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STUDYING SMUGGLING

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Smuggling is an economic activity that is politically defined and socially embedded.[1] In its functional essence, smuggling is typically trade, anchored in the demand for certain products and the costs of their movement. At the same time, it is segmented from legal trade through laws, which are, along with their enforcement, deeply political, tied into processes of state-formation and demarcation, economic regulation and prohibition, and geopolitics and conflict. Unlike most trade, smuggling in its perception and study is also intimately tied to the figure of the 'smuggler' and the particular social space of the borderland in which they are imagined to operate – as a risk-taker, a broker, a hustler, a worker, a profiteer, a villain, or a local hero. Consequently, the study of smuggling always has attracted a range of disciplines: anthropology; geography; economics; sociology; history; law; and political science. Even so, it rarely has been genuinely multi-disciplinary. Discussions are frequently siloed along regional, disciplinary, and methodological lines that are connected insufficiently with each other. Frequently, smugglers appear not just on the geographic margins of states but on the margins of arguments that are primarily not about them and are imagined and framed to fit the respective assumptions, theories, and ideologies.[2]

This handbook is intended to work against these tendencies and toward what might be called 'smuggling studies.' Its aim is to bring diverse disciplinary perspectives on smuggling together in one place and in conversation with each other, to highlight themes that emerge across different areas: the complex relationships among smugglers, states, armed groups, and globalised markets; the role of and impact on borderland communities; the sometimes counterintuitive effects of conflict and 'anti-smuggling policies;' and the drivers of heterogeneous dynamics across goods and routes. It also seeks to reflect on the methods and politics that have shaped the study of smuggling and to outline pathways for future research and collaboration. First and foremost, it seeks to present the value of understanding smuggling by placing smuggling at the centre of a field of study, not casting it at the margins, merely as a policy implication or a bogeyman. The remainder of this introduction is split into two broader sections. The first summarises key observations in the study of smuggling, highlighting central themes around conceptions, routes, actors and regulation, while also tracing some of the key developments and fault-lines in this field of study itself. The second section then provides an overview of the purpose, perspective, and content of this volume.

Defining smuggling – in time and space

We define smuggling as the purposeful movement across a border in contravention to the relevant legal frameworks.[3] It should be clear from this that smuggling, as an activity and as a field of study, is fundamentally politically defined. Both the borders that make smuggling cross-border trade and the laws that make it illegal are social and political constructs. This of course means that the boundaries of smuggling are movable and embedded as much in the context of an activity than in the activity itself. Critically, they are conditional not just in space but also in time. As historical studies of cross-border trade have often highlighted, the same exchange of food and livestock between two settlements can over the years and without any variation in its practice change from a neighbourly exchange to legal international trade to smuggling.

As many contributions in this volume have highlighted (for example, Nugent; Andreas, in this volume), the history of smuggling, deeply entwined with the processes of border-making, colonialism, and the territorial expansion of states, is an excellent illustration of this dependency on politics. It highlights again the fundamental contextuality of the topic at hand, as different goods and trade corridors have been criminalised and decriminalised across history, while borders have been drawn, erased and re-drawn. While it is frequently referred to as the 'shadow' or 'dark side' of globalisation, trade or border making, a more historicised approach to smuggling takes away some of the perceived neutrality or inevitability of the dividing line between the legal processes and its 'underbelly.' It notes that what is today often taken self-evidently as 'global drug smuggling' would have been incomprehensible to an observer from 200 years ago, not just because the borders across which these goods move have changed, but because the very conception of 'drugs' as a particular set of criminalised medically harmful recreational substances is distinctly contemporary (see Porter and Hough, 1996).

Naturally, these processes of rule-making and boundary-making have not been shaped merely by geography, changing social norms and their legal codification, but also by political and commercial interests (see for example Durán-Martínez, in this volume). Here, the political drivers behind the historical geographical expansion of the nation-state and of empires have shaped critically the making of borders, the creation of borderlands and the construction of a global legal trade system. Smuggling today often happens across borders that were drawn by colonial powers through communities that remain closely connected (see for example Titeca, in this volume). As historical scholarship has often highlighted, the expansion of state and imperial structures has not demarcated only smuggling, but often not shied away from encouraging it or drawing on it where it was useful, from arms supplies to blockade busting to the opium wars (Andreas, 2014; Harvey, 2016). Opium in particular of course highlights the complex relationship among empire, economic interests, bureaucratic development, and the criminalisation of certain trades (Kim, 2020). It also fits into a wider picture, especially with a view to narcotics, that serves as a reminder that the colonial and imperial history of the making of smuggling both through border-making and the making of global rules of trade and consumption have been embedded deeply in unequal power structures and consequently have been racialised (Koram, 2019) and gendered starkly (Schuster, in this volume). As we note below, the politics of making smuggling – and making smugglers – still disproportionately affects communities not just at geographic but also political margins of the modern state system, from travellers to nomadic pastoral communities. This is especially true given how closely connected modern policy on smuggling is with language around 'poor governance,' 'weak states,' and 'under-development,' considering the power structures that have shaped its context necessarily unsettle common de-politicised conceptions of smuggling and anti-smuggling policy.

While the making of laws and of borders has shaped smuggling, smuggling can also do the same trick in reverse. As a range of contributions in this volume have highlighted, smuggling has actively shaped how borders and borderlands have developed. While Scott famously framed borderlands and their mobility as essential resistance against the 'last enclosure' of the state (2009), historians have frequently highlighted the ways in which border communities and smugglers have at times themselves contributed to shaping and legitimising border structures (Nugent, 2002 and in this volume). At the same time, smuggling has been connected to the rise of vast state enforcement apparatuses, both within countries and acrossborders. It has contributed to the justification of state and imperial expansion and contributed to the shape of modern bureaucracies and state structures (Andreas and Nadelmann, 2008), and influenced legislation, from tariffs to prohibition.

Naturally, none of these dynamics are merely historical: legislation around trade and taxation, prohibition and tariffs still are constantly evolving and re-shaping the barriers between legal and illegal trade. In the last few years, a legal global trade in cannabis products, long almost entirely limited to smuggling, has been developing again. Taxes and tariffs on different goods are constantly re-negotiated, and arguments around smuggling are still actively shaping lobbying efforts – for example around taxes on tobacco products (see Gallien, in this volume). While the past decades have seen fewer borders being re-drawn, customs unions and trade agreements are changing the boundaries and barriers of the global trade system, simultaneously accompanied by new trade infrastructure and industries of border fortification, shaped again, by discourses of smuggling and porosity (see Andreas, 2009; Andersson, 2014; Gazzotti in this volume).

As the politics and the violent history underlying the creation and maintenance of modern state and legal systems have created the boundaries that characterise smuggling, they naturally have complicated its definition. Similarly, they have shaped how scholarship has conceptualised, characterised and named smuggling. Somewhat unsurprisingly, the literature on the topic currently has not endorsed one universal set of terms. Researchers, including the authors in this volume, have used a variety of conceptions of the term, or sub-sections of it, and a variety of language around it, from illicit trade to contraband to shadow trade to informal cross-border trade (ICBT) to trafficking. This tapestry typically becomes even more diverse when we leave the language of academia and talk to those engaged in smuggling themselves. Here, some may speak of "livelihood trade," others of "informal trade," and others just of "business." Given the politics of the 'boundaries of smuggling,' it should be unsurprising that the language around it has become varied and contested, as academics, policy practitioners and smugglers all seek to establish and subvert these boundaries and the connected normative claims about the activity, the political context that names it illegal, or the local social context that may frame it as immoral or heroic.

The term 'smuggling' in particular, may be seen by some as endorsing a statist perspective towards the activity. We would like to highlight here that this is not our intention – we trust our audience not to read a normative position in the term, and defer to the importance, in evaluating smuggling, of its aforementioned context, of which this volume provides riches. We feel it critical to maintain both the fact that the defining features of smuggling are socially constructed and the conviction that this does not make them meaningless in practice. Our aforementioned definition groups within its conception of smuggling some practices which are entirely normalised and tolerated, and which would see both those involved in the trade and some of those studying it balk at the term. We note, however, that the illegality of an activity still can have critical consequences for those involved in it, even if activities are normalised. It can shape the routes or profits available, the payments traders must make, or the violence they may be subject to, including at the hand of the state.

We do not seek to and did not impose a uniform terminology, definition, or perspective on the authors of the individual chapters, as will be evident to the reader. Instead, the claim that we seek to make here is that, within this diverse language, and within these contingent and shifting boundaries, there lies a field of study to which a variety of methodological and disciplinary perspectives are making contributions that can speak to each other and be legible across terminological differences.[4] Finally, it is worth noting that while smuggling requires borders, these do not necessarily have to be (or lay claim to being) national borders between states. Goods can be smuggled into a prison, past a barricade into a city under siege, or from an area controlled by an armed group to a territory dominated by a different group. The focus of this volume, however, lies primarily in smuggling across international borders, alongside the particular geographic, social and political structures that they give rise to.

The content of smuggling

The study of smuggling has seen the development of numerous sub-divisions and sub-categorisations of its titular activity, some structured around the scope of the activity (such as bootlegging vs wholesale smuggling), the actors involved (see Dobler, 2016 or Goodhand et al., in this volume), or the routes taken (such as maritime smuggling, see Bruwer in this volume). Other distinctions have categorised territory according to its position in a wider smuggling macro-structure, dividing between spaces of production and transit, and between entrepot and consumption territory (Igue and Soule, 1992; Bennafla, 2014). While we do not expand on these here, we think it worth expanding on some distinctions and observations that are based on the goods that are being traded. Again, some preliminary conceptual points are in order.

First, some chapters in this volume reference a distinction between 'licit' and 'illicit' smuggling. This distinguishes between the smuggling of goods for which a legal trade corridor exists that is not subject to additional restrictions, such as rice (Quitoriano, in this volume) or gasoline (Eaton, in this volume), and the smuggling of goods for which it does not, which typically includes goods such as firearms (Marsh and Pinson, in this volume), narcotics (Mansfield; Duran-Martinez, in this volume), or rare wildlife (Felbab-Brown, in this volume).

Second, this volume also includes chapters on the smuggling of people. We have included them not because we understand the smuggling of people and the smuggling of goods as essentially the same, or because we seek to understand humans merely as 'cargo.' As each of the respective chapters highlight, human smuggling spurs unique dynamics: it complicates the roles of smugglers and of law enforcement and gives rise to further distinctions around consent and relationships between smugglers and smuggled that are not applicable to the smuggling of goods. However, we have decided to include these studies in this volume because we believe that the two areas of scholarship can benefit from closer communication, especially given the rich and critical history of scholarship on human mobility. As the different contributions in this volume powerfully illustrate, the study of smuggling of people has made contributions to our understanding of the role of networks, the politics and effects of anti-smuggling policies, and the entanglement between smuggling and livelihoods that provide critical interventions into our understanding of smuggling more widely (see Bird; Deshingkar; Gazzotti; Raineri; van Liempt, in this volume).

Historically, the study of smuggling has not been characterised only by disciplinary and methodological divisions, but also often by segmentations based on the study of different goods, with particularly active sub-fields developing around the smuggling of different narcotics, hydrocarbons, and agricultural products. The chapters on different smuggled goods in this volume can be read as empirically rich single case studies on commonly smuggled goods. Read

alongside each other, they provide an illustration of the power that comparisons between different goods can have in the study of smuggling. Contributions to the study of particular goods again demonstrate how much the dynamics of smuggling are subject to the particular contexts in which they operate. They provide an important reminder that this is not just context-dependent on laws and borders, although both can also be good-specific, but also one shaped by value chains, industries, and markets.

Studying smuggling with a focus on particular goods also situates the role of illegal movement across borders within the larger life of these commodities. It can point to the importance of different production economies – some of which are highly labour intensive and connected to politically tolerated livelihood strategies. This can be observed in the case of some agricultural production of narcotics such as cannabis in Morocco; others also are an important source of revenue for competing authorities such as in the case of opium in Afghanistan (see Mansfield; Ahmad, in this volume). Similarly, consumption markets can shape the politics of smuggling, as has been particularly noticeable in the context of firearms (Pinson and Marsh, in this volume) (where actors are worried about the effect on the capacity for violence of the end-user), or in foodstuffs, (where smuggling routes have often been central to maintaining livelihoods) (see Scheele, 2012; or Quitoriano, in this volume).

Focusing on particular goods can also help illuminate the heterogeneity in power, access and profit along smuggling value chains and the different actors involved (see for example Mansfield, in this volume). It also demonstrates that smuggled goods don't exist always as smuggled goods – while some value chains are entirely illegal, others dip in and out of legality as they cross borders and boundaries, passing from export processing zones to free ports and to consumption markets. Consequently, they closely tie in to the changing politics of trade liberalisation, regulation, and taxation in recent decades (Meagher, 2003). Here, work on the smuggling of licit goods, in particular, has foregrounded the importance of examining the role of legal industries in smuggling as well. While they often frame themselves as victims or competitors of smuggling, work on cigarette smuggling or wildlife trade, for example, has highlighted both the role of formal sector actors in smuggling economies and the continuous re-negotiation of the boundaries between legal and illegal trade (see Felbab-Brown; Gallien, in this volume). Furthermore, focusing on value chains frequently points to the importance of formal and informal finance, of licit and illicit financial flows, and of money laundering and currency exchange as critical features of smuggling today. These issues are particularly prevalent if we consider where smuggling typically is studied.

Localising smuggling

As this volume shows, there has been a strong theoretical and empirical connection between the study of smuggling and the study of borders and borderlands, particularly in African countries and low- and middle-income countries across the globe. In a sense, this is unsurprising – moving goods across borders is a defining part of smuggling, state capacity to limit these types of activities is arguably lower in low-income countries, and the production centres for some of the most studied smuggled goods, such as cocaine or opiates, lie in the so-called 'Global South.'

However, as a range of contributions in recent years has illustrated, it is important to complicate this picture. Scholarship on bordering and the externalisation of borders (see Pena, in this volume) has shown that borders themselves are often more complex and geographically expansive institutions than the proverbial line in the sand. A focus on borders themselves, however, also risks over-emphasising one particular aspect of smuggling activities – the logistics of movement – at the expense of dynamics of production, consumption and in particular financing, which are more frequently located in the political and economic centres (see

Meagher, in this volume). Seeking to understand the relationship between the centre and the periphery – geographically, politically, legally, economically – has been one of the central contributions of the study of smuggling to social sciences more widely, but also remains an ongoing challenge.[5]

The frequent focus of the study of smuggling on low- and middle-income countries presents a parallel dynamic. As many of the chapters in this volume highlight, they present particularly important and insightful places of study, where smuggling overlaps with ongoing state transformation processes, and where some of the most visible changes and intense human costs and suffering in connection with smuggling are concentrated. It is critical, however, to locate these as nodes in wider networks which also feature high-income countries – as key consumption markets for narcotics, as key financial centres for the movement and investment of capital, as logistical centres for global transport networks, or as drivers of the rules of global trade and mobility that shape legal and illegal trade structures alike.

Building on these considerations, it is important to recognise that just like legal trade, smuggling today is a truly global phenomenon. Naturally, there are different corridors and geographic weights to the trade of different goods, and some countries more frequently take the role of production, consumption, or transit space. However, not only is there no country on the globe today that is not in some way implicated in smuggling structures, but smuggling is also deeply embedded in the increasingly globalised economy and its structures and infrastructures of finance, shipping, mobility, and technology. Consequently, it is critical to take a wider look at the geography of smuggling and consider it more explicitly in the context of the development of the global trade system more broadly. While many of the most visible dynamics around smuggling may lie in borderlands, it is important both to connect these developments to dynamics that lie in the political and commercial centres, and re-evaluate the role of these spaces in smuggling.

Parallel to discussions on the spaces of smuggling lies increasing scholarship that asks how different smuggling actors and networks intersect, particularly in borderland spaces. One strand of the literature has frequently highlighted the potential for new connections to be formed between different smuggling networks in these spaces (see Idler, in this volume). In these strategic nodes, where the flows of various smuggled goods, licit and illicit, converge, different actors at times share a labour pool, local interlocutors, routes, information, or interests. That argument has often been extended to point to the risk, or perhaps the suggested proclivity of smuggling networks to engage closely with other non-state actors in these spaces, to form 'dirty entanglements' (Shelley, 2014) with organised crime groups or particularly terrorist organisations. Naturally, these arguments have been focused in particular on spaces of conflict and contested governance.

Recent years, however, have also seen scholarship seeking to 'untangle' these suggested entanglements, and highlight the complex and often adversarial micro-dynamics between these different actors on the ground. Authors have shown that alongside entanglements often lie segmentations between different actors and networks, based on different risk trade-offs, different normative evaluations of different activities, or different regulatory structures in which smuggling is embedded (Gallien, 2020). The question then becomes how and when different actors connect in borderlands. Here, a rich history of scholarship on borderlands has once again highlighted the importance of local political and social contexts to understand processes of brokerage, social and economic capital accumulation, moral economies, and practical norms that shape these interactions (see Goodhand, Raeymaekers and Titeca, in this volume; as well as Roitman, 2004; Titeca and Herdt, 2010; Raeymaekers, 2014; Hüsken, 2018; Raineri, 2019, among others). This connects to another central theme in recent scholarship.

Regulating smuggling

Unsurprisingly, the way in which things are smuggled varies significantly across goods, routes, and regions. Some smuggling routes pass across rural and barely noticeable borderlines, others through heavily fortified checkpoints or across the high seas (Bruwer, in this volume). While many goods are hidden from the eyes of state officials while they pass across borders, this is not always the case. One of the most notable themes in recent scholarship on smuggling is also perhaps one of the most counter-intuitive with respect to common portrayals of smuggling as a lawless game of cat and mouse. As multiple chapters (e.g., Raeymaekers, in this volume) and recent scholarship have more broadly highlighted, smuggling is typically conducted neither in a 'lawless zone' nor entirely under the radar of the state. Instead, smuggling is itself embedded in various forms of regulation.

Some regulation is inherent in smuggling operating as a trade – it is affected by formal legal frameworks, laws of demand and supply, by price differences and changes in these parameters. While these can introduce fluctuations and uncertainty into the life of smugglers, much other regulation is often intended to increase predictability for actors involved. This includes regulation created among and between smugglers – cartels on the more well-known end of the spectrum, but also arrangements around insurance, debt and divisions of retail territory. Most remarkably perhaps, scholarship has also shown that the relationship between smugglers and state agents is often substantially more regulated than commonly assumed. For example, looking at the Congo-Uganda border, Raeymaekers (in this volume) shows that many 'borderland bandits,' which play an important role in the smuggling economy and the way it is governed, owe their position to connections with the state. Rather than being characterised by mere evasion or perhaps unstructured petty corruption, recent scholarship has described a variety of more structured relationships, regulating how goods can be smuggled, at what price and under which conditions (i.e., Titeca and Herdt, 2010; Ahmad, 2017; Gallien and Weigand, 2021; Raineri and Strazzari, 2021). This can be found throughout the chapters in this volume, a few of which have further demonstrated that these dynamics take on an additional complexity when they are set in a context where also non-state armed groups are active (see Brenner; Thakur, Ahmad, in this volume). These examples highlight not merely that smuggling is often more structured and regulated than common imaginaries suggest, but also point to the complex interplay between such arrangements and ideas of legitimacy and local normative conceptions.

Here, communities themselves can emerge as regulatory actors. Local understandings of what type of smuggling is and is not appropriate, moral, or religiously permitted might not always present a unified evaluation of smuggling practices or by themselves drive out less accepted variants. Being highlighted frequently across these chapters (see for example Titeca; Quintaro; Schomerus and de Vries, in this volume), they present another level of regulation that smugglers engage with as they negotiate their relationships with their communities as customers, employees, neighbours, brokers, or customary governance actors (see also Goodhand et al, in this volume). Critically, acknowledging different community-centred perspectives on smuggling present an alternative account of smuggling to one that is solely focused on compliance with formal legal frameworks. They can help widen the vocabulary and categories relevant in describing and understanding smuggling. As particularly the chapters in the 'borderland' sections in this volume highlight, community perspectives can locate evaluations of smuggling in the political, economic and social environments of borderland communities, in local livelihoods or the history of community interaction across borders.

The smuggler

As we have noted above, the study of smuggling has often stood at the margins of separate academic enquiries, with smugglers being cast in supporting roles to support theories and policy recommendations that were not grounded in an in-depth analysis of smuggling itself, be it in studies on trade liberalisation, globalisation or war economies. Consequently, research that has sought to centre smuggling in its analysis has often struggled not merely with the terminology but also the figure, imaginary, and common perception of 'the smuggler' itself. As scholarship on human smuggling in particular has noted (see for example Sanchez, 2014; Gazzotti, in this volume), the figure of the 'smuggler' has increasingly become a boogeyman in the policy literature. Here, it has functioned not merely as an analytical shorthand, but also has provided a canvas to project blame for the horrific human costs at the intersection between modern systems of mobility, smuggling, and state policies. While this dynamic is somewhat less developed in the context of the smuggling of goods, here, too, a closer look at recent empirical scholarship on smuggling offers at least three important correctives.

First, as recent scholarship on the issue, and a range of contributions in this volume demonstrate, there is enormous and analytically relevant diversity in the people who are involved in smuggling (see for example Dobler, 2016; Sanchez, 2014; Goodhand, in this volume). While common conceptions of 'the smuggler' are typically associated with men, women play a variety of visible and less visible roles in smuggling networks around the globe. Schuster (in this volume) illustrates the "powerful modes of feminine concealment work" in her study of Ciudad del Este, on the Paraguayan side of the Tri-Border Area with Argentina and Brazil. Similarly, actors from varying class and social backgrounds can be involved in smuggling networks, which can at the same time present tools for social mobility and contain highly uneven and oppressive divisions of risk and profit. While the distinction between 'small fish' and 'big fish,' between bosses and their more vulnerable employees in common accounts of smuggling capture some imbalances of power, modern networks are often not just hierarchical structures but complex and dynamic assemblages of capital, labour and relationships.

Second, a simplistic focus on the figure of the 'smuggler,' even if more broadly conceived, also risks misrepresenting the way in which people engage in smuggling networks. Frequently, as ethnographies on smuggling, in particular, have noted, smuggling is not a full-time activity, and does not define comprehensively, economically, socially, or politically those involved in it. On the one hand, framing smuggling as something that is only done by 'smugglers' risks ignoring the degree to which smuggling is also practiced or facilitated by tourists and migrants crossing borders, or neighbouring pastoral communities keeping up long-standing exchanges of goods, or doctors, lawyers, and architects making a bit of money on the side (e.g., Peraldi, 2001; Scheele and McDougall, 2012). On the other hand, framing everyone involved in these activities as a 'smuggler' often risks expanding normatively charged terms to huge groups of people, and deepening prejudices around borderland communities.

Third, the figure of the 'smuggler' also risks limiting the driving role and agency of smuggling to those involved in moving goods across borders, and conceptually segments them from the wider networks of relationships that make up smuggling today. As noted above, smuggling does not exist always in antithesis to or competition with state law enforcement, but is embedded in structured relationships with state- and non-state governance providers. Focusing merely on the figure of the smuggler risks drawing a firm line through complex networks of facilitation, toleration, accountability, and profit that involve state- and non-state actors. It also risks drawing too firm a line between legal and illegal trade. Business communities have frequently relied on the figure of the 'smuggler' in order to lobby policymakers. Adopting

their discourse risks overlooking that legal and illegal trade are also shaped by each other – migration systems are perhaps the most striking but by far not the only example of this. See for example the chapter on cigarettes in this volume. It presents businesses in contrast to smugglers, camouflaging that formal enterprises themselves sometimes are involved in activities such as tax and tariff evasion. They may tolerate smuggling if it brings their goods cheaply into a different market, or engage in smuggling themselves.

Clearly, the solution here is not to do away with the term altogether – it is used frequently throughout the volume by authors who still manage not to fall prey to the pitfalls outlined above. We believe the best way forward is instead to continue to contextualise and complicate the term, to highlight the diversity of activities, and to present scholarship that takes a wider view at the wider networks and political economy structures in which smuggling is embedded.

Smuggling and conflict

Smuggling can be a crucial aspect of armed conflicts, ensuring the survival of civilian populations, financing warring parties, and even creating economic incentives to continue fighting (Keen, 2007; Andreas, 2008; Kaldor, 2013). Consequently, smugglers frequently feature in the literatures on war economies, conflict, and security. Recent work on smuggling and conflict, including contributions in this volume, has sought to unpack the complex interplay among these phenomena (see for example Walther and Miles, 2017; Duran-Martinez, 2018; Walton et al., 2018; Brenner, 2019; Idler, 2019).

On the one hand, wars and armed conflict often shape the dynamics of smuggling. Armed conflicts create new demands and, in the context of evolving war economies, new opportunities for smuggling. For example, armed groups often depend on smuggled weapons and goods (Pinson and Marsh, in this volume). Meanwhile, the needs of civilian populations during armed conflict give rise to survivalist smuggling activities as well as the rise of "smuggling tycoons," who accumulate considerable wealth (Ahamad, in this volume). Armed conflicts create new opportunities for "network specialists." Goodhand, Koehler and Bhatia (in this volume) illustrate the crucial role of brokers, who act as intermediaries among the various parties involved in the smuggling economy. Perhaps counterintuitively, state actors in armed settings frequently feature among those that benefit from smuggling economies (see Weigand, 2020; Mansfield, in this volume).

However, scholarship on smuggling and conflict has noted that armed conflict can also inhibit smuggling, and many smugglers try avoiding conflict zones on their transit route as they are notoriously difficult and expensive to navigate (Gallien and Weigand, 2021). Successful smuggling in conflict zones frequently requires negotiations with and payments to numerous authorities, including state actors and non-state armed groups (Ahmad, 2017; Thakur and Brenner, in this volume). Profit margins in the smuggling economy of conflict zones are often low due to the high costs of transportation, even in the smuggling of high value goods. In his detailed analysis of the opium trade in and out of Afghanistan, Mansfield (in this volume) shows that smuggling is only profitable for the numerous involved actors, if conducted in large volumes.

Meanwhile, peaceful or stable environments are more conducive to smuggling. Thakur (in this volume) illustrates how political agreements, such as ceasefires, between armed groups and state actors at the India–Myanmar border have exacerbated the smuggling economy, while enabling the various political authorities to collect more taxes and levies from smugglers. Conversely, states have tried to intervene in the smuggling economy with political objectives. However, such interventions have not always had the desired consequences. Brenner (in this

volume) shows how US policies aimed at curbing the revenues generated by armed groups through 'conflict minerals' in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, shifted how those armed groups generated revenue and ultimately resulted in more violence.

Disciplines, methods and motivations

We started this introduction noting that despite the existence of substantial work on smuggling in different disciplines, and despite overlapping themes and concerns, there often has been relatively little interaction and conversation among them. As in adjacent fields, some of this has been shaped by broader disciplinary and methodological divisions, as well as different conceptions of what 'data' on smuggling looks like, and the types of contexts in which this is accessible. From a methodological point of view, this relative 'siloing' likely has done a particular disservice to the generation of knowledge on smuggling. As methodological work on researching smuggling and illegal activities more widely has pointed out (see i.e., Ellis and MacGaffey, 1996; Gallien, 2021; Siu and Bensassi; Dobler; De La Rosa and Lara, in this volume), the particular challenges in researching these activities make work across methodologies and across disciplines particularly important and potentially particularly productive. Furthermore, different methodologies share wider challenges around ethics and risks (see Huesken, in this volume) and the trade-offs of localising smuggling (see Dobler, in this volume) that can provide a starting point for conversations across disciplinary divides.

Beyond methodologies, it appears that another dynamic that has deepened gaps among disciplines are disciplinary assumptions about the motivations of smuggling and smugglers. Consequently, one central feature in strengthening the literature's ability to interact and bridge the gaps among them is to emphasise that as the features of smuggling are diverse, so are its motivations, and the two should not be conflated or assumed to be singular. Smuggling is an economic activity and price differences, tax rates or transaction costs often feature in the calculations of smugglers. A broader view at different literatures on smuggling cautions against suggesting, based on that observation, that smuggling is exclusively motivated by economics, or that by definition it is essentially equivalent to tax evasion (Pitt, 1981). Similarly, as we have noted above, smuggling is defined and shaped by politics, and can be in itself a highly political activity. Political effects and motivations don't always overlap, however, and the micro-politics of smuggling can be complex and counter-intuitive. Hence, a wider look across different literatures and disciplinary traditions also cautions against assuming, a-priori, that smuggling is necessarily also politically motivated, or, more importantly, that its politics are always inherently subversive and antagonistic toward the state.

Similarly, smuggling has deep historical roots, and much of what today is framed as smuggling routes across borders created in colonial contexts are in fact trade routes that pre-date both the borders and the laws that make the trade illegal. While it is worth highlighting this fact as a relevant complication of more criminalising approaches to smuggling, here too it remains important to remain cautious in transitioning from a feature to a motivation, noting that smuggling, even if it is along the same routes, is not always motivated by a historical continuity or path dependency. As much historical work on smuggling has shown, trade across similar routes can transform substantially and swiftly over time as its economic, political, and social environment shifts.

A similar point is true for the observation that smuggling is socially normalised in borderland environments. As scholarship in borderland studies has often found, smuggling frequently is part of the everyday lives of borderland populations, no matter how much external observers may be scandalised by it. Scholarship on these issues also cautions that here, again, it remains important

not to draw a line from the everyday normalised practice to conclusions about the beliefs and motivations of people involved in the trade. Recent work in borderland studies, in particular, has highlighted critical diversities – while some smuggling may be normalised in communities, other activities might be tolerated grudgingly. While some smuggling activities may be embedded socially and central parts of borderland livelihood strategies, other activities at the same time may have unleashed dynamics of profit, competition, and violence that communities observe with unease (for example see Meagher; Titeca, in this volume).

Examining the conceptual challenges in studying smuggling and pointing to underlying common themes, previous sections in this introduction have noted the various possible points of connection for work on smuggling among different disciplines that have worked in this space; particularly anthropology, sociology, history, political science, and economics.[6] These considerations of methods and motivations further highlight the way communication between disciplines can strengthen work in this area, and provide new avenues for collaboration and complicating dominant assumptions. Challenges around ethics and localising smuggling for example, as discussed in this volume, exist across disciplines and would benefit from closer conversations. Similarly, work across different perspectives can help embed localised ethnographies in transnational analyses or challenge macro-level discussions through more critical perspectives. Legal scholarship and anthropological accounts of practical norms typically have different starting points, but both contribute to analyses of the different regulatory levels that surround smuggling. This leads us directly to the purpose and structure of this volume.

This book

This book aims to provide the first systematic introduction and comprehensive mapping of research on smuggling in a variety of disciplines, with a view to aiding the formation of a more well-connected field of 'smuggling studies.' We aim both to provide an entrance and reference for new scholars of the field and a point of connection and inspiration for collaboration, and new perspectives for established researchers. As we have argued above, research on smuggling has been produced in various disciplines. Geographic sub-fields have frequently been segmented from each other by disciplinary boundaries, ideological divergences, methodological differences, and linguistic gaps. Hence, our intention is to move the study of smuggling from the edges of different discussions and disciplines to its own centre, creating a cornerstone for a more thorough investigation that draws on the insights of the various disciplines that consider the topic.

The book is structured around larger thematic debates. It covers themes ranging from the methodological challenges in researching smuggling to its central conceptual histories and debates. It provides introductions of how selected goods are smuggled around the world, offering empirical texture and comparative insight. In addition, it seeks to link smuggling scholarship to central discussions in social sciences, such as the nature and development of the state, the construction of borders, mobility, and armed conflict.

The handbook begins with a discussion of the methodologies, terms and perspectives that have shaped how smuggling has been studied in different disciplines. This first section of the handbook has two main functions. On the one hand, it aims to provide an introduction and methodological toolkit to those readers who are new to the field, and are thinking about conducting research on the topic. On the other hand, as the book also seeks to reflect critically on the knowledge generated on smuggling so far, it seems only fitting to begin it by discussing the tools and ideas that have been used to help trace blind spots and ways forward. After addressing the question of where to go to study smuggling and discussing the way localising

smuggling shapes its study (Dobler, in this volume), a chapter on 'smuggling ideologies' (Meagher, in this volume) traces the distortions that overly ideological or programmatically driven perspectives on smuggling have introduced into its study. The following chapters discuss different quantitative (Siu and Benassi, in this volume) and qualitative approaches (de la Rosa and Lara, in this volume) that have dominated the study of smuggling, as well as the ethics, risks and security challenges that are linked to and have influenced the study of smuggling (Hüsken, in this volume).

The second section of the handbook looks at borderlands and their people. Building in particular on the rich literature on borderland studies, this section zooms in and takes a closer look at the dynamics of smuggling at the local level to provide an understanding of how borderlands function, how smuggling is understood locally, and the role of communities, brokers and other actors in the local smuggling economy. The section begins by tracing the historical creation of borders (Nugent, in this volume) and reviewing how different scholarship has conceptualised borders, borderlands, and frontiers (Peña, in this volume). After investigating the role of brokers in local smuggling economies (Goodhand, Koehler, and Bhatia, in this volume), the section looks at the politics of smuggling and the role of the state in the smuggling economy at the local level (Raeymaekers, in this volume) and analyses the role of smugglers in their local communities (Titeca, in this volume). The following chapters explore local narratives, memories and histories in the context of smuggling (Schomerus and de Vries, in this volume) and unpack the role of gender in the smuggling economy and how gendered tropes shaped our perception of the topic (Schuster, in this volume).

The third section provides an overview on various goods that are frequently smuggled, identifying common routes, practices, and procedures. In doing so, the handbook considers both licit and illicit goods and a range of case studies from around the world. The section begins with a discussion of goods that are widely considered to be illicit, such as cocaine (Durán-Martínez, in this volume), opiates (Mansfield, in this volume), weapons (Marsh and Pinson, in this volume), and wildlife (Felbab-Brown, in this volume). It then proceeds to a discussion of goods that are commonly viewed as licit, such as cigarettes (Gallien, in this volume), petroleum products (Eaton, in this volume), and rice (Quitoriano, in this volume). The final chapter of the section investigates the intersection between the flows of different goods (Idler, in this volume).

The fourth section focuses on the smuggling of people and the intersection between mobility and smuggling. It both introduces central concepts in this literature and discusses the effect of restrictions on and the criminalisation of mobility (van Liempt, in this volume). It provides an introduction to the networked structure and the social organisation of migrant smuggling (Raineri, in this volume), and examines its relationship with wider structures of labour circulation, considering, in particular, its gendered effects (Deshingkar, in this volume). The final chapter of this section uses the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on borders around the globe to draw out lessons on human smuggling more widely (Bird, in this volume).

The fifth section then explores the role of smuggling and conflict as the two topics are often portrayed as closely linked. On the one hand, armed conflict and wars are commonly associated with bolstering smuggling economies. On the other hand, illicit trade is often viewed as a driver of armed conflict, providing income opportunities for armed groups and corrupt state actors alike, and incentivising the continuation of war. This section aims at providing a more nuanced understanding of what frequently is called the 'conflict-crime nexus.' After looking at the role of smuggling in historical wars (Andreas, in this volume) the section looks at smuggling and war economies (Ahmad, in this volume) and explores the role of armed groups in smuggling economies (Thakur, in this volume). In the conclusion of the section, the handbook analyses the effects of policies aimed at curbing smuggling to fight insurgencies or to reduce armed conflict (Brenner, in this volume).

The final section of the handbook engages with how smuggling currently is addressed and could be addressed differently, also providing a stepping stone for policymakers thinking about how to engage with the topic. Following a discussion of maritime borders (Bruwer, in this volume), the handbook takes a critical look at policing and law enforcement in the context of smuggling (Gazzotti, in this volume). The section and the handbook conclude with a chapter that takes us back to the local level, exploring community adaptation and resilience (Herbert, Reitano, and Gastelum Felix, in this volume).

While we tried to cover a large range of perspectives and approaches in this handbook, it is naturally not without limitations. The set of goods covered here is limited and selective. It is meant to provide an introduction to the diversity of goods and the factors that drive their unique dynamics, not to diminish the relevance of smuggled goods that we do not cover here, such as amphetamines, electronics, alcohol, garments, or works of art and heritage. Crucially, the role of financial flows requires further investigation. There is also a disciplinary bias within this book – while we have aimed to bring together different perspectives here, our focus has been on the social sciences. This has been shaped both by our own perspective on the field and an intention to seek out literatures that may speak to each other particularly well, and is not meant to discard work on smuggling in the arts and humanities.[7] Geographically, the handbook engages primarily with smuggling in low- to middle-income countries, while also arguing in a range of chapters for a wider global view of these activities that include the role of consumption markets and networks in high-income countries. We recognise that representation in this handbook does not reflect these goals fully. While we have managed an equal distribution of genders among the authors, authors from or based in low- to middle-income countries are still under-represented among the contributors to this book. Nevertheless, we hope that the book contributes to a deeper knowledge and further networking within the field that also strengthens connections among fields and will further shift these balances in future volumes.

As this handbook aims at providing an overview of the entire field of what we describe as smuggling studies across disciplines, perspectives, and worldviews, it also illustrates tensions within this field. Different scholars in this handbook engage with different types of questions and relate their work to different strands of literature. They take different positions on the frameworks, meanings, and definitions of smuggling, and especially on the role of state and policy actors in relation to these activities. Some chapters in this volume focus on suggesting ways to advance our thinking within the frameworks and languages provided by states and policymakers, especially in order to develop ways to address pressing issues in a relatable way on the short term. Others focus on a more critical engagement with the assumptions and definitions that are proposed by states and make suggestions for how to change our thinking about smuggling – how we study it, what we think the problem is, and what answers could be – in a more substantial way. As throughout the different issues presented here, we see value in this diversity, and hope that our readers share this view.

Notes

a whole acknowledgement section into a footnote – this is a handbook of smuggling. What did you expect?

2   For an illustration of this point in the context of African borderlands, see Meagher (in this volume).

3   This is typically conceptualised as the movement of goods or people, but could similarly refer to capital or information.

4   We note that this field naturally has a close overlap with what is usually referred to as 'borderland studies' – this will be evident throughout this volume, which has a large set of contributions from leading scholars typically associated with this field. As we note in the section below, the two do not precisely map on top of each other: not all borderland studies focuses on smuggling, and not all analysis of smuggling can or should be located in borderlands, as scholars might instead focus on financial actors in economic centres, on policy makers in political centres, on larger transcontinental networks or on maritime smuggling.

5   Dobler in this volume provides a deeper discussion of this issue.

6   This also applies to connections between different fields of study, such as borderland studies, work on war economies, the study of transnational organised crime or of informal economies.

7   One exception to this perhaps represents the cover of this handbook – a painting by Fernanda Morales Tovar, entitled "Displaced nexus." From her series "Archeologies of the environment," the image spoke to us as an illustration of the fact that institutions such as borders are constructed not merely architecturally but socially, and benefit from an analysis that centres people's role in their emergence, maintenance, and perhaps subversion. We were glad to find an illustration that moves away from common visual representations of borders merely as lines or walls, and of smugglers merely as masked men. We hope that the readers will find their own connections between the artwork and the chapters in this volume – our favourite is that the painting's central object shades the landscape behind it in a different colour, mirroring the description of the border as a prism for stories and perceptions in the chapter by Schomerus and de Vries in this volume.

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