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**Theoretical Approaches
to Human Smuggling**

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ABSTRACT

Human smuggling is a global phenomenon which has been difficult to research. Even though there is a large and growing literature on human smuggling, the literature lacks a systematic review of the major theoretical and conceptual approaches. This literature review is organized with the purpose of clarifying and understanding the diversity of theoretical approaches used in the study of migrant smuggling. Six separate theoretical approaches are identified and discussed: 1) organizational or network approaches, partially based on criminological models; 2) mode of crossing and likelihood of capture models, including estimations of migration rates and flows; 3) migration industry and market approaches; 4) global historical comparisons; 5) human rights responses which are concerned with legal arguments; and 6) gender approaches. The review concludes with suggestions for future research.

INTRODUCTION

This working paper reviews the major theoretical and conceptual approaches to human smuggling. It reviews how researchers, practitioners, and states have conceived of human smuggling as an aspect of international migration. The paper surveys the prominent approaches in human smuggling studies, arguing that a diversity of approaches exist which can aid researchers in pursuing new lines of inquiry and theorization regarding human smuggling.

Human smuggling is a global phenomenon which has remarkable geographic and organizational diversity (Kyle & Koslowski, 2001, 2011). Human smuggling, legally differentiated from human trafficking, is defined by inter-state institutions as: obtaining material benefit for assisting someone to cross a border in a manner which is deemed illegal by states (UN, 2000a). The definition of human smuggling, however, is contested and political, and social scientists have provided alternative definitions and criticized the conceptual scope of the inter-state definition (see Ahmad, 2011, p. 6 ff).

Difficulties in narrowing down the definition of human smuggling have been met by the challenge of precisely obtaining data on the phenomenon. Despite the large and growing literature, the process of human smuggling is still not well understood, stemming from the difficulties in observing, measuring, and gathering reliable data. As a consequence, many studies on the topic are shaped by the views of public officials and police who have first-hand information or by advocates for a particular political position (for example see Coen, 2011; Courau, 2003). As a result, Kyle and Koslowski (2001, p. 12) assert that "what is missing is a sustained historical and empirical examination of different smuggling activities using more inductive and comparative reasoning by observers not so directly tied to advocating a priori a

specific state policy or political/philosophical position." In spite of the limits defining and observing smuggling, there is a diversity of evidence about smuggling that spans different regions and methodological approaches.

Prior literature reviews of migrant smuggling have detailed the diversity of empirical material (Salt & Hogarth, 2000), compared the social organization of smuggling with other forms of organized crime (Zhang & Chin, 2008), and linked it with the broader literature on 'irregular' migration (Koser, 2010). Comparative studies have focused on the need for trans-disciplinary approaches to smuggling (Kyle & Koslowski, 2011). Some recent literature reviews have been completed for law enforcement purposes with the specific intent of aiding the fight against transnational organized crime as conceived by states and inter-governmental organizations (UNODC, 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2012).

The current literature review takes a different approach: it is organized by theoretical positions with the purpose of clarifying and understanding the diversity of theoretical approaches used in the study of migrant smuggling. The review begins from a trans-disciplinary perspective on migration studies, taking into account studies from across the range of social science disciplines (for more on trans-disciplinarity in migration studies, see Brettell & Hollifield, 2008; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). The review is intended to be used as a heuristic device to complement existing theories of migration and human smuggling and provide analytical input to policy discussions.

Some studies identify a range of theoretical approaches to smuggling, but do not go far enough (Salt, 2000a; Van Liempt, 2007). Salt's (2000a: 35) study identifies three primary approaches to theorization in human smuggling studies: 1) smuggling as a business, 2) smuggling as a crime, and 3) humanitarian responses to smuggling which engage with human

rights debates. Van Liempt (2007, p. 43ff) follows the same outline as Salt, but adds a fourth position, "a broader, more socially embedded understanding" which provides "a larger and more socially contextualised picture of who the smugglers are and why the migrants need them" (ibid: 46). The positions outlined by Salt and Van Liempt are useful for categorizing the range of approaches, but my reading has added more dimensions, differentiating between six different theoretical orientations:

- organizational or network approaches, partially based on criminological models
- mode of crossing and likelihood of capture models, including estimations of migration rates and flows
- migration industry and market approaches; 'smuggling as a business'
- global historical comparisons
- human rights responses which are concerned primarily with legal arguments and
- gender approaches to human smuggling

Each of these approaches overlap with the vast literature on 'illegal' and 'irregular' migration, and a brief discussion preceding the conclusion will highlight where these overlaps occur.

This paper is divided into multiple sections by theoretical approach. After a summary contrasting the definitions of smuggling and trafficking, the paper outlines the six primary theoretical approaches. After discussing the six theoretical approaches, a brief account of theories of 'irregular' and 'illegal' migration is given, highlighting similarities and differences with the main approaches to smuggling. The paper concludes with thoughts on extending the six theoretical approaches and suggestions for future research.

DEFINITIONS OF SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING

The terms smuggling and trafficking are often used synonymously in public discussions and the media. The accepted international definition of smuggling and trafficking was not devised until the end of the 1990s. In international law, with the signing in December 2000 of the United Nations Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, a distinction was made in order to aid authorities in managing and prosecuting individuals involved.

Human smuggling and trafficking are covered under the two Protocols to the Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), which was negotiated in Vienna under the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, with the UN Centre for International Crime Prevention serving as Secretariat, in the 'Vienna Process' (Gallagher, 2001). Austria has figured prominently in human smuggling studies, with a number of important works concentrated on explaining and understanding smuggling organizations in the country and region (Bilger, et al., 2006; Jandl, 2004b, 2007; Neske & Doomernik, 2006; Peterka-Benton, 2011). The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), a think-tank dedicated to researching smuggling and trafficking, is also based in Vienna. The Smuggling Protocol was signed at a meeting convened in Palermo, Italy, dubbing them the 'Palermo Protocols'. The Palermo Protocols, which went into force in 2003-2004, define human smuggling as:

> 'Smuggling of Migrants' shall mean the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not

a national or permanent resident. (UN, 2000a; Art. 3)

In contrast to the definition of smuggling, human trafficking is defined as:

> 'Trafficking in Persons' shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. (UN, 2000b, Art. 3)

Human trafficking differs from smuggling by the activity, the means, and the purpose of action:

> (a) the *activity* refers to some kind of movement either within or across borders, (b) the *means* relates to some form of coercion or deception, and (c) the *purpose* is the ultimate exploitation of a person for profit or benefit of another. Where people are vulnerable because of ignorance, need, war, poverty, crisis, desperation, marginalization, and fear, they are at risk of falling into the hands of those who wish to exploit them. (Martin & Callaway, 2011, p. 225)

According to most interpretations, exploitation is essential to the legal characterization of trafficking, whereas border crossing is not an essential element in trafficking (Icduygu & Toktas, 2002). Smuggling is cross-border

whereas trafficking is not necessarily cross-border. The main focus of the definition of trafficking is on coercion and exploitation and the lack of consent:

> [T]he main components which separate human trafficking from human smuggling are the elements of force, fraud and coercion, a clear exploitation phase in the case of human trafficking, as well as the fact that human smuggling always involves the crossing of international borders, while human trafficking can also occur within countries. (Peterka-Benton, 2011, p. 217)

The definitions distinguish between a *smuggled migrant* and a *victim of trafficking*: smuggling is a migration issue, where controls on admission and settlement are infringed, and trafficking is a human rights issue, where there is an individual, identifiable victim. However, the international legal distinction between smuggling and trafficking is difficult to maintain in empirically observed social contexts. There are instances where the terms overlap or where a 'grey area' (Leman & Janssens, 2007, p. 1379) emerges between voluntary migration and rights-violating coercion and exploitation:

> Not only traffickers, however, expose the migrants to abuse and human rights violations. Smugglers, who are instrumental in facilitating the illegal crossing of borders, are not above committing human rights violations themselves, which may take the form of rape, physical and mental abuse, food deprivation, and abandonment and death. (Icduygu & Toktas, 2002, p. 29)

The distinction is not as clear as we should expect. Those who voluntarily commit to 'smuggling' may move because of desperate circumstances but may be deceived or exploited

along the way. And when exactly is 'smuggling' considered 'trafficking'? Is trafficking only discernible *ex post facto,* and smuggling before or during the act? A number of thorny questions are raised by the international legal definitions of smuggling. When discussing the discrepancies between smuggling and trafficking "there are subtle differences in interpretation that render the discussion a terminological minefield" (Skeldon, 2000, p. 8). Nonetheless, the definitions of smuggling and trafficking outlined in international law have set the tone for designing and conducting research on the two phenomena, as two major branches of investigation have distinctly developed around the issues of smuggling and trafficking. The following discussion shall continue using the accepted definitions of smuggling and trafficking by focusing on theoretical developments within the field of human smuggling.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES TO HUMAN SMUGGLING

There are a diversity of analyses and theoretical orientations in the human smuggling literature. These theoretical approaches can be categorized according to their theoretical focus and analytical frame. Overall, six different but interrelated approaches are outlined. They are ideal types derived from my reading of the literature on human smuggling. Much of the work cited could fit into one or more categories. They are meant to be a basis for discussing the theoretical strengths and weaknesses of theories of human smuggling. The categories are open for interpretation, and can be added to and amended. The table below outlines the main theoretical approaches and their associated core theories and complications. The table is given as a rough guide to multiple approaches, as many of the approaches overlap. Network

approaches, for example, are not confined to the organizational or criminological debates but span multiple fields of inquiry. The network approach is included in the organizational approach because understanding of human smuggling networks emerged primarily from investigations questioning the social organization of smuggling. Furthermore, methodological nationalism is an issue which stretches through all approaches (for more on methodological nationalism, see Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007).

Some work breaks the bounds of the approaches identified, notably Alison Mountz's (2003, 2004, 2010) ethnographic accounts of state responses to smuggling, David Spener's (2009) anthropology of the U.S.-Mexico border, and Ali Nobil Ahmad's (2011) study of gender and masculinity among Pakistani men. Each of the previous studies exhibit elements of all the theoretical positions without being confined to a particular approach, resorting more to conceptual innovation than rational-choice theories which are, according to Ahmad, "premised on liberal and neoliberal assumptions – one-dimensional portraits of human behavior dictated by narrow agendas of economic utility" (Ahmad, 2011, p. 7). Alongside these alternative conceptualizations stands an isolated work on the health consequences of smuggling (Gushulak & MacPherson, 2000).

Recent literature reviews are crucial to understanding the development of human smuggling studies because they reflect the anti-smuggling thrust of many published academic studies (UNODC, 2011a). Most studies on human smuggling are explicitly concerned with the *modus operandi* of smugglers and the social organization of human smuggling and how this relates to managing or criminalizing it. Quantitative work analyzes the various modes of crossing, the likelihood of capture by border guards, and includes estimates of flows. An older model of human smuggling

Table 1 Comparing Theoretical Approaches to Human Smuggling

	Core Theory	Critiques	Main Proponents
Organizational, criminological, and network approaches	Social organization of smuggling, the role of organized crime, the role of networks	- Critique of organized crime thesis - Mostly applied research for migration management	(Antonopoulos & Winterdyk, 2006); (Aronowitz, 2001); (Zhang, 2008)
Mode of crossing, likelihood of capture, and flow estimate models	Statistical models of apprehension, population estimates of stocks and flows, estimates of the probability of capture	- Two-dimensional 'state' versus 'migrant' models - Data quality and availability - Policy orientation	(Espenshade, 1995a, 1995b; Massey & Capoferro, 2004; Massey & Singer, 1995; Singer & Massey, 1998; Vogel, et al., 2011)
Migration industry and market approaches	Smuggling as a business, financial costs, social organization	- Dominance of economic relationships - Limited role for networks	(Bilger, et al., 2006; Salt & Stein, 1997)
Global historical-structural comparisons	Comparing smuggling contexts across time and space, usually single state or two-state comparisons	- Data not always comparable - No macro-comparisons - Methodological nationalism - Identifies the paradoxes of 'globalization' but is itself an analytic product of it	(Kyle & Koslowski, 2001, 2011; Kyle & Liang, 2001)
Human rights approaches	Analysis of the normative and institutional/ organizational regimes criminalizing smuggling and managing migration	- Normative	(Bhabha, 2005; Brolan, 2002; Gallagher, 2001; Morrison & Crosland, 2001; Obokata, 2005)
Gender approaches	Gender relations and gender differences	- Focus on women to the detriment of understanding gendered relations	(Ahmad, 2008b; Donato, et al. 2008; Peixoto, 2009; Schrover, et al., 2008; Van Liempt, 2008, 2011; Zhang, et al., 2007)
Source Author			

has theorized it as a business (Salt & Stein, 1997). More recent models have extended the business metaphor, theorizing smuggling as a transnational service industry (Bilger, et al., 2006) and linked the business model to familial networks (Herman, 2006). Comparative work on migration industries has also focused on the market aspects of smuggling and the marketization of migration policy (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013). Historical and structural theories of globalization and migration have been used to theorize smuggling from a structural approach, and go back to work from the late 1970s on smuggling to the U.S. (Portes, 1978), smuggling from Ethiopia in the 1980s (Karadawi, 1991), to comparative work from the early post-Palermo days (Kyle & Koslowski, 2001), with more recent theorizations of 'illegal' migration (Ahmad, 2008a; Baldwin-Edwards, 2008) and gender (Schrov-

er, et al., 2008). These studies are based on historical comparisons to contemporary processes with a focus on structural constraints and agents' interactions across time. Human rights arguments and legal criticisms of anti-smuggling laws have persisted since early conceptions of smuggling (Kirchner & Schiano di Pepe, 1998), and include various positions, critical or otherwise, pertaining to anti-smuggling laws and their role in protecting or undermining asylum and human rights (Bhabha, 2005; Brolan, 2002; Gallagher, 2001; Morrison & Crosland, 2001; Nadig, 2002; Obokata, 2005). Finally, gender has figured prominently in discussions of human smuggling, but perhaps even more so in human trafficking (Ahmad, 2008b, 2011; Chin, 1999; Donato, et al., 2008; Peixoto, 2009; Schrover, et al., 2008; Van Liempt, 2008, 2011; Zhang, 2008; Zhang, et al., 2007).

Organizational, Criminological, and Network Approaches

The social organization of human smuggling has been an important topic of inquiry driven by questions surrounding the *modus operandi* and business tactics of smugglers, their roles within smuggling operations, and their positions within social networks. Early studies on human smuggling emphasized that a system of networks existed that consisted of individuals and organizations with an interest in making money from the movement of people across borders outside the authorization of the state (Chin, 1999). The social organization of human smuggling, it was emphasized, is dependent on remuneration and profit, and is organized as a 'business' (Salt & Stein, 1997). The conception of smuggling as a business was bound up with early difficulties in disambiguating between smuggling and trafficking (Lazcko & Thompson, 2000; Salt, 2000b), a struggle over defining the issues of smuggling and trafficking that was partially resolved with

the Palermo Protocols (Brolan, 2002; Gallagher, 2001; Kirchner & Schiano di Pepe, 1998), but which continues to spur discussion until today (Van Liempt & Sersli, 2012).

The initial conception of smuggling as a business is tied directly into questions of organized crime (Salt, 2000a). Precisely defining organized crime and its role in shaping human smuggling and trafficking organizations generated a lasting debate in smuggling studies, with many questioning the exact role that organized crime plays in human smuggling (Coluccello & Massey, 2007; Heckmann, 2004; Kaizen & Nonneman, 2007; Kyle & Koslowski, 2011; Neske, 2006; Soudijn & Kleemans, 2009; UNODC, 2011b). The debate about the social organization of smuggling and organized crime informs the following review of human smuggling networks. It begins with a review of the organized crime debate, and then proceeds through a discussion of network studies, and concludes with a note about the smuggling of unaccompanied minors and un-resolved issues in the study of the social organization of smuggling.

The Organized Crime Debate

The role of transnational organized criminals in the commission of and control over the smuggling of humans has been central to discussions of migrant smuggling from early studies until now. Transnational organized crime is a vague term because of the social construction of crime, what constitutes 'organized' activity, and to what extent organized criminal activity transcends international borders (von Lampe, 2012). The thesis that human smuggling is a transnational organized crime has been at the heart of the debate of the social organization of human smuggling and trafficking (Aronowitz, 2001 ; Coen, 2011; Icduygu, 2004; Kaizen & Nonneman, 2007; Lazcko & Thompson, 2000; Mallia, 2010; Pastore, et al., 2006; Pickering, 2004; Schloenhardt, 2003; Thachuk,

2007; Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012; UNODC, 2011a; Ventrella, 2010; Zhang, 2007). The organized crime thesis depicts human smuggling as criminal activities committed in well-organized networks with links to the trafficking of other goods and services, such as women, weapons or drugs (Coen, 2011; Schloenhardt, 2003; Thachuk, 2007; Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012; UNODC, 2011a). The organized crime thesis posits that operations involve a central command and control structure where a central 'smuggler' dishes out commands and enforces the rules in a social hierarchy. Strategic decisions are made by criminal bosses thought to be involved in multiple other profit-making criminal activities (Mallia, 2010; Schloenhardt, 2003). In the extreme form of the organized crime thesis, smuggling activities are moving towards globalized control by highly organized criminals acting in concert and benefitting from the newest technologies (Coen, 2011).

The organized crime thesis has been fiercely criticized throughout the literature, both as a reaction to sensationalist media accounts of smuggling as well as refuting early research into the role of organized crime in smuggling (Chin, 1999; Icduygu & Toktas, 2002; Kyle & Koslowski, 2001; Neske & Doomernik, 2006; Zhang, 2008). As evidence began to accumulate regarding human smuggling, it became clear that syndicated mafia-style hierarchical organizations were absent from the empirical picture – the field of smuggling was composed of smaller-scale networks of individuals and groups who are efficient at organizing piecemeal and ad hoc activities (Icduygu & Toktas, 2002; Neske, 2006). The typical form of smuggling cited in these studies appeared to be small-scale partnerships among a core group of agents with little outside intervention, based on a logic of profit (Bilger, et al., 2006). The smugglers themselves are not bound by a hierarchical command structure, but by contracts

and insurance against risk (ibid.), as well as control through threats and violence (Kyle & Scarcelli, 2009). Thus, a general trend in research refuting the organized crime thesis is a trend towards local control by small-scale networks which is exerted within regions and states, and involves some degree of cross-border mobility at a global level, but not of the kind envisioned as large global organizations with top-down control.

Recent research from Greece suggests that smuggling is organized in small-scale networks, but these networks maintain links with drug traffickers and other forms of fraud and money laundering networks (Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012). Triandafyllidou and Maroukis' thesis skirts a middle ground between the organized crime thesis and its refutation by suggesting that migrants and smugglers are involved in drug trafficking. Other research has demonstrated that highly organized and hierarchical organizations have *re-entered* the smuggling field, profiting from un-armed and vulnerable migrants on the way (Kyle & Scarcelli, 2009; Sorensen, 2013).

Social Networks

There is a near-unanimous consensus that human smuggling resembles a series of socially embedded networks rather than hierarchical and rule-bound organizations. Much of the research on human smuggling has gone on to refute the organized crime thesis, or at least amended it by considerable degrees. Much of the criticism of the organized crime thesis was justified, as well-structured smuggling organizations were not observed, and may never have played a major role at all in human smuggling. The emphasis is placed on social networks and temporary alliances within and across networks to provide services to migrants. Hierarchical control may be observed at the local level, but in a transnational setting, networks become prominent.

The focus in network models is now on social relationships between individuals and the structural constraints placed on cooperation among agents assisting migration (Courau, 2003; Heckmann, 2004; Herman, 2006; Mavris, 2002; Neske & Doomernik, 2006; Staring, 2004; Van Liempt, 2007; Van Liempt & Doomernik, 2006; Zhang, 2008). As such, there has been an intense debate about agency and the role of networks in facilitating migration, with concepts from the vast literature on migrant networks (Van Liempt & Doomernik, 2006). One of the main findings of network studies is that smuggling depends on unique network characteristics rather than individual agency – it is the relations of individuals and the structure and distribution of those relations which helps explain concrete smuggling operations. Recently, structural shifts in markets for immigration enforcement, control of borders, and the politics of migration management that modify these networks has also been raised as topics of analysis (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013).

The social relations and network ties of family, friends and co-ethnics have been central to social network understandings of migration, and the transnational scope of familial networks has added important theoretical dimensions to the study of human smuggling (Herman, 2006; Staring, 2004). Research on family networks has suggested that smugglers play a limited role in migration, and that "the arrival of illegal immigrants is guided by the managing efforts of supportive and loyal relatives in transnational networks … , … human smugglers who facilitate the illegal entry of immigrants for profit bear less responsibility than is commonly assumed" (Staring, 2004, p. 291). Staring suggests that networks of trust and solidarity complement migration, not necessarily relations of unequal power. Thus, the strength of social ties plays an important role – not only the vertical dimension of power and coercion,

but also the horizontal dimension of solidarity and connection. The proximity and strength of social ties are crucial for migration and human smuggling. The quantity of social ties plays a weaker role: "the size of the network is less important than its strength" when looking at the facilitation of migration (Herman, 2006, p. 202). In other words, having high-quality social ties and a strong personal network makes a difference: having family, friends and relatives in the destination country may trump smugglers' power and lower their ability to easily profit in the smuggling transaction.

Estimates of Flow, Mode of Crossing, and Likelihood of Apprehension Models

The volume of smuggling flows cannot be directly observed or recorded, and remain undocumented. Studies estimating the volume of flow of undocumented migration rely on apprehension statistics as a proxy for the number of migrants entering. A variety of models estimating migrant flows are drawn from literature analyzing undocumented border crossing in the United States and border apprehensions in Europe.

Statistical models of deterrence and apprehension in the U.S. are based on survey interviews with migrants of various nationalities. They complement border apprehension statistics to arrive at models which estimate undocumented flow, modes of crossing, and the effects of border apprehension. The consequences of undocumented migration for states and the policies designed to suppress it are often reviewed alongside estimates of flow and apprehension to demonstrate that migration occurs in large volume in spite of attempts to end it (Espenshade, 1995a). The threat of apprehension does not constitute a significant deterrent, as most migrants continue attempting until they succeed, e.g. along the U.S.-Mexico divide (Donato, et al., 1992). The literature is

primarily policy oriented and investigates the effects of U.S. border enforcement measures using a variety of methods. Singer and Massey (1998) identify three methodological positions in the analysis of the social process of border crossing: 1) institutional evaluations of border management organizations such as the INS, 2) qualitative methods based on migrant viewpoints, and 3) quantitative methods used to estimate the likelihood of capture and to determine the various impacts of border apprehension on modes of crossing.

In Europe, the literature estimating migrant flows is more recent, is based primarily on border apprehension data, and suffers from technical problems related to the quality and availability of statistics, the generation of a reliable and valid 'multiplier', and problems with generalization across the Union (Jandl, 2004a). The vast literature on the modes of undocumented border crossing in the U.S. and Europe has expanded further from the 1990s, so only a select group of initial and influential quantitative studies will be reviewed here, as part of the second model in the review: estimates of flow, mode of crossing, and likelihood of capture models.

Estimates of flow are limited in the European context, due to the paucity of large-scale surveys of undocumented migration as well as limitations on the availability of data among border management officials. Nevertheless, border apprehensions and court records form the foundation of most estimations of undocumented flow in Europe (Futo, et al., 2005; Heckmann, 2004; Icduygu, 2003; Jandl, 2007; Leman & Janssens, 2011; Monzini, 2007; Neske & Doomernik, 2006; Pastore, et al., 2006; Peterka-Benton, 2011; Salt, 2000b; Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012; Uehling, 2004; Ventrella, 2010). International Organization for Migration (IOM) surveys carried out in the 1990s provide detailed but outdat-

ed information, and have not been replicated to provide more longitudinal perspectives and changes over time (Lazcko & Thompson, 2000). More recent IOM surveys looking at West African and Central Asian smuggling to the EU offer similar snapshots (Carling, 2006; de Haas, 2008; IOM, 2006). Two unique surveys on unaccompanied minors carried out in Belgium provide evidence of flows (Derluyn & Broekaert, 2005; Derluyn, et al., 2010), but remain un-comparable as there is little research to compare. The lack of comparable estimates across Europe stems from the "ad hoc rather than systematic" collection of data as well as the inherent transnational scope of smuggling activity (Salt, 2000a). Statistics are based on national surveys, border apprehension statistics, or judicial files, and may only capture a small piece of a much larger network of flows (Neske & Doomernik, 2006).

The Business Model and the Migration Industry

The earliest conceptualizations of human smuggling come from the older but still useful market model of geographers John Salt and Jeremy Stein (1997). Salt and Stein's model theorizes international migration as a business composed of legitimate and illegitimate markets in which actors pursue profit and commercial gain. They place smuggling and trafficking into a single model (which points to its efficacy and durability as a theory) regardless of the discrepancies in the definitions of smuggling and trafficking (Salt & Stein, 1997, p. 471):

> Despite these sometimes conflicting definitions, they are compatible with our concept of trafficking in migrants as an international business, involving the trading and systematic movement of people as 'commodities' by various means and po-

tentially involving a variety of agents, institutions and intermediaries.

Smugglers act as important intermediate agents embedded in wider global markets for migration. Salt and Stein's model is formed in the tradition of economic accounts of international migration. The business model has been popular in analyses of smuggling, as it replaced two-dimensional representations of human smuggling where receiving states chased migrants and migrants avoided state controls in a game of cat-and-mouse: "The business idiom drew attention to the complexity of global migration, with its different levels, actors, and interconnections" (Herman, 2006, p. 195). The various levels, institutions, and actors were thus integrated into a global model of migration which remains influential today. Salt and Stein divide the business of migration into three stages, each of which is a multi-level process involving a variety of actors: 1) the mobilization and recruitment of migrants, 2) movement en route, and 3) insertion and integration into receiving contexts.

Salt and Stein's tripartite model has been revised and extended by different studies. First, Bilger, Hofmann and Jandl (Bilger, et al., 2006) extend the business model to conceptualize smuggling as a transnational service industry operating in a market of incomplete, imperfect information. They outline the risk-reduction techniques that actors use to compensate for imperfect information and ensure some degree of transparency in the market, including "the build-up of reputation and trust," including "insurance," "guarantees" and "a variety of warranties" (ibid: 66; 85). They use the broad outline of mobilization, en route, and insertion to guide their analysis, but focus on human smuggling in stages where recruitment and advertisement, organizational structures and networks, prices, risk, reputation and trustworthiness all play a role. They

conclude by refuting the organized crime thesis and suggesting that the business of human smuggling is organizationally and structurally distinct from human trafficking, mirroring the legal and institutional definition. Thus, smuggling remains a service industry based on risk, reputation, and trust, and trafficking is a nefarious business based on coercion and exploitation. Sub-dividing human smuggling from human trafficking within the business model itself has meant re-orienting analyses of smuggling towards migrant decision-making and agent-structure analyses. The (re)focusing of the business model onto relations between smuggler and migrant has also meant that attention is aimed at understanding *financial* aspects of migrant-smuggler relations and why smuggling "pays" (Koser, 2008).

Second, Herman (2006, p. 199) criticizes the business model of smuggling, claiming that it "underestimates the role of personal networks in the migration process." Earlier work by Staring (2004) also focused on familial networks and came to similar conclusions. Social networks are not well represented in the Salt and Stein model, so Herman included networks of friends, relatives, and acquaintances in a study of the mobility phase of migration. She incorporates "the social non-profit factor" into the study of smuggling, adding a "personal component … bringing the role of personal and especially familial ties into the foreground" (Herman, 2006, p. 217). Herman expands the visual model of Salt and Stein, providing an updated, multi-level representation of migration as a family business, re-orienting social relations from those of for-profit gain to those of familial trust and kinship bonds.

Third, culture was not a factor in the initial business model. Recent work by Leman and Janssens (2011) has introduced the analysis of specific 'entrepreneurial cultures'. They found that historical and socio-cultural contexts differ among Albanian smuggler 'entrepreneurs'

operating between Brussels and England. They explore the logics of power and authority within networks and specific ethno-national ideologies of authority and gender. Their work is representative of recent work employing the business model, and hints towards future work employing an analysis of the organization, costs, networks, culture, and socio-historical context of human smuggling. Another example of a model which incorporates the market model, culture, and social organization, depicting smuggling organizations in China as small task-based networks, comes from Zhang's (2008, p. 130) task-force formation and process of operations model.

The financing of smuggling has been the focus of various sections of studies speaking about the *hawallah* system (or escrow services where migrants lend money to a third party to be distributed after successfully migrating) but only two significant pieces of work focus specifically on the topic of costs. First, Petros (2005) analyzed over 500 secondary sources to arrive at a global review of smuggling prices and costs. She asks three questions: 1) How much does it cost? 2) Are prices increasing or decreasing? and 3) What determines costs? She breaks down the globe into five regions and reports the mean cost of each region. Costs remained stable in some regions and not in others, reflecting regional contexts and specific circumstances. From Turkey to Europe, for example, costs have remained relatively stable across time. Petros finds there are five main determinants of costs (ibid: 12): the distance travelled, the mode of transport, the number and characteristics of people involved, and contextual/circumstantial conditions.

Table 2: Global Costs of Human Smuggling (mean costs in USD)

Routes	Mean Costs (USD)
Asia-Americas	26,041
Europe-Asia	16,462
Asia-Australasia	14,011
Asia-Asia	12,240
Asia-Europe	9,374
Europe-Australasia	7,400
Africa-Europe	6,533
Europe-Americas	6,389
Americas-Europe	4,528
Americas-Americas	2,984
Europe-Europe	2,708
Africa-Americas	2,200
Africa-Australasia	1,951
Africa-Africa	203
Source: Petros, 2005, pp. 4-5	

Koser (2008) investigates the financing of smuggling routes from Pakistan and Afghanistan to the UK. He finds that 'smuggling pays': the initial investment in smuggling is paid back through earning wages abroad and sending them home, increasing household income significantly. Koser adopts the business model of smuggling and suggests it can be used for further comparative analysis of "how money is raised by clients, how payments are made to smugglers and disbursed by them, how smugglers profit and how the initial investment pays for migrants and their families" (Koser, 2008, p. 20). Koser also rebuts a main criticism of the business model – that it fails to incorporate social context and network characteristics – by arguing that following the money reveals socio-economic contexts, networks, and family relations. However he cautions us from labeling smugglers as 'entrepreneurs' or 'merchants': "conceiving smugglers as business people can professionalize them and ignore the utter lack of respect that many have for the rights and dignity of their clients" (Koser, 2008, p. 6). In sum, "the business of migrant

smuggling depends on social networks and relations to make a profit" (ibid: 21). Again, the conclusions of the research are oriented towards policies which reduce the profits of smuggling.

Since Salt and Stein's (1997) initial conceptual work on smuggling as a business, there has been a failure to distinguish analytically and empirically between for-profit and not-for-profit smuggling activities, leading to an over-abundance of empirical and conceptual work focusing on the market logic of smuggling activities and the migration industry model of migration. Little research has been conducted examining alternative non-monetary benefits which smugglers accrue through providing their services.

Migration Industries: Market Logics for Migration Problems

Intimately linked to theories of migration as a business are more nuanced theoretical accounts which draw on trans-disciplinary discussions of migration industries. Migration industries approaches, based on work by Hernandez-Leon (2005), conceptualize the migration industry as "the social infrastructure connecting origin and destinations in a given migratory circuit, including legal/illegal and formal/informal activities, and their interaction and articulation with the demand-side actors in the social process of international migration; actors such as governments, employers, migrants and their networks and advocacy organizations" (Sorensen & Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2013, p. 5). Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sorensen (2013) relate the migration industry to both the facilitation and the control of migration. Studies on the migration industry highlight the neoliberal market logics which pulsate through transnational circuits, imbuing migration management with economic techniques of coercion (Menz, 2013). The migration industries literature demonstrates that not only smuggling

and the facilitation of migration have been commercialized, but migration policy itself has been overcome with a marketized logic. As European borderlands extend, and border controls are outsourced, "grey zones" appear which increase the profitability of migration, a space where stranded migrants and deportees find opportunities for money assisting others to be smuggled further (Lucht, 2013). Neoliberal outsourcing of migration management and control leads to market logics even for humanitarian issues (Betts, 2013). Finally, the role of organized crime has re-entered the discussion, as migrants traverse dangerous territories run by armed non-state actors and drug traffickers who profit from those passing through in an 'exploitation industry' of kidnapping, ransom, and violence (Sorensen, 2013).

Global Comparative and Structural Approaches

Historical approaches to human smuggling draw heavily on globalization theories and the various histories of human smuggling, emphasizing its distinct roles and positions within and across different geographic regions. The large geographic distribution of conditions favorable to human smuggling is a critical point made in global comparative accounts. In other words, human smuggling has remarkable global scope. Human smuggling is viewed as the product of political, economic, legal, and social factors which differ across space and time, allowing for comparisons (Kyle & Koslowski, 2011). The global historical-structural approach emphasizes the diversity of organizational forms, causes, and consequences of human smuggling in different places and at different times across the globe. Far from being a business without a space, human smuggling is territorialized historically and structurally, with fixed routes often in parallel with historically licit and illicit trade routes. Conclusions drawn from historical-structural approaches

are complex, multifaceted, and highlight the embedded complexity of human smuggling over time and space:

> [S]tate officials and smugglers are locked in an embrace without straightforward solutions, primarily because the causes, social organization, and proposed solutions are much more historically and politically complex than they may at first seem. … [T]he phenomenon of human smuggling is exacerbated by multiple sets of interlocking problems such as widening social inequality, state corruption, and ethnic and gender discriminations. Further, all of these are compounded by the contradictions of a contemporary world connected economically and technologically but in no fundamental way integrated politically or culturally. (Kyle and Koslowski 2001, p. 21; 23)

A number of other studies have linked migration to the structure of national and global labor markets. Early structural analysis of 'illegal' migration in the U.S. context focused on the labor market structure in receiving areas (Portes, 1978, p. 472; 477; 478): "the causes of illegal immigration are ultimately found in the use and control of labor in different areas of the international economy. … Illegal or not, the fundamental point … is that international labor immigration responds to structural determinants in both sending and receiving countries … as a process of network-building through which individuals adapt to the uneven spatial distribution of economic advantage." This early account posits a distinct relationship between the labor market and 'illegal' migration and that human smuggling plays a crucial role in shaping the labor markets in receiving countries.

In contrast, Ahmad's (2008a) work on ethnic economies shows that the legal status and migratory pathways of migrants have little effect on the segmented labor market. It is not that smuggling has an effect on the labor market in London, it is that the sociological texture of the labor market has consequences for smuggling. The labor market functions autonomously from smuggling networks, i.e. the context of reception is disambiguated from human smuggling, which is in contrast to other historical-structural approaches which posit that the distinct structure of receiving contexts is a crucial factor in the organization of smuggling to some extent.

There is some agreement that smuggling is structurally embedded in receiving contexts, just not exclusively linked to the labor market. For example, Kyle and Liang (2001, p. 5) draw on theories of the embeddedness of markets in economic sociology. In their comparison of China and Ecuador, they expand on the bi-directional structural model to include the different socio-historical, political, and economic contexts, histories, gender relations, and ethnicities, to expound an embedded commodification model of migration: "A more close-range, historical analysis of the social organization of migrant trafficking [and smuggling] reveals a complex process that may be transnational in scope but is built upon a foundation of local, often rural, ignorance and hierarchical structures of class, ethnicity, and gender; we refer to this process as the embedded commodification of migration." The strength of socio-historical ties should not be underestimated, as research by Spener (2004) shows how these socio-historical links have been hard to sever, even in the midst of government efforts to restrict immigration and prevent undocumented border crossings.

Human Rights Approaches
The consequences of migration policies which permit some and deny others have been a topic of considerable debate. The difficult and dan-

gerous lengths to which individuals go scaling state borders to migrate have raised serious questions about the moral, legal, and normative responses both state and non-state actors are obliged to consider. Fundamental tension arises when individuals have a right to leave their country, but are denied the corresponding right to enter another. The global preoccupation with controlling and managing migration has given rise to the migration industries of facilitation (including services offered by human smugglers) and control (including institutional and state efforts to manage mobility), further antagonizing the debate about the treatment of migrants. How should states ethically respond to human smuggling? How do states reconcile human rights with human smuggling as a crime? How is the right to asylum compromised by state reactions to smuggling?

A key critique within human rights studies of smuggling is the lack of protection which is offered to migrants who have been smuggled. Access to asylum, for example, is seen to be constrained by criminalizing smuggling, as it is perceived that a majority of asylum seekers use smuggling services to flee political persecution (Crepeau, 2003; Morrison & Crosland, 2001). The relationship between smuggling and asylum points to the deep ambiguities in the Palermo Protocols and their relation to other human rights instruments. The Palermo Protocols are not human rights instruments, but instruments to aid states in the combat against organized crime. In the human rights account of smuggling, state sovereignty trumps human rights concerns:

> While human rights concerns may have provided some impetus (or cover) for collective action, it is the sovereignty/security issues surrounding trafficking and migrant smuggling which are the true driving force behind such efforts. Wealthy states are in-

creasingly concerned that the actions of traffickers and migrant smugglers interfere with orderly migration and facilitate the circumvention of national immigration restrictions (Gallagher, 2001, p. 976)

Counteracting the practice of smuggling and enforcing laws criminalizing it is a state-centric endeavor, and efforts to end the practice have not seen much success. In one account, this is due to national interests overriding attempts at regional cooperation, undermining rights claims:

> Yet, so far, national interests in preserving state sovereignty clearly prevail over the willingness to work effectively on regional co-operation to combat human smuggling on the one hand, as well as, on the other, over international obligations emanating, for example, from the 1951 Geneva Convention or Human Rights declarations. (Nadig, 2002, p. 9)

The main point of these works is to demonstrate that although states have rights to prevent entry, states must ensure that an individual's entry into a state should not adversely affect the individual's ability to access asylum and make a claim for refugee status (Brolan, 2002, p. 592). This implies that the smuggling of refugees is not illegal, but a fundamental component of international refugee law, which is compromised by the Palermo Protocols. Some have hypothesized that the criminalization of smuggling hints at a covert mechanism to end the right of asylum on European territory, arguing for a tough defense of the principle of asylum (Morrison & Backers, 2001).

Multiple analyses of the laws criminalizing smuggling have demonstrated that to do so constrains the ability of individuals to access rights and gain protection if necessary (Brolan, 2002; Kirchner & Schiano di Pepe,

Table 3: Comparison between the Measures of the Palermo Protocol Aimed at Containing Migrations and Those Aimed at Protecting Migrants

Measures Aimed at Containing Migrations	Measures Aimed at Protecting Migrants

• Criminalization of migrant smuggling (Article 6)
• Measures against the smuggling of migrants by sea (Article 8)
• Information exchange (Article 10)
• Border measures (Article 11)
  - Strengthened controls
  - Obligations and sanctions for carriers
  - Denial of entry for smugglers
  - Strengthened cooperation between border control agencies
• Security and control of documents (Article 12)
• Training and technical cooperation (Article 14)
• Prevention measures (Article 15)
• Cooperation on repression (Article 17)
• Return of smuggled migrants (Article 18)
	• Protection and assistance measures (Article 16)
	  - Measures to preserve and protect the rights of smuggled migrants
	  - Measures against violence
	  - Assistance to migrants whose life and safety is in danger
	  - Measures to take into account the special needs of women and children
	• Migrants not considered criminals because they have been smuggled; not liable to criminal prosecution for being object of smuggling (Article 5)

Source: Adapted from Crepeau, 2003, p. 177

1998; Obokata, 2005). The main protection concerns involved in the smuggling Protocol are outlined in the table below. In opposition, some work takes a more hostile tone, using law as a weapon to combat crime and to be enforced rigorously through new technologies and techniques (Coen, 2011; Mallia, 2010).

Gender Approaches

Migration theories have wrestled with the competing articulations of gender differences. The rational choice view of migration posits that people move based on individual utility and balanced consideration of economic benefits and costs, and often denies gender. Structural approaches to migration posit that structural constraints and macro-social trends result in migration, in interaction with the agency of the individual. The increased feminization of migration, along with restrictions on movement and smuggling's attempts to overcome them, have reshaped our understanding of agency and structure, and helped to re-formu-

late conceptions of gender and mobility. Gender has entered directly into the smuggling debate, as "the entire migration process is perceived as a gendered phenomenon" (Donato, et al., 2006, p. 6).

Gendered aspects of human smuggling theories have called attention to both the global historical and structural inequalities which shape and constraint movement but do not deny agency (Schrover, et al., 2008). Such a gender-sensitive approach to human smuggling integrates a conception of agency that is mixed with contextual structures and intermediate structures such as migration industries. Thus, *competing understandings of agency and structure lie at the core of human smuggling and trafficking studies.*

The definitions of trafficking and smuggling are distinguished in law by the concepts of agency and exploitation, but in practice, as Van Liempt (2011, p. 190) has demonstrated, "there is no clear demarcation line that distinguishes smuggling and trafficking" and

furthermore "the interpretation of the two phenomena is often gendered." In turn, binary gender oppositions erroneously frame discussions of trafficking and smuggling: women and children are trafficked, men are smuggled; women are trafficked for prostitution, men for forced labor. Men are given agency and control to cross borders and violate state norms, where women are denied agency, victimized, made vulnerable, and exploited. Thus, the distinction between smuggling and trafficking is "highly gendered, and reproduces stereotypes and 'universal' narratives which deny women's agency in their migration process" (Van Liempt, 2011, p. 179). Overcoming these fundamental tensions has resulted in research that is actor-oriented and investigates the particular strategies migrants use to overcome the legal categorizations and stereotyped gender divisions (Ahmad, 2008b; Van Liempt, 2008).

Gendered smuggling studies have also focused on gender differences in likelihood of apprehension (Donato, 1993), the divergent positions of men and women as smugglers (Zhang, 2008; Zhang, et al., 2007), divergent perceptions of risk and danger (Van Liempt, 2011), smuggling's role in incorporating migrants into segmented labor markets (Ahmad, 2008a; Peixoto, 2009), household gender roles and border controls (Donato, et al., 2008), resisting collective decision-making in the household (Ahmad, 2011) and global historical and structural gender inequalities (Schrover, et al., 2008). Finally, Zhang, Chin and Miller's (2007) gendered market perspective was developed into Zhang's (2008) conditional market perspective, and offers a single model of women's participation in the smuggling industry in China.

CONTRASTS WITH THEORIES OF 'ILLEGAL' AND 'IRREGULAR' MIGRATION

"The economics and sociology of irregular migration are contested territory, and raise complex issues" (Jordan & Duvell, 2002, p. 112). The definitions of 'irregular' or 'illegal' migration are disputed and political. "At one level, illegal migration is simple to define: it is migration that occurs outside of the legal-institutional frameworks established by states" (Baldwin-Edwards, 2008, p. 1449). At another level, illegal migration opens up a conceptual Pandora's Box, as normative and politicized concepts enter into the forum of debate and obscure categories and concepts by imposing legal and political logics onto the study of migration. In line with this dilemma is a vast literature on 'illegal', 'irregular', 'clandestine' and 'undocumented' migration. Each term has a particular weight in political and legal debates and has ramifications for the conceptualization of migration by states and international actors. It is espoused throughout the literature that defining exactly who is an illegal migrant is not difficult: there are a number of norms, rules, moral principles, and legal decisions which attest to definitional clarity (Guild, 2004). However, debates over definitions have plagued research on undocumented migration – precisely defining 'illegal', 'irregular' and 'clandestine' has been beset by analytical, political, and normative positioning, often obscuring the empirical phenomenon to be observed and explained. It is the "intensely politicized nature of claims to knowledge and analysis" which divides the usage of these terms among states and academics (Anderson & Ruhs, 2010). Research on 'illegal' migration has turned to socio-historical accounts of how 'illegality' itself is produced and accounted for in different contexts (Chavez, 2007; de Genova, 2002; Oelgemoller, 2011; Solis, 2003; Willen, 2007).

Other related terms, such as 'clandestine' (Duvell, 2008) and 'undocumented' (Paspalanova, 2008) migration have been subject to similar scrutiny. The scholarship on undocumented migration shares many of the conceptual and methodological challenges associated with human smuggling research, that the use of particular terms indicates a particular political or normative position. In the end, however, it seems to be the personal preferences of the researchers which determine which term to use and which political and normative position they wish to express.

Finally, explanations for 'irregular' migration can be divided into macro-, meso-, and micro-levels (Koser, 2010), which engage with structural causes, policies and intermediaries, and individuals and families, respectively. This ensures that theories of 'irregular' migration draw elements from macro-level theorizations such as migration systems theory, segmented assimilation theory, or historical-structural accounts, meso-level theorizations from network theories, or micro-level theories of agency and family structure (Baldwin-Edwards, 2008; Cvajner & Sciortino, 2010; Icduygu, 2007; Ruhs & Anderson, 2010).

To sum up, it has not been the intention to review the expansive literature on 'illegal' and 'irregular' migration here, only to point the reader to some significant studies and demonstrate the complexity of conceptualizing migration in relation to the state and international norms and rules. The study of human smuggling is beset by similar setbacks, as no significant investigation of either 'smuggling' or 'illegal' migration can occur without explicit reference to the constructed nature of the practice of human smuggling and our explanations and understandings of it.

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDS

This working paper has explored the main approaches to theorizing and conceptualizing human smuggling in the migration studies literature. The review identified six different theoretical approaches to human smuggling and summarized the main debates among them: 1) organizational or network approaches, partially based on criminological models; 2) mode of crossing and likelihood of capture models, including estimations of migration rates and flows; 3) migration industry and market approaches; 'smuggling as a business'; 4) global historical comparisons; 5) human rights responses which are concerned primarily with legal arguments; and 6) gender approaches to human smuggling. Each approach has a unique value in raising important questions about human smuggling, but very few bridge the gaps or holistically combine concepts and approaches from each. The next step could be to compile a meta-analysis of empirical findings by combining and contrasting results from multiple studies. It is unclear exactly how such a meta-analysis could combine both qualitative and quantitative findings from across a range of disciplines and literatures, but such an endeavor could yield interesting results. Another meta-analysis can consider the various methods available for researching human smuggling and how to improve them. An analysis of the geographic content scope of human smuggling studies can aid in finding areas of the globe where smuggling exists, but is understudied (for a similar review of geographical content, see King, et al., 2011).

Theories of human smuggling can move forward through the individual approaches, or be mixed and matched in holistic theoretical combinations and wholes. Two or more approaches may be combined and yield unique insights. Generating new approaches to human smug-

gling may help move past the models reviewed here and help us arrive at holistic conceptions which draw multiple elements together. Developing new models and conceptual frameworks outside of the European and North American contexts can aid in alternative understandings and explanations of human smuggling. Exploring the application of the six approaches to contexts outside Europe and North America could also assist in moving our understanding forward.

There is a general lack of empirical details, stemming from difficulties of researching the undocumented context which is slowly being overcome. Investigating the violence experienced in smuggling through a closer empirical examination of the smuggling-trafficking nexus, the grey zone where practices of smuggling and trafficking overlap and where migrants are coerced or exploited, would be useful. Understanding the scale and scope of violence experienced by migrants can help in protecting migrants and improving reception conditions. Another way of furthering the empirical field is through comparison.

Developing research which is comparative in scope can open new conceptual frameworks and help move past the mostly nation-based studies outlined above. Indeed there is a diversity of studies on human smuggling, and a diversity of models available for further theoretical work. This diversity is positive, and a trend towards compatibility will enhance the ability to compare and contrast conclusions and suggest new conceptual avenues for debate. The six theoretical positions outlined above provide strong frameworks for examining human smuggling. However, some of the theoretical models outlined above are more suitable for comparison than others. Within-model comparisons (such as within the business model of smuggling) are evidenced by a wide range of literature, so developing cross-model comparisons in an effort to develop hybrid theoriza-

tions of smuggling could prove fruitful. New concepts and alternative classifications of the migratory phenomenon need to be made more explicit. Relying on the international legal and political system to define social science concepts can cause theoretical issues which hinder the formation of research questions and research attention. Combing and synthesizing concepts developed through sustained empirical exploration, as well as through legal and political norm-making, can help move beyond the definitional problems outlined above. Engaging with alternative conceptual and theoretical debates on the definition of smuggling, linked with empirical explorations, can re-invigorate the core of smuggling research and spark new ideas for debate and practical engagement.

Finally, unaccompanied minors have been relatively under-researched in smuggling studies. Minors (itself a culturally specific term, often used to designate those 18 years old or younger) constitute a growing population among migrants using smugglers to reach other countries. Very little research has been conducted on the smuggling of minors (Derluyn & Broekaert, 2005; Derluyn, et al., 2010; Uehling, 2008). The smuggling of minors raises serious questions concerning the role of agency, consent, and coercion among human smuggling scholars, as they are often unaccompanied by parents, kin, or guardians. An important sub-population of minors is vulnerable to exploitation and coercion, and by extension forms of human trafficking. However, what constitutes exploitation, victimization, and trafficking are contested through the social and cultural interpretations of minors themselves (Mai, 2011). The approach to smuggled minors is complex and fraught with country-specific difficulties in detection and protection (Derluyn, et al., 2010). The smuggling of children raises important questions about the tensions between security and humanitarianism (Uehling, 2008).

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