

Debunking the smuggler-terrorist nexus: human smuggling and the Islamic State in the Middle East

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Abstract

Amid increasing terrorist violence in and beyond European countries, concerns have been raised about connections between illegal migration and terrorism. Regional armed conflicts in the Middle East have led to the massive migration of people in search of safe heavens and better livelihoods, pressing upon frontline countries in the Mediterranean and throughout the EU. Multiple government and intelligence agencies report that human smuggling networks have been identified as providing a readily available conduit through which terrorist groups such as the Islamic State and Al-Qaida can enter Europe and the U.S. These criminal travel networks are said to rely on highly effective transnational alliances involving service providers within source, transit and destination countries. There is also widespread consensus in the intelligence circles that terrorist groups rely on the practice of smuggling for financing of terrorist activity.

Nonetheless, despite the region's geopolitical significance and its demonstrated potential for spillover effects, scant systematic field research has been conducted by independent researchers to understand the purported nexus between terrorism and human smugglers within the Middle East into the Mediterranean. This constitutes a severe gap in knowledge which our study will address.

In this paper, we debunk the nexus human smuggling-terrorism by comparing the Islamic State's logistics with human smuggling networks' modus operandi and organizational structures. Based on a mixed research approach that combines the analysis of a unique data-set (U.S. Special Forces) and an empirical research carried out among smugglers and migrants in the Middle East and across the Eastern Mediterranean route² over the past two years, this paper will tackle the alleged connection between human smuggling and terrorist groups. What will be argued is that smuggling networks and terrorist networks have fundamental operational and structural differences. These operational and structural differences need to be taken into account in order to deconstruct harmful stereotypes on irregular migration³ and, consequently, develop adequate responses to analytically distinct phenomena.

1. Introduction

The influx of migrants fleeing war-torn countries and seeking better livelihoods has generated a state of emergency in Europe over the last few years. Smuggling networks have thrived in this environment. According to recent statistics, the facilitation of irregular migration has become a booming business with 90% of transits to the EU being facilitated by these networks.⁴ In the popular rhetoric around migration, smugglers are typically depicted as greedy bogeymen organized in criminal cartels making a profit out of despair and suffering. Concerns have been raised about connections between illegal migration and terrorism amid increasing terrorist violence in European countries.⁵ Terrorism and immigration feature respectively as the first and second most pressing issues in the European public opinion in 2017.⁶ However, anxieties over the conflation of human smuggling with terrorism have interested other regions of the world. Already in the fifties, US authorities have expressed preoccupations about the possible associations between these criminal actors.⁷ Especially after September 11, these concerns have escalated, boosting the security and enforcement imperatives that have guided the border policies implemented in the United States and Europe.

Recently, a strand of academic research has backed the idea that collusions between human smuggling and terrorism are not only plausible but even undisputable for the growing tendency of transnational organized crime organizations to generate economies of scale integrating different illicit activities or, to put it with Shelley's words, "dirty entanglements".⁸ If smuggling is a business open to all, its networks can be utilized by anyone who can afford them, including terrorist fighters. Even more worryingly, smuggling networks might quickly become economic and logistical assets readily available to organizations such as Al-Qaida and the Islamic State (IS) to finance and execute their operations.⁹ In other words, terrorist groups could thrive thanks to the abundant revenues generated by their involvement in human smuggling. And these are conspicuous: in 2015 alone, EUROPOL estimates that criminal networks involved in the facilitation of irregular migration have had an income of between EUR 3 – 6 billion – a turnover that "is set to double or triple if the scale of the current migration crisis persists in the upcoming year".¹⁰

Nonetheless, despite legitimate fears of terrorism, the vast majority of writing on the collusion between smuggling and terrorism suffers from a serious lack of solid empirical data, relying more on conjecture and accepted truth than on scientific investigation, which ultimately work to reinforce harmful stereotypes on irregular migration more than actually unveil its dynamics. A more careful scrutiny reveals that the convergence of human smuggling and terrorism that many studies observe is a fiction evoked through the obsessive repetition of anecdotal information and few disconnected episodes rather than a proven connection. As Izcara Palacios observes, "the cases involving terrorists and migrant smugglers are almost always the same. These examples, extracted from official reports, are cited again and again; so that repeating the same data so many times creates the impression that there is a symbiosis between human smugglers and terrorists, and that the collusion is ubiquitous".¹¹

Here, we agree with De Ming Fan¹² and Saux¹³ that such constructed connections amplify a distorted imaginary, which is a product of the securitization of migration and asylum issues.¹⁴ While successful at igniting "moral panic"¹⁵ and justifying the progressive criminalization of irregular migration, media accounts and policy reports have not adequately addressed the inner dynamics of human smuggling and provided an adequate understanding of the relationship between smugglers and terrorists. Indeed, among raising concerns over the likelihoods of terroristic attacks, the step from humanitarian approaches to the militarization of borders has been short: tackling irregular migration has soon become a matter of national security in Europe as elsewhere.¹⁶ Small wonder then that fears of terroristic infiltration have further exacerbated migration control policies, for instance with the temporary suspension of the Schengen Agreement in many European countries, notably following the series of attacks that targeted Paris on November 2015.¹⁷

By contrast, this study sits on a body of ethnographic research that has put forward a different set of arguments, backed by solid empirical data, to demonstrate the implausibility of the convergence between human smuggling and terrorism.¹⁸ Both Zhang¹⁹ and Andreas²⁰, for example, show how the operational structure and interests of smuggling groups and terroristic organizations are irreconcilably different. Whereas the former actively avoid drawing attention and maximize financial gain, the latter seeks visibility in the pursuit of their political goals.

Despite this growing body of scholarship, as today, no systematic field research has been conducted by scholars to investigate the purported nexus between terrorism and human smugglers operating in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean.²¹ This constitutes a gap that our study seeks to address. This paper is precisely aimed at understanding and eventually debunking the smuggler-terrorist analogy on the grounds

of a series of empirical and analytical considerations.²² To do so, we combine a review of secondary sources – largely based on the IS’s documentation retrieved by the US military forces – with an empirical research largely based on interviews with irregular migrants – mostly Syrian asylum seekers – and smugglers themselves held in Europe and the Middle East between 2015 and early 2017²³. What will be argued here is that the nexus – or rather its absence – human smuggling/jihadist terrorism can be explained with the fundamental operational and structural differences between the flexible groups that coalesce around the category of human smuggling, on one side, and the centralized bureaucracy and rigid hierarchy of the Islamic State, on the other side.²⁴ These fundamental differences allow us to rule out a twofold nexus: 1) the aforementioned terrorist groups rely on the practice of migrant smuggling for financing their own activities; and 2) smuggling networks offer terrorist groups a channel to infiltrate fighters in European countries.²⁵

2. The political economy of the Islamic State

It is an article of faith that the smuggling and trafficking of human beings are “an easier and more lucrative business than kidnapping foreigners [and] a natural evolution of any kidnapping enterprise”,²⁶ which has become “the favorite tactic of the Islamic State (“ISIS”) ... [and its] largest sources of income”.²⁷ This type of statements, however, seems to be oblivious of the complexity of irregular migratory systems and the political economy of terrorist groups such as the Islamic State.

As a matter of fact, migrant smuggling is not included in the criminal portfolio of the IS in Syria and Iraq. Financial records captured by U.S. and Iraqi forces provide an insider’s look into the administrative structure and the coffers of the organization, which reportedly managed to generate \$1-3 million per day by September 2014.²⁸ The huge size of revenues is evidence for a predatory political economy that thrived on a wide array of criminal practices – oil and gas smuggling, antiquities and bank looting, kidnapping for ransom, extortion, taxation, delivery of water and energy services – to sustain prolonged and sophisticated military operations on several battlefronts. Contrary to the Al-Qaida network, the Islamic State financing primarily does not rest upon private donations; rather, it raises funds locally by seizure of territory and control of cross-border informal economies in order to be financially independent.²⁹

Disaggregated data show indeed a diversified mechanism of revenue generation, which proved to be resilient even to territorial losses with a 11% increase in the theoretical value of its assets by the end of 2015.³⁰ Whilst the sale of natural resources (notably oil and natural gas, and to a lesser extent phosphate, cement, and agricultural products) was by far the largest source of revenue, accounting for 80% and 62% of the total volume in 2014 and 2015 respectively,³¹ the Islamic State resorted to a variety of criminal practices as complementary means of financing.³² The records outline a broad range of economic activities that involve a number of external, profit-motivated intermediaries (such as truckers, traders, and cash couriers) who are taxed of passage fees and custom duties to move goods across the areas under the Caliphate’s de-facto jurisdiction. Yet, smuggling of migrants is never mentioned in the budgetary documents.

The absence of direct involvement into the smuggling of migrants on the parts of the Islamic State seems to be confirmed by our research informants. Many Syrian asylum seekers that we interviewed in 2015 along different steps of the so-called Eastern Mediterranean route claimed to have reached Turkey through the land border, near the village of Khirbat al-Joz in the northern Syrian governorate of Idlib. Others were smuggled by boat from the Syrian ports of Latakia and Tartus. Both routes were extremely dangerous and expensive as asylum seekers had to travel across areas controlled by armed groups. Either ways, they often required the services of independent drivers and the guides (*dallala*), who left them at the border with

Turkey. More recently, the journey seems to be made either independently or with the help of fellow travelers with cars who reportedly charge each passenger up to around USD 900 for the trip.³³ In Lebanon, a research informant who was involved in human smuggling confirmed that Da'ish let him and his collaborators operate in exchange for money: "we just help people coming from Damascus to Idlib. [...] Syria is a total mess. There is no difference anymore between the opposition and the regime. There is no justice, there are no good and bad. People want to leave, and we provided them with an opportunity. We deal with the FSA, al-Nusra, Daesh³⁴ or the regime in the same way: if you have money and *wasta* [connections], they let you cross their territories".

In sum, although the Islamic State has imposed taxes on trade and border crossing, it has not consistently entered the smuggling of migrants as a means of financing. Why?

As we shall see in the following section of the article, this is in part explained by the specific organization and modus operandi of smuggling networks. Here, however, we want to shed some light on the organizational culture of the Islamist militia. The specific approach of the Islamic State vis-à-vis smuggling – with its rationale of looting stock resources and taxing flows rather than manage them – has its roots in the origin of the organization. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's circle did not become the wealthiest terrorist group worldwide out of nowhere. The organization took the first steps in the early 2000s, when Abu Musab al-Zarqawi established an Al-Qaida branch in Iraq (AQI). Since the onset of the Sunni insurgency in the wake of Saddam Hussein's downfall, AQI increasingly filled the political vacuum created by the collapse of the Ba'athist regime in Iraq and the outbreak of civil war in Syria at a later time. In so doing, it gradually took hold of the taxation schemes that had been established already in the 1990s under the UN embargo with the deep involvement of many Ba'athist officers. The latter joined the ranks of Salafi jihadist brigades such as AQI after Hussein's ousting and the disbandment of the Iraqi military to escape from the de-Baathification purges undertaken by the Shiite-led transitional governments.³⁵

In this sense, it should be noted that, first, al-Zarqawi and, then, al-Baghdadi's quests for power leaned on a specific war economy, which has been expanding in Iraq since the 1990-1991 Gulf War on the wave of Saddam Hussein's "tribal policies". By allowing tribesmen to trade livestock and goods without paying custom duties, the black-market routes crossing the Iraq-Syria border have historically played a pivotal role in securing the prosperity of western Iraq and eastern Syria.³⁶ With the imposition of economic sanctions after the first Gulf War, however, the "taxation" of cross-border trade became even more important to the Ba'athist regime, which "moved from being a security agency to a regulatory agency (...) with sanctions reserved for those traders who attempted to move cargo across the border without first acquiring the necessary protection".³⁷ These licit and illicit networks connected Iraqi communities – particularly in the Anbar desert – with neighboring countries, shaping an assemblage of tribal fiefdoms, warlords' racket activities, and authorities' complicity.³⁸ When the former Ba'athist members pledged allegiance to AQI, they brought to the organization the same modus operandi and taxation schemes.

Rising from the ashes of AQI and the convergence with former officials of the Iraqi Ba'athist regime, the Islamic State asserted itself as a proto-state over a contiguous area stretching between Syria and Iraq by retaking control of informal economies in both countries and securing a stream of cash flow to financially support the proclamation of the Caliphate in June 2014. Casting itself as a state-like authority, the organization chose to regulate the economy, rather than replace pre-existing enterprises and institutions. Under Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's leadership the group went through "extensive structural reforms", expanding its presence in Sunni areas in northern Iraq, as well as across northern and eastern Syria.³⁹ Besides a

composite military command, al-Baghdadi oversaw the creation of a parallel bureaucracy to implement state-like functions in the territories under his jurisdiction, as well as manage finances, personnel, and day-to-day activities accordingly with standard procedures of reporting and auditing. The Islamic State took Al-Qaida organizational model to a next level by territorializing the same hierarchical design at different geographical scales (from governorate to district level) and “separating revenue-collection activities from disbursements and management”.⁴⁰ Such specialized administrative structure has been in charge of raising financial and material resources by taxing economic activities, looting spoils of war, facilitating trade, and providing social services to put local communities on the Caliphate’s payroll and sustaining a war machine of about 20,000 to 31,500 fighters in late 2014 according to CIA estimates.

In brief, collecting custom duties and road tolls from smugglers, imposing a broad range of taxes, and looting resources allowed the Caliphate to purchase legitimation and maximize its financial self-sufficiency. It has been stressed that “the most important lesson from ISI’s revenue-raising practices is that insurgent groups do not need external backers if they can tax the economy”.⁴¹ Accordingly, passage fees have been levied on smuggling routes: for instance, “Turkish smugglers reportedly ‘rent’ a specific portion of the border in half-hour segments from an Islamic State official in order to facilitate the movement of people”.⁴²

3. Smuggling networks: organizational structure and modus operandi

If the jihadist insurgency has not been funded through irregular migration, even less plausible are the likelihoods that the Islamic State could have established a network of smugglers outside Syria either as an extra-curriculum activity to finance their own activities or infiltrate their operatives to other countries.

Smuggling networks are non-hierarchical, structured on an ad-hoc basis, and also relatively accessible – all these characteristics cannot be attributed to the Islamic State and other militias fighting across Syria and Iraq. Researchers have highlighted how these networks might evolve in highly organized and hierarchical business-based groups that run a number of other illicit businesses alongside human smuggling – most notably drug, human and arms trafficking.⁴³ This notwithstanding, criminological models have often overestimated the extent and dimension of these organizations.⁴⁴ Other studies have indeed shed light on how smugglers are often part of migrants’ social and familial networks⁴⁵ and that large, highly structured organizations usually are not involved in migrant smuggling.⁴⁶ More importantly, recent studies have dismissed the even existence of major crime syndicates who presides over the entire smuggling process in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea.⁴⁷

Human smuggling in the Eastern Mediterranean corridor involves a very different modus operandi and the structure depends on the origin of the smugglers, the client group, the smuggling route, and the complexities of border crossing. Smuggling groups can be situated somewhere in the continuum between single-service providers and multi-service networks.⁴⁸ The former are small groups that run the sea crossing and often have solid roots in the local community. They do not have ties within the migrants’ countries of origin, and the recruitment happens through intermediary groups. These groups generally serve migrants who travel alone, mostly legally, for a large part of the journey. Migrants would recur to smugglers only to cross a specific leg of their journey. At the other end of the spectrum, there are larger and wider-ranging networks that have offshoots in migrants’ countries of origin. These are bigger organizations that operate either land, air or sea routes and provide customers with a variety of services that range from border crossings to detention center releases. These types of migrant-smuggling services are often used by migrants who are barred from legal entry in the transit countries. Their journeys occur through a ‘pre-organized, stage-to-stage’ process.⁴⁹ A

chain of independently but closely interacting 'stage coordinators' organizes the migration process by outsourcing certain smuggling activities to local coordinators – often individuals with solid ties in the local community of transit countries. The latter, in turn, subcontract the border crossing to the local service providers.⁵⁰

Most of our research informants who fled the areas under control of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq claimed to have been smuggled to Europe via Turkey by single-service providers. Those who sought, more or less successfully, to reach Europe crossed into Turkey illegally by taking the inland route – via the Syrian-Turkish border – or by sea from the Syrian coastal cities. Once in Turkey, the vast majority indicated that they had reached Greece on board of rubber dinghies from the isolated areas near the Turkish port of Izmir and Bodrum. From Greece to Europe, displacement patterns varied considerably depending to the fast-changing scenarios of border control. In 2015, Balkan countries' policy vis-à-vis refugees and migrants veered toward a facilitation of irregular migration by issuing temporary transit papers for asylum seekers and migrants crossing their territories.⁵¹ These permits entitled migrants to move freely and to use public transportation for a period of time that ranged from a few days to several months, depending on the issuing country and the migrant population. The situation has changed since early 2016. The EU-Turkey agreement on March 20 and the decision of many Western Balkan countries to seal their borders in winter 2016 have considerably stemmed the flow of people.⁵² Different sources report that effectively blocking smuggling networks only redirected unauthorized migration flows on different routes – most notably the Central Mediterranean and Western Mediterranean routes.⁵³

It is worth pointing out, however, that even wide-ranging networks do not have that sturdy hierarchical structure that researchers have observed within military or larger criminal organizations. The groups operating in the Mediterranean rather consist of a system of flexible and independent groups, which might enter into partnerships with one another but only for short periods.⁵⁴ These groups have a few recurring figures that can be pinpointed – such as the group coordinator, intermediaries, recruiters, guides, and so on. However, the complex organigram of smuggling groups should not lead us to think that they share the same structural features that can be attributed to highly centralized and rigid structures as those of armed groups engaged in warfare. On the contrary, these groups involve a differentiated yet flexible structure whose roles are not integrated into rigid hierarchies. Different positions within the groups can be covered by the same person, and people are not bound by life-term agreements. For example, a person in charge of recruiting prospective clients might also work as a cashier by collecting money if needed. In another case, the captain of a group operating in the area quit overnight after a two-year involvement in the business. Although the pay was good, the risk proved too much for him.

The considerable instability of the current irregular migratory flows explains the type of structure. Human smuggling involves flexible and adaptive networks that can deal with a market characterized by fast-changing scenarios and great insecurity. Indeed, it would hardly be possible for a single centralized organization to carry out all services alone along a route that comprises journeys of several thousand kilometers and in a market characterized by high levels of instability and unpredictability.⁵⁵

Small and loose groups are not only more adaptable and functional but also appear to be more desirable than larger and highly hierarchical organizations. Critical scholarship on smuggling has stressed that these groups "are often community initiated" and "constitute a form of human security from below".⁵⁶ The establishment of smuggling networks on an ethnic basis along migratory routes would serve to reinforce what Ilse Van Liempt aptly calls 'chain of trust' – ethnic solidarities between smugglers and migrants that

tend to fade the further migrants are from their country of origin.⁵⁷ The groups that we encountered along the Eastern Mediterranean route were often based on pre-existing kinship and friendship connections. This sociomoral proximity and the protracted condition of illegality facilitated a blurring of roles. Asylum seekers and labor migrants might work as recruiters, guides, or intermediaries—positions that were often covered by the same person. They might escort immigrants across the border because of their own first-hand knowledge of the route. They might recruit clients because they share the same ethnic networks. They would provide the various services needed to the migrants (food, accommodation, and so on) because of their long-term relationship with local communities in the transit countries. They would do all this to pay the required fees or have a decent livelihood.

4. Dismantling the thesis of unitary facilitation networks and transit routes

A fundamental objection may be raised on the alleged lack of connections between human smuggling and terrorism. It might still be argued that these Jihadist militias could rely on these networks to evade government security controls in order to carry out terrorist acts in Europe or elsewhere. The case of foreign fighters is particularly relevant here. The assumption is straightforward: terrorist groups might take advantage of murky and illegal smuggling networks to infiltrate into nameless masses of refugees, moving human resources under the radar of security apparatuses and border controls.

As legitimate this claim could sound, however, there is no evidence of a systematic exploitation of migration routes by terrorist groups.⁵⁸ Despite few isolated cases, returning foreign fighters “typically do not rely on the facilitation services offered by migrant smuggling networks”.⁵⁹

At least two related findings support this argument. First, tracking of foreign fighters reveals that legal channels of migration – especially air travel – have been the most effective way to reach and return from the Caliphate unnoticed. In most cases, Turkey became the last destination for would-be jihadists, usually after several stopovers at intermediate points and a variety of itineraries, before crossing the Syrian porous frontier and joining the Islamic State outposts. To take a well-known example, Hayat Boumeddiene, wife of the French gunman Amedy Coulibaly who was responsible for the Montrouge shooting in January 2015, fled from Madrid to Urfa via Istanbul to get smuggled over the border through the Syrian town of Tal Abyad, at that time under the Islamic State control, where she went off the grid. Likewise, the Spanish recruiter Abdeluahid Sadik Mohamed travelled by air from Morocco to Turkey, where he entered Syria along the so-called “jihadist highway”, a two-way breach in the north-west of the country that allowed the Islamic State to recruit a massive influx of foreign fighters with the Turkish government turning a blind eye on it. One year later he got back into Turkey with the intention of flying to Amsterdam, albeit without success.

These were not exceptions. Being Turkey the primary transit country, foreign fighters preferred air travel over the Balkan land route and sea routes across the Mediterranean, which have been at most complementary.⁶⁰ Regardless of the spiraling of conflict in Syria, the travelling modus operandi barely changed over time. After all, flight connections are safe, legal, and reliable channels for EU passport holders. On the contrary, “illegal travel options carry the risk of detention and/or of being taken to another country rather than the intended destination, and therefore remove the element of control from the terrorist’s hands”.⁶¹ As the EU counter-terrorism coordinator Gilles de Kerchove emphasized, it is therefore very unlikely that terrorist organizations may be willing to infiltrate highly trained militants among asylum seekers, thus putting major operations at risk,⁶² especially with the tightening of border surveillance.

Second, data produced by the Islamic State and retrieved by U.S. Special Forces details a peculiar facilitation network to recruit, smuggle, and deploy foreign fighters pledging allegiance to the organization. From the analysis of over 4,600 unique Islamic State personnel records covering a short but significant timeframe,⁶³ a clear pattern emerges with “six border crossing points [accounting] for at least 93% of all border crossings in the dataset”.⁶⁴ All of these points of entry lie on the northern Syrian frontier in proximity of key border towns: (in order of decreasing frequency of passages) Tal Abyad, Jarablus, Atimah, Azaz, Al Rai, and an unspecified location in the Latakia governorate. What is most interesting is that few gatekeepers were in charge of facilitating recruits to cross the border. Among them, Abu Muhammad al-Shimali, “the Islamic State’s Border Chief and an important figure in the group’s Immigration and Logistic Committee”,⁶⁵ smuggled 31.3% of the fighters recorded in the dataset. Compared to AQI, the “logistic pipelines” leading to the Caliphate-held territories appear to be “more geographically dispersed”, “redundant”, and articulated around a hierarchy of key facilitators.⁶⁶

This is a further element that recommends disentangling vertically integrated terrorist organizations from horizontally shaped smuggling networks. The latter may even share the same trails but remain fundamentally distinct. As we said earlier, the Islamic State took advantage of cross-border informal economies along the Euphrates River operated by independent professional smugglers and tribes. However, when it comes to the transfer of fighters, military equipment, and money the organization resorted to separate facilitation networks run by high-profile senior militants.⁶⁷

With the consolidation of the Islamic State, the centralization of facilitation networks in the hands of the organization’s upper cadres has been further strengthened. Whereas AQI key facilitators used also local dwellers – who were not necessarily sympathetic with the jihadist group – to mobilize resources across Syria,⁶⁸ the Islamic State maintains a stronger top-down control on any level of its multi-dimensional organization in order to prevent infiltration and defection among its ranks. Some analysts suggest that cooptation of former Iraqi intelligence officers rewired the Islamist group’s organizational approach towards a “layered internal security apparatus to insulate its core leadership from provincial officers, and vice versa”.⁶⁹ The relevance of trust-based relationships, the specialization of labor inside the group, the evolution of a peculiar facilitation system, and the need for a constant supply of foreign fighters make it doubtful that the terrorist group would outsource its logistics to unaffiliated freelancers smuggling migrants out of the Caliphate. It is not by chance that al-Baghdadi’s forces took over several villages and towns on the Turkish southern border to secure safe passages for foreign recruits.⁷⁰ In other words, whereas the Islamic State has been collecting custom taxes and fees from smugglers transporting goods and persons, it built its own short-range mobilization infrastructure to move operatives in and out Syria with the twofold purpose of reducing dependency from external service providers and increasing adaptability to volatile war conditions. This consideration also applies to foreign fighters returning to Europe. As emphasized above, those few returnees who have been effectively involved in attacks predominantly used the organization’s transnational brokers to slip back into Europe.⁷¹ The circumstance that al-Shimali was implicated in plotting the 2015 large-scale attacks in Paris corroborates this view. Hence, posing as refugees to enter Europe might be an episodic tactic for “expendable footmen” only.⁷² In this sense, it should be also considered that the pool of fighters in Syria and Iraq appears rather disposable – “one-time use products” whose reward does not go beyond their sacrifice.⁷³

On the other hand, the Islamic State’s coordination of terrorist acts outside the Syrian-Iraqi theatre should not be overestimated. Even though the multiple shootings and bombings in Paris (November 2015) and Brussels (March 2016) were among the deadliest attacks in Europe since the end of the IWW and

documented a surge in the exportation of jihadist violence, the recent record of terrorism in the West shows a steady trend in “lone wolf” attacks. Western countries are increasingly on target of homegrown lone actors, that is to say unaffiliated and self-radicalized Western nationals carrying out indiscriminate attacks without being steered by any jihadist network. Europol draws a distinction between directed and inspired terrorist acts, and clarifies: “the majority of attacks claimed by IS appear to be masterminded and perpetrated by individuals inspired by IS, rather than those who work with the organization directly”.⁷⁴ As tragic events occurred in Europe (Ansbach, Würzburg, Nice, Berlin, London, Stockholm – to mention a few) and North America (San Bernardino, Orlando) spotlight, the high impact of lone actors has come to prominence over the last couple of years. Hence, in the eyes of the jihadist group, online recruitment through propaganda is a much remunerative tactic that comes at no risk.

5. Conclusions

Especially after the 9/11 attacks, irregular migration and international terrorism have been viewed in the West as interrelated threats to the territorial sovereignty of nation-states. The IOM puts it bluntly in a specific report on this issue: “international terrorism is, because of its cross-border dimensions, a migration issue”.⁷⁵ The IOM later softened its position by stressing that “when migration and terrorism are linked too closely, or in a simplistic causal manner, there is a risk that policy prescriptions will be misguided or could even backfire by increasing community tensions and compromising social cohesion”⁷⁶ and more recently acknowledging that foreign terrorist fighters “are not necessarily a major migration problem”.⁷⁷ However, the general understanding represents migrant flows as dangerous carriers through which terrorism is likely to diffuse with the complicity of ruthless smugglers.

Our study demonstrates, instead, that a perception of a grey area where clandestine, trans-border, and trans-national activities are in a condition of reciprocity is largely biased. If research on the interactions between armed militias and human smugglers in the Middle East is certainly needed, a closer look at the Islamic State documentation shows that the organization never exploited migrant smuggling either to finance the insurgency or move fighters. The comparison with jihadist branches in other geographic contexts, such as Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and affiliates in the Sahel, adds empirical strength to this pattern.⁷⁸ Whereas reports have warned of the possible relationship between smugglers and terrorist groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad in Latin America,⁷⁹ the existence of these ties, nevertheless, has been dismissed by studies supported by primary sources.⁸⁰

Today, despite recent military setback and heavy losses, which left the Islamic State with a few scattered pockets of resistance across Syria and Iraq, the argument presented above still holds. Despite a shrinking income base and a decimated workforce, the group remains vertical, hierarchical, territorially structured, with a rigid division of labour. The Caliphate has neither entered human smuggling nor used smugglers to infiltrate their operatives – and it is unlikely it will do it in the future – because this is not economically remunerative, entails risks, and is not strategically suitable for the organization. It might be argued that smugglers can be an indirect source of revenue since militants levy taxes on any (licit and illicit) cross-border economic activity, including migrant smuggling. However, passage fees seem to constitute only a negligible part of the IS income, which are less and less significant since the territorial model was no longer unsustainable after the loss of the major strongholds in Raqqa and Mosul and the group reverted to clandestine low-intensity insurgency. Hence, without extensive and effective territorial control, the prospect of entering smuggling operations is even less plausible. Most importantly, the two organizational models underline glaringly different purposes: whereas the hierarchical bureaucracy of the Islamic State is geared to

sustain a prolonged military effort by predated and regulating war economies, horizontal smuggling networks “operate on a short timescale, responding to changing problems with flexible solutions”.⁸¹

In conclusion, deconstructing the “artificial link”⁸² between international terrorism and irregular migration has relevant policy implications. First, it supports the idea that targeting migrant smugglers and irregular migration at large does not degrade terrorist organizations, neither financially, nor logistically. On the contrary, the militarization of border control generally exposes migrants to greater dangers. Since studies have demonstrated that terrorist attacks increase out-migration from an affected country,⁸³ the tightening border control is itself a source of violence by forcing refugees and asylum seekers to rely on unsafe travel options. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, linking the occurrence of terrorist violence in Europe with migration flows is not only a flawed assumption, but it is a dangerous statement that might ultimately prompt the behavior that seeks to prevent.⁸⁴ We should not forget that Islamic State’s statements about jihadist hordes sailing towards the European shores disguised as migrants should be read as well-calculated propaganda to further polarize Western societies over the refugee issue and exacerbate the fortification of European cultural and physical borders. Growing anti-Islam rhetoric and rallies are proof of such polarization.⁸⁵ This perception of insecurity fuels, indeed, a narrative of fear and a politics of exclusion that, in our opinion, constitute the actual center of gravity of the Caliphate’s captivation.

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² Irregular migration to Europe has developed along different major routes. The Eastern Mediterranean route refers to the sea crossing from Turkey to Greece; it has become in 2015 the most popular route for African and Asian labor migrants and refugees wishing to access Europe. FRONTEX, *FRAN Q2 2017 - Frontex Risk Analysis Network Quarterly Report* (2017).

³ “Irregular migration” is a recent phenomenon that depends on a modern juridical apparatus oriented toward the classification of international mobility in terms of a legal/illegal or regular/irregular distinction (Martina Cvajner and Giuseppe Sciortino, “Theorizing irregular migration: the control of spatial mobility in differentiated societies,” *European Journal of Social Theory* 13, no. 3 (2010): 389-404). There is no universal consensus on the definition of irregular migration. According to the International Organization for Migration, it is a “movement that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving country” (IOM, *Key Migration Terms* (2019) available at <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>). Because “irregularity” is the product of immigration law and not an intrinsic attribute of migrants, critical scholars have called for the need to denaturalize the term and look at the socio-political process that produce it (see, for instance, Nicholas P. De Genova, “Migrant “illegality” and deportability in everyday life,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31, no. 1 (2002): 419-447).

⁴ Europol, *Migrant smuggling in the EU* (2016). Europol and Interpol, *Migrant Smuggling Networks: Joint Europol-INTERPOL Report* (2016).

⁵ Europol, *TE-SAT 2012: EU Terrorism situation and trend report* (2012); Interpol, *Terrorism, people smuggling & trafficking in human beings interactivity* (Lyon: Interpol, 2013); Europol and Interpol, *Migrant Smuggling Networks: Joint Europol-INTERPOL Report* (2016).

⁶ Eric Kaufmann, “Why Values, not Economics, Hold the Key to the Populist Right - and to Crafting New Migration Narratives”, in Marie McAuliffe and Michele Klein Solomon, *Ideas to Inform International Cooperation on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* (Geneva: IOM, 2017).

⁷ David Spener, *Clandestine crossings: Migrants and coyotes on the Texas-Mexico border* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009).

⁸ Louise I. Shelley, *Dirty entanglements: Corruption, crime, and terrorism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); see also Svante E. Cornell, “The interaction of drug smuggling, human trafficking, and terrorism,” in *Human trafficking and human security* (Routledge, 2012), pp. 60-78; Loretta Napoleoni, *Merchants of Men: How Jihadists and ISIS Turned Kidnapping and Refugee Trafficking into a Multi-Billion Dollar Business*. (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2016); Benjamin Perrin, “Migrant Smuggling: Canada’s Response to a Global Criminal Enterprise,” *Int’l J. Soc. Sci. Stud.*, no. 1 (2013): 139; Daniel Sheinis, “The links between human trafficking, organized crime, and terrorism,” *American Intelligence Journal* 30, no. 1 (2012): 68-77; Shannon A. Welch, “Human trafficking and terrorism: Utilizing national security resources to prevent human trafficking in the Islamic state,” *Duke J. Gender L. & Pol’y*, no. 24 (2016): 165. A

recent wave of academic articles has also put forward correlations between the flow of refugees and the likelihood of terrorist attacks without questioning the trustworthiness of the implicit causal statement (e.g. Tamara Makarenko, "The crime-terror continuum: tracing the interplay between transnational organised crime and terrorism," *Global Crime* 6, no. 1 (2004): 129-145; Seung-Whan Choi and Idean Salehyan, "No good deed goes unpunished: refugees, humanitarian aid, and terrorism," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 30, no. 1 (2013): 53-75; Daniel Milton, Megan Spencer, and Michael Findley, "Radicalism of the hopeless: Refugee flows and transnational terrorism," *International Interactions* 39, no. 5 (2013): 621-645; Vincenzo Bove and Tobias Böhmelt, "Does immigration induce terrorism?," *The Journal of Politics* 78, no. 2 (2016): 572-588..

⁹ The fear of terrorist infiltration lists as one of the most prominent motivations for counter-smuggling measures in the EU (Jørgen Carling, "How Does Migration Arise?," in *Migration Research Leaders' Syndicate* (IOM: 2017): 19).

¹⁰ Europol, *Migrant smuggling in the EU*, 12. The concern that terrorist fighters could infiltrate Western countries through smuggling networks or use smuggling as a source of income is not new in Europe.

¹¹ Simón Pedro Izcara Palacios, "Tráfico de migrantes y terrorismo: Un vínculo infundado," *Política y gobierno* 24, no. 2 (2017): 338-9.

¹² Mary De Ming Fan, "The immigration-terrorism illusory correlation and heuristic mistake," *Harv. Latino L. Rev.* 10 (2007): 33.

¹³ María Soledad Saux, "Immigration and terrorism: a constructed connection., *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 13, no. 1-2 (2007): 57-72.

¹⁴ Jef Huysmans, "The European Union and the securitization of migration," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 38, no. 5 (2000): 751-777; Jef Huysmans, *The politics of insecurity: Fear, migration and asylum in the EU* (Routledge, 2006); Fiona B. Adamson, "Crossing borders: international migration and national security," *International security* 31, no. 1 (2006): 165-199.

¹⁵ Stanley Cohen, *Folk devils and moral panics* (London: Routledge, 2011).

¹⁶ This trend has blossomed under security and enforcement imperatives that have guided the border policies implemented in the United States and Europe, especially after September 11, 2001 (see, among many others, Donald Kerwin, "How robust refugee protection policies can strengthen human and national security," *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 4, no. 3 (2016): 83-140; Douglas S. Massey, Karen A. Pren, and Jorge Durand, "Why border enforcement backfired," *American Journal of Sociology* 121, no. 5 (2016): 1557-1600; Sharon Pickering, "Border terror: Policing, forced migration and terrorism," *Global Change, Peace & Security* 16, no. 3 (2004): 211-226.).

¹⁷ Didier Bigo, Sergio Carrera, Elspeth Guild, Emmanuel-Pierre Guittet, Julien Jeandesboz, Valsamis Mitsilegas, Francesco Ragazzi, and Amandine Scherrer, *The EU and its Counter-Terrorism Policies after the Paris Attacks. Liberty and Security in Europe*, CEPS, no. 84 (2015).

¹⁸ Peter Andreas, "International politics and the illicit global economy," *Perspectives on Politics* 13, no. 3 (2015): 782-788; Izcara Palacios, "Tráfico de migrantes y terrorismo"; Simón Pedro Izcara Palacios and Karla Lorena Andrade Rubio, "Terrorism and Human Smuggling in the US Southwestern Border," *Psychology* 8, no. 8 (2018): 388-396; David Spener, *Clandestine crossings*; Sheldon Zhang, *Smuggling and trafficking in human beings: All roads lead to America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007).

¹⁹ Zhang, *Smuggling and trafficking in human beings: All roads lead to America*.

²⁰ Andreas, "International politics and the illicit global economy".

²¹ A relevant exception is İçli, Sever, and Sever's survey among detained human smugglers in Turkey. See Tülin Günşen İçli, Hanifi Sever, and Muhammed Sever, "A survey study on the profile of human smugglers in Turkey," *Advances in Applied Sociology* 5, no. 1 (2015): 1. However, on the alleged conflation between smuggling and terrorism, the authors could only conclude that over one fourth of the interviewed research participants had criminal records on terrorism.

²² For comparative purposes, see also Simón Pedro Izcara Palacios, "Corrupción y contrabando de migrantes en Estados Unidos," *Política y gobierno* 20, no. 1 (2013): 79-106; Izcara Palacios and Andrade Rubio, "Terrorism and Human Smuggling in the US Southwestern Border";.

²³ Luigi Achilli, "The "Good" Smuggler: The Ethics and Morals of Human Smuggling among Syrians," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 676, no. 1 (2018): 77-96.

²⁴ For a study on the fundamental structural difference between migrant smuggling and organized crime see Gert Vermeulen, Wendy De Bondt, and Yasmin Van Damme, *EU Cross-border Gathering and Use of Evidence in Criminal Matters: Towards Mutual Recognition of Investigative Measures and Free Movement of Evidence?* (IRCP-series, vol. 37, Maklu: 2010).

²⁵ Although a problematization of terrorism in its prevalent usage is out of scope of the present work, a note of caution is in order. In contemporary discourse, terrorism is largely postulated as an existential threat to national security in normative terms, insofar as it represents an attempt to delegitimize agency and subjectivity of certain (typically non-state) actors, rather than properly describe a form of political violence intended to induce terror among civilian population as means of coercion; see, for example, Marie Breen Smyth, Jeroen Gunning, Richard Jackson, George Kassimeris, and Piers Robinson, "Critical terrorism studies—an introduction," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 1, no. 1 (2008):

1-4. As such, here, we firmly refrain from treating “terrorism” as ideological label. Rather, our analysis highlights that the connotation of the Islamic State as terrorist organization is incomplete to understand both genesis and functioning of an insurgent militia with a broad panoply of goals and strategies.

²⁶ Napoleoni, *Merchants of Men*, 53.

²⁷ Shannon A. Welch, “Human trafficking and terrorism: Utilizing national security resources to prevent human trafficking in the Islamic state,” *Duke J. Gender L. & Pol’y* 24 (2016): 165.

²⁸ Patrick B. Johnston, *Countering ISIL’s Financing* (California: RAND Corporation, 2014)

²⁹ Matthew Levitt, *Terrorist financing and the Islamic state* (Washington: *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, 2014).

³⁰ Center for the Analysis of Terrorism, *ISIS Financing in 2015* (CAT, 2016).

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Carla E. Humud, Robert L. Pirog, and Liana Rosen, *Islamic State Financing and US Policy Approaches* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2015); Dimitrios Stergiou, “ISIS political economy: financing a terror state,” *Journal of Money Laundering Control* 19, no. 2 (2016): 189-207.

³³ See also Claire Healy, “Targeting vulnerabilities: The impact of the Syrian war and refugee situation on trafficking in persons,” in *A Study of Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq* (Vienna: International Centre for Migration Policy Development, 2015).

³⁴ Also referred to as Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), or Islamic State (IS), “Da’ish” is the acronym of “al-Dawla al-Islamiya fi Iraq wa al-Sham” (literally “Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant”). The Free Syrian Army is one of the main armed opposition groups in Syria, founded in July 2011 by officers who defected from the Syrian Armed Forces. Al-Nusra or Jabhat Fateh al-Sham is a jihadist organization fighting in the Syrian conflict.

³⁵ Isabelle Coles and Ned Parker, “How Saddam’s fighters help Islamic State rule,” Reuters (2015, December 11)

³⁶ Brian Fishman, Jacob Shapiro, Joseph Felter, Vahid Brown, and Peter Bergen, *Bombers, Bank Accounts, & Bleedout. Al-Qa’ida’s Road In and Out of Iraq* (West Point, NY: US Military Academy, 2008)

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 87.

³⁸ Christopher Parker and Pete Moore, “The war economy in Iraq,” *Middle East Report* 37, no. 2 (2007): 6-15.

³⁹ Charles R. Lister, *The Islamic State: A Brief Introduction* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2015): 10-13.

⁴⁰ Patrick B. Johnston, Jacob N. Shapiro, Howard J. Shatz, Benjamin Bahney, Danielle F. Jung, Patrick K. Ryan, and Jonathan Wallace, *Foundations of the Islamic State: Management, Money, and Terror in Iraq, 2005-2010* (California: Rand Corporation, 2016), 79.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 255.

⁴² Humud, Pirog, and Rosen, *Islamic State Financing and US Policy Approaches*, 9.

⁴³ See, for instance, Ko-Lin Chin, “The social organization of Chinese human smuggling,” *Global human smuggling: Comparative perspectives* (2001): 216-35.

⁴⁴ Ferruccio Pastore, Paola Monzini, and Giuseppe Sciortino, “Schengen’s soft underbelly? Irregular migration and human smuggling across land and sea borders to Italy,” *International Migration* 44, no. 4 (2006): 95-119; Theodore Baird, and Ilse van Liempt, “Scrutinising the double disadvantage: knowledge production in the messy field of migrant smuggling,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 42, no. 3 (2016): 400-417.

⁴⁵ Veronika Bilger, Martin Hofmann, and Michael Jandl, “Human smuggling as a transnational service industry: Evidence from Austria,” *International Migration* 44, no. 4 (2006): 59-93; Emma Herman, “Migration as a family business: The role of personal networks in the mobility phase of migration,” *International Migration* 44, no. 4 (2006): 191-230; Khalid Koser, “Social networks and the asylum cycle: The case of Iranians in the Netherlands,” *International migration review* 31, no. 3 (1997): 591-611; Khalid Koser, “Why migrant smuggling pays,” *International Migration* 46, no. 2 (2008): 3-26; Gabriella Sanchez, *Human smuggling and border crossings*. (Routledge, 2014); Richard Staring, “Smuggling aliens toward the Netherlands: The role of human smugglers and transnational networks,” In *Global Organized Crime*, pp. 105-116 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2003).

⁴⁶ Marek Okolski, “Illegality of international population movements in Poland,” *International Migration* 38, no. 3 (2000): 57-89; David Kyle and John Dale, “Smuggling the state back in: Agents of human smuggling reconsidered,” *Global human smuggling: Comparative perspectives* 29 (2001): 45; Ilse Van Liempt and Stephanie Sersli, “State responses and migrant experiences with human smuggling: A reality check,” *Antipode* 45, no. 4 (2013): 1029-1046; Gabriella E. Sanchez and Sheldon X. Zhang, “Rumors, Encounters, Collaborations, and Survival: The Migrant Smuggling–Drug Trafficking Nexus in the US Southwest,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 676, no. 1 (2018): 135-151.

⁴⁷ Luigi Achilli, “Smuggling and trafficking in human beings at the time of the Syrian conflict,” in *Human Trafficking and Exploitation*, pp. 129-146. Routledge, 2017; Achilli, “The “Good” Smuggler”; Theodore Baird, *Human smuggling in the Eastern Mediterranean* (Routledge, 2016); Ahmet İçduygu, “The politics of irregular migratory flows in the Mediterranean Basin: Economy, mobility and ‘illegality’,” *Mediterranean Politics* 12, no. 2 (2007): 141-161; Anna Triandafyllidou and Thanos Maroukis, *Migrant smuggling: Irregular migration from Asia and Africa to Europe* (Springer, 2012).

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- ⁴⁸ Matthias Neske, "Human smuggling to and through Germany," *International Migration* 44, no. 4 (2006): 121-163.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid.
- ⁵¹ Luigi Achilli, *Tariq al-Euroba: displacement trends of Syrian asylum seekers to the EU* (2016).
- ⁵² FRONTEX, "FRAN Q2 2017 - Frontex Risk Analysis Network Quarterly Report".
- ⁵³ Ibid.
- ⁵⁴ Pastore, Monzini, and Sciortino, "Schengen's soft underbelly?"; Oguzhan Omer Demir, Murat Sever, and Yavuz Kahya, "The Social Organisation of Migrant Smugglers in Turkey: Roles and Functions," *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 23, no. 3 (2017): 371-391; Achilli, "The "Good" Smuggler".
- ⁵⁵ Matthias Neske, "Human smuggling to and through Germany"; Pastore, Monzini, and Sciortino, "Schengen's soft underbelly?".
- ⁵⁶ Gabriella Sanchez. "Women's Participation in the Facilitation of Human Smuggling: The Case of the US Southwest." *Geopolitics* 21, no. 2 (2016): 387-406.
- ⁵⁷ Ilse Van Liempt, *Navigating borders: Inside perspectives on the process of human smuggling into the Netherlands* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007)
- ⁵⁸ Europol, *Migrant smuggling in the EU*; Europol and Interpol, *Migrant Smuggling Networks: Joint Europol-INTERPOL Report*.
- ⁵⁹ Europol, *Migrant smuggling in the EU*, 12.
- ⁶⁰ Europol, *TE-SAT 2016: EU Terrorism situation and trend report* (2016).
- ⁶¹ Europol, *Changes in Modus Operandi of Islamic State (IS) revisited* (2016).
- ⁶² Adéla Denková, "EU counter-terrorism czar: Terrorists among asylum seekers? Unlikely", Euractive (2015).
- ⁶³ Records cover the time between early 2013 and late 2014, when the al-Baghdadi's group established its strongholds in Syria, launched an almost undisputed insurgency in Iraq, and declared the restoration of the Islamic Caliphate.
- ⁶⁴ Brian Dodwell, Daniel Milton, and Don Rassler, *The caliphates global workforce: An inside look at the Islamic States foreign fighter paper trail* (West Point, NY: US Military Academy, 2016), 25.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid., 26.
- ⁶⁶ Brian Dodwell, Daniel Milton, and Don Rassler, *Then and Now: Comparing the Flow of Foreign Fighters to AQI and the Islamic State* (West Point, NY: US Military Academy, 2016), 14-15.
- ⁶⁷ This is nothing new: in February 2008, the U.S. Department of the Treasury identified Badran Turki Hishan al Mazidih, an AQI commander better known with the nom de guerre Abu Ghadiyah, as the leader of a support network facilitating "the flow through Syria of money, weapons, and terrorists". From the Syrian town of Zabadani, since 2004, Abu Ghadiyah had managed AQI's recruitment and logistics in Syria "[receiving] recruits arriving by air at Damascus International Airport and by land from Jordan to the south, Lebanon to the west and Turkey to the north and managed their transport – ordinarily in groups of at least fifteen at a time – eastwards towards Iraq" (Charles R. Lister, *The Islamic State: A Brief Introduction*, 37).
- ⁶⁸ Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, *Al-Qa'ida's foreign fighters in Iraq: A first look at the Sinjar records* (West Point, NY: US Military Academy, 2007), 35.
- ⁶⁹ Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan, *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror* (Simon and Schuster, 2016), 195.
- ⁷⁰ Lister, *The Islamic State*, 175.
- ⁷¹ Hegghammer and Nesser point out that only a minor fraction of them is committed to continuing their jihad in the country of origin after having experienced warfare (Thomas Hegghammer and Petter Nesser, "Assessing the Islamic State's commitment to attacking the West," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9, no. 4 (2015)).
- ⁷² Europol, *Changes in Modus Operandi of Islamic State (IS) revisited*, 9.
- ⁷³ Brian M. Jenkins, *The Islamic State's Disposable Army*, (California: RAND Corporation, 2017).
- ⁷⁴ Europol, *Changes in Modus Operandi of Islamic State (IS) revisited*, 8.
- ⁷⁵ IOM, *International Terrorism and Migration* (2003), 2.
- ⁷⁶ IOM, *International Terrorism and Migration* (2010), 7.
- ⁷⁷ IOM, *World Migration Report* (2018), 10.
- ⁷⁸ Richard Philippe Chelin, "From the Islamic State of Algeria to the Economic Caliphate of the Sahel: The Transformation of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2018): 1-20.
- ⁷⁹ 9/11 Commission, *9/11 and Terrorist Travel. Staff Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States* (2004), 61.
- ⁸⁰ See, for instance, Izcara Palacios, "Tráfico de migrantes y terrorismo" and Spener, *Clandestine crossings*.
- ⁸¹ Pastore, Monzini, and Sciortino, "Schengen's soft underbelly?".
- ⁸² Huseyin Cinoglu, "Terrorism, international migration and border control," *European Scientific Journal* 9, no. 20 (2013).
- ⁸³ Alex P. Schmid, "Links between terrorism and migration," *International Centre for Counter Terrorism*, ICCT Research Paper (2016).
- ⁸⁴ Joseba Zulaika, "Self-Fulfilling Prophecy," *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology* (2009), 1-3.

⁸⁵ Edwin Bakker and van Zuijdewijn J. de Roy, *Jihadist Foreign Fighter Phenomenon in Western Europe: A Low-Probability, High-Impact Threat*, ICCT-Research Paper (2015): 22.