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Mexican Migrant Smugglers and Foreign Terrorists

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Abstract

Human smuggling and terrorism are seen as two related activities because the first is a potential source of funding for the last and it could facilitate the clandestine transportation of terrorists. Accordingly, the White House has stated that terrorists are among those who illegally enter from the Mexican border. Engaging a qualitative methodology that included in-depth interviews conducted between 2011 and 2018 with 144 Mexican migrant smugglers, this chapter proceeds from the following research question: Have Mexican migrant smugglers and foreign terrorists built alliances in order for the latter to enter into the United States? This chapter concludes that Mexican migrant smugglers have not built alliances with foreign terrorists. However, while migrant smugglers involved in simple networks were more inclined to think that foreign terrorists could not be smuggled into the United States, migrant smugglers involved in complex networks were more inclined to think the opposite.

Keywords: terrorism, migrant smugglers, foreign terrorists, Mexico, US Southwestern border

1. Introduction

Migrant smuggling has increasingly been framed as associated with transnational terrorism [1, 2]. However, migrant smugglers and terrorists have opposite motivations and goals, and migrant smuggling and terrorism are different phenomena [2, 3]. Migrant smugglers are driven mainly by selfish motivations as they are seeking for a material gain. On the contrary, terrorists are ideologically driven. The latter aim to overhaul existing governance structures or influence public opinion through criminal acts [2, 4]. The involvement of violent non-state actors, including insurgent and terrorist groups, in drugs smuggling has been known for some time. Many scholars have pointed out that the narcotic trade facilitates terrorism [5–10]. On the contrary, there is a lack of empirical evidence concerning the involvement of migrant smugglers in terrorist activities. In places where human smuggling represents a significant portion of organized criminal activity, a link with terrorism is suspected [11], but not proved. In some cases insurgent and terrorist groups have driven drug cartels out of the market to supplant them themselves [12]. However, nothing indicates that migrant smugglers have been supplanted neither by drug traffickers [13–16] nor terrorist groups [3].

US authorities have been concerned about a possible collusion between Mexican migrant smugglers and foreign terrorists from the mid-1950s [17]. The global threat

of terrorism was acknowledged in the 1981 Executive Order 12333 [18], and in the aftermath of 9/11 attacks, these concerns were further accentuated [18, 19]. The thinking was that foreign terrorists seeking US entry through the Southwestern border would require the highly specialized Mexican smugglers who uniquely understood how to navigate the complexities of clandestine travel. In an effort to reduce the threat of terrorist infiltration at the US Southwest border, the US Government has focused its attention on international smuggling networks transporting special interest or other than Mexican aliens [7]. On December 16, 2002, President Bush signed the National Security Directive 22, the connection between migrant smuggling and terrorism being made explicit. Two years later, the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center was established in order to facilitate the exchange of information to support the investigation and prosecution of migrant smugglers, and in 2005, the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act developed an interagency task force to study the interrelationship between human trafficking and terrorism, including the use of profits from the former to finance the latter [3, 12, 20].

The United States has been insulated from international terrorism since 9/11, and no migrant has committed an attack on US soil, to date [21]. Accordingly, some studies suggest that more migration into a country is associated with a lower level of terrorist attacks [22]. However, migration control for the control of terrorism is a widely used instrument in the United States. The threat of terrorism provided a pretext for a rigorous application of entry restrictions and deportations, the enforcement of stricter migration controls being legitimized [23]. As Slack et al. have pointed out: “the mission statement for CBP does not mention immigration at all, but rather focuses explicitly on terrorism” [24]. Departing from the argument that several terrorist attacks in the western part of continental Europe were perpetrated by immigrants who were smuggled and camouflaged among millions of asylum seekers, every migrant or refugee has become a potential terrorist [4, 25]. If foreign-based terrorists were successful in using migrant smuggling networks to reach European targets, which also could reach the US Southwestern border in the same manner. On the other hand, the migrant smuggling industry is seen as a potential source of income for terrorist groups [1]. Consequently, building a wall along the southern border in order to keep the country safe from terrorists and illegal immigrants was a key promise of Trump’s presidential campaign. This promise has been repeated with conviction and consistency. On January 25, 2017, just 8 days since taking office, President Trump signed an executive order defining illegal immigration as a “clear and present danger to the interests of the United States.” Two days later, on January 27, a new executive order “Protecting the Nation from Terrorist Attacks by Foreign Nationals” was issued, the entry of nationals of Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Libya, Somalia, and Yemen being suspended [25]. Accordingly, in order to prevent human smuggling and acts of terrorism, the construction of a contiguous physical wall between Mexico and the United States was ordered.

This chapter is underpinned in the following research question: Have Mexican migrant smugglers and foreign terrorists built alliances in order for the latter to enter into the United States? On the other hand, this research centers on the hypothesis that Mexican migrant smugglers involved in simple networks do not help foreign terrorists to enter the US soil as they carry only labor migrants from their hometown or region; on the contrary, those smugglers involved in complex networks could inadvertently help terrorists to cross the border as they do not know their clientele.

This chapter, based on interviews with 144 Mexican migrant smugglers, examines if Mexican migrant smugglers have built alliances with foreign terrorists. The paper proceeds as follows: I first provide a description of the methodology. Next,

the characteristics of simple networks and complex networks are analyzed. Finally, I go on to examine the opinions of migrant smugglers involved in simple and complex networks about the possibility of foreign terrorists being crossed through the US Southwestern border with the help of Mexican migrant smugglers.

2. Methodology

This research is based on a qualitative methodology. Qualitative interviews were conducted with a guide, all interviews being recorded and transcribed literally. On the other hand, contact with interviewees was made via social networks and snowballing in different Mexican states.

Fieldwork was conducted between 2011 and 2018, and 144 migrant smugglers ranging from 21 to 48 years were interviewed. All had considerable experience in the business of human smuggling. They started working as migrant smugglers between the ages of 16 and 45 years and are dedicated to this activity for 9.5 years on average. Respondents had 0–17 years of schooling, and the age at which they started working ranges from 5 to 23 years (see **Table 1**).

More than two-thirds of the interviewees were born in Tamaulipas, a Mexican state located in the northeast of the country. However, interviewees originated from almost half of Mexico’s states. Only one of the interviewees was not born in Mexico (see **Table 2**).

	Average	Mode	Median	Min	Max	Standard deviation
Age	36.8	35	37	21	48	5.2
Years of schooling	5.7	6	6	0	17	3.5
Age when started working	10.1	10	10	5	23	3.33
Age when started working as migrant smugglers	27.2	29	28	16	45	5.1
Number of years involved in human smuggling	9.5	7	9	3	21	4.0

Source: Compiled by the author from data recorded in the interviews. *n* = 144.

Table 1.
Characteristics of the interviewees.

	n	%		n	%
Tamaulipas	60	41.7	Tabasco	3	2.1
Veracruz	15	10.4	State of Mexico	2	1.4
Mexico City	13	9.0	Guanajuato	2	1.4
Nuevo León	13	9.0	Oaxaca	2	1.4
San Luis Potosí	12	8.3	Sonora	2	1.4
Chiapas	10	6.9	Chihuahua	1	0.7
Puebla	4	2.8	Guerrero	1	0.7
Coahuila	3	2.1	California (United States)	1	0.7

Source: Compiled by the author from data recorded in the interviews. *n* = 144.

Table 2.
Place of origin of migrant smugglers interviewed.

Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Tamaulipas University research group on “Migration, development and human rights” [26]. Informed oral consent was obtained from the respondents, and participants were provided with verbal information about the study purpose in simple language. Interviewees were informed about the voluntary nature of their participation in the study and were told that the information they shared was confidential. Participants were assured that individual names would not be collected or used in any study findings.

3. Simple networks and complex networks

Mexican migrant smuggling networks can be divided by their degree of complexity. Those networks composed of one cell led by a migrant smuggler can be defined as simple, while those consisting of one or more lines, with two or more cells per line, can be defined as complex [27–29]. A cell is a structure lead by a migrant smuggler supported by a small number of assistants, who transport migrants from the point A to the point B. A line is the group of actors involved in the transportation of a group of migrants from the point A in the country of origin to the point B in the country of destination. In simple networks a unique cell transports migrants from the point of origin to the point of destination. In complex networks usually a line is composed of several cells. Simple networks are composed only of a line, while complex networks usually involve several lines.

Simple networks are composed of one cell led by a migrant smuggler, with the support of a small number of assistants. Migrant smugglers involved in simple networks are autonomous entrepreneurs who lead the network. Some of them satisfy the labor demand of US employers and receive an economic compensation from them; others tend to work primarily for migrant social networks.

Complex networks are composed of one or more lines; each line has several cells, and each cell appears to be led by a migrant smuggler who has the support of several assistants. Migrant smugglers involved in complex networks are salaried workers. They lead the cell but not the network they are involved in. The one who leads the network is a person that the smugglers call “patron.” Smugglers receive orders from the “patron” who manages the network and receive a salary that is paid by their patron [30].

4. Migrant smugglers in simple networks

Migrant smugglers involved in simple networks answered to the question if foreign terrorists could be smuggled into the United States by using the services provided by Mexican migrant smuggling networks, by using two lines of argumentation to describe the possible links between smugglers and foreign terrorists:

- Less than half (46.2%) of the respondents thought that terrorists could enter the United States by using established human smuggling networks.
- More than half (53.8%) of the respondents did not believe that terrorists could be smuggled into the United States by using Mexican migrant smuggling networks (see **Table 3**).

Migrant smugglers involved in simple networks tend to believe that foreign terrorists cannot be smuggled into the United States by using the services provided

Argument		n	%
Terrorists could enter the United States by using established migrant smuggling networks	If illegal immigrants can cross the border also can terrorists.	28	35
	If weapons and drugs are smuggled into the United States, also terrorists can be smuggled.	2	2.5
	Migrant smugglers are unaware of the intentions of their clients.	5	6.2
	Terrorists can enter the United States because of corruption.	2	2.5
	Total	37	46.2
Terrorists could not be smuggled into the United States by using Mexican migrant smuggling networks	They had never witnessed the crossing of terrorists.	24	30
	They did not have an extensive knowledge of the border.	12	15
	The US Government blames Mexico for all of their problems.	2	2.5
	Terrorists cannot cross through territories controlled by the drug cartels.	1	1.3
	Terrorists can enter the United States through its airports.	3	3.7
	Terrorists can cross through the customs situated at the southwestern border.	1	1.3
	Total	43	53.8
Total		80	100

Source: Compiled by the author from data recorded in the interviews.

Table 3.
Arguments expressed by migrant smugglers involved in simple networks.

by Mexican migrant smuggling networks. Almost one-third (30%) answered that they never witnessed the crossing of terrorist. Interviewees pointed out that they had witnessed how labor migrants from many different countries had crossed the US Southwestern border. Some of them also pointed out that drugs were being smuggled through the border day in and day out, during day and night times. However, during the many years they had been working as migrant smugglers, they never witnessed Arab terrorists being smuggled to the United States. This was reflected in expressions such as: “I haven’t seen Arabs; I have only seen Mexicans and Central Americans” (migrant smuggler from Tamaulipas interviewed in 2011); “I haven’t seen any Arabs; I’ve seen Cubans, Central Americans, people from Brazil or Belize; but I haven’t seen any Arabs” (migrant smuggler from Puebla interviewed in 2012); “Here I didn’t see that. I’ve seen many immigrants crossing the border; but they are Mexicans or they come from Central America” (migrant smuggler from Tamaulipas interviewed in 2014); or “Terrorists don’t cross, the only thing crossing are drugs, always, every day, and at every hour of the day” (migrant smuggler from Coahuila interviewed in 2015). On the other hand, less than one-sixth (15%) indicated that they thought terrorist were not crossing through the Mexico-US border; but, they pointed out that they did not have an extensive knowledge of the border. Therefore, they indicated that their opinion was not very relevant.

5. Migrant smugglers in complex networks

Migrant smugglers involved in complex networks answered to the question if foreign terrorists could be smuggled into the United States by using the services provided by Mexican migrant smuggling networks, by using two lines of argumentation to describe the possible links between smugglers and foreign terrorists:

- More than half (56.3%) of the respondents thought that terrorists could enter the United States by using established human smuggling networks.
- Less than half (43.7%) of the respondents did not believe that terrorists could be smuggled into the United States by using Mexican migrant smuggling networks (**Table 4**).

Migrant smugglers involved in complex networks tend to believe that foreign terrorists can be smuggled into the United States by using the services provided by Mexican migrant smuggling networks. More than one-third (37.5%) thought that if illegal immigrants could cross the border also could terrorists. Interviewees pointed out that they were helping anybody to cross the US Southwestern border who paid a fee. Respondents had helped people from many different countries to cross the border. Therefore, they could not know if some of these people were terrorists or not. Respondents had the impression that the US Southwestern border was not an orderly inspected place; on the contrary, they used to think that the border was a place poorly protected where migrants, drugs, and so on were crossing over at every moment [30]. The expression “so many things happen at the border” were repeated

Argument		n	%
Terrorists could enter the United States by using established migrant smuggling networks	If illegal immigrants can cross the border also can terrorists.	24	37.5
	If weapons and drugs are smuggled into the United States, also terrorists can be smuggled.	5	7.8
	Migrant smugglers are unaware of the intentions of their clients.	6	9.4
	Terrorists can enter the United States because of corruption.	1	1.6
	Total	36	56.3
Terrorists could not be smuggled into the United States by using Mexican migrant smuggling networks	They had never witnessed the crossing of terrorists.	8	12.5
	They did not have an extensive knowledge of the border.	4	6.2
	The US Government blames Mexico for all of their problems.	1	1.6
	Terrorists can't cross through territories controlled by the drug cartels.	4	6.2
	Terrorists can enter the United States through its airports.	9	14.1
	Terrorists can cross through the customs situated at the southwestern border.	2	3.1
	Total	28	43.7
Total		64	100

Source: Compiled by the authors from data recorded in the interviews.

Table 4.
Arguments expressed by migrant smugglers involved in complex networks.

by many interviewees indicating that anything could occur at the border. This was reflected in expressions such as: “It could be possible, because many things happen from here to there, from there to here also happen” (migrant smuggler from Mexico City interviewed in 2012); “Probably they could cross; many people are going to the north, people that we don’t know, they are not from here, they are not Central Americans” (migrant smuggler from Veracruz interviewed in 2013); “It could happen; so many illegals cross through Mexico that sometimes you don’t know where they are coming from” (migrant smuggler from Sonora interviewed in 2014); “So many things happen at the border, that terrorist could cross the frontier and nobody would notice” (migrant smuggler from Tamaulipas interviewed in 2014); “There is so much smuggling that everything can be true. It could be possible that Mexico is used by terrorists to cross to the United States” (migrant smuggler from Coahuila interviewed in 2015); “I think that it is possible because Mexico is the US entrance; from Mexico many things cross: drugs, illegals and more” (migrant smuggler from Mexico City interviewed in 2018); or “It is possible that they could cross; it is said that there is so much vigilance, it is not true. I didn’t see them, but there is so much free passage to the US” (migrant smuggler from Tamaulipas interviewed in 2018). Moreover, almost 1 in 10 (7.8%) thought that if weapons and drugs were smuggled into the United States, also terrorists could be smuggled (**Table 4**).

6. Conclusion

Migrant smugglers interviewed had never witnessed terrorists to cross the border by using the services provided by Mexican migrant smuggling networks. However, there was a difference between the answers responded by migrant smugglers involved in simple networks and those involved in complex networks. The former were more inclined to express arguments denying the existence of connections between foreign terrorists and Mexican migrant smugglers, while the latter were more predisposed to think that foreign terrorist could enter the United States by using the same channels employed by migrant smugglers to smuggle labor migrants or by drug traffickers to smuggle weapons or drugs. We conclude that migrant smugglers involved in simple networks are more inclined to think that foreign terrorist cannot be smuggled to the United States because they come from the same hometown or region of their clientele and gained their knowledge of entering the United States illegally from their own experiences as migrants. Therefore, they personally know that their customers are not terrorists. On the contrary, migrant smugglers involved in complex networks do not come from the same hometown or region of their clientele. Their customers come from different countries; and they do not know personally any of them. Therefore, they could not be completely sure if any of them was a terrorist.

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Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Information about the interviewees

Case	Age	Education	Origin	Destination	Experience as human smuggler				Profile of migrants				Type of network	Argument
					Years	Initiation	Crossings/ year	People/ crossing	Age	Women	>50	<12		
1	39	7	Tamaulipas	Virginia	4	2007	2	13/18	25–45	No	No	No	Simple	1.3
2	38	9	Tamaulipas	Texas	11	2000	1	10/15	20–50	Yes	Yes	No	Simple	1.3
3	45	5	Tamaulipas	Idaho	21	1990	0/1	8/10	16–40	No	No	No	Simple	1.1
4	35	1	Tamaulipas	Texas	6	2005	2/3	6/12	20–35	No	No	No	Simple	1.2
5	39	6	Veracruz	Florida	10	2001	2	20/25	20–40	No	No	No	Simple	2.4
6	40	9	Tamaulipas	Texas	11	2000	6	13	16–30	Yes	No	No	Complex	3.1
7	44	9	Chiapas	Virginia	4	2007	6	8/12	10–45	Yes	No	Yes	Complex	2.2
8	33	6	Tamaulipas	North Carolina	7	2004	2/3	12/18	20–40	Yes	No	No	Simple	1.1
9	46	6	Tamaulipas	Texas	5	2006	4/6	10/20	16–40	No	No	No	Simple	2.2
10	39	4	Tamaulipas	North Carolina	8	2003	2	10/15		Yes	No	No	Simple	1.1
11	45	6	Mexico City	Oregon	5	2006	2	15/20	15–35	No	No	No	Simple	1.1
12	43	9	Tamaulipas	Texas, Canada	14	1997	1	9/20	12–55	Yes	Yes	Yes	Simple	2.1
13	40	6	Nuevo León	Texas, California	5	2006	2	10/20		Yes	Yes	Yes	Simple	3.1
14	28	12	Nuevo León	Arizona	4	2007	12	6/10	16–35	Yes	No	No	Complex	2.2
15	21	9	Tamaulipas	South Carolina	4	2007	1	8/10	15–40	No	No	No	Simple	2.2
16	37	6	San Luis Potosí	California	16	1995	1	5/15	20–50	Yes	Yes	No	Simple	2.1
17	39	6	San Luis Potosí	Colorado	5	2006	1	10/15	18–50	Yes	Yes	No	Simple	2.1
18	37	6	San Luis Potosí	Texas	7	2004	2	17/20	15–55	Yes	Yes	No	Simple	2.1

Case	Age	Education	Origin	Destination	Experience as human smuggler				Profile of migrants				Type of network	Argument
					Years	Initiation	Crossings/ year	People/ crossing	Age	Women	>50	<12		
19	30	6	San Luis Potosí	Arizona	6	2005	1	15/25	18–30	Yes	No	No	Simple	2.1
20	25	9	Nuevo León	Texas	5	2006	12	7/12	1–60	Yes	Yes	Yes	Simple	2.1
21	39	0	Chiapas	Alabama	10	2001	2	8/15	12–60	Yes	Yes	Yes	Simple	2.1
22	30	9	Tamaulipas	Texas	4	2007	1	10/15	15–40	No	No	No	Simple	1.1
23	29	6	Tamaulipas	South Carolina	6	2005	1	10/20	16–50	Yes	Yes	No	Simple	2.1
24	45	9	San Luis Potosí	Florida	11	2000	1	7/15	13–50	Yes	Yes	No	Simple	2.1
25	32	6	Tamaulipas	North Carolina	8	2003	1	10/20	20–40	Yes	No	No	Simple	2.1
26	40	4	Tamaulipas	Texas	16	1995	1	7/9	14–40	Yes	No	No	Simple	3.2
27	36	9	Chiapas	Texas	5	2006	3/5	3/20	> 5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Complex	3.2
28	38	9	Tamaulipas	Texas	7	2004	12	10/40		Yes	Yes	Yes	Complex	2.3
29	35	6	Nuevo León	Texas	6	2006	8/10	6	20–40	No	No	No	Complex	2.3
30	41	6	Coahuila	Texas	7	2005	1	10/15	10–40	Yes	No	Yes	Simple	1.1
31	25	9	Nuevo León	Texas	6	2006	4	7/9	20–40	No	No	No	Simple	2.3
32	45	4	Tamaulipas	Texas	17	1995	2	10	20–50	No	Yes	No	Simple	2.1
33	41	8	Tamaulipas	Texas	11	2001	1	20/25	15–40	No	No	No	Simple	2.1
34	33	6	Tamaulipas	Texas	10	2002	2	7/15	20–35	No	No	No	Simple	1.1
35	39	6	Nuevo León	Texas	12	2000	1	8/15	20–40	Yes	No	No	Simple	2.3
36	45	4	San Luis Potosí	Oklahoma	20	1992	1	7/15	15–35	No	No	No	Simple	2.3
37	37	6	Nuevo León	Texas	11	2001	2	4/8	18–50	No	Yes	No	Simple	2.1
38	35	9	Tamaulipas	Texas	15	1997	1/2	5/10	20–40	No	No	No	Simple	2.1
39	41	9	Tamaulipas	Louisiana	11	2001	1	4/12	18–35	No	No	No	Simple	2.1

Case	Age	Education	Origin	Destination	Experience as human smuggler				Profile of migrants				Type of network	Argument
					Years	Initiation	Crossings/ year	People/ crossing	Age	Women	>50	<12		
40	48	9	Tamaulipas	Florida	14	1998	1	7/10	15–50	Yes	Yes	No	Simple	1.1
41	35	6	Tamaulipas	Louisiana	11	2001	1/2	4/10	20–40	No	No	No	Simple	2.1
42	30	9	Tamaulipas	Texas	4	2008	1	4/9	20–35	No	No	No	Simple	2.1
43	32	6	Tamaulipas	Texas	12	2000	1/2	5/9	35–40	No	No	No	Simple	1.1
44	35	9	Nuevo León	Texas	7	2005	6/12	5/15	18–40	Yes	No	No	Simple	2.1
45	40	6	Tamaulipas	Texas	12	2000	7/11	5/15	20–30	Yes	No	No	Simple	1.1
46	40	9	Tamaulipas	Virginia	17	1995	2	8/15	15–50	Yes	Yes	No	Simple	1.2
47	37	5	Tamaulipas	Florida	10	2002	2	6/10	15–40	Yes	No	No	Simple	1.2
48	45	9	Tamaulipas	Louisiana	12	2000	3	10/20	15–35	Yes	No	No	Simple	1.1
49	39	2	Tamaulipas	Louisiana	10	2002		10/20	18–40	Yes	Yes	No	Simple	2.1
50	28	6	Tamaulipas	Texas	8	2004	12/15	10/15	15–35	Yes	No	No	Complex	1.1
51	41	6	Tamaulipas	Texas	10	2002	2	7/10	15–45	Yes	No	No	Simple	2.1
52	38	9	Tamaulipas	Florida	8	2004	3	10	13–35	Yes	No	No	Simple	1.2
53	36	6	Tamaulipas	Texas	6	2006	6		16–40	No	No	No	Simple	2.1
54	30	12	Tamaulipas	Illinois	5	2007	6	7/10	20–35	Yes	Yes	No	Simple	2.1
55	40	4	Tamaulipas	Virginia	10	2002	2	7/10	18–40	Yes	No	No	Simple	1.1
56	43	8	Tamaulipas	Texas	15	1997	2	10/20		Yes	Yes	Yes	Simple	1.1
57	39	6	Mexico City	Florida	10	2002		25	20–40	No	No	No	Simple	2.1
58	35	3	Tamaulipas	Arizona	10	2002	3	7/15	20–40	No	No	No	Simple	2.3
59	45	6	Tamaulipas	North Carolina	9	2003	3/4	12/30	20–50	No	Yes	No	Simple	1.1
60	40	6	Tamaulipas	Texas	8	2004	2	7/10	15–35	No	No	No	Simple	2.1

Case	Age	Education	Origin	Destination	Experience as human smuggler				Profile of migrants				Type of network	Argument
					Years	Initiation	Crossings/ year	People/ crossing	Age	Women	>50	<12		
61	34	6	Guanajuato	Texas, North Carolina, Virginia	8	2004	9/15	15/20	15–60	Yes	Yes	No	Complex	1.4
62	45	6	Tamaulipas	Texas	10	2002	1/2	8/30	13–50	Yes	Yes	No	Simple	1.1
63	36	9	Mexico City	Texas, New Mexico, New Orleans, Florida, Virginia, California	4	2008	12/15	15/20		Yes	Yes	Yes	Complex	2.1
64	37	6	Mexico City	Texas	5	2007	24	20/25	16–40	Yes	No	Yes	Complex	2.1
65	35	5	Mexico City	Texas	15	1997	12/24	5/10	5–40	Yes	No	Yes	Complex	3.1
66	32	0	Puebla	California	7	2005	12	8	13–45	Yes	No	No	Complex	1.1
67	40	9	Mexico city	Texas	12	2000	9/12	7/20	15–40	Yes	Yes	No	Complex	1.1
68	38	6	San Luis Potosí	Texas	9	2003	3	7/15	15–30	Yes	No	No	Simple	2.1
69	36	6	San Luis Potosí	Illinois	11	2001	4	7/20	15–40	Yes	No	No	Simple	1.2
70	42	9	Tamaulipas	Texas	9	2003	2	7	18–25	Yes	No	No	Simple	1.2
71	32	9	Veracruz	Texas	6	2002	12/24	15/20	14–40	Yes	No	No	Complex	1.2
72	35	3	Puebla	Texas	7	2005	4	10	15–30	Yes	No	No	Simple	1.1
73	41	12	San Luis Potosí	Texas	6	2006	12	11	3–40	Yes	Yes	Yes	Complex	2.1
74	37	3	Tamaulipas	Texas	8	2004	2	7	17–30	Yes	No	No	Simple	1.2
75	36	3	San Luis Potosí	Texas	9	2004	4	7/10	15–30	only	No	No	Complex	2.1
76	40	3	Coatzacoalcos Veracruz	Texas, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina	16	1997	6	10/12	13–50	Yes	Yes	No	Complex	3.1
77	35	4	Mexico City	Texas	16	1997	24/36	5/8	13–35	Yes	No	No	Complex	1.1
78	37	6	Mexico City	Florida	8	2005	6/24	6/10	15–30	Yes	No	No	Complex	3.1
79	32	0	Mexico City	Texas	9	2004	3/4	6/8	17–40	Yes	No	No	Simple	3.1

Case	Age	Education	Origin	Destination	Experience as human smuggler				Profile of migrants				Type of network	Argument
					Years	Initiation	Crossings/ year	People/ crossing	Age	Women	>50	<12		
80	28	6	State of Mexico	California	10	2003	3/4	10	20–27	Yes	No	No	Complex	2.1
81	23	6	Mexico City	Texas	7	2006	6	9/15	18–30	Yes	No	No	Complex	2.1
82	35	0	Mexico City	Texas	8	2005	6/12	8/10	20–40	Yes	No	No	Complex	2.1
83	40	9	Mexico City	Texas	16	1997	3/4	15/20	15–40	No	No	No	Complex	1.2
84	36	0	Tamaulipas	Oklahoma	9	2004	4	10	18–35	Yes	No	No	Complex	2.2
85	38	0	Chiapas	Texas	8	2005	3/4	10	15–30	No	No	No	Simple	3.1
86	27	6	Veracruz	Texas	7	2006	3/6	10	18–40	No	No	No	Complex	2.1
87	42	6	Chiapas	Oregon	20	1993	6	8/12	21–35	No	No	No	Complex	2.1
88	37	6	Chiapas	Texas, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, Florida	15	1998	4/6	12	20–40	Yes	No	No	Complex	2.3
89	30	0	Chiapas	California	7	2006	4	12/15	20–25	Yes	No	No	Complex	2.1
90	32	9	Chihuahua	Texas, New Mexico, California	10	1997	4/12	12	18–25	Yes	No	No	Complex	3.1
91	35	0	Chiapas	Virginia	7	2006	6/12	15	20–40	No	No	No	Complex	1.2
92	31	0	Veracruz	Texas	11	2002	4/6	15/20	15–35	Yes	No	No	Simple	1.1
93	37	4	Veracruz	Texas	7	2006	4/12	10	20–40	Yes	Yes	No	Complex	2.1
94	40	0	Tamaulipas	Texas	12	2001	4	13/15	16–30	Yes	Yes	No	Complex	2.1
95	25	0	Veracruz	Texas, Florida	6	2007	6	8/10	< 40	No	No	No	Complex	2.2
96	38	0	Guerrero	Texas	9	2004	12	8/10	14–35	Yes	No	No	Complex	2.1
97	36	6	Veracruz	Texas	13	2000	5	10/12	20–40	Yes	No	No	Simple	2.1
98	41	4	Veracruz	California	8	2005	6	10	18–35	Yes	No	No	Complex	3.1
99	33	0	Veracruz	Arizona	12	2001	9/12	20/25		Yes	No	Yes	Complex	3.2

Case	Age	Education	Origin	Destination	Experience as human smuggler				Profile of migrants				Type of network	Argument
					Years	Initiation	Crossings/ year	People/ crossing	Age	Women	>50	<12		
100	25	0	Puebla	Texas	7	2006	4	10/11	10–40	Yes	Yes	Yes	Complex	2.1
101	35	9	Veracruz	Texas	15	1998	4/6	15	16–25	Yes	No	No	Complex	2.2
102	42	6	Veracruz	Texas, California, Louisiana	9	2004	6	15	18–32	Yes	No	No	Complex	1.2
103	42	6	San Luis Potosí	Louisiana	9	2004	6/12	10	16–40	Yes	No	No	Simple	2.1
104	28	8	Tamaulipas	Texas	5	2008	8/10	7/8	16–25	Yes	No	No	Complex	2.1
105	35	0	Puebla	Texas	13	2000	8/10	8/10		Yes	Yes	Yes	Simple	1.1
106	29	6	Nuevo León	Florida	4	2009	12	8/12		Yes	No	No	Complex	3.1
107	36	5	Tamaulipas	Missouri	7	2006	6/7	15	16–35	Yes	No	No	Complex	1.1
108	39	0	Tamaulipas	Texas	11	2002	8/12	10/15	20–40	Yes	No	No	Simple	1.2
109	37	0	Tamaulipas	Texas	6	2007	12	10/15	16–35	Yes	No	No	Complex	1.3
110	37	17	Tamaulipas	Oklahoma	7	2006	4	13	20–40	No	No	No	Simple	1.2
111	40	9	Tamaulipas	Iowa	5	2009	3	12	17–35	No	No	No	Simple	1.1
112	34	2	Tamaulipas	Texas	4	2010	2	72	20–35	No	No	No	Simple	1.1
113	39	5	Tamaulipas	Texas	10	2004	2	9/10		No	No	No	Simple	1.4
114	45	5	Tabasco	Texas	17	1987	4	10	16–25	Yes	No	No	Complex	2.1
115	39	9	State of Mexico	California	8	2006	2	8/10	15–27	Yes	No	No	Simple	2.4
116	32	6	Sonora	Texas, Florida, California, New York, Louisiana, Colorado	12	1995	6/12	7	14–20	Yes	No	No	Complex	2.1
117	45	0	Veracruz	Texas	15	1999	4/5	10/12	15–25	Yes	No	No	Complex	2.4
118	38	6	Chiapas	California	17	1997	4/5	5/7	16–23	Yes	No	No	Complex	2.1
119	35	0	Veracruz	Texas	6	2008	4/6	10/12	14–20	Yes	No	No	Complex	2.1

Case	Age	Education	Origin	Destination	Experience as human smuggler				Profile of migrants				Type of network	Argument
					Years	Initiation	Crossings/ year	People/ crossing	Age	Women	>50	<12		
120	39	5	Tamaulipas	South Carolina	6	2008	1	8/10	13–20	Yes	No	No	Simple	1.2
121	30	12	Tamaulipas	Texas	5	2009	1	10	14–22	Yes	No	No	Complex	2.1
122	35	0	Tamaulipas	Texas	10	2004	2	8/12	16–20	Yes	No	No	Simple	2.1
123	41	3	San Luis Potosí	Missouri	9	2005	2	12	16–22	Yes	No	No	Simple	1.1
124	36	0	Tamaulipas	Texas	12	1991	2/3	8/10	15–20	Yes	No	No	Complex	1.4
125	40	9	Coahuila	Texas	20	1995	3	12/15		Yes	No	Yes	Simple	1.1
126	42	6	Sonora	Arizona, Canada	18	1997	2	10	17–35	No	No	No	Complex	1.1
127	33	4	Nuevo León	Texas, Canada	8	2007	3	10	16–24	Yes	No	No	Complex	1.4
128	42	0	Chiapas	Texas	15	2000	2	10	16–30	Yes	No	No	Simple	1.2
129	39	8	Tabasco	California	16	1999	3/5	8/12	15–45	Yes	No	No	Complex	3.1
130	35	6	Tamaulipas	South Carolina	8	2007	2/3	14/20	16–30	No	No	No	Complex	1.1
131	36	8	Coahuila	Texas	5	2010	3	15/20	15–22	Yes	No	No	Complex	2.1
132	41	0	Oaxaca	Florida	15	2000	4	12/15	15–20	Yes	No	No	Simple	1.1
133	38	9	Nuevo León	Texas	5	2010	3	10	< 20	Yes	No	Yes	Complex	2.1
134	35	9	Guanajuato	Texas	8	2008	2/3	12/15	14–35	Yes	No	Yes	Complex	1.4
135	43	4	Tamaulipas	Texas	9	2007	2	15	17–30	Yes	No	No	Simple	2.3
136	42	6	Veracruz	Texas	10	2006	3/4	8/10	14–40	Yes	No	No	Simple	1.2
137	38	9	Tabasco	Texas	6	2010	3	10	16–24	No	No	No	Simple	1.1
138	39	0	Tamaulipas	Texas	12	2005	2	8	17–25	No	No	No	Complex	2.3
139	36	6	Oaxaca	Texas, Georgia	7	2010	2/3	10/11	16–40	Yes	No	No	Complex	1.1
140	40	12	Nuevo León	Texas	12	2005	2/3	10/13	16–30	Yes	No	No	Complex	2.3

Case	Age	Education	Origin	Destination	Experience as human smuggler				Profile of migrants				Type of network	Argument
					Years	Initiation	Crossings/ year	People/ crossing	Age	Women	>50	<12		
141	39	6	California	California	9	2008	3/4	10/13	14–30	Yes	Yes	No	Complex	2.3
142	24	9	Nuevo Leon	Texas	3	2015	2	10	< 20	Yes	No	No	Complex	3.1
143	40	6	Mexico City	Texas	11	2007	¾	8/10	16–25	No	No	No	Complex	2.1
144	32	16	Tamaulipas	Texas	8	2010	3	8/10	16–25	No	No	No	Complex	2.1

Source: Compiled by the author from data recorded in the interviews.

Education: Years of education of the interviewee.

Origin: Place where the interviewee originates from.

Destination: Place in the United States where the migrants are transported by human smuggling networks.

Experience as a migrant smuggler: Years: years of experience as a human smuggler.

Initiation: Year when interviewees began to work as human smugglers; Crossings/year: Number of times that the interviewee crosses the border each year; People/crossing: Number of migrants transported at every crossing.

Profile of migrants: Age: age of the migrants transported by the interviewee; Women: Transport women; > 50: Transport people 50 years old and older; < 12: Transport children of less than 12 years old.

Argument:

1.1. They had never witnessed the crossing of terrorists.

1.2. They didn't have an extensive knowledge of the border.

1.3. The US Government blames Mexico for all of their problems.

1.4. Terrorists can't cross through territories controlled by the drug cartels.

2.1. If illegal immigrants can pass also can terrorists.

2.2. If weapons and drugs are smuggled also terrorists can be smuggled.

2.3. Human smugglers are unaware of the intentions of their clients.

2.4. Terrorists can enter the United States because of corruption.

3.1. Terrorists cross by airports.

3.2. Terrorists pass through the border customs.

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