

Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling in Southeast Europe and Russia, Criminal Entrepreneurship and Traditional Culture.

By JOHAN LEMAN & STEF JANSSENS. (Palgrave Macmillan Series on Crime, Crime Control and Security). pp. 200. Basingstoke and New York. Palgrave Macmillan. 2015. £60.00. Hardback. ISBN: 9781137543639.

In their newly published work on the Smuggling of Migrants (SoM) and Trafficking of Human Beings (THB), John Leman and Stef Janssens examine 53 large scale criminal networks and over 130 files and police reports concerned with their activities over a timeframe of twenty years. The authors focus their studies mainly on Russia and South East Europe, however also discuss their international relationships with Indo-Pakistani, Iraqi-Kurdish, and Italian Organized Crime networks.

As is indicated in the title, the authors concentrate on the cultural background of criminal networks and how their traditions affect their activities, as well as incorporating analysis of their entrepreneurial endeavours. They also go into great detail about their methodology, and how their analysis and knowledge is based on police reports and judicial cases. The definition of People Smuggling and Human Trafficking is based on UN guidelines. Leman and Janssens set out to examine leadership and entrepreneurial practices commonplace in criminal networks, and essentially provide a business-centred analysis of these networks' activities.

The authors differentiate between clan based and business based networks. Clan based networks tend to originate from Albania and Romania with trust built on family and blood ties. These networks deal primarily in people trafficking for coerced sex work. Ancient cultures deeply rooted in their ethnic backgrounds provide a behavioural basis for their business. In the Albanian case, this culture is known as Kanun, and can be understood as a type of clan law that in many cases carries more legitimacy for ethnic Albanians than the country's official laws. In the Romanian networks, the concept of Kumpania plays a very dominant role. The ways in which these concepts apply to the world of these criminal clans is in their perverse manipulation and deliberate misinterpretation. A result of this is that the predominantly female victims of THB end up feeling indebted to their captors, and are very hesitant to seek outside help. Of the many observations made in this book, perhaps the most surprising is the lack of hesitation on the part of the criminals to exploit women from their own ethnic group.

Business-based networks on the other hand tend to be dominated by Russians and Bulgarians, and in contrast to clan networks, trust is based on the reputations of business partners. They are defined by exceedingly professional business practices, and the authors describe in great detail how these networks attempt to conceal their illegal activities behind legitimate, bonafide businesses. The entrepreneurs behind these networks very often have a state security background, and capitalise on the clandestine smuggling routes and practices used by the intelligence services of former socialist governments. It is also shown to what extent these networks have managed to penetrate European state organs, and a disturbing degree of complicity by certain European nations' embassy staff is also detailed. These networks tend to specialise in money laundering, people smuggling and human trafficking.

Another aspect of this particular type criminal activity that is focussed on in Leman and Janssens work is its evolution over twenty years. They stress the importance of entrepreneurs being able to adapt to changing market forces and restructure their business models accordingly, and also to learn from their own mistakes. One such change that is described is the concept of a so-called 'win-win' situation in the context of forced sex work. If the victims are allowed to keep some of their profit, they are more likely to be more compliant and a lot less likely to attempt escape. Nevertheless, their perceived

profit is still a pittance compared to that received by their captors. This is in contrast to the business model prevalent in the 90s, in which the victims do not keep any of their earnings and faced arbitrary violence. The authors also comment on how the use of violence in these networks has changed over two decades.

Limitations of their study is discussed by the authors and include the fact that their research is based on continental Europe, particularly Belgium, hence their findings cannot be extrapolated on a global level.

This book is thoroughly recommendable for researchers wishing to gain insight into the activities of criminal networks. The authors use qualitative methods to analyse the cases and take an economic and sociological approach when describing and analysing their business models, the authors also provide suggestions to improve the state authorities' approaches in combatting organized crime.

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