

Women' exploitation patterns as narcotics couriers: A study of participating victim

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Received
February 26, 2024

Revised
April 20, 2024

Accepted
May 8, 2024

Abstract

This research discusses the pattern of exploitation of women by their partners as drug couriers. This research uses the study of participating victims, namely someone who unconsciously becomes a victim because of his attitude that encourages him to become a victim. The purpose of this study is to analyze the recruitment patterns used by men as crime planners involving women as drug couriers. Thus, the pattern of exploitation that has occurred is expected to be the primary step in limiting drug couriers who use women as intermediaries in their crimes. Over five months, this study was carried out at the Pondok Bambu, Jakarta, and Tangerang Class II A Women's Correctional Institution. The subjects of this research were four informants involved in the crime and one informant from the Community Legal Aid Institute in Jakarta, who handled the case. This research uses a descriptive-qualitative approach with primary data sources and secondary data, namely, the results of interviews with research subjects and informants related to this crime, then examined in the form of narrative descriptions and using secondary data such as news, books, and data related to the research. The study's findings indicate that women become involved in drug-related crimes when they meet their partners, and then the partners use these women's emotions as leverage to conduct the crimes. In addition, the factor of being a victim of violence is also very influential on the existence of women involved in drug crime cases. Women's involvement in this case shields the male spouse from legal obligations and is not defended based on the pattern of exploitation they get, but women are convicted based on the evidence found against them.

Keywords: Woman Exploitation, Drug Courier, Participating Victim, Narcotics



Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas mengenai pola eksploitasi perempuan oleh pasangannya sebagai kurir peredaran narkoba. Dalam penelitian ini menggunakan kajian *participating victim* yaitu seseorang yang secara tidak sadar menjadi korban karena sikapnya yang mendorong menjadi korban. Tujuan dalam penelitian ini yaitu, menganalisis pola perekrutan yang digunakan laki-laki sebagai perencana kejahatan yang melibatkan perempuan sebagai kurir peredaran narkoba. Sehingga, pola eksploitasi yang telah dianalisis diharapkan menjadi langkah utama dalam memberantas para kurir narkoba yang menjadikan perempuan sebagai pelantara kejahatannya. Penelitian ini dilakukan dalam waktu 5 bulan di Lembaga Masyarakat Kelas II A Perempuan di Pondok Bambu, Jakarta dan Tangerang. Subjek penelitian ini berjumlah 4 orang narasumber yang terlibat dalam kejahatan tersebut dan 1 orang informan yaitu pihak Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Masyarakat di Jakarta yang menangani kasus tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan sumber data primer dan data sekunder yaitu, hasil wawancara dengan subjek dan informan penelitian yang terkait dengan kejahatan ini, kemudian diteliti kedalam bentuk uraian naratif dan menggunakan data sekunder seperti berita, buku dan data-data yang terkait dengan penelitian. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa keterlibatan perempuan dalam kejahatan narkoba berawal dari perkenalan perempuan dengan pasangannya, setelah itu perasaan perempuan tersebut dieksploitasi untuk memanipulasi kejahatan yang dibuat oleh pasangannya. Selain itu, faktor menjadi korban kekerasan juga sangat berpengaruh terhadap keberadaan perempuan yang terlibat kasus kejahatan narkoba ini. Keterlibatan perempuan dalam kasus ini digunakan untuk melindungi pihak laki-laki sebagai pasangannya agar mereka tidak terikat oleh hukum. Dalam kasus ini pun perempuan tidak dibela berdasarkan pola eksploitasi yang mereka dapatkan tetapi perempuan divonis berdasarkan barang bukti yang ditemukan pada perempuan.

Kata Kunci: *Eksplotasi Wanita, Kurir Narkoba, participating Victim, Narkoba*

INTRODUCTION

During the 1980s and 1990s, the employment of women as drug couriers increased dramatically. At this time, drug trafficking organizations are starting to recruit women for their operations (Adhitya, 2020). In the twenty-first century, the illegal drug trade in the United States is growing more and more powerful. Women are now playing a leading role in the drug economy in the United States, both as drug buyers and as participants in drug sales. Besides, criminal statistics show an increase in the population of prisons in the United States. According to the Institute on Women and Criminal Justice, the number of women in prison has increased by 757% between 1997 and almost doubled

that of men (Karnadi, 2022). The use of narcotic couriers, or people transporting narcotics from one location to another, has been a common practice in the illicit drug trade for years. For a variety of reasons, including monetary need, compulsion, and exploitation, women have participated in the drug courier industry. This is due to the fact that law enforcement organizations frequently believe that women are less likely to be looked at or suspected. Furthermore, some women exploit their feminine qualities to trick the police into thinking they are not expected to be suspected of being drug couriers. The type of narcotics is also one of the essential factors to interrelate because different narcotic drugs have various levels of stigma anyway, some of them strongly related to social class (Micheline D. Ludwick, Sheigla Murphy, 2015). Due to its location as an island state and its proximity to other nations, drug dealers have exploited numerous gaps in the law, making Indonesia a prime location for drug trafficking in Southeast Asia. According to a study conducted by the Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD), characteristic of Indonesia's narcotic trafficking network involves West African unions from Nigeria, Ghana, and Liberia who are involved in the heroin trade with women couriers in Indonesia. Since beginning its operations, the International Narcotics Union has employed various techniques and approaches. One of them employs females as messengers.

Within the drug trafficking phenomenon, women are frequently employed as drug couriers, which is the root cause of women working as drug couriers. Grundetjern (2015) asserted that poverty is the primary cause of women's involvement in international drug trafficking networks in nearly all nations, which is consistent with this opinion. However, behind poverty and its consequences is violence in the private sphere that has turned women into drug-like criminals. It is consistent with studies conducted by (Anastasia, 2010), who discovered that women who experience abuse constantly are unbroken and continuous. The layered violence that women experience both before and after the criminal justice system is directly related to the early violence they experienced and its early consequences in the crime. Many factors cause women to be involved in drug trafficking, so research is needed to find out if women are the perpetrators of crimes, such as being drug dealers. Women are not the most profitable people in this business (Erwin Owan Hermansyah Soetoto, Zulkifli Ismail, 2022). According to the Public Legal Aid Institute (LBHM), during 2019 there were 168 drug cases involving women as couriers (BNN, 2019). Ultimately, the woman must be compensated for doing something she does not want. The perpetrator is usually a foreigner or a person close to

the woman, who gives the deceit to a woman who is suffering from poverty or social tension (Irianto, Sulistiyowati, Lim sing Meij, Firliana Purwanti, 2017).

The imbalance of power between men and women means that women cannot resist the orders of their husbands (Braun, 2019). The value of a couple's existence is born when women try to maintain relationships without letting men dissolve relationships by following men's orders. In addition to the anxiety of losing a partner, women who become laborers develop dogmatic values in their relationships. A woman's commitment to her spouse to legitimize her decision to become a delivery guy embodies the ideals of love and loyalty. According to Sandbury of Jennifer Fleetwood, the state of the relationship between traffickers of women and men is exploitation, not relationship (Puspitosari, S.H., M.H, 2013).

It should take into account the differences in women's crime rates, including not only indicators of female sexual roles but also social and structural variables that can influence the evolution of the role of women in crime. Dr. Corina Giacomero, a researcher at the Autonomous University of Chiapas, Mexico, highlights the nature of women's involvement in drug trafficking. The role of women in crime is undeniable, and while crime is often associated with gender-based victimization and socio-economic degradation, it is mainly patriarchal structures, gender-based violence, and women's involvement in criminal activities. Gender-based violence, such as emotional relationships and childhood trauma, can also trigger crime. Women in dangerous jobs like small couriers, courier dealers, and low-cost operators are more likely to be arrested and imprisoned, where they are exposed to criminal narcotics policies (Borders, 2023).

Women are going to feel like their existence is being taken advantage of after the arrest because the exploitation started when they first got to know their spouse—the vulnerability of a woman's accepted condition, not in a safe position. Thus, there is a need for justice and guaranteed protection for women who are involved in drug trafficking and to avoid acts of exploitation by their partners. A study conducted by Anderson, T. L., & Kavanaugh (2017) only researched women's impotence as an important aspect in supporting the course of drug trafficking crimes committed by men. So, the researchers are interested in doing research on the patterns of women's exploitation as couriers of drug trafficking by their partners. To study further the patterns of exploitation experienced by women as couriers of drug trafficking involved by their partner in drug crimes. To break the vicious circle of women in drug trafficking. This study is linked to a participating victim study as a form of explanation of women's involvement in cases of narcotics black circulation, without a basis of

consent on the female side, but the presence of a woman in a relationship with her partner that indirectly plunges a woman into a drug crime. The reason this study is utilized is that it has a direct bearing on the status and existence of the victimized woman in the case. Thus, a more thorough analysis of women's involvement in the illegal distribution of narcotic narcotics is possible.

METHOD

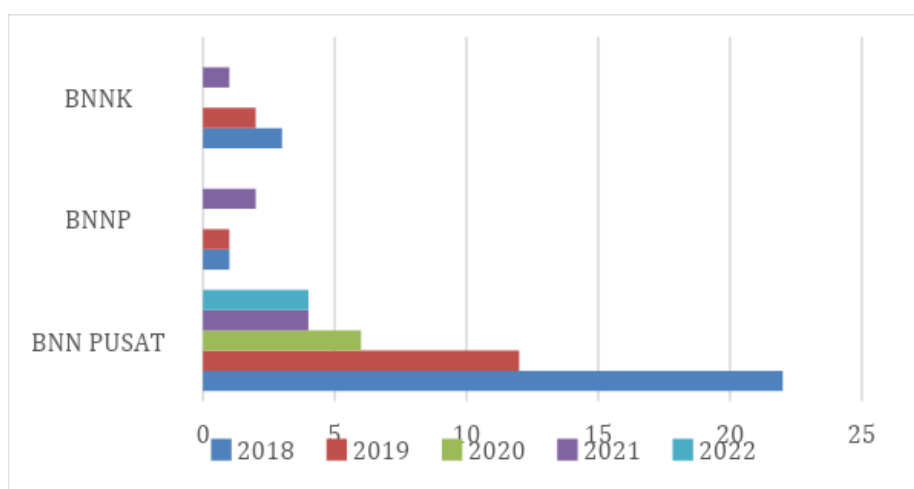
This study used a qualitative approach that analyzes how women are couriers of narcotics circulation using descriptive methods. This study focuses on the women who became the source, namely the citizens of the Institute of Women's Marketing Class IIA Pondok Bambu, Jakarta, and Tangerang, which comprises four women. The women that were the subject of this study were women who were the victims of exploitation by their partners. In the process of interviews, the researchers determined the criteria of women who became the source of this study, in addition to women who were the victims of their partners; other criteria are women who are communicative in interviews and open. Researchers pose questions regarding discussion topics to be evaluated in library studies and interviews to gather data. Additionally, the statistical information was gathered from the organizations and authorities that deal with the issue of women acting as drug couriers. The library studies carried out in this research are not only sources from the journals of the research results but also annual reports, research reports, and news articles related to this research. Therefore, this research is expected to provide a comprehensive criminological analysis and provide solutions to the exploitation of women by their partners, as well as provide attention and protection for women who have been trapped in cases of drug trafficking, especially women whom their partner exploits. Through this research process, the data collected is analyzed and constructed. The analysis does not use numbers but instead describes the result of the subject verbally and processes it using the concept of the participating victim, which is a derivative of the victimology concept (I Gusti Ngurah Parwata, 2017; Muthaqin, 2020). So, we can find results that indicate the cause of women's involvement as couriers of drug trafficking exploited by their partners.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The Reality of Couple Relationship in a Women's Case as a Narcotics Courier

In the circulation of narcotics, women who are trapped will be in the lowest class, so women are very vulnerable to exploitation. The role of women in the narcotics circle is almost dominant to that of men. Women obey men's

orders because of economic demands and the need to live, thus weighing the role of women in this case. In these crimes, the women involved are directed to be victims of a very high-risk, low-income job and exploited to profit from crimes committed by men (Bahaduri, 2022). Based on data from the National Narcotics Agency of the Centre, it can be seen that the involvement of women in drug cases almost increases every year and is dealt with by the District/City Narcotic National Agency, the Provincial Narcotical National Agency (BNNP), and the Central Narcotics National Agency (BNN CENTRAL). The data can be seen as follows:



Graph 1. Women involved in drug cases handled by Central BNN

The recruitment process also plays a vital role in the reality of women's relationships in drug cases. The recruitment process of women is often the first step in women becoming victims of exploitation. Women are the victims of exploitation in various forms, such as dating, marriage, living together, and personal relationships between women and men. The recruitment process is interrelated because of indirect contact with foreign men through lovers, which is preceded by appeals and promises. Once women have placed excessive trust in men, as compensation, women will be involved in drug dealings that act as intermediaries or drug carriers. According to an in-depth interview with VF, IJ, and U.S. sources who are citizens of the Penitentiaries of IIA Class Society, Jakarta's women were associated with their initial encounters with their partners:

"Oh no, because I spent more time alone in Malaysia without friends. I'm gonna download an app called Stret. Well, that's where I first met

my boyfriend." (VF - Jakarta Women Penitentiaries, in an interview on March 9, 2023)

"So at first it was like I was playing at the club so he kept his boyfriend my friend this Niger is not recognized I was to his girlfriends. The first time I met my boyfriend was there." (IJ- Jakarta Women Penitentiaries, in an interview on March 9, 2023)

"I'm working at the coffee shop after a friend's offer, 'cause I just need it. After four years of this work, I've been identified to this cowo from Nigeria, my friend, my acquaintance is the same cowo. It's been almost a year since I was with him, three months since I lived with him." (AS- Jakarta Women Penitentiaries, in an interview on March 9, 2023)

Through interviews with VF, IJ, and SA, the approach's sources with his partner have varied patterns of acquaintanceship; nonetheless, all three share a similar pattern, which is presented by a friend who has previously dated a male Nigerian citizen. Friendship becomes a major influence that puts women trapped in exploitation as drug couriers. Environmental factors are also influenced because a good environment will create good action, but the opposite is true. Almost the average person who gets stuck in a drug case begins with a bad environment and friendship (Batu, 2022). Through brief acquaintances, the women easily gave excessive confidence to their partners. Moreover, based on an in-depth interview with VF, IJ, and SA, who are members of the Penitentiaries of IIA Women's Society of Jakarta, the reason why they easily give overconfidence to couple:

"There is still nothing more than I believe because I have been identified to his family even if it is just a video call" (VF - Jakarta Women Penitentiaries, in an interview on March 20, 2023)

"He is a loyal man, and I love my son, futhermore he is not even a year old. I have been married and I am not happy, but my ex-husband had some kind of sexual fantasies, so he did not have any attention or affection for me or his child." (IJ- Jakarta Women Penitentiaries, in an interview on March 20, 2023)

"I have a husband but as if as not. He never gives me the money. I am also a victim of my husband. The first time I met him, I felt that he was so different from my husband, he loved and cared for me. That is what

makes me trust my boyfriend." (AS- Jakarta Women Penitentiaries, in an interview on March 20, 2023)

This is different from the sources of the Drug Department Administration in Penitentiaries of Class IIA Per Women Tangerang, DK stated that there is a difference from the reality of the relationship between the spouses in the case of women as couriers of narcotic drugs that he experienced, that is, the perpetrator is a legal husband of DK who is a citizen of the Indonesian state. Contrary to the three sources from VF, IJ, and the US were victims of the perpetrators' spouses who were Nigerian nationals.

"Yes, so it is not me who used to work as a courier, but my husband influenced me. My love is the same as that of my husband who made me like this, and I might say I am the same man." (DK – Jakarta Women Penitentiaries, in an interview on February 20, 2023)

Based on interviews, the woman had previously suffered trauma that made her more confident in men if treated well. The results of an interview with VF, IJ, and SA who are members of the Penitentiaries IIA Class community of Jakarta Women who have had previous trauma so that they have more confidence in their new partner:

"I have been dating with an Indonesian man before, at that time I have often got domestic violence if he is angry because of his jealousy." (VF – Jakarta Women Penitentiaries, in an interview on Mei 26, 2023)

"On the other hand because I used to get a lot of domestic violence if he was not satisfied with sex, so I thought maybe it was my fault due to his unsatisfied, then he also liked to scratch. When I met this boyfriend, I felt more appreciated as a woman." (IJ – Jakarta Women Penitentiaries, in an interview on Mei 26, 2023)

"Because I got domestic violence from my husband, I trust to the new boyfriend because he gave the cost of my life and the children. All the time I am here, my family does not care me anymore, so I feel alone." (SA- Jakarta Women Penitentiaries, in an interview on Mei 26, 2023)

In addition, the women's perspective suggests that they were pressured and misled. It clarifies how men and women develop the shape of heart conquest in the name of love. According to Anna G. Jonasdottir in (Azhara Khayati, 2014), the power of love is a human capacity that is exploited through socio-sexual relations, gender relations, love practices and struggles that form control over the abuse of love power. The act of women as a form of romantic love as explained by Firestone (Azhara Khayati, 2014), the romanticism that occurs is a form of label tool of the power in men so that women do not know their condition. Millet in (Azhara Khayati, 2014), reiterates that the love romance that occurs will form the emotional manipulation of women that indicates that men will be free to exploit women. The results of a study conducted by Bailey (Azhara Khayati, 2014), confirmed that the factors that make women involved in drug crimes created by their partners are due to the emotional dependence that women experience on their partners.

The first form of exploitation that occurs in this case is the love romanticism created by men; it is the exploitation and violence that women are unaware of. So, it obscures the risks to women. Women's positions indicate that they are very vulnerable to getting even sustained layered exploitation by joining high-risk narcotics couriers without women's prior knowledge, not getting a wage or a low wage. Then, they are manipulated to make a profit in the crimes created by the male side as well as becoming black ships made to protect the position of men in the narcotic crimes dominated by men. Even if, in this situation, men and women are complementary to one another and depend on one another, gender dominance, control over power, and manipulation turn into tools of male dominance that erode women's status (Budiman, A. A., Kamilah, A. G., Ginting, G. A., Iftitahsari, Rahmawati, M., & Dirga, 2021)

In the case of women working as drug couriers, the reality of the relationship between partners is also connected to the idea of the participating victim, that is, a person whose attitude pushes them to do the crime rather than their actions (Huda, 2022). In this case, the woman involved as a drug courier begins with the woman placing excessive confidence in the male side. Men abuse this belief for their benefit. Participating victims indicate that someone unintentionally turned themselves in or allowed them to be exploited, making them unintentionally complicit in the crime as well. In this case, the woman goes into the pattern of exploitation created by the man at the time the man introduced himself and the woman received the introduction. Women as victims often get very high sentences that make women's rights unattainable. This woman has no guarantee of protection, but she is the male protector in carrying out her crimes (Dea, A., Permata, A., & Zakiyah, 2019). The male

perpetrators of these crimes use the "chain recruitment" model, for example, women with cross-racial, religious and ethnic backgrounds and low average education and backgrounds of victims of violence (Irianto, Sulistiyowati, Lim sing Meij, Firliana Purwanti, 2017). It can be concluded that the presence of women in such crimes is seen as a phenomenon not standing alone, but there is a context of relationship behind it, that is, between men and women. The position of a more powerful man is that of a boyfriend, a husband, and a wife, who determine the actions to be taken by a woman.

CONCLUSION

There is no denying that women are involved in drug cases, and there is very little difference between the dominance of women and males in drug cases. Nearly all of the average female couples in this survey are foreign nationals. As a minority group, women are particularly susceptible to being the targets of partners' overbearing power dynamics.

It shows that women involved in these drug trafficking cases are being exploited and manipulated to cover up violations committed by men. Love romance becomes a major component for women trapped in drug trafficking cases. The victims involved in this study show that women unconsciously become victims because of the behaviour that drives them to be victims. Women involved in this crime require both psychological support and legal protection. It is anticipated that the investigated exploitation patterns will interfere with and keep women from falling prey to drug trafficking..

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