The Commercialization of International Migration

*Ninna Nyberg Sørensen*, Danish Institute for International Studies

nns@diis.dk

Over the last few decades a host of new business opportunities have emerged that capitalize on migrants’ desire to move or the struggle of governments to ‘manage’ migration. The actors comprising the migration industry range from small migrant entrepreneurs facilitating the transportation of people – or the connectivity between family members separated by borders – to multinational companies taking over e.g. privatized border guarding functions and deportations; and from NGOs performing different tasks linked booth to facilitating and managing migration, to organized criminal networks profiting from human smuggling and trafficking. The increasing commercialization of international migration fundamentally impacts not only migratory flows but also attempts to manage or regulate migration around the world.

Taking its point of departure in conceptual work currently carried out in relation to the ‘migration industry’ and the ‘commercialization of international migration’, the paper intends to discuss the relationship- or tension - between ‘transnational’ and ‘migration industry’ approaches to international migration. For empirical illustration, the paper draws on contemporary Central American experiences.