

A Survey Study on the Profile of Human Smugglers in Turkey

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Abstract

Illegal migration is an impalpable phenomenon with complicated dimensions. Thousands of people leave their homelands every year due to a number of reasons such as civil wars, terrorism, economic difficulties, and social oppressions. With their flexible modus operandi, migrant smugglers benefit from individuals or groups that wish to immigrate for a more comfortable life. In order to reach a complete perception of illegal migration one needs to draw an accurate profile of migrant smugglers. At this end, data collection from both smugglers as perpetrators and illegal migrants as the object of the smuggling process provides important information for a holistic definition of “smugglers”. In this study researchers interviewed 262 illegal migrants and 174 smugglers captured in Istanbul from 2007 to 2013 in order to identify and develop a profile of migrant smugglers and understand the operating methods of illegal migration organizations. The collected data were analyzed and important results on illegal migrant smugglers were reached.

Keywords

Irregular Migration, Irregular Migrant, Migrant Smuggling, Migrant Smugglers

1. Introduction

There are a number of occasions in the world (i.e. economic inequality, unsafe environment, political instability, and terrorism) that lead people to migrate in order to have better living conditions or only to save and maintain their lives. Following the collapse of the USSR, new nation-states were established in Eurasia. Due to the poor economic and political standards in these countries, their citizens caused migration flows towards western European countries. In addition, many Asians and Africans migrate legally or illegally to developed countries with

high standards in order to have better life conditions. Within this concept, illegal or irregular migration can be defined as “migration movements which are not consistent with the regulations and laws of transit and hosting countries” (IOM, 2009: p. 15).

Since economic problems and social matters such as starvation, wars, terrorism and strict custom practices have not been permanently and globally solved yet, migration remains a significant problem which organized crime syndicates exploit and target “helpless migrants”. People who want to enter the US and western European countries through illegal ways pay high amounts of money which provides organized crime syndicates to gain high levels of financial profits (Roth, 2010: p. 18).

The aim of this study is to draw a profile of smugglers, and determine their behaviors towards migrants, their socio-demographical characteristics and perspectives about illegal migration.

2. Literature Review on Migrant Smugglers

Since they do not possess detailed knowledge about the migration process, illegal migrants cannot provide comprehensive information about smugglers (Neske, 2006: p. 130). In addition, migrants from different backgrounds could have different perceptions of smugglers (Webb & Burrows, 2009). At this end, illegal migrants’ views on smugglers would partially be helpful in profiling migrant smugglers. With regard to nature of crime, the relationship between smugglers and migrants is different from that between criminals and their victims (Van Liempt & Doomernik, 2006). A research indicates that there is a relation between smugglers and migrants, which is completely commercial and based on trust (Batsyukova, 2012). In various studies migrant smugglers describe themselves as “service providers” than criminals (Staring, 2003; Zhang, Chin, & Miller, 2007; Soudijn & Kleemans, 2009). The 2010 report published by the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) states that some of the migrant smugglers illegally took African pregnant women to Spain or France to help them for free birth (UNODC, 2010).

The current literature includes a considerable number of studies focusing illegal migrants. Researches on migrant smugglers on the other hand seem to be relatively fewer. Soudjin (2006) examined 88 cases involving 172 individuals who committed migrant smuggling and found that 13% of migrant smugglers were females and all migrant smugglers had significant roles in international migration organizations. Among 172 migrant smugglers, 22 were organizers, 88 carriers, 2 fake passport providers, 3 public servants and 43 suppliers.

Zhang & Chin (2002) carried out a study with a sample of 129 migrant smugglers. They found that the original occupations of the migrant smugglers were ordinary professions such as restaurant owners, barbers and waiters (while some of them were unemployed). The majority of them was between 30 and 40 years and had a high school education. Their common desire was to earn more money. In their subsequent study, Zhang & Chin (2004) concluded that migrant smugglers had very different occupational backgrounds (specifically 70 distinct occupations), including housewives, tailors, taxi drivers, etc. The findings of the study revealed that smugglers were mostly men (82%) with university education (90%), married (78%), and in their thirties (79%). In addition, 64% of the smugglers had been in the US since 1993 or before, 63% entered the country legally, and more than two-thirds were either US citizens or “Green Card” holders. Nearly all of the smugglers (92%) stated that their motivation was to earn money.

Webb and Burrows (2006) analyzed the relation between smugglers and migrants, therefore interviewed 45 smugglers in the UK prisons. 85% of the smugglers were men, average age was 35, and most of them were from Albania and the UK. There were also smugglers from China, Southeast Asia, former Soviet countries, India and Africa. According to the findings of the study, 72% of the smugglers stated that their motivation was all of a humanitarian reason, as assisting people in their attempt to stay in the UK. All participants of the sample were ordinary working people such as tourism agency workers or market employees. Another study carried out in Italy (Pastore, Monzini, & Sciortino, 2006) proved that smugglers have ordinary occupations. Almost all of them were Italian and involved in other types of smuggling activities, too. In addition, this study showed that migrant smugglers had extensive knowledge on border security, residing of foreigners and work permits. Hamood (2006) stated that some corrupt white collar employees were also found helping migrant smugglers.

A study on migrant smuggling in Africa (Horwood, 2009) indicates that the ages of migrant smugglers vary from 18 to 40. They were mostly male Somalians or Ethiopians. UNODC reports that Indian migrant smugglers were mostly between 31 and 50 ages and were residing in luxury neighborhoods of the city. They became smugglers because of such economic advantages (UNODC, 2011).

A research on organized crime depicts that migrant smugglers prefer to employ safe houses. Organized crime groups realize that illegal migration through false passports is among mafia organizations (Leman & Janssens, 2006). İçduygu & Toktaş (2002) concluded that Turkish migrant smugglers describe their illegal activities as an ordinary occupation like medicine or engineering which are regular parts of economy and daily life. In another study carried out in France (Courau, 2003), it was found that migrant smugglers are part of mafia-like organizations and they were based in England while their organization had branches in Afghanistan, Albania, Iran and Iraq.

Narli (2006) collected data in Istanbul for eighteen months and one of her significant findings is that migrant smugglers are in cooperation with both crime organizations and terrorist groups. Similarly, Çınar (2010) concluded that one of such terrorist groups in Turkey, PKK, is in close cooperation with migrant smuggling organizations and that migrants are forced to be a member of the terrorist group to increase financial support. A report of the UNODC (2011) stated that some of the migrant smugglers in Africa were the former intelligence agents and policemen. It was further indicated that some of them owned small-scale enterprises. There were also those who were involved in other types of smuggling activities and those who were part of terrorist organizations.

Migrant smugglers earn high levels of income due to their activities. This income may become much higher because of tightened border controls, additional security measures and other interventions of the states against migrant smuggling (Cornelius, 2005; Lee, 2005).

3. Methodology

The primary data of the study were collected through interviews and questionnaires applied to 174 migrant smugglers who were detained from 2007 to 2013 in Istanbul and 262 illegal migrants (Pakistanis, Afghans and Bangladeshis) who were arrested in June-August 2008 in the same city. The data gathered from these two groups (smugglers and migrants) provides mutual and supplemental information for the study. In addition, a questionnaire was applied to these 262 migrants. 13 items in the questionnaire were determined based on literature review. Before questionnaire, we interviewed all migrants to understand their background. While applying questionnaires to migrants and during interviews with both smugglers and migrants, six interpreters were used. There were no female participants.

4. Findings

Table 1 indicates that 66.8% of the participants (175 individuals) migrated illegally due to economic reasons, 17.6% (46 individuals) due to security reasons and 15.6% (41 individuals) due to both reasons. The motivation of illegal migrants was found to vary. While 26% (68 individuals) decided to migrate illegally due to their contacts in foreign countries (it becomes 34.1% (89 individuals) when their contacts include friends and relatives in foreign countries) on one hand, 23.3% (61 individuals) on the other decided to migrate illegally with regard to their friends in home countries. It was also found that 17.9% (47 individuals) were motivated to migrate illegally by their spouses. Media was also found to be a source of motivation of 18 illegal migrants. When it comes to entrance to Turkey, 85.5% of illegal migrants (224 individuals) entered from mountains in the eastern border of the country and 14.1% (37 individuals) entered by sea.

Table 2 indicates that more than half of the migrants (66%; 173 individuals) made contacts with smugglers in their native countries and three-fourth of them (76.3%; 200 individuals) made agreements for illegal migration for an amount of more than \$5000. The mean amount for such agreements is found to be \$7107.44 ± \$2778.58¹. It was also found that 90.8% (238 individuals) gave smugglers more than \$1000 in the names of guarantee money, deposit or agreement money. The participants were found to pay either no money or a maximum of \$10,000. The mean amount paid was \$3070.03 ± \$1353.18. Having asked that how they paid the smugglers, it was found that 33.6% of the participants (88 individuals) gave their previously saved money, 26% (68 individuals) got into debt and 22.5% (59 individuals) sold their properties.

With regard to the behavior of human smugglers, 62 of the illegal migrants reported that they remained under heavy pressure from the smugglers in different aspects. For instance 75.8% of migrants (47 individuals) stated that the smugglers exhorted them to say they were from 'Mauritania or Burma if they would be arrested by Turkish security officials. The participants also stated that they got to know four (31.3%; 82 individuals) or five smugglers (34%; 89 individuals) during migration.

¹Illegal migrants reported that they signed an agreement in this process.

Table 1. Findings collected from illegal migrants.

Reason for migration	n	%
Safety	46	17.6
Economic reasons	175	66.8
Both safety and economic reasons	41	15.6
Total	262	100.0
Trigger for migration	n	%
Friends in home country	61	23.3
Partner	47	17.9
Friends in foreign countries	68	26.0
Relatives in home country	20	7.6
Friends in home country	3	1.1
Media	18	6.9
Friends in foreign country	13	5.0
Relatives in foreign country	8	3.1
Himself	24	9.2
Total	262	100.0
Ways to enter to Turkey	n	%
From mountains illegally	224	85.5
Border crossing	1	0.4
From sea illegally	37	14.1
Total	262	100.0

Views on illegal migration.

According to **Table 3**, illegal migrants described smugglers as aggressive and rude (35.9%; 94 individuals), violent (31.7%; 83 individuals), expert (13%; 34 individuals), in panic (9.5%; 25 individuals), and well-meant (9.5%; 25 individuals). They described those smugglers that helped them in entering the borders and in their trip as aggressive and rude (53.1%; 139 individuals), no description (35.5%; 94 individuals) and physically violent (11.1%; 29 individuals).

Majority of the illegal migrants reported their fear of dying in their attempt to migrate (95%; 249 individuals). 113 illegal migrants among them (45.4%) were threatened or experienced physical violence when they wanted to return to their country whereas 68 (27.3%) of them did not think about returning since they thought they had nothing to lose. Concerning future plans, 143 illegal migrants (54.6%) reported that they would find a job in the host country through their friends. There were also those who would find a job through their own attempts (16% (42 individuals)) and through migrant smugglers (15.3%; 40 individuals).

All migrant smugglers, detained by the police are male. In terms of age, 41.4% (72 individuals) of the smugglers are from 30 to 39 years old, while 30.5% (53 individuals) are from 19 to 29 years. Only seven migrant smugglers (4%) were under 18 years. Nearly three fourths of them were married (72.4%). Considering educational background, 91.4% of the smugglers (159 individuals) had primary school education or illiterate (**Table 4**).

As seen in **Table 5**, 75.3% of the migrant smugglers (131 individuals) were unemployed, while 20.7% (36 individuals) were self-employed. Only 4% of them (7 individuals) reported their original occupation as smugglers. Having asked the reasons for working in “human smuggling business”, participants fiercely responded that migrant smuggling was the “Easy way to earn money” (74.7%; 130 individuals). With regard to learning smuggling as a profession, 69.5% of the migrant smugglers (121 individuals) reported that they learned it from their friends, while 8% of them (14 individuals) began smuggling due to their own migration experience.

Table 6 depicts the criminal backgrounds of the smugglers in Turkey. 53.4% of the human smugglers (93 individuals) had criminal records in Turkey. At this end, 22.4% (39 individuals) were arrested due to human smuggling, 9.2% (16 individuals) were arrested for opposition to Turkish Law No. 6136 (Firearms, Knives and Other Similar Objects), and 8% (14 individuals) were arrested for ordinary crimes.

Table 2. Relations between illegal migrants and migrant smugglers.

Contact with migrant smugglers	n	%
Through friends	173	66.0
Himself	33	12.6
Through relatives	56	21.4
Total	262	100.0
Amount contracted with migrant smugglers	n	%
\$5000 or less	62	23.7
\$5001 or more	200	76.3
Total	262	100.0
M ± SD	7107.44 ± 2778.58	
Amount paid to migrant smugglers	n	%
\$1000 or less	24	9.2
\$1001 or more	238	90.8
Total	262	100.0
M ± SD	3070.03 ± 1353.18	
Source of money	n	%
Saved money	88	33.6
Money from real estate sold	59	22.5
Relatives in foreign countries	7	2.7
Debt	68	26.0
Family	15	5.7
Relatives in home country	6	2.3
Friends in foreign country	3	1.1
Bank loans	16	6.1
Total	262	100.0
Suggestions by migrant smugglers	n	%
They suggested migrants that they should say they were from Mauritania or Burma	47	75.8
They suggested migrants that they did not know smugglers	9	14.5
They suggested migrants that they should say they were from East Turkestan	6	9.7
Total	62	100.0
Number of migrant smugglers	n	%
1	3	1.1
2	9	3.4
3	35	13.4
4	82	31.3
5	89	34.0
6	31	11.8
7	13	5.0
Total	262	100.0

Table 3. Relationship between illegal migrants and migrant smugglers 2.

Behaviour of migrant smugglers	n	%
Expert	34	13.0
In panic	25	9.5
Violent	83	31.7
Aggressive and rude	94	35.9
Well-meant	25	9.5
Undecided	1	0.4
Total	262	100.0
Behaviour of migrant smugglers in the migration	n	%
Aggressive and rude	139	53.1
Physical violence	29	11.1
No comment	94	35.9
Total	262	100.0
Fear of dying	n	%
Yes	249	95.0
Smugglers threatened or beat	113	45.4
They thought that they had nothing to lose	68	27.3
To avoid it they paid money	35	14.1
They did not know the way	29	11.6
Both to avoid it they paid money and they did not know the way	4	1.6
No	13	5.0
Person who would find them a job in the foreign country	n	%
Friend	143	54.6
Himself	42	16.0
Relative	37	14.1
Smuggler	40	15.3
Total	262	100.0

Table 4. Findings obtained from migrant smugglers.

Age range	n	%
11 - 18 years	7	4
19 - 29 years	53	30.5
30 - 39 years	72	41.4
40 - 49 years	29	16.6
50+ years	13	7.5
Total	174	100.0
Marital status	n	%
Married	126	72.4
Single	48	27.6
Total	174	100.0
Educational background	n	%
Illiterate	46	26.5
Primary school	113	64.9
High school	15	8.6
Total	174	100.0

Personal characteristics of migrant smugglers sampled.

Table 5. Information about migration motivates.

Occupation	n	%
Unemployed	131	75.3
Self-employed	36	20.7
Smuggler	7	4
Total	174	100.0
Reasons for smuggling	n	%
Easy way to earn money	130	74.7
Additional income	7	4
Unemployment	33	19
Being deceived	4	2,4
Total	174	100.0
Whom they learned smuggling	n	%
From his own experience	14	8
Friends	121	69.5
Relatives	37	21.3
Bosses	2	1.2
Total	174	100.0

Table 6. Criminal background of smugglers.

Prior criminal record	n	%
Yes	93	53.4
No	81	46.6
Total	174	100.0
Criminal type	n	%
Migrant smuggling	39	22.4
Narcotic	6	3.4
Opposition to fire-arms law	16	9.2
Ordinary crimes	14	8
Theft and fraud	10	5.7
Sexual offenses	5	2.9
Terrorist offenses	3	1.7
No criminal record	81	46.7
Total	174	100.0

Concerning how the migrant smugglers were arrested, **Table 7** provides necessary information. It was found that 30.5% of the smugglers (53 individuals) were apprehended after their houses were searched by police and 28.2% (49 individuals) were arrested when their storehouses were similarly raided by security forces. In addition, 24.1% (42 individuals) were arrested while they were providing logistic support to migrants. There were also some smugglers who were caught in the act. For instance, 9.2% (16 individuals) were arrested together with illegal migrants in the vehicles, while 8% (14 individuals) were arrested while driving a vehicle full of illegal migrants. Moreover, 3.4% (6 individuals) were detained together with illegal migrants while transferring them to departure points.

With regard to the number of people who were arrested with the human smugglers, it was found that respectively 24.7% (43 individuals) were arrested with 5 to 10 people. 31% (54 individuals) were arrested with 3 - 5 people, 21.8% (38 individuals) were arrested with 2 people, 7.5% (13 individuals) were arrested with more than

10 people and only 14.9% (26 individuals) were arrested alone.

When asked whether human smuggling and illegal migration are crimes or not, 50% of the migrant smugglers (87 individuals) stated that it was not a criminal offense. With regard to experience in human smuggling, 77.6% of them (135 individuals) were found to be in the “business” for more than three years. Concerning nationality of the human smugglers, the following findings were found: 81.6% (142 individuals) were Turks, 6.3% Pakistanis (11 individuals), 5.2% Iraqis (9 individuals), 3.4% Afghans (6 individuals) and 3.4% Iranians (6 individuals) (Table 8).

Table 7. Information about smuggling process.

Type of Arrestment	n	%
Driver	14	8
Companion and escort vehicle	16	9.2
At Their Residences	53	30.5
At The Storehouses	49	28.2
Logistical support	42	24.1
Total	174	100.0
How many people were captured with them	n	%
Only himself	26	14.9
2 persons	38	21.8
3 - 5 persons	54	31
5 - 10 persons	43	24.7
10+	13	7.5
Total	174	100.0

Table 8. Smuggling background.

Is migrant smuggling a crime	n	%
Yes	51	29.3
No	87	50
Undecided	36	20.7
Total	174	100.0
Smuggling experience	n	%
1 year	15	8.6
2 years	24	13.8
3 years	43	24.7
4 years	47	27
5+ years	45	25.9
Total	174	100.0
Nationality	n	%
Turkish	142	81.6
Pakistan	11	6.3
Afghan	6	3.4
Iraqi	9	5.2
Iranian	6	3.4
Total	174	100.0

5. Discussion

According to the current literature, data based only on illegal migrants would not be enough to yield up a complete picture of human smuggling. Although illegal migrants are connected with human smugglers in terms of their social network, their cultural backgrounds are somewhat different (Neske, 2006: p. 130; Webb & Burrows, 2009: p. 8). Therefore, the data of the study were collected from both groups through direct questions. This helped us to reach a bunch of supplemental and necessary information.

In the current study, it was found that 67.6% of illegal migrants (177 individuals) described the migrant smugglers as violent, aggressive and rude. The same description was reported by 64.2% of illegal migrants (168 individuals) for the human smugglers who traveled with them throughout the migration process. It is also significant in the present study that 95% of illegal migrants (249 individuals) experienced fear of dying during their travel and 45.4% (113 individuals) of them reported that they could not return due to threats and physical violence of the human smugglers during their journey. These findings suggest that illegal migration is in fact a very dangerous and physically violent process. Unlike Van Liempt & Doomernik (2006), present study reveals that the relation between the smugglers and the migrants is as violent as a criminal offense.

Most studies conclude that human smugglers do not describe themselves as criminals, but rather as “humanitarian assistants” or “service providers” (Staring, 2003; Zhang et al., 2007; Soudijn & Kleemans, 2009). The current study’s finding that 50% of human smugglers (87 individuals) did not perceive illegal migration as a crime is similar to those previous studies’ findings. Moreover human smugglers’ description of themselves as a “service provider” also indicates their attempts to legitimate their activity. In addition, there were human smugglers who had been “running the business” for more than three years (77.6%;135 individuals). Since they were in this activity for a long time, smugglers seemed to internalize the activity and become professionals. At this point, 4% (7 individuals) described their occupation as “smugglers” as if it was their official profession.

Differential Reinforcement Theory argues that if people have more positive concepts about an act, the potentiality to do this act increases (Siegel, 1989). Sutherland’s *Differential Combination Theory* on the other hand states that migration might be learned through behavior. People may learn illegal migration only through engaging in crime and knowing illegally migrated people (Sever, 2012). Migration can be described as a learnable and teachable fact, not a self-recognized fact from social learning process approach. In this approach, friends may display role model in the learning process. For instance, peer groups may act as an information source or model in migration activities (İçli, 2007: p. 122-123). In a similar vein, the current study revealed that 69.5% of migrant smugglers (121 individuals) learned migrant smuggling from their friends. Therefore, it can be argued that human smuggling is related to social learning theory and differential combinations theory and that it is committed through learning. Similarly 8% of human smugglers (14 individuals) reported that they began to take part in this activity due to their own experience of illegal migration indicating the role of learning in this regard. The case was similar for the illegal migrants. More than half of them (54.6%; 143 individuals) stated that it was their friends who would find them a job in the host country. This indicates the relevance of social learning theory in migration and migrant smuggling. In addition, 15.3% of illegal migrants (40 individuals) have underlined that one of the most significant motives for illegal migration was job promises of human smugglers. In a similar way, some illegal migrants (6.9%) reported that they saw migration-related newspaper advertisements and these were very influential in their decision to migrate. In other words, human smugglers are making propaganda through promises to find people jobs. On the other hand, the other finding that supports the relevance of social learning theory in migration is that only 9.2% of illegal migrants decided to migrate themselves, but the remaining majority learned migration from their environment. Another support comes from the finding that 66% of the illegal migrants contacted human smugglers through their friends and 21.4% through their relatives.

According to the findings of the current study 41.4% of human smugglers were from 30 to 39 years old, 72.4% were married, and 94.1% had primary or lower education level. Therefore, personal characteristics of the human smugglers detained in Turkey are similar to those reported in previous studies in the literature. Moreover, every three out of four human smugglers arrested in Turkey were found to be unemployed (75.3%). On the other hand, 20.7% were self-employed and had ordinary jobs such as waiter or real estate agent. In short, it is safe to argue that human smugglers are ordinary people with ordinary lives. Also parallel to the studies in the contemporary literature, current study reveals that 74.7% of human smugglers had smuggled migrants to earn easy money. There are supportive findings that the amount of easy money earned from smuggling is attractive. Almost all migrant smugglers (97.7%) in the sample reported that they got involved in this “business” to raise their pecuniary benefits.

Although most of the human smugglers arrested in Istanbul were Turkish citizens (81.6%), there are also some from neighboring countries which brings us to the idea that migrant smuggling has to be considered as a transboundary and professionally organized activity. Soudijn (2006) explained that majority of human smugglers were arrested on the job. However, in the current study most of them were arrested in safe houses (79.4%) or in storehouses. At this end, it is clear that Turkish police is capable of effectively uncovering migrant smugglers' safe houses. Considering 63.3% of the migrant smugglers were arrested with at least three people, it is safe to say that human smugglers work in organized groups.

Based on the data from illegal migrants, it was found that the illegal migrants accompanied by the smugglers walked through mountainous terrains to pass the border lines in the eastern and southeastern regions of Turkey. Although Turkey has 8.333 km. of sea borders, only 14.1% of the human smugglers preferred the coastal lines to infiltrate their clients through Turkish borders. On the other hand, the land border of Turkey with its neighboring countries is about 2.875 km. long and 85.5% of the smugglers preferred to pass through these land borders. Most of the illegal migrants came across at least three human smugglers during their travel (95.5%). This shows that migrant smuggling is a transboundary and organized process, just as some other studies also revealed the necessity of organizational connections rather than individual ventures (Bolz, 1995; Myers, 1996; Kwong, 2001).

There are numerous descriptive studies about financial relationships between illegal migrants and human smugglers ((Kwong (1997); Skeldon (2000); Sobieszczyk (2000); Surtees (2003); Gao, (2004)). Zhang & Chin (2002) found that human smugglers rate basis is between 1.000 and 70.000 US dollars (the mean amount was 50.000 US dollars). It is also reported that there are human smuggling groups demanding 20.000 - 40.000 US dollars (Djajic & Vinogradova, 2013). The amount varies based on distance, host country and travel type. In the current study migrants were asked to pay high amounts of money to illegally migrate from their homelands to Greece. It was found that 76.3% of them accepted to pay 5000 US dollars or more. The illegal migrants stated that they signed contracts with the smugglers. Having asked that how they paid the smugglers, it was found that 33.6% paid with their previously saved money, 22.5% paid by selling their properties and 26% did not pay any amount but pledged that they would pay it after working in the host country. The latter finding implies that one fourth of illegal migrants kept their connection with the human smugglers in the post-migration period.

Human smugglers keep themselves updated and well-informed about social and legal regulations of the countries that are within the migration route. Pastore et al. (2006) state that human smugglers are very knowledgeable of laws and regulations on migration and border security. Similarly, in the present study it is found that human smugglers had advised illegal migrants about what to tell the security forces in case they were arrested. For instance, 75.8% of illegal migrants were advised to tell security forces that they were from Moritania or Myanmar, since these countries do not have official representatives (embassy, consulate etc.) in Turkey. In addition 9.7% of them were advised to tell that they were from East Turkistan (which is subject to jurisdiction of a different law in Turkey rather than the penal code) due to her consanguineous relations with Turkey. Accordingly, it is safe to say that human smugglers deliberately exploit the judicial system to avoid illegal migrants from being deported.

Some significant studies in the literature reveal that most of the migrant smugglers have criminal records not only on human smuggling but also for other smuggling kinds (Pastore, Monzini, & Sciortino (2006); İçduygu & Toktaş (2002)). In the current study it is found that 53.4% of the migrant smugglers had criminal records. In accordance with these records, it is found that 22.4% were arrested due to human smuggling previously. This indicates that 79th article of the Turkish Penal Code (No. 5237) which draws up "migrant smuggling" and its correction, is not deterrent enough.

Both some academic studies (Narlı (2006); Çınar (2010); Leman & Janssens (2006)) and reports of International Organizations (UNODC, 2011) refer to the relation between organized crime groups in smuggling business (migrant, weapon, narcotics, etc.) and terrorist organizations. In the current study, a similar finding was obtained in significant numbers. 27.5% (48 individuals) of the human smugglers have criminal records on terrorism, narcotic and human smuggling related organized crime offenses.

6. Conclusion

Illegal or irregular migration in the contemporary world is one of the most important social problems. In this study, we tried to reach a comprehensive understanding and a generic profile of migrant smugglers. With this regard, data collection from both smugglers as perpetrators and illegal migrants as the object of the smuggling

process provided us a holistic definition of “smugglers”. As a result of the information gathered, migrant smugglers in Turkey could be defined as mostly Turkish, dangerous, physically violent, rude and aggressive in behavior. They make a habit of migrant smuggling to earn their lives (considering the charm of easy money) and may have criminal records at this end. Moreover, they presume “migrant smuggling” as an ordinary job and part of the economy. Migrant smugglers are not simply amateurs that try to benefit from irregular migration. They are very well aware of legislation and regulations on migrant smuggling, irregular migration and border security that they advise their clients (illegal migrant) about exploitable legal loopholes in order to permanently reside or extend their durations of stay in the host country. With regard to learning smuggling as a profession, migrant smugglers generally learn the job from their friends. Therefore, it is possible to argue that migrant smuggling is related to social learning theory and differential combinations theory and it is one of the crimes that is learned. The findings of the study also provide the following information: almost half of the migrant smugglers in Turkey are 30 - 39 years old; three fourths are married and most of them have low levels of education. Coming to the organizational aspects, it must be stated that migrant smugglers constitute a transboundary and organized structure and work in groups to achieve their smuggling activities. They mostly prefer mountainous terrains to pass through border lines in the eastern and southeastern regions of Turkey. Depending on the distance to destination, migration policies of the host country and travel type, migrant smugglers earn an average of \$7107 per migrant.

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