

## **Critical approaches to the governance of migrant smuggling – a transdisciplinary debate**

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Over the past three decades, counter migrant smuggling measures have emerged as tools to stop unwanted mobility from the global majority world to the global minority world (Andreas 2011; Gazotti 2022; Mountz 2003; Okyere and Olayiwola 2023). The “war against smugglers” can be understood as part of a longer history of criminalizing certain forms of mobility that dates back to colonial attempts to govern undesirable movements (Gallien and Weigand 2022; Oldfield 2022).

The war against smugglers aligns with the migration- and crime control agendas of Minority World states (Russo and Stambøl 2022; Stambøl 2019). In this context, there has been significant policy “innovation” in state-led initiatives to curb migrant smuggling, including newsanctions mechanisms (Carrera et al. 2019), forms of police cooperation (Boyer and Chappart 2018) and capacity building (Jegen 2023; Robinson 2023), alongside the delegation of responsibility for migration control to non-state actors, and the establishment of high-level regional consultative processes in South East Asia (Kneebone and Missbach 2018) and West Africa (Jegen, forthcoming).

Scholars have illuminated the detrimental effects of the war on smuggling, pointing to how it undermines the global refugee regime (Morrison and Crosland 2001), endangers refugees and migrants (Tinti and Reitano 2018), criminalizes humanitarian assistance, solidarity (Fekete 2018; van Liempt 2022; Mainwaring and DeBono 2021), and migrants (Winkler and Mayr 2023). In the fight against migrant smuggling, the mobilization of human rights and humanitarian rationales serves to legitimize anti-smuggling efforts in the name of protecting the most vulnerable (Moreno-Lax 2018; Pallister-Wilkins 2015; Perkowski 2018), contributing to the securitization of human rights (Moreno-Lax 2018). Scholarship has asserted that these efforts reproduce the figure of the migrant as a helpless victim and the smuggler as an evil ‘villain’ (Andreas 2011; İçduygu 2021; Sanchez 2017). This binary framing reflects and reinforces state- and Eurocentric ideas about legitimate and illegitimate forms of mobility (Brachet 2018; Hüsken and Klute 2010).

While a substantial body of work, primarily in anthropology, has aimed to critically reframe and understand the practices of illegalized mobility facilitation (İçduygu 2021; Sanchez 2017; Sanchez and Achilli 2020), research on the *governance* of smuggling has often occurred in disciplinary silos spanning disciplines such as Criminology, International and European Law, Humanitarian Studies, Border Studies, Security Studies, Science and Technology Studies, Anthropology, and Global History. The aim of this workshop is to bridge these disciplinary divides and launch a transdisciplinary debate among critical approaches to the governance of migrant smuggling.

We invite contributions that consider:

- The contested legal and political construction of the figure of the smuggler/smuggled
- Historical approaches to migrant smuggling in the context of colonialism and Empires
- The role of International Organizations and non-state actors in governing migrant smuggling
- Technical expertise and technological intervention in the field of migrant smuggling
- Humanitarianism and migrant smuggling
- The criminalization of humanitarian assistance as smuggling for-profit
- Non-Eurocentric perspectives on the governance of facilitation of illegalized mobility

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