to ineffective extradition in practice (Spencer 2012, 153-154).

Third, gaps in domestic legislation in each country affect cooperation. With Vietnam, chapters 35 and 36 of the Criminal Procedure Code (2015) broadly provide for international cooperation in criminal proceedings, including extradition and mutual legal assistance, which may be provided subject to treaties to which Vietnam is party, or on the basis of reciprocity (in accordance with Vietnam’s domestic law) in combating transnational crimes. More detail with this provision was catalogued by extradition and mutual legal assistance, including specific steps required to make and receive requests, in the Law on Mutual Legal Assistance, which enacted in 2007. For example, Vietnam’s law permits the refusal of extradition based
on nationality, on offences under the CCV apply to citizens of Vietnam who commit those offences outside the territory of Vietnam, through the application of extraterritorial jurisdiction—meaning that Vietnamese citizens may be prosecuted in lieu of extradition. Meantime, extradition matter in Laos has to base on their legal status, which is not a compulsory regulation with their citizens who commit offences outside territory of Laos will be charged with relevant punishment and be extradited to their counterpart for investigating and prosecuting. It explains that why the process of applying extradition matters into the practice of bilateral cooperation to combat TransNT still is need of specific improvements.

In short, thus, linking border liaison offices to intelligence centres and other specialized units should be recognized as the third recommendation.

5.4.4. Uneven distributions of law enforcement

Across the common borderland areas, there are wide differences in the operational capacity of LEAs between two nations. In some cases, drug authorities were well funded and staffed while in others the ability to maintain a strong border presence is not clearly. Within scope of this study, this problem could be characterized by 1) technical capacities, 2) disparity of border officer’s knowledge, and 3) overall operational capacity.

First, in terms of LEA’s technical capacities, the disparities are critical. One assessment of UNODC about drug enforcement’s professional knowledge pointed out that their capacity effectively operation varies considerably within the region (UNODC Regional Programme for East Asia and the Pacific 2008). Many LEAs in BLOs of Laos working at the border lack the necessary skills and resources to operate effectively, absence of specialized training, and limit proper equipment which were contributed to be serious barriers to cooperation with their

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61 Criminal Procedure Code 2015 – Article 498, 499; MLA Law – Article 35
62 According to the Law on Mutual Legal Assistance – Article 33(1) that an extraditable offence is defined as an offence punishable under the criminal law of both Vietnam and the requesting state by imprisonment for a period of at least one year or life imprisonment or the death penalty
counterpart (Broussard and Teetzen 2013, Mi Xay Xay Song Kham 2016). Without a structured system, which ensures the rapid flow of information between LEA’s, the effectiveness of any initiative was severely barrier. Besides that, lack of modern equipment and updated training programmers from two sides, Vietnam and Laos, that led to uneven distributions of LEAs to anticipate and prevent TransNT activities (UNODC 2010b, 2013a). Many participants at the Workshop recognizes that although both forces have achieved important successes to combat drug trafficking, cooperation and coordination to arrest wanted persons and joint investigation operations of LEAs were not well as their expectations.

Second, there is limit knowledge to drug control of each side. In Vietnam, the absence of equipment for sharing information between provincial CIPDRC Department and other agencies (i.e. forensic force) is also impeding their capacity to identify exactly “new” synthetic drugs trafficked into and out of Vietnam’s cross-border areas (UNODC 2012a, UNODC and SODC 2012). In addition, several drug enforcement officers involved at BLOs of Vietnam (e.g. customs and border guard) lack of basic knowledge about new psychoactive substance (NPS), which led to mistake to recognize between cocaine, cannabis, morphine, and methamphetamines when requested to identify some drugs precursors (UNODC 2010b). Meantime, similarly, in Lao PDR, their LEAs suffer from a lack of training and resources to recognize and intercept specific types of illicit drugs, particularly with capacity building information and data system in terms of TransNT activities (INCSR 2012, AIPA 2012a, Mi Xay Xay Song Kham 2016). In fact, LEA’s officials of two sides with the large of police’s involvement received training on how to search a suspect and his/her vehicle, meantime training on precursor identification and drug identification’s type has been ignored (UNODC 2013a). For example, in respect of drug forensic capabilities of two nations, although national reports have affirmed the prevalent usage synthetic drugs with its diverse types, their levels and abilities recorded with major limitations in analysis’s process. “We acknowledged that no
except for the dominating presence of heroin in our society, there have increasingly boomed of synthetic drugs in recent years, including ATS and NPS. However, our laboratories do not have the capability and equipment to identify those substances” (Interview #1). This barrier was also considered as one of the most concerned difficulties with Laotian LEAs face at the current time.  

Third, the capacities of border patrols on one side of a border do not match with those on the other side of the same border and vice versa. “With many porous border areas, sometime we found drug courier’s groups across ‘blurred points’ of two sides, but could not inform with our counterpart for cooperating arrest due to their location was sheltered far way this area and we lacked the communications equipment to connect with them. What a pity!” (Interview #3) With this situation, there are multiple choices with traffickers when they face with LEA’s pursuits. According to CIPDRC officers at six Vietnam’s provinces, where share common borderlands with Laos, it was very rare any traffickers will be accepted for arrests; instead, they were often protest against police’s arrests (N=76 respondents, accounted for 62.8%) or throw drugs for escaping (N=33, contributed to 27.2%). Excepting for traffickers were arrested directly by LEAs at the scene, almost of their accomplices have often run away into mountainous areas, where is very difficult to identify the borderline’s scope of each nation. “It is also serious hindrances to catch up with their traces without supporting and sharing information of Laos’s anti-narcotic police” (Interview #4, 6). However, in fact, intelligence gathering and data sharing in terms of TransNT activities between two countries shared borderland are often different methods and difficult to access information from both LEA’s sides (Walton 2014, Hufnagel 2011, Lemieux 2010b). In addition, the challenge of communication capabilities, computers and other necessary tools make case management  

63 This point was shared by Mr.Dalin Soudachan, Acting Director of Research and Data Collection Division, Lao National Commission for Drug Control and Supervision (LCDC) at the 7th Regional SMART Workshop in Beijing, China (UNODC 2015b).
difficult (Douglas 2015a, 2014). Yet, the lack of a common language often limits the ability to communicate effectively between LEAs of two sides (AIPA 2014b, UNODC 2013c, Hai 2016). As a result, it is likely to lead the ineffectiveness of cross-border efforts to pursue warrant wanted traffickers. As police agent in the case study CS5 shared

In the case of transport, storing, buying and selling illegal narcotics related to Laotian and their accomplices, those subjects are foreigners, ethnic minorities constitute large proportions, and most of them do not speak Vietnamese. Almost all transactions and exchanges communicated by clan symbols and local slang (Laotian language). Meanwhile, the CIPDRC officers and police reconnaissance agent who can speak and understand Laos language and other ethnic minority languages are very limited. Therefore, when implementing the professional measures to catch up L.A.H and L.A.T (H’mong men), we are really need to support and sharing information from Laos’s responses to decipher these contexts (Interview #5).

In addition, the differences in prioritized training LEAs of each nation created gaps in cooperative partnership. While CIPDRC officers in Vietnam at all three levels, including headquartered, provincial, and districted ranking, have to complete their relevant degrees in relation to drug enforcement’s knowledge, professional skills, and investigative tactics. All recognition and certification of CIPDRC officer were often educated and trained at police institution across the whole of country such as the Police Academy at the Northern region and Police University at the Southern areas (MPS 2015, Xuyen 2010). To contrast, Laotian anti-narcotics police agencies have not only insufficient resources to educate by internal budget and but also they have to need supports from international donor’s resources, including Vietnam’s efforts (INCSR 2014, 222, 2015, 224, MPS 2014). In addition, until 2011, the National Police Academy of Lao PDR established as the central police education and therefore, as just only new system, it needs more enhancing and improving in curriculum and program to train LEA’s officers, particularly with CIPDRC officers (Mi Xay Xay Song Kham 2016). It is a clearly evidence that this incomplete training resource from two sides may be
lead to the limitations to upgrade CIPDRC’s capacity to match that of their counterparts across the border (UNODC Regional Programme for East Asia and the Pacific 2008, Mi Xay Xay Song Kham 2016, MPS 2016).

In short, thus, *improving anti-trafficking skills in a coherent and sustainable way around the region* should be recognized as the fourth recommendation.

**5.4.5. Increased transportation and trade between shared borderland countries**

Both Vietnam and Lao PDR had a special relationship in the past when signing a diplomat relationship in 1962, particularly with the post-1986 – “New Renovation” (known as *Doi moi*). Based on the Agreement on Border Status, Agreement on Transportations, and Agreement on Trade and Tourism Cooperation approved in 1990s, free movement of people, services and capital have increasingly developed to enhance the strategic relation of two sides. Particularly, after the Agreement of Trade between Vietnam and Laos ratified since June 2015, all shared borderlands between two countries are open for bilateral trade. It covers several procedures for payment in cross-border trade such as transportation of cash across land borders, entry and exit progress for individual and vehicles, which will promote a freer movement of people and goods across eight international border gates and state-level border gates between Vietnam and Laos.⁶⁴ Although no anyone doubt about positive effects in terms of lowering overall trade costs while boosting growth, it will also likely place potential chances for TransNT to transport illegal drugs cross borders.

The regional roadmap for connectivity, such as the ASEAN Community 2015 and the Greater Mekong Sub-Region Transport Master Plan, includes major upgrades in infrastructure

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⁶⁴ As one of the special ties between two nations, they have celebrated their completion of border markers planting and the inauguration of border market No.460 at the Thanhthuy border gate in July 2013 which will significantly contribute to improving the efficiency of border management, ensuring security and defence, boosting socio-economic development and building a borderline of peace, friendship, stability, and cooperation. After one year since this important event, the eighth international border gate bridge two side have also established and constructed which located on the borderline between Dakrong district in Vietnam’s Quang Tri province and Laos’ Salavan province, known as the La Lay gate (VNS 2015, VOV 2015)
and initiatives that contribute to rapid increases in free movement of people and goods across borders. Among the GMS economic corridors, the East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC) has been the most developed in terms of infrastructure, and the Laobao – Dansavanh border along it, connecting Vietnam and Laos, has become as the first case for the cross-border transport agreement (Giang 2012a, b). The Laobao-Dansavanh international border located in a hilly area, 260 meters above sea, 260 kilometres from Danang, 80 kilometres from Dongha, and 240 kilometres from Savannakhet. On the Vietnamese side, the Laobao Special Economic Commercial Area (SECA) established along Vietnam’s National Road No.9, with a 25-kilometre length between the two towns of Laobao and Khesanh; and meanwhile, on the Laos side, the Dansavanh Border Trade Zone (BTZ) was along the route a 20-kilometre length between Dansavanh and Bandong (Shiraishi 2013, 133–4). At there, facilitation of border crossing formalities (e.g. single window and single stop customs inspection; coordinating of hours of operation; and exchange of advance information and clearance) and facilitation of cross-border movement of people and goods (e.g. multi-entry visa, recognition of driver license, and regional transit regime) that will be implemented after the cross-border transport agreement (CBTA) deploying (Giang 2012b, Shiraishi 2013). However, as the UNODC’s border management and PATROL’s experts emphasized traffickers could take these advantages of free movements to conceal illicit drugs into transportation’s vehicle for delivering into Vietnam via the Laobao gate, as the last point of the East-West Economic Corridor (UNODC 2014b, Douglas 2015a).

Besides the Laobao international gates at the EWEC, the Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam Development Triangle Area (CLV DTA), particularly at the Bo-Y international border gate shared three countries, was also recorded as the most formally developed triangle area among
the five triangles in the GMS (Ishida 2012). In particular, in the coming years, export-driven exchanges and major multilateral infrastructure upgrades in CLV DTA, will concentrate resources along development corridors. While this model will boost economic growth, it will also provide increased opportunities for TransNT groups to traffic illicit drug the three above national borders. In fact, the volume of drug seizures in this area, were located at Ngochoi district, Kontum province (Vietnam), it is not a considerable number at the current time, if compared with the rest of border areas with Laos PDR in this study (i.e. Quangtri, Nghean, Quangbình, and Dienbien). However, potential concerns at this location in the next time could not be ignored by LEAs of all countries.

The expansion of the Asian Highway and the expected increase in transportation and logistics across borders from neighboured countries (Cambodia and Laos) to Vietnam may cause an unintended surge in illicit activities including drug trafficking (Douglas 2015a, b). This concern should be looked the case of boom drug trafficking from Afghan to Europe via Central Asia and the Caucasus on the Great Silk Road in the 1990s. Crossing the porous borders and expanding transportation’s movement at these regions have been become as a major international drug trafficking centre transporting heroin and ATS enter Ukraine, Eastern and Central Europe, the Baltic states and the Nordic countries (Fenopetov 2006, Lewis 2010, Olcott and Udalova 2000). With a several dangerous cargos to pass along the Central Asian areas via the revived ancient Great Silk Road, with around 99 per cent of

65 In the GMS, there are five triangle areas. Two are in the Southern part of the GMS: one is the Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam Development Triangle Areas and the other is the Emerald Triangle, composed of Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand. Regarding the triangle areas in the Northern part, the Golden Triangle, consist of Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand, is the most famous as a tourism site in Thailand but, it is also recognized as one of the most drug production around the world. Another triangle area upstream on the Mekong River is composed of China, Laos, and Myanmar and it is called the “Green Triangle” in China. The combined area of the Golden Triangle and the Green Triangle is called as the “Golden Quadrangle Area” or the “Quadrangle Economic Zone (Ishida 2012).

66 Geography and history make Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan attractive areas for drug traffic. These states are situated between the world’s largest illicit opium producers and the most lucrative markets in Western Europe. The countries border or are located in close proximity with the two world’s largest producers of illicit opiates, the Golden Crescent (Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran) and the Golden Triangle (Burma, Laos, and Thailand). In addition, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan shared porous border with China, at 1,533 kilometres, 858 kilometres, and 414 kilometres, respectively where China offers a market for the selling of drugs and also serves as a supplier of ephedrine (Olcott and Udalova 2000, 5).
Opiates originates in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the amount of drug users in Europe, the Russian Federation, and increasingly China has been become as one of the largest targets of traffickers (UNODC 2008, 8, 32). Thus, this quite similar feature with geographical proximity and drug’s threats of the Great Silk Road in the past should be re-called to the Asian Highway national members, including Vietnam and its shared neighbours, for planning to prevent illicit drug’s flows into domestic market in the next time.

In short, thus, promoting standard operating procedures for bilateral cooperation at the border for drug control should be recognized as the fifth recommendation.

5.5. Summary of chapter

Overall, this Chapter presented a perspective on cross-border TransNT from CIPDRC officers, who are directly involved in TransNT cases across Vietnam’s provincial borderlands with Lao PDR. This survey was derived from initial findings of qualitative phases through a conceptual framework about organizational structure and modus operandi of TransNT entities. Although this study is not purpose to use complex techniques with different software to enhance the quality of statistic analysis, the current data contributes to generalize and test qualitative findings. Further, these quantitative findings are not only identifying different perspectives of CIPDRC officers at both regional and provincial levels, but also provide useful information for audience about structure and operation of TransNT in relation to their case studies investigated. Furthermore, this Chapter also calls for barriers and challenges to combat TransNT of LEAs have to face.
CHAPTER 6: INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

6.1. Chapter overview and objectives

The two main aims of this chapter are 1) to synthesise qualitative and quantitative research findings and 2) to propose preliminary recommendations to improve bilateral cooperation to combat TransNT between Vietnamese and Laos LEAs. Synthesis between qualitative and quantitative findings is a compulsory requirement of the Exploratory Model, because this allows for more insightful interpretation of research findings. This chapter reflects on the nature of TransNT in Vietnam emphasising two main concerns, organizational structure and modus operandi. From these findings, the study compares and contrasts the nature of TransNT across the Vietnam-Laos border with well-researched cases of cross-border crime in other world regions. In doing so, this section paints a more detailed picture of drug trafficking in Southeast Asia in general and Vietnam in particular. Second, based on identified challenges to law enforcement, the chapter proposes initial recommendations and prioritized policies to enhance capacities to police cooperation in fighting TransNT at this region. It is evident that LEAs in Vietnam and neighbouring countries are struggling to adapt to the flexible and fast moving nature of transnational narcotics crime groups.

6.2. The nature of transnational narcotics trafficking: compare and contrast

6.2.1. Typologies of TransNT networks

As mentioned at the section 2.5.1 with regard to drug trafficking network debate, the network typologies applied in this study are drawn from criminal network theory with one focusing on Williams and Kenney’ approaches. Williams (2001) clarified four social network types, namely directed network, mesh network, transactional network and flux network. Kenney (2007) divided Colombian drug trafficking groups into two main networks, including
wheel and chain network. In comparison, the characteristics of Kenney’s wheel and chain networks are similar to Williams’ directed and mesh networks. Accordingly, the directed network and wheel network is comprised of a core group and periphery network; whereas, both mesh and chain network are decentralised and characterized by direct interaction between nodes. To some extent, thus, TransNT groups that operate under directed and mesh networks can also be classified as wheel and chain networks, respectively. This reconciliation of different terminologies opens avenues for better integration and more expansive interpretation of information on TOC, linking local practices with identified global patterns.

The directed network is structured by a ‘core group’ of organizers for a specific purpose. The core is characterized by dense connections among individuals who provide the ‘steering mechanism’ for the rest of the network (Williams 2001c, 72). To some extent, the nature of this model is quite similar with the ‘core group’ under the United Nations typology’s classification or ‘wheel chain’ under the Kenney’s identification (Kenney 2007a). One typical example (the case study CS1) has similar characteristics of directed networks in which, all TransNT activities are frequently supervised and controlled by a group of core organizers. As the biggest case study in this research, the core group is comprised by “Big Four Bosses”, including the offender CS1-No.1, CS1-No.2, CS1-No.3, and CS1-No.4, each with the variety of roles. For example, as wholesale distributors, the first three group leaders steer the whole process of drug transporting from Laos and Cambodia to Vietnam via cross-border areas before delivering to Ho Chi Minh City and other Southern retail markets. Meanwhile, the latter organizer, CS1-No.4, not only control directly in Dongnai’s provincial drug market, but also managed his sub-coordinators and accomplices blending and mixing pure heroin with other, cheaper substances. However, this core structure differs from the “standard hierarchy” (UNODC 2002, 34), which is characterized by a single leader and a relatively clearly defined chain of command, because it is constituted by a small “core” unit
of individuals, which are surrounded by a loose network of accomplices. Thus, in the case CS1, although both of these two groups have relationships in drug-business activities, their operations are relatively independent of each other and create a strong system of internal discipline as ‘core group’ under the United Nations’ organized crime typologies (UNODC 2002, 39). However, the data gathered for this thesis does not indicate a level of violent behaviour within Vietnam-Lao cross-border criminal networks comparable to the more rigidly hierarchical drug groups in Mexico for example, where, to maintain internal discipline and assert external control, drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) apply violent forms as brutal as possible (Beittel 2015, 1).67

Meanwhile, in the ‘single leadership’ case study (CS3), although the whole of TransNT activities in Vietnam’s side is steer by one principal offender (CS3-No.1), identifying the role of his counterpart (N.T – Laotian related actor, who is likely to manage other drug sources’ suppliers at Lao PDR territory) was very difficult for Vietnamese LEAs. As investigator in this case shared that, no evidence can affirm how many potential partners with N.T’s nodes in Laos collaborated in supplying heroin to the offender CS3-No.1; and further, no evidence can confirm whether any broker was involved (Interview #3). This is a key indicator of the ‘dynamic’ and amorphous nature of a small sized group with high adaptabilities rather than ‘core group’ or ‘standard hierarchy’ in Vietnam’s context. In other words, the data in this study shows that there are limited evidences to confirm existence of a rigid hierarchy or ‘core organizers’ in directed network to steer the whole of TransNT activities in Vietnam.

67 According to Beittel (2015, 2), these DTOs are already utilize to apply their brutal activities into drug trafficking for maintaining violent influences on society and their peers, such as “beheadings, public hanging of corpses, killing of innocent bystanders, car bombs, torture and assassination of numerous journalists and government officials”. Several analysts estimate from 2006 through 2015 that more than 80,000 organized crime-related killings have taken place in Mexico.
Depending on the type of drug trafficking activities and their implementing process, some TransNT groups can operate under one network typology first and then adjust their modus operandi that could be transferred into a different network type after (Williams 2010). In other words, in some specific situations, transactional network can operate within a directed network. For example, the offenders in case CS2 appeared to operate in both directed and transactional network models. In particular, as ‘core group’ in directed network’s model, the leader (the offender CS2-No.3) conspired with four accomplices (CS2-No.1, CS2-No.2, CS2-N.5 and CS2-No.7) and other related actor named N.D.H, to organize three shipments of heroin from Laos to Vietnam during two months, between March and June 2004. These were implemented and supported by at least four other suspects (related actors) in their various roles, including N.T.M, P.T.Th, L.H.V, and N.V.T. The importation stages relied on N.D.H’s brokerages to access the heroin supply in Laos and to mediate each stage of the drug transaction from Laos to Vietnam (Interview #2). As one part of the elements in the transactional network’s model, in this situation, he acted as a bridge (“broker” or “middleman”)68 between drug suppliers in Laos and traders in Vietnam, including “Old Godfather” (the offender CS2-No.4) who is a dual Vietnamese and Laotian citizen, and “T.V.H -Hoi’s Owl in Vietnamese language” (the offender CS2-No.1). Therefore, in social network theory terms, the broker acts as a linking mechanism to fill a “structural hole” for connecting between two disconnected parties (Burt 2005). Given this role, brokers occupy a key position in importation ventures where Vietnamese offenders need access to a drug source overseas from Laos. As Williams (2001c, 69) assesses that the heroin trade from Southeast Asia was recognized as a transaction network, in which “brokers play a critical role at almost every stage of the process. Producers supply heroin to independent distributors, and it is then passed along a chain of brokers until it reaches the retail market”. This research confirms the persistence of this form of organized cross-border crime.

68 See more detail about Williams’s criminal network models at Section 2.4, pp.38-39
A mesh network is distinguished from a directed network through the decentralisation of power. Mesh networks are characterized by horizontal connections rather than vertical accountability (Williams 2001c, 1998). They contain independent nodes that perform specific tasks and transact directly with other nodes without mediation and oversight by core groups (Kenney 2007b, a). For example, in the case study CS4, although N.C.H is leader of group to explore a drug supply source from Laos, his co-offenders, including CS4-No.1 and CS4-No.2, respond to the demand for drugs at the Southern market (with the former) and at the Northern market (with the latter). As independent nodes, these two markets were established by each of them through their different bridges to transport and trade 255 bricks of heroin in the period of March-July 2012 (Interview #4). A flux network, on the other hand are highly unstable, small sized, amorphous, lack trust and hence cohesion (Williams 2001c, 1998). Further, a flux network is flexible without strict rules governing membership or exit (Williams 2001c). For instance, in the case study CS5, no rules or regulations governed admission; instead, people become involved based on economic motivations (Interview #5). As Williams (2001c) pointed out, one of the most common characteristics of two these models is that a core group is not present in the mesh and flux networks since they are often self-organizing networks, opportunistic is that they collude for a specific purpose or only one project.

Given these above characteristics, it is difficult to ascertain whether any offenders in the Vietnam-Laos border context operate under the directed network model and if so, these groups are unlikely to be classified as “standard hierarchy”. In some circumstances, brokers play an important role to connect between Vietnamese and Laotian offenders in highly flexible transactional networks. Therefore, meantime evidence of directed network in the current study’s data was difficult to confirm because the majority of drug trafficking groups in Vietnam are involved in multiple drug transactions and operations. The rest of Williams’ typologies in terms of criminal network (i.e. transactional, mesh, and flux networks) are
applicable. In other words, while flexibility is indeed a defining feature of Southeast Asian TransNT groups, they exhibit a greater degree of internal order and cohesion. That said, groups are relatively small and depend upon extended networks to manage trafficking operations.

6.2.2. The nature of ties

- Family-based ties

Many researchers have explored the nature of structure of illegal drug groups, suggesting that drug trafficking enterprise involves a large network of individuals and groups operating within a relatively flat organizational structure (Natarajan and Belanger 1998, Curtis 1996, Eck and Gersh 2000, Pearson and Hobbs 2001, Natarajan 2006, Malm, Kinney, and Pollard 2008, McGloin and Kirk 2010). Other scholars have also identified subgroups established by a range of organizational structures from small, unstructured, and loosely knit clusters of individuals to large, highly structured, and hierarchy controlled operations (Dorn, Oette, and White 1998, Natarajan 2000, Williams 1998). Particularly, in the binding relationships between criminal networks and subgroups, associations between clusters and individuals involved in drug trafficking activities, were often found to be based on familial ties (Luspa 1983, Ianni 1972). Within the scope of transnational illicit flows, many of those researchers pointed out that the extended ‘family business’ plays an important role in transnational activity, particularly the linkage between source country and initial transport to a distribution point (McGloin 2005, Desroches 2007, Ruggiero and Khan 2007). On the other hand, within the scope of national illicit operations, in Vietnam context, the data of this study indicated that collaborating between offenders, either principal traffickers or related actors, and their family members who occupied various tasks/roles in the operation is considered as a preferred option in the process of recruiting a co-offender or associate. As Kleemans (2007, 182) points out, ‘criminal cooperation… is built not so much on ethnicity as it is on social
relationships among several individuals. People cooperate because they are family and they originate from the same village.’ After all, strong family and local ties ensure not only the cohesion of the trafficking group but also impermeableness to LEAs enquiries and monitors. As stated in Chapter 4, it is logical for persons seeking to engage in criminal activities to choose crime partners they can trust, and it is easier to judge trustworthiness by virtue of similarities in language, cultural values and practices, and physical appearance. Thus, in Vietnam context, the majority of anti-narcotics police officers at six provinces state that selecting in family ties of members to join in TransNT activities was the most prioritized for traffickers and rather preferable than select from friends in prison, fellow-countryman or randomise social acquaintances in the society, accounted for 62% ($N=75$ respondents).

In terms of typologies of drug trafficking based on organizational form, amongst of the numerous studies reviewed in this thesis, the presence of family-based ties is considered as one of the specific modes of organization (Ruggiero and Khan 2007, Curtis 1996, Curtis and Wendel 2000, Natarajan 2000, Vy 2013, Paoli 2004). Accordingly, family-based ties are defined with abroad understandings in terms of close relationship between family members who are related by blood or marriage. This is in keeping with studies of street-level drug markets in Brooklyn, New York, in which spouses or de-facto partners were counted as ‘family ties’ by Curtis (1996). The current data suggested that drug trafficking groups in Vietnam built around families were smaller in numbers and much smaller in scale than Mafia families in Italy, or Mexico’s DTOs with hierarchy system, clear classification of roles, such as the Sicilian Cosa Nostra and the Calabrian ’Ndrangheta (Paoli 2004, 2003) and the Arellano Felix family in Sinaloa drug cartel or Beltrán Leyva Organization (Beittel 2015, 2013). The limited data available for this research nonetheless illustrates dominant roles of family members. Groups have strong family connections, but networks across borders are not centred in any simple family, or extended family, comparable to the Kurdish Baysasin family,
which is reputed to be one of the largest suppliers of heroin into Western European markets from the late 1970s or the typical ethnic Albanian families with up to 60 members and 150 surrounding relatives (Paoli, Victoria, and Reuter 2009, 211,213). The picture in the Vietnam-Laos border zone is much more fragmented. Family ties often important in subgroups involved at different stages of the procurement and supply process.

As the nature of ties connecting members of a TransNT network, these family ties, including 1) parent and children; 2) sibling ties; and 3) marital relationships are most likely to establish a solid network, particularly for the purpose of recruiting and operating. One of the common characteristics of these three ties that is the role of family patriarch, elder brother, and masculine gender are more dominant. For instances, regarding the parent-child relationship, patrimonial ties among members of the Lupollo’s criminal activities in New York was provided as specific evidence of a chain of command by family patriarch in the period of 1960s (Albini 1971, Ianni 1972, 1974). This issue was illustrated by closed relationship between CS1-No.7 (father) and CS1-No.10 (his son) in the process of drug transporting 829 blocks of heroin (equivalence of 310.875 kg) from Laos to Vietnam for trading Big Four’s groups. To some extent, the significance of this relationship may be sourced and influenced by traditional Confucian firms from Chinese culture to Vietnam’s society such as filial duty, brotherly affection, or connubial bliss, which will be enshrined in Vietnamese family unit (Interview #1, 3, 6). This characteristic is also quite similar to ‘socially bonded businesses’ of street drug groups in New York City. As Curtis and Wendel (2000, 133) emphasize that organizations of this form are usually based upon ‘extra-economic social ties – typically kinship, race, ethnicity, nationality, and/or neighbourhood’.69 In particular, the leadership of such organizations often falls to the family patriarch where young

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69 To recognize differences and similarities between these social ties, see more detail at “Socially Bonded Businesses” in article of Curtis and Wendel (2000, 133)
adult and juvenile members of the family will often be assigned the riskier duties, whereas older participants will be in charge of positions that require more responsibility. This model, thus, often operate based on the principle of redistribution in which, profits is often ‘funnelled to the head of the family, who in turn, pays the various members accordingly’ (Curtis and Wendel 2000, 134). Meanwhile, in Vietnam’s context, no evidence was found of profit sharing between father (CS1-No.7) and son (CS1-No.10) in all nine cases of heroin trafficking from Laos to Vietnam. Therefore, in the Vietnamese context, there is very limited evidence to show that a child offender could be an active, independent trafficker in drug trafficking transactions like as the study of Curtis and Wendel (2000). The significance of culture and organization is perhaps illustrated further by the difference in Southeast Asian trafficking groups in Australia, where, despite a heritage of vertical loyalties, offenders work with senior family members on a much more equal footing (Vy 2013, 252).

Cases involving offenders that cooperated with siblings or spouses also demonstrated aged-based division of labour with one sibling usually occupied a superior position over the other sibling/s. Firstly, in terms of sibling ties; this key point was proved by both blood brother and brother-in-law’s groups in the case CS1. With the former, when the offender CS1-No.5 (older brother) required his younger brother (H.D.T – related actor) to collect 515 bricks of heroin, he accepted without hesitation. With the latter, the CS1-No.4 (one of Big Four’s leader) covers the whole of his ring in Dongnai provincial drug markets; meanwhile, his six brother-in-law offenders, including the offender CS1-No.16, CS1-No.19, CS1-No.20, CS1-No.21, CS1-No.22, and CS1-No.23 contributed with dual functions. One group is responsible for drug delivery and other dilutes or ‘cuts’ the pure heroin with additives to increase the quantity for sale. The data in this research also support Curtis’ proposal (1996) in terms of classifying division of labour in family-based groups being based on age where the older are more powerful and influential than younger and hence lower-ranked siblings. Kinship ties
involved in drug distribution and drug courier were also evident in cases such as in the case study CS4 with sister-in-law in one family at Nghean province, between CS4-No.4, CS4-No.5 and CS4-No.6; and the case CS5 with blood sister relationship between CS5-No.2 and CS5-No.5.

Secondly, in respect of marital ties, either spouse or de-facto partner, the data highlighted more frequent collaboration between spouses involved in middle-scale drug trafficking schemes. Both of these marital forms are evident in case CS2, one is the offender CS2-No.3 (husband) and CS2-No.7 (wife) and other is the offender CS2-No.2 (de-facto) and his lover (P.T.T – Ms Big boss). However, each of them has different tasks and roles in this syndicate. With the former, they are Vietnamese couple but they rent a house in Laos to connect with their network’s nodes with the purpose of exploring sources of illicit drugs. Under the husband’s provisions and guidelines, the role of wife was recorded as a willing accomplice in keeping lookout while heroin was packed into cartons for transport to Vietnam by a drug courier (CS2-No.6). Meanwhile, with the latter, as a couple of de-facto, the offender CS2-No.2 was considered as one of the most important nodes in Ms Big boss (P.T.T) TransNT network. “She (P.T.T) convinced him to involve this syndicate to source drugs in Laos for shipments through to China and Hong Kong” (Interview #2). Consequently, under her instructions, he and his accomplices took successfully 355 blocks of heroin in the period of March-June 2004 for trafficking from Lao PDR to Vietnam.

Besides family-based ties, ethnic ties between members of local minority groups, who live across the Laos-Vietnam border, also provide a foundation of collusion in TransNT activity. For example, with the Hmong ethnic minorities of Vietnam (Nghean, Dienbien, Laichau, and Sonla) and Lao PDR (Bolykhamxay, Luangprabang, Xiengkhuang, and Huaphan), share distinguishing characteristics such as language, customs, culture, lifestyle, and religion. The cultural strength of kinship at these local groups mean that traffickers can
exert enormous pressure on relatives to support or join TransNT chain as a drug courier to transport illegal drug from Laos to Vietnam. Networks built within tribal groups have proven effective in transporting drugs across intentional borders, the Pashtun tribes crossing the Afghan-Pakistan border (e.g. the Afridi and the Shinwari) for example have played central roles to engage in large-scale heroin production and trafficking since the 1980s (Paoli, Victoria, and Reuter 2009, 211). However, as interviewees at provinces shared borderland with Laos point people from ethnic minorities are only recruited to courier drugs and rarely meet directly with leaders/organizers (Interview # 3, 4, 5). Yet, many are equipped with military weapons such as AK-47s, K-54s, and grenades, and prepared to use these to oppose law enforcement authorities (Interview # 4, 6). This characteristic is also supported by at least more than 62 per cent out of 121 CIPDRC officers were involved in the LEA survey at six provinces with shared borderlands with Lao PDR (N=76 respondents). The drugs trade is thus bound up with security issues of a political nature involving minorities like the Hmong who have maintained a longstanding resistance struggle against the Laos state.

- Fellow-countryman association

Many scholars have focused on fellow-countryman firms as one of the typical crime group forms, where people of similar nationality in a foreign country organize to commit a crime. There are various reasons to explain why compatriots collude overseas. First, they form relationships in the informal economics, including illicit drugs, is a foreign country as ‘in order to survive and to cohere’ exemplified in the case of Nigerian migrant who turned to crime in Johannesburg’s inner city in the 1990s (Morris 1998, 1131, 1133). Second, domestic

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70 With respect to ethnicity and their contributions in organizational structure, no ethnic minority group dominates the organizer’s role in TransNT network in Vietnam. Instead, those ethnic minority participants, who are living at shared borderland with Laos territories, are often seduced or recruited as drug couriers to carry illegal drug cross border return Vietnam. It is different characteristics with other ethnic minority groups in DTOs in Western European countries, where both Turkish (ethnic Kurds) and ethnic Albanians play as “a dominating heroin import and wholesale distribution” (Paoli and Reuter 2008, 15) or in the Shan State of Myanmar, where the Shan people, the largest ethnic minority in Burma, that occupied by armed groups to contribute importantly to drug production and trafficking (Zhang and Chin 2015, 37).
criminals join with foreign offenders, who share a common ethnic background, so as to ‘help their fellow-countrymen’ conduct migrant smuggling operations (Kleemans and de Bunt 2003, 103). Further, amongst offenders and their victims in this human smuggling’s syndicate exist social ties between the counties of origin – developing countries (such as Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, India, China, and several African nations) and the countries of destination – developed countries (such as the member states of the European Union, Canada, the U.S., and Japan). Third, others state based on trustworthy and faithfulness values, one criminal group with the same ethnicity and nationality is likely to establish close connections and good communication (von Lampe and Johansen 2003, 2004). A specific example of the relevance of ethnicity was illustrated by the relation of Vietnamese dealers to other participants of the Vietnamese community in the Germany where ‘wholesale and retail dealers could openly store, transport, and sell untaxed cigarettes without fear of being reported to authorities’ (von Lampe and Johansen 2004, 174). It is clearly show that with the same ethnicity and nationality, fellow citizens created a close group for supporting and sharing in their criminal field at overseas countries. Crucially, it is not ethnicity per se but the social reality that trust relationships are more likely to form among people who share an affinity, be this political, cultural or familial or all three.

Fellow-countryman relations are evident in TransNT entities in Vietnam. This was reflected by village-based relationships between primary offender (leader) and their accomplices (related actors), who were born and grew up at the same places, in TransNT activities at the different regions of Vietnam. Based on confirming the place of offender’s birth, final court’s judgements and identifying the native county of interviewees’, this study identified two main factors to explain why leader prefers to recruit their fellow-countrymen to join in drug trafficking activities than others. These are includes 1) to ensure trust for cooperating in co-offending and 2) to establish close-knit community (see more detail at
Regarding to fellow-countrymen group, these operated on a provincial scale at two levels, including commune and district level.

First, with commune level, offenders select their potential accomplices from among people of one commune. Of six case studies, there are two typical cases that display countrymen-based structures, namely the case CS1 and CS5. For example, in the case CS1, at least, there are includes 17 offenders (CS1-No.1, CS1-No.4, CS1-No.8, CS1-No.14, CS1-No.16, CS1-No.18, CS1-No.19, CS1-No.20, CS1-No.22, CS1-No.23, and CS1-No.27) and related actors (P.H.V, P.V.D, N.V.T, T.V.H, N.V.C, and L.N.H) who were born and grew up at Hunglong commune, Hungnguyen district, Nghean province. These 17 offenders accounted for 35% of all offenders in the case study CS1. In fact, they all grew up there. At the time they committed of drug crimes, some still lived there while others had moved. However, they still kept to their childhood identity at Hunglong commune. Similarly, in the case study CS5, five out of 10 offenders (CS5-No.1, CS5-No.4, CS5-No.5, and CS5-No.7) and related actor (B.H.H) were born and grew up together at Thanhyen commune – “the black spot of drug-related issues at the whole of Dienbien province in particular and the Southern mountainous region of Vietnam” (Interview #5). Investigator of this case considers that,

With the scope of very close space and advantage to communicate and share information, only around 800 meters and two kilometres from the offender CS5-No.1 to her accomplices (CS5-No.4, CS5-No.4, and CS5-No.5), they are easy to keep in touch and switch roles together. Of course, it led to very difficult to identify exactly about their modus operandi when they only use their local ethnic language, meanwhile, our officers have not yet already understood these informal conversation regards to the process of send-and-receive and sale-and-buy drugs (Interview #5).

Second, with district level, birthplace and region are significant factors in criminal associations. Leaders will want to cooperate or recruit with people from the same district. In other words, although offender’s birthplaces can be in different villages in one district,
proximity is a factor in explaining the composition of drug trafficking groups. Again it contributes to the formation of tight knit association between offenders in different parts of Vietnam. In the case CS1, for example, the leader of the “Hungnguyen drug syndicate group”, only sought out those who come from Hungnguyen district to be involved his group (Interview #1). The offender CS1-No.24 at Hunghong commune became involved in as a drug courier; while, the related offenders, T.V.H and N.D.H, both born at Hungxa commune that neighbours Hunglong commune, served as important nodes in Laos to arrange transport of illicit drugs for Hungnguyen’s drug lords in Ho Chi Minh City (CS1-No.1 and CS1-No.4). Inter-communal connections within one district were common in the court transcript and interview data. In traditional culture of Vietnamese, “living in wealth may not be as happy as living in friendship”\(^{71}\) and thus, at least, coming from same province in Vietnam makes it easier to form (or re-form) friendship bonds (Interview #1, 2, 5, 6). Thus, alongside with Hungnguyen district group, Vietnamese LEAs have also dealt with at least two other district level groups, namely Vinh city and Nghiadan district. With the former, there were at least seven offenders (CS1-No.2, CS1-No.3, CS1-No.11, CS1-No.15, and CS1-No.25) and related actors (H.T.Th and V.A.T) who were either born or resident in Vinh City, capital of Nghean province. Two principal offenders (leaders) in this case play as the Mr Big Boss (CS1-No.2 and CS1-No.3) and one related actor as big retailer’s partner (H.T.Th). With the latter, there are also 6 offenders (CS1-No.7, CS1-No.9, CS1-No.10, and CS1-No.11) and related actors (N.T.Th and T.T.H) who shared their childhood in Nghiadan district and were connected by family ties or by familiarity born of proximity. Police officer illustrated this network as follow:

They showed cohesive nodes, as a bee nest with the queen bee is N.T.Th who is one of the biggest drug source’s suppliers in Laos, and two leader’s bee worker groups. One located at Laos (CS1-No.9, CS1-

\(^{71}\) It is one of the most common proverbs in Vietnam’s society to describe the powerfulness and strengthens of friendships in the life. In some case, the friendship plays more important role than physical assets, particularly when they live far from their original hometown.
No.11, and T.T.H) to collect drugs at storage and other (CS1-No.7 and CS1-No.10) is at Vietnam to transport its productions return Vietnam when the queen bee required. In addition, their close-knit community was established with the several bee workers who were born at Nghia Dan district, Nghean province for delivering multiple drugs to consumers (Interview #1).

Groups of traffickers tend to come from either same communes or districts in one province, which underscores the significance of ‘external’ sources or makes of trustworthiness.

6.2.3. Structure and authority in the drug trafficking network

Little evidence was found to suggest that TransNT entities in Vietnam work in groups that are organized in a manner consistent with DTOs. Traffickers operating across Vietnam’s borderland with Lao PDR are often fluid and loosely organized rather than tightly hierarchical and centralized. This contrasts with DTOs in Mexico and Colombia which comprise numerous actors collaborating in a vast supply chain where they are combined and colluded together to create tightly knit groups before transporting illicit drugs to demand chain (Astorga and Shirk 2010). DTOs are controlled and managed under the supervision of leaders of each stage with centralized authority structures, where leaders make almost all strategic decisions in terms of production, marketing, and operational security (Williams 2010, 1998, Kenney 2007b).

For example, with Colombian trafficking groups, ‘leaders have final say on drug production levels, shipment size, methods of conveyance and concealment, wholesale prices, customers, money laundering and repatriating methods, along with a host of other business-related issues’ (Kenney 2007c, 363). Meanwhile, with the Mexican DTOs, these groups often operate in separate, specialized, and more hierarchical networks in the U.S. wholesale market (Beittel 2011, Astorga and Shirk 2010). Furthermore, they are gaining control of the U.S. retail distribution by forming alliances with local the U.S. gang’s (Beittel 2013). Yet, its
considerable degree of hierarchy and cohesion of Mexican DTOs, normally, are based on the
existence of a protective centralized power structure with symbiotic relation between politics
and corruption (Bailey 2010, Bonner 2010, Beittel 2011, Kenney 2007c). As quite similar as
to Mexican DTOs, the Colombian cartels tend to use corruption tactics, or deal making,
primarily when they lack a preponderance of power. In particular, ‘Colombian drug runners
possess remarkably effective abilities to collaborate with officials in influencing government
policy, the law enforcement environment, and the entire political system, as these criminals
engage in the promotion of favourable legislation, election, and prosecution outcomes’
(Mandel 2011, 73). There is no evidence of political involvement in drug trafficking in Lao
PDR or Vietnam, possibly because political systems in both countries are more stable, but
also because information is very strictly controlled. Besides that, crossing all selected case
studies in this current research shows no evidence to suggest those traffickers corrupted LEAs
or local administrative authorities at checkpoints or the international border gates between
Vietnam and Laos, unlike TransNT groups at cross-border between Mexico and the U.S.
(Astorga and Shirk 2010, 31, 34, 38, Olson, Shrik, and Selee 2010, 2-3) and the South
Otherwise, possibly, some drug couriers took advantage of weakness in border control and
lack of monitoring capacity to conceal illegal drugs and ship from Laos to Vietnam.

Drug markets in Vietnam are not controlled by monopolistic groups or ‘cartels’ as in
Mexico and Colombia. Some of characterization of the drug trade in Mexico and Colombia
(e.g. hierarchical organizations, collusion with LEAs, violent behaviours, using political
influences, and so forth) are not applicable to the drug trade in Vietnam. The data shows that
drug cartels do not exist in Vietnam and no drug group there is powerful enough to declare a
particular drug route as their exclusive own or charge other TransNT entities a “toll” for using
an exclusive drug route such as DTOs in Mexico (Campbell 2009, 23). One of the main
reasons to argue this point is under leading of the Communist Party and Government, monopoly does not permit to exist in drug trade inside in Vietnam, particularly the across border between Vietnam and its neighbours. Thus, under the Government and Ministry of Public Security requirements, all the major roads connecting Lao PDR and Vietnam points, are heavily guarded by Vietnamese LEAs. It is a similar situation in China, where trafficking groups cross the Chinese borderland with Myanmar have not had the opportunity to become institutionalised (Zhang and Chin 2015, Chin and Zhang 2007).

Instead, depending on the quantity of drug trafficker involved, the size of TransNT in Vietnam can be separated into small, middle, or large scale. As discussed above, groups often operate under the supervision of leader, who involves, either directly or indirectly, in one part or wholly in TransNT activities in Vietnam and Laos. Those leaders comprise both recidivist (the case study CS1 and CS2) and non-recidivist offenders (the case study CS3, CS4, CS5, and CS6). It is a different point to core groups in ‘wheel network’ of Colombian DTOs who are ‘veteran traffickers that have the contacts, capital, and knowledge to fear, charisma, managerial acumen or some combination of such attributes’ (Kenney 2007a, 243). This charisma and experience is essential to the coherence of large-scale trafficking where core group often rely on multiple peripheral nodes simultaneously to facilitate communication and coordinate relations between them and their sub-nodes (Kenney 2007a, Williams 2001c). To contrast, in Vietnam, TransNT transactions are likely to be implemented by individual traffickers who hold comprehensive responsibilities, including location and contact of drug suppliers in Lao PDR, to decide shipment size and methods of concealment, and retail distribution in Vietnam. In the case CS3, for example, the offender CS3-No.1 is recorded as a multi-functioned leader when he connects with his counterpart (N.T – Laotian drug lord) for collecting heroin and ATS to deliver to Vietnam by concealing these drugs inside bed and hotel cupboards before hiring tourist vehicles to transport them to market. Some TransNT
entities in Vietnam successful not because they have the strongest network but because they can operate independently when they so choose.

In regards to group size, mid-sized groups are predominant in the cases analysed for this thesis. This type of TransNT entity is comprised of between six to ten members with a clear division of labour based on trafficker’s experiences, ages, and charisma (mentioned at section 4.3.5). Smaller sized groups have one leader and partners, being related actors of either Vietnamese or Laotian origin. These smaller groups exhibit similar characteristics to drug trafficking groups in West Africa, which are also are composed of small, compartmentalized cells with two or more members (Mazzitelli 2007, 1083-1084). Groups of this size, for reasons of security, often limit members’ access to information or details about a drug trafficking to specific operations or tasks for which they are responsible (Interview #3). As a result, their organizational structure is also loosely organized and lack of cohesion between participants. To contrast, with large size group, it is establishes over ten participants and is often steered by a single person or core group with tidy relationship between sub-groups. However, one different point between TransNT in Vietnam and DTOs in Colombia is number of memberships involved each network. In the case CS1, TransNT was networked by at least 53 traffickers, including Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian offenders for transporting and trading over 2,354 blocks of heroin during the period of 2000-2002 with the great proportion transported from Laos to Vietnam and a smaller proportion transported from Cambodia into Vietnam. This is a very small-scale operation compared with the actions of DTOs in Colombia, which were operated large, sophisticated armed networks with the diversity of traffickers’ backgrounds, including paramilitary and guerrilla group for controlling all the links in the drug chain from production to retail (Dijk and Spapens 2013, Williams 2013, Kenney 2010). For example, the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) was once the largest paramilitary organization with a nationwide movement of paramilitary groups formed
in the 1990s with around 35,000 soldiers at its height;\textsuperscript{72} meantime, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia guerrillas (FARC) is the oldest and most important guerrilla group in the Western Hemisphere with estimated 8,000 fighters and 30,000 militia members (Dudley 2011, 20, McDermott 2013, 13, Dudley 2010, 66). That said, it should not be presumed that Vietnamese groups are unsophisticated.

Another point of difference with TransNT entities in the Vietnam context in well-know organized crime groups in South America, Asia and Europe is the absence of extensive connection to other forms of crime. In Vietnam, trafficking is not explicitly connected with terrorism or political violence but they are connections with money laundering. In terms of relationship between drug trafficking and politic, while DTOs in El Salvador and Guantemala are known to have infiltrated the political leadership in some areas and redirect resources into local and municipal elections for insuring that specific trafficking routes are shielded and protected (Arnson and Olson 2011, 7). There is deep concern that the post-Cold War security environment is being changed by the convergence of organized crime and terrorism, although drug related crime and terrorism are two very different phenomena (Makarenko 2004, Picarelli 2006, Makarenko 2005). For terrorists, the drug trade is considered as one of the important sources of revenues to wage warfare against governments. On the contrary, capital accumulation is the aim for criminal syndicates, and in pursuing profit they do not seek a direct confrontation against the state, but rather other forms of coexistence (Danieli 2014, 1235-1236, Howard and Traughber 2008, 371-372). These convergences are not apparent in Vietnam although, as mentioned, the involvement of Hmong separatists adds a political dimension.

The rise of violent drug crimes of increasing to concern at Central American and Mexico with the highest rates for homicide in the world, crime and violence in Central

\textsuperscript{72} Disbanded after 2001 following US declaration that AUC was a terrorist organization.
America have multiple drives, but the illegal drug trade is considered as one of the main causes to lead the dramatic increase in violence between TransNT groups (Seelke 2014). The locations of the high incidence of homicides also coincide with areas of heavy drug trafficking activity and for example, the northern coast of Honduras, the eastern border of El Salvador, and the northern jungles of Guatemala and the U.S.-Mexico border (Dudley 2011, 30). It is a quite similar situation at Mexico, where the nature of the expanding violence “is a complex and multi-layered phenomenon with a variety of different rationales and motivations” (Williams 2011, 262-3). While violence and trafficking are explicitly connected still in Myanmar, the end to war in Indochina has lessened the intensity of political rivalries and reduced the demand for weapons by non-state groups in this part of Southeast Asia at least. Once again, three these close relations between drug trafficking and politics, terrorism, and violence can be seen in the data collected for this research project, but this is not of the same order.

Symbiotic ties between illegal drug trade and money laundering are evident in most selected cases. In Vietnam, though the Government had adapted criminal justice system to prevent money laundering, its practice this was not done as effectively as possible, particularly in drug trafficking cases. In all six case studies, traffickers recycled illegal profits using a variety of laundering techniques (i.e. buying luxury cars, investing in real estate, even depositing in legitimate bank account). Gambling was another avenue used to launder, and, disturbingly, the purchase of assault weapons (mentioned at section 4.4.4.2). However, no money laundering cases related drug trafficking activities in these case studies were prosecuted under the CCV in Vietnam at the period of data collection in this thesis.

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73 This thesis does not comment on possible links between drugs, crime and violence in Southern Thailand.
6.2.4. The various roles in a transnational narcotics trafficking network

As mentioned in the literature review, in terms of typologies of TransNT (see more detail at section 2.6.2), depending on a criminal group’s operational structure, targeted illicit markets, and types of drugs (e.g. heroin, cocaine, opium, or ATS), specific roles are allocated. There are at least 16 different roles that could be reviewed and applied into TransNT activities according to Kenney (2007b) with nine typologies and Williams (2001c) with seven typologies.

Firstly, leaders, in the light of social network theory, carry the ‘highest cognitive load’ and have the prior experience and resources that enable them to control and manage complex tasks (Carley, Lee, and Krackhardt 2002, 84, Morselli 2009, 14). In cross-border TransNT groups studied for this thesis, the role of a leader depends upon the centrality of their position in diversified trafficking networks. TransNT leaders act as for 1) establishing structure, 2) strategic and operational planning, and 3) adjusting modus operandi to circumstances. However, leaders only exert indirect influence over extended parts of operations, especially at the point where drugs are sourced, from “drug lords” in Lao PDR. Here a partnership model, rather than leader-follower model is a more appropriate construct. For example, in the case CS3 and CS6, both leaders, CS3-No.1 and CS6-No.1, assumed that their partners are Laotian drug lords (N.T for the former and H.N.C for the latter), who supplied the whole of their drug production.

Crime group leaders carry the heaviest burden of risk, for which reason they prefer to limit direct physical involvement in trafficking operations (Morselli 2009). Instead, they manage or direct from a safe distance, through proxies, with the consequence that visible organizers are often not the principal or leader of the crime group. A number of offenders in the TransNT case, including case study CS2 (CS2-No.2 and CS2-No.5) and CS4 (CS4-No.1 and CS4-No.2) occupied “leader” roles, as “right hand” managers responsible for sub-stages
and special duties in the drug trafficking process. In addition, leaders’ representatives in a transportation venture, as in the case CS5 (L.A.H and L.A.T – related actors), are likely to act on behalf of their leader to communicate with foreign contacts (Laotian drug suppliers) to procure and deliver drugs to Vietnam to send their big boss (CS5-No.1).

Secondly, in the architecture of Colombian DTOs, Kenney (2007a) also identifies “investors”, who are part of the drug trafficking group or are external to the group but occupy a key position to provide funds for each drug shipment. Large-scale drug smuggling operations require extensive human resources with at least two individuals in investor roles (Kenney 2007a, 247). However, for this thesis, investment patterns tended to be less complex. For example, in the case study CS2, under the shell of a foreign entrepreneur Vietnamese (known as Viet Kieu), who is businesswomen want to invest her hometown’s economic development when she come back Vietnam, P.T.T (Ms Big) used her financial investments from overseas, either Hongkong or the U.K., to help her de facto (CS2-N.2) source drugs in Laos to trade and transport Vietnam before shipping into Hongkong. By doing this, investors can finance an entire operation or provide funds for one element of the importation, such as real-estate investment. During this process of investment, to avoid LEA pursuit, they rent one house to collect reusable irons and motorcycle equipment for concealing illegal drugs. The difficulty in identifying investors is that these offenders were more likely to belong to other nationalities outside Vietnamese jurisdiction.

In respect of “buyer” in Kenney’s classification, thirdly, is defined as those who are purchase cocaine and heroin from processing labs. In the Vietnam-Laos context, evidence suggests that buyers prefer not to deal directly with processors. In the current study, there is insufficient evidence to prove where illegal drugs are manufactured. Based on UNODC reports in terms of drug manufacturing capacity in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (particularly at Vietnam and Laos) and survey questionnaire’s of CIPDRC officers, there is no
evidence of heroin and ATS being manufactured inside Vietnam (UNODC and SODC 2012). Alternatively, drugs consumed in Vietnam are substantially transported either from Lao PDR (with 78.51% out of 121 CIPDRC respondents stating this is the case) or from “blurred points” between Vietnam and Laos borderland (with 21.49%, N=26 officers). Similar to Kenney’s version (2007a), based on offenders’ confessions, this study assumed that in most case studies, illicit drugs was not bought from processing labs; instead, perhaps, they buy it from their “third-party” counterparts, who are often located at Laos. Consequently, these productions could refine and change the drug’s quality by adding chemical substances (cutting) before re-selling to Vietnamese wholesale distributors.

Fourthly, “packers” compress heroin and cocaine into digestible capsules using an hydraulic packing press (Kenney 2007a, 247). In his examination, this role is likely to be based overseas because drugs are usually processed before supply to destination country. This process could be implemented by Laotian trafficker or their counterparts (Vietnamese) at Lao PDR territories. While in the case CS3 and CS6, the related actors (N.T in the former and H.N.C in the latter – Laotian drug lords) packed heroin for concealment; whereas in the case CS1 and CS2, only Vietnamese traffickers covered this duty after receiving the drugs from “third-party” suppliers. To differ with Kenny’s investigation, packer in this current study is not involved in transformation of raw opium or heroin but in all four cases CS1, CS2, CS3, and CS4, packers were engaged in concealment.

Fifthly, a “recruiter” enlisted human couriers and supported them with the necessary travel documentation, including passport and visa (Kenney 2007a, 247). However, both Vietnam and Lao belong to ASEAN Community with visa free travel for member country citizens. In the Vietnam-Laos context, couriers usually arranged their own documentation, often forged documents adapted from original official documents. For example, the offender

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74 See more detail this terminology – “blurred points”, at section 5.3.3.2
CS2-No.7 amended on his transport logs and routes in order to enable to travel between Vietnam and Laos by himself.\textsuperscript{75} There is no evidence to confirm any coercion by threat to recruit couriers. In the case CS6, the related actor (H.N.C – Laotian) recruited his friend (CS6-No.5) and brother-in-law of his wife (CS6-No.6) to deliver 58 blocks of heroin send to his partner (CS6-No.2). Yet, those recruiters paid for the couriers’ transport fares and other expenses and thus, the recruiter aided these drug couriers to facilitate drugs importation.

Sixthly, after the recruiter had enlisted couriers, according to Kenny’s diagram, the couriers will be prepared by a “trainer” to ingest the drug capsules and given advice on how to avoid LEAs’ monitoring at airports (Kenney 2007a, 247). Similar to other functions based overseas, the data in this study provided no evidence of a “trainer”. However, given that the data provides cases of couriers concealing drugs for transportation in vehicles or on their bodies, it is reason, it can be assumed that one accomplice or the courier would be involved in the transfer of delivery skills.

Seventhly, in terms of function of an “enforcer” in Kenney’s typology, within the small trafficking network, Kenney notes that enforcers are not always use to resolve disputes, or to coerce people who owed money to pay their debts (p.247). Data in this thesis suggest that enforcers were rarely used by Vietnamese TransNT groups. No offenders engaged in violent behaviour in TransNT activities in Vietnam. Thus while “violence” is likely to occur in hierarchical networks or DTOs in Mexico or Colombia, offenders studied for this thesis were not involved in any violent behaviour. Violent behaviour is also associated with certain types of organized crime activity e.g. vice, extortion, and street crime, where use of violence can emphasise strengths and influence to competitors. In Vietnam’s context, the avoidance of violent behaviour may be example of a risk-management strategy to limit attention from

\textsuperscript{75} In this case, the offender CS2-No.7 have been not prosecuted as drug transportation’s act due to the CIPDRC only proved his carrying illegal goods (e.g. old equipment of motor, motorcycles, and cotton’s clothes) cross-border transportation (article 154, CCV). Additionally, he also prosecuted with amending and/or using certificates and papers issued by agencies and/or organizations (article 256, CCV).
Yet importantly, the absence of violence could show that these offenders do not operate in large TransNT networks or hierarchies that may require the use of violence to affirm power authority within a group or to the external network.

In the two last stages of the transportation process, when “couriers” reach the destination country, they make contact with a “receiver” (Kenney 2007a, 247). Depending on the extent of their previous exchanges, information will be communicated via their special signals or slang. Normally, the drugs are exchanged at “safe” locations where couriers and receivers can easily evade LEA monitoring. In this research, 21.49% out of 121 CIPDRC respondents assessed that all drug couriers in their TransNT cases took advantage of ambiguous geographical frontiers (known as “blurred” interconnection’s places) between Vietnam and Lao PDR to transport illicit drug ($N=26$ officers). Most case studies reflected on a variety of exchange processes, such as switching cars between courier and receiver in the case CS6, handing over drugs by the roadside in the case CS1, pick ups on a highway after passing through an international border gate in the case CS3, escort couriers to a rental house of the receives in the case CS2, and ingesting for carriage on foot through mountains and forests in cases CS4 and CS5.

Different from Kenney’s classification (nine separated roles as presented above), Williams’ typology (2001) does not analyse specific roles and tasks in TransNT activities. Alternatively, as mentioned at literature review, Williams (2001, 84) argued that except for seven main roles in criminal networks, some types of drug trafficking networks still require more specific roles, such as chemist or “mixer”, who is involved in the cutting and cleaning of drugs in a drug distribution network. These offenders may have limited functions in the

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76 According to William (2001), in general, in criminal network, there are at least seven main roles to contribute illegal activities within the scope of transnational territories, namely, 1) organizer, 2) insulator, 3) communicator, 4) guardian, 5) extender, 6) monitor, and 7) crossover.
network but are important to determining the quality or grade of drug produced (Matrix Knowledge Group 2007, 27).

This thesis identifies three broad trafficking categories: organizers, extenders and crossovers. Firstly, the position of an organizer can be aligned with discussions on “leaders” in Kenny’s typology (2007a) and perhaps, it requires no further discussion. Both extenders and crossovers have similar characteristics because two those roles recruit participants to join in their network. The current data provided more information about extenders than crossovers. To identify an extender would require knowledge on their motivations and reasons for becoming involved in criminal activity i.e. whether they actually defected from a position in a public institution or joined a criminal group after leaving government employment.

Secondly, “extenders” play an important role to extend the network by either recruiting new members or encouraging “defectors”, former law enforcement officers who have opted for a life of crime (Williams 2001c, 83). Extenders can occupy more than one role in a drug operation. In some cases, leaders also cover this responsibility. For example, in the biggest case, CS1, both bosses (CS1-No.1 and CS1-No.4) have attempted to recruit more participants into their TransNT group. Particularly, as one partly of family-based ties, they are often select their relatives to fix up drug couriers, money collectors, or mixers. Additionally, the leader CS1-No.1 was recorded as one extender who encouraged “defectors” from the CIPDRC officers (CS1-No.3 and CS1-No.7), who were head of anti-narcotics police unit at the police district, to involve his ring. One of the different points between William’s arguments and this data that are methods of induce those defectors to come TransNT activities. While Williams (2001c, 83) states that “among the tactics that extenders typically use are voluntary recruitment through bribery and corruption and involuntary recruitment through coercion”, both police officers in question joined CS1-No.1’s network because they were sacked for

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77 One detailed information about these terminologies, extender and crossover, is attached on Appendix I, particularly at the section ‘drug trafficking classifications and typologies’.
misconduct. There is no evidence, understandably, to prove that the extender used bribes to corrupt them; instead, they were motivated by economic incentives on the one hand and economic necessity on the other by virtue of losing paid employment with CIPDRC (Interview #1).

Meanwhile, thirdly, the role of “crossovers”, who have been recruited into a criminal network but continue to operate in legitimate businesses, whether governmental, financial or commercial (Williams 2001c, 83) do not clearly appear in the data for this thesis. The data pointed out that the offenders in two cases CS3 and CS6 used legitimate companies as a shell or front for their criminal operations to avoid LEA’s attentions. Both leaders in these cases, CS3-No.1 and CS6-No.1, were built actively these shell’s legal businesses by themselves rather than be recruited into TransNT activities by others (Interview #1,3).

Based on selected case studies collection and analysis, the data indicates that no single case incorporates all these fourteen individual functions/responsibilities identified by both Kenney and Williams.

6.2.5. Modus operandi

The journey of illicit drugs – trafficking – is quite similar to a standard cross-country bus trip or airline flight with at least three key components, including the departure location, the destination, and the route (Jenner 2014, 63). The journey comprises a series of preparations (movement of drugs), action (methods of transport), and post-action (forms of communication) by traffickers with their diverse modus operandi so as to able to achieve objective at journey’s end.

78 Although in the official court’s profile do not mention directly reasons to kick two those offenders out CIPDRC forces in the past, according to interviewee in the case study CS1, one of the main reasons is they were drug users when are serving police force.
- Movement of drugs

As discussed in Chapter 4, there are two main explanations for the production and movement of drugs, including the geographical proximity of producers to the raw commodity and the types of illicit drug produced for the market. First, regarding geographic issues for Vietnam markets, illicit drugs are often transported between source and market directly from Laos into Vietnam. For example, crossing the China’s borderland with Myanmar points, most of heroin trafficking cases in China derived by traffickers from the Burma-China borderland (Zhang and Chin 2015, ix, 2, 24). As same situation as to these routes between China and Myanmar, most of heroin cases have investigated successfully by LEAs in Vietnam proved that it was sourced from Lao PDR market. Most of CIPDRC officers involved the survey identify that there are at least two broad directions from Laos were exploited by drug lords to trade for Vietnamese dealers. One is to source from the Golden Triangle to provinces such as Bokeo, Luangprahang, and Phongsaly in Lao PDR before transporting to the North-western provinces of Vietnam, principally Laichau, Dienbien, and Sonla. The other involves the Huaphanh-Thanhhoa route, Savanankhet-Quangtri route, Khammuane-Hatinh route, and Bolykhamxay-Nghean route (mentioned at section 4.4.1.1).

Second, the journey of drug trafficking also depends on types of illicit drugs, which have different patterns of movement between producer countries to consumer nations. In fact, each of the major drug groups (i.e. marijuana, cocaine, opiates, and ATS) has their distinct itineraries with different methods of transportation. Vietnam’s border with Laos – one of the top largest opium producers, is long and porous for which reason Vietnam is being impacted directly by the size of heroin production in Laos border zones shared. Consequently, heroin production is recorded as the highest proportion of illicit drugs entering Vietnam from Laos (Hai 2016, MPS 2016, Hai 2017). In particular, LEAs in Vietnam seized 823.90 kilograms of heroin from Laos trafficked in six selected cases in this study. As Paoli, Victoria, and Reuter
(2009, 238) highlight that “proximity to major producing and consuming countries [such as Lao PDR], and strong commercial and demographic connections usually override all other factors in determining which countries become principal transit countries [such as Vietnam]”.

In European illicit drug markets, diverse drug flows come from multiple directions, both external and internal ways (von Lampe 2014). With the former, cocaine arrives from South America and with the latter, South-Eastern Europe produces relatively large amounts of cannabis, most notably in Albania, and the region has a recent history of producing and trafficking ATS (EMCDDA and Europol 2013). Meanwhile, at the U.S.-Canada border, both ecstasy and marijuana are transported by land and sea, through official crossing points and main ports and also across rugged mountain terrain (Office of National Drug Control Policy 2012, 5).

- Methods of transport

The modus operandi of traffickers includes design and preparation of means to transport from source to destination. First, in terms of air transportation, cocaine and heroin from Colombia to the U.S. and Western Europe markets are concealed on commercial aircraft at ‘midpoints’ before entry into destinations (INCSR 2014, 2015). In the case study of Colombian smugglers, Decker and Chapman (2008, 62-3) highlighted that ‘most often, the drugs are moved from Colombia to a mid-shipment location using a transporter hired and overseen by Colombians. The methods of transport described by smugglers most often was by airplane, with the load either dropped or landed in such countries as the Bahamas, Cuba, Aruba, Haiti, Honduras, and Puerto Rico’. Meanwhile, as a ‘midpoint’, West Africa has also become a ‘transit hub’ to transporting cocaine in parallel from South America to Europe by both large and small shipments; or from the Sahara to North Africa by air where they are delivered to Europe in light aircraft (UNODC 2013d, Ellis 2009). Aircraft used have grown progressively more sophisticated over time and the size of aircraft used has increased to
handle multiple and very large cocaine shipments (UNODC 2013d). For example, Mexican trafficker ‘El Chapo’ Guzman had an aircraft fleet of 586 planes and an extensive series of laundering strips, and even, he also has developed his own rudimentary ‘submariners’ to transport drugs into the U.S (Beittel 2015, INCSR 2015, Woody 2016).

With similar ways by importation drugs via air routes, in the periods of mid 1990s, smugglers took advantages of technical equipment to spray liquid cocaine onto clothing and later extracted with a special solution or to pack into latex capsules and swallowed by drug mules, for transporting from South American to European markets (Zaitch 2003, 9). After two decades later, this modus operand has still applied as one of the common methods in this region, which led Bolivia as a ‘stop-over’ in the cocaine air bridge connecting between one of the world’s biggest cocaine producer (Peru) and one of the region’s largest consumer market (Brazil) (Rousset et al. 2013, Daugherty 2015, Gagne 2014). As a compulsory factor, in any movement of drugs via air routes, there is need to recruit or train airplane pilots. Couriers are also needed assists in the movement of drugs by air. However, in this study, there was no evidence of two above roles (i.e. pilot and air courier) facilitating the movement of drugs between Laos and Vietnam, because it is still possible to effectively evade LEAs travelling on foot or by motor vehicle at border crossing points.

Second, for transportation by sea, the ‘off-loaders’ usually escort the drugs from the source nation to the destination nation. Once the drugs reach the destination country, ‘off-loaders’, who are recruited to remove the drugs from the boat, will transfer it from one mode of transportation to another or to a safe location for storage (Decker and Chapman 2008, 90-91). Some successful investigations by anti-narcotics agency of Europol indicates that cocaine shipments were trafficked onward by sea with diverse transportation vehicles such as fishing boats and speed boats to ship across the Mediterranean (UNODC 2007a, Lacher 2012). Air and sea – modes are preferred here because land and refuelling stops via Sahara routes are
limited and terrain is extremely harsh. Passing through politically unstable areas, the realm of violent extremists, insurgents, and bandits, that presents risk to traffickers and transporting by across multiple borders means traffickers will be faced with multiple border controls which they have to negotiate their way around (UNODC 2013d, 14).

Out of the way, landing strips and marine landings are used to deliver narcotics from South America, involving the Puget Sound, the Strait of Georgia, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca, into the U.S. where shipments are held pending instructions about final destination (Decker and Chapman 2008, 47-8, Office of National Drug Control Policy 2014, 7). Obviously, these methods are used to avoid detection. These include 1) blending in with normal traffic by arriving and departing with other similar boats, 2) having good navigational equipment, 3) using commercial routes, 4) remaining close to land and other islands, and 5) being on the water during holidays, regattas, and weekends (Decker and Chapman 2008, 71). Again, between Vietnam and Lao PDR, there are no sea routes and thus, there was no evidence to describe this method of transport in the study. It could be interesting to explore sea-routes used to more drugs between Cambodia and Vietnam and China and Vietnam but this is beyond the scope of this thesis. One can surmise however that maritime trafficking into Vietnam is substantial.

With respect to transportation on the land, third, there is variable modus operandi applied into delivering illicit drugs from supplied sources to demanded countries. Based on joint investigation operation and technical activities, LEAs in European nations identified that traffickers used to all of transportation vehicle routes with various types, either personal vehicles (e.g. commercial trucks) or public transportation (e.g. trains, buses), to transport cocaine from Afghanistan into Italy, France, Belgium, and France markets via the Iberian Peninsula on the land routes, (EMCDDA and Europol 2015, 2014). In this study, almost of case studies (CS1, CS2, CS3, and CS6), traffickers used commercial trucks and heavy
transportation vans to deliver the drugs from Laos to Vietnam. Normally, these shipments were deployed after disguising of illicit drugs (e.g. recyclable iron in the case CS1; clothing and car’s equipment in the case CS2; and wood’s materials in the case CS3) or concealing into secret compartments of the transportation vehicle (e.g. extra-fuel containers of a Toyota Hilux car in the case CS6). However, no evidence can prove that the trafficker used “public transportation” such as trains, tram, or buses on the Vietnam-Laos trafficking routes. Perhaps, lacking of trans-connecting roads and poor railway infrastructure’s system between Vietnam-Laos are considered as main reason trafficker did not select this route to ship the drugs. To contrast, with modern infrastructure’s system in Europe with multimodal transportation network, TransNT groups used these means to transport heroin and cocaine from Afghanistan to South-Eastern European countries (UNODC 2014c). Analysing case studies of Turkish and ethnic Albanians (whether from Albania, Kosovo or other neighboured Balkan states) for heroin distribution and Colombian immigrants for cocaine market, Paoli and Reuter (2008, 27) pointed out that traffickers took advantages of road infrastructure to smuggle these drugs into Western European countries, where ‘they have better knowledge of potential sellers and corruption opportunities’.

Apart from using transportation vehicles to deliver the drugs by road, traffickers in other parts of the world use secret tunnels to bring drugs across border. As one of the unique techniques and sophisticated operations to transport illegal drugs, border zones between Mexico and the U.S. have become a target to traffickers, excavating tunnels for bridging two sides with ‘advanced rails, electrical, and ventilation systems’ (National Drug Intelligence Center 2011, 15). As of the last months in 2015, at least, there were more than 180 tunnels that have been dug and completed to serve the process of illicit drugs transportation from
Mexico to the U.S. since the first cases were discovered in 17th May 1990. Although having quite similar terrains with the Mexico-and-the U.S. borderland, there was no case and evidence reflect this modus operandi across Vietnam’s border with Lao PDR because as yet there is no need. The U.S.-Mexico border is extensively patrolled and monitored. For Vietnam road transport and foot transport are still effective and preferred for traffickers.

- The forms of communication

Beyond recognizing that TransNT communications are idiosyncratic. This is not just because the evidence is difficult to collect and analyse (Williams 1994, Dorn, Oette, and White 1998, Williams 1998). Explaining the Codes of the Underworld, Gambetta (2009, ix) argued that ‘the storytellers of the underworld collect tales of crime and marvel at the variety of rituals, styles, and languages that criminal use, but seldom go beyond descriptive accounts; criminologists focus on deviant actions, but they rarely seem to appreciate in full the information that actions themselves can convey in the underworld’. With respect to communicating during the process of exchange, offenders use a variety of communication forms to convey crucial and incriminating information (Basu 2014c, b). The means are varied but known, including cell phones, face to face, Internet, and through intermediaries (May et al. 2005, Kenney 2007a, b, Zaitch 2002a, Grabosky 2007, Coles 2001, Lavorgna 2013). These are worth looking into is some greater detail.

Communications between Mexican-based TransNT entities and their associates in the U.S. have been recognized as highly sophisticated, with advanced equipment and techniques (Morris 2013, Beittel 2015, Lee and Wilson 2013). LEAs of the U.S. indicated that several Mexican DTOs maintain cross-border communication centres in Mexico near the U.S.-Mexico border to facilitate coordinated smuggling operations (Basu 2014a, 2013, Etter 2011).

In particular, National Drug Intelligence Center (2008) observed that these centres are steered by DTO members who use a variety of communication methods, including Voice over Internet Protocol, satellite technology (i.e. broadband satellite instant messaging), encrypted messaging, cell phone technology, two-way radios, scanner devices, and text messaging, to communicate with members. Further, in some cases DTO members use high-frequency radios with encryption and rolling codes or use codification systems via blackberry messenger (or BBM) to communicate during cross-border operations (Bunker 2013). For example, in the case of Carlos Parra-Pedroza, also known as ‘Walt Disney’ or ‘Don Walt”\', they used an innovative ‘encryption’ system of their own devising shipment quantities and prices (cited at Para 539, United States District Court 2015, 292-3). A summary of coded terms is listed below (table 15)

**Table 15: Summarized a list of coded information in the case of Carlos Parra-Pedroza**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code (Numerical)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Code (Colour)</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Code (Text)</th>
<th>Conversation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td><em>Let’s go to the beach</em></td>
<td>Make an appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td><em>It’s warm</em></td>
<td>Appointment was made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td><em>The beer are cold</em></td>
<td>I am on my way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td><em>I’m with my wife</em></td>
<td>I am on my way back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td><em>I have diarrhoea</em></td>
<td>I am verifying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td><em>Ticket is complete</em></td>
<td>Mercedes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td><em>Let’s go to the movie theatre</em></td>
<td>They are following me and I have money with me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, in this study, traffickers used slang or signs to communicate in the process of trading drugs via mobile phone. This method is preferred to share trafficker’s conversation
about quantity and prices of drugs, with nearly 90% out of 121 CIPDRC officers asked the question of the most frequent measures used to communicate between traffickers in TransNT case (N=96 respondents) (Morselli 2009, Decker and Chapman 2008). “Our surveillance (i.e. phone-tap) revealed use of coded language such as rice for heroin and rice-bags for blocks of heroin” (Interview #5). Meanwhile, not all situations, using face-to-face meeting through a broker intermediate are considered as the compulsory factor in TransNT activities in the Vietnamese context. Brokers play an important role to provide critical linkages between drug suppliers and buyers, and arrange transactions between them when necessary (Kenney 2007a, Desroches 2007, Morselli 2001, Morselli, Giguère, and Petit 2007, Natarajan 2006). In Colombian DTOs, brokers are located at the U.S. to act as go-betweens, brokering for goods, services, personnel, or laundering the money (Kenney 2007b, c, Decker and Chapman 2008); meanwhile, brokers could be located in both Vietnam and Lao PDR areas.

The use of codes limits the range of people who can be party to communication to those most trusted. This can be advantageous but it also has costs. As Morselli argues traffickers want to protect their information and operations “by remaining as discreet as possible or by inventing private codes to conceal the content of their conversations, it remains that such attempts to conceal also hinder communication between the network participants themselves” (p.42). In this thesis, using mobile phone was supported with around 20% out of 121 CIPDRC officers, the second ranking among of three main communication methods in this study (N=25 respondents). Meanwhile, some of interviewees believe that online ordering (especially with ATS’s types) is becoming significant metropolitan centres, especially in among a younger generation (Interview #1, 4, 6). For the case studies examined in this thesis, there was no evidence to support for communicating via the Internet between traffickers.  

80 At the current time, according to the recent annual report of CIPDRC Headquarter, Ministry of Public Security, some suspects used nickname, account and website on the Internet to seduce “potential victim”, particularly with youth group in Vietnam’s cities, for trading ATS via online (MPS 2016).
Lavorgna (2013, 131-2) cautioned in her thesis that transit crimes in the Internet age, including drug trafficking, will be increasingly become facilitated by online communications, as demonstrated by Silk Road,\textsuperscript{81} a now defunct virtual platform which once boasted a global reach used to trade cannabis products, opiates, and ATS. The Silk Road was an example of a new age of ‘networked’ trafficking.

6.3. Initial recommendations and prioritized issues for enhancing cooperation to combat transnational narcotics trafficking

Transnational narcotics trafficking (TransNT) is considered one of the main threats to the security of people, in that it can have repressions for social, economic, political and cultural development. TransNT itself is by nature a global danger, posing a threat, not only to individual countries, but also to regional communities of states (Reuter 2014, Jenner 2014, Mandel 2011). The regional challenge of TransNT cannot be addressed effectively without close cross-border cooperation between the police and other elements of the criminal justice system, such as border and customs agencies, prosecutors and judges. As Ethan Nadelmann (1997, 4) emphasized, the principal objective of most criminal law enforcement efforts is to ‘immobilize’ criminals. Immobilization involves identifying individuals who engage in criminal activity, finding and arresting them, gathering the evidence necessary to indict and convict them, and finally imprisoning them; it also can, and increasingly does, include the identification, seizure, and forfeiture of the criminal’s assets (Nadelmann 1997, Andreas and Nadelmann 2006). However, ‘a weak law enforcement and judicial system cannot play a role of any significance in this form of cooperation, for the simple reason that it has neither the capacity nor the competencies to do so’ (Fijnaut 2012, 6). To some extent, thus, trans-governmental enforcement networks, particularly with countries sharing their borderlands together, need more expansive and intensive cooperation than ever before, ‘encouraging and

\textsuperscript{81} On October 2, 2013, the Silk Road was shut down by the FBI and its 29 years-old administrator arrested.
facilitating a thickening of cross-border policing relationships’ (Andreas and Nadelmann 2006, 232).

Based on filtering barriers and challenges for LEAs to combat TransNT at the previous section and combining with some best practices and experiences from different references, the below tentative recommendations are proposed. There is no expectation that all suggestions can be implemented immediately to improve effectiveness of counter TransNT. However, the recommendations are practical and should the Vietnamese and Laotian governments adopt them then, they could improve cross-border cooperation.

**Recommendation 1: Improving technological controls at border checkpoints**

Across the porous borderland between Laos and Vietnam, LEAs face many obstacles in conducting operation that can be eased by better infrastructure and equipment. Thus, investments in communication and surveillance technologies at the borders – as well as training on how to use such devices – are essential to scale-up the response to TransNT.

*Priority 1: Focusing on training and developing human resources at BLOs*

Upgrade the human and physical capacity of frontline officers such as police, customs, border guard, and immigration to understand, interdict and act upon the illegal movements of goods and people across borderland areas. These LEAs must be educated and completed basic courses and degree in terms of preventing and combating drug trafficking at police institutions. Upgrading the BLOs through the procurement of adequate premises, basic IT and communication equipment including Internet connection. Based on survey and assessment of UNODC Country (both Laos and Vietnam), the revitalization of progress of the BLO mechanism to promote a multi-agency response to border crimes that should be applied and implemented in the next time.
**Priority 2: Providing modern equipment, technical applications and the appropriate training and skills to use them**

Although the government of Vietnam and Laos have considered the important role to strengthen supply technological materials for combating TransNT, improving these supplements need to continue as specific as possible (UNODC 2014d). The exact requirements for both anti-narcotic enforcement polices sides can be determined for each location through detailed research into equipment and training needs. From this research project alone it can be surmised that there is an urgent need for scanners and portable forensic laboratories. Tracking and surveillance devices as well as scanning and search machines can improve the capacity to gather strategic information related to persons of interest and suspicious vehicles in relatively short time. In some cross-border locations, equipment must be mobile so that authorities can utilize it on their patrols. Mobile detection units as well as investigation kits are useful for localized enforcement efforts, and these should be prioritized and investments made in necessary equipment, such as smart-phones, recording camera models, transportation vehicles, and IT equipment, which must be installed and support capabilities ensured. Further, this can be achieved with specialized training and with budgetary allocations for the functioning of equipment through the Foundation of Anti-
Narcotics National Program\textsuperscript{82} and supports of international organizations such as UNODC\textsuperscript{83} and ASEANPOL\textsuperscript{84}.

\textit{Priority 3: Encouraging use of e-passport at checking points}

When Laos approves the ASEAN Single Window Customs System (ASW),\textsuperscript{85} all movement of goods and people into Vietnam will be trackable and immigration and customs processes made more efficient. Combined with the cross-border transport agreement (CBTA), the Laobao-Dansavanh international border gate will boost the speed and reduce administrative hurdles for ASEAN citizens, moving around the region. As previous analysis in terms of modus operandi to transport drugs from Laos to Vietnam, traffickers can be expected to try to gain extra advantage from these developments. Therefore, both Vietnam and Laos should research and utilize the e-Passports for their citizen as soon as possible. E-passports (or known as biometric passports) are machine-readable travel documents (MRTDs) with an embedded secure element based on specifications defined by the International Civil

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\textsuperscript{82} According to the National Strategy for Drug Prevention, Combat and Control in Vietnam through 2020 and orientations to 2030, Vietnam’s government will prioritize State budget for drug prevention, combat and control through the National Target Program on drug prevention and control; consolidate management, supervision and use of resources funded for drug prevention, combat and control; and also decentralize the management of budget for the work to ministries, agencies and People’s Committees of provinces and central-governed cities (Hai 2017)

\textsuperscript{83} According to UNODC’s Regional Program in the Southeast Asia in the period of 2013-1017, UNODC will work with regional and national level partners, particularly with Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam, to help them more effectively identify and counter drug and precursor trafficking within, into and from the Greater Mekong Sub-Region through the variety of sub-program, including training to LEAs and provide modern technology (see more detail at (UNODC 2014d, 31-32)

\textsuperscript{84} Since established in 1981, ASEANPOL and its Secretariat declared one of the main objectives and functions are facilitate and coordinate joint operations and activities involving criminal investigations, the building and maintenance of the ASEANPOL database, training, capacity building, the development of scientific investigative tools, technical support and forensic science (Bakhyt, Kanat, and Aiman 2014, Bukit 2016) (see more detail at http://www.aseanapol.org/about-aseanapol/objectives-and-functions)

\textsuperscript{85} According to Agreement to Establish and Implement the ASEAN Single Window (ASW), which signed at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 9 December 2005 by ten ASEAN’s members, the ASEAN Single Window is the environment where National Single Windows of Member Countries operate and integrate. Accordingly, this Agreement (cited section 1, article 1 in ASEAN, ASEAN 2005) identified clearly that the National Single Window is a system which enables:

\begin{quote}
"- a single submission of data and information;
- a single and synchronous processing of data and information; and
- a single decision-making for customs release and clearance. A single decision-making shall be uniformly interpreted as a single point of decision for the release of cargoes by the Customs on the basis of decisions, if required, taken by line ministries and agencies and communicated in a timely manner to the Customs."
\end{quote}
Aviation Organization (ICAO). It incorporates a contactless microprocessor chip, on which information about the passport holder is stored, including his/her biographic data (e.g. name, date and country of birth, medical information) and the facial image of the passport holder.

**Recommendation 2: Establish mechanisms to improve data collection and sharing**

As mentioned at the previous section, to ensure the flows of information are more effective between LEAs, Vietnamese and Laotian governments should build a mechanism to collect and share data on cross-border movements.

**Priority 4: Establishing an intelligence database between two countries**

It will contribute to improve cooperation for LEAs to collect and analyse communication procedures. To do this, governments should invest in upgrading the current state of infrastructure at border crossings, where officials say that they lack basic IT and even an Internet connection. To be able to provide comprehensive information on TransNT activity, this intelligence database would also need to be regional, seeing as many illegal cross-border flows involve more than two countries and both Vietnam and Laos’s government could pioneer such an approach. It would assist drug enforcement officers to access such a database quickly and easily. For such a database to be effective however, LEA’s officials with weak IT skills and insufficient knowledge, would need to be trained quickly using Computer-Based Training courses (Broussard and Teetzen 2013).

In particular, to ensure this intelligence database’s content keeps up with the needs of each LEA’s country, there are some useful recommendations for improving information sharing from the UNODC Regional Programme for East Asia and the Pacific. There are summarised below,

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86 Biometric passports are new generation of MRTDs with an embedded secure element as well. Chip embedded into biometric passports store not only demographic information of the passport holder, but also his biometric data. Biometrics may include fingerprints, iris pattern and other biometric data (optional).
Group 1: Recommendations for improvement of seizure information, including:

- Sharing seizure information through an electronic database;
- Sharing forensic information and precursor seizure information;
- Developing a system to report on the scale of clandestine lab seizures;
- Establishing a “learning centre” for training and observation of precursor tracking and monitoring; and
- Providing training on the management and coordination of the activities of the chemical industry (UNODC Regional Programme for East Asia and the Pacific 2008, 67)

Group 2: Recommendations for the improvement of information sharing on drug trafficking patterns, including:

- Developing capacity to record geographical information on seizures (with some operational limitations), including border seizure information;
- Systematically sharing border seizure information via expanded mechanisms;
- Making more extensive use of a regional alert system for shifting trafficking patterns and methods as well as drug types (UNODC Regional Programme for East Asia and the Pacific 2008, 67-68)

Once these recommendations to be adopted, it would open police cooperation across ASEAN. Additionally, if such a centre comes into being, it will complement the current Global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting, and Trends Programme for Southeast Asia and the Pacific (SMART), which only focuses on synthetic drugs.87

Regarding operational mechanism, this centre should combine information between agencies responsibilities for drug-related crimes. One model of shared data collection and analysis is the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and

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87 “As a response to the synthetic drug problem, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has launched the Global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends (SMART) Programme since 2008 at the Southeast Asian region. The programme enhances the capacity of targeted Member States in priority regions by providing technical support to laboratory personnel, law enforcement and research officers, to generate and use synthetic drug information for effective policy design and programme interventions” (see more detail at https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/scientists/smart-new.html and http://www.apaic.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&layout=edit&id=449)
Europol. 88 These agencies joined forces to gather intelligence from which to provide European governments with detailed evidence on the state of drug crime in Europe. Information and analysis are key concerns of both organizations. A similar centre for ASEAN would be possible building upon the ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD) in cooperation with ASEANPOL, which plays a significant role in data collection and analysis of drug markets and TransNT modus operandi in Southeast Asia.

Priority 5: Information and data sharing at BLOs

Although establishing an operational data capture system has been proposed at the annual meeting’s of ASEAN member drug enforcement agencies since 2008, it nothing has been resolved at the time of writing (UNODC Regional Programme for East Asia and the Pacific 2008). In light of the issues and cases discussed in this thesis, one aspect of regional cooperation that required special effort is cooperation between BLOs. Information sharing between BLOs should be shared on a regional scale so as to track movements of traffickers across the region. To ensure the speed of information, this data capture system should be built around an Internet-based platform and combined with an e-mail distribution Alert option for sharing of timely information. These proposals seem obvious and straightforward, but for reasons discussed, resourcing of such measures starts from a base.

88 “The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) was established in 1993. Inaugurated in Lisbon in 1995, it is one of the EU’s decentralized agencies. The EMCDDA exists to provide the EU and its Member States with a factual overview of European drug problems and a solid evidence base to support the drugs debate. Today it offers policymakers the data they need for drawing up informed drug laws and strategies. It also helps professionals and practitioners working in the field pinpoint best practice and new areas of research. Meanwhile, Europol was also established in 1993, comprising the European Union’s law enforcement agency with main goal that is to help achieve a safer Europe for the benefit of all EU citizens. Europol is a high-security operational centre and uses its unique information capabilities and the expertise of its staff to identify and track the most dangerous criminal and terrorist networks in Europe. Law enforcement authorities in the EU rely on this intelligence work and the services of Europol’s operational coordination centre and secure information network, to carry out over 18,000 cross border investigations each year. Europol personnel come from different kinds of law enforcement agencies, including regular police, border police, customs and security services. This multi-agency approach helps to close information gaps and minimise the space in which criminals can operate. Although Europol officers have no direct powers of arrest, they support EU law enforcement colleagues by gathering, analysing, disseminating information, and coordinating operations.”

Although each BLO is equipped to run Computer-based Training (CBT) Programmes, applications have to be upgraded and, as said, training provided to stay ahead of TransNT network (UNODC 2013a). Thus, reviewing the evaluation mechanism of Computer-Based Training, including an assessment of its impact on operational performance, should be implemented so as to design a ‘new model’. In addition, both domestic and cross-border counterpart’ BLOs should be organized to share information. One survey by UNODC pointed out that BLOs in Vietnam and Laos do not conduct and maintain regular meetings to exchange cross-border crime’s trends and operations (UNODC 2010b, Broussard and Teetzen 2013). Therefore, a boost in the frequency of meetings and joint operations between border LEAs is also necessary for sharing information collected by agencies such as CIPDRC, Border Guard, Customs, Immigration, and even from drug informants.  

Recommendation 3: Link border liaison offices to intelligence centres and other specialized units

As Southeast Asian region becomes more dynamic and when the ASEAN Community is established, there will be intensified challenges posed by the free of movement of people and goods cross borders. Both national and regional assessments recognized that TransNT would continue to threaten social order of member states. Border control and anticipating flows of drug should therefore be of the utmost priority.

Priority 6: Joint investigation between LEAs and BLOs

Border checkpoints are often a significant source of information in respect of illicit drugs’ flows (Passas 2002, van Duyne 2002, Hufnagel 2011). Yet, border officers in Vietnam

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89 Lee (2003, 63) states that drug informants are arguably the most difficult among all informants to control and manage. However, the chances of successfully managing them are increased significantly when drug agents know what motivates them to provide information to the police. These individuals often have questionable motives for offering their services to law enforcement. When drug agents do not tightly control their informants, safety problems arise, placing department resources and personnel at risk. Each time an informant offers information; drug agents should question his motives and discontinue using him if he is not willing to accept his handler’s specific direction.
and Laos are not trained for intelligence collection and analysis. Cooperation is also hampered by the different education levels between officials in Laos and Vietnam (between police, customs, border guard, and immigration) (UNODC 2013a). BLOs could play a central role to collate information and supply it to specially trained intelligence unit of LEAs up to national level, focused on the CIPDRC. At the same time, BLOs could disseminate intelligence coming from specialized units through intelligence sharing models. This process and model could follow the Joint Investigation Teams (JITs) model in Europe. Of course, to do this, both sides require to sign and ratify a agreement on extradition;90 and further, there should be more detail in regulations an mutual legal assistance provisions and methods.91

In Europe, the JITs have been established for a fixed period and for a specific purpose, based on mutual agreement between two or more European member states. A JIT comprises of a team of national experts, including LEA officers, prosecutors and judges and other relevant personnel, who can provide rapid technical and operational assistance to member states on a bilateral or multilateral basis (Klother 2014, Mesko and Furman 2014, Block 2010). Although in existence on paper only since 2002 and with a few success stories of cooperative investigation, this model is widely recognized and applauded in the counter narcotics field. One of the distinguishing characteristics of this model is that teams are limited to representatives from two countries. This bilateral emphasis means less bureaucracy and hence less bureaucratic complication (Brady 2008, 107). Therefore, to achieve the effectiveness of this model to combat TransNT, LEAs and BLOs of both Laos and Vietnam should be brought together to discuss how similar operations might be conducted for those border areas covered in this thesis.

90 To date, Lao PDR singed extradition’s agreement with Cambodia, Thailand, and China as a separated document; however, they still maintain this issue with Vietnam as one of the activities in mutual legal assistance in criminal matters.
91 This initiative idea will be replaces for “old agreement” on mutual legal assistance of two nations, which combined between civil and criminal matters in one legal document since 1998.
JIT operations, if they were to be implemented along the Vietnam-Lao PDR border should be monitored and reviewed by policy-makers, scholars, and practitioners in formal meetings. If approved, these meetings should be organized as regular as possible at ASEANPOL’s workshops or ASEAN Senior Officials on Drugs Matter’s conferences (ASOD). Another priority is online information sharing, using ASEANPOL’s website.92

Priority 7: Constructing an online website refers to combat TransNT

The idea of a website dedicated to TransNT research and intelligence sharing between scholars and LEA practitioners in the Southeast Asian region derive from the ‘InSightCrime’ website, which is maintained by a foundation dedicated to the study of organized crime in Latin America and the Caribbean.93 The website 1) provides news updates and analysis on all aspects of organized crime in the region; 2) provides public workshops with guidance for journalists, academics and non-governmental organizations on how to cover this important issue and protect themselves, their sources and their research; and 3) provides information support through publication in multiple languages. Were such a service to be available in ASEAN, a region-wide network of investigators looking at organized crime would mobilise to provide support to governments.

Priority 8: Establishing new BLOs at the rest of international border gates of two sides

At the current time, Vietnam has established eight BLOs and Laos18 BLOs (UNODC 2013a, 2014b). However, while there are eight international border gates and six state border gates and several local gates along the Vietnam-Laos border, there are only three BLOs in

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92 As one of the most important pillars in combating transnational crime, ASEANAPOL has identified to maintain a coordination and communication mechanism so as to allow members to establish all channels of interaction amongst members since established in 1981 (Bakhyt, Kanat, and Aiman 2014, Bukit 2016). However, in fact, there is very limited to cooperate as JIT’s form against transnational crime among of memberships as well as lacking of information detail reflects on their cooperative activities to prevent drug trafficking on ASEANPOL’s website, except for their annual conferences or diplomatic activities, see more detail at http://www.aseanapol.org/about-aseanapol/objectives-and-functions

93 See more detail at http://www.insightcrime.org/about-us
operation on either side. At least five international border gate locations urgently require BLOs, funded by international donors through the United Nations or bilateral aid partners.

**Recommendation 4: Improving anti-narcotics trafficking skills in a coherent and sustainable way around the region**

Specialist counter-narcotics training needs to be established on a regional scale, particularly with any states share borders, such as Vietnam and Laos, to create a coherent system of law enforcement cooperation. Only where LEAs in all countries share techniques and achieve a degree of common understanding and approaches can effort to counter TransNT be more effective.

**Priority 9: Enhancing education and training for LEA officers**

Border agencies in all countries of the region are currently lacking in skills and strategies, to address TransNT. While there is wide variation between countries, capacities even for well-understood crime problems in countries with higher training levels are inadequate. To help solve this problem, countries need to significantly improve their training processes. Candidates must go through a comprehensive basic training before they are sent to the border (UNODC 2013a, Broussard and Teetzen 2013). This training should be organized at the national level, to ensure comparable skill sets across all border sections. To ensure comprehensiveness and a similar quality of training, a standard curriculum needs to be devised. In establishing the curriculum and training processes, both Vietnam and Lao PDR should consult and build on the expertise of existing international organizations working in the area.

At the current time, within the scope of bilateral cooperation between Vietnam and Laos context, Vietnamese LEAs side should continue to assist Laotian counterparts with education and training. It should distribute at both headquartered level via police’s institutions with all
degrees (undergraduate and postgraduate)\(^4\) and provincial level via training short courses of provincial police (certification and recognition)\(^5\). However, looking forward to an ASEAN Community, one idea to establish ASEAN Police College that should be implemented as a regional initiative, to train and educate LEAs of all 10 states, particularly police forces, to enhance professional skills and knowledge in combating TransNT and TOC in general. In the interim training should be encouraged and organized by INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation (IGCI) in Singapore with the support of INTERPOL and ASEANPOL to identify and address emerging crime threats, including TransNT.\(^6\) If so, each ASEANPOL members need to select their representative senior staffs to involve this course to exchange information and share experience to combat drug trafficking.

**Priority 10: Boosting a building ASEAN Centre on Transnational Crime and forwarding an establishing ASEAN Police College.**

An ASEAN Centre on Transnational Crime, mentioned in the ASEAN Declaration on Transnational Crime (1997) should also be established. Such a Centre would also play important role to coordinate regional efforts against transnational crime through intelligence

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\(^4\) During in recent two decades, the People’s Police Academy of Vietnam (PPA) has assisted to educate hundreds of Laotian police’s cohort with many fields, including anti-narcotic trafficking. At the current time, under memorandum of understanding of two sides, the PPA will be continued to support their counterpart, PPA of Laos to exchange experiences in lecturer’s training and recruitment, work of drafting textbook, lesson plans and designing the curriculum; experiences in training some specialties that Laos’s PPA is not available, such as investigation on economic crimes, environment crimes, hi-tech crimes and so forth (see more detail at [http://www.hvcsnd.edu.vn/en/Acedemy/International-Cooperation/167/4151/Highranking-delegation-of-Laos-Peoples-Police-Academy-visits-and-works-at-Peoples-Police-Academy-of-Vietnam.aspx](http://www.hvcsnd.edu.vn/en/Acedemy/International-Cooperation/167/4151/Highranking-delegation-of-Laos-Peoples-Police-Academy-visits-and-works-at-Peoples-Police-Academy-of-Vietnam.aspx)).

\(^5\) Implementing on MoU of 8 provinces shared borderland between Vietnam and Laos, including Sonla, Dienbien, Thanhho, and Nghean (Vietnam) and Huaphan, Luonghabrang, Phongsaly, and Xiengkhoang (Lao PDR), which have adopted the first time since 2000, these Vietnam’s CIPDRC Department shared and exchanged several short-courses to their partners, particularly with experiences and tactics to combat drug trafficking (Cong an Nghe An 2013).

\(^6\) The INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation (IGCI) is a cutting-edge research and development facility for the identification of crimes and criminals, innovative training, operational support and partnerships. Located in Singapore, the IGCI complements our General Secretariat in Lyon, France, and enhances the Organization’s presence in Asia. It is housed in a state-of-the art building conforming to the highest environmental standards. This operational and investigative support to solve Asian Organized Crime was recognized as one of the initiative priorities of INTERPOL when they established new branch at Singapore since September 2014 (INTERPOL 2014). (See more detail at [http://www.interpol.int/About-INTERPOL/The-INTERPOL-Global-Complex-for-Innovation](http://www.interpol.int/About-INTERPOL/The-INTERPOL-Global-Complex-for-Innovation))
sharing, harmonization of policies and coordination of operations. Further, the model of European Police College, 97 which contributes to European police cooperation through learning, ASEANPOL could be applied through with the support of ASEAN governments in the form of an ASEAN Police College. This College would focus on establishing a universal training curriculum for all law enforcement officers (police, customs, border guard, and immigration) that deal with trafficking across the region. This curriculum should take into consideration localized needs and provide a basis of minimum standards for law enforcement performance (UNODC Regional Programme for East Asia and the Pacific 2008). Furthermore, these recommendations could be facilitated and implemented via Computer-based Training (CBT) programmes. As the premier training methodology of the region, CBT should be used as platform to build up the capacity of the regional law enforcement community. As a mobile technology, the existing training centres of non-ASEAN bilateral partners serve as venues for the coordination of training. This already takes place but in view of the recommendation to take training on location and to the officers who needed it, CBT should serve as the platform for delivery.

**Recommendation 5: Promote standard operating procedures for bilateral cooperation at the border for drug control**

As said, assessments by UNODC experts and national reports argue that border officers and other LEAs of both Vietnam and Lao PDR have lack training, equipment, and infrastructure (AIPA 2014b, a, Broussard and Teetzen 2013). Furthermore, they often limit empowerment to communicate promptly and effectively with their counterparts across the

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97 CEPOL was established by Council Decision 2000/820/JHA in 2000, which was modified in 2005 by Council Decision 2005/681/JHA. It was originally seated at Bramshill House in Bramshill, Hampshire, England, but was relocated to Budapest, Hungary in 2014 following a European Council decision the previous year. CEPOL is an agency of the European Union dedicated to develop, implement and coordinate training for law enforcement officials with main task to brings together a network of training institutes for law enforcement officials in EU Member States and supports them in providing frontline training on security priorities, law enforcement cooperation and information exchange. Since 1st July 2016, the date of its new legal mandate, CEPOL’s official name is “The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training” (CEPOL 2016, Jaschke et al. 2007). See more detail at https://www.cepol.europa.eu/who-we-are/european-police-college/about-us
border, particularly with complex cross-border operations to fight TransNT group, such as ‘controlled delivery’ which needs high-level department approval (UNODC 2013a).

**Priority 11: Utilizing controlled delivery technique to investigate TransNT case**

One Resolution of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (2002) recognized controlled delivery as an valuable technique to investigate TransNT case, because it can greatly assist with identifying the principals, modus operandi, organizational structure and distribution network of drug trafficking groups. The techniques was stated in the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Trafficking in Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substance (Article 11) with the purposes of supporting LEAs to control and surveillance a consignment of illicit drugs, which is detected and allowed to go forward other State’s border (Cutting 1983, Lee 2003). Therefore, the Commission on Narcotics Drugs called upon Governments, particularly with the 1988 Convention’s members that have not yet done so to review their legislation, procedures and practices with a view to allowing the use of the technique of controlled delivery. Both Vietnam and Laos signed and ratified this Convention, therefore, they should be also be able to use to combat drug trafficking through police cooperation at the border. If approved, combined with the Joint Investigation Teams proposal (see priority 7), a coordinated and multi-level approach to TransNT could be developed using “internal

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98 As an investigative tool, the 1988 UN Convention defines “controlled delivery means the techniques of allowing illicit or suspect consignments of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, substances in Table I and Table II annexed to this Convention, or substances substituted for them, to pass out of, through or into the territory of one or more countries, with the knowledge and under the supervision of their competent authorities, with a view to identifying persons involved in the commission of offences established in accordance with article 3, paragraph 1 of the Convention” (quoted in article 11, UN 1998).

99 Although this technique do not regulate in the Criminal Procedure Code 2015 and Law on Organizing Investigation of Criminal Offense 2015, it enables to apply at the international cooperation’s situation under the Law on Prevention and Combat Drugs. Article 51 of this Law regulated that “the Vietnamese State cooperates with others in respect of requests for controlled delivery in conformity with the provisions of the international treaties that Vietnam has ratified or acceded to for the purpose of identifying and prosecuting persons involved in the commission of drug-related crimes. The use of this technique must conform to agreements made between the Vietnamese competent authorities and authorities of the concerned States”. Based on this provision, article 4(2) of the International Drug Control Cooperation Decree 2003 of Vietnam’s Government generally empowers national authorities, within the scope of their responsibilities and functions, to reach agreements with corresponding authorities of other states on using this technique with a view to identifying and prosecuting persons in relation to drug trafficking offences. Whereas, Laos adopted their Law on Narcotics in 2007, however, this technique is still not regulating as one separated provision to combat drug trafficking (Article 29).
controlled delivery”, “external controlled delivery”, or “clean controlled delivery”. According to Cutting (1983, 15), first, if the final destination of the consignment is within the frontiers of the country in which the initial detection occurred, “internal controlled delivery” is possible. Second, if the intended final destination of the consignment is in a country other than that where the initial detection was made, there is potential for an “external controlled delivery”. Third, if the circumstances of the detection and concealment are such that it is possible to remove all or most of the illicit drugs before allowing the consignment to proceed, a “clean controlled delivery” can be used. As a complicated and sensitive in investigating TransNT cases, this techniques is also needed to consider carefully in each circumstance with supported and integrated by both sides (Giurea 2013, Cutting 1983, Hoa 2008).

6.4. Summary of chapter

As a logical step in the Exploratory Model used for this thesis, the first section of this Chapter focused on interpretation of research findings with the mixing qualitative and quantitative data. It provided an overall picture of the nature of TransNT in Vietnam with two main themes, organizational structure and modus operand of criminal groups and networks. In addition, using comparative approaches with different scales and locations, this first section distinguishes the primary characteristics of TransNT in Vietnam. The second section of this Chapter outlined recommendations intended to guide LEAs in addressing major challenges. It states eleven prioritized issues that could improve the effectiveness of cooperative operation to combat TransNT between Vietnam and Lao PDR.
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

7.1. Chapter overview and objectives

This thesis has set out to answer the question, “what are the distinctive characteristics of transnational narcotics trafficking operating across Vietnam’s border with Lao PDR? What specific challenges to Vietnam do they pose and how effectively can they be addressed?” This question was identified because of the apparent rise of transnational organized crime in Mainland Southeast Asia and the surge in drug-related crimes in Vietnam. To answer this question, the research program focussed on organizational structure and modus operandi as key factors by which to distinguish between or categorise together the many different criminal groups operating between Vietnam and Lao PDR. Importantly, this research project has identified major barriers and challenges to national and transnational criminal law enforcement, with significant implications for LEAs, policy-makers, research scholars in Vietnam, and others working to end drug trafficking.

7.2. Contributions of research

Empirical research and analysis of heroin and ATS markets in Vietnam has been lacking, for which reason this thesis makes a fundamental contribution both to policy and law enforcement practice, and to scholarship on TOC. In analysing current trends in drug trafficking offences by Vietnamese and Laotian criminals known to be involved in the Vietnamese drug trade (by virtue of their case histories), we can deduce much about the nature of the transnational narcotics business in Southeast Asia. Information and analysis provided in this thesis identifies capacity limits of LEAs that inhibit effective investigations and the enforcement of zero-tolerance anti-narcotics policy of the Vietnamese state.
Based on primary data through in-depth interview and survey questionnaire with CIPDRC officers, as representatives of LEAs in Vietnam, this thesis is one of the first written from a Vietnam perspective to focus on the organizational structure and modus operandi of TransNT entities operating across the Vietnam-Laos border. In the scope of research, the study has shown that although the structure of TransNT entities in Vietnam is small sized and based on family ties and fellow-countrymen, their operations, with diverse modus operandi from locating drug sources in Laos to transporting and trading in Vietnam are very sophisticated and hence difficult to monitor. Yet, the thesis also presents a unique overview of the Vietnamese criminal justice system and offers an assessment of the capacity of LEAs in Vietnam to combat TransNT, with particular emphasis on the role of the CIPDRC, which is at the forefront of Vietnam’s battle against the illicit drug trade. The number of challenges and barriers to that hinder the efforts of LEAs, in Vietnam and Laos, drug trafficking both sides, but particularly focusing on Vietnam’s approaches, require further research and recommendations in order to improve national and regional cooperation in this issue.

Vietnamese drug trafficking groups have traditionally been associated with the heroin trade and more recently, ATS production. Existing published research addresses internal drug trafficking and law enforcement issues, much of which is done by Vietnamese scholars and available only in Vietnamese. This thesis builds upon important work on drug use and harm in the Highlands of Northern Vietnam by Rapin (2003); reviews of intervention policies and rehabilitation of drug users by (Van and Scannapieco 2008); the assessment of drug control policies (Vuong et al. 2012); legislative implementation by Vietnam of its obligations under the U.N Conventions (Hoa 2008); and suppressing illicit opium production and its intervention policies in Vietnam (Windle 2016, 2012). This thesis contributes to and connects this body of research to recent studies on drug trafficking groups by western scholars which are taking analysis away from an emphasis on hierarchical structure to acknowledge variable
and fluid organizational forms (Bruinsma and Bernasco 2004, Kenney 2007a, c, Williams 2010, Morselli 2009). Most of these studies apply social network analysis using sophisticated software technologies (including Unicet, NetDraw, Pajek, and Mage) which require computerized database and authoritative information from court judgments or law enforcement operations, which are both limited and difficult to access in Vietnam.

7.3. Research findings

Almost all of the warnings made by Williams’ (1998) nearly twenty years ago about the nature of drug trafficking networks, seemingly, are still relevant to the operations of TransNT groups today. Based on initial findings, he emphasized the extent of TransNT and encouraged an increase transnational cooperation between LEA network nodes as a consequence of globalization, arguing that:

“There are many gaps in our understanding of drug-trafficking networks. The pattern of authority and direction in these networks is not always evident, the balance between competing and cooperating networks is not readily discernible, and the nature of information flows through them is often elusive. Nevertheless, it is clear that networks have several characteristics that make it difficult for law enforcement to combat them effectively” (155).

Following Williams, this research project analysed TransNT from a Vietnamese LEA perspective to gain an objective understanding of the nature of criminal networks operating across the Vietnam-Lao PDR border. Key research questions are answered below.

7.3.1. What are the distinguishing characteristics of organizational structure and modus operandi of TransNT in Vietnam?

Traditional research into transnational organized crime has tended to focus on the hierarchical systems of the Italian Mafia, Japan’s Yazuka, Chinese Triad, and Russian Mobs. Recent studies however note that organizational structure and modus operandi of organized crime groups, particularly drug trafficking groups, are not hierarchical in structure with power
centralized in the hands of only one leader. Instead, drug trafficking groups have shifted organizational form towards a fluid, adaptable, and flexible network-style of operation (von Lampe 2005, Morselli 2009, Natarajan 2006, Kenney 2007b, Mackenzie 2002). The current thesis identified the presence of informal hierarchies amongst Vietnamese and Lao groups; however, none of these possessed the necessary characteristics to meet the definition of a standard hierarchy as described under the United Nations’ typologies.\(^{100}\) Alternatively, hierarchies in TransNT entities in Vietnam can exist in various forms such as ‘networks of hierarchies’, ‘hybrid organizational forms with some hierarchical components’ or even ‘networks of networks’ (Williams 2001c, 69). Thus one of the most significant distinguishing characteristics of TransNT in Vietnam is the absence of large organized triad or mafia-style operations.

Within the scope of this study, key findings state that drug offenders across Vietnam’s borderland with Lao PDR operate in small groups, partnerships, or individual. Data indicates the size of groups varies from small, medium, to large. However, the quantity of participants in a group or network does not determine structure and operation. Further, individual and their co-offenders will be often distributed with specific duties and roles in the process of drug transporting from Laos to Vietnam. Perhaps, this point led to number of membership of these TransNT entities that create a flexible organization with diverse modus operandi rather than a large-scale organization with strong vertical command and control structures.

There are two main forms of TransNT entities in Vietnam, loosely organized horizontally and independent model. With the former, traffickers operate largely in connection with group members and with their wider networks when conditions permit.

\(^{100}\) Based on a survey of forty organized crime groups across a number of jurisdictions, the UNODC clarified it into five main models. In which, standard hierarchies, “is the most common form of organized crime group”, as being characterized by a sole leader, a distinct chain of command and clearly defined roles. The top-and-down nature of the hierarchy facilitates strong internal control and discipline over its members through an explicit code of conduct. Yet, violence is predominantly used to maintain the internal and external powerfulness of the organization. Standard hierarchies are generally mono-ethnic or comprised of members with similar personal backgrounds together (UNODC 2002, 34-5).
Based on economic motivation or profit sharing, traffickers in these instances could be connected through brokers or other intermediaries. In this situation, normally, a broker will be contributed as ‘key player’ to connect between groups in order to facilitate the supply of illegal drugs from Laos to Vietnam (Morselli 2009, 15). However, the current data indicates that brokers in Vietnam’s context do not follow ‘a career model’ (Boissevain 1974), meaning that they do not occupy a sole or permanent role. Instead, one person often has multiple-functions/responsibilities such as broker, transporter, dealer, and co-offender with their principal traffickers in the TransNT syndicates. Thus, at least, where brokers are used one can assume ‘resource pooling and coordination’ indicating ‘a higher degree of sophistication or organization’ (Morselli 2009, 16-7, Williams 1998, Coles 2001).

Meanwhile, with the latter, although traffickers may operate largely at different regions across Vietnam’s border with Lao PDR, their connections are links within the scope of their internal groups. They often establish a TransNT network by connecting directly to their partners (Laotian drug lords) without an intermediary. In particular, these traffickers also use their professional background and knowledge about Laos, which help them to more easily exchange and trade with suppliers beyond the border. Yet, such TransNT entities are always created by one independent principal trafficker (Vietnamese), who directs all stages, from sourcing drugs in Laos, to transport into Vietnam, to distribution to retailers in domestic drug markets. To some extent, thus, the evidence suggests that Vietnamese offenders involved in drug trafficking from cross-border Lao PDR in this model of are unlikely to be part of an established hierarchical organizations or extensive criminal networks. These TransNT entities are more likely to operate independently in small networks. Thus while there were same cases involving multi-kilogram drug shipments orchestrated by larger groups with numerous offenders. However, this was a far less common occurrence than offenders operating in small groups or partnerships such as family-based ties and fellow-countrymen associations.
Previous studies indicated that the presence of family-based ties is considered as one of the specific models to illustrate organizational structure of TransNT (Ruggiero and Khan 2007, Curtis 1996, Curtis and Wendel 2000, Natarajan 2000, Vy 2013, Paoli 2004). Accordingly, family-based ties establish from closed relationship between family members who are related by blood, by relatives and by spousal relationship were evident in this research. The nature of ties connecting members of a TransNT network included 1) parent and their children; 2) sibling ties; and 3) marital relationships. One of the common characteristics of these three ties that is the role of family patriarch, elder brother, and masculine gender are more dominant than the rest in each relevant couple. However, in the Vietnam context, the role of leaders or organizers in some cases is filled by female offenders, such as offender CS4-No.2 in the case study CS4, offender CS5-No.1 in the case study CS5, and related actor P.T.T in the case study CS2. Besides that, meanwhile Vy (2013, 325) identifies that as a core unit or ‘hub’, many Vietnamese family-base groups control a peripheral network of dealers and runners in Australia’s importation of illicit drugs, which operate under a hybrid structure i.e. both hierarchical (patriarch, matriarch or core unit) and network elements. In contrast, crossing the borderland between Vietnam and Lao PDR, TransNT operates with supports of kinship ties, particularly to recruit participants to join their activities. Kinship ties often appear as one specific element in a drug supply chain, and these ties help to build sufficient trust to exploiting drug sources in Laos, transport drugs from Laos to Vietnam, and deliver multiple packages to retailers or ‘cut’ pure heroin with cheap additives.

International studies also tend to emphasise ethnicity and nationality as important social bonds between criminals operating transnationally. Most of these studies assert that such offenders, who share ethnicity or nationality in an overseas context are likely to connect through a ‘desire to help fellow-countrymen’ (Kleemans and de Bunt 2003, 103), ‘to survive’ in the drug trade and ‘to cohere’ their relationship (Morris 1998, 1131, 1133), or ‘to store,
transport, and sell untaxed cigarettes without fear of being reported to authorities’ (von Lampe and Johansen 2004, 174). At the domestic level, in contrast, alongside with the family-based relations, the data in this study indicates that fellow citizen/countrymen ties are significant relational ties in TransNT in Vietnam. Beginning with village-based connections between primary offender and their accomplices in TransNT activities, these connections are maintained when people move to other districts or provinces. The data identified two main factors to explain why leader prefer to recruit their fellow-countrymen to join drug trafficking activities. These include 1) to ensure trust for cooperating in co-offending and 2) to establish close-knit community. Depending on the number of members, each of these fellow citizens’ groups will be gathered based on their relevant birthplaces with two specific levels, including districdted and communed domain. Once again, similar to family-based ties, this mode is supposed to create a close-knit community with closed relationships among fellow-countrymen. This is the dominant consideration when recruiting participants to join in drug trafficking activities, as opposed to randomized selection.

One of key findings in term of modus operandi of TransNT entities in this study is extremely diverse background and sophisticated techniques of traffickers to transport and trade illicit drugs. The process of trafficking illicit drugs, including heroin and ATS, from the manufacturer’s warehouses and cultivator’s farms in Lao PDR to drug abusers on the streets of Vietnam, consists of multiple steps. These stages can be set out in four general categories, namely 1) transporting across Vietnam’s borderland with Laos; 2) forwarding to the Northern region (Dienbien and Sonla provinces), the Central Northern Coast region (Thanhhoa, Nghean, Hatinh, Quangbinh, Quangtri, and Thuathienhue), and the Highland Coast region (Quangnam and Kontum) and continuing transhipments to other parts of Vietnam or overseas; 3) delivering these drug productions to major transhipment hubs in Vietnam for further distribution; and 4) diving into mid-level dealers, street vendors, and eventually to users from
wholesalers. The data relating to the process of the transportation of illegal drugs from Laos to Vietnam provides the clearest evidence of a relationship between quantity, method, flexible abilities, and individual roles. Previous studies on drug trafficking groups have not assessed the influence of drug quantity on modus operandi of transporting, which adopted by a group or individual (courier) and in turn, whether a more complicated method requires a different approach to member recruitment with their professional skills and adaptable movements (Natarajan 2006, Ruggiero and Khan 2006, Kenney 2007a). To transport large quantities of drugs (e.g. multiple thousands of packages) that usually required sophisticated modus operandi in the process of concealment and transportation. Yet, it also requires special adaptation skills on the part of traffickers in specific situations, particularly when facing LEA investigations and counter-narcotics activities.

This study points out the structure of TransNT entities operating between Vietnam and Laos is necessarily highly adaptable. These adaptations are often stimulated by LEA strategies deploying, changes in market conditions, and personal attributes for involving drug trafficking activities. Additionally, the success or failure of each shipment in selected case studies also depends on capacities of the leader. Both qualitative and quantitative findings in this thesis proved that through involving directly, either partly or mostly circumstances, the central node contributes a leading position as leader to build specific plans for their group’s operation. Moreover, at some situations, in order to avoid the risk of detection of LEAs, those leaders prefer to limit direct appearances or rare involvement any activities of a network than direct connections to their partners and accomplices. Instead, they selected either distance managing from overseas or proxy their powerfulness via their closed coordinators.

The variety of individual roles in TransNT entities illustrates a quite clear division of labour in drug trafficking operations, which based on individual charismas, experiences, and ages. Particularly, the role of leaders in all cases reflects on their roles and operations to
manage and control the whole of network’s activities, from Laos to Vietnam. The current data shows that no any leaders, either Mr Big or Ms Big, in six-selected case study is less than 40 years old when committing drug-related offences and be arrested by LEAs. Though level of aging is not recorded as the most important factors to reflect on the leader’s role due to lack of evidence specifics, it displays experiences and contributions of those leaders in operating and controlling the whole of drug trafficking activities. As Williams (1998, 157) explained that TransNT networks often operate in ‘a cellular fashion in which information is compartmentalized or shared only on a need-to-know basis.’ Consequently, LEAs often face to difficulties and barriers to identify exactly the whole of relational ties to arrest all those traffickers. Instead, arrests tend to be limited to those on the periphery (i.e. drug couriers or others’ accomplices), who do not yield usable connections to those in the core (i.e. leaders). This lack of criminal intelligence is a specific obstacle preventing LEAs from combatting TransNT activities, particularly with investigating and arresting on the high-level rankers in these networks.

7.3.2. What are barriers and challenges to combat TransNT and how can LEAs improve international cooperation to address it?

Both previous studies and current thesis have already recognized that the transnational criminal of today tends to be active in several nations. Absolutely, they are going to commit a crime at where the opportunities are high and the risks are low. Although LEAs have moved towards the internationalization (e.g. Interpol) and regionalization of their activities (e.g. Europol or ASEANPOL), they still need more specific requirements to respond effectively to TransNT entities that could be led to violate national borders and undermine national sovereignty when conflicts occur. Seemingly, diverse forms of cooperation among LEAs in different countries, including bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral level, have improved, however, this is still limited by traditional concepts of sovereignty that serve to barrier and
constrain national anti-narcotic enforcement bodies, particularly between countries with common borders. Consequently, the limited nature of cooperation merely encourages traffickers emboldened by the knowledge that border controls are not uniformly enforced, and that policing is in many ways lacking in consistency (Williams 2001b, 58-59).

One benefit of combining qualitative and quantitative findings in this exploratory model is that it has been possible to identify main barriers and challenges, and implications of these for law enforcement (see more detail at section 5.4). First, with respect to border control issues, the data shows that drug traffickers took advantage of mountainous terrain, dense forest, and shallow streams to transport illegal drugs from Laos to Vietnam. Distinctive geographical features of this mountainous border zone offer distinct advantages to trafficking, sparse population, steep sided, jungle-clad hills, and dense bushes. Law enforcement officers are unable to come to grips with these challenges because equipment and professional capabilities are inadequate. Although border liaison offices (BLOs) have been continuing to expand to improve regional cooperation to fight TransNT, it is often ‘far less efficient or useful than can be expected from stated goals’ (Chouvy 2013a, 51).

Second, in respect of data sharing, at the national data collection levels of these two nation’s LEAs are different. While, the data collections networks of Lao PDR have been established recently and their sustainability is still not assured; Vietnam is recorded as the least developed country in the region with the principal problem being the inability to make institutional arrangements for centralizing data with its strict access. Furthermore, although both sides have ratified an agreement on mutual legal assistance in civil and criminal matters since 1998, the stages of information sharing were still gaps when cooperating. For example, in regards to the process of requesting legal personal’s information, including suspect’s personal profile and their previous convictions, the current data pointed out that when it is not provide timely, it would lead to barriers for identifying accurately trafficker’s suspects when
they escaped out LEAs of Party’s request, either Vietnam or Laos. Evidently, although bilateral (further, international) anti-narcotic police cooperation is the dynamic through which criminal intelligence is shard across borders, a lack of competence in information sharing could be hinder opportunities to develop strategies and set priorities to identify the resource necessary for conducting multiple operations in combating TransNT between two sides (Lemieux 2010b, Hufnagel 2011, Madsen 2012).

Third, previous research has argued that the effectiveness of combating TransNT requires increased collaboration between LEAs of over two countries (Cockayne 2007, Lemieux 2010a, Madsen 2012). In other words, where drug trafficking crimes are trans-boundary in nature they can only be effectively addressed through regional cooperation and shared responsibility. However, key findings of this study listed a number of obstacles when build cooperative instruments to combat TransNT between two countries, Vietnam and Laos. These include 1) constraining of BLO mechanism, 2) absenting of an effective mutual legal assistance in criminal matters’ channel and extradition issues, and 3) existing gaps in domestic legislation’s system of each part. To restate, these incapacities in building cooperative instruments can impede cooperative policing efforts to combat TransNT across their borders (Madsen 2012, Gray 2012, Hufnagel 2011).

Fourth, geopolitics and responses of each nation to drug control are different, no expect for common community such as the Southeast Asian Association. Accordingly, across the common borderland areas, there are also wide differences in the operational capacity of LEAs between two nations. The current findings demonstrated that unbalancing of technical capacities, disparity of border officer’s knowledge, and dissimilarity of overall operational capacity will lead to uneven of distributions of law enforcement to combat TransNT between two sides. Particularly, challenge of communication capabilities and other necessary tools at developing countries such as both Vietnam and Laos led to limit TransNT’s case
management. Yet, the lack of a common language, where two countries cover multiple languages and variations, limited the ability to communicate effectively between LEAs. Consequently, it is likely to misunderstand information in relation to pursuit warrant wanted traffickers when both units of investigators want to collaborate.

Fifthly, apart from specific values of economic integration and development, increased transportation and trade between shared borderland’s nations will be pushed more pressurized to border control for each country. Under economic perspective, most of economists consider the regional roadmap for connectivity, such as the ASEAN Community 2015 and the Greater Mekong Sub-Region Transport Master Plan, include major upgrades in infrastructure and initiatives that contributes to rapid increases free movement of people and goods across borders. Yet, since the Agreement of Trade between Vietnam and Laos ratified since June 2015, all land borders crossing of two countries are open for bilateral trade with many positive policies for transportation and logistics services, which will promote a freer movement of people and goods at international border gates and state-level border gates between Vietnam and Laos. Particularly across the East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC) at the Laobao – Dansavanh border crossing (Quangtri province), which connects Vietnam and Laos has become as the first case for the cross-border transport agreement (CBTA) that will be faced potential activities of traffickers without timeless and borderless to transport illegal drugs from Laos to Vietnam. Of course, alongside with ‘official highways’ connecting between countries, the data of this study emphasizes that LEAs should not neglected potential threats from ‘unofficial pathways’ passing ‘blurred points’ from Vietnam to Laos of traffickers.

This study further illustrates why countries with common borders benefit from enhanced bilateral (further, international) cooperation, which needs to be made more extensive than ever before (Andreas and Nadelmann 2006, Hufnagel 2011, Lemieux 2010a,
The regional challenge of TransNT cannot be addressed successfully without close bilateral cross-border cooperation between LEAs. Based on the process of filtering barriers, challenges, and its implications for LEAs to combat TransNT and combined with some best practices and experiences from different areas, the current study identified at least five main recommendations to address each relevant challenge (see more detail at section 6.3). Further, among of these recommendations, several strategies are also suggested as major priorities for both governments and LEAs to urgently improve their cooperation. Although it means that not all of these suggestions have to implement immediately to ensure effectiveness of combating TransNT, they could obtain more successful in the reality of cross-border cooperation when two governments refer it as practical preferences. Of course, depending on each weighting of national response, among of these recommendations and priorities should be discussed further specific at their national and regional meetings before implementing.

7.4. Research limitations and future research

Meanwhile this study has made some findings and contributions to the literature, some limitations were also identified. First, this thesis is limited in scope, as it considers just the context of Vietnam and Lao PDR, however facing risks to personal safety, issues with ethics approval, and difficulties to access data it did not analyse TransNT cases. Different to other countries in the mainland Southeast Asian region, both Vietnam and Laos pursue socialist policies with highly centralized decision making processes from central government level to provincial level, with drug control no exception (Windle 2016, 2012). In particular, though this study tried to cover at least one representative of each regional areas of Vietnam’s provinces shared border with Laos (with six provinces), each of them had been applied different policies to combat TransNT based on their distinguished characteristics (e.g. geographical proximities, social and economic conditions). Therefore, possible future
research topics could be extended from this study by collecting and analysing quantitative data of all 10 provinces of each side through survey questionnaire’s process. By doing this, this survey can show on a comprehensive understanding between different CIPDRC perspectives at these provincial levels about the nature of TransNT in Vietnam. However, as Foddy warned, one point must be aware to conduct survey’s questions is ‘the relationship between what respondents say they do and what they actually do is not always very strong… due to respondents often answer questions even when it appears that they know very little about the topic’ (1993, 3, 8). It is one of the concerned issues must be faced and overcome with researchers to ensure the relevant context of questions when they deploy this design in the future.

Second, main aims of the current thesis are to analyse the nature of TransNT across Vietnam’s borders with Laos, but it is only focuses on Vietnam’s side without its counterpart’s sharing. As mentioned at the barriers, challenges, and its implications, many cases Laotian traffickers’ involved TransNT activities, identifying and prosecuting them under the CCV encounter serious obstacles. Despite mutual legal assistance in criminal matters signed as bilateral cooperation, its applications in fighting drug trafficking have still needed more supported from two sides in practice. Yet, criminal recording’s profiles in terms of previous conviction’s offenders, either Vietnamese or Laotian, are limits and poor techniques, which led to barrier in the process of exploring database between LEAs. Thus, one extra-collaboration or joint investigation between both Vietnamese and Laotian scholars to examine and assess the whole of organizational structure and modus operandi of TransNT at this scale that should be the aim of future research in this field. In this regard, there is an urgent need to examine more extensively the capacities of CIPDRC officers and to broaded the scope of inquiry out into other law enforcement agencies, and in particular transnational policing cooperation.
Finally, with respect to research design, this thesis is considered as the preliminary study, and used mixed methods research to apply into the field of TransNT. However, when deploying the Exploratory Model with the interview method in the qualitative phase, the study only applies into CIPDRC officers as one of the representatives of LEAs, which could be limited from other participant’s ideas such as border guard and customs officers. Possible future research could be extended to those participants to enable the sharing of knowledge and perspectives from different LEAs when assessing the nature of TransNT.
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APPENDIXES

Appendix I:

1. Organized Crime Classifications and Typologies

*Figure 1:* The UNODC’s typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Figures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Standard hierarchy/</td>
<td>• Single leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rigid Hierarchy</td>
<td>• Clearly defined hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Strong systems of internal discipline</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Known by a specific name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Often strong social or ethnic identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Violence essential to activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Often have clear influence or control over defined territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regional hierarchy/</td>
<td>• Single leadership structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Devolved hierarchy</td>
<td>• Line of command from centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Degree of autonomy at regional level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Geographic/regional distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Multiple activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Often strong social or ethnic identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Clustered hierarchy/</td>
<td>• Consists of a number of criminal groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hierarchical conglomerates</td>
<td>• Governing arrangement for the groups present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Cluster has stronger identity than constituent groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Degree of autonomy for constituent groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Formation strongly linked to social/historical context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Relatively rare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Core Criminal Group</td>
<td>• Core group surrounded by a loose network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Limited number of individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Tightly organized flat structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Figure 2: William’s four criminal network typologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Figures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Small size maintains internal discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Seldom has social or ethnic identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Only in a limited number of cases known by a specific name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Organized Criminal Network</td>
<td>- Defined by activities of key individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Prominence in network determined by contacts/skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Personal loyalties/ties more important than social/ethnic identities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Network connections endure, coalescing around series of criminal projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Low public profile – seldom known by any name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Network reforms after exit of key individuals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Directed Network**
- To implement under a groups of “cored organizers”
- To focus on a specific aim
- With hierarchical participant as a “steering mechanism” to direct network as a whole

**Mesh Network**
- Decentralized and self-organizing
- Actors implement distinct responsibilities and transact directly with other participants
- No core group
- Horizontal relationships

**Transactional Network**
- “Brokers” and “middlemen” play an obvious role at each stage of a “transaction”
- Can be part of a “directed network”

**Flux Network**
- Highly unstable structure, small size, and amorphous shape
- Collude for specific aim or only one project
- Not strict to join and quit
- Limited trust between participants
### 2. Drug Trafficking Classifications and Typologies

#### Figure 3: Curtis’s identifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Figures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Freelance Distributor</td>
<td>• Small non-hierarchical entrepreneurial groupings of individuals;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Not clear division of labour;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Members from a variety of ethnic backgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Family businesses</td>
<td>• Flexible division of labour based on age or gender;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Based on family or kinship relationships;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Clear organizers or boss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Large number of participant involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Community-based Organizations</td>
<td>• Flexible groups bound by a common ties, including ethnicity, religion, and nationality;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Flexible division of labour;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Clear leader or boss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Corporate Distributors</td>
<td>• Strong division of labour;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Participants share a defining characteristics;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Violence could employed if applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Figure 4: Kenney’s identifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Figures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wheel Networks</td>
<td>• To contain a core group that manages the overall enterprise and peripheral nodes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Core groups are led by veteran traffickers;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Leaders direct their networks through fear, charisma, managerial acumen or some combination of such attributes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Peripheral actors who specialise in various roles;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Types</td>
<td>Figures</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To establish based on underlying kinship and friendship network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chain Networks</td>
<td>• Decentralized and self-organizing;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Actors transact and employ directly with one their partner;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• No core group;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Drug shipments process through a series of arms-length transactions among independent nodes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• To establish based on underlying kinship and friendship networks and facilitating trust</td>
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</table>

*Figure 5:* Williams’s identifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function/Responsibility</th>
<th>Relevant duties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizers</strong></td>
<td>Core personals and groups provide the “driving” policies and operations for the network. Organizers decide the scale and scope of activities and provide instructions and guidance for its execution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insulators</strong></td>
<td>Network’s members have to respond take care the core from risks by infiltration and compromise. They communicate leadership viewpoints to the periphery of the network. Additionally, they also must be insured communication flows from the periphery do nothing to compromise the core.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communicators</strong></td>
<td>As “information deliverer”, they ensure communication flows smoothly between other nodes in their networks as a whole. From time to time, both insulators and communicators are at odds due to overlapping functions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guardians</strong></td>
<td>They have to proactively enforce the security of their ring against potential harms, threats, and risks from external sides. Guardians serve and take care members’ recruitment, combined with measures to insure loyalty, involving rituals and coercion, and limit defection. If so, they are responsible to control and reduce with minimized damages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extenders</strong></td>
<td>Those whose function is to extend the network through recruiting new participants, by negotiating with other networks, and by encouraging defectors form legal businesses, bodies of government and law enforcement agencies. In addition, they play an important role to create “portal” between the licit and illicit worlds, and to establish “bridge” between new members and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Monitors

They are accountable for informing potential weaknesses and problem in the network to the core organizers, who will initiate remedial action. Monitors have to guarantee that corrective measures are implemented wherever necessary in order the network can adjust in response to new situations.

Crossovers

People selected as members of criminal networks but continue to work in legitimate institutions. Their responsibilities are collect and inform helpful messages from the legal sector.

---

**Figure 6: Kenney’s classifications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function/Responsibility</th>
<th>Relevant duties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leader</strong></td>
<td>Control thoroughly all of operations, providing managerial assistance as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Investors</strong></td>
<td>Invested budget in the enterprise’s drug shipments (at least two individuals filled this role)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buyer</strong></td>
<td>Purchased drugs from processing labs (this enterprise did not process illicit drugs, preferring to buy them fully refined)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recruiter</strong></td>
<td>Prepared human couriers and supported them with the obligatory travel documentation, including passports and visas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Packer</strong></td>
<td>Squeezed cocaine and heroin into digestible capsules using an hydraulic packing press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enforcer</strong></td>
<td>Used intimidation and violence to enforce transactions and resolve disputes, including coercing people that owed money for drugs to pay their debts to the enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trainer</strong></td>
<td>Prepared human drug couriers in swallowing capsules, dealing with law enforcement, and avoiding problems in airport security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Couriers</strong></td>
<td>Transported small amounts of drugs from Colombia to the US or Spain, sometimes by way of Aruba or Venezuela, most couriers ingested drug-filled capsules and hid narcotics in their personal luggage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Receiver/Wholesale</strong></td>
<td>Received couriers in the United States or Spain, transported them to stash houses where they could ‘expel’ their cargo. They</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function/Responsibility</td>
<td>Relevant duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>distributor</td>
<td>was also obligated for selling drugs to independent wholesalers</td>
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### 3. Matrix of criminal network theory with relevant references

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Models</th>
<th>Key themes</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inter-person networks</td>
<td>shared norms and a common language and knowledge foundation</td>
<td>(Sutherland 1937); (Curtis 1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinship, family and friendship ties</td>
<td>through associational and family-relative networks rather than bureaucratic organization via their private rules and distinguished decision-marking hierarchies</td>
<td>(Cressey 1967); (Blok 1974); (Ianni 1974); (Albini 1971); Arlacchi (1986); (Curtis 1996); (Ruggiero and Khan 2007, 173-174)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-firm network</td>
<td>a coalition-based operating between politicians, law enforcers, businessmen, union leaders and racketeers of organized crime</td>
<td>(Chambliss 1978); (Curtis 1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal network</td>
<td>Offender get in touch with criminal association through their social relations with the variety of roles, tasks, and responsibilities</td>
<td>Granovetter (1985); (Williams 2001c, 72-78); Kleemans and Bunt (1999, 36); von Lampe (2005, 245)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheel and chain network</td>
<td>Colombian drug trafficking</td>
<td>(Kenney 2007a, 242-5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transnational criminal network</td>
<td>Including directed network, mesh network, transaction network, and flux network</td>
<td>(Williams 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models</td>
<td>Key themes</td>
<td>References</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational chart</td>
<td>Relationship of “the organization chart” between external dotes (the roles of the Bosses in Colombia) and internal rings (the roles of the Chief Operator in New York City and their cabinets)</td>
<td>(Natarajan 2000, 289)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mono-ethnic networks</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Ruggiero and Khan 2007, 173-174)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue-specific networks</td>
<td>Comprised of an “executive layer, middle management and a number of employees” and already recruits new member from amateurs to professional dealers</td>
<td>(Ruggiero and Khan 2007, 173-174)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value-adding networks</td>
<td>Coordinates alliances with any rings that can potentially profits their own commercials</td>
<td>(Ruggiero and Khan 2007, 173-174)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Appendix II: Codes and Themes

### 1. Matrix of Initial Coding Themes and its Catalogues

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Catalogues</th>
<th>References</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational structure</td>
<td>Hierarchy of Authority</td>
<td>(Williams 1998); (UNODC 2002); (Morselli 2009); (Benson and Decker 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of Rules</td>
<td>(Kenney 2007c); (Benson and Decker 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>(Benson and Decker 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>(Benson and Decker 2010); (Zaitch 2002b); (Morselli 2009);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Division of Labour/Specialization</td>
<td>(Benson and Decker 2010); (Curtis 1996); (Williams 1998); (Williams 2001c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coordination of Activities</td>
<td>(Reuter and Greenfield 2001); (Williams 2001c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recruitment and Promotions</td>
<td>(Benson and Decker 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>(Cornish 1994, Fosdick 1916, Vollmer 1919, Letkemann 1971, Hancock and Laycock</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Themes, Catalogues, References

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Catalogues</th>
<th>References</th>
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2. **The Initial Coding Scheme**

<table>
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<th>Document Records</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>Similar birth-place</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ex-conviction</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Hand in hand</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Dependence</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Size</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Tie relationship</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Close knit</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Loose group</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Complicity</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Participant Observation</td>
<td>Document Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Big boss</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Sub-organizer</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Cunning</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Amateur</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Criminal Experience</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>Drug User</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Relative family</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Countryman</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Weapon force</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Bribery</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Collusion</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Preparation stage</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Pre-commit stage</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Commit stage</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Participant Observation</td>
<td>Document Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Post-commit stage</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Silent rule</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Slang-letter rule</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>Secret signal</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Cash in hand</td>
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<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Check “goods”</td>
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</tr>
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</table>
3. Themes

1. Structure Components
   1. Group size
   2. The Central Actors
   3. The Flexibility of the Organizational Networks
   4. Offenders and their Family Relationships
   5. Age, task, function, and responsibility
   6. Geography-Based distribution

2. Crime script
   1. Preparation
      i. Exploit drug sources
      ii. Sell-and-buy agreement
      iii. Build up “shell-proof”
   2. Pre-activity
      i. Packing and concealing
      ii. Transporting
   3. Activity
      i. Send-and-receive process
      ii. Cutting
   4. Post-activity
      i. Distribution
      ii. Using illegal profits
4. Conceptual Framework of Transnational Narcotics Trafficking to Apply into Vietnam’s Context

- Organizational structure
  - Group's Size
  - Central actors
  - Ties relationship
  - Division of labour
  - Adaptation

- Modus Operandi
  - Explore drug sources
  - Stockpile and conceal
  - Money laundering
  - Against LEAs
  - Transport
  - Send and receive
  - Communicate
Appendix III: Six Selected Case Studies

1. Codes based on name cases, jurisdictions and offender’s names

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Code case</th>
<th>Code Offender’s Name</th>
<th>Fake names</th>
<th>Case name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ho Chi Minh City</td>
<td>CS1</td>
<td>1. N.V.H (CS1-No.1)</td>
<td>1. H “l”</td>
<td>N.V.H, N.D.H, and their complicities refer to Article 194, 230, and 266, the 1999 Criminal Code of Vietnam</td>
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<td>2. N.V.D (CS1-No.2)</td>
<td>2. D “l”</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>3. T.V.L (CS1-No.3)</td>
<td>3. L “m”</td>
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<td>4. P.V.H (CS1-No.4)</td>
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<td>5. H.A.T (CS1-No.5)</td>
<td>5. T “t”</td>
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<td>21. N.V.K (CS1-No.21)</td>
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<td>22. N.V.T (CS1-No.22)</td>
<td>22. No</td>
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<td>27. N.V.Dg (CS1-No.27)</td>
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<td>H.T.A (CS1-No.28)</td>
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<td>CS2</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>L.M.L (CS2-No.2)</td>
<td>2. Either H or T, or L.T.T</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>N.M.T (CS2-No.3)</td>
<td>3. T “b”</td>
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<td>N.V.C (CS2-No.4)</td>
<td>4. C “g”</td>
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<td>H.V.T (CS2-No.6)</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>K.B.N (CS2-No.7)</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>N.T.T (CS2-No.8)</td>
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<td>N.M.T and his complicities refer to Article 194, 154, 230, and 266, the 1999 Criminal Code of Vietnam</td>
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<td>Dienbien</td>
<td>CS5</td>
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<td>Code case</td>
<td>Code Offender’s Name</td>
<td>Fake names</td>
<td>Case name</td>
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<td>Nghean</td>
<td>CS6</td>
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<td>2. T.V.T (CS6-No.2)</td>
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<td>3. P.T.L (CS6-No.3)</td>
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<td>4. B.N.T (CS6-No.4)</td>
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<td>5. X.N.C (CS6-No.5)</td>
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<td>6. N.X (CS6-No.6)</td>
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<td>7. T.V.L (CS6-No.7)</td>
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<td>8. T.T.H (CS6-No.8)</td>
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</table>
### 2. Case study’s extractions from Court Judgements

#### Case Study 1 (CS1): N.V.H and his accomplices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Case</th>
<th>Offender Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Related Actor(s)</th>
<th>Drug Type</th>
<th>Drug Quantity</th>
<th>Source Drug</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N.V.H and his accomplices refers to Article 194, 230, 266, and 154</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>- Leader</td>
<td>1. T.V.H</td>
<td>- Heroin</td>
<td>- 2,354 blocks,(^{101}) equivalent with 823.90 grams in which be purchased from Lao’s areas with 2129 blocks and 225 blocks from Cambodia’s borders</td>
<td>- Lao PDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>N.V.H</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>- Leader</td>
<td>1. T.V.H</td>
<td>- Heroin</td>
<td>- 2,354 blocks,(^{101}) equivalent with 823.90 grams in which be purchased from Lao’s areas with 2129 blocks and 225 blocks from Cambodia’s borders</td>
<td>- Lao PDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>N.V.D</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>- Leader</td>
<td>1. T.V.H</td>
<td>- Heroin</td>
<td>- 2,354 blocks,(^{101}) equivalent with 823.90 grams in which be purchased from Lao’s areas with 2129 blocks and 225 blocks from Cambodia’s borders</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>T.V.L</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>- Leader</td>
<td>1. T.V.H</td>
<td>- Heroin</td>
<td>- 2,354 blocks,(^{101}) equivalent with 823.90 grams in which be purchased from Lao’s areas with 2129 blocks and 225 blocks from Cambodia’s borders</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>P.V.H</td>
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<td>- Leader</td>
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<td>- Heroin</td>
<td>- 2,354 blocks,(^{101}) equivalent with 823.90 grams in which be purchased from Lao’s areas with 2129 blocks and 225 blocks from Cambodia’s borders</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>H.A.T</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>- Drug courier and helper (re-packer)</td>
<td>1. T.V.H</td>
<td>- Heroin</td>
<td>- 2,354 blocks,(^{101}) equivalent with 823.90 grams in which be purchased from Lao’s areas with 2129 blocks and 225 blocks from Cambodia’s borders</td>
<td>- Lao PDR</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>T.A.T</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>- Supplier</td>
<td>1. T.V.H</td>
<td>- Heroin</td>
<td>- 2,354 blocks,(^{101}) equivalent with 823.90 grams in which be purchased from Lao’s areas with 2129 blocks and 225 blocks from Cambodia’s borders</td>
<td>- Lao PDR</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>N.D.H</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
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<td>- Heroin</td>
<td>- 2,354 blocks,(^{101}) equivalent with 823.90 grams in which be purchased from Lao’s areas with 2129 blocks and 225 blocks from Cambodia’s borders</td>
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<td>8.</td>
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<td>- Drug courier and re-packer</td>
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<td>- Heroin</td>
<td>- 2,354 blocks,(^{101}) equivalent with 823.90 grams in which be purchased from Lao’s areas with 2129 blocks and 225 blocks from Cambodia’s borders</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>N.D.N.A</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>- Drug courier and retailer</td>
<td>1. T.V.H</td>
<td>- Heroin</td>
<td>- 2,354 blocks,(^{101}) equivalent with 823.90 grams in which be purchased from Lao’s areas with 2129 blocks and 225 blocks from Cambodia’s borders</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>N.H.N</td>
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<td>- Courier</td>
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<td>- Heroin</td>
<td>- 2,354 blocks,(^{101}) equivalent with 823.90 grams in which be purchased from Lao’s areas with 2129 blocks and 225 blocks from Cambodia’s borders</td>
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<td>11.</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<td>- Heroin</td>
<td>- 2,354 blocks,(^{101}) equivalent with 823.90 grams in which be purchased from Lao’s areas with 2129 blocks and 225 blocks from Cambodia’s borders</td>
<td>- Lao PDR</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\(^{101}\) One block/cake/brick of heroin in Southeast Asia region, mostly at Myanmar, is weight around 350 grams (Kramer, Jelsma, and Blickman 2009, 46–47). This estimation is also applied into all six case study’s jurisdictions in this thesis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name Case</th>
<th>Offender Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Related Actor(s)</th>
<th>Drug Type</th>
<th>Drug Quantity</th>
<th>Source Drug</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. H.V.L</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>and logistic</td>
<td>Drug courier</td>
<td>23.N.T.Th (Ms. Big Boss)</td>
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<td>14. N.V.H</td>
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<td>15. L.N.A</td>
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<td>17. P.K.Q</td>
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<td>24. P.V.X</td>
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<td>Name Case</td>
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<td>Age</td>
<td>Nationality</td>
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<td>Related Actor(s)</td>
<td>Drug Type</td>
<td>Drug Quantity</td>
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<td>28. H.T.A</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>- Transformer</td>
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On 21 August 2003, the criminal investigation department (CID) of Ho Chi Minh City Police Force caught up “red handle” to N.V.H and T.V.L for illegal stockpiling narcotics and military weapons. Physical evident includes two types, one belongs to N.V.H and other is T.V.L. With the former, there are involves two shotguns and its bullets, 2,800 USD, 100 AUD, one car FC Laser’s brand name. With the latter, there are includes 103 tablets of ATS, the equivalence of around 10,5077 grams of methamphetamine, one shot gun and its bullets, one grenade, 900 USD, 9,900,000 VND, two mobile phones. Both of offenders are still wanted in person of other law enforcement agencies but they escaped and continue to criminals.

Early morning 22 August 2003, the CID continued to employ arresting person in urgent cases’ charter to P.V.H at Dongnai. At his private house, they seized 14 bricks of heroin, the equivalence of 4,734 kilograms, one full toolkit to heroin’s machine production, 85,000 USD, 8,400,000 VND and one car Toyota Camry, one
passport beared N.X.T but with P.V.H’s picture, and one notebook to jot down on drug trading quantities. He has also wanted in person of CID of Nghean Police Force in the past.

In conclusion, combining above circumstances, offender’s roles and their criminal abilities was prescribed as follow:

Based on geographical proximity of the Northern Central Coast region from Nghean province to Quangtri province where shared the longest borderland areas with Lao PDR via official ways, including international and national border gates, and unofficial ways, including the vast of small roads and narrow paths, almost of accused in this case, who grown up from Hunglong commune, Hungnguyen district, Nghean province and its peripheral zones, have been colluded with together to transport drugs with the huge quantities from Laos to interior Vietnam. After that, they organized to deliver directly by themselves or indirectly through hiring a number of drug couriers to Dongnai province and Ho Chi Minh City to spread out retail markets. Apart from Laos’ routes in the period of 2000-2001, during 2002, N.V.H, N.V.D, and their accomplices organized to drug’s transporting from Cambodia via Tayninh province’s gates to focus on two targeted markets, Dongnai and Ho Chi Minh City.

It is one of the typical cases of transnational drug trafficking network across the country that have colluded and operated by the objects in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. From 1998 to arrested in 2003, N.V.H - “the kingpin of the kingpin”, and his accomplices purchased 2,354 blocks of heroin, the equivalence of approximately 800 kilograms of heroin and 1,000 tablets of ATS, in which from Lao’s routes entry into the Northern Central Coast regions with 2,129 blocks. Yet, they also traded and transported from Cambodia’s routes via Tayninh’s gates with 225 bricks and 1,000 tablets of ATS. In this case, three main groups are identified and separated as follow:

1) Supply’s group those who provide heroin to demand’s groups. They are includes T.V.H, P.H.V, P.V.D, N.D.H, N.D.H, N.H.N, T.X.T, N.D.N.A, H.V.T, P.V.X, T.A.T, N.T.T, and T.T.H who are Vietnamese and X (Cambodian). Apart from those offenders, there are four different accomplices not charged in this case, including N.H.L, L.V.A, D.S.S, and N.K.H due to first one was died, the second and third offender were executed death, and the last one was arrested and charged with the death penalty and waiting for execution.


3) Demand and command’ group those who collect all heroines’ source from international routes, including Laos and Cambodia’ transitions, to allocate to their internal distribution chains. In addition they are also identified and classified as organizer and leader in this case. They are involves N.V.H (Mr.Big),

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N.V.D, T.V.L, H.A.T, H.D.T, N.X.H, P.V.H, N.V.T, H.N.H, P.V.C, H.T.T, V.T.B.N, T.T.Hg, N.T.T, V.A.T, and V.X.T. In this group, it is divided into two main locations, one in Ho Chi Minh City was controlled by N.V.H and N.V.D; and other in Dongnai province was managed by P.V.H. Both of these groups are relationships but independent economies and motivations.

According to final judgement’s sentences, there are four leaders in this network, who are considered as Big Four’s groups:

1) N.V.H (Mr. Big) is leader and organizer in the whole of case. Accordingly, he was considered a boss of transnational drug trafficking network and must be responded for 1,495 bricks of heroin (approximately 523.25 kg). In addition, he and co-offender, T.V.L who also as No.3 highest ranking in their syndicate, has to face for illegally storing more than 100 tablets of ecstasy, one grenade, three pistols, 47 rounds, one mufflers and repair, using the papers of agencies and organizations including: one passport and one driver's license bearing the name of the other but was pasted by his photo.

2) As the “No.2”, N.V.D shall be responsible for the acts of buying and selling 1,531 cakes of heroin (approximately 535.85 kg) and 1,000 tables of ATS. In addition, he was ordered and supplied N.V.H and T.V.L two grenades, five pistols, 64 rounds, three mufflers. He also used one fake passport, two fake driving license, and 11 fake membership card overseas Vietnamese associations.

3) With the accused of T.V.L, former police captain Crime Drug Squad of Tuongduong Police district, Nghean Police Force), define the indictment is insufficient evidence to conclude he is responsible for the formation the company provides more than about 17 cakes of heroin for drug lines C.D.H. However, due to Le escaped arrest warrants, have not had to handle the investigation agency has decided to enter further into this case. Total Le is accused of purchasing 583 cakes of heroin (approximately 204.05 kilograms) and 11,374.7 grams of heroin powder. In addition, he also added the crime charged "possession of narcotics", "illegal possession of military weapons" and "repair, using certificates of agencies" used by the first author and co-conspirators ID N.V.H in the more than 100 tablet of ecstasy (ATS), one grenade, one pistol and 14 bullets.

4) Regarding to P.V.H’s role, a drug lord shadow "ranchers" self-contained operation with ethyl own recipes in Long Khanh district (Dong Nai) to set the heroin smuggling of TP. HCM must be responsible for a total of 814 bricks (approximately 284 kg) and 2.7 kg of opium. Accordingly, he has bought of N.H.L with 500 blocks, of P.H.V with 100 blocks, of T.V.H with 50 blocks, of P.V.D with 48 blocks, and of N.V.H with 102 blocks, in total with 800 blocks of heroin. Also, Hanh also used one fake passport, two fake driving license, and one household registration book author. All of these productions were sold for H.T.T with 400 bricks, V.T.N.B with 391 bricks, N.T.N with six bricks, and N.V.B with three bricks. On 20 August 2003, he continued to purchase
N.D.H with 4,734 kilograms of heroin to repack through blending and mixing these original heroines with other different impurities to create 14 blocks of heroin, but be arrested before consuming.

They are colluded to organize deliveries’ lines with the numerous quantities of heroin from Laos into Vietnam to consume in Dongnai province and Ho Chi Minh City. Besides that, this network also established transportations’ routes to ship narcotics from Cambodia through the gateway of Tayninh to domestic markets. One of the noticeable points in modus operandi of this network is that leaders/organizers utilized chemical formula to blend and mix between original heroin and different impurities, mostly caffeine’s ingredient to increase the quantity of heroin. Following up this instruction, they added with scale of 10% caffeine flour with original narcotics to make up more extra quantities than original productions. Most “new” heroin was released to wholesalers and retailers after blending and mixing.

Apart from illegal stockpiling and trading drugs, the criminal investigation department of Ministry of Public Security also clarify the different offenses of this network’s offenders, including illegally trading and stockpiling in or appropriating military weapons; improper transportation of goods across the border; and amending and/or using certificates and papers issued by agencies and/or organizations.

To make the entire process of collecting, shipping, concocting, and reproducing before re-sell major wholesalers, N.V.H has built a system of the “head of manager” those who represent him to control and operate his guidelines and constructions in each stage: 1) connecting with drug lord in aboard to collect drugs; 2) transferring drugs from Laos to Vietnam; 3) transporting drugs to storages and locations; 4) blending and mixing between original drugs and impurities by set up formulas; 5) contacting to wholesale hubs; 6) transporting drugs to initial appointments to transaction; and 7) Exchanging and integrating financial issues after sending “goods”.

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Case study 2 (CS2): N.M.T and his accomplices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name Case</th>
<th>Offender Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Related Actor(s)</th>
<th>Drug Type</th>
<th>Drug Quantity</th>
<th>Source Drug</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N.M.T and her accomplices refers to Article 194, 154, 230, and 266, the 1999 CCV Trial Judgement on 25 November 2006 Appeal judgment on 6 April 2007</td>
<td>T.V.H</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Vietnamese + the U.K.</td>
<td>- Executor (Drug courier)</td>
<td>1.P.T.T (Vietnamese): Leader (Ms. Big boss)</td>
<td>Heroin</td>
<td>- 970 blocks, equivalent with 339,843 grams in which 199 blocks, the equivalence of 70,155 grams is direct evidence</td>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L.M.L</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Vietnamese + the U.K.</td>
<td>- Organizer and executor (Drug Supplier)</td>
<td>2.N.D.H (Vietnamese): Broker in Lao PDR</td>
<td>ATS</td>
<td>- 5,040 tablets of Methamphetamine, the equivalence of 462.5 grams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N.M.T</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>- Drug supplier and broker</td>
<td>3.N.V.T: Helper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N.V.C</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Vietnamese + Laotian</td>
<td>- Instigator</td>
<td>4.P.T.Th: Drug courier in P.T.T’s network</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T.T.H</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Vietnamese + the UK</td>
<td>- Broker</td>
<td>5.N.T.M: Drug courier in P.T.T’s network</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H.V.T</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>- Drug supplier and courier</td>
<td>6.L.H.V: Drug courier in P.T.T’s network</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K.B.N</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>- Helper (Broker)</td>
<td>7. N.V.T: Drug courier in P.T.T’s network</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N.T.T</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>- Helper (Drug courier)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This network is organized and derived by P.T.T, who was born at Haiphong, Vietnam and had crossed the border illegally into Hong Kong in 1989. She has a close relationship with L.M.L as her de facto and his sister-in-law, T.T.H. Both those offenders contacted directly to N.D.H (Vietnamese broker at Laos) to look for drug sources to transport via Vietnam for trading in Hong Kong, China. Based on this planning, since March 2004, they connected to N.D.H, T.V.H, and N.V.H to
provide illegal drugs for them. After collecting enough amounts of the drugs, they rent to T.M.T to re-pack (used cotton boxes to conceal the drugs into legal goods such as motor and motorcycle’ equipments and clothes) for transporting from Laos to Vietnam by long truck.

These productions moved to the repository of Paksan’s Customs Office to check and seal lead before hire H.V.T to drive return Quangbinh province via the Laobao International Border Gate. Then, they will catch up these productions at Vietnam’s territories after passing other Vietnam-Lao PDR’s border gates to return Vietnam. The end of the drugs will be separated into multi routes and different locations, where they changed as much as possible their final places (such as rental house, hotel, or on the way) in order to avoid LEA’s monitors before pushing it to Vietnam-China border to P.T.T’s disciples collected.

Keep going to this game, P.T.T continued to steer those guys with larger quantities and more sophisticated tricks. In order to avoid criminal investigation’s suspicions and conceal real identification, any times come back Vietnam; L.M.L used the fake identity card bearing the name of another person with his image. Meanwhile T.T.H also pasted her picture on different identification card to rent accommodation in the hotel. By doing these modus operandi, this network have transported and traded at least 970 blocks of heroin, equivalent with 339,843 grams and 5,040 tablets of methamphetamine, the equivalence of 462,5 grams before failing in the last shipment with 199 cakes of heroin, which concealed into 8 cotton boxes and included both a handgun in 25 June 2004. All of important nodes of this syndicate were arrested later, except for Ms. Big boss, P.T.T and her some disciples.

This case was recorded as one of the biggest studies with the largest amount of drugs being caught directly, 199 blocks of heroin. Apart from illegal trading drugs, the criminal investigation department of Ministry of Public Security also clarify the different offenses of this network’s offenders, including illegally trading and stockpiling in or appropriating military weapons; improper transportation of goods across the border; amending and/or using certificates and papers issued by agencies and/or organizations; and unlawful stockpiling drugs.

To accomplish those tricks as above in unlawful stockpiling, transporting, and trading heroin, the objects in the network has at least apply the specific steps, including 1) preparing financial budgets to buy “goods”; 2) “ordering” number of “goods” through the network’s nodes in foreign countries, either Laos or Thailand; 3) searching, connecting and purchasing “goods”; 4) receiving “goods” and finding the person hired to transport back Vietnam; 5) arranging between licit, illicit, and “goods” to enter Vietnam through the border gate; 6) repackaging these “goods” at the transfer point; 7) transporting across the China’s borderland areas; 8) sending an representatives in China’s managers; 9) trading “goods” again for local wholesalers in China or other countries.
### Case study 3 (CS3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name Case</th>
<th>Offender Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Related Actor(s)</th>
<th>Drug Type</th>
<th>Drug Quantity</th>
<th>Source Drug</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D.X.D and his accomplices refers to Article 194</td>
<td>D.X.D</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Organizer and executor</td>
<td>1. N.T (Laotian) Co-organizer and supplier 2. D (Vietnamese) Wholesaler</td>
<td>Heroin</td>
<td>- 8 blocks, the equivalence of 2.808,46 grams of heroin</td>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On 22 August 2011, D.X.D calls for N.T (Laotian) to deposit for purchasing eight blocks of heroin. After ordering, he catches up Vietnam-Lao’s car route to go Vientiane, Lao PDR to meet N.T via the Cautreo International border-gate where shared borders between Hatinh province, Vietnam and Bolikhamxay province, Lao PDR. They met at Nam Vi Ca’s Hotel at Vientiane on the night of 23 August 2011. According to “previous agreement”, he sent 48,000 USD first for these eight blocks and debt 4,000 USD. After integrating for send and receive’ modus operandi, N.T concealed this drug into two bed bars which they have already pierced a hole, to transport to Vientiane’s Bus Station.

On 24 August 2011, both of them integrated to deliver this bed from Vientiane to Quangtri province via land’s route. After that, he returns to Hatinh province to avoid suspicions of law enforcement agencies. On day later, around 10.30a.m on 25 August 2011, he drives a car with registration number 30V-8204 from Hatinh province to Dongluong precinct, Dongha city, Quangtri province to receive this bed. When he gets this bed to transfer into his car, it is caught up red-handle in terms of unlawful stockpiling and transporting drug. At the final examination’s testing of forensic scene’s department, 8 blocks was testified and confirmed with 2.808,46 grams of heroin.

The role of offender and his modus operandi in this case are described and concluded in court’s judgement as follow:
To ensure for safety and advantage in drug trafficking, D.X.D established three companies under executive management by himself but does not work well without bank account and even, he still remained a business license and stamp for serving travel between Vietnam and Laos. Before purchasing drugs, D.X.D has created drug smuggling’s network from Laos to Vietnam by himself, not through intermediaries. In other words, the whole of identifying “input”-and-“output” transactions is belong directly to him with the purpose of establishing a closed cycle. D.X.D has researched and selected shipping method more sophisticated than ever. He required N.T to build furniture, including beds and personal cabinets (for using at hotels), with empty drawers to contain drugs. Furthermore, it will be covered with lids, screws, and polish its outsides up wood-crays palm; meanwhile other space drawers will be inserted by toilet papers to conceal heroin and synthetic drugs separately.

Moreover, he required using betel leaf to protect them against drug’s smells. In fact, he confessed that during the study, he considered that the transportation’s route through the Laobao International Border Gate with these above furniture without being checked. When he goes to Lao to purchase heroin, he used to choose the Laobao International border-gate where shared borderland between Quangtri province, Vietnam and DaenSavanh province, Lao PDR. However, when returns Vietnam, he changes different routes via land road line through the Cautreo International border-gate in lieu of the Laobao International border-gate as initial movement. With the purposes of limiting and avoiding to track and pursuit to law enforcement, this modus operandi led to barriers and difficulties for police force and border-guard to seek and identify movements and transportations in this case.

At the trial, according to the Provincial Procuracy’s People of Quangtri argued that apart from this caught red-handle, N.X.D admitted with the similar modus operandi in purchase and sale’ process between he and N.T or her cabinets, he succeeded to buy 18 blocks of heroin and 4,600 tablets of ATS to deliver Vietnam in order to sale in Hochiminh City’s retail markets. All of these six times were employed and implemented since May to August 2011, but criminal justices’ agencies are not available to strong evidences to accused of his criminal activities.

1st shipment:

On May 2011, based on the previous relationship with N.T (Laotian), D.X.D came to Nam Vi Ca’s Hotel in Vientiane to meet her for depositing heroin. At there, she sold two blocks of heroin with price 13,000 USD. This production was concealed in one woodcarving with “dragon”-figure to deliver Vietnam. D.X.D re-sold it to D in Ho Chi Minh City, but he was not accepted for its bad quality. Therefore, D.X.D takes it to refund for N.T in Laos.
2\textsuperscript{nd} shipment:

After some days, D.X.D purchased 1,000 tablets of ATS with price of 2,500 USD. In order to hidden this production, N.T assisted him to conceal it in wood leg-beds and send it via Vientiane – Da Nang’ routes. By doing this, all of these tablets were succeeded to transport to sale for D in Ho Chi Minh City. At this time, he gets beneficial money from interest rate with 1,000 USD.

3\textsuperscript{rd} shipment:

After second shipment, D.X.D continued to deposit N.T to purchase 2,000 tablets of ATS and 4 blocks of heroin with price of 31,000 USD. Pursuing on the same modus operandi in concealing drugs, it was covered by wood beds to transport from Vientiane to Da Nang via land route by public transportation. It was also re-sale to D with price of 39,000 USD.

4\textsuperscript{th} shipment:

On the first days of July 2011, D.X.D colluded with N.T to sale four blocks of heroin and 1,600 tablets of ATS to D with price of 37,600 USD.

5\textsuperscript{th} and 6\textsuperscript{th} shipment:

On the end of July 2011, D.X.D continues to travel Lao PDR to buy heroin. At these times, he changed route’s schedule. He prioritized Vinh – Vientiane’ routes to go. Both of these times, he purchased eight blocks of heroin. It was also re-sale for D with price of 64,000 USD.
Case study 4 (CS4): V.D.M and his accomplices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name Case</th>
<th>Offender Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Related Actor(s)</th>
<th>Drug Type</th>
<th>Drug Quantity</th>
<th>Source Drug</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V.D.M and his accomplices refer to Article 194</td>
<td>1. V.D.M</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Organizer and executor</td>
<td>1. P.T.K (Vietnamese): Broker and Supplier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. T.T.H</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Executor and helper</td>
<td>2. N.C.H (Vietnamese): Principal as Mr. Big Boss</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. N.H.T</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Helpers (Courier)</td>
<td>4. N.T.H (V.D.M’s wife): “potential” money launder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. N.T.N</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Helpers (Courier)</td>
<td>5. N.V.L (V.D.M’s relatives): “potential” money launder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. N.T.C</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Helpers (broker)</td>
<td>6. X.D (Laotian) Supplier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. - S (Vietnamese): Dealer retail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8. - S (Vietnamese): Dealer retail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At 11.30 am on 31st July 2012, at the garden of Vinh railway station, Vinh City (Nghean Province), the investigation police office on drug-related crimes of Nghean Police coordinated with other professional units to catch up V.D.M and N.T.N with red-handed and to collect 30 cakes of heroin and 19 million VND, equivalence of around $1,000, when two those offenders are waiting for trains to transport to Ho Chi Minh City. In the morning of 1st August, expanding this operation has collected more specialized 40 cakes of heroin that means 70 cakes of heroin were discovered in this special case and employed to arrest more 4 related offenders, including N.H.T, N.T.C, T.T.H and N.T.H. In addition, the operation seized 2.87 billion VND, 14 taels of gold, $207,000, one car Fortuner’s brand name, bringing the total amount seized in the initial with around eight billion VND, equivalence of around $400,000.

The offenders in this network colluded with very sophisticated tricks and constantly changing rules for transportation and shipping routes to avoid law enforcement agencies’ detections during a long time. At least, after nearly five years of follow-up, all the rules, tricks operations of objects in the line were demonstrated as persuasive as possible. According to final conclusions of criminal investigation department and indictment of prosecution, from April until 31st July 2012, under the
direction and administration of the N.C.H who was considered as Mr. Big boss, V.D.M and his accomplices purchase with a number of drugs from Laotian drug lords across border Quephong district and then brought to Vinh City before spreading out Ho Chi Minh City and Langson to consume.


On April 2012, not remember date detail, based on the previous relationship in terms of drug trafficking between S (no exact identification) and V.D.M, V.D.M connects and orders to N.C.H transport 14 blocks of heroin from Nghean to Hochiminh City. Through S’s introduction, V.D.M delivered it to one S’s partner. Around one week later, those strange men paid money of nine blocks for S with the price of 9,000 USD per block to send V.D.M. The rest of heroin, five blocks, was not ensured quality and thus, they send back to V.D.M. He also sends it to N.C.H in Nghean through T.T.H. Though T.T.H was not delivered directly to N.C.H, she suggested her friend, N.T.H who is her previous childhood partner, implement this duty. Therefore, based on T.T.H’s introduction, N.T.H contacted directly to V.D.M to take it and send to T.T.H at her private house. With this contribution, drug courier, N.T.H is also received 10,000,000 VND, equivalent with around 500 USD, for hire’s transporting by T.T.H. After that, T.T.H communicates and delivers these five blocks of heroin to N.C.H


On April 2012, not remember date detail, after N.T.H transports five not well quality blocks of heroin from Hochiminh City to T.T.H’s house, N.C.H also send 10 blocks to her. At this circumstance, though T.T.H suggested to shared money with him from this quantity, N.C.H refused her due to he have already shared with P.T.K who lives at Kimson commune, Quephong district, Nghean province. With the purposes of transporting this package, T.T.H is also got 30,000,000 VND by V.D.M at Hochiminh City. To keep on his previous relationship with S, V.D.M ships 10 blocks of heroin to one subject (no exact identification) to split out small quantities to serve retail markets in Hochiminh City.


On May 2012, not remember date detail, N.C.H suggests T.T.H to contact N.T.H delivering of heroin to Hochiminh City. After connecting with N.T.H, he picks up her to go Vinh railway station by his car. All of 10 blocks of heroin was covered in one box and sent to her on his car before come there around one or two kilometres. N.T.H bought railway ticket goes to Hochiminh City and send this “gift” to V.D.M and get 30,000,000 VND for hire’s transporting by him. Again, there are similar with modus operandi of twice times ago, this “gift” was sent to S’s partner to sale in retail market in Hochiminh City.

4th shipment: Unlawful trading and transporting 20 blocks of heroin of N.C.H, T.T.H, and V.D.M
On April 2012, not remember date detail, N.C.H discusses and suggests T.T.H to cooperate with P.T.K to cover 20 blocks of heroin with the formation 50:50. It means that N.C.H and T.T.H cover 10 blocks and the rest belongs to P.T.K. To support this way, P.T.K connected one H’Mong ethnic identity (Laotian) to order heroin. After purchasing drugs, N.C.H calls for V.D.M to go from Hochiminh City to Vinh to get this production. Again, there are similar with operations of three times ago, this “gift” was sent to S and his partner to sale in retail market in Hochiminh City.

5th shipment: Unlawful trading and transporting 20 blocks of heroin of N.C.H, T.T.H, and V.D.M

On June 2012, not remember date detail, It is same script with the 4th shipment with cooperating between N.C.H, T.T.H, and P.T.K to order 20 blocks of heroin from Laotian’s partners. After successful collection, N.C.H calls for V.D.M to receive it. V.D.M flew from Hochiminh City to Vinh via airline route to meet N.C.H. N.C.H picks up him on the road of Vinh City by his car and come to T.T.H’s house to get “gift”. At there, all of these drugs were covered one suitcase and send to V.D.M to deliver return Hochiminh City via railway route. Again, there are similar with operations of all of times in the past, this “gift” was sent to S and his partner to sale in retail market in Hochiminh City. All of exchange’s money for purchase and sale process, they employs via transaction’s account of private enterprise in Vinh city.


On June 2012, not remember date detail, between N.C.H, T.T.H, and P.T.K has continued to apply “supply and demand” as similar as with the 5th shipment. P.T.K responds to connect with Laotian’s partner to order heroin, meanwhile, N.C.H collect money to deposit and receive “gift”. After getting this production, it was covered in one box and concealed in T.T.H’s house. At this time, T.T.H calls for N.T.H to come and deliver to V.D.M in Hochiminh City via railway route. Again, there are similar with operations of all of times in the past, this “gift” was sent to S and his partner to sale in retail market in Hochiminh City. All of exchange’s money for purchase and sale process, V.D.M sends to N.C.H via transaction’s service of L.T.H.D’s account.

7th shipment: Unlawful trading and transporting 10 blocks of heroin of N.C.H, T.T.H, N.T.H, and V.D.M

On 27th June 2012, N.C.H suggests T.T.H to contact with N.T.H go to Vinh City for delivering heroin. At that date, T.T.H’s father was died and she recommended to N.T.H that she must be covered by herself to do. Thus, N.T.H connected directly to N.C.H to make an appointment. Accordingly, N.C.H send one bag contained 10 blocks of heroin to N.T.H at an around-about place in Yenly commune, Dienchau district, Nghean province. Differing with the previous times, this shipment was delivered via road routes by N.T.H’s car and it was also taken over V.D.M at Dongnai province where close position with Hochiminh City. In order to employ this plan, N.T.H called for V.D.M and integrate signature and place to meet and exchange. By doing this, V.D.M received full production from her and she also got
30,000,000 VND for hire’s transportation from him. Again, there are similar with operations of all of times in the past, this “gift” was sent to S and his partner to sale in retail market in Hochiminh City.

8th shipment: Unlawful trading and transporting 20 blocks of heroin of N.C.H, N.T.C, N.T.H, and V.D.M

On July, not remember date detail, N.C.H discusses and integrates with N.T.C to cooperate for ordering heroin with the formation 50:50. It means that each of them will cover and respond 10 blocks. Given this operation, N.T.C connects directly to X.D (Laotian) to order drugs, meanwhile, N.C.H takes money to get heroin. After receiving this production, N.C.H calls for N.T.H who comes back her hometown in Baccan, a northern province of Vietnam, to take it and deliver to Hochiminh City. Receiving and delivering’ process between N.C.H and N.T.H in Vinh City before send to V.D.M in Hochiminh City is similar script with the 3rd and 6th shipment that they meet each other at Vinh and then catch up with train via railway route to Hochiminh. Again, there are similar with operations of all of times in the past, this “gift” was sent to S and his partner to sale in retail market in Hochiminh City.

9th shipment: Unlawful trading and transporting 60 blocks of heroin of N.C.H, T.T.H, and N.T.C

On 20 July 2012, based on the previous relationship in terms of drug trafficking with D.T.H in Dongdang commune, Caoloc district, Langson province where is closed borderland with China and be located at northern position of Vietnam, T.T.H met M.B.D to discuss for trading drugs. After integrating supply and demand’ issues, N.C.H, T.T.H, and N.T.C decided to invest for 60 blocks of heroin to re-purchase for M.B.D. In order to implement this operation, N.T.C connects directly to X.D (Laotian) to order heroin, meanwhile, N.C.H go to pay money and get production. After then, N.C.H and T.T.H catch up train from Vinh to Hanoi on night of 21st July 2012. All of these drugs was covered and concealed in suitcase. Around lunch time of 22nd July 2012, after moving via road route by car, N.C.H and T.T.H meet M.B.D at one restaurant at Dongdang commune, Caoloc district, Langson province and sent this suitcase first and its money later. Up to 24th July 2012, through mobile phone’s conversation, M.B.D informs to N.C.H and T.T.H that there are 2 “bad quality” out of 60 blocks of heroin and means that they will minus money for these two blocks. All of exchange’s money for purchase and sale process, they employs via transaction’s account of private enterprise in Vinh city.


N.C.H, T.T.H, N.T.C, and N.H.T discuss and integrate for investing to purchase 70 blocks of heroin. N.T.C connects directly to X.D (Laotian) to order with price of 6,600 USD per block. At the lunch of 29th July 2012, N.C.H requires T.T.H to supply all of money in the 9th shipment, which is received from M.B.D, in sum of 10,500,000,000 VND, equivalent around 5 million USD. In addition, N.C.H puts 100,000 USD which is original and interest’ rates of N.T.C in the two previous cases, and 40,000 USD which she borrows him in this case. After all, morning of 30th July 2012, N.T.C take all of money to catch up DuyManh’s Bus which serves
Vinh-Quephong route and connect to N.T.T for meeting at N.T.L’s house who her sister. When receiving money, N.T.T calls for N.T.N who is her relatives to employ plan. Up to 6p.m, N.T.N and N.T.T go to meet X.D’s representatives to get “gift” but not succeed due to they are not clear routes. Therefore, they suggested N.T.C to guide road map to go. After getting 70 blocks of heroin, N.T.T and N.T.N arrange and divide it into one box and one suitcase and to inform N.C.H that “done”. Around 4a.m 31st July 2012, N.T.N catches up bus to Vinh City for contacting with V.D.M via N.T.T’s mobile message. At Vinh City, meanwhile exchanging “gift” between N.T.N and V.D.M at the Vinh railway station was explored and arrested by police force with physical evidence of 30 blocks of heroin, equivalent approximately 10,151 grams. Keep going this operation, police force has continued to seize 40 blocks of heroin, equivalent around 14.004 grams at N.T.T’s locations after searching.

In conclusion, combining both of above circumstance, offender’s roles and their criminal abilities was identified as follow:

- V.D.M commits with nine times unlawful trading drugs, including 164 blocks of heroin, equivalent approximately 56.390 grams. He played as organizer and executor in this operation which he can cover his cases with mobile connection and fluid movement as “roving commission”.

- T.T.H commits with nine times unlawful trading drugs, including 150 blocks of heroin, equivalent approximately 51.760 grams. She played a “special bridge” between N.C.H, big boss and his cabinets. Some circumstance, she joined directed and other is implemented under N.C.H’s requirements and guidelines

- N.T.H commits with six times unlawful trading drugs, including 85 blocks of heroin, equivalent approximately 29.330 grams. She played a “flexible bridge” between two big bosses, between N.C.H and V.D.M during they employ their operations from Vinh city and Ho Chi Minh City and conversely.

- N.H.T commits with one time unlawful trading drugs, including 70 blocks of heroin, equivalent approximately 24.155 grams. She was recruited by N.C.H and immersed with his network to transport and trade drug, although she is lecturer at secondary school of district.

- N.T.N commits with one time unlawful trading drugs, including 70 blocks of heroin, equivalent approximately 24.155 grams. She was seduced by her family’s relatives to join the first game to deliver drug to V.D.M

- N.T.C commits with three times unlawful trading drugs, including 50 blocks of heroin, equivalent approximately 17.253 grams. She contacted directly with X.D (Laotian) to order heroin and make an appointment for N.C.H to deposit money and take heroin.
### Case study 5 (CS5): D.T.C and her accomplices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name Case</th>
<th>Offender Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Related Actor(s)</th>
<th>Drug Type</th>
<th>Drug Quantity</th>
<th>Source Drug</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D.T.C and her accomplices</td>
<td>1. D.T.C</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>- Organizer and executor</td>
<td>1. B (Chinese): Demand</td>
<td>- Heroin</td>
<td>- 132 blocks, the equivalence of 45.795.27 grams in which 31 blocks, equivalent with 10.818.97 grams is direct evidence</td>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refer to Article 194</td>
<td>2. N.T.C</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>- Organizer and executor</td>
<td>2. C (Vietnamese): Retail dealer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. T.B.H</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>- Drug courier and helper</td>
<td>3. S.L (Laotian): Big boss</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. X.X.L (Laotian)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgement on 14 January 2014</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. S.L’s disciple</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>5. N.T.X</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>- Organizer for delivering</td>
<td>7. B.H.H (Vietnamese)</td>
<td>- Opium</td>
<td>- 1.97 grams of opium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. N.T.N</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>- Organizer for transporting and trading</td>
<td>9. L.A.T (Vietnamese)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to criminal profile of anti-narcotic police force, at 6.30pm on 29th November 2012, during coordination tasks in the area of Team 4, Yenthanh commune, Dienbien district, Dienbien, a special task force detected D.T.C, 46 years old, resident of Yenthanh commune who was driving motorcycle on the C9’s bridge toward Thanhxuong commune with “signs” of drug-related crime. The working group requested D.T.C to stop for examination and discovered one black plastic sack at foot’s parts of motorcycle in which contained 22 cakes of heroin. Pursuing on search of the D.T.C’s house, they also seized nine cakes of heroin concealed within one yellow bag at the door of her bedroom.

Extending the investigation of this case, D.T.C confessed that during the period from early 2011 until her arrest, she and his accomplices employed a number of trading and transporting heroin to multiple drug wholesalers and retailers at different locations. Apart from arresting D.T.C, the criminal investigation agency has

Circumstance #1: From July 2012 to 29th November 2012

1st shipment:

On July 2012, not exactly remember date detail, N.T.C connects and informs to D.T.C that “everything is fine and already”. It means that preparing money to order drugs should be employed as soon as possible. At the night of this day, B.H.H comes to D.T.C and sends 26,400 USD to her for purchasing heroin. On the morning later, N.T.C brings money to come N.T.H’s house to deposit. Around one week later, they have already set up an “informal meeting” at one location where they integrated for “secret signal”, in order to employ a send and receive’ process. Accordingly, based on this “code”, D.T.C drives her motorcycle to go met T.B.H’s representatives at a small alley near Nooghet commune, Dienbien district, Dienbien province. On around 7p.m, at this place, one strange man sent one black bag with eight blocks of heroin to D.T.C and she took it and concealed in her house. After two day, she calls for N.T.C to require receiving this production. However, N.T.C suggested D.T.C to contact indirectly to her cabinet at Haiphong where distances about 550 kilometres with Dienbien province. Accordingly, after coming LiemNghia’s Bus Station, D.T.C rings for this man and be requested to wait his disciple at a small rest’s shop near the petrol station. After around 3 minutes, one man come there and pick up her on his motorcycle to move other place. On the road, he asks her take over this “gift” to him and also drops her on the way to catch up car return Dienbien province. Everything is done as smooth as their plan and then, D.T.C informs N.T.C about her completed process. Then, N.T.X offers one envelope contains 3,600 USD for interest rate and 300 USD for hire’s transporting.

2nd shipment:

After around one week since the first shipment, utilizing same planning with the previous operation with scale “2:1:1”. It means that D.T.C contributes 26,400 USD to buy four blocks; meanwhile, B.H.H and N.T.X provide 13,200 USD per individual. N.T.C called for D.T.C with a noticed statement that “someone will call to drink coffee, please”. After that, T.B.H connected to D.T.C via mobile phone with confirms that “have a dinner together”. Following up these “soft signal”, around 7p.m, D.T.C comes to an appointment’s place and wait there. After one hour, one man drive his motorcycle to come and see around her motorcycle’s plate number and then send one black bag contained 10 blocks of heroin to her. She kept it in her private house and also informed to N.T.C – “done”. Responding her communication, N.T.C asked her that “please goes to the hospital on tomorrow morning”. It means that she has to deliver this bag on tomorrow morning. Thus, through bus transportation route, D.T.C shipped and sent it to one man at the Metro Supermarket area in Haiphong. After that, she returned immediately to Dienbien
and wait for 5 days later, she come N.T.H’s house to take beneficial money, including 3,600 USD be sealed in one envelope. It is also extracted with 6,000,000 VND for D.T.C’s hiring transportation, and the rest belongs to N.T.X

3rd shipment:
On August 2012, not remember exactly date, applying the same modus operandi in communication, connection, and exchange between sender and receiver, T.B.H offered an appointment’s location first and inform to D.T.C that “go to dinner at the C3, close with Hong Hanh’s house”. However, D.T.C was busy to meeting and thus, her husband to go and get “gift”. After completing meeting, she come back home and see one black bag on table, meanwhile her husband slept. She opened and checked this bag that covers 60 blocks of heroin. She connects to N.T.C who requires separating three times for delivering with 20 blocks per time. D.T.C transported three times to one man in Haiphong at the Metro Supermarket area who got twice times in the past. After completing, N.T.C told her come N.T.H’s house to take beneficial money, including 2,700 USD for interest rate and 800 USD for hire’s transporting.

4th shipment:
After the third shipment is around 20 days, N.T.C calls D.T.C to stop for ordering heroin from T.B.H’s source and change by other source, N.T.L. They integrated “signal and communication” to connect and discuss via “go and come to coffee”. Based on these special principles, after 10 days, D.T.C and N.T.L met each other at one place where they were already set up. At there, D.T.L sent one back bag contains 9 blocks of heroin to D.T.C. After that, D.T.C delivered directly to Haiphong by herself to one man at Metro Supermarket. When finishing the send and receive’ process, N.T.C guides to D.T.C to go N.T.H’s house to take beneficial money, including 2,700 USD for interest rate and 800 USD for hire’s transporting.

5th shipment:
After the fourth shipment is around one week, with the similar modus operandi as previous operation, between D.T.C and N.T.L continued to cooperate for depositing and ordering heroin first and then, D.T.C delivered 11 blocks of heroin to Haiphong at the Metro Supermarket with one man. After completing, N.T.C asked D.T.C come to N.T.H’s house to take beneficial money, including 2,700 USD for interest rate and 800 USD for hire’s transporting.

6th shipment:
The first days of November 2012, N.T.C commented to D.T.C that “when T.B.H calls to drink coffee, we will meet”. After that, T.B.H called for D.T.C said “we shall go to dinner, but other people meet you at the C9’s bridge”. They discussed and integrated with “secrete signal” that D.T.C will return her motorcycle’s plate
number to oppose with Highway No 279 in order to those man recognize to her appearance. Following up these their notations, around 7p.m D.T.C drove her motorcycle to appointment’s place and wait for there. After an hour, one man who wears full helmet and not clear face, drive motorcycle with Airblade’s brand name to come and send one black bag contains 12 blocks of heroin to her, nothing more, and nothing less. She concealed at her house and deliver to one man at the Metro Supermarket in Haiphong as same as previous locations. Again, she reported for N.T.C “done” returned Dienbien immediately. Around five days later, N.T.C called D.T.C to come N.T.H’s house to take beneficial money, including 3,600 USD for interest rate and 800 USD for hire’s transporting.

7th shipment:

After the sixth shipment is around one week, continuing to employ similar modus operandi in communication, discussion, and connection, D.T.C met one man who sent heroin to her in the previous time, to receive 14 blocks of heroin. All of these heroin’s quantities was stockpiled and concealed at her private house before shipping to Haiphong as same as location and information in the past. Between both of them were not exchanged any more. After this time, N.T.C called D.T.C to come N.T.H’s house to take beneficial money, including 3,600 USD for interest rate and 800 USD for hire’s transporting.

8th shipment:

On 25th November 2012, D.T.C called to talk N.T.C that “I have already a little bit private owner money; please help me to look for purchasing heroin”. N.T.C agreed and advised the price of 13,500 USD per a pairs of heroin. Supporting for this price, D.T.C took 54,000 USD to come N.T.H’s house to urge buy heroin. He accepted and sent it to T.B.H for purchasing heroin. After two days, T.B.H called D.T.C with statement that “have a dinner, but other people meet you at the C9’s bridge”. She agreed and came there on 7p.m. At this point, the man who met her in the past and also sent one black bag with 10 blocks of heroin to her. Once again, this bag was stockpiled at her private house until N.T.C required for transporting. This time was different to previous shipment, N.T.C advised her to calm down for delivering. Therefore, after three days, on 28th November 2012, N.T.L who is N.T.C’s younger sister, asked D.T.C separate 1 out of 10 blocks of heroin to bring her house for her husband’s using. The rest of heroin was continued to conceal in yellow leather bag at her house. On 29th November 2012, T.B.H called for D.T.C that “go to dinner, but other man meet you”. It means that employing send and receive’ process. To implement this modus operandi, around 6p.m, she came to this place to wait for T.B.H’s representatives who he is similar characteristics with man in all of previous time, but she was not confirmed exactly due to he is always wear the helmet. After receiving this bag, she delivered it to come back her house, however when on the road, she captured by law enforcement agencies at No.4 unit, Thanhuyen commune, Dienbien district. At the scene, she was arrested with 22 blocks of heroin in bag.
**Circumstance #2: From the first days of 2011 to the first days of 2012**

Apart from all of these above cases, D.T.C confessed to different shipments with other subjects from the first days of 2011 to 2012 as following:

**1st shipment:**
On the first day of 2011, not remember exactly date, N.T.N colluded D.T.C for couriering heroin to N.T.X and D.T.C accepted. However, agreement between price and hire’s transporting, it is only discussed and integrated by N.T.N and N.T.X, D.T.C has not informed. After that, N.T.N connected directly to T.B.H to deposit and order heroin. When “gift” already, N.T.N and D.T.C catch up with bus to Haiduong province to L.T.H. During trading, N.T.N introduced her name is “M” and D.T.C is “H”.

**2nd shipment:**
After the first shipment is around 20 days, keeping on the previous modus operandi, N.T.N and D.T.C was hired by N.T.X to deliver two blocks of heroin to L.T.H at Haiduong province. After some days, N.T.N informed D.T.C that L.T.H and N.T.X commented one out of two blocks of heroin is bad quality. Therefore, N.T.X urged N.T.N come back Haiduong province to take it and return Dienbien province for refunding.

**3rd shipment:**
After around two months, N.T.N and D.T.C continued to deliver heroin for N.T.X’s ordering. Again, both of them catch up with bus from Dienbien to Haiduong to ship two blocks of heroin to L.T.H. After some days, N.T.N informed D.T.C that they report their partners was arrested by law enforcement agencies and thus, no money paid for them.

After three times for delivering, N.T.X paid for N.T.N’s hire’s transporting but D.T.C was not clear how much. She was only received 6,000,000 VND, equivalent with around 300 USD. In addition, they declared that “stoping for N.T.X”

**4th shipment:**
The end days of 2011, N.T.N questioned D.T.C that “Have you available any heroin resource? If so, take it to sale L.T.H, don’t care N.T.X”. D.T.C accepted this ways and between N.T.N, D.T.C and L.T.H established one “new ring” that needn’t to bridge N.T.X. Following up this planning, D.T.C sought to new supplier, N.T.T who lives at Thanhchan commune, Dienbien district. She ordered two blocks with the price of 150,000,000,000 VND, equivalent with around 7,500 USD per block. After examining, she only chooses one and returns one for bad quality. This block was concealed in one biscuit and covered by red bag. Also, it was shipped
by D.T.C and N.T.N via bus transportation from Dienbien to Haiduong for trading. N.T.N sent directly it to L.T.H at the 555’s restaurant with price of 180,000,000 VND, equivalent with around 8,000 USD. After completing this shipment, N.T.N was busy with her private family; she did not join any more time.

5th shipment:

The first days of 2012, D.T.C connected to N.T.L for purchasing a pair of heroin with price of 7,000 USD per block. She bought two blocks, but she covered one block in biscuit’s coverage and conceals it in the red bag to deliver L.T.H via bus route from Dienbien to Haiduong; other is kept in her house. At this time, they integrated to change place at the Haiduong’s hospital area in lieu of restaurant. The price of this block was set up with 180,000,000,000 VND, but L.T.H paid only 110,000,000,000 VND first and 70,000,000,000 VND was debt in the next time.

6th shipment:

After the fifth shipment is around 1 month, D.T.C delivered the rest of block that bought from N.T.L, to L.T.H with the same modus operandi, from stockpiling to transporting. At this time, they continued to select the Haiduong’s hospital area to exchange. After three days, L.T.H informed D.T.C that her partner was arrested with this block when come to China and therefore, she cannot collect money. Accordingly, she suggested to delay payment for D.T.C with twice times is 250,000,000,000 VND, equivalent with around 11,500 USD.

Apart from 14 shipments on above with 164 blocks of heroin, D.T.C confessed to contribution with 4 times to shared budget with N.T.L to trade with one woman, nickname “C” in Hanoi

In conclusion, combining both of above circumstance, offender’s roles and their criminal abilities was identified as follow:

- D.T.C commits with 12 times unlawful trading drugs that is divided into two stages. The first stage, from the first days of 2011 to the first days of 2012, committed six times with 8 blocks of heroin, equivalent with around 2.770.4 grams, to L.T.H. The second stage, from July 2012 to 29th November 2012, she committed six times with 124 blocks to trade at Haiphong. Amongst of two stages, there are 31 blocks be caught with red handle at the scene and 93 blocks was succeeded. To sum, she must be responded with 132 blocks, equivalent with around 45.795.27 grams of heroin. He played as organizer and executor in this operation which he can cover his cases with mobile connection and fluid movement as “roving commission”.

- N.T.C with six times unlawful trading drugs, including 124 blocks of heroin, equivalent approximately 43.024.87 grams in which she was caught with “red handle” with 31 blocks and the rest of heroin was succeeded. She played an organizer and executor this syndicate. Although she is live in Hanoi, not in Dienbien province,
through communications’ network, she led to her disciples and partners to implement with a number of diverse plans and its tricky modus operandi. All of shipments, she is always stand out and never appear direct. This demonstrated her important role in this case as one big boss.

- T.B.H plays a supplier heroin for D.T.C and N.T.C in unlawful stockpiling, transporting, and trading network. With this role, although he stands out all of shipments, he has to be responded for his trading’s contributions in each case. Accordingly, from the first days to the end of 2011, he commits with three times with five blocks to supply D.T.C for sale to L.T.H in Haiduong province, equivalent with around 1.731.5 grams of heroin. In addition, between July and 29th November 2012, he provides six times with 124 blocks for D.T.C and N.T.C’ groups to trade in Haiphong. To sum, he is punished by with 129 blocks, equivalent with around 44.755.37 grams of heroin. He also played a positive role as an instigator to support his partners to commit in the long period before arresting. In addition, he confessed to purchase1, 97 grams of opium of Hmong ethnical man in Dien Bien Dong district for retailing.

- N.T.H plays as helper to receive money and deposit it for purchasing heroin. With this role, he contributes to unlawful trade six times with 124 blocks, equivalent with around 43.024,87 grams of heroin.

- N.T.X plays organizer’s role in three times to order D.T.C and N.T.N to deliver and trade L.T.H in Haiduong province, with five blocks, equivalent with around 1.731,5 grams of heroin. In addition, she also contributed her finance to join D.T.C’s network to trade with N.T.C and T.B.H three times with six blocks, equivalent with around 2.077,8 grams of heroin. Totally, she commits six times with 11 blocks, equivalent with around 8.809,3 grams of heroin.

- L.T.H plays executor’s role in six times with eight blocks, equivalent with around 2.770,4 grams of heroin to purchase it from D.T.C, N.T.N, and N.T.X’ group. After collecting, all of these drugs was re-sale to other subjects in Langson province where closed borderland with China. Although she is a communist party membership, she breaks legal regulations of a CP’s participant that is not permit to employ.

- N.T.N joins in N.T.X, T.B.H, and D.T.C’s network to sale for L.T.H’s ring in three times and also helps D.T.C to deliver heroin for L.T.H in one time. Totally, with four times, she contributed to unlawful transporting and trading with six blocks, equivalent with around 2.077,8 grams of heroin.

- There are five different involvers, including B.H.H, L.A.T, L.A.H, L.V.V, and B with the different roles in this network. However, with B.H.H, L.A.T, and L.A.H were escaped at their local residence and therefore criminal investigation department was order “special wanted warrant”. Both of the rest, L.V.V and B are not enough evidences and legal matters to prosecute and thus, they are not mention in this case.
### Case study 6 (CS6): N.T.T and his accomplices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name Case</th>
<th>Offender Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Related Actor(s)</th>
<th>Drug Type</th>
<th>Drug Quantity</th>
<th>Source Drug</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N.T.T and his accomplices refers to Article 194</td>
<td>1. N.T.T</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>- Organizer</td>
<td>1. H.N.C (Laotian) Supplier</td>
<td>- Heroin</td>
<td>- 208 blocks, the equivalence of 72.864.5 grams in which 58 blocks, the equivalence of 20.318 grams is direct evidence</td>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. P.T.L</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>- Helper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>4. B.N.T</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>- Helper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. X.N.C</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Laotian</td>
<td>- Drug courier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. N.X</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Laotian</td>
<td>- Drug courier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. T.V.L</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>- Helper (concealing offences) - Helper (Failing to denounce offences)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. T.T.H</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- ATS</td>
<td>- 321 tablets, the equivalence of 30 grams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Northern Central provinces in general and Nghean and Hatinh’ provinces in particular has always been identified as a "hot spot" on the situation of trafficking and transporting drugs across border between Vietnam and Laos. From there, a number of illegal narcotics distributed throughout areas in the country with the nature of increasingly complex situation, from South to North. By early June 2012, through the work of the situation, law enforcement agencies discovered a number of suspects who was colluded with Laos’ drug lords to transport narcotics back Vietnam under covering of business’s activities. After completing these “goods”, it will be spread out the provinces of Bacninh, Langson, Haiphong, Ho Chi Minh City, and even to China for consumption. Accordingly, those traffickers established the roadmap to go Laos through the Cautreo International Border Gate before entry the town of Lacxao (Laos) for collecting and delivering drugs into Vietnam.
Head of this transnational drug trafficking is led by N.T.T, 44 years old and was born in Namdan district (Nghe An), known as Mr. Big boss. His syndicate was only blocked with 58 cakes of heroin in last shipment on 28th December 2012 after a journey with 50 kilometres transporting route from Laos to Vietnam.

**Circumstance #1: Trading and transporting 58 blocks of heroin and 321 tablets of ATS of N.T.T, T.V.T, X.N.C, N.X, and B.N.T**

Under shadowing as a timber merchant boss, N.T.T always proved to be a rich and successful merchant, however, hiding behind this glamour that was a very wise man, devious and cunning. Based on the previous relationship in terms of drug trafficking between N.T.T (Vietnamese) and H.N.C (Laotian), on 26th December 2012, N.T.T suggested purchasing 60 blocks of heroin from H.N.C who lived at Muongkhamcot district, Bolykhamxay province, Lao PDR with price of 7,500 USD per block. After getting four billion VND from N.T.T, H.N.C borrowed one Toyota Hilux car with Lao’s license plate registration (9977) of X.N.C to conceal all of drugs into secondary fuel tank. On 27th December 2012, X.N.C came to H.N.C’s house to get this car, at there, H.N.C urged X.N.C to transport drugs to Vietnam, but he refused due to fearing risks if only he deliver. Therefore, H.N.C called N.X, his brother’s wife, to join in with hire’s transporting of 1,000 USD per one. Both of them agreed and received 500 USD of H.N.C to pump fuel and take a rest on the road. In addition, H.N.C advised both of them drive across the Chalo International border-gate, Quangbînh province in lieu of the Cautreo International border-gate, Hatinh province. Accordingly, N.X drove across the Chalo International border-gate and completes customs’ procedure at there and goes to Ho Chi Minh’s square, Vinh city, Nghean province.

Under leading of N.T.T, his cabinet, T.V.T, picked up X.N.C and N.X and arranged them to stay the Hoa Phuong Do’s Hotel. Meanwhile, he drives Lao’s license plate registration to the Vinh highway. He waits for T.T.H at Nghîlong commune, Nghîloc district take one suitcase. Besides that, he also called for B.N.T drive car with Vietnam’s license registration (37C-054.33). At that time, he change drugs from secondary fuel tank to suitcase and inform to N.T.T: “full gift”. After that, he and T.T.H drive car to Rung Thong’s petrol shop to meet B.N.T with the purpose of changing car to avoid law enforcement’s exploring. Accordingly, T.V.T took the suitcase and swaps his car, a Lao’s Toyota Hilux, to B.N.T’s car, a Vietnam’s plate number. However, when driving on the road, they are explored and pursued by police patrol. In order to avoid to arrest, T.V.T throw suitcase out on the kerb and re-call for B.N.T return this point to seek again. Between T.V.T and B.N.T are integrate signature and places to T.V.T return to take it. Apart from all of heroin in suitcase left on the road to T.V.T get on, B.N.T hold two bags contain 321 tablets of ATS and conceal in toilet’s room of the Hong Quyet’s Motel. In turn, to avoid police’s investigation, T.V.T drive car (37C-054.35) go to a yield to leave there and go to 555-Lam Duc’s petrol shop to wait for N.T.T pick up. Around 30 minutes later, N.T.T, T.V.Tg, and T.V.L come there by N.T.T’s car (37S-3438). Under N.T.T’s leaderships, T.V.T and T.V.L have to continue transport suitcase’s drug to conceal in other location until be explored by police force.
**Circumstance #2:** Trading 150 blocks of heroin of N.T.T and T.V.T and transporting 60 blocks of heroin of P.T.L

**1st shipment:**
On October 2012 N.T.T bought 30 blocks of heroin, equivalent with around 10.509,3 grams, from H.N.C (Laotian) with 7,500 USD per block, in sum of 225,000 USD. H.N.C covered this entire block as a “gift” and delivered to T.V.T at one hotel in Vinh city (capital of Nghean province). After that, N.T.T required T.V.T transport it to go Langson where shared borderland with China, in order to takeover T.H (Chinese). With this shipment, they sold with prices of 8,700 USD per block, in sum of 261,000 USD.

**2nd shipment:**
On October 2012, N.T.T sent two billion VND (around 1,000,000 USD) to H.N.C in Muongkhamcot district, Bolykhamxay province, Lao PDR to deposit to purchase 30 blocks of heroin, equivalent with around 10.509,3 grams, with price of 7,500 USD per block. After receiving full enough of money, H.N.C sent “gift” to Vietnam for N.T.T. This package was received by T.V.T who is co-offender with N.T.T at Linh Cam’s bridge, Ductho district, Hatinh province. With this gift, N.T.T required T.V.T call for P.T.L in Yenphong district, Bacninh Province to join in delivery to T.H (Chinese) at Langson. They got around 3,2 billion VND from this shipment in which N.T.T paid 50,000,000 VND for P.T.L and 130,000,000 VND for T.V.T as hire’s transporting. The rest of benefits belong to N.T.T with around 600,000,000 VND after deducting money’s purchase of heroin from H.N.C (Laotian),

**3rd shipment:**
On November 2012, with similar modus operandi to purchase heroin as previous twice times, N.T.T continued to send 2 billion VND to deposit 30 blocks of heroin, equivalent with around 10.509,3 grams, of H.N.C. Again, when receiving money, H.N.C packed drugs into a bag and send to T.V.T at Linh Cam’s bridge. In terms of transport this gift, it employed and implemented by T.V.T and P.T.L via catch up a car to Langson province to meet T.H (Chinese). They got around 3.2 billion VND from this shipment in which N.T.T paid 70,000,000 VND for P.T.L and 130,000,000 VND for T.V.T as hire’s transporting. The rest of benefits belong to N.T.T with around 600,000,000 VND after deducting money’s purchase of heroin from H.N.C (Laotian).
4th shipment:

On 18th December 2012, N.T.T has been received four billion VND by T.H (Chinese) and sent to H.N.C (Laotian) to deposit 60 blocks of heroin, equivalent with around 21,018.6 grams, with price of 7,500 UND per block, in sum of 450,000 USD. After receiving money, H.N.C concealed all of these drugs into Hilux car to transport to Vietnam. N.T.T led to T.V.T meet and received this package at LyThuongKiet Street, near LeLoi Kindergarten School. To escort this shipment, T.V.T used to Lao’s Toyota car and urged T.T.H to go Langson together. When go to Cuong’s temple, Dienan commune, Dienchau district, T.V.T changed drive’s plate number and continue to go Langson. When come there, T.V.T dropped N.T.T on road and then, he met two strange men who are T.H’s runners to send 60 blocks of heroin. After finish, he returned to pick up N.T.T and also pick up N.T.T and T.V.L who they went to Langson before come back Nghean. This shipment sold to T.H with price of 8,700 USD per block, in sum of 522,000 USD, equivalent with around 11 billion VND, and N.T.T extracted to pay for T.V.T with 300,000,000 VND.

In conclusion, combining both of above circumstance, offender’s roles and their criminal abilities was identified as follow:

- N.V.T and T.V.T commit five times unlawful trading drugs, including 208 blocks of heroin and 321 tablets of ATS, equivalent with around 72,864.5 grams of heroin and 30 grams of ATS.
- P.T.L plays role of transporter in delivery process with 60 blocks of heroin, equivalent with around 21,018.6 grams.
- N.X, X.N.C and B.N.T contribute to transport 58 blocks of heroin and 321 tablets of ATS, equivalent with around 20,318 grams of heroin and 30 grams of ATS
- T.V.L commits a concealing offense at article 313 of criminal code of Vietnam when though he knew T.V.T conceal heroin’s suitcase in bus (37B-00523), he kept in his thoughts and not report for law enforcement.
- T.T.H plays complicity’s role of this case when failing to denounce drug-related crimes of T.V.T under article 314 of criminal code of Vietnam
Appendix IV: RMIT Human Research Committee Ethic’s Approvals

Notice of Approval

Date: 18 April 2013
Project number: 51/13
Project title: Transnational narcotics trafficking and law enforcement: A Vietnam perspective
Risk classification: More than low risk
Investigator: A/Prof Paul Battersby

Approved: From: 18 April 2013 To: 31 December 2015

Terms of approval:

1. Responsibilities of investigator
   It is the responsibility of the above investigator to ensure that all other investigators and staff on a project are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure that the project is conducted as approved by HREC. Approval is only valid whilst investigator holds a position at RMIT University.

2. Amendments
   Approval must be sought from HREC to amend any aspect of a project including approved documents. To apply for an amendment use the request for amendment form, which is available on the HREC website and submitted to the HREC secretary. Amendments must not be implemented without first gaining approval from HREC.

3. Adverse events
   You should notify HREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse events on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.

4. Plain Language Statement (PLS)
   The PLS and any other material used to recruit and inform participants of the project must include the RMIT university logo. The PLS must contain a complaints clause including the above project number.

5. Annual reports
   Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an annual report.

6. Final report
   A final report must be provided at the conclusion of the project. HREC must be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.

7. Monitoring
   Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by HREC at any time.

8. Retention and storage of data
   The investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

9. Special conditions of approval
   The Human Research Ethics Committee approves this application on the following two conditions:
   1. Researcher is requested to pay specific attention to issues of data security, especially while data is being collected during fieldwork.
   2. Researcher is requested to provide a progress report to the committee on the project following a month of data collection and conduct of interviews.

In any future correspondence please quote the project number and project title above.

A/Prof Barbara Polus
Chairperson
RMIT HREC

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Appendix 4.1: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION (with those involving selected case studies)

Project Title: “Transnational Narcotics Trafficking and Law Enforcement: A Vietnam Perspective”

Investigators:

Ass Prof Paul Battersby, Chief investigator  paul.battersby@rmit.edu.au
Phone: (+613) 9925 2308

Dr. Aiden Warren, co-investigator  aiden.warren@rmit.edu.au
Phone: (+613) 9925 3708

Hai Thanh Luong, PhD candidate  haithanh.luong@rmit.edu.au
Phone: (+613) 9925 3025

Dear .............,

You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted by RMIT University. Please read this sheet carefully and be confident that you understand its contents before deciding whether to participate. If you have any questions about the project, please ask one of the investigators.
Who is involved in this research project? Why is it being conducted?

- This research is being conducted as part of a PhD program at RMIT University, Australia with the supervision of Associate Professor Paul Battersby. The research project is “Transnational Narcotics Trafficking and Law Enforcement: A Vietnam Perspective”. The researcher, Hai Thanh Luong, will be the person you meet.

- The researcher’s role is to interview law enforcement agencies to identify and assess the distinct characteristics in terms of organizational structure and modus operandi in six transnational narcotic trafficking cases. In addition, this project also conducts to frontline officers who involve directly into one of three case studies to make sense their strategies, measures, and planning to combat transnational narcotics trafficking in Vietnam, particularly across the Vietnam-Laos border.

- This research has been approved by the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee with official permission to conduct this fieldwork on the grounds that it poses no harm or risk to participants. However, participants have full rights to refuse to answer or give no answers without any dependency or pressures from investigators or others.

Why have you been approached?

We would like to invite you to provide information and data for this research because you employed or involved to implement criminal investigation’ tactics and planning to combat transnational narcotics trafficking. As in the key case studies, you have deeply understood organizational structure and modus operandi of transnational narcotics trafficking network, particularly with one of selected cases you involved directly. Therefore, both of your responses will be crucial for understanding comprehensively about the nature of transnational narcotics trafficking across the Vietnam’s borderlands with Laos.

What is the project about? What are the questions being addressed?

The goal of this research is to examine the distinct characteristics of transnational narcotics trafficking of law enforcement agencies in Vietnam.

If I agree to participate, what will I be required to do?

If you agree to participate, you will be invited to answer the questions about your relevant perceptions with either organizational structure or modus operandi of transnational narcotics trafficking in Vietnam; or both of them through interview meeting.

What are the possible risks or disadvantages?

- There are no risks or disadvantages to you or to your daily life.
• However, if you are unduly concerned about your responses to any of the given questions, you can suggest kindly with your authorities/managers/leaders to cease immediately. If you wish, Mr Hai Thanh Luong is available to discuss your concerns confidentially and suggest appropriate follow-up, if appropriate.

**What are the benefits associated with participation?**

Your agency’s participation in this project is completely voluntary and confidential, thus, there is no direct benefit to you. However, the final publication with key findings would be shared and recommended with you to identify organizational structure and modus operandi of transnational narcotics trafficking in the future.

**What will happen to the information I provide?**

• The information you provide will be anonymously safeguarded by this research. The information given by you is not identified in any stage of this study. Data will be aggregated for analysis and the researcher plans to use pseudonyms instead of real names.

• The results of this study will be disseminated in the form of journal articles and conference papers. The research data will be kept securely at RMIT for 5 years after publication and then being destroyed.

**What are my rights as a participant?**

• The right to withdraw from participation at any time

• The right to request that any recording cease

• The right to have any unprocessed data withdrawn and destroyed, provided it can be reliably identified, and provided that so doing does not increase the risk for the participant.

• The right to have any questions answered at any time.

**Whom should I contact if I have any questions?**

If necessary, you may contact the researcher through the following address:

Hai Thanh Luong, PhD Candidate, School of Global, Urban, and Social Science,

RMIT University, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
What other issues should I be aware of before deciding whether to participate?

• Please consider these issues before participation:

Your responses will be used for further studies or publications in similar disciplines to this study.

Yours sincerely,

Hai Thanh Luong

If you have any concerns about your participation in this project, which you do not wish to discuss with the researchers, then you can contact the Ethics Officer, Research Integrity, Governance and Systems, RMIT University, GPO Box 2476V VIC 3001. Tel: (03) 9925 2251 or email human.ethics@rmit.edu.au
Appendix 4.2: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION (with those not involving selected case studies)

Project Title: “Transnational Narcotics Trafficking and Law Enforcement: A Vietnam Perspective”

Investigators:

Ass Prof Paul Battersby, Chief investigator  paul.battersby@rmit.edu.au
Phone: (+613) 9925 2308

Dr. Aiden Warren, co-investigator  aiden.warren@rmit.edu.au
Phone: (+613) 9925 3708

Hai Thanh Luong, PhD candidate  haithanh.luong@rmit.edu.au
Phone: (+613) 9925 3025

Dear ............,

You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted by RMIT University. Please read this sheet carefully and be confident that you understand its contents before deciding whether to participate. If you have any questions about the project, please ask one of the investigators.

Who is involved in this research project? Why is it being conducted?

• This research is being conducted as part of a PhD program at RMIT University, Australia with the supervision of Associate Professor Paul Battersby. The research project is “Transnational Narcotics Trafficking and Law Enforcement: A Vietnam Perspective”. The researcher, Hai Thanh Luong, will be the person you meet.
• The researcher’s role is to identify and assess the distinct characteristics in terms of organizational structure and modus operandi of transnational narcotic trafficking cases through surveying law enforcement agencies. In particular, this project also conducts to criminal investigation police officers on drug-related crimes who involve directly into this crime’s type at their local areas to make sense their strategies, measures, and plans to combat transnational narcotics trafficking in Vietnam, particularly across the Vietnam-Laos border.

• This research has been approved by the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee with official permission to conduct this fieldwork on the grounds that it poses no harm or risk to participants. However, participants have full rights to refuse to answer or give no answers without any dependency or pressures from investigators or others.

Why have you been approached?

We would like to invite you to provide information and data for this research because you employed or involved to implement criminal investigation’ tactics and planning to combat transnational narcotics trafficking. Even though you are not involve directly investigating one of selected cases at this project, your experiences, responsibilities, and functions on fighting drug trafficking are useful to identify and examine main characteristics of those offenders. Furthermore, as police agent of anti-narcotics trafficking unit/squad, you have also spent lessons and moments in prevent and combat transnational narcotics trafficking, particularly at the Vietnam-Lao PDR border’ domains. Therefore, both of your responses will be crucial for gauging the nature of transnational narcotics trafficking in Vietnam.

What is the project about? What are the questions being addressed?

The goal of this research is to examine the distinct characteristics of transnational narcotics trafficking of law enforcement agencies in Vietnam.

If I agree to participate, what will I be required to do?

If you agree to participate, you will be invited to answer the questions about your relevant perceptions with either organizational structure or modus operandi of transnational narcotics trafficking in Vietnam; or both of them through survey’s questionnaires.

What are the possible risks or disadvantages?

• There are no risks or disadvantages to you or to your daily life.
• However, if you are unduly concerned about your responses to any of the given questions, you can suggest kindly with your authorities/managers/leaders to cease immediately. If you wish, Mr Hai Thanh Luong is available to discuss your concerns confidentially and suggest appropriate follow-up, if appropriate.

What are the benefits associated with participation?

Your agency’s participation in this project is completely voluntary and confidential, thus, there is no direct benefit to you. However, the final publication with key findings would be shared and recommended with you to identify organizational structure and modus operandi of transnational narcotics trafficking in the future with your local territories where were not covered from selected.

What will happen to the information I provide?

• The information you provide will be anonymously safeguarded by this research. The information given by you is not identified in any stage of this study. Data will be aggregated for analysis and the researcher plans to use pseudonyms instead of real names.

• The results of this study will be disseminated in the form of journal articles and conference papers. The research data will be kept securely at RMIT for 5 years after publication and then being destroyed.

What are my rights as a participant?

• The right to withdraw from participation at any time

• The right to request that any recording cease

• The right to have any unprocessed data withdrawn and destroyed, provided it can be reliably identified, and provided that so doing does not increase the risk for the participant.

• The right to have any questions answered at any time.

Whom should I contact if I have any questions?

If necessary, you may contact the researcher through the following address:

Hai Thanh Luong, PhD Candidate, School of Global, Urban, and Social Science,
What other issues should I be aware of before deciding whether to participate?

• Please consider these issues before participation:

Your responses will be used for further studies or publications in similar disciplines to this study.

Yours sincerely,

Hai Thanh Luong

If you have any concerns about your participation in this project, which you do not wish to discuss with the researchers, then you can contact the Ethics Officer, Research Integrity, Governance and Systems, RMIT University, GPO Box 2476 VIC 3001. Tel: (03) 9925 2251 or email human.ethics@rmit.edu.au
Appendix 4.3: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Project Title: “Transnational Narcotics Trafficking and Law Enforcement: A Vietnam Perspective”

Interviews will be conducted with agencies and individuals who are part of anti-transnational narcotics trafficking’s headquartered branch in Ho Chi Minh City and law enforcement department/units in some of provinces, namely Dienbien, Nghean, Quangtri, and Quangbinh where located share with common border with Lao PDR. The Purpose of the interviews is to collect information about structures and operations’ characteristics of transnational narcotics trafficking.

The names and identities of all individuals participating in interviews will be kept confidential. All interviewee names will be given a unique personal code number and linked to personal contact information on a master log. Only personal codes will be used and interpreted in transcripts of interviews – no names or other identifiers are to be recorded only. Follow up that needs identifiers can be conducted through reference to the log, which will be secured along with focus group notes in a locked drawer inside a locked office at RMIT University where the researcher located. All computerized information will be stored on a secure, password protected computer or server. Access to the data will be restricted to principal research student only.

Prior to conducting interviews:

- Schedule interviews, either in person or telephone
- Verbally inform the individual that the study is voluntary and confidential
- Administer passive consent, and briefly explain more detail the study to the interviewee
- Ask questions that are designed for the agency in which the interviewee works (please see below – questions for Criminal Investigation Police on Drug-Related Crime Officer, CIPDRC) or use the questions as a guideline for discussion.
Thank you for taking your time to participate in this research.

Your responses to this interview will be anonymous. I will code your personal details in the final research report and any publications to maintain your anonymity. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Date: ......................... Time commenced: .........................

1. General information

Organization: .................................................................

Your current position: ......................................................

How long have you been in this position? ................................

How many years of working experience in this agency?
2. Information about the case

The researcher will identify the specific case study that he wants to talk about (name of the case, location, starting and finishing time)

- What was your role in this case?
- What were the objectives of this case?
- What is kind of drug trafficking in this case? How much quantities and exhibits this case were seized (e.g. quantity of drugs, real-estate, transportation’s vehicle, equipment and so on)?
- How was this case employed? (Please describe the implementation process of this case from institute to finish)

3. Characteristics of transnational narcotics trafficking’ cases

3.1. Factors related to organizational structure

- Who were involved in this case? How many Vietnamese and Laotian traffickers related, investigated, and arrested?
- What were organized to operate by traffickers in this case? How is the role of organizers (big boss) and their cabinet’s participants?
- In your opinion, can you describe or explain what is the predominant network applied in this case?
- How can between those traffickers to connect and implement their operations in this case?
- What are the special issues, for example ‘soft law’ that was employed by traffickers in this case?

3.2. Factors related to modus operandi

- Where are main places they collect drug? (Either internal Laotian or closed border’ provinces between Laos and Vietnam?)
- What are modus operandi to employ at Vietnam and Laos’ domains? In your opinion, they were often order and obey at Vietnam first or Laos first or parallel?
- What are types of transportation traffickers use to transfer drug from Lao to Vietnam (e.g. car, van, long vehicle and so on)?
- What the main routes drug couriers to apply and why they select it?
- What are ‘tactic cheatings’ to avoid law enforcement agencies’ investigative activities in stockpiling, transporting and trading drug trafficking?
- How they can overcome law enforcement agencies’ investigative process in this case?

4. Suggestions

- What are barriers and challenges to combat transnational narcotics trafficking your police force have to face?
- What are issues should be focused to strengthen international cooperation between law enforcement agencies of Vietnam and others, particularly with Lao PDR? If so, please specific.
- If I need to clarify any points, do you mind if I get back to you?

Thank you very much for your participation in this interview!
Appendix 4.4: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE PROTOCOL

(This protocol will be used as a framework for the survey)

Project Title: “Transnational Narcotics Trafficking and Law Enforcement: A Vietnam Perspective”

Investigators:

Ass Prof Paul Battersby, Chief investigator  paul.battersby@rmit.edu.au
Phone: (+613) 9925 2308

Dr. Aiden Warren, co-investigator  aiden.warren@rmit.edu.au
Phone: (+613) 9925 3708

Hai Thanh Luong, PhD candidate  haithanh.luong@rmit.edu.au
Phone: (+613) 9925 3025

Dear Criminal Investigation Police on Drug-Related Crimes Officer (CIPDRC),

In recent years, complicated trends of transnational drug trafficking at the Southeast Asia in general and cross-border between nations cover common frontier, such as Vietnam and Lao PDR in particular, have become a remarkable concern for regional and national security. It also requires law enforcement issue facing many of our local communities. Under official permission of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT University) Human Research Ethic Committee, our group designed and established survey questionnaire protocol that examine organizational structure and modus operandi of transnational narcotics trafficking under law enforcement agencies’ analyses and evaluations. Your assistance in completing the enclosed survey is critical to understanding characteristics of drug trafficking in Vietnam. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and confidential. At any time, you may decline to answer specific questions.
Thank you for taking the time to assist us in this important study. The information you provide will help our group more accurately assess the characteristics of transnational narcotics trafficking in Vietnam, particularly crossing the Vietnam’s borderland with Laos.

Many thanks for your consentient to be interviewed!

Transnational Narcotics Trafficking and Law Enforcement:
A Vietnam Perspective
(SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE)

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is this study being conducted?

Through examining of law enforcement agencies, this study is designed to identify organizational structure and modus operandi of transnational narcotics trafficking across the Vietnam-Lao PDR border’s domain. Based on these outcomes, combining with initial findings from in-depth interview is to assess recognition and opinions of CIPDRC officer at provincial shared borderland between Vietnam and Laos. Additionally, it is also contribute to identify barriers and challenges of this force have to combat transnational narcotic trafficking in Vietnam as well.

Why is your participant important?

Your participant in this study is completely voluntary. However, we need complete information from a wide range of agencies that may have opinions, sharing or experiences with transnational narcotics trafficking for the study to provide faithful outcomes

What happen if you have not implemented any transnational narcotics trafficking case since the past 5 years?

Please fill out Part 1 of Questionnaire and return it. Even if you did not have a transnational narcotics trafficking case, your basic information are significant to us in this survey.
**Whom can we contact for questions?**

If you have questions about the survey or would like to suggest different points of the survey, please contact Hai Thanh Luong at haithanh.luong@rmit.edu.au or +84904151716 (Vietnam). If you have any further questions or concerns about the confidentiality and protection of information or your participation in this survey, please you can contact the Ethics Officer, Research Integrity, Governance and Systems, RMIT University, GPO Box 2476 VIC 3001. Tel: (03) 9925 2251 or email human.ethics@rmit.edu.au
Part I. Personal information

1. Gender Male □ Female □

2. Which is your position on above form?
   Senior Detective □
   Immediate Detective □
   Elementary Detective □
   Assistant Detective □

3. How long have you served in law enforcement agencies, at the time of survey?
   Time < 5 years □
   5 years < time < 10 years □
   10 years < time < 15 years □
   Over 15 years □

4. Have you implemented to investigate any transnational narcotics trafficking case since the last 5 years?
   Yes □ No □

   If yes, please focusing on one of the most impressive cases in your investigating life with main criteria as follow:
   - Be colluded between Vietnamese and Laotian subjects in this case
   - Have at least two subjects
II. Organizational Structure of Transnational Narcotics Trafficking

Regarding to your case investigated, our survey only want to focus on five main issues in terms of organization structure of transnational narcotics trafficking. There are includes 1) group size, 2) the role of leader, 3) the process of membership’s recruitment, 4) adaptation of this network, and 5) the age, influences and experience of traffickers.

1. Which is the most important contribution of numbers of group members to structure of transnational narcotics trafficking?

   1. To increase scale of group
   2. To contribute diverse modus operandi of group
   3. To create a dominant influence of group with their peers

2. What is the most important role of leader in transnational narcotics trafficking entities?

   1. To establish organization structure
   2. To build a specific plan
   3. To adjust modus operandi
3. What is drug traffickers’ *most* prioritized characteristic when looking for recruits?
   
   1. Fellow-countrymen
   2. Family ties
   3. Friend-in-prison bonds

4. What is the *most* conditioned stimulus to impact on the adaptability of transnational narcotics trafficking?
   
   1. Change in drug market
   2. Police operations and monitoring
   3. Personal attributes of traffickers

5. Which the *most* important criteria to identify tasks of trafficker in organizational structure of a transnational narcotics trafficking group?
   
   1. Based on trafficker’s charisma
   2. Based on trafficker’s experiences
   3. Based on trafficker’s age
III. Modus Operandi

Regarding to your case investigated, our survey only want to focus on seven main issues in terms of modus operandi of transnational narcotics trafficking. There are includes 1) to exploit drug source, 2) to conceal drugs, 3) to transport, 4) to send and receive, 5) communicate, 6) to protest police officer, and 7) to launder money.

1. Where were often drugs sourced by drug traffickers across the Vietnam’s borders with Laos?
   
   1. Laos’ domestic territories
   2. At “blurred frontiers” between Vietnam and Laos
   3. From within Vietnam

2. Which is the most popular form of concealment for drugs transported from Laos territory into Vietnam’s markets?
   
   1. To mix illegal goods and legal goods
   2. To carry on person
   3. To separate multi packages to hide into transportation’s vehicle

3. Which is the most popular form drug courier to transport drugs from Laos to Vietnam?
   
   1. By roadway
   2. By foots via mountainous pathways and forest lands
   3. By railway

4. Where is the most popular location to implement send-and-receive drugs from Laos to Vietnam?
   
   1. At Laos’s territories
   2. At the “blurred interconnection’s point” between two sides
   3. At Vietnam’s domains
5. Which is the *most* popular form to communicate between traffickers from Vietnam to Laos and converse for exchanging information?

1. By mobile phone  
2. Face to face  
3. By the Internet

6. How drug traffickers *often* respond to your arrest’s operations to achieve final motivations in transporting drugs?

1. To dispose of drugs and flee  
2. To resist police  
3. Accept arrest

7. Which was the *most* popular form drug trafficker launder their illegal benefits?

1. Traded investments  
2. Play gambling  
3. Purchase military weapons

*Thank you very much for your involvement!*
### Appendix V: THE OUTCOMES OF THE CHI-SQUARE TEST FOR INDEPENDENT IN SPSS

#### Case Processing Summary

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<td>-------</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
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<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>19.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>8.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qtri</td>
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<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonla</td>
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</table>

Total Count: 19 19 22 19 21 21 121
### Crosstab

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dbien</th>
<th>Ktum</th>
<th>Nghean</th>
<th>Qbinh</th>
<th>Qtri</th>
<th>Sonla</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% within size of group</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within location</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
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</table>

### Chi-Square Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

a. 6 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.88.
## The role of leader * location

### Crosstab

<table>
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<th>Role of Leader</th>
<th>location</th>
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<th>Ktum</th>
<th>Nghean</th>
<th>Qbinh</th>
<th>Qtri</th>
<th>Sonla</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To establish organization structure</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>52</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within the role of leader</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within location</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
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<td>23.8%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
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<td>% of Total</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To build a specific plan</td>
<td>Count</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>9.6</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within the role of leader</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>26.3%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To adjust modus operandi</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>12.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.0%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>121</td>
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<td>19.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>121.0</td>
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</table>

385
## Crosstab

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dbien</th>
<th>Ktum</th>
<th>Nghean</th>
<th>Qbinh</th>
<th>Qtri</th>
<th>Sonla</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% within the role of leader</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
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<td>15.7%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within location</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>15.7%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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</table>

### Chi-Square Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>df</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
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a. 6 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.26.
## Recruit drug traffickers * location

<table>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Ktum</td>
<td>Nghean</td>
<td>Qbinh</td>
<td>Qtri</td>
<td>Sonla</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Count</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>fellow-countrymen</td>
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<td>5.2</td>
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<td>5.7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>16.0%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
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<td>9.9%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>62.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>19.0</td>
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<td>19.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>121.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Crosstab

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>location</th>
<th>Bien</th>
<th>Ktum</th>
<th>Nghean</th>
<th>Qbinh</th>
<th>Qtri</th>
<th>Sonla</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% within recruit drug traffickers</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% within location</td>
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<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>15.7%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chi-Square Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>28.055</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>25.200</td>
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<td>.005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>11.041</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

N of Valid Cases | 121

---

a. 6 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.04.
### Adaptation of network * location

#### Crosstab

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dbien</th>
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<th>Nghean</th>
<th>Qbinh</th>
<th>Qtri</th>
<th>Sonla</th>
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### Chi-Square Tests

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a. 6 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.36.
### Age, charisma and experiences * location

#### Crosstab

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Based on trafficker's charisma

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Based on trafficker's experience

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Based on trafficker's age

### Total

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### Chi-Square Tests

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a. 6 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.04.
## Drug source exploitation * location

### Crosstab

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### Chi-Square Tests

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a. 6 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.08.
Conceal drugs for transporting * location

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## Crosstab

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<th>Qtri</th>
<th>Sonla</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>17.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>100.0%</td>
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### Chi-Square Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
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a. 6 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.04.
**Forms to deliver drugs * location**

<table>
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<td>Ktum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>by roadway</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
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<td>8.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>% within forms to deliver drugs</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9.1%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>by foots via mountainous pathways and forested lands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Count</td>
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<td>9.3</td>
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<td>9.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>by railway</strong></td>
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<td>% of Total</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<tr>
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### Crosstab

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<th>Sonla</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within location</td>
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<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
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### Chi-Square Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
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<td>Linear-by-Linear Assoc</td>
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N of Valid Cases: 121

a. 6 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.26.
### Send and receive drugs * location

<table>
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</tr>
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<td>5.5</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>% within location</td>
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<td>5.0%</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
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<td>Dbien</td>
<td>Ktum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Count</strong></td>
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</tr>
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<td>Ktum</td>
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<td>% within location</td>
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<tr>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<th>location</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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### Crosstab

<table>
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<tr>
<th>location</th>
<th>Dbien</th>
<th>Ktum</th>
<th>Nghean</th>
<th>Qbinh</th>
<th>Qtri</th>
<th>Sonla</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% within send and receive drugs</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
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<td>18.2%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% within location</td>
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<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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<td>100.0%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>18.2%</td>
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### Chi-Square Tests

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
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<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
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<td>.013</td>
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a. 6 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.88.
### Communicate between traffickers * location

#### Crosstab

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<th>Nghean</th>
<th>Qbinh</th>
<th>Qtri</th>
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<td>79.3%</td>
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<td><strong>by mobile phone</strong></td>
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<td>8.3%</td>
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<td>1.7%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
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<td><strong>face to face</strong></td>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>22.0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
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<td>121.0</td>
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<tr>
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### Chi-Square Tests

<table>
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a. 6 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.93.
### Against LEAs arrest operations * location

#### Crosstab

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<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chi-Square Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>30.918</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>13.023</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N of Valid Cases: 121

a. 6 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.88.
## To launder illegal benefits * location

### Crosstab

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>location</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dbien</td>
<td>Ktum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>play gambling</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within to launder illegal benefits</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within location</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to launder illegal benefits</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within to launder illegal benefits</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within location</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purchased military weapons</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within to launder illegal benefits</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within location</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Chi-Square Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>26.709</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>22.689</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>4.487</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>121</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 6 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.88.