CHAPTER 1
Irregular Migration and Human Smuggling from Asia and Africa to Europe

International migration has intensified during the last two decades both across the East to West and the South to North axis: Europe has been receiving increasing numbers of migrants from developing countries in Africa and Asia (and also Latin America).

Figure 1. 1 Estimated number of international migrants by major area, 1990-2010 (*millions*)
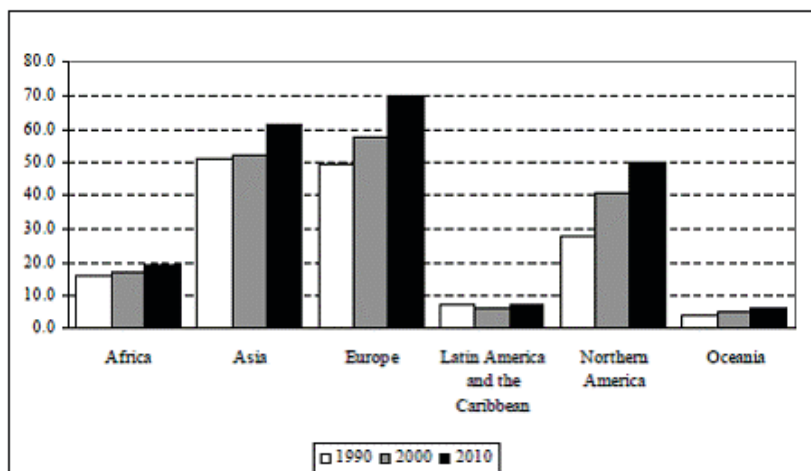
Source: UN ESA 2008, p.2

Part of this international movement of people takes place illegally, notably involves either unlawful border crossings or overstaying (with or without visa). This books looks at one specific aspect of the wider irregular migration phenomenon, notably the organization and role of migrant smuggling networks in aiding irregular migration from Asia and Africa to southern Europe (and from southern European countries to the wider EU area). It also discusses how migration control policies in southern European countries may inadvertently shape the migrant smuggling phenomenon and the smuggling 'business'.

The book is inscribed in the wider literature on migrant smuggling and irregular migration while it also briefly touches upon the question of trafficking in human beings to the extent that migrant smuggling sometimes involves labour trafficking (notably the labour exploitation of the smuggled migrants under conditions that approximate modern day slavery). A detailed overview of the routes and modalities of migrant smuggling actors the Mediterranean is provided. Moreover, both the 'business' and social-cultural aspects of the phenomenon are analyzed in the chapters that follow.

The book is based on extensive empirical research (about 150 qualitative interviews with migrants, smugglers, state actors and civil society stakeholders), participant observation, collection of statistical data, desk research) as regards the smuggling of migrants from Africa and Asia to Greece (via North Africa and Turkey) and on recently published studies, statistics and qualitative data on migrant smuggling from Africa (sub Saharan and North Africa) to Spain and Italy.

This introductory chapter presents the theoretical and empirical context within which the book is placed and also the geopolitical and policy context within which migrant smuggling develops. In the following section we discuss the two dominant perspectives in analyzing migrant smuggling and discuss their relevance for the study of the smuggling of irregular migrants and asylum seekers from Africa and Asia to Europe. We also offer here a first overview of the irregular migration flows towards southern European countries with a view to highlighting the size of the phenomenon and in particular the relevance of human smuggling within the wider context of irregular migration and asylum seeking. Section Three discusses the EU policy on irregular migration with a view to offering the framework within which to consider the related policies of Spain, Italy, Malta and Greece discussed in Chapters 2-6 in more detail. This chapter already traces the contours of the human smuggling phenomenon and how it develops as a response to a mismatch between migration pressures (from East and South) and (the lack of legal) migration opportunities (in West and North) in the wider Mediterranean region and beyond. The chapter concludes with a short presentation of the contents of the book.

2. Irregular Migration and Human Smuggling

According to the most recent United Nations Development Report (UNDP 2009, p.21) it is currently estimated that around 214 million individuals are international migrants, representing some 3.1 percent of the world's population (see also IOM 2008, p. 2). Thus international migrants represent a rather small fraction of the world's population. Still it is interesting to note that the percentage of international migrants is estimated to have doubled in the last 25 years even if the share of international migrants in the world's populations has risen only by 50% - in other words international migrants are 2.5 times more today compared to 1970 but they account for approx. 3% of the total world's population (as opposed to approx. 2% in 1970).

Table 1.1: International (documented and irregular) migrants (in millions), worldwide, 1970-2010

	Migrants	Total Population	World %
1970	81,3	3 696	2.2
1975	86,8	3 696	2.1
1980	99,3	4 442	2.2
1985	111	4 844	2.3
1990	154,9	5 280	2.9
1995	165,1	5 692	2.9
2000	176,7	6 086	2,9
2005	190,6	6 465	3,1
2010	213,9	6 793	3,1

Source: ICHRP 2010, p.11

Of course such gross numbers should be read with caution as migration statistics differ widely between countries even simply within the European Union let alone in global scale. Different countries have different naturalization laws and hence may convert migrants to citizens and make them disappear statistically from the country. In addition some countries count the foreign born and not just the foreigners giving a fuller picture of migration trends (Triandafyllidou, Gropas and Vogel, 2007). The above problems show that global data on legal international migration may not be accurate. Such problems are even greater when seeking to estimate the size of irregular migration, as it is a non registered phenomenon, by definition.

The United Nations has estimated that globally there are approximately 30 to 40 million irregular migrants, a number that amounts to between 15 and 20 percent of all international migrants (ICHRP 2010, p.13, estimation refers to 2003). Naturally this is just an estimate. Data on undocumented migrants are usually derived from national censuses that although comprehensively counting both legal and irregular migrants, are not likely to capture the total size of the irregular migration as undocumented residents tend to hide from census interviewers by fear of detection.

For the European Union, the CLANDESTINO Project has produced in 2008 a scientifically rigorous calculation estimating irregular migrant residents in the 27 member states of the EU at 1.9–3.8 million (Vogel et al. 2009) in a total of approx. 498 million inhabitants[i] in the EU, i.e. below 1% of the total population. According to van Hook et al. (2005), undocumented migrants in the USA were estimated to be 10.3 million in 2005 (in a total population[ii] of 307 million on 2009, i.e. just over 3% of the total US population). According to Koser (2007), p.57-59), the percentage of irregular migration among total movements in Asia and Latin America might be beyond 50%. The above estimates show that irregular migration is a phenomenon of global concern. It has attracted much attention in Europe too by policy makers, the media and scholars, even though the political importance given to it may be disproportionately high compared to the overall percentage of irregular migrants within the total population (below 1% in 2008).

Naturally not all undocumented migrants have been smuggled into a country. The data given above are meant to put our study into its global context and give a sense of the size of the phenomena that we are studying. Below we shall first provide for working definitions and clarify how the terms 'human smuggling', 'migrant smuggling' or 'human trafficking' and 'trafficking in human beings' are used in the book. We shall thus identify the links between irregular migration, asylum seeking and human smuggling as well as trafficking. These clarifications provide for the necessary framework for our analysis of the empirical data in the chapters that follow.

2.1 Terms and definitions

In the world of nation states where borders are fixed, international migration is regulated and often restricted. The existence of national borders that are relatively impermeable is supported by a border bureaucracy, which includes border crossing points, border guards, passport controls, entry visas, stamps on one's passport when entering or leaving a country (Mountz 2010). This bureaucracy involves also a whole range of border actors including not only state authorities and border guards but also non governmental organizations, international organizations, and criminal networks for human smuggling and trafficking (see also Cassarino 2006). Although Kyle and Koslowski (2001a), p.1) consider that the smuggling of migrants has been officially recognized as a global problem as late as 1998, it is important also to acknowledge that human smuggling is probably as old as migration restrictions.

People who wish to move to a new country in search of better employment and life prospects often do so without appropriate authorization, if they cannot have access to legal migration channels. They may of course organize their trip on their own or with the help of family and friends based at the country of transit or destination. However, the increasing development of the border related bureaucracies and control systems mentioned above or simply the geographical distance between the country of origin and destination (and the complexity of the trip) make it necessary for the prospective irregular migrant to use the services of criminal networks. In the process of migrating without appropriate documents, many prospective migrants use the services of individuals or entire networks, who facilitate illegal entry and stay into another country.

Indeed probably what is novel in the last decade with regard to human smuggling is the professionalization and global nature of the related networks and criminal organizations. As Kyle and Koslowski argued about a decade ago (2001a, p.5) the smuggling of migrants into countries where they are not allowed to enter is not new, what is new is the global spread and development of the phenomenon. Ten years later, in 2011, there has been a development of the human smuggling and trafficking networks in terms of the breadth and size of their criminal activities and 'business' turnover, and a growth in the concern of governments and international organizations in combating these two related phenomena. Indeed the smuggling of migrants in general as well as into Europe in particular has been a priority concern for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and its special anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking training programmes. Also trafficking in human beings, an issue closely related to human smuggling, has become a priority concern[iii] for international organizations like the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

In the early scholarly works on migrant smuggling and to some extent to this day the terms smuggling and trafficking are used almost interchangeably. Salt and Stein (1997) in their seminal article: *Migration as a Business: the Case of Trafficking*, exemplify this kind of confusion. Salt and Stein, (1997), p.467) define trafficking as 'an intermediary part of the global migration business facilitating movement of people between origin and destination countries'. Salt and Stein just like later Kyle and Koslowski (2001b) and the contributors in their volume do not trace a clear line between trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling. The same is true for instance for Tamuray's (2007) very interesting analysis of the impact of policies combating irregular migration at the border on migrants' exploitation by smugglers. He also looks at smuggling and trafficking as phenomena so closely interlinked that it is hard to talk about smuggled migrants without crossing the line into the area of trafficking. Below we attempt to disentangle the two phenomena while acknowledging the close links that exist between them and in particular how hard it is methodologically to distinguish between smuggling and trafficking practices.

An official definition of the smuggling of migrants has been adopted in 2000 by the United Nations. This was part of the United Nations Convention[iv] against Transnational Organized Crime, which was accompanied by a Smuggling of Migrants Protocol. According to this Protocol, the smuggling of migrants is 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 a permanent resident."* (Article 3, Smuggling of Migrants Protocol).

Article 6 of the same Protocol requires states to criminalize both smuggling of migrants and enabling of a person to remain in a country illegally, as well as aggravating circumstances that endanger lives or safety, or entail inhuman or degrading treatment of migrants. The Convention and the Protocol note that almost every country in the world is either a country of origin, or a transit or destination country for smuggled migrants by profit-seeking agents. The Protocol draws attention to the fact that migrant smuggling is a transnational crime and that smuggled migrants are often subjected to life-threatening risks and exploitation while the smugglers make huge profits by people's hope for a better life.

The United Nations Protocol adopts the term 'the smuggling of migrants' rather than human smuggling, but in this work (and more widely in the relevant literature) we use the terms 'migrant smuggling' and 'human smuggling' as synonymous.

By contrast, in this book we treat human trafficking / trafficking in human beings and human smuggling / smuggling of migrants as two inter-related but still distinct phenomena.

According to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the related Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (Article 3), trafficking in persons is defined as:

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 a 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

Compared to the smuggling of migrants, human trafficking differs less in the acts committed by traffickers (according to the UN definition these include recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, all acts that are also involved in the smuggling of migrants) but more on the means and purpose of these acts.

Thus, while smuggling may be seen more as a free agreement and exchange between the smuggler – who provides the services – and the prospective migrant – who is the customer that needs the services, trafficking involves threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability, or giving payments or benefits to a person in control of the victim. In addition the purpose is not simply the profit, but also the exploitation such as
sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or similar practices and the removal of organs.

The UNODC provides almost a checklist to help authorities and other interested actors to ascertain whether a particular circumstance constitutes trafficking in persons:

Table 1.2: What is Trafficking?
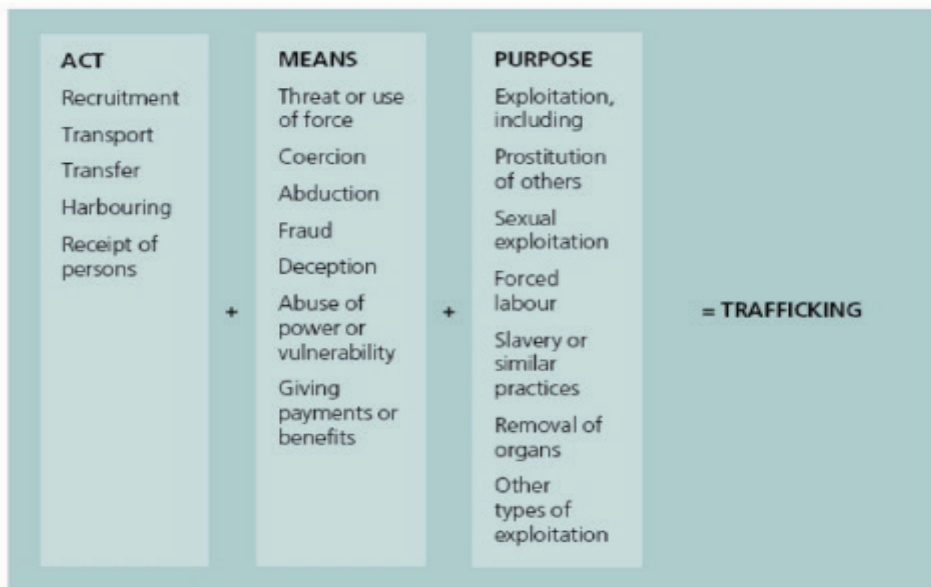
Source:http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/what-is-humantrafficking.html?ref=menuside, last accessed13 July 2011.

In this book the question of trafficking is the object of a specialized chapter that discusses in detail the advantages as well as shortcomings of the UN definition and of related national and EU legislation in the face of empirical evidence from trafficking in Greece (see Chapter Six). Here we shall discuss in some more depth the links between human smuggling and irregular migration and asylum seeking with a view also to providing definitions of who is an irregular migrant or an asylum seeker as again such terms may tend to become blurred when looking at real individual cases.

Human smuggling as a social phenomenon and as an illicit type of business is closely connected both to the question of irregular migration and to that of asylum seeking. Asylum seekers and irregular migrants who cross a border illegally with the help of human smuggling networks share the fact that they enter their transit or destination country unauthorized. However, neither all asylum seekers nor all irregular migrants cross a border illegally. They may arrive to a country with appropriate documents and then apply for asylum (as regards asylum seekers) or (in the case of irregular migrants) they may enter a country legally (with a tourist visa for example) and may stay longer or violate their conditions of entry and stay (e.g. engage into employment without authorization). At the same time, the fact of being smuggled into a country does not make one necessarily an undocumented migrant, as a person who is smuggled into a country may be fleeing persecution and be entitled to asylum. Thus we may consider human smuggling, irregular migration and asylum seeking as three overlapping circles.

Figure 1.2: Irregular Migration, Migrant Smuggling and Asylum Seeking
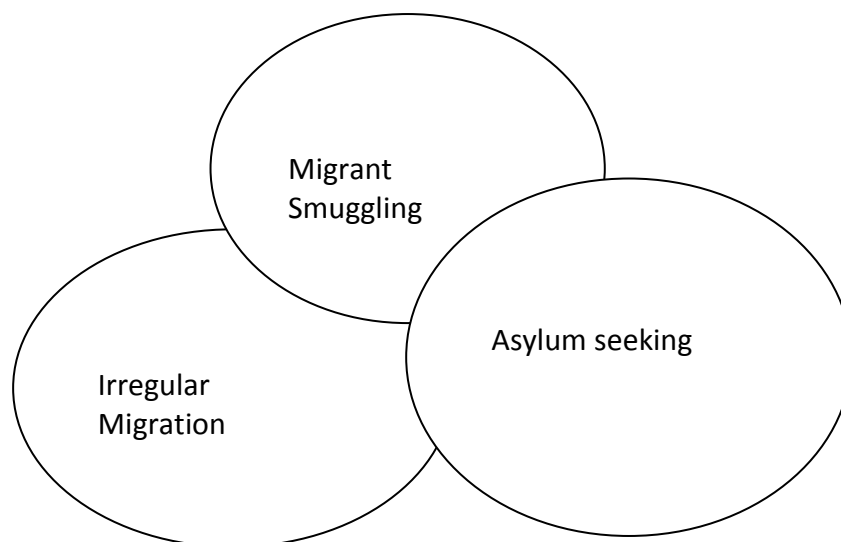
In the EU context, international migration means the action by which a person establishes his or her usual residence in the territory of a Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least twelve months, having previously been usually resident in another Member State or a third country. According to the European Migration Network's Glossary on Migration and Asylum, (2010), irregular migration is the movement of a person to a new place of residence or transit using irregular or

illegal means, without valid documents or carrying false documents. However in the relevant social science literature, there are a variety of terms and expressions used for persons who engage into some form of 'illegal' migration. Thus people who enter a country unauthorized, overstay their entry visa, live in a country without the appropriate residence permit, and/or break immigration rules in some other way that makes them liable to expulsion are called: irregular / illegal /undocumented / unauthorized / clandestine migrants, or also 'sans papiers' (French), 'clandestini' (Italian), 'clandestinos' (Spanish), λαθρομετανάστες (lathrometanastes) (Greek).

The term *"illegal migration"* refers, in the broadest sense, to an act of migration that is carried out against legal provisions of entry and residence. The European Union, for example, uses the term "illegal migration" in this sense (Jandl and Kraler, 2006). Sciortino however notes that the term illegal is value-laden and tends to associate this type of migration with criminal or otherwise "illicit" behaviour and should therefore be avoided (Sciortino, 2004, p.17). Indeed human rights and migrant NGOs have used the slogan "No human being is illegal" to denounce that the criminalizing effects of using the term 'illegal migrant'. Indeed as Vogel et al., (2008) argue the term "illegal migration" designates the act of entering a country in contravention to the law and is confined to illegal border crossing (but not overstaying the terms of visas or residence), referring only to a *flow* and not to a stock of persons.

In recent years, there is a preference in the research and international organization expert circles to talk about "irregular migration" to denote a form of migration that is "not regular", "unlawful" or not according to the rules (without necessarily being "illegal", "illicit" or "criminal" in the legal sense). An "irregular migrant" is therefore a migrant who, at some point in his migration, has contravened the rules of entry or residence. The term 'undocumented' migrant is also used widely and while it, strictly speaking, refers to a person without the required (and appropriate) residence or ID documents, it is used rather generically to talk about people who do not have a legal migration status. Pinkerton et al., (2004), p.1) note that undocumented migrant is even more neutral than irregular as it simply describes the fact of not having the required papers in order, and does not refer to breaking the law.

Kraler and Vogel, (2008), p. 7) also comment on the term "Unauthorized migrant" which refers to people who enter or stay in a country without legal authorization. This term however does not include technically speaking those foreigners who do not need explicit authorization to enter and live in a country (e.g. if there are free movement rights like within the EU). Hence in this case we need to interpret "unauthorized" as "not authorized according to the law".

In this book we adopt the definition provided by the CLANDESTINO research project (Kraler and Vogel 2008, p. 7):

> *Irregular or undocumented residents are defined as residents without any legal residence status in the country they are residing in, and those whose presence in the territory – if detected – may be subject to termination through an order to leave and/or an expulsion order because of their activities.*

Irregular entrants are persons who cross an international border without the required valid documents, either uninspected over land or sea, or over ports of entry

The activities of smuggling networks involve the facilitation of both irregular entry and stay (in transit or destination countries). They include different types of illegal services such as smuggling somebody through an unguarded part of the border, outside a border crossing point, in land or at sea. They involve procuring somebody with false papers (e.g. a fake passport or visa) to enter or transit through a country. The smuggler harbours the smuggled persons while in transit in specific places.

People using the services of human smugglers may however be not only irregular migrants but also asylum seekers. The term 'asylum seekers' encompasses several categories of people and is used often rather generically especially in the media. According to the European Migration Network Glossary, (2010), asylum is

*A form of protection given by a State on its territory based on the principle of **non-refoulement** and internationally or nationally recognised **refugee** rights. It is granted to a person who is unable to seek protection in his/her country of citizenship and/or residence in particular for fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion*

In an EU context, there are also two related terms that refer to people in need of international protection and that are often not distinguished from asylum in common parlance or even for policy purposes are seen as being included in the broader framework of asylum policy. These terms are *subsidiary protection* which refers to the protection given to a third country national or a stateless person who does not qualify as a refugee but in respect of whom substantial grounds have been shown for believing that the person concerned, if returned to his or her country of origin, or in the case of a stateless person, to his or her country of former habitual residence, would face a real risk of suffering serious harm and is unable, or, owing to such risk, unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country (see European Migration Network Glossary, (2010).

In addition in the EU context the term *temporary protection* is used to refer to a procedure of exceptional character to provide, in the event of a mass influx or imminent mass influx of displaced persons from third countries who are unable to return to their country of origin, immediate and temporary protection to such persons, in particular if there is also a risk that the asylum system will be unable to process this influx without adverse effects for its efficient operation, in the interests of the persons. (European Migration Network Glossary, (2010)

People who are seeking asylum and who would qualify as refugees or as people in need of international protection are often fleeing their country of origin with fake passports (in order to evade persecution) and lack the necessary documents (e.g. a visa) to enter their first safe destination country. In addition they may use the services of human smugglers in their effort to escape from their country of origin. Upon arrival at the destination country and when studying the role and nature of smuggling

networks, it can be quite problematic to distinguish between asylum seekers and irregular migrants (the main distinction between the two being that the former are fleeing persecution and are in need of protection while the latter are moving mainly for economic reasons). Actually the reason is not only the unauthorized entry of either into the destination country's territory but also the general blurring of the distinction between asylum seekers and economic migrants today. People fleeing for instance from Bangladesh or Pakistan or India mainly for economic reasons may have been pushed to emigrate also for political reasons (because they belong to a lower caster or they supported the 'wrong' party or originate from the 'wrong' clan of families). The empirical research presented in this book concentrates on the fact that people have been smuggled across the Mediterranean, from Asia and Africa into southern Europe, regardless of whether their motivations for moving have been mainly political or predominantly economic.

2.2 Human smuggling: a business or a social process?

From a conceptual perspective, this book aims at advancing our knowledge and understanding of the two opposed perspectives on migration: the economic paradigm that views migration as a business, driven mainly by economic motivations and the social paradigm that puts more emphasis on the socio-economic context within which irregular migration and even smuggling networks and activities are rooted.

From an economic perspective, migrant smuggling is a business, albeit an illicit one. Attention is paid to the money involved in the smuggling business and to the modalities that the smuggling networks used to transfer this money as well as to the financial gain that migrants and their families (expect to) make when engaging into irregular migration asking for the services of smugglers. Interestingly some scholars have argued that the globalization of transport and communication technologies and the increasing migration restrictions in economically developed countries have led to the increased professionalization of the smuggling business (Salt and Stein 1997; Kyle and Koslowski 2001).

Koser (2008) has also argued that a purely economic analysis of whether migrant smuggling pays is necessary to understand the dynamics of the phenomenon. Indeed Koser (2008) has sought to assess the economic costs and gains of families in Afghanistan and Pakistan who sent one of their members illegally to the UK using the services of a smuggling network. The study has shown that those who succeeded in staying in the UK and finding employment paid back the initial 'investment' to the smugglers after two years. After paying back their remittances back to the household of origin doubled its income. Hence overall the initial investment and risk was considered to be worth it.

Friebel and Guriev (2006) theoretically examined the interaction between migrants and smuggling agents. They assumed that not all potential irregular migrants are able to pay for the smuggling services upfront. Some thus enter into a debt contract with the smuggler promising that they will pay back the debt once they find work at destination. Friebel and Guriev showed that while stricter border enforcement discourages all potential migrants (regardless of whether they are able to pay upfront or not) better detection in the formal employment sector discourages the unauthorized

entry for those who are not financially constrained but actually encourages those who are. In other words, the smuggling is skewed towards the poorer migrants.

In another interesting study on how policies combating irregular migration and smuggling networks affect potential irregular immigrants, Tamuray (2007) showed that policies that reduce the number of active smugglers in the area, are likely to raise the mean exploitation in the market. Tamuray notes that migrants do not know if their prospective smugglers are exploitative or not (whether they are actually traffickers, exploiting their customers/victims at destination or whether they are mere smugglers, delivering the service for an agreed fee) and hence cannot make an informed decision of whether they prefer to pay a higher fee and avoid exploitation upon arrival or whether they prefer or simply can only afford the lower fee but exploitation at destination. So Tamuray argues that increased enforcement raises the risks and costs for smugglers and drives non exploitative smugglers out of the market. Thus, it indirectly raises the probability that irregular migrants seeking the services of smugglers will be exploited.

Studies like these actually consider all the factors involved in the irregular migration and using the services of a smuggler decision as a cost-benefit calculation of the migrant. They relate the decision and the choice of the smuggler mostly to the expected income after the migration, the cost of the smuggling services (and whether it is affordable or not) and the overall equilibrium in terms of information, risks and profits of all the agents involved (smugglers and smuggled migrants). There is no place in this model for social considerations about who introduces the migrant to the smuggling networks, what kind of trust (or fear) relations there are between the customer and the service provider, who is the smuggler and what is his position in the overall migration networks at the country of origin, transit or destination.

These and other factors by contrast lie at the heart of the socio-economic paradigm for analyzing the activities and modus operandi of human smuggling networks. This approach pays more attention to the socio-economic context of migration looking at the social and cultural processes that facilitate migration and to the ways in which migration alters the socioeconomic context at communities of origin. This approach sees migration also to a large extent as driven by economic factors behind which a wider array of social relations and experiences can lead people to move unlawfully and to ask for the services of smugglers.

Herman (2006) in her analysis of sub Saharan and North African migrants to Italy and Spain who entered without papers and of irregular migrants in the Netherlands shows that social networks are of crucial importance for the decision to migrate, the planning of the trip and the settling down at the destination country (including regularizing one's migration status). In line with Boyd (1989) and Staring (2001), Herman argues that familial, friendship and co-ethnic ties are crucial for the success of the migration project of an individual. She elaborates on the role of 'weak' vs. 'strong' ties with the transit and destination countries depending on whether prospective migrants had close or distant family members or friends in the destination country. She shows that strong ties are particularly important for all immigrants regardless of age or gender. In addition her informants consider the existence of family and other social networks of crucial importance for the success of their journey. In other words, the study

emphasizes both the objective and subjective importance of social networks in the irregular migration process.

The socio-economic paradigm in the analysis of human smuggling draws attention also to the social organization of the smugglers' networks. Several studies (including the empirical research presented in this book) have documented that smuggling networks may be more or less loosely organized but usually all include a certain degree of differentiation of functions. Borrowing the terminology used by Chin (2001), there are the 'big snakeheads' – the investors in the business, the 'little snakeheads' – the recruiters, the 'transporters' who organize and execute the long distance trips including accompanying migrants across borders, the 'guides' who move smuggled migrants from one transit point to the next and/or meet them up at ports and airports, the 'enforcers' who look after smuggled migrants at safe houses and while en route, the corrupt officials of the country of origin / transit / or destination and last but not least, a range of local actors located at transit points who provide food and lodging for the irregular migrants in transit. While people higher up in the hierarchy may be involved in other types of organized crime (see Chapter 4 below but also Spener, 2001) such as drug trafficking, others, especially the local agents or the guides may be people with 'normal' jobs who give a hand to smugglers in order to make some additional income. Actually the complex nature and embeddedness of the networks is one of the issues that we look into in this book.

Actually even scholars like Koser (2008) who concentrate on the profit made by smuggling and assess why smuggling continues (because it pays) also indirectly recognize the importance of the family in the decision on whether to migrate and how to organize the trip. Human smuggling has a strong business aspect in that it moves around money: migrants who migrate without papers often do so for economic reasons (even though some move also for seeking asylum); they therefore ask for the smugglers' services in helping them find a way into the desired country of destination; and they pay for these services. However, the very nature of the phenomenon – its illegal character, the risks and uncertainties involved in the trip, the absence of any kind of written agreement between the parties, the ambivalent relationship between smugglers and smuggled which is characterized by both trust and fear (see also Chapters Four and Five in this book), point to the importance of analyzing the social aspects of the business rather than concentrating on its profitability only.

This study casts light to the complexities of the human smuggling phenomenon by investigating both its business and its social relational aspects. From a business point of view we investigate the fees paid, the modality of payment, the means of transport, the journey, the documents. From a social relational perspective we examine in depth the relationship between the smuggler and the smuggled migrants, the migrants' views of the smugglers, the internal organization of the smuggling networks. We thus seek to answer the above both theoretical and empirical dilemma: should migrant smuggling be treated as just another criminal activity, another type of criminal business that can be suppressed through tougher enforcement? Or should migrant smuggling be considered a more comprehensive social phenomenon, combating which involves understanding better the social relations and networks that lie behind

it? Such relations may in fact be enmeshed with local societies and economies of countries of origin, transit and destination.

2.3 Geographical area and context of the study

The book concentrates on the crossing of the Mediterranean from south/southeast to north and northwest by African and Asian migrants. We have chosen this area for our study as it is an area that has seen irregular migration intensifying over the last few years and represents the main path for entry into the European continent writ large and more specifically into European Union countries.

During the last decade, the wider southeast Mediterranean region has been affected by a number of international and regional geopolitical and economic developments that have contributed to increasing migration outflows from the southern shores of the Mediterranean to its northern shores, notably Greece, Italy and Spain (as well as Malta and Cyprus). The last ten years have been marked by continuing political instability and warfare in Iraq, persisting violence between Israelis and Palestinians, civil war and ethnic strife in Sudan and Somalia, only to name a few of the conflicts in the wider region. Economic disparities between the global North and the global South have also grown unabated while climate change poses an even more pressing and worrying challenge for Africa and Asia in particular. The above factors have contributed to maintaining or indeed increasing migration and asylum pressures on southern EU member states located at the geographical periphery of the EU and hence exposed to the arrival of irregular migrants and asylum seekers.

Greece, Italy and Spain being at the southeast corner of Europe and in close proximity to important emigration and transit countries like the Maghreb, Turkey, Egypt and Libya have found themselves directly affected by the increasing migration and asylum pressures from Africa and Asia. They have thus become both important destination countries for smuggled migrants as well as stepping stones for migrants in transit to EU countries further north and west.

The situation has further developed during the last few months (spring 2011) as people in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya have revolted against the authoritarian regimes in their countries. While Egypt and Tunisia are heading towards elections and relatively peaceful socio-political change, in Libya the forces of the Gaddafi regimes are fighting against the 'rebels' while NATO countries are bombing the former with a view to (supposedly) protecting civilians. Indeed the Arab spring of 2011 has changed the power balance in the region and created a new set of conditions for the Euro-mediterranean relations (European Commission 2011, Communication on the European Union and its Neighbourhood) and in particular with regard to (irregular) migration.

The situation in Lampedusa and Italy more widely during the first six months of 2011 has changed dramatically. There were hardly any irregular migration or asylum seeking arrivals from Libya during 2010 (for more see Chapter Two in this book), the last months have seen the arrival of approximately 20,000 Tunisians, mostly young men, leaving their country. After the end of March there have been increasing numbers of Sub Saharan African immigrants who were fleeing warfare and racist

violence in Libya (approximately 30,000 people have arrived to Italy via the small island of Lampedusa, south of Sicily). The numbers of irregular migrants and asylum seekers fleeing North Africa to seek protection and a better life in Europe may appear rather high (more than 50,000 people in less than 5 months). If put in context though they have been overall relatively low, since according to IOM there is approximately 650,000 refugees, mostly people from Sub Saharan African countries, hosted by Egypt and Tunisia in temporary camps. Despite their own internal political problems these two countries are hosting, even if temporarily, a number of people that is 13 times higher than those who have been hosted by Italy, a country with far more resources than Egypt or Tunisia.

It is in this context that we approach the question of smuggling of migrants across the Mediterranean sea. This book covers all the main routes of migrant smuggling from Africa and Asia across the Mediterranean to Europe. From an empirical research perspective, the book seeks to shed light to the routes of migrant smuggling across the Mediterranean, the modus operandi and internal organization of smuggling networks, the experiences of migrants themselves and their relationships with smugglers. We seek to understand better both the subjective and the objective aspects of the phenomenon of migrant smuggling.

In particular we cast light to the motivations of migrants and the discrepancy if any between their expectations and the realities they face during the trip and upon arrival to their first European destination (i.e. Greece, Italy, Spain or Malta). We discuss the reality of 'transit' and the related concept of transit migration: who is in transit and how can we assess that?

Last but not least we explore the formation and transformation of migrant smuggling routes and the ways in which they relate (or not) to previously established migration systems. A migration system is defined as a group of origin and destination countries that is characterized by stable and close economic, cultural and political relations that have existed for at least a few decades and that have facilitated migration flows in either direction between the countries involved in the system. We argue (see Chapter Three for more details) that Greece and Turkey constitute an irregular migration system which actually provides for the wider socio-economic and policy framework within which migrant smuggling develops in the region. Interestingly, between the time when our fieldwork was conducted (fall 2009-2010) and today there has been an important shift of smuggling networks operations from the Turkish coasts to the Aegean islands in Greece (e.g. Mytilene, Chios, Samos) to the Greek Turkish land border in northeastern Greece. This shift is documented in this book, in Chapter Five in particular.

While our fieldwork does not cover these most recent months, and hence we cannot offer primary data for analyzing the operation of smugglers between Libya and Italy, we make the most of secondary sources to explain in Chapter Two how migrant smuggling – the networks and their modus operandi – have been affected by the Arab spring events and the new conditions of political instability in Tunisia and Egypt and war in Libya.

Before presenting in some more detail the structure and contents of this book we shall discuss critically below the European Union policies for combating irregular migration and in particular the main measures taken for controlling the border, the EU return policy as well as the effort to externalize border controls and of course the human rights concerns that these issues raise.

3. European policies combating irregular migration and human smuggling

The global approach to migration adopted by the European Union (EU) includes, as one of its main aims, the fight against irregular migration. In other words, policies targeting irregular migration are closely related to policies concerning legal flows and migrant integration. The issue of irregular migration is interlinked with a range of other issues, both internal to EU member states, such as the shadow economy and the informal labour market, and external to them, such as relations with transit and source countries and development cooperation. This section discusses those EU irregular migration policies that are of special relevance for combating human smuggling and critically assesses their scope and effectiveness and the human rights concerns that they raise.

In the sections below we discuss the overall institutional framework and how irregular migration emerged as a policy priority at EU level. We then review two broad policy areas through which irregular migration is being curtailed. Firstly, border management policies (through policing measures and border cooperation among EU member states), and second indirectly (through cooperation with sending and transit countries).

3.1 Institutional framework: Integration, institutions, and measures

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3.3 EU irregular migration policies and human rights concerns

In a recent article, Carling and Hernandez-Carretero (2011) consider the trade-off between protecting the borders of the EU and protecting the migrants who try to cross without appropriate authorization. Carling and Hernandez-Carretero consider the case of irregular migration from West Africa to the Canary Islands in Spain, and the evolution of smuggling network activities in the region as a result of stricter border controls and more effective cooperation between Spain and transit countries including Morocco but also Mauritania and Senegal. The two authors point out that externalized migration control in the form of pre-border patrolling can yield important results in curbing irregular migration and human smuggling activities. They also however note that more effective direct controls at the border can lead to new smuggling strategies rather than to an overall reduction of irregular migration. Thus, smugglers, as

happened in the case of sub Saharan African immigration to the Canary islands may relocate their business further south (this involving higher fees and higher risks for prospective migrants) and of course they may also use newer technological means (e.g. satellite phones) to avoid detection.

Carling and Hernandez-Carretero's conclusions (2011) support those of Sandell (2005), Carling (2007a and 2007b) and Spijkerboer (2007) that where incentives to migration (including the existence of informal work opportunities) persist stricter border controls may lead simply to greater costs and risks for the irregular migrant rather than an effective stop of irregular migration.

In a recent report on migrant smuggling, the International Council for Human Rights Policy (ICHRP 2010) points to the fact that every individual is entitled to certain fundamental rights by virtue of their humanity, regardless of their legal status. Some categories of undocumented migrants are afforded special protection. These include recognized asylum seekers as well as those who claim refugee status. More recently the European Commission has adopted special protection measures for people who are considered to have been trafficked (Directive 2001/36/EU).

Irregular migrants more broadly and smuggled migrants in particular enjoy a lower level of protection as their protection may seem to counter indirectly the interests of states and their citizens. In some regards also the state's legal obligation towards irregular migrants may also be considered unclear because of the irregular migration status of these last. However, this does not mean that the obligation for protecting people's fundamental rights does not exist as states have specific responsibilities to provide protection to all people who fall within their jurisdiction, including irregular migrants (ICHRP 2010).

With regard to smuggled migrants the need for such protection is particularly important because their very condition of being smuggled into the country makes them particularly vulnerable to abuse and criminal exploitation by the smuggling networks. The issue is of particular concern to the extent that it is not always easy to distinguish upon arrival at the destination country between irregular migrants and asylum seekers or people in need of international protection. Indeed EU countries and generally states that have signed the 1951 Geneva Convention have specific legal duties in relation to refugees and asylum seekers, including the obligation of *non-refoulement* and the obligations to provide effective protection and to search for durable solutions. The above human rights issues come up with special relevance when one investigates human smuggling on the ground and realizes how the legitimate desire of states to control their borders can run counter to human rights concerns and can seriously endanger the human rights of irregular migrants and asylum seekers. This chapter concludes with a presentation of the contents of this book.

4. Contents of the book

In the chapter that follows (Chapter Two) we offer an overview of migrant smuggling in the western part of the Mediterranean sea. In particular, we survey recent research on migrant smuggling from and through North Africa to Spain, Italy and Malta and

present up to date statistical data and estimates on irregular migrant and human smuggling in the region. The chapter casts light to the routes travelled and the modalities (fees, means of transport) adopted by migrant smuggling networks. It looks at the internal organization of these networks and their transnational or ethicized character. The chapter seeks to assess the importance of smuggling business actors and family or personal networks in the overall migration project of smuggled migrants across the western part of the Mediterranean. It also reviews the policy responses of Italy, Spain and Malta aiming at combating irregular migration and in particular migrant smuggling in recent years. It compares the different policies adopted in particular by Spain and Italy and their related success or failure. It discusses the normative/human rights and economic implications of each set of policies.

Special attention is paid to the most recent changes caused by the Arab spring and in particular by the war in Libya which has overturned the previous arrangements between the Italian and Libyan authorities that had practically stopped the irregular migration and asylum seeking flows via Libya to Italy and Malta. Although these developments are very recent and we have not had the possibility to conduct fieldwork in Italy in recent months, we use here information obtained from non-governmental and international organizations in the effort to assess how the situation has evolved in recent months and how smuggling networks have seized the opportunity and adapted to the new situation.

Chapter Three looks at the special dynamics of the wider southeastern Mediterranean region which is located at the crossroads of both Asian and African irregular migration and migrant smuggling routes. More specifically this chapter sets the framework and outlines the characteristics of what we have called the Greece-Turkey irregular migration system. It discusses the overall size and features of irregular migration flows from Turkey to Greece and reviews the relevant literature on smuggling in the region. The second part of the chapter reviews in more detail the Greek immigration control policies and the Greek asylum system as well as its European policy framework. We argue that these policies and their implementation have directly or indirectly contributed to the rise of irregular migration inflows and in particular to the development of the migrant smuggling networks along the Greek Turkish border.

Chapter Four concentrates on migrant smuggling from Africa towards Greece. It investigates the routes and modalities of migrant smuggling from East and West Africa via North Africa and/or Turkey to Greece as well as from North Africa to Greece, via Turkey or directly. The chapter outlines the main routes and modalities of migrant smuggling in this region, the internal organization of smugglers' networks. It confronts the objective aspects of migrant smuggling (routes, means of transport, fees, duration, demographic and socio-economic features of smuggled migrants, visa requirements in countries of transit and related issues) with the subjective experience of the migrants (their own way of making sense of their migration project and in particular of the trip). The chapter pays attention to the relationship between smugglers and smuggled people and the degree of agency of the migrant in the whole process (starting at the country of origin when s/he first sought for the services of the smuggler and continuing through the trip and upon arrival in 'Europe'/Greece), an issue that is of particular theoretical interest in the effort to assess the special features

of migrant smuggling as a 'social business'. Naturally attention is paid to the risks and vulnerabilities that migrants face during the trip and the factors that enhance or mitigate such risks/vulnerability including kinship and co-ethnic networks. This chapter concludes by discussing the ways in which Greek policies for combating irregular migration have affected the migrant smuggling phenomenon in recent years.

Chapter Five looks at Asian immigration and asylum seeking flows via Turkey to Greece. The chapter looks in particular at migrant smuggling networks that operate in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh. It reviews the modus operandi of these networks, the routes, fees and means of transport as well as the duration of the trip. It explores the relationship between migrant smuggling and labour trafficking looking at the ways in which migrants raise the necessary economic capital to pay the smugglers and whether this leads them to debt bondage and work at slave like conditions while en route in Turkey or in Greece. Similarly to chapter Four, this chapter highlights the risks and vulnerability of the migrants and discusses their agency in the smuggling process. It reviews the nature of Asian smuggling networks and the relationship between smugglers and smuggled migrants. Again the chapter concludes with an assessment of how Greek policies for combating irregular migration and unlawful border crossing affect migrant smuggling from Asia to Greece.

Chapter Six concentrates on the related even if conceptually distinct phenomenon of trafficking in human beings from Africa and Asia via Turkey to Greece. This chapter discusses the routes used by trafficking networks, their organization and their modus operandi. It pays attention to the strategies for recruiting the victims, the fees involved, the relationship between the traffickers and the trafficked, the means of transport used and the overall process of subordination and exploitation of the victims. The chapter also reviews the related Greek policies combating trafficking in human beings and the civil society support to victims of trafficking in human beings. The links and connections between migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings in the southeastern Mediterranean region are also discussed with special reference to the Greece Turkey irregular migration system.

Asian and African smuggled migrants who arrive in Greece often aim to move further west and north to another European country. This happens either because they have relatives there (usually a sibling, a parent, or even a spouse) or because they expect employment to be more profitable and living conditions better than in Greece. Chapter Seven reviews the modus operandi of migrant smuggling networks that seek to 'help' migrants cross from Greece to Italy, notably from the ports of Patras or Igoumenitsa to one of the connected Italian ports (Bari, Brindisi, Ancona, Venice). It looks at the modalities of migrant smuggling and the role that Greek policies play in preventing irregular migrants from moving further from Greece to other EU countries.

In the concluding chapter, we provide an overview of the migrant smuggling across the Mediterranean both as a business that involves actors that are in it only for profit and as a social process that explores the social and cultural aspects of the phenomenon, for instance the role of kinship and co ethnic networks, the organization of the smuggling along racial or ethnic lines, the gendered nature of the experience (the trip is experienced in different ways by men and women and this is an aspect worth exploring even if women are overall under-represented in migrant smuggling

across the Mediterranean). This chapter discusses critically the usefulness of the concept of transit migration, the dividing line between migrant smuggling and labour trafficking and last but not least the ways in which policies at receiving countries shape the migrant smuggling 'business' and construct irregular migration. The chapter concludes by discussing how policies for combating migrant smuggling and irregular migration in the southern European countries shape migrant smuggling. Lastly, we discuss the policy and political implications of our findings for the southern European countries and for the EU overall.

CHAPTER 2
Migrant Smuggling from Africa to Spain, Italy and Malta: A comparative overview

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CHAPTER 3
The southeastern Mediterranean: the Greece-Turkey irregular migration system

[not available here]

CHAPTER 4
Human Smuggling from/via North Africa and Turkey to Greece

[pages not available here]

4.2 The Smuggling Routes from Africa via Turkey to Greece

We have identified three main routes through which migrants are smuggled to Greece. The first route originates in North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia or Libya) and its main transit stop is in Egypt, at Cairo. Of course Cairo may also be the place of origin of some of the smuggled migrants. People usually travel by plane to Cairo (or more rarely and if they want to save money by truck, car or on foot). They then wait in Cairo for some days and are transported by plane to Izmir usually. They spend there a period of time between a couple of weeks and a couple of months. Somebody then signals them that 'the day' has arrived and they are brought to some remote place on the coast near Izmir, embark usually a small boat with a motor engine and cross to Greece. From Egypt and Libya some people also travel directly by plane to Istanbul in Turkey. The waiting period in this case takes place in Istanbul. Again they may wait there for a couple of months until the day of the transfer to Greece arrives. In this case they may be issued a regular bus ticket or may be driven by van to the coast, further south, near Aivali, and cross to one of the islands. The cost of this route is 1,000 Euro for the smugglers' services plus the expenses of the migrant her/himself while en route (notably accommodation at special 'hotels' as we shall explain below) and food.

Map 4.1: Smuggling Route no. 1: From North Africa to Greece
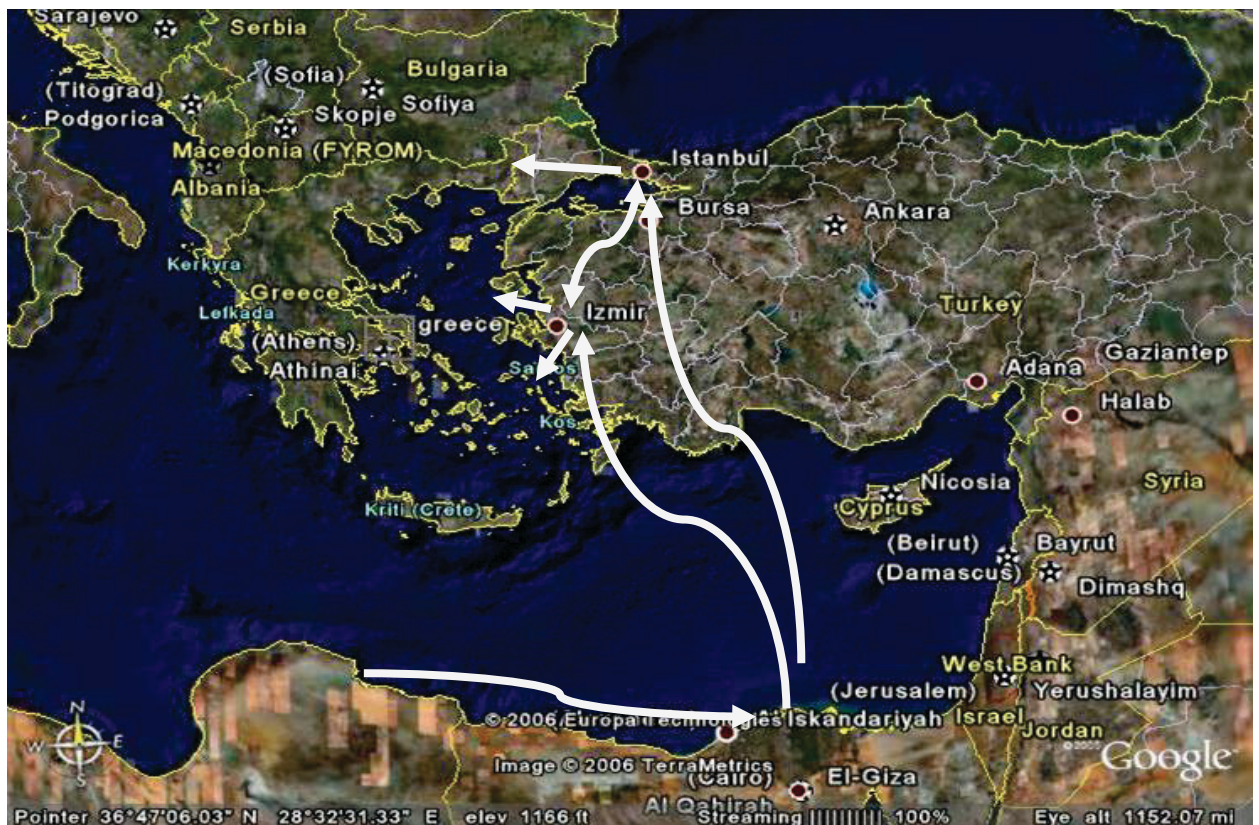
The second route originates in East Africa and follows the same transit stops. People are transported by plane to Cairo in Egypt, then by plane again to Istanbul in Turkey. Then they wait there as described above for a few months until they are driven to the coast and provided for a boat to cross to one of the islands of the Aegean. If they arrive in Istanbul, in some cases they wait there until they are driven by truck to the Greek Turkish land border along Evros river and cross that border at night, by truck or by van (none has reported crossing the river by boat or alone on foot). The cost of this route is between 2,000 and 3,000 Euro depending on the place of origin. In this route, we encountered three informants (migrants no. 24, 36, 43) that had organised the trip largely by themselves, locating in each transit place a local smuggler and paying for the next leg of the journey or for the next border crossing. For one informant the duration of the trip was actually much longer (migrant no. 36) as he stayed about 6 months in each intermediate stop (Libya, Syria, Turkey).

In all other cases, plane was the main means of transport until arrival to Turkey at least. Nonetheless interviews with African migrant communities (professionals no. 3, 4, 5) suggest that many migrants smuggled from sub Saharan Africa to Turkey and then Greece take up the journey partly on their own, paying separately for each leg of the journey until they reach Turkey and then Greece.

Map 4.2: Human Smuggling Routes from East Africa to Greece

21

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Map 4.3: Smuggling routes from West Africa to Greece

Source: Compiled by the authors.

The unfolding of the routes, once the migrant is smuggled into Greece varies. For those who cross via Evros, there is no apprehension usually. They manage to cross the border by van or lorry, they then meet up with local contacts and are put into cars (3-4 people together) and are driven to Thessaloniki. Our informants did not report being caught either near the border or on their way to Thessaloniki.

By contrast, if the point of arrival is one of the Aegean islands, the smuggled migrants are caught either while still on the boat, approaching the island, or upon arrival at the coast. Some report that the Greek authorities tried to push them back into Turkish waters, others do not. Their accounts are in line with the accounts provided by Greek police and coastguard authorities both in Athens and in Mytilene who actually admit that they try to push back dinghies to Turkish waters.

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4.5 Internal organization of smuggling networks and smugglers' profiles

As one informant put it (professional no.1) smuggling and trafficking networks may be said to resemble international terrorism networks in that they are polycentric, loosely organised, each local group working in some autonomy from the other. Nonetheless the network as such is overarching. Also as another informant put it (professional no. 2) migrant smuggling networks are involved in organised crime but should not be conceived as 'mafias'; there are no families, nor clans, nor any specific

23

persons pulling the strings. These organisations are task-driven. Their local contacts, their international coordination, their methods have to do with the job at hand. This is the driving force, and the money behind it, of course.

They appear to have a clear hierarchy. The few high level members of the network are those who profit the most and are actually involved in several types of criminal activities including not only smuggling of migrants but also drugs as well as legal business, such as travel agencies or transport companies for instance (professional no. 2 and 8). Their legal economic activities are used to pursue their illegal work and also to recycle the money they make through their criminal activities.

Middle- and lower-level agents of the network can be found at each location, in the countries of origin, at important transit stops, at the last ports of entry in Turkey (notably in Izmir and Istanbul) and of course also in Greece. At the country of origin, the prospective migrant will meet the middle-level agents who have the international connections and hold the key contacts for issuing tickets and passports. They discuss the destination and agree to a price. These middle level agents organise the trip, issue the necessary (false) identity documents and buy the airplane tickets.

> It is difficult to know who the boss is. It's secret. You come to Chartoum, you ask, you do the business with him. You don't ask for more. Many officers [are] doing this. Every officer has his own friends (maybe other officers) to help him. Some people used to rent house to Eritreans and Ethiopians. You know this? Receive Eritreans and Ethiopians and put them in house, and took from everyone 2,000 dollars in order to help to leave Sudan. Make Sudanese passport for him and visa from the police authority, and Turkish visa also. Included in the 2,000 dollars. When you are rich, some people give you their passport. And then send the passport back (migrants no 43)

Another important task performed by middle-level agents is the purchase of vessels by the network. According to the Greek Coastguard (professional no. 2), in cases of purchases of speedboats costing around 150,000 euros there are different people involved performing various roles. First there is a person with a heavy criminal record that collects the funds from different kinds of illicit activities. He uses, say, two persons that buy two such vessels on the names of two different petty criminals. Boats, smugglers and smuggled persons are not necessarily from one place or even one country though: the Greek Coastguard told us of a captured cargo ship owned by a Syrian that left Syria, picked up 85 Egyptian migrants from Egypt and headed to Greece. In cases of cheaper rubber boats or old vessels with a small engine, there are certain shipyards in Izmir or Aivali (professional no. 19) that sell such equipment.

When travelling by plane, the connection between the smugglers at the country of origin and the smugglers at the transit country is pre-organised. Thus, the local agents meet the 'customers' at airports and escort them to specific accommodation places (called 'hotels'[v]). Contact and communication with them is limited. The local agents return only to pick the migrants up on the day of departure for crossing the border. The migrant has no say as to the departure date and receives no advance notice. Middle-level agents also ask for more money for the accommodation and living expenses of the migrants while in transit. Sometimes this job is done by settled

migrants in Turkey or local Turks that 'keep an eye' on the everyday needs and issues of the migrants/refugees waiting in these 'hotels'. At other times this appears to be a method for recruiting lower-level agents for the network.

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CHAPTER 5
Human Smuggling from/via Asia and Turkey

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Looking more specifically into the routes of Afghans, the ones coming from Afghanistan enter Iran either via the Afghan-Iranian border near Herat or via Kandahar and the region of Balochistan (and the transit hub city of Quetta) in south Pakistan (migrants no. 56, 57, 74, 75, 76, 59, professional no.20). In some cases, crossing the Afghan-Iranian and Pakistani-Iranian border occurs autonomously without the use of the smugglers' services; using mostly kin networks that extend to Afghans belonging to the existing large Afghan community in Iran and circulating in the region for business and/or family purposes (migrant no. 57, 74, 76).

Afghan refugees that had been living in Pakistan come into Iran via south Pakistan following the same routes with Pakistanis and other Afghans and Bangladeshis. Pakistan hosts around 1.7 million registered Afghans who have the right to stay in Pakistan until the end of 2012[vi]. Indeed crossing the Pakistani-Iranian border is easy. As an Afghan born in Pakistan explains,

> I knew the language. A lot of Afghans are there. There was not a big problem. I left the borders of Pakistan and I entered Iran. Iran is a very difficult country to be. One month I stayed in Iran outside. I didn't have a house (migrant no.83).

Secondly, the residents of the region of Balochistan (southwest Pakistan) bordering with Iran speak both farsi and urdu and have always had commercial relations with each other. Pakistanis buying plastic products and petrol from Iran and Iranians buying other products in the Pakistani side of the border have been everyday practices promoting border-crossing for years in this region. In the words of one of our key informants,

> you know Iran has embargo. And has a lot of fuels in its possession. Where is it going to take it? 8 years ago the price of petrol in Iran was like 3 cents per liter and in Pakistan 30 cents. If you buy 100 litres from Iran and you resell it

to Pakistan you made your day's earnings. That's what smugglers do. They shop. You leave Pakistan with 10 people inside, they don't check, they say nothing. And you return on the same day full with merchandise (migrant no. 66).

When in Iran, the smuggling routes of Afghans, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis start spanning across the country and involve many short transit stops in several Iranian villages and towns. The routes taken vary considerably within Iran. Depending on the smuggling network's bribing capacity and the density of its local contacts, one may notice substantial detours in a smuggled migrant's journey. There are Pakistanis who enter and cross Iran from its very south, and go from Chabahar, a town in the Iranian southeast close to the border with Pakistan, to Bandar-e-Abbas that is situated opposite Dubai. And then do not follow the Bandar-e-Abbas Teheran highway which is the straightforward option but take a detour to Shiraz, remaining in south Iran (migrants no. 67, 72). As one of our key informants, whose cousin is a smuggler bringing Pakistanis and others in Greece from the late 1990s up to date, said:

Usually they don't go to Shiraz because it's very far. The smuggler took them there because there is less police control on the road to Shiraz. On the other hand, there is a lot of control to cars that are heading to Teheran. From Sarhadan to Teheran for example, the police checks 20 times. And not just the police but the religious 'police' that do a lot of searches for drugs, for women travelling and what they are wearing, where they go and such stuff (migrant no.66).

Detours also provide some level of assurance to cheap deals that cost relatively little to both the migrant and the smuggler who employs a small part of the network's resources. Indicatively, R. who stroke a cheap deal with the smuggling broker (6,500 euros in June 2009 as opposed to 8,500) and a flexible way of payment (4,000 upon arrival and the rest while working in Greece) crossed Iran with the minimal 'investment' from the smuggler's side: he reached Tehran along with 20 other migrants in one vehicle (a big truck carrying soil), which in itself is quite rare, and did big detours in order to avoid police road blocks. Characteristically, after leaving the region of Zahedan, he was taken to Bam that has a direct link to Tehran and, instead of moving forward, his truck turned straight down to Bandar-e-Abbas (migrant no. 69).

Others take a more straightforward route, from Zahedan to Tehran (migrant no. 63). Some cross Iran with minimum stops on the road avoiding cities (migrant no. 73). In any case though, a frequent change of drivers and vehicles is part and parcel of every journey. In front of the vehicles (vans/trucks) carrying the migrants there usually are other cars checking the road ahead and informing drivers about roadblocks and how to best avoid them (usually by waiting until the road is clear, walking on foot around the roadblocks and being picked up again by the trucks afterwards).

The Tehran province is a key transit hub where migrants both arrange deals with smuggling brokers and wait for some days or months until they continue with the next leg of the journey, which is reaching Orumijeh and the mountain of Salmas. The journey from Tehran to the Iranian-Turkish mountainous border zone is done with

private cars, 'taxis', carrying a few migrants at a time.

> Spent 15 days in Teheran and then in groups of five people we were driven with private cars to Salmas (migrant no. 67). We were left outside Teheran to be picked up by a bus. Stayed in a house for 2 days. 80 people were there. And then were taken to Salmas in cars in groups of 2 people. We re-grouped in the mountains and crossed the Iranian-Turkish border on foot (migrant no. 69).

The Iranian-Turkish mountainous border is crossed on foot in groups of 50-100 people, from all three nationalities[vii], at night usually escorted by two smuggler-guides at a time (migrants no. 65, 67). Locals, Iranians and Kurdish, take over this leg of the journey which takes 12-15 hours. The perils of the Iran-Turkey border crossing are many. Local mafias kidnapping migrants asking for ransom from their relatives back home, police shooting in the dark and extreme weather conditions make up the ingredients for a very treacherous passage. Twelve people from H.'s convoy were caught by Kurdish mafia while they were crossing the Turkish Iranian mountainous border. As they told him when he met two of them in Athens months after that incident:

> They were telling them 'call your home to bring money'. They were pulling out nails, cutting ears…they were talking with their dad and mum on the phone and he [the mafia guy] was screaming, he was cutting and they were screaming…(migrant no. 57).

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Notes

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[i] Data taken from Eurostat, see
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tps00001, last accessed 13 July 2011.

[ii] Data taken from http://www.migrationinformation.org/Resources/unitedstates.cfm, last accessed 13 July 2011.

[iii] For the UNODC see http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/smuggling-of-migrants.html?ref=menuside and for IOM see: http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/pid/748).

[iv] The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, adopted by General Assembly resolution 55/25 of 15 November 2000, is the main international instrument in the fight against transnational organized crime. It opened for signature by Member States at a High-level Political Conference convened for that purpose in Palermo, Italy, on 12-15 December 2000 and entered into force on 29 September 2003. The Convention is further supplemented by three Protocols, which target specific areas and manifestations of organized crime: the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition. For more information see: http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CTOC/index.html , last accessed 10 July 2011.

[v] Some are indeed hotels. In other cases, they are apartments or houses used for this purpose.

[vi] http://www.thefreelibrary.com/SAFRON-UNHCR+conduct+population+verification+survey+of+Afghans+in...-a0252594582, last accessed 26 July 2011.

[vii] Although in one group one encounters migrants from different countries having deals with different smugglers, in the case of Pakistanis sometimes one finds a smuggled group consisting of Pakistani migrants only.