

Judicial Reasoning and Sentencing Proportionality in the Teddy Minahasa Narcotics Trafficking Case

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ABSTRACT

This article examines judicial reasoning and sentencing proportionality in West Jakarta District Court Decision No. 96/Pid.Sus/2023/PN Jkt.Brt concerning Teddy Minahasa Putra, a senior police officer convicted of participating in narcotics trafficking. The defendant was sentenced to life imprisonment, and the sentence was subsequently upheld at the appellate and cassation levels. This study employs normative legal research using statutory, case, and conceptual approaches. Primary legal materials include the Indonesian Narcotics Law, the Police Law, the Judicial Power Law, the Criminal Procedure Code, and the relevant court decisions. The court's reasoning is evaluated by examining the fulfilment of Article 114 paragraph (2) of Law No. 35 of 2009 in conjunction with Article 55 paragraph (1), point 1, of the Criminal Code, as well as principles of retribution, deterrence, prevention, proportionality, and substantive justice. The findings indicate that the conviction was supported by evidence of coordinated participation in the diversion and distribution of methamphetamine controlled by the police. Life imprisonment was legally available and substantively proportionate to the quantity of narcotics, the defendant's degree of participation, the abuse of command authority, and the resulting damage to public trust. Nevertheless, the judgment should have explained more systematically how each aggravating and mitigating circumstance supported the selection of life imprisonment over other legally available sanctions. This article proposes a more structured framework for assessing judicial reasoning in serious narcotics cases involving law enforcement officers.

Keywords: *Judicial Reasoning, Narcotics Trafficking, Police Misconduct, Sentencing Proportionality, Substantive Justice*

Pertimbangan Hakim dan Proporsionalitas Pidana dalam Kasus Narkotika Teddy Minahasa

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini menganalisis pertimbangan hukum hakim dan proporsionalitas pidana dalam Putusan Pengadilan Negeri Jakarta Barat Nomor 96/Pid.Sus/2023/PN Jkt.Brt terhadap Teddy Minahasa Putra, seorang perwira tinggi kepolisian yang dinyatakan bersalah turut serta dalam tindak pidana peredaran narkotika. Terdakwa dijatuhi pidana penjara seumur hidup, dan putusan tersebut dipertahankan pada tingkat banding dan kasasi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian hukum normatif dengan pendekatan perundang-undangan, pendekatan kasus, dan pendekatan konseptual. Bahan hukum primer meliputi Undang-Undang Narkotika, Undang-Undang Kepolisian, Undang-Undang Kekuasaan Kehakiman, Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Acara Pidana, serta putusan pengadilan yang relevan. Pertimbangan hakim dianalisis berdasarkan pemenuhan unsur Pasal 114 ayat (2) Undang-Undang Nomor 35 Tahun 2009 jo. Pasal 55 ayat (1) ke-1 KUHP, serta prinsip pembalasan, pencegahan, penangkalan, proporsionalitas, dan keadilan substantif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pembuktian mendukung adanya keterlibatan terkoordinasi dalam pengalihan dan peredaran metamfetamina yang berada dalam penguasaan kepolisian. Pidana penjara seumur hidup memiliki dasar hukum dan sebanding dengan jumlah narkotika, tingkat keterlibatan terdakwa, penyalahgunaan kewenangan komando, serta kerusakan terhadap kepercayaan publik. Namun, majelis hakim seharusnya menjelaskan secara lebih sistematis hubungan antara setiap keadaan yang memberatkan dan meringankan dengan pemilihan pidana penjara seumur hidup dibandingkan sanksi lain yang tersedia.

Kata kunci: *Pertimbangan Hakim, Peredaran Narkotika, Pelanggaran Kepolisian, Proporsionalitas Pidana, Keadilan Substantif*

INTRODUCTION

Narcotics offences remain a serious challenge for the Indonesian criminal justice system because they involve not only individual drug consumption but also organised distribution networks, illicit commercial transactions, and the misuse of authority by persons who have access to narcotics or criminal evidence. Law No. 35 of 2009 on Narcotics establishes severe criminal sanctions for the unlawful offering, sale, purchase, receipt, intermediation, exchange, or delivery of narcotics.¹ Nevertheless, the application of these provisions has continued to generate questions concerning offender classification, evidentiary assessment, and sentencing consistency. Recent research has shown that legal uncertainty in differentiating drug users, addicts, possessors, and traffickers can contribute to disparities in criminal punishment.² Although that problem is most visible in cases involving drug users and addicts, it also demonstrates the broader need for courts to identify the precise nature of the defendant's conduct and provide transparent reasons for the punishment imposed.

The legal and institutional implications become more serious when a narcotics offence is committed by a police officer. Under Law No. 2 of 2002 on the Indonesian National Police, police officers are entrusted with maintaining public security and order, enforcing the law, and providing protection and public services.³ These responsibilities provide police officers with investigative authority, institutional resources, and access to evidence that members of the public do not ordinarily possess. Accordingly, narcotics trafficking committed through the misuse of police authority cannot be treated solely as an ordinary drug offence. It may also constitute an abuse of institutional trust because the authority intended to prevent and investigate crime is instead used to facilitate criminal activity.

Contemporary studies of police misconduct support an assessment that considers both the conduct of the individual officer and the broader institutional harm caused by that conduct. Dario et al. (2024) argue that police misconduct should not be evaluated exclusively by measuring the frequency of violations.⁴ Its seriousness must also be assessed through the harm inflicted on individuals, police organisations, and public confidence in law enforcement. Similarly, Taylor et al. (2024) identify organisational loyalty, fear of retaliation, informal police culture, and uncertainty concerning reporting mechanisms as significant barriers to exposing misconduct by fellow officers.

¹ Republic of Indonesia, "Law No. 35 of 2009 on Narcotics." (2009).

² Andri Winjaya Laksana et al., "Legal Uncertainty in Law Enforcement for Drug Addicts Resulting in Criminal Disparity," *Yuridika* 40, no. 2 (May 27, 2025): 253–70, <https://doi.org/10.20473/ydk.v40i2.68153>.

³ Republic of Indonesia, "Law No. 2 of 2002 on the Indonesian National Police." (2002).

⁴ Lisa M. Dario et al., "Quantifying the Impact: From Prevalence to Harm in Evaluating Police Misconduct," *Journal of Criminal Justice* 93 (July 2024): 102229, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2024.102229>.

⁵ These findings indicate that misconduct involving a senior officer can have consequences extending beyond the immediate criminal act. It may affect the willingness of subordinate officers to report wrongdoing, weaken internal accountability, and diminish public confidence in the impartiality of criminal law enforcement.

The quality of judicial reasoning is therefore central to the legitimacy of criminal punishment in cases involving police officers. A criminal judgment must establish whether the prosecution has proved every element of the charged offence, explain the relationship between the evidence and the applicable legal provisions, and provide adequate reasons for the selected sentence. Habibi (2024) maintains that a judicial decision should reflect real or substantive justice rather than merely satisfying formal procedural requirements.⁶ In a related discussion published in DE RECHT, Napitupulu et al. (2025) emphasise that criminal sentencing must incorporate normative, philosophical, and sociological considerations while maintaining objectivity and proportionality between the defendant's culpability and the punishment imposed.⁷ These considerations are especially important when the statutory provision gives judges several widely different sentencing alternatives.

The need for structured judicial reasoning is also supported by recent sentencing scholarship. Drápal and Plesničar (2025) explain that broad judicial discretion can produce inconsistency when sentencing objectives, aggravating circumstances, and mitigating circumstances are not clearly organised within the court's reasoning.⁸ A sentence may remain within the range permitted by legislation but still require further examination regarding how the court selected that particular punishment. Consequently, legality alone is not a sufficient measure of sentencing quality. A well-reasoned judgment must also explain why the selected sanction is proportionate to the seriousness of the offence, the defendant's degree of culpability, the consequences of the conduct, and the legitimate objectives of punishment.

These issues are directly relevant to the criminal proceedings against Teddy Minahasa Putra. At the time relevant to the offence, Teddy Minahasa held the rank of

⁵ Olivia Elizabeth Vere Taylor et al., "Police Whistleblowing: A Systematic Review of the Likelihood (and the Barriers and Facilitators) of the Willingness of Police Officers to Report the Misconduct of Fellow Officers," *Journal of Criminal Justice* 91 (March 2024): 102170, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2024.102170>.

⁶ Miftachur R Habibi, "JUDGEMENT, LEGAL ATTEMPT AND EXECUTION OF CRIMINAL LAW IN INDONESIA," *DE RECHT (Journal of Police and Law Enforcement)*, January 31, 2024, 56–69, <https://doi.org/10.55499/derecht.v2i1.215>.

⁷ Benjamin Steven Napitupulu et al., "PERTIMBANGAN ASPEK FILOSOFIS, SOSIOLOGIS, SERTA NORMATIF DALAM PENJATUHAN PIDANA DENGAN MENGEDEPANKAN ASAS OBYEKTIFITAS DAN PROPORSIONALITAS KESALAHAN TERDAKWA (Analisa Putusan Nomor: 813 K/Pid/2023 Tentang Kasus Ferdy Sambo)," *DE RECHT (Journal of Police and Law Enforcement)*, February 7, 2025, 34–49, <https://doi.org/10.55499/derecht.v3i1.272>.

⁸ Jakub Drápal and Mojca Plesničar, "Sentencing Elsewhere: Structuring Sentencing Discretion in Post-Communist Europe," *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 31, no. 2 (June 13, 2025): 251–70, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10610-023-09568-4>.

Inspector General of Police and served as Chief of the West Sumatra Regional Police. According to the facts accepted by the West Jakarta District Court, the case originated from the seizure of approximately 41.4 kilograms of methamphetamine by the Bukittinggi Police. Five kilograms of the seized methamphetamine were subsequently diverted, while part of the evidence was replaced with alum. The narcotics were then channelled through police subordinates and civilian intermediaries for unlawful distribution. The prosecution alleged that Teddy Minahasa exercised authority over the diversion and distribution process and participated in a coordinated criminal arrangement involving several other defendants.

The Public Prosecutor charged Teddy Minahasa primarily under Article 114 paragraph (2) of Law No. 35 of 2009 on Narcotics in conjunction with Article 55 paragraph (1), point 1, of the Criminal Code.⁹ Article 114 paragraph (2) applies when the conduct described in Article 114 paragraph (1) involves more than five grams of non-plant Category I narcotics.¹⁰ It authorises the imposition of the death penalty, life imprisonment, or imprisonment for a fixed term within the statutory range, together with the prescribed fine. The prosecution requested the death penalty. However, the West Jakarta District Court found the defendant guilty and imposed life imprisonment in Decision No. 96/Pid.Sus/2023/PN Jkt.Brt. The judgment was maintained by the Jakarta High Court through Decision No. 130/Pid.Sus/2023/PT DKI.¹¹ The Supreme Court subsequently rejected the cassation challenge and maintained the life sentence in Decision No. 5206 K/Pid.Sus/2023.¹²

The judicial decisions raise an important distinction between the legality of the sentence and the completeness of the reasoning used to justify it. Life imprisonment was expressly available under Article 114 paragraph (2) of the Narcotics Law.¹³ The central question is therefore not whether the court had the legal authority to impose that sentence. The more significant issue is whether the ratio decidendi sufficiently connected the proven conduct, the defendant's role, the amount of narcotics, the abuse of official authority, and the institutional consequences of the offence to the selection of life imprisonment. The judgment must demonstrate why these factors justified a sentence more severe than fixed-term imprisonment but less severe than the death penalty requested by the prosecution.

The defendant's status as a senior police officer is relevant to this analysis, but it should not be treated as an automatic basis for imposing a heavier sentence. Official status becomes a legitimate aggravating factor when the position materially facilitates

⁹ West Jakarta District Court, Decision No. 96/Pid.Sus/2023/PN Jkt.Brt, criminal proceedings against Teddy Minahasa Putra. (2023).

¹⁰ Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 35 of 2009 on Narcotics.

¹¹ Jakarta High Court, Decision No. 130/Pid.Sus/2023/PT DKI, criminal proceedings against Teddy Minahasa Putra. (2023).

¹² Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia, Decision No. 5206 K/Pid.Sus/2023, criminal proceedings against Teddy Minahasa Putra. (2023).

¹³ Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 35 of 2009 on Narcotics.

the offence, increases the defendant's control over other participants, provides access to evidence or institutional resources, or magnifies the harm caused by the offence. In the present case, the relevant consideration is not simply that the defendant was a police officer. It is whether his rank, command authority, and access to narcotics evidence enabled or strengthened his participation in the criminal conduct. A proportionate sentencing analysis must clearly identify that connection rather than relying on a general assertion that a police officer should have acted as a law enforcer.

Existing scholarship has addressed several elements relevant to this problem, but the discussions remain fragmented. Studies of Indonesian narcotics law have examined uncertainty and disparity in the treatment of drug offenders.¹⁴ International research has considered the individual and institutional consequences of police misconduct and the organisational barriers to reporting wrongdoing.¹⁵ Sentencing scholarship has also examined the need to structure judicial discretion and explain the weight assigned to aggravating and mitigating circumstances.¹⁶ Within DE RECHT, Habibi (2024) discusses the relationship between judicial decisions, legal remedies, and substantive justice, while Napitupulu et al. (2025) evaluate objectivity and proportionality in sentencing a high-ranking police officer in the Ferdy Sambo case.¹⁷ However, the literature reviewed for this article has not provided a focused evaluation of how the judges constructed the ratio decidendi in the Teddy Minahasa narcotics case across the first-instance, appellate, and cassation stages.

This article addresses that gap by examining the judicial reasoning applied to a senior police officer whose official authority was closely connected to the control and diversion of narcotics evidence. Unlike general studies of narcotics offences committed by police officers, this article specifically evaluates whether the judges correctly established the elements of participation under Article 114 paragraph (2) of the Narcotics Law in conjunction with Article 55 paragraph (1), point 1, of the Criminal Code, and whether the life sentence was proportionate to the defendant's culpability and the resulting institutional harm.¹⁸ The novelty of the study lies in integrating the analysis of statutory elements, evidentiary reasoning, abuse of police authority, and sentencing proportionality within a single case-specific assessment.

¹⁴ Winjaya Laksana et al., "Legal Uncertainty in Law Enforcement for Drug Addicts Resulting in Criminal Disparity."

¹⁵ Dario et al., "Quantifying the Impact: From Prevalence to Harm in Evaluating Police Misconduct"; Taylor et al., "Police Whistleblowing: A Systematic Review of the Likelihood (and the Barriers and Facilitators) of the Willingness of Police Officers to Report the Misconduct of Fellow Officers."

¹⁶ Drápal and Plesničar, "Sentencing Elsewhere: Structuring Sentencing Discretion in Post-Communist Europe."

¹⁷ Habibi, "JUDGEMENT, LEGAL ATTEMPT AND EXECUTION OF CRIMINAL LAW IN INDONESIA"; Napitupulu et al., "PERTIMBANGAN ASPEK FILOSOFIS, SOSIOLOGIS, SERTA NORMATIF DALAM PENJATUHAN PIDANA DENGAN MENGEDEPANKAN ASAS OBYEKTIFITAS DAN PROPORSIONALITAS KESALAHAN TERDAKWA (Analisa Putusan Nomor: 813 K/Pid/2023 Tentang Kasus Ferdy Sambo)."

¹⁸ Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 35 of 2009 on Narcotics.

Accordingly, this article examines three related questions. First, what juridical and non-juridical considerations formed the ratio decidendi in Decision No. 96/Pid.Sus/2023/PN Jkt.Brt and the subsequent appellate decisions? Second, did the evidence and judicial findings adequately establish the defendant's participation in the narcotics trafficking offence? Third, was life imprisonment proportionate when assessed through retributive, deterrent, preventive, and substantive justice perspectives? This article argues that the conviction and life sentence were substantively supportable because of the scale of the narcotics, the defendant's coordinated participation, the misuse of command authority, and the serious damage caused to police integrity. Nevertheless, the judicial reasoning would have been stronger if the court had expressly connected each aggravating and mitigating circumstance to its rejection of fixed-term imprisonment and the death penalty. This approach provides a more transparent framework for sentencing law enforcement officers who use public authority to facilitate serious criminal offences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Judicial Reasoning and Sentencing Proportionality

Judicial reasoning in a criminal judgment should not merely reproduce the indictment, witness testimony, and applicable statutory provisions. It must establish a traceable relationship between the facts proved at trial, the evidence supporting those facts, the elements of the offence, the defendant's culpability, and the sentence ultimately imposed. Habibi argues that a judicial decision must pursue substantive justice rather than satisfy procedural requirements alone.¹⁹ This position requires judges to explain not only whether a defendant is guilty but also why a particular sanction is justified by the seriousness of the proven conduct.

A recent study published in *DE RECHT* similarly emphasises that criminal sentencing must incorporate normative, philosophical, and sociological considerations. Napitupulu et al. maintain that those considerations must be applied objectively and proportionately to the defendant's culpability.²⁰ Normative considerations concern the correspondence between the facts and the applicable legal provisions. Philosophical considerations examine whether the sentence reflects the purposes and values of criminal punishment. Sociological considerations address the consequences of the offence for victims, institutions, and society. These dimensions should be connected within the court's reasoning rather than presented as separate and unsupported statements.

¹⁹ Habibi, "JUDGEMENT, LEGAL ATTEMPT AND EXECUTION OF CRIMINAL LAW IN INDONESIA."

²⁰ Napitupulu et al., "PERTIMBANGAN ASPEK FILOSOFIS, SOSIOLOGIS, SERTA NORMATIF DALAM PENJATUHAN PIDANA DENGAN MENGEDEPANKAN ASAS OBYEKTIFITAS DAN PROPORSIONALITAS KESALAHAN TERDAKWA (Analisa Putusan Nomor: 813 K/Pid/2023 Tentang Kasus Ferdy Sambo)."

The need for an integrated explanation becomes particularly important when legislation provides several substantially different sentencing alternatives. Drápal and Plesničar observe that broad judicial discretion may contribute to inconsistency when courts do not organise sentencing objectives, aggravating circumstances, and mitigating circumstances through a transparent method.²¹ Judicial discretion is therefore not incompatible with sentencing structure. A structured approach enables judges to individualise punishment while allowing the parties, appellate courts, and the public to understand how the sentence was selected.

Sentencing proportionality requires a correspondence between the seriousness of the offence and the severity of the punishment. This assessment cannot be reduced to a mathematical comparison. Coverdale explains that proportionality remains a qualitative judgment that must account for the harm caused, the offender's culpability, the circumstances of the offence, and the practical severity of the punishment.²² A proportionate judgment should consequently explain why a less severe sanction would be inadequate and why a more severe sanction would be unnecessary or excessive.

Indonesian law also requires judges to consider legal values and the sense of justice existing within society. Article 5 paragraph (1) of Law No. 48 of 2009 on Judicial Power obliges judges to explore, observe, and understand the legal values and sense of justice that develop in society.²³ This obligation does not authorise judges to disregard statutory requirements. It instead requires them to relate positive law to the concrete circumstances and consequences of the case. Judicial independence must therefore operate together with legal accountability, evidentiary accuracy, and reasoned justification.

Based on this literature, judicial reasoning in the present study is assessed through four criteria. The first is legal accuracy, which concerns whether the court correctly identified and applied the relevant statutory provisions. The second is evidentiary coherence, which concerns whether the findings regarding the defendant's conduct are supported by legally admitted evidence. The third is sentencing proportionality, which examines the relationship between culpability, harm, aggravating and mitigating circumstances, and the severity of the sanction. The fourth is reasoning transparency, which evaluates whether the judgment adequately explains the selection of life imprisonment over the other sanctions permitted by law.

Narcotics Trafficking, Criminal Participation, and Sentencing

The legal characterisation of a narcotics offence must correspond to the defendant's actual conduct. Article 114 paragraph (2) of Law No. 35 of 2009 on Narcotics regulates the unlawful offering for sale, selling, purchasing, receiving, acting

²¹ Drápal and Plesničar, "Sentencing Elsewhere: Structuring Sentencing Discretion in Post-Communist Europe."

²² Helen Brown Coverdale, "Putting Proportional Punishment into Perspective," *Criminal Law and Philosophy* 19, no. 2 (July 15, 2025): 181–201, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11572-024-09736-5>.

²³ Republic of Indonesia, "Law No. 48 of 2009 on Judicial Power." (2009).

as an intermediary, exchanging, or delivering of Category I narcotics. When the offence involves more than five grams of non-plant Category I narcotics, the provision authorises the death penalty, life imprisonment, or fixed-term imprisonment within the statutory range, together with a fine.²⁴ The wide difference among these alternatives places a particular responsibility on the court to explain the level of culpability and harm that supports its sentencing choice.

Where an offence involves several persons, individual criminal responsibility must be established through the defendant's particular contribution to the offence. Article 55 paragraph (1), point 1, of the Criminal Code applicable at the time of the offence extends criminal responsibility to persons who commit, order the commission of, or participate in committing a criminal offence.²⁵ Participation should not be inferred solely from association with other offenders, official position, or presence during part of the criminal process. The judgment must identify conduct demonstrating a conscious and material contribution to the execution of the offence.

The classification of conduct is especially significant under the Narcotics Law because different provisions address possession, personal abuse, distribution, and commercial trafficking. Laksana et al. identify uncertainty in the application of Indonesian narcotics legislation when law enforcement authorities fail to distinguish clearly between addicts, users, couriers, and dealers.²⁶ Their study concentrates on the misclassification of addicts, which differs from the trafficking conduct examined in the present article. Nevertheless, it supports the broader proposition that a court must determine the defendant's legal category through the proven nature, purpose, quantity, and context of the narcotics-related conduct.

In a trafficking case, relevant considerations include the quantity of narcotics, the defendant's control over the narcotics, the degree of planning, the relationship among participants, the expected financial or other benefit, and the defendant's authority over the persons involved. The assessment must distinguish between a principal organiser, an intermediary, a subordinate participant, and a person whose involvement is incidental. Such differentiation is essential because liability for participation does not eliminate the need to assess each defendant's individual culpability during sentencing.

A sentence may comply formally with the statutory range while remaining inadequately reasoned. Article 114 paragraph (2) permits several punishments of markedly different severity. It does not establish that every offence involving more than five grams automatically warrants life imprisonment or the death penalty. The court must therefore explain why the quantity of narcotics, the defendant's role, the manner in which the offence was committed, and its consequences justify the selected

²⁴ Republic of Indonesia, "Law No. 35 of 2009 Concerning Narcotics, Art. 114, Para. 2." (2009).

²⁵ Republic of Indonesia, "Criminal Code Applicable at the Time of the Offence (Wetboek van Strafrecht), Art. 55, Para. 1, Point 1" (n.d.).

²⁶ Winjaya Laksana et al., "Legal Uncertainty in Law Enforcement for Drug Addicts Resulting in Criminal Disparity."

sanction. In the Teddy Minahasa case, this framework requires separate analysis of whether the evidence established coordinated participation and whether the proven circumstances justified life imprisonment rather than fixed-term imprisonment or the death penalty requested by the Public Prosecutor.

Police Misconduct, Abuse of Authority, and Institutional Harm

The criminal conduct of a police officer carries an institutional dimension because police authority is entrusted for the purposes of maintaining public security, enforcing the law, and protecting the community. Article 13 of Law No. 2 of 2002 on the Indonesian National Police identifies these responsibilities as the principal duties of the police.²⁷ Conduct that uses police authority, evidence, personnel, or institutional facilities to facilitate an offence therefore conflicts directly with the legal purpose for which that authority was granted.

Police misconduct should not be evaluated solely by counting the number of violations involved. Dario et al. propose a harm-oriented approach that examines the seriousness and consequences of police misconduct for individuals, police organisations, and the wider community.²⁸ This approach is relevant to sentencing because an offence committed by an officer may produce harm beyond the immediate narcotics transaction. It can weaken confidence in evidence management, internal supervision, criminal investigations, and the equal application of the law.

The organisational position of the officer may also affect the commission and detection of misconduct. Taylor et al., through a systematic review of police whistleblowing research, identify police culture, interpersonal loyalty, fear of consequences, uncertainty about reporting procedures, and organisational relationships as significant barriers to reporting misconduct by fellow officers.²⁹ These barriers become particularly important where the alleged offender occupies a senior rank and possesses command authority over officers who have knowledge of the conduct.

Nevertheless, police status should not automatically justify a heavier sentence. Treating status alone as an aggravating circumstance could replace individualised sentencing with an assumption based on occupation. The defendant's official position becomes relevant when the evidence establishes that the position materially facilitated the offence, enabled access to narcotics or evidence, strengthened control over subordinate participants, obstructed internal reporting, or increased institutional harm.

²⁷ Republic of Indonesia, "Law No. 2 of 2002 Concerning the Indonesian National Police, Art. 13" (2002).

²⁸ Dario et al., "Quantifying the Impact: From Prevalence to Harm in Evaluating Police Misconduct."

²⁹ Taylor et al., "Police Whistleblowing: A Systematic Review of the Likelihood (and the Barriers and Facilitators) of the Willingness of Police Officers to Report the Misconduct of Fellow Officers."

The court must identify this connection expressly rather than rely on the general statement that a police officer should have upheld the law.³⁰

This literature supports a distinction between ordinary personal culpability and authority-enhanced culpability. Personal culpability concerns the defendant's intention, participation, knowledge, and contribution to the criminal act. Authority-enhanced culpability concerns the manner in which public office increased the capacity to commit the offence or magnified its consequences. The distinction prevents official rank from functioning as an automatic punishment multiplier while still recognising that the misuse of law-enforcement authority may make particular conduct more serious.

Accordingly, the theoretical framework used in this article integrates four connected elements: the statutory elements of narcotics trafficking, the requirements for joint criminal participation, the proportionality of the selected punishment, and the institutional harm resulting from the misuse of police authority. This framework permits the judgment to be assessed without presuming either that life imprisonment was necessarily correct or that it was inherently excessive. The decisive issue is whether the court established the defendant's individual and authority-enhanced culpability through the evidence and provided adequate reasons for selecting life imprisonment from the range of legally available sanctions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs normative legal research designed as a focused analysis of judicial decisions. Normative legal research is appropriate because the study examines the consistency between statutory provisions, judicial findings, sentencing principles, and the legal reasoning contained in court judgments rather than measuring social behaviour through interviews or surveys. The normative approach examines legal issues from the perspective of positive law, legal principles, judicial decisions, and relevant legal concepts.³¹

The research applies statutory, case, and conceptual approaches. The statutory approach is used to examine Article 114 paragraph (2) of Law No. 35 of 2009 on Narcotics, Article 55 paragraph (1), point 1, of the Criminal Code applicable when the offence was committed, Law No. 8 of 1981 on the Criminal Procedure Code, Law No. 2 of 2002 on the Indonesian National Police, and Law No. 48 of 2009 on Judicial Power. These provisions are examined systematically to determine the elements of the

³⁰ Dario et al., "Quantifying the Impact: From Prevalence to Harm in Evaluating Police Misconduct"; Taylor et al., "Police Whistleblowing: A Systematic Review of the Likelihood (and the Barriers and Facilitators) of the Willingness of Police Officers to Report the Misconduct of Fellow Officers."

³¹ Achmad Irwan Hamzani et al., "Implementation Approach in Legal Research," *International Journal of Advances in Applied Sciences* 13, no. 2 (June 1, 2024): 380, <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijaas.v13.i2.pp380-388>.

offence, the legal basis for joint criminal participation, the available sentencing alternatives, and the responsibilities attached to police authority.

The case approach focuses primarily on West Jakarta District Court Decision No. 96/Pid.Sus/2023/PN Jkt.Brt concerning Teddy Minahasa Putra.³² To examine the continuity and consistency of the judicial reasoning, the study also analyses Jakarta High Court Decision No. 130/Pid.Sus/2023/PT DKI³³ and Supreme Court Decision No. 5206 K/Pid.Sus/2023.³⁴ The three judgments are treated as a connected procedural sequence rather than as separate cases. This approach enables the study to determine whether the appellate and cassation courts independently evaluated the legal objections raised by the parties or merely maintained the reasoning developed by the court of first instance.

The electronic copies of the judgments were identified and verified by matching the case numbers, the defendant's identity, the dates of the decisions, the statutory provisions applied, and the operative parts of the judgments. The judgment metadata and procedural sequence were checked through the Supreme Court Decision Directory and corresponding court records. This verification was necessary to ensure that the analysis was based on the correct first-instance, appellate, and cassation decisions. The primary legal materials were supplemented by legislation obtained from official legal-documentation databases.

The conceptual approach is used to examine the concepts of *ratio decidendi*, criminal participation, sentencing proportionality, substantive justice, abuse of authority, and institutional harm. The theories of punishment are not discussed as abstract classifications alone. They are operationalised as analytical criteria for determining whether life imprisonment served legitimate retributive, deterrent, preventive, and protective purposes. Substantive justice is used to assess whether the punishment corresponded to the defendant's individual culpability, the seriousness of the offence, and the broader consequences of the misuse of police authority.

The legal materials used in this study are classified as primary and secondary materials. The primary legal materials consist of the three court decisions, the Narcotics Law, the Criminal Procedure Code, the Police Law, the Judicial Power Law, the Criminal Code applicable at the time of the offence, and relevant police disciplinary and professional ethics regulations.³⁵ The secondary legal materials comprise peer-reviewed journal articles and authoritative legal scholarship concerning judicial

³² West Jakarta District Court, Decision No. 96/Pid.Sus/2023/PN Jkt.Brt, Public Prosecutor v. Teddy Minahasa Putra (2023).

³³ Jakarta High Court, Decision No. 130/Pid.Sus/2023/PT DKI, Teddy Minahasa Putra (2023).

³⁴ Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia, Decision No. 5206 K/Pid.Sus/2023, Teddy Minahasa Putra (2023).

³⁵ Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 35 of 2009 on Narcotics.; Republic of Indonesia, "Law No. 8 of 1981 on the Criminal Procedure Code." (1981); Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 2 of 2002 on the Indonesian National Police.; Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 48 of 2009 on Judicial Power.; Republic of Indonesia, Criminal Code applicable at the time of the offence (Wetboek van Strafrecht), art. 55, para. 1, point 1.

reasoning, narcotics offences, criminal participation, sentencing proportionality, substantive justice, police misconduct, and the institutional consequences of abuse of authority. Recent publications from 2021 to 2026 are prioritised, while older sources are retained only when they constitute foundational legal theories that remain necessary for the analysis.

The court decisions are examined through a structured legal-analysis matrix. The analysis identifies: the indictment submitted by the Public Prosecutor; the prosecution's sentencing demand; the defence arguments; the evidence accepted by the court; the facts declared legally proven; the defendant's role in the diversion and distribution of narcotics; the application of Article 114 paragraph (2) in conjunction with Article 55 paragraph (1), point 1, of the Criminal Code; the aggravating and mitigating circumstances; the sentence imposed; and the treatment of these matters at the appellate and cassation levels. This method prevents the analysis from merely summarising the operative part of each judgment.

The judicial reasoning is evaluated using four criteria. First, legal accuracy is assessed by determining whether the judges correctly interpreted and applied the elements of the charged offence. Second, evidentiary coherence is examined by identifying whether each factual finding concerning the defendant's participation was supported by legally admitted evidence. Third, sentencing proportionality is evaluated by considering the quantity of narcotics, the defendant's degree of participation, the use of command authority, the involvement of subordinate officers, the institutional harm caused, and the aggravating and mitigating circumstances. Fourth, reasoning transparency is assessed by determining whether the judges adequately explained why life imprisonment was selected instead of fixed-term imprisonment or the death penalty requested by the Public Prosecutor.

The legal materials are analysed qualitatively through grammatical, systematic, and contextual interpretation. Grammatical interpretation is used to determine the ordinary legal meaning of the relevant statutory provisions. Systematic interpretation is applied by reading the Narcotics Law together with the rules on criminal participation, criminal procedure, judicial authority, and police responsibility. Contextual interpretation is used to assess how the statutory provisions operate in a case involving the diversion of narcotics evidence by a senior law-enforcement officer. The analysis proceeds deductively from the applicable legal norms and sentencing principles to the specific facts and judicial findings contained in the three decisions. The results are presented prescriptively by identifying the strengths and limitations of the judicial reasoning and formulating a more structured framework for sentencing police officers involved in serious narcotics offences.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Case Facts and Procedural Development

The criminal proceedings against Teddy Minahasa Putra arose from the handling of methamphetamine seized by the Bukittinggi Police. At the relevant time, Teddy Minahasa served as Chief of the West Sumatra Regional Police and held the rank of Inspector General. The underlying seizure involved approximately 41.4 kilograms of methamphetamine. The prosecution alleged that five kilograms of the seized narcotics were separated from the official evidence and replaced with alum before being distributed through a network involving police officers and civilian intermediaries.³⁶

The case did not concern the defendant's personal consumption or passive possession of narcotics. The indictment characterised the conduct as participation in the unlawful offering, sale, purchase, receipt, intermediation, exchange, or delivery of Category I narcotics exceeding five grams. The prosecution alleged that Teddy Minahasa directed AKBP Dody Prawiranegara, who was then Chief of the Bukittinggi Police, to remove part of the seized methamphetamine. The narcotics were subsequently transferred through Linda Pujiastuti and other participants before part of them entered an unlawful distribution network.³⁷

The prosecution relied on a combination of witness testimony, statements from the persons involved, communication records, the movement of the seized narcotics, and the recovery of narcotics connected to the distribution chain. The prosecution's case did not depend on proof that Teddy Minahasa personally carried, stored, or physically delivered the methamphetamine to the final purchaser. It was based on the allegation that he exercised control over the initial diversion and consciously participated in the coordinated process through which the evidence was removed from official police control and transferred for unlawful distribution.

The defence denied that Teddy Minahasa had ordered the sale of narcotics. It challenged the reliability of testimony provided by other participants and disputed the interpretation of communications attributed to the defendant. The defence also questioned the evidentiary weight of the WhatsApp conversations because some of the electronic communications had not been supported by a complete digital forensic examination. In addition, it argued that no witness had directly observed Teddy Minahasa physically exchanging methamphetamine for alum or personally conducting a narcotics transaction.³⁸

These objections required the court to distinguish between direct physical participation and criminal participation through instruction, coordination, or conscious cooperation. A defendant cannot be convicted merely because of rank, association, or

³⁶ West Jakarta District Court, Decision No. 96/Pid.Sus/2023/PN Jkt.Brt, Public Prosecutor v. Teddy Minahasa Putra.

³⁷ West Jakarta District Court.

³⁸ Jakarta High Court, Decision No. 130/Pid.Sus/2023/PT DKI, Teddy Minahasa Putra.

communication with another offender. Conversely, the absence of physical possession does not exclude criminal responsibility when the evidence proves that the defendant made a material and intentional contribution to the execution of the offence.

The Public Prosecutor requested the death penalty. The West Jakarta District Court nevertheless imposed life imprisonment after finding Teddy Minahasa legally and convincingly guilty of violating Article 114 paragraph (2) of Law No. 35 of 2009 on Narcotics in conjunction with Article 55 paragraph (1), point 1, of the Criminal Code.³⁹ The Jakarta High Court accepted the appeal procedurally but affirmed the conviction and life sentence through Decision No. 130/Pid.Sus/2023/PT DKI.⁴⁰ At the cassation level, the Supreme Court rejected the cassation applications and maintained the substantive sentence, while correcting the treatment of procedural costs.

The procedural sequence is significant for two reasons. First, the conviction and life sentence were maintained at three levels of adjudication. This continuity provides substantial institutional confirmation of the finding of guilt. Second, the consistency of the outcome does not remove the need to evaluate the quality of the reasoning. Appellate confirmation establishes the legal finality of the sentence, but an academic analysis must still determine whether the courts explained the defendant's participation and the proportionality of life imprisonment with sufficient precision.⁴¹

Establishing Criminal Participation in Narcotics Trafficking

Article 114 paragraph (2) of the Narcotics Law applies to the unlawful offering for sale, selling, purchasing, receiving, acting as an intermediary in a transaction, exchanging, or delivering of Category I narcotics when the quantity exceeds the statutory threshold. At the time relevant to the case, the provision authorised the death penalty, life imprisonment, or fixed-term imprisonment of between six and twenty years, together with the prescribed fine.⁴² The prosecution was therefore required to establish more than the existence of narcotics. It had to prove that the defendant intentionally participated in one or more forms of unlawful trafficking covered by the provision.

The quantity element did not present the principal legal difficulty. The narcotics alleged to have been diverted substantially exceeded the threshold of five grams applicable to non-plant Category I narcotics. The more contested issue was the defendant's relationship to the diversion and distribution process. The court had to determine whether Teddy Minahasa's conduct constituted intentional participation or whether the prosecution had merely established his official relationship with the officers who physically handled the evidence.

³⁹ West Jakarta District Court, Decision No. 96/Pid.Sus/2023/PN Jkt.Brt, Public Prosecutor v. Teddy Minahasa Putra.

⁴⁰ Jakarta High Court, Decision No. 130/Pid.Sus/2023/PT DKI, Teddy Minahasa Putra.

⁴¹ Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia, Decision No. 5206 K/Pid.Sus/2023, Public Prosecutor and Teddy Minahasa Putra (2023).

⁴² Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics, art. 114, para. 2.

Article 55 paragraph (1), point 1, of the Criminal Code extends criminal responsibility to persons who commit an offence, order its commission, or jointly participate in its commission.⁴³ Joint participation requires more than knowledge that another person intends to commit a crime. It requires conscious cooperation and a contribution that is sufficiently connected to the execution of the offence. The contribution need not take the same physical form as the conduct of the other participants. An organiser, instructor, or coordinator may incur responsibility where the evidence proves that the offence was carried out through a common criminal purpose.

The court's reasoning treated the case as a coordinated sequence rather than as several unrelated acts. The initial removal of narcotics from police evidence, the substitution of part of that evidence, the transfer of the methamphetamine to intermediaries, and the subsequent distribution were interpreted as connected stages of the same criminal arrangement. The judgment attributed particular importance to testimony describing the defendant's instructions and authority over the initial handling of the seized narcotics. It also considered communications and the conduct of the other participants after those instructions were allegedly given.⁴⁴

Evaluated collectively, the evidence provided a rational basis for finding participation. The defendant's alleged contribution occurred at the stage that made the later distribution possible. The methamphetamine could not have entered the unlawful network in the manner described by the prosecution without first being removed from official control. The instruction to divert the evidence, where accepted as proven, was therefore not incidental to the trafficking process. It constituted an essential contribution to the availability and subsequent movement of the narcotics.

The defence objection concerning the absence of direct physical possession did not eliminate this conclusion. Article 55 does not limit joint participation to persons who personally perform every material act described in the principal offence. Such an interpretation would allow a person who plans, authorises, or controls an offence to avoid responsibility merely because subordinate participants physically execute the plan. The legally relevant inquiry is whether the defendant consciously contributed to the common criminal activity and whether that contribution had a substantial relationship to its execution.

The absence of a complete digital forensic examination of some communications required caution, but it did not automatically render all testimonial and documentary evidence inadmissible or unreliable. Electronic communications should not be assessed in isolation. Their probative value depends on whether the sender, recipient, context, sequence, and content can be corroborated by other evidence. In this case, the

⁴³ Republic of Indonesia, Criminal Code applicable at the time of the offence (Wetboek van Strafrecht), art. 55, para. 1, point 1.

⁴⁴ West Jakarta District Court, Decision No. 96/Pid.Sus/2023/PN Jkt.Brt, Public Prosecutor v. Teddy Minahasa Putra.

communication evidence was considered together with testimony concerning the defendant's instructions, the actual removal of the narcotics, the involvement of identified intermediaries, and the later recovery of narcotics connected to the distribution process.

Nevertheless, the judgment would have been stronger had it explained this evidentiary relationship in a more structured manner. Rather than moving directly from a summary of testimony to a finding of guilt, the court should have identified which evidence established each element of participation. A transparent analysis should specify: first, the evidence proving that an instruction was given; second, the evidence proving that the instruction concerned narcotics rather than a lawful investigative operation; third, the evidence connecting the instruction to the subsequent transfer; and fourth, the evidence demonstrating the defendant's knowledge of and intention regarding the unlawful distribution.

This structure is particularly important because narcotics cases may produce significant disparities when the legal category of the defendant is not clearly connected to the proven conduct. Laksana et al. observe that uncertainty in distinguishing among users, addicts, possessors, couriers, and traffickers can result in inconsistent punishment.⁴⁵ Although Teddy Minahasa was not prosecuted as a user or addict, the underlying principle remains relevant. A court must explain why the proven conduct places the defendant within a trafficking provision rather than another category of narcotics liability.

The conviction was therefore substantively supportable, but the court's reasoning could have more clearly separated three analytical stages: the existence and quantity of the narcotics, the occurrence of unlawful trafficking, and the defendant's conscious contribution under Article 55. A clearer separation would have strengthened the ratio decidendi and reduced the possibility that the conviction could be understood as resting primarily on the defendant's senior position or on the testimony of other accused persons.

Abuse of Police Authority as an Aggravating Circumstance

Teddy Minahasa's position as a senior police officer was central to the seriousness of the offence, but official status must be used carefully in sentencing analysis. A police officer should not receive a more severe punishment merely because of occupational identity. The aggravating significance of police status arises when the authority, access, command relationship, or institutional resources associated with the position materially facilitate the offence or increase its harmful consequences.

Law No. 2 of 2002 entrusted the Indonesian National Police with maintaining public security and order, enforcing the law, and providing protection and services to

⁴⁵ Winjaya Laksana et al., "Legal Uncertainty in Law Enforcement for Drug Addicts Resulting in Criminal Disparity."

the community.⁴⁶ Narcotics evidence is placed under police control precisely because police officers are expected to preserve it for investigation, prosecution, and adjudication. The diversion of such evidence therefore involves two connected wrongs. The first is participation in narcotics trafficking. The second is the misuse of a public institution and its evidence-management authority to make the trafficking possible.

The court identified several aggravating circumstances. These included the defendant's use of his position for unlawful benefit, his failure to support the government's programme for combating narcotics offences, the inconsistency and complexity of parts of his testimony, and the damage caused to the reputation of the police institution. The court also treated the defendant's senior rank as significant because he should have set an example for subordinate officers and the public.⁴⁷

Some of these considerations require differentiation. The misuse of official authority is directly connected to culpability because it concerns the manner in which the offence was committed. The diversion of narcotics evidence would have been substantially more difficult without access to the evidence, influence over subordinate officers, and knowledge of internal police procedures. These factors demonstrate what may be described as authority-enhanced culpability. The defendant's public position did not merely accompany the offence. According to the facts accepted by the court, it increased his capacity to initiate or facilitate it.

Damage to institutional trust is also a legitimate aggravating factor. Dario et al. argue that the seriousness of police misconduct should be assessed not only through the number of violations but also through the harm caused to individuals, police organisations, and public confidence.⁴⁸ Narcotics trafficking involving police evidence creates institutional harm because it raises doubts about the integrity of evidence storage, supervisory controls, internal accountability, and the impartiality of narcotics enforcement. A member of the public may reasonably question the legitimacy of enforcement when narcotics seized from one offender can be returned to illicit circulation by the officers responsible for securing them.

The involvement of a senior officer can intensify this harm. Senior rank carries command authority and may influence the conduct of subordinate officers. Research on police whistleblowing indicates that organisational loyalty, fear of retaliation, uncertainty about reporting channels, and hierarchical relationships can discourage officers from reporting misconduct committed by colleagues or superiors.⁴⁹ This does not prove that every subordinate in the present case acted because of coercion. It does, however, explain why the defendant's command position was relevant to the institutional context in which the offence occurred.

⁴⁶ Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 2 of 2002 concerning the Indonesian National Police, art. 13.

⁴⁷ West Jakarta District Court, Decision No. 96/Pid.Sus/2023/PN Jkt.Brt, Public Prosecutor v. Teddy Minahasa Putra.

⁴⁸ Dario et al., "Quantifying the Impact: From Prevalence to Harm in Evaluating Police Misconduct."

⁴⁹ Taylor et al., "Police Whistleblowing: A Systematic Review of the Likelihood (and the Barriers and Facilitators) of the Willingness of Police Officers to Report the Misconduct of Fellow Officers."

The defendant's denial of guilt and allegedly complicated testimony should be treated with greater caution as aggravating considerations. A defendant has the right to contest the prosecution's case and is not required to confess. The exercise of defence rights should not independently justify a heavier sentence. A court may consider a demonstrably dishonest attempt to obstruct justice or fabricate evidence, but it should distinguish such conduct from an ordinary denial of the charge. The judgment should therefore have clarified whether the aggravating factor was the absence of remorse, an intentional attempt to mislead the court, or merely the defendant's decision to maintain his innocence.

The court also identified mitigating circumstances, including the absence of a prior criminal conviction and the defendant's previous service and achievements within the police institution. The absence of prior offending is a conventional mitigating consideration and supports some degree of individualisation. Previous service may also be relevant to the defendant's personal history. However, it should carry limited weight where the authority obtained through that service became an instrument of the offence.

Using professional achievement as a significant mitigating factor creates a possible internal contradiction. The defendant's police career provided the rank, access, and command influence that aggravated the offence. The same institutional position should not simultaneously reduce the sentence without an explanation of why earlier service outweighs or meaningfully offsets the later abuse of that authority. The more coherent approach is to recognise prior service as part of the defendant's background while assigning greater weight to the betrayal of the responsibilities attached to that service.

Napitupulu et al. emphasise that sentencing a senior police officer requires the integration of normative, philosophical, and sociological considerations while maintaining objectivity and proportionality.⁵⁰ In the present case, the normative dimension supported punishment under the Narcotics Law. The philosophical dimension required a sanction proportionate to intentional participation in a large-scale narcotics offence. The sociological dimension concerned the effects on public confidence, police integrity, and the credibility of narcotics enforcement. These considerations collectively supported a severe sentence, but the judgment should have shown more explicitly how much weight it assigned to each factor.

Proportionality of Life Imprisonment and the Quality of Appellate Review

The legality of life imprisonment was not in dispute because Article 114 paragraph (2) expressly included it among the available sanctions. The more difficult question was whether life imprisonment was proportionate to the defendant's

⁵⁰ Napitupulu et al., "PERTIMBANGAN ASPEK FILOSOFIS, SOSIOLOGIS, SERTA NORMATIF DALAM PENJATUHAN PIDANA DENGAN MENGEDEPANKAN ASAS OBYEKTIFITAS DAN PROPORSIONALITAS KESALAHAN TERDAKWA (Analisa Putusan Nomor: 813 K/Pid/2023 Tentang Kasus Ferdy Sambo)."

culpability and whether the court adequately explained its selection over fixed-term imprisonment and the death penalty.

Sentencing proportionality requires the severity of punishment to correspond to the seriousness of the offence, the harm caused, and the defendant's degree of culpability. Coverdale explains that proportionality is a qualitative judgment rather than a mechanical calculation.⁵¹ It requires a court to compare the punishment with both the offence and the practical severity of the sanction. This means that a sentence cannot be justified solely by stating that it falls within the statutory range.

Several considerations supported the imposition of a sentence more severe than fixed-term imprisonment. First, the case involved a very substantial quantity of Category I narcotics. Second, the offence concerned narcotics that had already been seized and placed under state control. Third, the defendant was found to have occupied a coordinating or directing position rather than a minor or incidental role. Fourth, the conduct involved the misuse of police authority and relationships with subordinate officers. Fifth, the return of seized narcotics to unlawful circulation created both public-health risks and serious institutional harm.

These factors differentiated the case from an ordinary narcotics transaction. The defendant's culpability arose not only from participation in trafficking but also from transforming a law-enforcement process into an opportunity for further distribution. Fixed-term imprisonment could have been legally imposed, but the scale, planning, authority-enhanced culpability, and institutional consequences provided a rational basis for concluding that the maximum fixed term would not adequately express the gravity of the offence.

At the same time, the court rejected the death penalty requested by the prosecution. The judgment appears to have treated the absence of a previous conviction and the defendant's service record as reasons not to impose the most severe sanction. Life imprisonment therefore functioned as an intermediate choice between the maximum fixed term and death. This outcome can be defended as a proportionate balance between the seriousness of the offence and the mitigating circumstances accepted by the court.

However, the reasoning should have explained this balance directly. The judgment should have stated why twenty years of imprisonment would have been insufficient, why life imprisonment was necessary, and why the death penalty would have been excessive. Without this comparative explanation, the sentence remains legally valid but analytically incomplete. The reader can infer the reasons for the result, but the court should not require the parties or the public to reconstruct the proportionality analysis themselves.

Drápal and Plesničar explain that broad sentencing discretion may generate inconsistency where courts do not organise sentencing purposes, aggravating factors,

⁵¹ Brown Coverdale, "Putting Proportional Punishment into Perspective."

and mitigating factors through a transparent framework.⁵² This observation is directly relevant to Article 114 paragraph (2), which permits sanctions ranging from a minimum fixed term to life imprisonment and death. The wider the statutory range, the stronger the obligation to explain why the selected point within that range is appropriate.

A more structured sentencing analysis in this case would consist of five stages. First, the court should determine the seriousness of the offence through the quantity, nature, planning, and distribution risk of the narcotics. Second, it should determine the defendant's individual role and degree of intention. Third, it should identify how official position facilitated the offence and increased institutional harm. Fourth, it should evaluate each mitigating factor and explain the weight assigned to it. Fifth, it should compare the available sanctions and state why life imprisonment provides the most proportionate response.

The Jakarta High Court affirmed the first-instance judgment and maintained the life sentence.⁵³ The appellate outcome confirmed that the objections raised by the defence did not undermine the finding of guilt. Nevertheless, the appellate judgment presented an opportunity to clarify the evidentiary treatment of the electronic communications and to provide a more detailed proportionality analysis. An appellate court exercising the functions of *judex facti* should not limit its role to confirming that the sentence falls within the statutory range. It should examine whether the factual findings and the weighting of aggravating and mitigating circumstances are sufficiently supported.

The Supreme Court subsequently rejected the cassation applications and maintained the life sentence, subject to a correction concerning procedural costs.⁵⁴ At the cassation level, the principal inquiry concerns the application of law rather than a complete reconsideration of the facts. The Supreme Court's decision therefore reinforced the conclusion that the lower courts had not committed an error of law sufficient to overturn the conviction or sentence.

The three-level outcome supports the legal sustainability of the sentence. It does not, however, establish that the explanatory quality of every stage was optimal. Habibi argues that a judgment should reflect substantive justice rather than merely satisfy formal procedural requirements.⁵⁵ Substantive justice in sentencing requires reasons that permit the defendant, the prosecution, appellate courts, and society to understand the relationship between the offence and the punishment.

Accordingly, this study finds that life imprisonment was substantively proportionate. The quantity of narcotics, the coordinated nature of the conduct, the

⁵² Drápal and Plesničar, "Sentencing Elsewhere: Structuring Sentencing Discretion in Post-Communist Europe."

⁵³ Jakarta High Court, Decision No. 130/Pid.Sus/2023/PT DKI, Teddy Minahasa Putra.

⁵⁴ Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia, Decision No. 5206 K/Pid.Sus/2023, Public Prosecutor and Teddy Minahasa Putra.

⁵⁵ Habibi, "JUDGEMENT, LEGAL ATTEMPT AND EXECUTION OF CRIMINAL LAW IN INDONESIA."

defendant's senior role, the misuse of command authority, the diversion of police evidence, and the resulting institutional harm justified a sentence above the maximum fixed term. The court also had a rational basis for declining to impose the death penalty because mitigating considerations remained present and life imprisonment provided a severe but less irreversible sanction.

The principal weakness was not the sentencing outcome but the organisation of the ratio decidendi. The judgment should have more clearly connected each factual finding to the elements of participation and each sentencing factor to the choice among the statutory alternatives. This distinction resolves the inconsistency in the original manuscript. The decision should not be characterised as both legally incorrect and entirely justified. The more defensible conclusion is that the conviction and life sentence were legally and substantively supportable, while the reasoning required a more explicit and systematic proportionality analysis.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the conviction of Teddy Minahasa Putra in West Jakarta District Court Decision No. 96/Pid.Sus/2023/PN Jkt.Brt was legally supported by the evidence and the applicable statutory provisions. The evidence demonstrated a coordinated sequence involving the diversion of methamphetamine from police custody, its transfer through police officers and civilian intermediaries, and its subsequent unlawful distribution. Although the defendant did not personally perform every physical act in the trafficking process, his instructions, authority, and contribution were sufficiently connected to the execution of the offence. The application of Article 114 paragraph (2) of Law No. 35 of 2009 on Narcotics in conjunction with Article 55 paragraph (1), point 1, of the Criminal Code was therefore substantively justified.

The imposition of life imprisonment was also within the statutory sentencing range and proportionate to the seriousness of the offence. The sentence reflected the substantial quantity of narcotics, the coordinated nature of the conduct, the defendant's senior role, the diversion of evidence under police control, and the use of command authority to facilitate the offence. The defendant's position as a police officer was relevant not merely because of his occupation, but because his institutional authority, access, and influence materially increased his capacity to commit the offence. The resulting damage extended beyond the narcotics transaction by weakening the integrity of evidence management and public confidence in law enforcement.

Nevertheless, the principal weakness of the judgment concerned the structure and transparency of its sentencing reasoning. The court did not explain in sufficient detail how each item of evidence established the defendant's form of criminal participation. It also did not systematically connect the aggravating and mitigating circumstances to the selection of life imprisonment. In particular, the judgment should have explained why fixed-term imprisonment was inadequate, why life imprisonment was

proportionate, and why the death penalty requested by the Public Prosecutor was unnecessary. The defendant's denial of guilt should also have been distinguished from conduct that intentionally obstructed the judicial process, since the exercise of defence rights should not independently aggravate punishment.

The appellate and cassation decisions confirmed the legal sustainability of the conviction and life sentence. However, the maintenance of the same outcome at three levels of adjudication does not eliminate the need for clearer judicial reasoning. A legally authorised sentence should also be supported by an accessible and coherent explanation of culpability, harm, sentencing objectives, and the comparative appropriateness of the available sanctions.

Accordingly, this article finds that the conviction and life sentence were legally and substantively supportable, but the ratio decidendi required a more explicit proportionality analysis. The contribution of this study lies in proposing an integrated assessment of statutory elements, evidentiary coherence, individual participation, abuse of police authority, institutional harm, and sentencing proportionality. This framework may assist courts in producing more transparent and accountable decisions in serious narcotics cases involving law enforcement officers.

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