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The costs of human smuggling and trafficking

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Global Commission on International Migration

In his report on the 'Strengthening of the United Nations - an agenda for further change', UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan identified migration as a priority issue for the international community.

Wishing to provide the framework for the formulation of a coherent, comprehensive and global response to migration issues, and acting on the encouragement of the UN Secretary-General, Sweden and Switzerland, together with the governments of Brazil, Morocco, and the Philippines, decided to establish a Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM). Many additional countries subsequently supported this initiative and an open-ended Core Group of Governments established itself to support and follow the work of the Commission.

The Global Commission on International Migration was launched by the United Nations Secretary-General and a number of governments on December 9, 2003 in Geneva. It is comprised of 19 Commissioners.

The mandate of the Commission is to place the issue of international migration on the global policy agenda, to analyze gaps in current approaches to migration, to examine the inter-linkages between migration and other global issues, and to present appropriate recommendations to the Secretary-General and other stakeholders.

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Introduction

It has become almost axiomatic to begin papers on human smuggling and trafficking by stating that they remain under-researched phenomena. Increasingly, however, this is not the case, and new empirical research has begun to plug some of the gaps. What is true, nevertheless, is that this research is largely scattered. Still relatively little information is available in academic publications, with the concentration of empirical evidence spread across policy papers, migration bulletins and the media. Probably as a result, it is also true that this information has rarely systematically been analysed. There is, for example, still no reliable global overview of the scale or dynamics of human smuggling and trafficking; certain geographical regions and routes are far better understood than others, and there are very few comparative studies.

In contrast, this paper attempts to draw together some of this scattered information – it is based on analysis of over 500 secondary sources. It is concerned specifically with the costs of human smuggling and trafficking, and adopts a longitudinal and global perspective – asking how costs vary across the world, how they have changed over time and what factors other than origin and destination determine their level.

There are at least three reasons why it is important to better understand costs. First, most commentators agree that human smuggling and trafficking have become increasingly significant phenomena. It has been suggested they may be changing the geography of international migration and that they challenge traditional migration theories. It is possible to conceive both essentially as businesses, as profit and losses lie at their heart (Salt and Stein, 1998). In this sense, to understand how much human smuggling and trafficking cost is to understand one of their central dynamics.

Second, it has been suggested that an increasing proportion of certain types of international migration worldwide – in particular that of asylum seekers and irregular migrants - is facilitated by smugglers and traffickers. In that case, costs might potentially have a significant impact on the scale of these migrations. If costs are increasing their volume may reduce, whereas if they are decreasing a commensurate increase in certain migration types might be expected.

Finally, a better understanding of what determines costs has clear policy implications. Arguably one way to combat human smuggling and trafficking is to make them so expensive that they are undermined as viable businesses.

Data collection and analysis

The 538 cases of human smuggling and trafficking analysed for the purposes of this paper come from three main sources. First, a significant proportion of the data originates from issues of the Migration News Sheet, a monthly bulletin distributed by the Migration Policy Group. Papers and reports from migration journals, newspapers, news magazines, international conferences, governmental agencies, non-governmental and research

organisations, and academic institutions comprise the second major category of sources. Finally, the third category covers information found on the Internet in the form of past news articles available on major news websites.

Data collection took place during 2004, and entailed systematically searching these sources for information on human smuggling and trafficking costs and routes. The vast majority of this information took the form of case studies or reports of specific and isolated incidents.

A number of reservations impede full analysis of the data collected. First, although this paper deliberately encompasses both human smuggling and trafficking, making a distinction between the two as they are reported in various sources has proved a subjective and difficult process. Before about 1998 there was little distinction between the two concepts, and the terms 'smuggling' and 'trafficking' were often used interchangeably (Salt and Hogarth, 2000). Although they have now been separated in various protocols, usage of the concepts – particularly in the media – remains confused, rendering a distinction difficult at times in this paper. Where possible, the context for the specific data on costs and routes has been considered in order to distinguish whether it applies to an instance of smuggling or trafficking.

Second, there is significant variety in the geographical specificity reported. Some sources provide costs between two specific countries. Others provide costs for movement between two broad regions. Still others specify either the country of origin or destination, but not the other. For example, it is reported that migrants travelling from Iran to Europe paid \$5,000 (IOM, 2000). It seems unlikely however, that moving between Iran and the UK costs the same as travelling from Iran to Poland. Similarly, a single cost of \$35,000 for transportation from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to Japan (Global Support Network, 1997) surely masks differences in costs for those moving, say, from the Ukraine as compared to those moving from Kyrgyzstan to Japan.

A lack of clarity over exactly who is moving can be another problem. It is reported, for example, that to move from Lebanon to Germany cost one family \$29,874 (Migration Policy Group, 1996). But it is not clear how many people the family comprised. Is there a special 'family rate', or is there a charge per person? Are children charged less than adults? An associated fourth problem arises where prices for trafficking and smuggling are given as a lump sum for two or more people. The case of two Pakistani boys sold for \$400 together (US Department of State, 2000) illustrates this point – is it fair to assume that their cost individually would have been \$200?

Fifth, prices are often provided without specifying details of the journey – whether it was direct or indirect, for example; or what the mode of transport was. Presumably these types of differences explain some of the broad ranges for costs between the same set of countries. In one case, migrants paid anywhere from \$10,000 to \$45,000 (US Department of Justice, 1998) to travel from China to the US - a \$35,000 gap in price.

A sixth variable affecting analysis is the differing forms in which costs are presented. For example, trafficking costs are often presented as the debt incurred from being trafficked whereas most smuggling data is simply for the price paid by those being smuggled. A final caveat is that the costs provided in this paper remain unadjusted for past exchange rates and levels of inflation simply because adjustment for those factors is problematic and potentially inaccurate and misleading.

The above reservations apply to the data included in this paper. It is also worth noting that certain information has been excluded altogether from the analysis, because of problems of inaccuracy or incomparability. Sometimes, costs are provided for journeys to the ‘West’ or ‘North’. Sometimes they are presented in a non-monetary form – such as in the case of a young woman from Sierra Leone sold by her parents to be a domestic worker in Geneva for six sacks of rice (Migration Policy Group, 1997). Sometimes, costs are reported in the form of profits for the smuggler or trafficker. For example, trafficking a woman from the former Soviet Union to Germany apparently generates between \$3,000-\$30,000 in profits for the trafficker depending on the cost to transport her and the price she is sold for (Hughes, 2002).

In addition, certain types of human smuggling and trafficking have been excluded because of their atypical circumstances. These include cases of infant smuggling and trafficking; bride-trafficking and movements arranged through marriage and entertainment agencies.

Turning to methods of analysis, the first step was to group origin and destination countries into five broad regions: Africa, Asia, the Americas (including North, South, and Central America), Australasia (including Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific islands and nations), and Europe. On the basis of these regions, 14 broad routes were identified that encompassed all the cases documented: Africa to Africa, Africa to Americas, Africa to Australasia, Africa to Europe, Americas to Americas, Americas to Europe, Asia to Americas, Asia to Asia, Asia to Australasia, Asia to Europe, Europe to Americas, Europe to Asia, Europe to Australasia and Europe to Europe. Each of the 538 cases covered in the research were then categorised according to these routes, so that routes could begin to be matched with costs.

For each route, mean prices were calculated. Where prices are presented in the original source as falling within a range, the mean price was calculated.

How much does human smuggling and trafficking cost?

Table One presents the mean costs for each identified route in US dollars.

Table One Global costs for human smuggling and trafficking (mean costs in USD)

Routes	Mean Costs (USD)
Asia-Americas	26,041

Europe-Asia	16,462
Asia-Australasia	14,011
Asia-Asia	12,240
Asia-Europe	9,374
Europe-Australasia	7,400
Africa-Europe	6,533
Europe-Americas	6,389
Americas-Europe	4,528
Americas-Americas	2,984
Europe-Europe	2,708
Africa-Americas	2,200
Africa-Australasia	1,951
Africa-Africa	203

Asia to the Americas

Consistently, the most expensive recorded smuggling and trafficking routes are between Asia and the Americas, with a mean recorded cost of \$26,041. Movements from China to the United States (US) comprise the majority of recorded movements, but other major routes include China to Canada, India to the US, Pakistan to the US, Sri Lanka to the US, Thailand to the US, and Sri Lanka to Canada. Interestingly, the route from China to the US is at the same time the most and least expensive recorded within this category, with costs apparently ranging from \$26 (Chin and Massey, 2000) to \$50,000 (Kyle and Liang, 2001).

Europe to Asia

Smuggling and trafficking from Europe to Asia is also expensive, with a mean cost of \$16,462. Major reported routes include Russia to Japan and the Ukraine to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). At \$35,000, Russia or the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to Japan constitutes the highest cost movement between these regions (Global Support Network, 1997); while at \$4,000, Russia to South Korea is the lowest (Global Support Network, 1997).

Asia to Australasia

Movements between Asia and Australasia have a mean cost of \$14,011. Routes from China to Australia and Indonesia to Australia constitute the only two cases in this category, reported respectively to cost \$26,021 (Australian Institute of Criminology, 1999) and \$2,000 (McInery, 2001).

Asia to Asia

In terms of cost, the next category is movements between Asian countries. The mean cost for these regional movements is \$12,240. Thailand to Japan and Pakistan to the UAE comprise major routes within this category. The route with the highest recorded cost is Thailand to Japan at \$43,000 (IOM, 2000), and the lowest cost route is \$50 from Laos to Thailand (Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation, 2001).

Asia to Europe

For the recorded routes from Asia to Europe, the mean cost is \$9,374. Major routes include China to the UK, Afghanistan to Germany, India to Poland and Pakistan to the Ukraine. The highest cost journey recorded is from China to the UK at \$37,500 (IOM, 2000), and the lowest cost is from India to Poland at \$85 (Glabicka, 1998).

Europe to Australasia

The next most expensive inter-regional movements are from Europe to Australasia, averaging \$7,400. Two cases of movement from Turkey to Australia constitute the only recorded movements in the first category, with one journey apparently costing \$12,000 (Icduygu and Toktas, 2002) and the other only \$2,800 (Icduygu and Toktas, 2002).

Africa to Europe

The mean cost for movements between Africa and Europe is \$6,533. Common routes in this category include Morocco to Spain and Nigeria to Italy. The highest cost route in this category is from Nigeria to Italy at \$60,000 (IOM, 1999) and the lowest \$37 to travel from Somalia to the UK (Morrison, 1998).

Europe to the Americas

Mean costs for documented movements between Europe and the Americas are \$6,389. Journeys between Turkey and the US (Icduygu and Toktas, 2002) and Russia and the US (Center for the Study of Transnational Crime and Corruption at American University, 1999) both cost \$15,000, and are the most expensive routes between these two regions. The lowest recorded cost was for movement between Central Europe to the US, at \$900 (Richard, 1999).

The Americas to Europe

For movements in the reverse direction from the Americas to Europe, the mean recorded cost is \$4,528. The only major route for this inter-regional category is between the

Dominican Republic and Austria. At \$13,047, the highest cost route is from Brazil to the UK (Metropolitan Police Service of London, 1997), and the lowest from Brazil, Colombia or Venezuela to Spain (Migration Policy Group, 1999) or from the Dominican Republic to Switzerland – all reported at \$1,500 (IOM, 1996).

The Americas to the Americas

Next cheapest are movements within the Americas, for which the mean cost is \$2,984. Common routes include Mexico, Haiti and Cuba to the US. Ecuador to the US comprises the highest cost route for this category at \$8,000 (Kyle and Liang, 2001), and Mexico to the US the lowest at \$150 (University of Trento, 1996).

Europe to Europe

The mean documented cost for movements within Europe is \$2,708. Particularly common routes are between Russia and Poland, Turkey and Greece, and Estonia and Sweden. Russia to Poland is the most expensive reported, at \$14,000 (Glabicka, 1998), and Poland to Germany the least at \$28 (IOM, 2000).

Africa to the Americas

The mean cost for smuggling and trafficking movements from Africa to the Americas is \$2,200, although this is based on just one recorded instance from Senegal to Canada (BBC News, 2003).

Africa to Australasia

Similarly, Somalia to Australia is the only documented journey for interregional movements from Africa to Australasia, at a cost of \$1,951 (Australian Institute of Criminology, 1999).

Africa to Africa

At the cheapest end of the spectrum, movements between African countries comprise the least expensive smuggling and trafficking routes, with a mean cost of only \$203. Mali to Cote d'Ivoire and Mozambique to South Africa are two of the major documented routes in this category. Movement from Zimbabwe to South Africa constitutes the highest recorded cost in this category at \$500 (IOM, 1994) while Mali to Cote d'Ivoire constitutes the lowest at \$30 (Anti-Slavery International, 1999).

Are prices increasing or decreasing?

The preceding section provided at least an approximate picture of major global human smuggling and trafficking routes and their costs. This section uses the limited available evidence to try to answer the question whether costs have increased or decreased over time. The most common journeys within each inter-regional movement category are used as case studies.

Asia to the Americas

Movements from China to the US encompass the majority of recorded journeys between Asia and the Americas, with 63 cases. The general trend that emerges is an increase in smuggling and trafficking costs during the 1980s, and a stabilisation during the 1990s. Chin and Massey's 2000 study provides something of a longitudinal perspective of changing costs for this route, starting in 1988 when travel for smuggled migrants cost an average of \$22,888. In 1989, this price increased to \$23,780 and in 1990 to \$24,756. By 1991 there had apparently been a significant increase in costs to an average of \$28,078, at which level they seem to have stabilised in 1992 (\$28,063) and 1993 (\$28,472) (Chin and Massey, 2000). The overall cost increase from 1988-1993 was thus \$5,584 or 24 percent of the original price in 1988.

Post-1993 data are more anomalous, but indicate a stabilisation around the \$30,000 mark. For instance, some migrants apparently paid \$35,000 in 1995 (Branigan, 1995), whereas for 1996 another source showed migrants paying \$25,000 (University of Trento, 1996). Reported costs for 1997 ranged from \$30,000 for a journey made via Madrid (Migration Policy Group, 1997); \$35,000-\$40,000 for another journey (University of Cambridge, 1997); and \$30,000-\$50,000 (Kwong, 1997) for yet another. By 1998 costs had apparently increased to between \$40,000 and \$50,000 (Ghosh, 2000), and \$47,000 for a journey made via Canada (US Department of Justice, 1998) – although one anomalous figure states a cost of only \$6,462 (IOM, 1998). By 1999 prices show a downturn at \$30,000 (Skeldon, 2000), in addition to one extraordinary case where a Chinese man apparently smuggled himself via Thailand and Myanmar for just \$26 (Chin and Massey, 2000). Data for 2000 indicate that migrants paid anywhere from \$10,000-\$45,000 (US Department of Justice, 2000), with specific examples ranging from \$27,745 (Chin and Massey, 2000), \$30,000 (Grennan, 2000) and \$35,000-\$40,000 (IOM, 2000). In 2001, some migrants are reported to have paid up to \$50,000 (Finckenauer and Schrok, 2001) although other prices included \$20,000-\$30,000 to travel via Mexico (Maler and Paige, 2001).

Data for the even more specific journey between China and New York reinforce the impression that through the 1990s costs remained fairly stable at about \$30,000. For example, in 1993, smuggled migrants travelling on the boat *Golden Venture* were reported to have paid \$33,832 (Skeldon, 2000). In 1998, migrants paid between \$15,000 and \$30,000 to travel via Frankfurt, London, Caracas, Panama, Vancouver, or Toronto to

New York (Heikkinen and Lohrmann, 1998). Finally, in 2000, migrants paid \$35,000 (IOM, 2000).

Five journeys from India to the US create a second picture of movements from Asia to the Americas. In this particular case the trend seems to be more obviously towards increasing costs. In 1994 smuggled migrants travelling from India to the US paid \$10,000-\$14,000 to travel via Mexico or Canada (University of California, Davis, 1994). By 1998, migrants travelling either to Miami or the Southern border of the US paid \$20,000 to travel via Moscow, Cuba, and either Mexico or the Bahamas (US Department of Justice, 1998). Migrants paid \$25,000 in 2000 (IOM, 2000) and data for two journeys made to the US (one via Mexico) in 2001 indicate that migrants paid \$28,000 (Kwong, 2001; Maler and Paige, 2001). The implication is that between 1994 and 2001 smuggling costs between India and the US increased by up to \$18,000 or 180 percent of the cost in 1994.

Five movements from Pakistan to the US constitute a third case study for this inter-regional category. Like those between India and the US, journeys from Pakistan to the US have apparently increased in costs over time. In 1994, smuggled migrants travelling via Mexico or Canada paid between \$10,000 and \$14,000 (University of California, Davis, 1994). By 2000 they were paying \$25,000 (IOM, 2000). And for 2001, the cost for two separately documented journeys (one via Mexico) was \$28,000 (Kwong, 2001; Maler and Paige, 2001). Finally, in 2003, migrants smuggled by direct flight are reported to have paid between \$28,878 and \$33,975 (Koser, 2003).

Europe to Asia

Whereas most of the available data on movements between Asia and the Americas are for smuggling, those from Europe to Asia are predominantly reported to be for trafficking. The debt incurred by women trafficked from Russia to Japan in 1997 (Global Support Network, 1997) was apparently the same as that by women trafficked between the same countries in 1999 (Beare, 1999), namely \$35,000. Trafficking costs between the Ukraine and the UAE apparently also remained stable – at \$7,000 – for an even longer period of time, between 1999 (Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights, 1999) and 2003 (Hughes, 2002).

Asia to Asia

Turning to movements within Asia, there are 22 documented cases of women trafficked from Thailand to Japan. In the early 1990s, they incurred a debt of \$19,348 (Beare, 1999). A rather anomalous figure, for 1993, in contrast recorded debt at only \$2,418 (Beare, 1999). Meanwhile in 2000 debt figures for the same route ranged anywhere from \$16,000 to \$43,000 (IOM, 2000), with an average debt of \$30,324. Although limited information restricts any conclusive analysis, prices on this route appear to be increasing through the 1990s.

Three cases of trafficking of young women from Myanmar to Thailand provide information for another route in this category. In 1997, a young girl from Myanmar was reported to have been trafficked and sold to a brothel in Thailand for \$5,000 (Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation, 2001). In 2000, trafficked women were sold for \$272-\$800 (Brown, 2000). In 2001, trafficked girls were sold for only \$50 (Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation, 2001). It seems unlikely that prices really decreased quite so drastically and presumably other factors such as the specifics of the journey account for these differences. The importance of factors other than the origin and destination country is examined in the next section.

Asia to Europe

For Asia to Europe, there are four documented journeys between Afghanistan and Germany. In 1996, migrants were reported to have paid \$8,962 (Migration Policy Group, 1996), while in 1998 one couple paid \$18,000 together (so \$9,000 each) (Juhasz, 1998). Migrants were reported to be paying between \$3,000 and \$5,000 in 1999 (Juhasz, 1999) and between \$5,000 and \$10,000 in 2000 (IOM, 2000). The range reported over the 1990s is therefore between \$3,000 and \$10,000, and again it is not clear whether this really represents changing costs over time or the influence of other intermediary factors.

Seven journeys from China to the UK provide the second case study for this inter-regional category. In 1997 migrants were reported to be paying \$30,000 to travel via Madrid (Migration Policy Group, 1997). In 1999, for one journey, migrants also paid \$30,000 (Migration Policy Group, 1999) and \$28,297 for another journey via Russia, Hungary, Austria, the Netherlands, and Belgium (Migration Policy Group, 1999). Payments are reported at \$35,000 to \$40,000 in 2000 (IOM, 2000), and in 2001 migrants smuggled to Dover via Yugoslavia (by air), Hungary (by car), Austria, France and then the Netherlands paid \$31,522 (Baggio and Asis, 2001). Finally, in 2002, migrants are reported to have paid \$29,975 (BBC News, 2002). Therefore from 1997-2002, the price for being smuggled between China and the UK remained consistently in the range \$30,000-\$40,000.

With six recorded journeys, movements from India to Poland comprise a third case study. In 1995, one smuggled migrant paid \$7,000 (Glabicka, 1998), while in 1996 another paid \$4,360 (Glabicka, 1998). In 1998, one migrant paid \$685 (Glabicka, 1998), a second \$6,540 (Glabicka, 1998) and a third only \$85 (Glabicka, 1998). In 2000, a migrant travelling from Gujarat who intended to continue on to Germany after arriving in Poland paid \$3,100 (IOM, 2000). It seems reasonable to assume that the price of \$85 is anomalous, and if that is ignored the impression is that over the 1990s costs for this particular route may have decreased.

In addition to the above cost trends for smuggling between Asia and Europe, it is also possible to draw some preliminary conclusions from the data about the costs of trafficking in the same direction. In 1995 women trafficked from Thailand to Germany paid \$4,000 (Beare, 1999), whereas in 1999 they paid between \$1,659 and \$2,213 (Beare,

1999). Indebtedness for those trafficked between Thailand and the UK was far higher, but also appears to have reduced over time: it was reported at \$23,720 in 1997 (Metropolitan Police Service of London, 1997), and \$15,761 in 2000 (Kelly and Regan, 2000).

Africa to Europe

The only smuggling route in this category that is reported over time and thus permits longitudinal analysis is Morocco to Spain, with four recorded journeys. Smuggled migrants were reported to have paid \$415-\$830 in 1998 (Heikkinen and Lohrmann, 1998), while in 1999 Moroccan and other North African migrants travelling by boat paid \$412-\$480 (Migration Policy Group, 1999). Costs reported for 2001 range between \$500 (National Foreign Intelligence Board, US, 2001) and \$1,047-\$3,490 depending on the boat size and number of passengers (Migration Policy Group, 2001). The implication is that from 1998-2001 the price for smuggling migrants between Morocco and Spain increased.

There is at least a two year gap for documented trafficking costs between Nigeria to Italy, but the range is enormous: a person trafficked into prostitution was sold for \$2,924 in 1997 (Migration Policy Group, 1997), whereas in 1999 women trafficked into prostitution were sold for between \$9,000 and \$30,000 (Richard, 1999).

The Americas to the Americas

With six documented cases, journeys from Mexico to the US represent the most significant documented movements for this inter-regional category. For this route, smuggled migrants were reported to have paid \$150 in 1996 (University of Trento, 1996), and \$200-\$300 in 1997 (University of Cambridge, 1997). A female Chinese migrant apparently paid \$300 for her journey in 1999 (Chin and Massey, 2000). In 2000, migrants going to Los Angeles paid between \$200 and \$400 (IOM, 2000), and in 2001 migrants paid \$200 to travel via the Arizona border (Maler and Paige, 2001). The overall trend appears to be towards a slight increase in costs over time.

With two recorded journeys, movements from Central America to the US comprise the second major route in this category. For this route, migrants paid \$200-\$300 in 1996 (University of Trento, 1996), whereas in May 2001 migrants paid \$1,500-\$9,000 to travel to Phoenix, Arizona (Maler and Paige, 2001). Part of the explanation for this wide price range may be that costs vary between specific origins and destinations in Central America and the US. Nevertheless, the overall trend for costs of movement between these two regions appears to have been upwards between 1996 and 2001.

Europe to Europe

With three documented journeys, movements from Hungary to Germany demonstrate no clear cost trend. In 1997, Sri Lankan migrants paid \$800 (Ruggiero, 1997) to travel this route; in 1999 migrants apparently paid \$1,300 (Juhasz, 1999) and \$800 again in 2001 (Tass, 2001).

Five journeys from Turkey to Greece provide a second case study. There are two recorded costs for this route in 2000 - \$1,400 (IOM, 2000) and \$1,488 (Migration Policy Group, 2000). One figure for 2002 suggests that migrants paid \$1,500 (Jones, 2002), and another that they paid \$500-\$1,750 to travel by land (Jones, 2002). Lastly, in 2003, migrants apparently paid \$1,000 to travel by boat (IOM, 2003). Costs thus appear to have been fairly consistent over time, and interestingly, there is no clear difference in costs for different modes of transport.

Similarly, documented movements from Turkey to the UK demonstrate consistency over time. Smuggled migrants apparently paid between \$2,491 and \$4,982 in 1994 (Migration Policy Group, 1994), and \$2,000 and \$3,000 in 2002, travelling part of the way by boat (Icduygu and Toktas, 2002). At the same time another documented price for 2002 is \$8,000 (Icduygu and Toktas, 2002).

What are the main determinants of cost?

Overall analysis of the data collected for this research indicate that there are five main determinants of the costs of smuggling and trafficking: distance travelled; the mode of transport; the number and characteristics of people being moved, and a set of less easily categorised particular circumstantial conditions.

Distance

In order to examine the significance of distance, 50 journeys were selected for closer analysis. These journeys were chosen as a representative sample of the total number of journeys because they embody the most commonly occurring routes and associated costs used for analysis in this paper. Most of the routes reported were between countries, but in order to allow specific mileages to be calculated it has been assumed that travel was between the two capital cities, unless cities have been specified.

Table Two shows the routes chosen for this analysis sorted by highest to lowest number of miles for each journey with cost per mile calculated for each journey. Overall, the entries in the table demonstrate fairly clearly that costs increase with distance. There are, inevitably, some important exceptions. The longest journey recorded – at 9289 miles - is between Turkey and Australia; but the most expensive - at \$40,000 – is between China and the US (Kyle and Liang, 2001), for a distance of about 6,600 miles. Another journey

for which the cost is out of proportion with distance covered is between Sri Lanka and the UK, documented at \$36,433 (Morrison, 1998). It is also interesting to contrast the cost of \$2,500 for a journey of 1,557 miles between Turkey and the UK.

Table Two A comparison of smuggling costs with distance (50 selected incidents)

Route	Distance (miles)	Cost (USD)	Cost per Mile (USD)
Turkey-Australia	9,289	12,000	1.29
Sri Lanka-Canada	8,713	17,784	2.04
Pakistan-US	8,355	25,000	2.99
India-US	7,978	25,000	3.13
China-New York	7,613	22,500	2.96
China-US	6,626	40,000	6.04
Iran-Canada	6,156	10,000	1.62
China-UK	5,906	29,975	5.08
China-Dover	5,839	20,000	3.43
China-Italy	5,794	14,000	2.42
Colombo-London	5,431	36,433	6.71
Turkey-US	5,301	15,000	2.83
Dominican Republic-Vienna	5,101	5,000	0.98
China-Poland	5,100	12,000	2.35
Sri Lanka-Germany	5,024	8,321	1.66
China-Australia	4,686	26,021	5.55
Somalia-UK	4,301	5,000	1.16
Pakistan-UK	3,930	22,932	5.84
Kinshasa-Belgium	3,860	4,722	1.22
Pakistan-Germany	3,543	3,000	0.85
Cameroon-Poland	3,337	2,500	0.75
India-Poland	3,262	6,540	2.00
Afghanistan-Germany	3,188	7,500	2.35
Pakistan-Poland	3,057	2,598	0.85
Nigeria-Poland	3,031	3,000	0.99
Thailand-Japan	2,860	4,232	1.48
Afghanistan-Poland	2,653	3,200	1.21
Pakistan-Ukraine	2,630	1,000	0.38
Afghanistan-Ukraine	2,228	350	0.16
Iraq-Poland	1,767	5,000	2.83
Lebanon-Germany	1,763	7,500	4.25
Istanbul-UK	1,557	2,500	1.61
Mexico-US	1,555	250	0.16
Philippines-Malaysia	1,535	3,500	2.28
Iraq-Ukraine	1,386	850	0.61
Istanbul-Brussels	1,358	2,500	1.84
Kosovo-UK	1,111	2,225	2.00

Van-Istanbul	750	55	0.07
Beirut-Greece	718	3,000	4.18
Moscow-Poland	704	2,000	2.84
Romania-Poland	612	2,000	3.27
Zimbabwe-South Africa	606	500	0.83
Hungary-Germany	520	800	1.54
Iran-Van	520	100	0.19
Albania-Italy	375	699	1.86
Turkey-Greece	349	1,000	2.87
Talinn-Stockholm	238	2,500	10.50
Cuba-Florida	228	1,750	7.68
Morocco-Spain	38	446	11.74
Poland-Germany	0.2	28	140.00

Poland to Germany represents the route with the smallest distance at 0.2 miles across the Neisse River (which forms a border between the two countries) and the lowest cost of \$28 (IOM, 2000). There are similarly, however, anomalies at this end of the spectrum too. For example, for two journeys of about 500 miles, one from Hungary to Germany (Tass, 2001), and another from Iran to Van, Turkey (Icduygu and Toktas, 2002), a price difference of \$700 is reported. Particularly expensive short journeys are recorded for Tallinn to Stockholm at \$2,500 (Tass, 2001) for only 238 miles, and Cuba to Florida at \$1,750 (Migration Policy Group, 2000) for 228 miles. In contrast, most journeys under 600 miles cost \$1,000 or less.

Mode of transport

It is surprising how few documented cases of smuggling or trafficking report the mode of transport. One example is for smuggling between Pakistan and the UK. For this route migrants were reported to be paying \$6,794 in 2003 to travel by air to a transit country such as Russia or Turkey and then overland; as compared with \$22,082-\$23,781 to travel directly by air (Koser, 2003).

In contrast, cost differentials for different modes of transport between China and the US are far less significant. In 1991, for example, air travel apparently cost \$29,708 and sea travel \$27,250. In 1992, air travel from China to the US cost \$30,166 and sea travel \$27,958 (Chin and Massey, 2000). From this specific time period, it can be asserted that air travel cost more than sea travel during these two years, although the difference is fairly negligible.

Number and characteristics of travelers

It also appears that the number of people travelling at any one time can influence costs. In one case where migrants travelled from Morocco to Spain by boat, not only was the

number of passengers a cost determinant but the boat size affected the price of the journey as well, resulting in a price range of \$1,047-\$3,490 (Migration Policy Group, 2001). There is some indication that the total cost for moving families or groups of people together is proportionally lower than individual costs. In one instance a family of five travelling from Afghanistan to Germany paid \$29,873, whereas individuals travelling the same route in the same year paid \$8,962 per person (Migration Policy Group, 1996).

Who specifically is travelling also appears to make a difference to price, and in particular there is a contrast in costs for adults and children. In the case of a group of mostly Kurdish and seven Bangladeshi migrants travelling from Beirut to Greece by boat, adults paid \$3,000 each while children were charged only half as much at \$1,500 (Migration Policy Group, 1999). Similarly, a group of mostly Kurdish and some Afghan migrants travelling from Turkey to Italy by boat were charged \$1,190-\$2,381 per adult and \$595 per child (Migration Policy Group, 2000). Unfortunately there is simply insufficient data to assess whether there are gender differentials in smuggling and trafficking costs. There is one reported case where only women were smuggled from China to the US and paid \$20,000 each for the journey (Chin and Massey, 2000), which is significantly less than most other journeys cost for this route.

Although on the whole all the determinants covered in this section appear to apply to smuggling and trafficking, some factors can be specifically attributed to trafficking. In particular, criteria such as age and sexual 'status' apply to women trafficked for prostitution in determining how much they are sold for or what debts they acquire. For example, women trafficked from Albania to Greece and Italy were sold for \$1,000, with 'underage virgins' selling for as much as \$10,000 (Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights, 1999). In another case, women trafficked into prostitution from Nigeria to Italy sold for \$9,000-\$30,000 depending on their 'physical attributes' (Richard, 1999).

Other circumstantial factors

Unsurprisingly, costs appear to increase when the services offered by smugglers exceed simply transportation. One example is where travel documents are provided. For one journey from Istanbul to Brussels, for example, migrants paid \$2,500 for the trip and \$600-\$700 extra if they required a visa (IOM, 2003). For one woman travelling from China to the UK, the fee of \$28,297 included a false passport (Migration Policy Group, 1999). Women travelling between Korea and the US paid \$15,000 for a package including the airline ticket, a tourist visa, and a referral to a brothel owner (DeStefano, 2001). Finally, a woman trafficked from Myanmar to Thailand paid \$243 to cover the cost of travel, agent fees and police bribes (Beare, 1999).

Besides documents, other material costs can also be figured into price calculations. From Afghanistan to Western Europe, for example, migrants paid \$14,000 for a journey that included food (Okolski, 1999). In contrast, for another journey made from Afghanistan to Russia, migrants paid \$1,000, a price that did not include food (Okolski, 1999). Another material, non-document related cost is physical assistance of migrants by

smugglers. For example, migrants smuggled from Poland to Germany across the Neisse River paid \$28 simply to be escorted to the river bank in Poland, or \$56-\$83 to be physically assisted across the river (IOM, 2000). Although other examples of material costs are not documented in this study, factors like places provided for migrants to stay while travelling are other possible cost determinants. Finally, the cost of smuggling and trafficking can involve other journey-related, non-material costs. For instance, migrants smuggled from Guinea Bissau and Rwanda paid a Moroccan gang \$175 to take them to Melilla and give them advice on how to avoid repatriation if arrested (Migration Policy Group, 1996).

Conclusion

Bringing together analysis of over 500 scattered sources, this paper has tried to examine the costs of human smuggling and trafficking. It has identified approximate mean costs for the main inter-regional movements around the world, trends in those costs and some of their main determinants. The analysis here cannot be considered conclusive. There are sources that have not been covered, and new empirical data is emerging on an almost daily basis. And there are important methodological and analytical reservations which must always be borne in mind.

This criticism could be turned back onto the authors of many of the sources that have been addressed. While fully acknowledging the difficulties of researching human smuggling and trafficking, a disappointing lack of rigour in the reporting of much of the research covered here has to be highlighted. There really is very little point in providing information for routes between regions as broad as Asia and Europe. Often costs are presented without specifying when travel took place, and what the particular circumstances of travel were. Overall there appears to be a lack of critical engagement with sources of information. More scientific rigour would go a long way towards demystifying the phenomena of human smuggling and trafficking, combating media and popular misconceptions, properly informing policy-making and opening up this important field to further academic study.

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