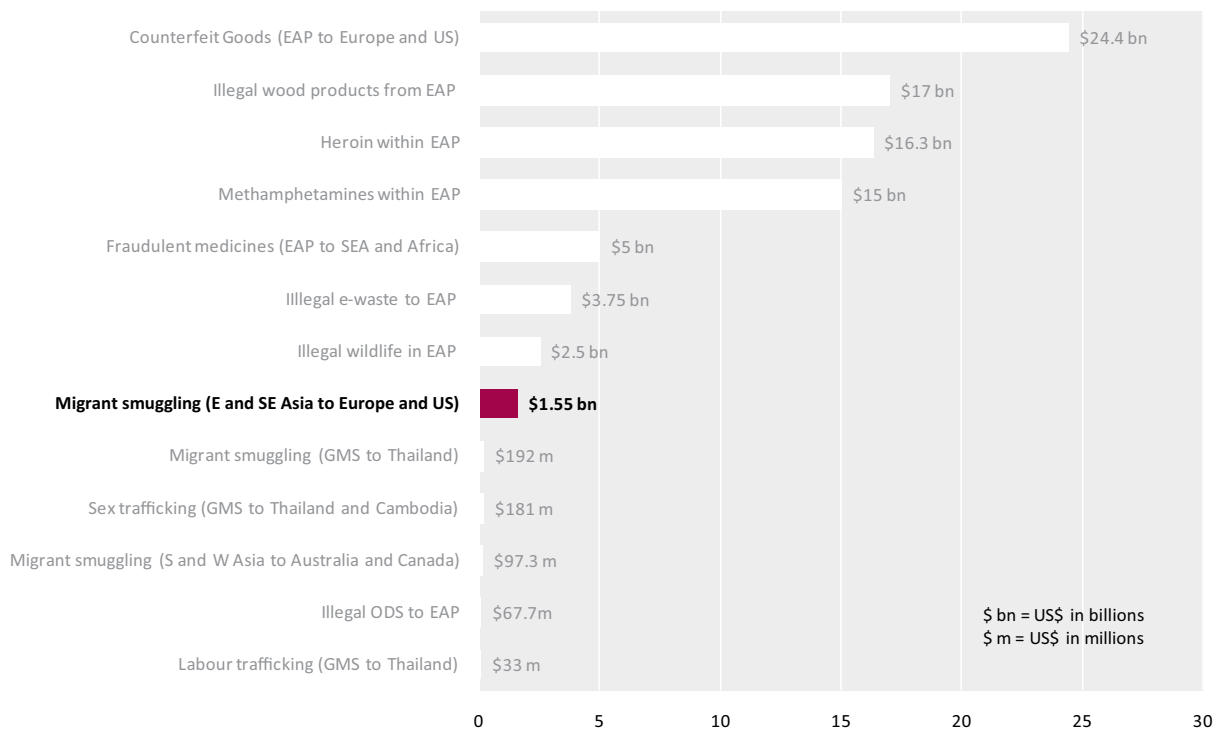


# Chapter 3

## Migrant smuggling from East and Southeast Asia to the United States and the European Union



## NATURE OF THE THREAT

<p><b>1. Deadly risks and loss of human life</b> – smuggled migrants are exposed to deadly risks, including loss of life, en route to destination. Thousands of migrants die each year during the process of illegal migration.</p>	<p><b>2. Human rights abuses</b> – irregular status of migrants creates vulnerabilities to discrimination, exploitation, and trafficking in persons. Smuggled migrants often end up with dangerous jobs. They are often excluded from health, education and other social welfare provisions.</p>
<p><b>3. Economic impact</b> – the illegal economy creates unfair competition, and undermines wages and social protection, loss of legitimate tax revenue for governments.</p>	<p><b>4. Threat to state security</b> – migrant smuggling is a high-profit / low-risk crime. It empowers criminals and undermines state security due to links with organized crime, violence, and corruption. People cross borders without the host states’ consent and knowledge.</p>
<p><b>5. Corruption</b> – fuels corruption among public officials.</p>	<p><b>6. Cost of law enforcement</b> – costs to the state to improve border security measures, conduct search and rescue operations (e.g. with maritime smuggling), and provide protection and assistance.</p>

## 1. What is the nature of the market?

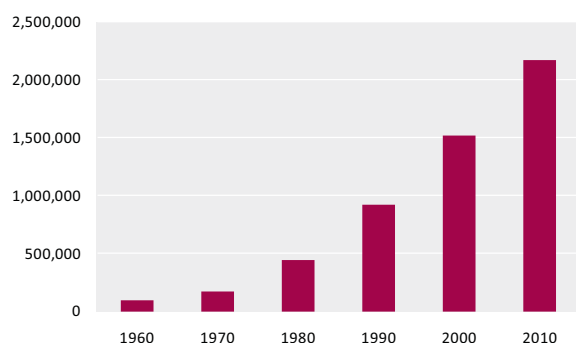
Due to the prominence of China and Viet Nam as source countries typifying these flows, this chapter will focus almost exclusively on these two states.

Though migration to Europe and the United States is nothing new, China's economic reforms of the 1980s greatly increased migrant flows. The Chinese-born population in the United States, for example, has grown five-fold since 1980 (see Figure 1), rising to 2.2 million people in 2010.<sup>1</sup> Viet Nam is, in many ways, following in the footsteps of China. Its economy is growing nearly as fast, and export-oriented industries have fed emigration.

Most of this migration is legal, but some is not. In 2010, an estimated 10.8 million irregular migrants were living in the United States, of which 130,000 were from China.<sup>2</sup> Based on the difficulties of making the journey successfully, it is reasonable to assume that most of those who entered through irregular channels employed the assistance of migrant smugglers.

China and Viet Nam are two of the most rapidly growing economies (see Figure 2), and have – in fact – recently experienced labour shortages.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, both North America and Europe are still struggling with the recession brought about by the financial crisis of 2008. Irregular migration from Latin America to North America and from Africa to Europe has declined dramatically in response to diminishing job prospects.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 1: Size of the Chinese-born population in the United States**



Source: McCabe 2012a and 2012b<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This estimate is based on Census data and includes people born in Taiwan (Province of China). See McCabe 2012a.

<sup>2</sup> Hoefer and others 2011

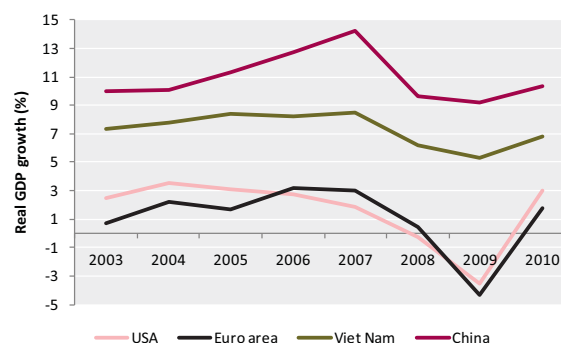
<sup>3</sup> The World Bank 2011a

<sup>4</sup> For example, see Orozco 2009; Passell and Cohn 2010.

<sup>5</sup> These estimates include Taiwan (Province of China).

The exact destination of these migrants is not determined by economics alone. Most venture forth to join existing diaspora communities where they have family, friends or contacts. According to remittance flows, the largest Chinese communities in Europe are in Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The largest Vietnamese communities are in France, Germany, and the Czech Republic.

**Figure 2: Real GDP growth**



Source: IMF, *World Economic Outlook*, 2011

The largest flow of remittances to China and Viet Nam are from migrants residing in the United States (see Figures 3 and 4). In 2010, over US\$12 billion in remittances was sent from the United States to China and over US\$4 billion from the United States to Viet Nam. Pulled towards existing communities, remittances and well established smuggling networks enable others to migrate or be smuggled. In the case of China, smuggled migrants are largely from Sichuan, Hunan, Anhui, Fujian, Guangdong, and Zhejiang.<sup>6</sup> Both population data and deportation figures suggest that the main destinations are France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The Fujian province of China is the point of origin for many irregular migrants destined for the United States,<sup>7</sup> most of whom head for California or the greater New York area.<sup>8</sup>

Except for Sichuan and Hunan, these source areas are located in Eastern China and are among the more affluent provinces, which means that residents may be able to afford high smuggling fees.<sup>9</sup> These six provinces, especially Fujian and Guangdong,

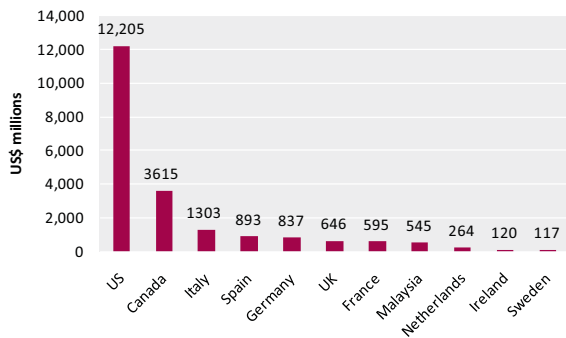
<sup>6</sup> UNODC communication with the Joint Analysis and Strategy Centre on illegal Migration (GASIM) 2011; UNODC communication with the UK Border Agency (UKBA) 2011.

<sup>7</sup> UNODC communication with the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center (HSTC), United States 2011.

<sup>8</sup> McCabe 2012a

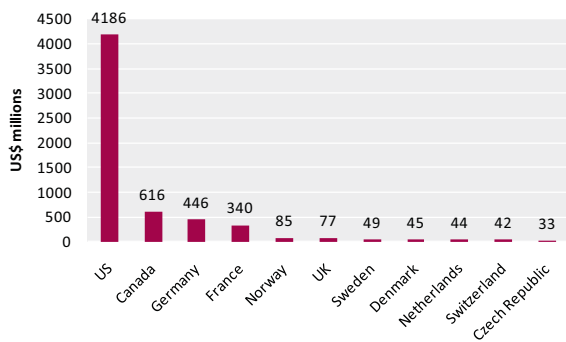
<sup>9</sup> Skeldon 2011

**Figure 3: Remittances to China in 2010, by country of origin (Top ten)**



Source: The World Bank 2011b

**Figure 4: Remittances to Viet Nam in 2010, by country of origin (Top ten)**



Source: The World Bank 2011b

also have well-established histories of migration and residents have travelled for hundreds of years to find work in the United States and Europe.<sup>10</sup>

The majority of smuggled Vietnamese migrants, in particular to the United Kingdom, are from the northern provinces of Hai Phong and Quang Ninh.<sup>11</sup>

As the source region or province varies, so does the profile of the smuggled migrants detected in the destination countries. German authorities report that most detected Chinese smuggled migrants are adults between 20 and 49 years of age,<sup>12</sup> but one-third are children nine years old and younger.<sup>13</sup> The profile of

the detected Vietnamese smuggled migrants shows a narrower age range: 85% are between the ages of 10 and 39 years of age.<sup>14</sup>

Even within a national group, the profile of the smuggled migrant depends on the destination. Research indicates that the Vietnamese detected in Germany are fairly well-educated.<sup>15</sup> French authorities report that the smuggled Vietnamese migrants they detect are both younger than in Germany (most in their late 20s) and less educated.<sup>16</sup> There are a number of possible explanations for this difference. The Vietnamese population in Germany is well established, originating from a formal worker exchange programme in the 1980s, and this community may attract better-educated migrants. Many of those detected in France may be destined for the United Kingdom, some to become workers in indoor cannabis cultivation operations.<sup>17</sup>

## 2. How is the smuggling conducted?

The image most commonly associated with Chinese migrant smuggling is that of the *Golden Venture*, a cargo ship that foundered off the coast of New York in 1993. The ship had embarked from Thailand and spent 112 days at sea before running aground with its cargo of 186 Chinese migrants. Ten of these people died attempting to swim ashore.<sup>18</sup>

Although the sea route is still used, new trends in the smuggling business have emerged since the Golden Venture tragedy. Today, most smuggled Chinese and Vietnamese migrants fly as close as possible to their destination, landing in countries where they can enter without a visa or where visa controls are weak, and then move clandestinely the rest of the way. The smugglers help with both phases of the journey – the preparation of the necessary paperwork and the illicit border crossings.

Migrant smuggling from China proceeds along a number of well-established paths, although the exact route a migrant will take is rarely predetermined.

<sup>10</sup> Zhang 2008

<sup>11</sup> UNODC communication with Vietnamese Immigration Department, Ministry of Public Security.

<sup>12</sup> UNODC communication with the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center (HSTC), United States 2011; UNODC communication with the Austrian Federal Criminal Intelligence Service 2011.

<sup>13</sup> UNODC communication with GASIM 2011.

<sup>14</sup> UNODC communication with GASIM 2011

<sup>15</sup> UNODC communication with GASIM 2011

<sup>16</sup> UNODC communication with the Office Central de Répression de l'Immigration Irrégulière et de l'Emploi d'Etranger (OCRIEST) 2011.

<sup>17</sup> Europol 2011b

<sup>18</sup> Zhang 2008. For example, Zhang reports that smugglers are using peripheral locations for migrant smuggling, such as the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, Mexico, and Canada. Often these ships or fishing trawlers leave from Hong Kong (China).

### *Vietnamese indoor cannabis cultivation*

Vietnamese organized crime groups are gaining a reputation as specialists in cannabis cultivation, particularly indoor cultivation. Vietnamese cannabis farms have been detected in Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States. The situation in the United Kingdom has been particularly well documented with police raiding an average of 500 cannabis farms per month in 2010. Although many of these were controlled by British criminal organizations, Vietnamese gardeners were often preferred over local labour.<sup>19</sup>

Research suggests that migrants are encouraged to work in cannabis farms as a way of rapidly paying off the debts accumulated through the process of smuggling.<sup>20</sup> Exploitation and trafficking in persons, however, can occur. In 2010, the UK's Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre identified 58 Vietnamese children who were allegedly trafficked, and of these, 39 were working on cannabis farms.<sup>21</sup>

One common technique is for migrant smugglers to arrange for migrants to travel legitimately from China to Latin America or Cuba via the United Arab Emirates and then Russia by air. From Latin America or Cuba, Chinese and local smugglers arrange onward air travel to Mexico (e.g., Cancun), although a small number are moved by sea given the short distance from coast to coast (509 kilometres). Cuba is a popular departure point for maritime routes to southern Florida or the Caribbean Islands, although maritime entry to the United States is – due to the ease of detection on a well-patrolled coastline – far more difficult than crossing at the land border. Countries in Central and South America are also commonly used to reach Mexico with the aid of Chinese and local smugglers (such as ‘coyotes’ or ‘polleros’). Once close to the United States border, authorities believe that most smuggled migrants destroy their documentation as it is common to find sets of partially destroyed documents just south of the border. Smuggled in trucks or on foot, authorities suspect that Chinese migrants are held in Mexican safe houses until onward passage can be arranged. The journey to the United States – Mexico border is notoriously dangerous. As a result, migrant smuggling via Latin America is constantly changing. Immigration enforcement, corrupt officials, immigration policies, and even weather conditions affect the actions of smugglers (including the routes used, *modus operandi*, and fees charged).<sup>22</sup>

Ethnic Chinese migrant smugglers (often referred to as ‘snakeheads’) are well versed in international visa waiver agreements, and are quick to exploit any opening.<sup>23</sup> Faced with a sudden influx of Chinese migrants in the mid-2000s, countries like Colombia and Ecuador had to adapt their visa regimes. Even where conditions appear strict on paper, countries without the capacity or motivation to scrutinize visa applications may become conduits for migrant smuggling.

In many countries, Chinese tour groups are granted visas under the Approved Destination Status visa programme. Any country wishing to receive Chinese tour groups must assent to this programme, under which blanket visas are granted to licensed Chinese tour operators. It has been alleged that certain operators will charge an additional fee for those wishing to disappear part way through their tour. Although tour operators are subject to sanctions if their charges abscond, this may be a source of smuggled migrants in some countries.

A number of countries in Africa will award visas upon arrival for a fee, and with growing Chinese engagement with the continent, smuggling through Africa is likely to increase.<sup>24</sup> The United Kingdom Border Agency, which continues to monitor passenger movements out of Hong Kong (China), recently observed a shift from Latin American and Caribbean transit countries to African ones.

<sup>19</sup> UK Association of Chief Police Officers 2012

<sup>20</sup> Silverstone and Savage 2010

<sup>21</sup> Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre 2010

<sup>22</sup> UNODC communication with the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center (HSTC), United States 2011.

<sup>23</sup> UNODC communication with the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center (HSTC), United States 2011.

<sup>24</sup> UNODC communication with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) 2011.

For countries and territories that do require visas, forgery and fraud are big issues. European authorities report that the majority of smuggled Chinese nationals enter Europe by air using a combination of genuine as well as forged or fraudulently obtained documentation from China, Hong Kong (China), Japan, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan (Province of China).<sup>25</sup> Mexico does not require visas for nationals of Japan or Hong Kong (China), so Chinese nationals may enter with illicitly obtained passports from these countries and territories.

Visa fraud, carried out with the assistance of skilled specialists, is often based in China and Thailand. Fake invitations to attend conferences, business meetings, cultural events, or trade shows are commonly used by smugglers to secure genuine visas. Admission forms to educational programmes are also used.<sup>26</sup>

An emerging migrant smuggling scheme involves employment-based fraud.<sup>27</sup> False companies are created in Europe and “sold” to Chinese nationals. A Chinese citizen applies for residency permits for himself and his family as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the firm he owns. Others may receive permits as employees of this company.

Another scheme popular with Chinese smugglers is marriage fraud. Arranged marriage to a European or United States citizen is an effective and relatively fast way to gain residency in Western countries. In 2006, Europol detected more than 8,000 cases of marriage fraud, but the number of cases is undoubtedly much higher.<sup>28</sup>

It is almost impossible to stop fraudulent schemes at the port of entry because these migrants hold genuine passports or visas - the only illegal aspect is their intentions. Bribery of checkpoint personnel is often used to ensure safe departure. To combat corruption, the Chinese government has instituted mandatory rotations of border personnel.<sup>29</sup>

Because Chinese citizens cannot usually fool their own border protection agents, many use their genuine passports to depart the country. Once outside, many switch to forged or fraudulently obtained documentation. Documents may be prepared in China and sent to Europe. At a pre-selected point (e.g., when in transit at an airport), the smuggler provides new travel documents and tickets to the chosen destination. It is common practice to use Asian passports that do not require visas for the European Union, such as those of Japan, Hong Kong (China), Malaysia and the Republic of Korea.<sup>30</sup> This is indicative of a growing trend. In Europe, between 2009 and 2010, Frontex reported a 12% increase in the use of fraudulent travel documents. While one-third of these were forged passports, 15% of the fraudulent travel documents were altered authentic passports.<sup>31</sup>

As Latin America is the preferred flight destination for smuggled Chinese migrants headed for North America, Eastern Europe is often the transit region of choice for those headed for Western Europe. A typical route would follow the following pattern. First, arrive in Russia (Moscow in particular), the Ukraine or Belarus by plane. Then travel overland into Schengen countries<sup>32</sup> such as Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, or Austria. Then travel to the intended target countries of the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, or the Netherlands, typically by car, lorry, or train.<sup>33</sup> Italy and Spain are also popular destinations.<sup>34</sup> Another popular route is to travel by air to Moscow or Belgrade and then travel by vehicle or on foot to Greece via the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Once in Greece, smuggled migrants continue on to their chosen European Union destination.<sup>35</sup>

Some migrants make the journey to Europe entirely by land. For example, a Chinese migrant arrives in

<sup>25</sup> UNODC communication with GASIM 2011; UNODC communication with OCRIEST 2011

<sup>26</sup> UNODC communication with OCRIEST, 2011

<sup>27</sup> Europol 2011a

<sup>28</sup> Europol 2010b

<sup>29</sup> Zhang 2008

<sup>30</sup> UNODC communication with OCRIEST, 2011

<sup>31</sup> Europol 2011b

<sup>32</sup> The countries that are part of the Schengen Area allow the freedom of movement within and between the members. This means that irregular migrants can move across national borders within these countries without needing to officially cross at border checkpoints.

<sup>33</sup> UNODC communication with the Austrian Federal Criminal Intelligence Service 2011; UNODC communication with GASIM 2011.

<sup>34</sup> UNODC communication with the Austrian Federal Criminal Intelligence Service 2011; UNODC communication with GASIM 2011.

<sup>35</sup> Europol 2011c

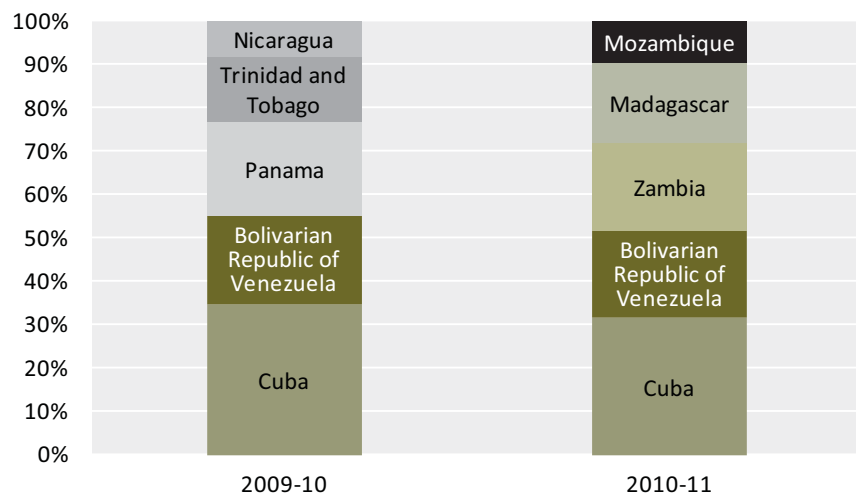


Moscow via the Trans-Siberian railway. A smuggler meets the train and takes the migrant to a hotel until another smuggler takes him or her to Prague by train. A car then meets the train to take the migrant to the German border where the green border (i.e., not an official border entry point, but across a field, forest, or river) is crossed either on foot or by lorry.<sup>36</sup> From Germany, the smuggled migrant remains or proceeds to the final preferred destination.

From Viet Nam, organised smuggling networks use a range of methods to smuggle migrants into and within Europe. For example, it is common for smugglers to provide migrants with forged or altered documents or genuine documents under false identities, as described above, before leaving Viet Nam or en route, often with the help of corrupt consular officials. The migrants fly to Moscow, Minsk, or Kiev and then continue overland into the European Union. Once the migrants reach Europe, the travel documents are usually returned to the criminal network.<sup>37</sup> If the United Kingdom is the preferred destination, Iraqi Kurdish smuggling networks based in Belgium and France are subcontracted for this service. In and around the French port of Calais, migrants wait in illegal camps, often for long periods of time, to cross the English Channel into the United Kingdom.<sup>38</sup> They are often transported in vans with hidden compartments or concealed among commodities in lorries.<sup>39</sup>

Another popular smuggling route is from Turkey to Greece, onwards to Italy, and through Central Europe to Belgium, before continuing to the United Kingdom as the final destination.<sup>40</sup> Iraqi nationals are known to smuggle hundreds of migrants along this route mainly from Iraq and Afghanistan, but also from Viet Nam and China.<sup>41</sup> Smuggled into Belgium

**Figure 5: Top five destinations of “suspicious” Chinese passengers travelling out of Hong Kong (China) in 2009-2010 and 2010-2011**



Source: United Kingdom Border Agency 2011<sup>42</sup>

by an Indian network, the migrants are then handed over to the Iraqi smuggling network who facilitate the onwards journey to the United Kingdom. Although it is not yet known if the Indian and Iraqi networks were subcontracted by Vietnamese and Chinese smuggling networks, both groups are known to outsource services to locally based networks (e.g., Czech, Iraqi, Serbian and Turkish) in transit countries.

On finding a suitable smuggler, Vietnamese smuggled migrants pay a deposit from US\$1,000 to US\$2,000 so the smuggler can obtain the required fraudulent documentation.<sup>43</sup> The passport is not given back to the migrant until full payment is received. Once the migrant has reached the European Union (e.g., Czech Republic), the migrant is asked if the United Kingdom is the final destination. If yes, the migrant pays an additional fee to an associate of the European-based smuggling coordinator with cash carried from Viet Nam.<sup>44</sup> Typical amounts are around US\$600 for the journey to France, and then an additional US\$4,700 from France to the United Kingdom (which requires leaving the Schengen area).

All financial flows between Viet Nam and Europe are managed internally by the smuggling network through a hawala-like system. A broker in Viet Nam

<sup>36</sup> Chin 2007

<sup>37</sup> COSPOL 2011

<sup>38</sup> UNODC communication with OCRIEST 2011

<sup>39</sup> Europol 2011b

<sup>40</sup> Europol 2010a

<sup>41</sup> Europol 2010a

<sup>42</sup> UNODC communication with UKBA 2011

<sup>43</sup> Neske 2011

<sup>44</sup> Neske 2011

is given the cash and arranges payment to another broker in the European Union.<sup>45</sup> If the smuggling operation is unsuccessful, a portion of the fee paid is refunded to the migrant's family.<sup>46</sup>

### 3. Who are the smugglers?

Chinese and Vietnamese smuggling networks are capable of managing all phases of smuggling from the source to the destination countries. Yet, both groups are known to outsource travel through transit countries as well as entry into the destination countries to locally based networks (e.g., Czech, Hungarian, Iraqi, Serbian, and Turkish networks).<sup>47</sup> These are business relationships requiring frequent contact between smugglers of the two networks in order to ensure that both parties adhere to their respective agreements.<sup>48</sup> At times, there is even collusion between Chinese and Vietnamese networks. For example, Chinese smugglers see the Vietnamese in the Czech Republic as 'local specialists' because of the well-established diaspora.<sup>49</sup>

Located at various points along the different routes, Chinese smugglers are primarily male between 20 to 50 years of age with no prior criminal history.<sup>50</sup> The Chinese smugglers based in the European Union have typically lived abroad, legally, for a long time. Thus, they have the connections and networks needed in transit countries to facilitate the various phases of the smuggling process.<sup>51</sup> Although Chinese smuggling networks are male-dominated, women are also involved. It is estimated that approximately one out of eight Chinese smugglers are women.<sup>52</sup> Less is known about the smugglers of Vietnamese migrants even though Vietnamese smuggling networks are well established throughout Europe.

### 4. How big is the flow?

Not all irregular migrants are smuggled. However, while survey data on the share of irregular Chinese and Vietnamese migrants is not available, there are many reasons to believe that most are smuggled.

These migrants pay a large amount to be smuggled, many times their average annual income in the country. If there were easy alternatives to paying smugglers, it is unlikely that the smugglers would be able to charge such large amounts. The distance to be travelled to the destination countries is great and often involves transiting countries with which the migrants are unlikely to have much familiarity. For example, migrants may be able to enter Kosovo or certain African states without a visa, but they would have to be exceptionally resourceful to proceed on their own from there. The vast majority of migrants from origins much closer to the destination countries, like those from Mexico, make use of smugglers. Given this knowledge, it would be surprising if Chinese migrants did not make use of smugglers.

In the year 2000, the United States government estimated that 30,000 to 40,000 Chinese migrants were being smuggled into the United States each year. In 2007, one academic placed this number between 50,000 and 100,000.<sup>53</sup> While these numbers represent only 1% to 6% of the recognised 2.2 million Chinese-born people in the United States, the range represents between one-quarter and three-quarters of the 130,000 irregular Chinese migrants the United States government estimates were present in that country in 2010.<sup>54</sup> In other words, the estimates of the annual inflow are almost as large as the entire irregular community.

This would suggest one of several possibilities;

- migrants entering irregularly are normalising their status at a very rapid rate;
- there are high rates of migrant return, so that migrants are leaving almost as fast as they are arriving;
- the size of the Chinese irregular migrant population has been substantially underestimated;
- the inward flow has been substantially overestimated.

In recent years, around 2,000 Chinese irregular migrants have been detected annually. Of the 1,970 Chinese irregular migrants detected in 2010,<sup>55</sup> 1,157

<sup>45</sup> Neske 2011

<sup>46</sup> Neske 2011

<sup>47</sup> Europol 2011c

<sup>48</sup> Europol 2011c

<sup>49</sup> COSPOL 2011

<sup>50</sup> Zhang and Chin 2004

<sup>51</sup> Neske 2011

<sup>52</sup> Soudjin 2006

<sup>53</sup> Zhang 2007

<sup>54</sup> Hoefler and others 2011

<sup>55</sup> Hoefler and others 2011



(59%) were detected at the border.<sup>56</sup> The other 41% (813 migrants) were detected inside the country. These people may have been detected the same year they entered, or they could have been resident without documentation for years.

Based on extensive survey data, the intercept rate for Mexican migrants attempting to cross the border clandestinely is about 20%.<sup>57</sup> If the same rate were applied to the lower end of the official US estimates for Chinese being smuggled, this would imply as many as 6,000 illegal border crossers in 2010. Survey data suggests that as many as 45% of irregular migrants simply overstay their visas.<sup>58</sup> Again, applying this rate to Chinese migrants would imply that another 6,000 irregular migrants could be visa over-stayers, yielding a total of around 12,000 irregular migrants in 2010. This is less than the estimates cited above, but reasonable if the true size of the resident Chinese irregular migrant population was really 130,000 in that year.

In 2008, the cost cited for Chinese migrant smuggling to the United States was around US\$50,000,<sup>59</sup> but more detailed European data suggests a range of prices depending on the exact service provided – provision of a false conference invitation would cost considerably less than an arranged marriage or a circuitous clandestine border crossing arrangement. Assuming this premium price is paid by all migrants, and assuming virtually every irregular migrant had used a smuggler, the 2010 flow could be valued at as much as **US\$600 million**. The actual value is probably less, however, and there is a need for survey data to confirm these estimates.

The number of Vietnamese being smuggled to the United States is likely much lower. For example, only some 55,000 Vietnamese received non-immigrant visas to the US in 2010, compared with over 1 million Chinese. Since visa overstays contribute about half of all irregular migrants, this would suggest that Vietnamese irregular migrants are about 5% of the Chinese total, or fewer than 1,000 migrants, with a resulting flow worth at most **US\$50 million**.

<sup>56</sup> Sapp 2011

<sup>57</sup> UNODC 2010

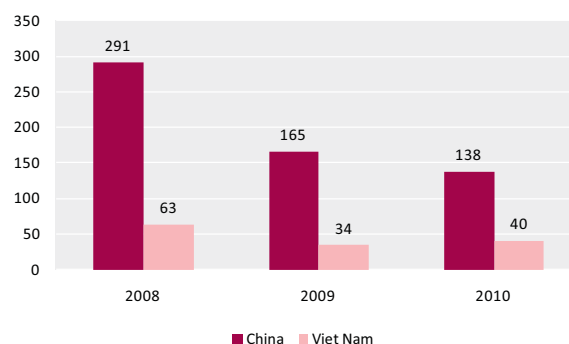
<sup>58</sup> Pew Hispanic Center 2006

<sup>59</sup> Zhang 2008

The number of irregular Asian migrants detected in Europe is much higher. A small and declining number of Chinese and Vietnamese irregular migrants are apprehended crossing between official border points (see Figure 6). A larger but also declining number of Chinese and Vietnamese irregular migrants are denied entry at the border, including migrants concealed in vehicles to those arriving in an airport without a visa (see Figure 7). Combining the two together, there were 1,842 border detections of Chinese irregular migrants in 2010. Although the data is not directly comparable, both of these figures appear to be smaller than in the United States.

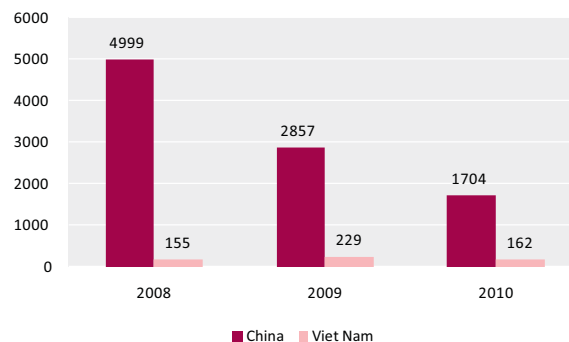
But a large number – between 15,000 and 20,000 per year – of Chinese and Vietnamese irregular migrants are discovered staying in the EU illegally. Either they managed to successfully enter the EU clandestinely and were only caught later, or they entered legally and overstayed their visas.

**Figure 6: Illegal entries between official border crossings**



Source: Frontex Risk Analysis Network (FRAN) 2011<sup>60</sup>

**Figure 7: Refusals of entry to the EU**



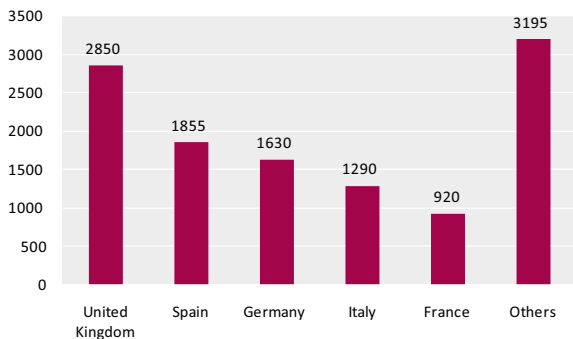
Source: Frontex Risk Analysis Network (FRAN) 2011<sup>61</sup>

<sup>60</sup> UNODC communication with Frontex 2011

<sup>61</sup> UNODC communication with Frontex 2011

Just five countries are home to the majority of the Chinese-born population in Europe: Italy, Spain, the UK, France, and Germany. Based on historic data, it appears that the authorities in these countries apprehend around 12,000 illegally-resident Chinese each year, or about five to six times as many as the US (see Figure 8). If detection rates were similar, this would imply as many as 72,000 Chinese irregular migrants entered the EU in 2010, but this would be difficult to believe: the Chinese-born population of Europe (around 750,000) is about one-third the size of that in the United States.

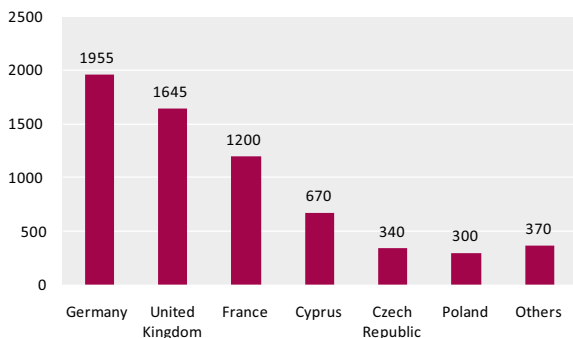
**Figure 8: Chinese found to be illegally present in EU countries in 2011**



Source: Eurostat database 2012

It is possible that irregular migrants make up a much larger portion of the entire Chinese-born population of Europe than in the US. The European Union has a more generous set of welfare provisions, which could make it both more reluctant to grant licit residence and a more attractive destination to potential migrants. Perhaps irregular migrant detection rates, particularly for visa over-stayers, are much higher than in the US because irregular migrants represent

**Figure 9: Vietnamese found to be illegally present in EU countries in 2011**

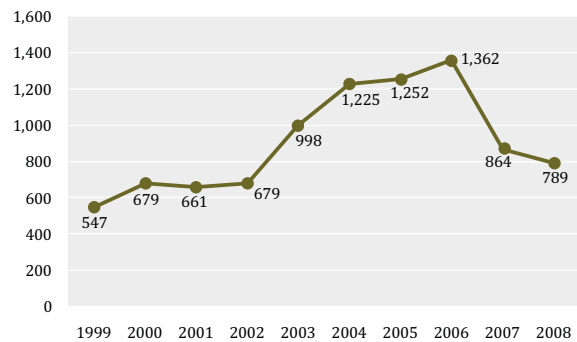


Source: Eurostat database 2012

a greater potential cost to EU member states. If detection rates were twice as high, this would suggest that there are up to 36,000 Chinese irregular migrants in the EU.

Fees range from US\$7,800 to US\$27,000 for smuggling migrants from China to the European Union.<sup>62</sup> Premised on the basic assumption that all the irregular migrants use smugglers, and using an average price of around US\$17,000, this suggests an income for smugglers of as much as **US\$600 million** per year.

**Figure 10: Chinese deportable aliens located in the US**



Source: US Department of Homeland Security 2009

Roughly half as many Vietnamese are detected as Chinese, suggesting a flow of perhaps as many as 18,000 migrants. For Vietnamese irregular migrants, Europol reports that smuggling services to the European Union cost from US\$9,450 to US\$31,000.<sup>63</sup> If Vietnamese smugglers are paid the same as Chinese, this would result in an income for smugglers of around **US\$300 million**. This would imply a European flow for both national groups worth about US\$900 million per year.<sup>64</sup>

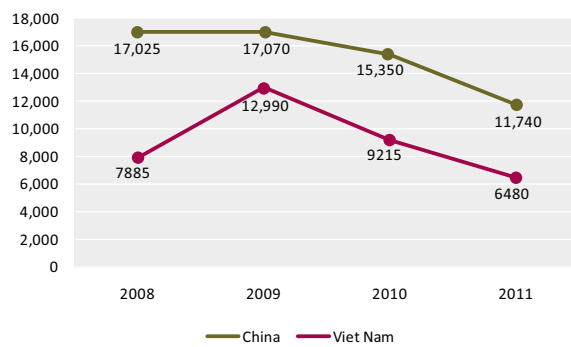
<sup>62</sup> UNODC communication with GASIM 2011. With ADS schemes, travel agencies are said to charge a fee of US\$6,750 for travellers wishing to remain illegally in the European Union at the end of the trip, according to the Europol 2011c. To reach the United Kingdom, the cost is higher, with smuggling networks charging approximately US\$33,000, according to Europol 2011c. Schemes involving immigration fraud (e.g. fake companies to secure residency permits) cost even more, with smugglers charging US\$30,000 to US\$44,500 per person, according to the Europol 2011a.

<sup>63</sup> Europol 2011a. Other research indicates costs are lower, with a smuggling operation to the Czech Republic costing US\$7,000, which includes fraudulent documentation. A trip to reach the United Kingdom costs around US\$20,000 to US\$22,000. See Neske 2011.

<sup>64</sup> Please note that the estimated numbers in this chapter are drawn by employing various published sources which are not official national data approved by either the China or Viet Nam government.

After a peak in the mid-2000s, the number of irregular Chinese migrants detected in the US has declined in recent years. The number of irregular migrants detected in Europe from both China and Vietnam are declining. Since there are no indications of declines in enforcement, these changes likely represent a decline in flow of irregular migrants.

**Figure 11: Total number of Chinese and Vietnamese found to be illegally present in EU countries**



Source: Eurostat database 2012

# The Value of Migrant Smuggling from China and Viet Nam to the United States and the European Union (US\$)

