

**T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**



**IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND THE CHALLENGE OF THE EUROPEAN
UNION: A CASE STUDY OF MIGRANTS FROM LIBYA TO ITALY**

MASTER'S THESIS

Ngo Makendi Bassonog BABETTE

**Department of Political Science and International Relations
Political Science and International Relations Program**

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(Y1812.110063)

Department of Political Science and International Relations
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Thesis Advisor: Dr. Neslisah Leman Basaran LOTZ

June, 2021

ONAY FORMU

DECLARATION

I hereby declare with respect that the study “Irregular Migration and the Challenge of the European Union: A Case Study of Migrants from Libya To Italy”, which I submitted as a Master thesis, is written without any assistance in violation of scientific ethics and traditions in all the processes from the Project phase to the conclusion of the thesis and that the works I have benefited are from those shown in the Bibliography. (.../.../20...)

Ngo Makendi Bassonog BABETTE

FOREWORD

I would first like to thank and appreciate my project advisor, Dr. NESLISAH LEMAN BASARAN LOTZ, whose patience, guidance and sincere support even at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic was always forthcoming. Your efforts will always be remembered as she consistently allowed this paper to be my own work, but steered me in the right direction whenever he thought I needed it.

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June, 2021

Makendi Bassonog Babette

IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND THE CHALLENGE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION: A CASE STUDY OF MIGRANTS FROM LIBYA TO ITALY

ABSTRACT

This study focused on Italy in particular, as well as other African nations and investigated if Italy was considered a target country for migration or considered a transit country into other European countries by African migrants. It also examined the reasons that influenced African migrants to go through the Libya-Italian route into Europe and lastly, determined the human trafficking mechanisms in the Libya-Italian route into Europe.

The theoretical frameworks on which this study was predicated were the Push factors and the Pull factors that influenced migration to other nations. Furthermore, this study was designed as a qualitative research and employed structured face-to-face interviews that were mediated through Skype video calls to collect responses from the 20 interviewees selected for this research.

The study discovered that Italy is predominantly viewed as a sought after destination country by many African migrants and not merely a transit nation into other parts of Europe. This study also discovered that the major motivations that compelled Africans to migrate into Europe via the Libya-Italy route are extreme poverty, and the closure of the other routes into Europe, such as the Morocco/Tunisia route.

Lastly, the study also discovered that there exists high degree of synergy in the activities of the various bodies involved in the various stages of travel in the Libya-Italy route, as there existed seamless transition from one agency to another in the different stages of migrant's journey to Europe via this Libya/Italy route. On a final note, this study's recommendation among many others is that the governments of Libya and Europe should facilitate mechanisms that welcome migrants or refugees in line with the common objective of allowing personal independence and freedom from poverty.

Keywords: Migrant, refugees, illegal migrants, legal migrants.

DÜZENSİZ GÖÇ VE AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ'NİN GÖÇLE İMTİHANI: LİBYA'DAN İTALYA'YA GİDEN GÖÇMENLER ÜZERİNE BİR ÇALIŞMA

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada, özellikle İtalya'ya ve diğer Afrika ülkelerine odaklanılarak, Afrikalı göçmenler tarafından İtalya'nın göç için hedef ülke olarak mı yoksa diğer Avrupa ülkelerine geçiş ülkesi olarak mı görüldüğü araştırılıyor. Ayrıca Afrikalı göçmenleri Libya-İtalya rotasından Avrupa'ya geçmeye iten nedenler incelenerek Libya-İtalya rotasını kullanan kaçakçılığı mekanizmaları belirlenmeye çalışılıyor.

Bu çalışmanın dayandığı teorik çerçeve, diğer ülkelere göçü etkileyen itici ve çekici faktörlerdir. Ayrıca, bu çalışma nitel bir araştırma olarak tasarlanmış ve bu araştırma için seçilen 20 görüşmeci ile video konferans yoluyla yapılandırılmış yüz yüze görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Çalışma,

İtalya'nın ağırlıklı olarak birçok Afrikalı göçmen tarafından aranan bir hedef ülke olarak görüldüğünü ve yalnızca Avrupa'nın diğer bölgelerine geçiş ülkesi olarak görülmediğini ortaya koyuyor. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda Afrikalıları Libya-İtalya yoluyla Avrupa'ya göç etmeye zorlayan ana motivasyonların aşırı yoksulluk ve Fas / Tunus rotası gibi Avrupa'ya giden diğer yolların kapatılması olduğunu da ortaya çıkarıyor. Çalışma ayrıca, Libya-İtalya rotasında göçün farklı aşamalarında bir kurumdan diğerine sürekli geçişler olduğu için, bu çeşitli aşamalarda yer alan farklı organların faaliyetlerinde yüksek derecede sinerji olduğunu keşfetmiştir.

Son olarak, bu çalışmanın önerisi, Libya ve Avrupa hükümetlerinin, kişisel bağımsızlık ve yoksulluktan kurtulma ortak hedefi doğrultusunda göçmenleri veya mültecileri karşılayan mekanizmaları kolaylaştırması gerektiğidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Göçmen, mülteci, yasadışı göçmen, yasal göçmen.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFDB	: Africa Development Bank
BBC	: British Broadcasting Corporation 1
EC	: European Commission
HRW	: Human Rights Watch
IOM	: International Organization for Migration
OECD	: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
UNHCR	: United Nations High Commission for Refugees

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I. INTRODUCTION

The migration of African citizens to various countries in Europe via the Libyan-Mediterranean route remains and has constituted a recurrent issue between the two continents of African and Europe within the recent couple of decades, as the volume of migrants continue to grow consistently. This mass volume of migration of African citizens has adversely affected many of these European nations, particularly their economic, social, political, and in other cases, the security of these European nations. This has consequently compelled a number of European nations to devise a mechanism towards the prioritization of policy reformations in a bid to regulate migration and the African refugee crises (Park, 2015). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (UNHCR, 2015: p.56), in most instances, the migration of thousands of people from other nations into Europe on a yearly basis originates from predominantly the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa; therefore, a number of European nations are encountering challenges in a bid to keep up and maintain the European Union's standards for welcoming, and processing asylum applications, and consequently accommodating immigrants (Bogdan & Fratzke, 2015). Meanwhile, on the other side of the world, a number of African leaders also continue to fall short in their responsibilities of making available basic needs, infrastructural amenities, and welfare packages for their citizens in their different nations. The negative consequences of these failures is reflected on the continent of Europe and also in the growing volume of deaths of Africans who continually risk their lives to travel through the Libyan - Mediterranean route in the quest of seeking improved lifestyles in Europe (Telschow, 2014).

As revealed by International Organization for Migration, IOM (2017), governments in Europe are making concerted efforts to decrease the influx of African asylum seekers that gain access into Europe through the Libyan-Mediterranean route: this is being achieved through synergies with African governments in a bid to tackle the challenge of irregular migration and also make available more qualitative education, employment opportunities, and technological

capacities for Africans, in order to encourage them to stay in Africa. These collaborations among the governments of Europe and Africa have encountered some degree of success as reported by a BBC report (2018) and also a report by the UNHCR (2018) on migration. This was evidenced by a reduction of African migration from 2017 to 2019.

Furthermore, based on a European Commission report (2018), migrants and refugees are scattered across various nations in Europe. For example, Italy has encountered immense volume of migrants that arrived into the country over the years; or also Spain and Greece have witnessed substantial numbers of migrants looking for refuge in their countries. The International Organization for Migration, IOM, (2015) reveals that from the year 2014 and 2015, nations including Syria, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Cameroon, Somalia, Bangladesh, and Sudan proved to be the nations that have the largest source of migrants that arrived into Italy. Thus, as an African student, the author believes it would be appropriate and interesting to conduct this research on African migration to Europe. With special focus on the Libya-Italy route, and also examine the impact of these migrations on the social and economic stability of Italy among other variables that this study hopes to focus on.

Italy and many other European countries have for an extensive period of time been deemed as a locations where African migrants want to travel to, this is because many persons worldwide are constantly attracted to living in Italy and various other countries in Europe. This situation is especially so with Italy because of Rome and other numerous tourist attractions, which lure people from all spheres of life to desire to live in Italy. This desire to live in Italy or in other European nations makes reference to Africans' choices of labour migration to Europe, which began around the 1960s (Icduygu and Yukseker, 2012). In the same light, in this era, over 243 million persons reside and work in countries that are not their birthplace, thus implying that immigrants represent 3.3% of the Globe's population (Edo, Ragot, Rapoport, Sardoschau and Steinmayr, 2018). The population distribution of foreign-born people in economically stable and technologically advanced regions, such as Europe increased from about 7% in the 1990 to over 10% in 2015, as Borjas, (2014) opine that "Higher percentages of the developed world is now increasingly made up of nations of immigrants". For example, according to him, around 11.5% of France's population, 13% of the population of Germany, 20% of the United States of

America's and also 20% of Canada's population comprise of people that are all foreign-born.

Hence, it is based on the foregoing information provided in the paragraph above that this research attempts to examine if African migrants consider Italy as a target country for migration or consider Italy as a transit point into other European countries. In addition, this research seeks to know why African migrants go through the Libya-Italian route. And lastly, this study seeks to discover the human trafficking mechanism in the Libya-Italian route into Europe. This is because irregular migration is believed to possess demographic consequences on the labour markets, public finances and political landscapes of the host nations (Edo, et al, 2018).

A number of studies in the field of migration have focused its attention on different issues in the area of mass Africans' migration to Europe and its adverse implication on the social, political, economic and security wellbeing of these nations (Park, 2015). Similarly, some other researchers have also examined the influx of Sub-Saharan Africans to Europe and particularly emphasized on the reasons that these Africans abscond their birthplaces for European host nations mainly from the Africans perspective.

The goal of this study is therefore to carry out a qualitative research on the research objectives mentioned above. The importance of this research is that after its completion, future researchers would be capable of making reference to this study as reference material in the field of transcontinental migration, its regulation and control, its impact to the host countries, as well as its merits and demerits.

A. Statement of the Case

Migration is the movement of a person or a group of persons in order to settle in another location, usually across a political or administrative boundary. Migration could either be temporary or permanent, and could also be voluntary or forced. In some instances, this movement across international borders could be considered as irregular when migrants enter another nation and stay or work without the appropriate documents and authorization required by the immigration regulations (Rohrmoser, 2010).

The Italian context of migration is especially sophisticated and is characterized by various migratory dynamics and socio-political tensions. Italy is considered as one of the prominent destinations in Europe for migrants from Africa in the search of better opportunities. This has recently led to the increment in the arrivals of irregular entries of undocumented migrants and asylum seekers – predominantly from sub-Saharan African countries (Caritas Italiana. 2018). According to Istat (2017), within Europe, Italy has encountered the highest relative growth of her migrant population within the last two decades. Since 1998, the volume of immigrants has increased fivefold, with an increment of 2,023,317 people from 2007 to 2016 (Istat, 2017). Nonetheless, in this decade, regular inflows have decreased, portrayed in the slow growth of new foreign residents, around 33,000 from 2015 to 2017, (Caritas Italiana. 2018).

It is important to mention at this juncture that the reduction of the Italian labour market, as well as the emerging high rate of unemployment in the nation has compelled the government to immensely decrease the quota available for regular migrant workers. This restricted cap was imposed despite employers' rejection of the idea, based on their need for immigrant labour. Rather these employers of labour advised the government to hasten the procedures for employing asylum seekers and to re-creating legal migration into Italy for labour purposes.

Based on the information above, this research attempts to examine if African migrants view Italy as a target country for migration or merely consider Italy as a transit nation into other European countries. The research also seeks to know the reason why African migrants go through the Libya-Italian route into Europe. And finally to discover the human trafficking mechanisms that exist in the Libya-Italian route into Europe. This is because irregular migration is believed to possess demographic consequences on the labour markets, public finances and political landscapes of the host nations (Caritas Italiana. 2018).

B. Research Questions

Taking into consideration all that have been explained, the following research questions are formulated to guide the execution of this research;

1. Is Italy considered a target country for migration or considered a transit country into other European countries by African migrants?
2. What are the reasons that influence African migrants to go through the Libya-Italian route into Europe?
3. What are the human trafficking mechanisms in the Libya-Italian route into Europe?

C. Definition of Key Concepts

According to Rohrmoser (2010: 10), a migrant is “a man, woman or child who leaves his or her country of birth in order to live and work in another country”. In the same vein, a ‘Legal migrant’ as defined by Böhning (1983: 641) is a type of “migrant that legally get into a country and possess valid and adequate immigrant visa and proper documentation”. This type of migrant also gains access into a country through all the legal channels. Meanwhile, on the opposite end, an ‘Illegal migrant’ as defined by the 2006 Florence Summer School on Euro-Mediterranean Migration and Development, is “a person who, due to illegal entry or due to the expiration of visa, lacks legal status in a host country. The term is also applicable to migrants that infringe a nation’s admission rules and any other person that is unauthorized to remain in the host country. An illegal migrant could also mean an alien who gains access or stays in a country without the proper documentation”. Lastly, a ‘Refugees’, as defined by Rohrmoser (2010: 13) is “a person who is demanding asylum in a foreign nation, so as to escape persecution, war, terrorism, extreme poverty, famines, and natural disaster. People that ask for refugee status are sometimes considered as asylum seekers and the act of accepting such refugees could also be offering political asylum.”

D. Research Methods

While attempting to carry out this research, the qualitative method of research will be adopted for this study. This research depends on the primary means of data collection, especially in-depth interviews on respondents specially selected for this research. This primary means of data collection relies on the collection of direct, realistic and factual information from respondents, which is necessary and required

to fully explore the sophisticated and subtle true-life situations of humans, such as experiences, emotions and opinions (Denscombe, 2017). In addition, in the opinion of Denscombe (2010), interviews represent the most efficient method of data collection for qualitative studies because it collects more in-depth information from the interviewees regarding the subject matter. Based on this reason, the researcher – Makendi Babbette selected utilizing interviews as the primary source of gathering data from both selected African migrants and the selected European citizen that are this study’s respondents. These selected respondents will be twenty (20) in number. Fifteen (15) of the respondents will comprise of African migrants that passed through the Libya-Italian route into Europe, while the other five (5) respondents will comprise of European citizens that will offer their opinions from the Europeans’ perspective. The researcher also decided to use interviews that could be administered by using semi-structured types of interview questions (Denscombe, 2017, p. 270). The reason for this is because the researcher planned to acquire in-depth information, which is suitable for the study.

The ‘snowball’ sampling technique was employed as the devise for selecting the interviewees for this research. To explain this more clearly, I approached one of my aunts who had at one point in her life attempted to cross over into Italy using the Libya-Italian route, but was caught and was repatriated to Cameroon. I approached her as my first point of contact to be interviewed since she had firsthand experience about the issues that my thesis attempted to discuss. Then subsequently, after my interview with her, she referred me to other Africans that have also had experience journeying into Europe via the Libya-Italian route. This was the process I engaged in, till I was able to get 15 African interviewees for this research.

These interviewees comprised mostly of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants from Africa. In addition, in order to prevent the potential shortcomings of the ‘snowball’ sampling technique, the researcher counterbalanced this potential shortcoming of creating a biased sample by employing different locations for the ‘snowball’ sample – this means that the researcher approached various refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants from different African nations; consulted with different human rights and refugee bodies and also searched for friends or family members that have had various forms of experience about migration into Europe through the Libyan route for interview purposes for this research.

Data was collected from respondents through interviews that were comprised of questions created from former studies and designed to acquire logical responses to the research questions. All of the interviews were conducted in English language because all the respondents understood and speak English Language. In addition, the interviews were recorded for the sake of simpler transcription of information after the interviews. This recording of interviews was after respondents granted the researcher's request to record and save the interviews in a recording gadget to ascertain ease of access to replay, recollection and transcription of information.

A total of 20 respondents were the sample size for this research. This means that a total of 15 African migrants that reside and work in Italy and other parts of Europe, and another 5 Europeans or Italian citizens that work in globally recognized Non-Governmental Organizations were interviewed for the purposes of this research.

E. Demographic Analyses of the Interviewees

In this section, the interviewees' demographic information was analyzed according to their gender composition; age group and country of origin or former host nation prior to their migration through the Libyan route into Europe.

Table 1 Gender Composition

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	11	53.0	53.0	53.0
Male	8	42.0	42.0	95.0
Prefer not to say	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher's Compilation through interviews conducted on respondents

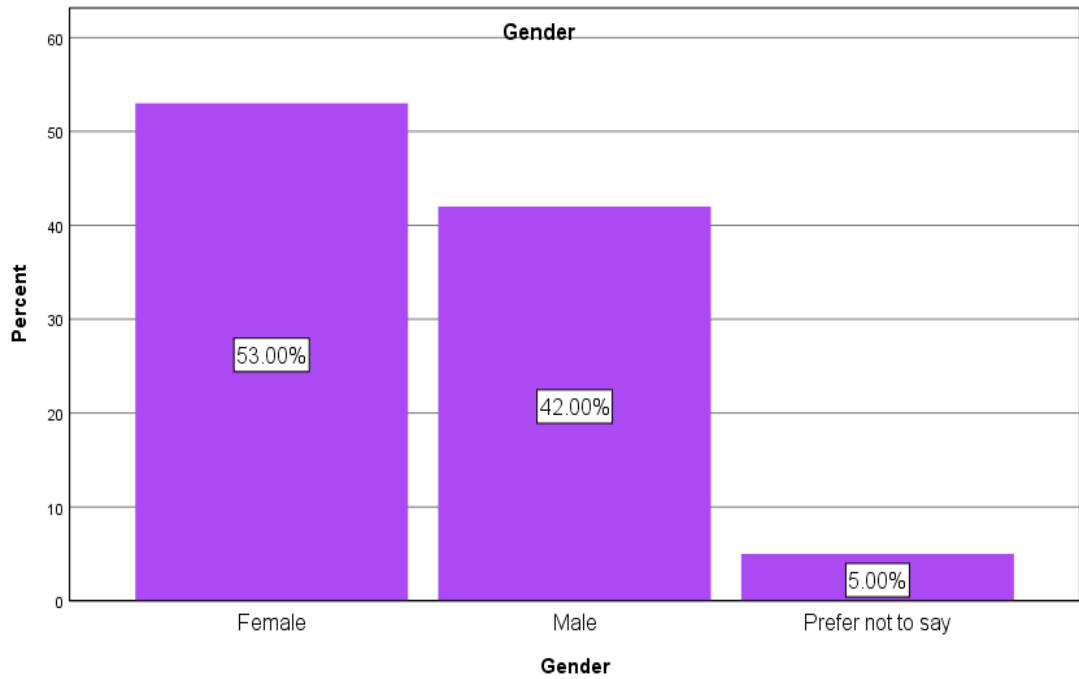


Figure 1 Gender Composition

Source: Researcher's Compilation through interviews conducted on respondents

As depicted in Table 1 and Figure 1 above, 11 (53%) of the interviewees were females, while the remaining 8 (42%) of the interviewees were males. The final 1 (5%) of the interviewees remained neutral and refused to reveal their gender. This indicated that a higher percentage of the interviewees were women.

1. Age Group

Table 2 below revealed that while 8 (40%) of the interviewees were below the age of 20 years old, 11(57%) of the interviewees fell within the ages of 20 to 35 years old, while only 1 (3%) of the interviewees fell within the age group of 36 to 40 years old. The implication of this is that 19(97%) of the entire interviewees were within the age group of 18 to 35 years, which is largely widely deemed as the youthful age in most nations of the world.

Table 2 Age Group

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Below 20 years	8	40.0	40.0	40.0
20 to 35 years	11	57.0	57.0	97.0
36 to 40 years	1	3.0	3.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher's Compilation through interviews conducted on respondents

2. Country of Origin or Host Nation Prior Migration

Data in Table 3 revealed that the interviewees were from Nigeria (2); Cameroon (2); Senegal (1); Ghana (1); Sudan (4); Eritrea (3); Somalia (2); Italy (3) and lastly, Germany (2). It is important to mention that the largest number of interviewees were from Sudan, followed by migrants from Eritrea. On the other hand, Ghana and Senegal presented the smallest number of interviewees for this research. In addition, personnel drawn from selected human rights and refugee bodies, most of whom are citizens of various European nations, especially Italy and Germany were also interviewed in order to get their opinions about African migrants and their experiences through the Libyan-Italian routes into Europe.

Table 3 Country of Origin or Host Nation Prior Migration

Nation of Origin	Frequency
Nigeria	2
Cameroon	2
Senegal	1
Ghana	1
Sudan	4
Eritrea	3
Somalia	2
Italy	3
Germany	2
Total	20

Source: Researcher's Compilation through interviews conducted on respondents

Having concluded the demographic analyses of the interviewees' characteristics, this research progressed into conducting the analyses of the responses presented by the interviewees in the course of providing responses to the various questions posed by the researcher. It is necessary to mention that these analyses were

done, while attempting to provide relevant responses to the relevant research questions. The implication of this is that a particular research question is selected, while the analyses of the interview responses were conducted in a manner that offers appropriate responses to the different research questions. In addition, while attempting to answer these research questions, references were made to the relevant authorities in order to give credibility to some of the conclusions that this research made based on the responses offered by the interviewees.

F. Method of Data Analysis

The responses from the interviews conducted in this research were transcribed, analyzed and extracted to support findings from the study.

G. Theoretical Frameworks

In order for the findings of this study to be considered more trustworthy and generalizable, it needs to be solidly founded and built on theoretical frameworks that will make it backed by a number of theories. Therefore, the push and pull theory as espoused by Ogu (2017, p. 49-69) were adopted as the foundation on which this research is built on. Hence, based on the stipulations of this theory, in the issue about international migration, there always exist factors and reasons that influence migrants to move away from their nations of birth and become pulled into other nations of the world. Therefore, by employing the theory of push and pull factors, the researcher becomes able to examine and interpret some of the reasons that compel Africans to abandon their nations and become pulled to Europe.

This push and pull theory of migration is currently popular because it is widely employed in both secondary and tertiary education as the most popular theoretical framework for essays and study in the area of transnational migration (Martin, 2008, p. 25). Based on the stipulation of this theory, migration is seen from two perspectives, namely: (the cause and effect of migration). These include the factors or forces that compel people to move from one point to another: widely known as the “push and pull” factors of migration. Meanwhile, while the push factors are widely predominant in the migrant’s nation of origin, the pull factors on the other hand are mostly existent in the host nation. These two factors are significant

in order for migration to happen (Kline, 2003, p. 107-111). From another perspective, demand pull factors are the forces that combine to attract a person to migrate to a certain location that possesses favourable qualities such as: better working conditions, social security, and a financially booming economy, while on the other hand, supply push factors or forces, such as: bad governance, unemployment, poor social security, poor healthcare services and a gloomy economic state could compel people into relocating to other nations (Zimmermann, 1996, p. 95-128).

Numerous scholars have categorized the push and pull factors into conventional factors, some of which are the economic; political; social, and demographic factors (Ogujiuba, 2019, p. 226-231). The subsequent paragraphs and subheadings individually discuss some of these factors or forces, and how they realistically influence peoples' decisions to migrate, especially from one nation to another.

- Political Forces.

Discussing the political force from the African perspective, there exist many political issues that sometimes forcibly compel Africans to migrate from their birth nations. For instance, in Congo, violent conflicts, underdevelopment, poverty, intense political instability and large-scale governmental corruption all represent some of the forces that drove thousands of Congolese into other nations, such as Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, South Africa and Tanzania (Dinbabo & Carciotto, 2015, p. 154-177).

Moving further, another example of political forces influencing decisions to migrate to another nation is found in Ethiopia where war and insecurity forced people to move out of their country (Lemenih, Kassa, Kassie, Abebaw & Teka, 2014). This took place at the end of the 1974 uprising. Meanwhile, apart from the two examples mentioned above, recent crises in the globe in this era continue to force thousands of people out of their home countries. In this regard, the mass migration of Africans to Europe has drawn widespread attention with media reportage likening it to an "exodus" where desperate Africans are escaping from poverty in their countries in the quest for opportunities in Europe (Flahaux & De Hass, 2016). In the opinion of a renowned scholar, there are estimates that political

instability could have displaced as many as over 12 million Syrians, while about another 4 million have left the country for other nations (Metcalf-Hough, 2020).

In furtherance, with the large influx of migrants, especially into Europe, certain nations such as Australia, the United Kingdom, France and even Italy, which is the focus of this research have designed policies that make it tough for migrants attempting to migrate into these nations. However, in spite of the existence of these strict policies, migrants still find loopholes to take advantage of and still find their ways around migrating to these nations. Meanwhile, in some other nations, rather than outright prevention of large-scale migration into their nations, some nations have designed corporate policies aimed at attracting very skilled migrants into their nation, and therefore offering these migrants better conditions of working, while also ensuring easy assimilation and integration into the new host nation (Cervan-Gil, 2016). This situation constitutes a solid form of pull factor capable of influencing many people to migrate and enjoy the benefit of these kinds of policies.

- Economic Forces

Scarce and very limited employment opportunities, coupled with large-scale unemployment constitute some of the push factors that contribute to migration in developing nations (Makakala, 2015). For instance, research findings from a study of highly-skilled Tanzanians migrants resident in the United Kingdom reveals that the Tanzanian migrants left their birth nation due to the unemployment level in their nation, making reference to the challenges of getting gainful employment without recommendation from a “godfather” (Makakala, 2015).

In the same vein, when economies collapse, scarcity of jobs and employment opportunities becomes the order of the day. All of these forces combine to force people to get in search for greener pastures in other nations. Therefore, it is not surprising to mention that migration also comes with strategies, therefore, it is normal that people will most likely migrate to nations where they foresee better economic and social conditions of living (Miheretu, 2011). Meanwhile, unemployment and poverty are widely considered as the major drivers of transnational migration Odorige (2016, p. 18) and also researches sponsored by the International Labour Organization (ILO) also learnt that a larger number of transnational migrants – more than 100 million migrants abandoned their birth

nations in search of better employment opportunities in various host nations (Ogujiuba, 2019, p. 226-231).

Moving further, in another research, which examined the push and pull factors of migration as it affected certain workers in developing nations, with particular focus on Indonesia. Findings revealed that income and unemployment represented the core reasons that Indonesian migrants relocated to Malaysia (Djafar and Hassan, 2012, p. 703). Findings from another research about the impact of international migration on social and economic development also revealed that an average international migrant's family income was two and a half times more than the non-migrant family's income. This is due to the remittances paid by migrants in the diaspora into their birth nations (Rasool, Botha, and Bisschoff, 2012, p. 11-20).

In addition, numerous literature reveal that migration from one location to another has provided migrants the opportunity to earn sufficient money in their various host country, to the point of becoming financially independent and remitting money to their family in their birth nations (Kainth, 2009, p. 82-116).

- Social Forces

Social forces in this era now constitute important components that compel people to migrate from one location to another. There is almost no doubt that one of the factors that attract migrants to any location is the existence of welfare benefits (Schulzek, 2012). Therefore, it is almost not shocking that due to the seemingly moderate remuneration for workers, coupled with obviously high social benefits that exist in most European nations, the rate of African migration towards Europe is very high – thus giving credence to the assertion that “the rate of migration to a particular country is dependent on the average income and the social benefits provided in that country, as long it is greater than in the income or the situation in the migrants' birth nations (Schulzek, 2012).

Social amenities and the availability of welfare benefits is predominantly scarce in developing regions of the world, especially in Sub-Saharan African. This to a large extent explains the situation in a large part of the African continent where poverty and sickness appears to be very rampant. Therefore, due to this situation, many African households usually are in constant search of opportunities to move to other nations where the welfare opportunities are better. Therefore, while doing this,

migration to Europe appears to be an easy choice, as most African migrants believe that better social opportunities exist in these European nations. This in fact is one of the major reasons, apart from the income and employment opportunities that spur African migrants into Europe.

1. The Push Factors

The thought and action of migrating from a nation to another is an important and life altering decision among humans. However, the inspiration to take this type of decision in most instances is usually inspired by a number of factors that one places side by side and determines the one that appears better off and offers more opportunities, then deciding to go for the better option. Some of these factors considered are the economic, social and cultural conditions, which are juxtaposed with a migrant's country of origin and the intended country of migration (Rohrmoser, 2010, p. 22).

In the analysis of migration, this push-pull theory as present by Ogu (2017, p. 49-69) has been the most popular theory adopted. Scientists and scholars from diverse fields related to migration have created this theory to explain the rationale for the international movement of people. Researchers in the field of political science, economics and sociology have all examined the reasons that compel the migration of people throughout time. The theory highlights the differences between variables, which compel humans to abandon their nations (push-factors) and also the variables that draw people or migrants to completely new nations (pull-factors).

Push-factors are the circumstances in the nations of birth that compel migrants to travel to other nations, while the pull-factors on the other hand represent the positive benefits that the host nation can present to a migrant. Therefore, the higher the variation of attraction within the nation of birth and the host nation, then the higher the possibility of migration to the other nation. Thus, making a connection with this research, it can be assumed that the European Union, coupled with its social, economic and security welfare and also the numerous opportunities that the region offers is considered very attractive for migrants emanating from African nations that have not been enjoying the benefits of the global economic growth after the Second World War. In addition, the very minimal geographical distance between North African nations such as Libya and the Southern borders of the European Union

allows for very easy migration (Dzvimbo, p. 1-2).

Therefore, factors such as high unemployment as elucidated by Butterwegge & Jäger, (1993, p. 20); differences in population growth between a migrant's nation of birth and host migrant nation (Cuschieri, 2007, p. 10-11); international war; repression of minorities; internal armed conflicts; poverty; and lack of natural resources, constitute some of the push factors that compel people to live their nations of birth and migrate to other countries of the world (Cuschieri, 2007, p. 10-11).

2. The Pull Factors

On the other end of the divide exist different variables, which draw the attention of foreign citizens, especially of Africans into Europe. Firstly, it appears logical that any worker from the African continent would dream of earning a salary in Europe, which in most instances could be as much as ten times more than the salary in their nation of birth: this also is enough inspiration to want to migrate from Africa into Europe. Other forms of motivations that drive migration into Europe include: the search for improved life quality that comes with increased opportunities for professional career growth, increased job mobility and the opportunity to access European's single market, alongside its nations' welfare mechanisms (Cuschieri, 2007).

Another crucial factor that is also serving as a pull factor that is attracting Africans to pass through Libya into Europe is Europe's considerably low fertility rates and also its quickly ageing labour force who are beginning to retire, with recent demographic forecasts predicting that labour in Europe is urgently required (Cuschieri, 2007).

In addition, other very important pull factors that attract Africans into Europe include some of the following; access to welfare; historical colonial links with colonial masters – for example, Algeria to France, Nigeria to Britain, et cetera; higher standards of living due to higher wages, with Europe having some of the best in the world; ageing society; chances for higher education, overall economic prosperity, and lastly, the demand of workers in certain sectors of the domestic markets (Cuschieri, 2007).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The recent sustained growth in the influx of asylum seekers into Europe has without doubt sparked increasing interest and attention toward the concept of migration (Lima, Bernabè, Bubbico, Leonardo, & Weiss, 2016, p. 9). In the year 2015, about 1.2 million persons sought for asylum in various European Union member nations. Furthermore, in only the September of 2015, the number of applicant for asylum surpassed the entire number of application made in the whole of year 2008. This present rise in migration poses a significant number of challenges for numerous European governments. In addition, the financial impact of refugees is substantially relevant for nations experiencing budgetary limitations or unprecedented volume of migrants, either coming in or merely passing through (Lima, et al, 2016, p. 9).

Migration has consequences on numerous interconnected aspects of growth and development for nations in diverse phases of development. Put in a broader perspective, the impact and consequences of migration on both the nations of origin and the host nation constitutes a topic of immense deliberation and also contrasting opinions, as several economists have devoted numerous scholarly efforts to the question of the impacts of migration, particularly migration from Africa into different European nations. As contained in a recent summary made by Sachs (2016), economists institutively consider migration as a flow from regions of lesser productivity of labour to regions that possess more labour productivity. Therefore, migration results into increased economic benefits. However, it is important to note that the distributions of these benefits are mostly unequal. In addition, unlike capital flows, migration also possesses cultural and social consequences that surpass solely the economic dimension– for example, in migrants’ nations of origin, migration usually causes brain drain and demographic or social imbalances (Lima, et al, 2016, p. 9).

This chapter therefore deals with the review of relevant literatures that discuss some of the reasons why people, especially Africans, through the Libyan route,

migrate to nations in Europe. This chapter also discusses in details some of the challenges that this pattern of migration causes on the host European nations and also discusses some of the collaborations and agreements that the European Union governments and some African government leaders have made in order to regulate the rate of irregular migration from Africa to European nations. Meanwhile, before proceeding into the major discussions of this chapter, a brief definition of irregular migrations would be presented, while also presenting brief information about Libya, which is one of the routes through which many African pass through to get into European nations.

A. Brief Description of Libya

Libya is a country positioned in the Maghreb region of North Africa. It shares borders with the Mediterranean Sea to the north, and other surrounding nations such as Chad, Niger Republic, Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt. According to the World Migration Report as published the International Organization for Migration, IOM, (2018), for numerous years, the Libyan-Mediterranean route into Europe has been utilized by many migrants, especially from Northern and Western African nations as the gateway transit and destination path into Europe, this is made possible because of Libya's geographic closeness and historical ties with Europe.

In the opinion of Kate (2017), the European Union's restrictions placed on inward regular migration could have resulted into the increment of irregular migration influx into Europe via dangerous and illegal routes. This restriction has caused migrants fleeing from war, and seeking improved livelihood opportunities in European nations to become victims to human smuggling and trafficking agents that assure these migrants easy passage across the Mediterranean Sea and national borders (North Africa Mixed Migration Hub, (MHUB), Country Brief, 2018). It is also important to stress that in spite of the constant news regarding persons who experience dehumanization or in some cases, die in the course of their attempt to cross over into Europe via the Libyan desert and across the Mediterranean Sea, many African migrants continually travel through this dangerous route in their plan to migrate into Europe.

Recently, the trend and nature of African migration into Europe through Libya has changed. For more that forty years, Libya represented a destination for

migrants in search of job opportunities, especially temporarily before journeying back to their country of origin (Hamood, 2016, p. 17-19). In numerous instances, African migrants frequently visited Libya in a bid to increase their annual income, while also keeping their home in their nations of origin (Hamood, 2016). The rationale for this back then was that the visits to Libya were considered temporary and merely to increase their financial capacities.

Meanwhile, fast forward to many years later, circa the turn of the 21st century, many African migrants began to consider Libya as a transit country into Europe and no longer a destination for residence. Therefore, in the view of African migrants, Libya became seen as a temporary stop in the journey towards Europe (Hamood, 2016, p. 17-19).

B. Irregular migration

Irregular migration refers to ‘the cross-border movement of persons that enter into a country without the country’s legal permission to do so (Vollmer, 2011, p. 2). In the same vein, the term ‘irregular migrants’ also describes migrants in any nation that are not entitled to either live nor work there, either because of the absence of a legal residence permit or due to the expiration of their allotted permit to stay in such a nation. It is also important to note here at this juncture that partly due to the complexities of definitions, statistical data regarding irregular migration and migrants are scarce.

Therefore, irregular migration is by definition not recorded and escapes statistical coverage. Implying that accurate measurement is almost unattainable (Cummings, Pacitto, Lauro and Foresti, 2015, p. 4). This literature review is majorly concerned about the factors that compel people to decide to engage in irregular modes of migration. Therefore, given that the crux of the study is on migration flows and the challenges that it poses, it is preferred to understand the reasons why people migrate to other countries, and which factors are the most compelling factors in inspiring migration by irregular means to a European Union nation.

C. Factors that inspire Migration

Every nation on earth is supposed to have and carry out some characteristics and functions in order to ascertain the welfare of her citizens – a responsibility that qualifies any nation to be regarded a worthy country (Okeyim, 2012). A number of these functions are ensuring the availability of basic job creation and employment, providing security, infrastructural amenities, well-equipped academic institutions, hospitals, and carefully designed policies that are beneficial to the citizens, while also ensuring the protection of citizens' lives and properties. Therefore, in instances where the functions mentioned above are lacking in any way, which is the situation in numerous African nations, then the migration of its people is also assured. Therefore, based on the Push and Pull theory, as espoused by Lee, (1966, p. 47-57), there exist stringent factors that push citizens away from their nation of birth or of origin, as they begin to look out for other nations that are able to provide them with better life opportunities than their nation of origin cannot afford to provide to them. These opportunities are regarded as factors that pull these other foreigners in to another nation. This theory is also applicable in this instance of discussing the factors that compel Africans to make use of the Libyan-Mediterranean Sea route as the gateway into Italy, which is one of the most popular nations in Europe. Therefore, based on existing available literatures, the following are some of the push factors that cause migration from Africa via the Libyan-Mediterranean Sea route into Italy.

1. Economic Crisis

Former studies have depicted that the migration of Africans to European nations is predominantly connected with economic challenges or other variables such as large-scale unemployment; inadequate income; the absence of economic growth; financial challenges and debts (Danaan, 2018). It is important to note that prior migration, most African migrants are either self-employed or earn daily wages that are not adequate to suffice for their monthly expenses. Therefore, based on the failures of most African governments to properly regulate, drive, stabilize and manage their economies for very many years, the migration flow of her citizens towards European nations has immensely risen.

2. Terrorism and Insecurity

Another core responsibility of government in any nation is the protection of the lives and belongings of her citizens. This is tantamount to the fact that if this governmental function is lacking, then the response of the citizens would be to devise means of ensuring their safety: one of which is migrating to other regions of the world where this important feature is assured. Many African governments have failed to make available sufficient security of lives and properties to their citizens, which allows for the existence of numerous political and religious insurgences across a number of African nations (Barungi, Odhiambo & Asogwa, 2017). This widespread existence of insecurity and terrorism and sometimes, armed conflicts have caused the huge spates of migration of African citizens out of the continent, in search of security of their lives and that of their families in European nations.

3. Political Instability

Political instability in numerous African nations such as Sudan, South Sudan, Libya, Somalia, and more recently Mali constitute another significant reason for the large-scale exodus of African citizens to Europe. In addition, series of religious crises, inter-tribal conflicts, the failure of political leadership, lack of trust and uncertainty in future governments, military coups, political turmoil and violence are some of the features of the political milieu in Africa (Okeyim, 2012). All of the features constantly contribute to the degradation of the African political systems, thereby compelling her citizenry to seek for more political and social stability in other parts of the world, particularly Europe (Herbert & Husaini, 2018).

D. Challenges of International Migration to Europe

According to an OECD (2014) report that emphasized solely on the economic aspects and contributions of migrants, it depicts that there are many roles that migrants perform in the economies of their host European nations. These roles include: filling important industries both in the developing and declining sectors of the economy; contributing to the flexibility of the labour market; boosting the working-age population; and, contributing with their skills to the human capital growth and technological advancement of the host nations (Caritas Italiana. 2018, p. 8-11). However, in spite of these seemingly positive contributions, there are also

other not so positive contributions of migrants that require discussion.

As mentioned in the paragraph above, migrants occupy significant roles in Italy by reducing the impact of negative demographic trends such as the ageing of workforce and the reduction of the general depopulation, which is adversely affecting the nation's economy. As contained in the yearly report on foreigners employed in the Italian labour market, published by the Italian Ministry of Labour (2018), it reveals that "within the last few years, the foreign component in the labour market has become important in the Italian economy, not solely due to the importance that the foreign workers have brought, but also by virtue of the compensatory effect they have created up until 2015*, simultaneously in the EU and non-EU labour force. This has succeeded in offsetting the contraction of employment that affected the Italy as a nation" (Italian Ministry of Labour Report, 2018: 2-3).

Fast forward to two years later, in 2017, the migrant population that falls into the working age bracket (15- 64 years) in Italy constituted 10.5% of the entire nation's employment, amounting to about a little lesser than 4 million persons. At an in-depth level, the Italian labour market of foreign workers appears to be divided along two categories namely: the non-EU foreigners and the EU foreigners (Italian Ministry of Labour Report, 2018: 2-3).

The economic consequences of irregular migration on both the host nations and the nations of origin range from averse to beneficial consequences. With regards to European nations that constitute the major host nations for irregular migrants, one of the beneficial economic consequences is that it decreases the pressures of employment that many European nations are encountering due to insufficient supply of workers (Ogu, 2017, p. 49-69). However, a number of these European nations also encounter unemployment, particularly during economic recessions. Nonetheless, these illegal migrants constitute a veritable source of cheap and affordable low-skilled labour employable by European employers. This is necessary as it facilitates economic growth, which is only achievable using a vibrant working population.

However, from another perspective, irregular migration is also capable of possessing adverse consequences on the economies of the destination nations. This is because it reduces the remunerations for the low-skilled services and employment opportunities for the host nation's citizens that have low skills or lesser academic qualifications. This is usually the situation when there is a large influx of immigrants

(Ogu, 2017, p. 60). In addition, irregular migration is also able to increase the rate of unemployment within the host nation, especially in times of economic recession, which leads to high unemployment rates.

Another negative economic consequence caused by irregular migration to Europe is that it leads to additional costs for the European nations, in terms of providing for the housing and welfare of these illegal migrants, particularly migrants that enter into a host European Union as refugees and asylum seekers. In furtherance, the expenditures made by various governments of EU nations have significantly risen recently due to their attempts to regulate the influx of irregular migrants and to regulate their borders. The consequence of these increments in illegal migrations into Europe has stretched the budgets of the European Union in order to permit them to make provision for these foreigners in European nations (Ogu, 2017, p. 60).

In the same vein, according to a European Commission Report (2014), the European Commission gave approval of 2.4 billion Euro to member nations of the European Union to facilitate and aid the nations that are predominantly affected in managing the growing rate of illegal migrants from North Africa and the Middle East. This form of migration poses adverse consequences because the finances that would have been directed to other purposes, such as the revival of the declining economies in Eastern Europe are now dedicated towards tackling the challenge of illegal migration.

Irregular migration also has other psychological and social consequences. For example, recently, there has been a rise in the recurrence of xenophobic feelings against immigrants in the advanced nations, particularly with the high rate of terrorist attacks carried out by some of these illegal immigrants (Ogu, 2017, p. 62). This assertion can be illustrated with the terrorist attack wreaked on French citizens in France from January to November 2015. It can thus be implied that irregular migrations is capable of destroy social cohesion and unity already existent among the citizens the host European nation. Another challenging outcome of the irregular migration of Africans into these European nations is that it creates the issue of national identity and also gives birth to the challenge of minorities via inter-racial marriages. Furthermore, in instances of economic recession or political conflicts, the availability of foreigners is capable of aggravating the situation through increasing the feelings of hatred towards these immigrants who are mostly accused of the

economic or political challenges that the host nation encounters (Ogu, 2017, p. 63).

The discussion above has briefly discussed some of the negative consequences of irregular migration from African in the host European nations. The last section of this paper will discuss some of the collaborations made between the European Union and some African political leaders in a bid to control the influx of Africans into various European nations. This study will focus on two of these major collaborations and how these agreements are designed to regulate the mass movement of African into Europe.

E. The European Union's African priority on Migration Partnership Framework

The March 2016 European Union-Turkey statement represents the template for the type of migration partnership between the EU and some African nations. The European Union has been particularly concerned about the immediate and long-term effects of the irregular arrivals of Africans especially via the Greece route. Therefore, in reaction to this, the EU promptly launched a partnership framework in June 2016 as a measure of the European Agenda on Migration (European Agenda on Migration, 2016). This agenda aimed to “achieve a coherent and tailored undertaking where the Union and its Member States act in a coordinated manner, putting together the instruments, tools and leverage to reach comprehensive partnerships with third countries to better manage migration in full respect of our humanitarian and human rights obligations” (European Agenda on Migration, 2016, p. 85). This framework was a combination of short-term objectives, which included (saving lives in the Mediterranean; increasing the return rate to countries of origin and transit; allowing migrants and refugees to remain closer to home and curbing them from going on life threatening journeys) and also long-term goals such as (tackling the root causes of irregular migration or forced displacements; creating capacity in the birth nations of African and building the relevant institutions).

On the surface, this partnership framework appeared like the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility where the dialogue frameworks and policy instruments, such as the mobility partnerships, are sustained. However, the goals of this framework were succinctly made clear: and this was that the union was going to intensify efforts to increase the returns and readmissions of irregular migrants to their

nations of origin. Subsequently, the European Union established new forms of financial funds (trust funds) in order to gather the EU and its member nations' resources to ensure a more flexible and quicker, implementation than the normal EU financial instruments. Thus, from 2015, a regional trust fund meant to respond to the Syrian crisis, another trust fund meant for refugees in Turkey and thirdly, an emergency trust fund meant for Africa were also created (European Agenda on Migration, 2016).

In addition, this partnership framework varies from the Global Approach in terms of stronger political pressure on third nations and higher alignment between the actions of the EU and its member nations' diplomatic corps. The European External Action Service is more conspicuously in the helm of affairs, under the guidance of the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Apart from the intervention by European heads of government, such as the German Chancellor or the French President, that raised the migration issue in their visits to any third country, highlighting the need for the partnerships before the Europeans (Collet, E, and Ahad, 2017). So far, this has constituted the external face of the European asylum and immigration policy under the guidance of the Ministries of the Interior.

Moving further, the EU specified the overarching geographical scope of this policy. The Communication from the European Commission in June 2016 targeted 14 nations in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The list was subsequently further pruned down into five African nations namely: Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. This choice was reached via their situation on the central Mediterranean migration route. Meanwhile, these frameworks and objectives imposed by the EU is capable of creating a political implication, because they are capable of wreaking negative consequences on the relationships established on the subject between the European and African nations within the context of past dialogues. Since 2006, the Euro-African dialogue on migration and development has united 60 European and African nations and also the European Commission and the Commission of the Economic Community of West African Countries (ECOWAS). In addition, the Rabat Process has succeeded in building a balanced region of exchange between the parties on both sides of the Mediterranean, even though its operational effectiveness remains restricted (ICMPD and FIIAP, 2015).

F. The Italian-Libya Memorandum Of Understanding On Illegal Migration

The government of Italy, in the month of February 2017, got into an agreement with Libya. This agreement, also known as a Memorandum of Understanding between the two nations was designed to prevent what was perceived as “illegal immigration” from the Libyan coastlines into Italy (Memorandum of Understanding between Libya and Italy, 2017). The articles of agreement under this memorandum of understanding was that Italy would provide Libya with investments, which were targeted at improving Libya’s economic development and stability, while also making provisions for boats to facilitate border security apparatus. The agreement also entailed Libya intercepting ships or boats that ferried migrants at sea and also curbing prospective migrants from leaving her (Libyan) territory to travel into Europe, especially Italy via the Mediterranean Sea. The Memorandum of Agreement also made provision for funding for the Libyan centers for detention and also for other organizations that participated in the compelled and also voluntary departure of migrants from the country.

It is important to note that a number of challenges were birthed with the adoption of this Memorandum of Understanding. For instance, very recently, Libya as an entity has been a subject of scrutiny by numerous non-governmental international organizations because of her widespread human rights violations, human trafficking and inhumane treatment of migrants and refugees (Vari, 2020, p. 105-109). Refugees of migrants are widely discriminated against, and are also detained in very harsh conditions. In addition, a sizeable number of migrants also become subject to human traffickers and other forms of crime against humanity. Furthermore, there are allegations and suspicions that Libya, with the support of the Italian government, sends migrants back to their nations of birth, without consideration of their status or requirement for international protection. Most times, they do not care about the safety of the returned migrants. There are widespread speculations that Italy as a nation, alongside the European Union as a continental international association are aware of all of these issues, but prefer to rather dismiss all of the atrocities committed between Libya and Italy in the course of their dealings with immigrants, all directed towards preventing migrants from crossing over into

Europe (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

Prior to the creation of this Memorandum of Understanding, it is necessary to mention at this juncture that Italy has always served the dual purpose of either being the destination or passageway for numerous migrants. A large percentage of these migrants have predominantly emanated from North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe, and Asia, in search of residency or passing into other European countries (Scotto, 2017). Meanwhile, after the Arab Spring, the volume of migration that emanated from both North-Africa and the Middle Eastern nations into Europe immensely intensified, and Italy's geographical positioning at the border of the EU and also right on the Mediterranean Sea automatically positioned the country as a point of entry into Europe (Scotto, 2017). In this regard, in the year 2013 alone, about 335,000 irregular migrants landed into Italy through the Mediterranean Sea, thrusting immense pressure on the Italian immigration system and also leading to the recent European migration crisis (Redazione Ansa, 2017).

In furtherance, Italy has demonstrated commitments to the wellbeing of refugees via the provisions of her international instruments. In this regard, apart from establishing the rescue system known as the Mare Nostrum, she also promulgated policies and laws that were in agreement with international conventions that are associated with the protection of refugees as soon as the step into Italian land. This led to the creation of the national asylum system in 2001 (Vari, 2020, p. 105-109).

However, fast forward to the year 2015, as a response to the recent refugee crises in Europe, the Italian citizens began to portray increasing degrees of xenophobic acts, sentiments and racism, which resulted to the populist and far-right government parties building momentum to push for the anti-immigration agenda (Strickland, 2018). Consequently, this inspired the left-wing Italian government to demand from the EU and other member nations to become more cooperative and supportive towards migration, while, also giving consent to stricter immigration policies (Scotto, 2017). It is against the background above that Italy reached an agreement with Libya to regulate and control illegal immigration – confirmed via the MoU.

Having discussed some of the background occurrences that led to the 2017

Memorandum of Understanding between the governments of Libya and Italy, it is pertinent to also discuss some of the articles and provisions of the agreement. The agreement is three pages long, and comprises of eight articles. The initial first two provisions of the agreement specify the two nation' areas of commitments. For instance, as contained in Article 1 of the agreement, Italy made a commitment of financial investments in the areas impacted by illegal migration for sectors such as renewable energy and infrastructure. The goal of this was to make available other forms of employment rather than smuggling as a source of revenue. In the second Article, both Libya and Italy made a commitment towards completing the land border control satellite detection mechanism. In addition, both Libya and Italy made commitments towards ensuring that Libyan hands in the hosting centers were trained to "face illegal immigrants' conditions." Finally, Italy was committed towards development programs in Libya aimed at establishing employments and income, while simultaneously replacing contraband and human trafficking, which militias and irregular local groups largely benefit from (Walsh and Horowitz, 2017).

On the other end, Article 3 facilitated the establishment of a committee tasked with overseeing the implementation of the agreement, while Article 4 dealt with the funding of the entire memorandum of understanding. Article 5 in its part succinctly described both parties' commitment to understanding and the application of the MoU in tandem with the international and human rights obligations. The final three articles however treated the agreement's methods of enforcement and other procedural matters.

From a general perspective, the 2017 MoU was targeted at preventing or regulating migration volumes into Italy, while simultaneously facilitating economic development in Libya. Thus, while the articles as contained in the agreement clearly stated the terms and responsibilities of both parties, it appeared as though immense attention was directed towards securing Libya's borders in order to curtail to a very large extent the volume of illegal migration at all costs whatsoever (Amnesty International, 2017). However, within the last couple of years, Italy has continually remained vociferous concerning her need for a panacea to the challenges of the intense fluxes of migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea into the country. In lieu of this, the country has been praised on many occasions for conducting rescue operations on the Sea, an action that continues to save numerous lives, especially

during shipwrecks at sea (Scherer and Massimiliano, 2014). However, in spite of this global praise, Italy as a European nation continues to maintain her stance of being incapable of bearing the double burden of helping and taking illegal migrants in such huge volumes and has reached out to the EU to offer a more durable panacea to this challenge on several occasions (Scherer and Massimiliano, 2014, p. 11). The diagram below depicts the number of migrants that have arrived into Italy by sea from year 2014 to 2020.

Previous years	Sea arrivals	Dead and missing
2020	34,154	955
2019	11,471	754
2018	23,370	1,311
2017	119,369	2,873
2016	181,436	4,578
2015	153,842	2,913
2014	170,100	3,093

Figure 2 Migrants Arrivals into Italy by Sea, 2014-2020

Source: Operational Portal: Refugee Situations available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org>

G. The Valletta Action Plan: Financial Diplomacy

In November 2015, the European Union and its member nations extended invitations to their African partners to Malta in a meeting later known as the ‘The Valletta Summit’. During this meeting, there was an avenue to emphasize the principles of solidarity, collaboration and the shared responsibility for regulating migration influx in all ramifications (Tardis, 2018, p. 15). Therefore, the European nations attempted to involve African nations in matters that they had formerly decided to leave untouched. The political statements at this form of summit among heads governments were followed by detailed objectives outlining five areas of priority for action. According to Tardis, (2018, p. 15), they included the urgent need to do the following:

- Tackling the causes of irregular migration and forced displacement of people;

- Boosting co-operation about legal migration and mobility; and strengthening the protection of migrants and asylum seekers;
- Curbing irregular migration, smuggling of migrants and human trafficking, and combating these bad agents;
- Building cooperation and improving co-operation on returns, readmission and reintegration.

During this summit, the European Union launched the European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) for stability, in a bid to tackle the causes of the irregular migration and the occurrence of displaced persons in Africa. This trust fund was planned for a duration of five years, out of which about 3.6 billion euro was made available to achieve the objectives set above. This European Union Emergency Trust Fund, (EUTF) is targeted at facilitating the improvement of migration regulation and also meant to solve the causes of irregular migration. It comprises three functional geographical constituents namely: the Sahel region and Lake Chad basin; and the Horn of Africa; North Africa (Tardis, 2018, p. 15).

This trust fund has established itself as the most prominent tool of the migration partnership policy. It depicts the manner in which financial instruments is the major lever of the EU's external policy. It also represents the symbol of closer collaborations, or even unification of policies in the area of migration policy, security and development objectives (Krotov-Sand, 2017). Four important goals were assigned to this Trust Fund and they are: the provision of better economies and employment opportunities; increasing the resilience of communities, especially the most susceptible communities, and also refugees and displaced persons; increased and improved regulations of migration in countries of origin, and improving governance, control of conflicts and ensuring decrement of forced displacements and irregular migration.

H. Alternative Migration Routes into Europe

For numerous African migrants and refugees, the journey into Europe is filled with immense danger and life-threatening terrains, which are experienced at different phases of the very long journey. In most instances, the journey comprises three

phases namely: the crossing of the desert into the Libyan border; the journeying within Libya – commencing from the frontier and progressing towards the northern coastal areas, and lastly, a boat crossing from Libya through the Mediterranean Sea into Italy.

It is important to note that with more than about 4000 kilometers of land borders, all of the six (6) nations that share boundaries with Libya on its south, east and western coasts – Tunisia, Algeria, Chad, Niger, Egypt and Sudan, all function as points of entry into Europe for African migrants (Hamood, 2016, p. 17-19). Occasionally, certain African migrants and refugees utilize existing trans-Saharan trade routes that have been in operation for centuries for the purposes of the transportation of goods from Libya and other neighbouring African nations especially Sudan and Chad (Pliez, 2004, p. 42-58).

Moving further, in certain instances, the routes that African migrants take into Europe are determined by the nature of the journey, especially if the traveler can legally enter Libya or otherwise. For certain Africans, such as Egyptians who always have legal access into Libya, they experience straightforward journey. However, for sub-Saharan Africans, in their journey into Libya, they encounter very long desert crossing experiences under extreme weather conditions, encountering starvation and thirst, and could lose their lives in the process.

In the final analysis, apart from the popular, but dangerous Libya-Italy route into Europe, other available, but less frequently used routes are the following three routes: the first route passes via Darfur, a route that is presently officially closed (Pliez, 2004, p. 42-58). The second route, which is less utilized, also passes via Dongola in northern Sudan; and the last is through Chad.

I. The Italian Refugee Reception System

For African migrants who gain access into Italy via Libya and the Mediterranean Sea, they are firstly received in Sicily, where there exist two reception centers for asylum seekers, known as “*Centro per Richiedenti Asilo*”, (CARA): CARA Mineo and CARA Caltanissetta. Between the two reception centers for asylum seekers, “*Mineo*” was seen as the biggest refugee accommodation in all of Europe, but was shut down in July 2019 (Pliez, 2004). After the shutting of the

reception centers for asylum seekers, the system of hotspots was created by the European Union institutions to devise a political panacea to the redistribution of migrants that arrived at the Italian ports, such as Lampedusa and Sicily. The goal was to relieve nations and find a more “humane” transitional political solution.

In both of the two reception centers for asylum seekers, the facilities there are designed to house migrants for a short period of time, pending when they are going to be identified, recorded, enrolled for processing for either seeking asylum or refugee status and lastly, fingerprinting (Pliez, 2004).

III. ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter is one of the most important parts of this research, as all the information collected during the interviews are interpreted, analyzed and discussed. It is necessary to clarify that the findings presented in this section were reached based on the data from the interviews conducted on the selected African refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants who migrated into Europe through the Libya route. Interviews were also conducted on two (2) members of staff of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and also three (3) members of staff of the Human Rights Watch (HRW), both of which represented the selected human rights and refugee bodies, which were available at the time for the researcher to carry out interviews on.

As a result of the nature of this thesis, a qualitative research methodology was employed, thus suggesting that this research sought to achieve its aims and objectives, while also answering the set research questions using responses provided through face-to-face interviews. The outcomes of the qualitative data were presented in excerpts and comments, while all the data gathered through the interviews were analyzed and discussed with the goal of answering the research questions set out for this research. The timeframe within which the interviews were conducted was between July and October 2020.

In order to gather responses from the identified respondents, who are also referred to as interviewees in the course of this research, the researcher had to become creative and innovative, particularly during this season of the COVID-19 pandemic that came with travel restrictions and ban on human interaction. This made it impossible for the researcher to travel to Italy and other European nations to conduct real life face-to-face interviews with the respondents. Therefore, the researcher conducted all of the interviews with the Skype video calling software, since it was impossible to physically meet for the interviews. The way the meetings were set up was that the researcher initially established contact with each of the interviewees and expressed her intention of interviewing them for her research, after

which a date and time for each of the interviews was fixed. All of the interviews lasted approximately for an hour each. Prior to commencing the analyses and discussions of the interviewees' responses to the three research questions, it is important to mention that in order to protect the identity of interviewees selected for this research, the researcher only used the first alphabets in both their first and last names. For instance, using (S. K) as the name of an interviewee instead of using (Seyi Kotila), which is the full name.

The questions asked during these series of interviews were;

1. In your opinion, do you believe that Italy is a target country for migration or merely a transit country into other European countries by African migrants?
 - a. If you believe Italy is a target country for African migrants, what do you think attracts them to Italy?
2. What are the factors that influence African migrants to migrate into Europe via the Libya-Italy route?
 - a. In your opinion, do you think that the Libya-Italy route into Europe is legal?
3. Tell me what you know about the human trafficking mechanisms in the Libya-Italian route into Europe?
 - a. What are the consequences of these human trafficking mechanisms to the African migrants and to any of the receiving European country?
 - b. How can the human trafficking in this route be regulated?

Having briefly provided information about how the interviews were arranged and conducted, the following paragraphs and headings constitute the analyses and discussions of this study's findings, which is inspired by the interviewees' responses.

A. Is Italy considered a target country for migration or merely considered a transit country into other European countries by African migrants?

- Summary of Research Findings

This section attempted to put in proper perspective the assertion whether African migrants in Europe considered Italy as a target country for migration or

whether they viewed Italy as merely a transit nation through which they make their way into other European countries. The questions asked by the interviewer during the interview also sought to discover the reasons and explanations for the interviewees' responses. For instance, if the interviewees revealed that Italy was a target country for migration, the researcher also sought to discover the factors that attracted them to Italy. Thus, in a bid to answer the study's first research question, information was gathered via the conduct of interviews, which were subsequently transcribed and analyzed using excerpts from the interviewees' comments and summaries of their responses to questions asked by the researcher. The outcomes of the responses provided by the interviewees are presented below and all of the responses attempt to provide answers to Research Question One.

Before going into the individual responses that each of the respondents provided, it is important to briefly summarize the findings made while attempting to answer research question 1, which formed the basis of this discussion and analyses. A larger percentage of the interviewees revealed that in the question of whether Italy is considered as either a destination or transit country by African migrants, twelve (12) out of the 20 respondents believed that Italy is a destination country for these African migrants. Meanwhile, another six (6) of the interviewees out of 20 expressed that Italy is merely a transit country through which migrants passed through, into other European country. It is also important to note that another two (2) out of the 20 interviewees were neutral and retorted that the migrants' decision of if Italy should be considered either a destination country or transit country be made by the concerned migrants.

The interpretation of these responses can therefore suggest that majority of African migrants into Europe always consider Italy as a destination nation and although the reason for this situation is largely unknown, but it could also be connected with the favourable and human conditions that the migrants encounter in Italy's refugee camps and other Italian welcoming services. A proof that Italy's environment and surroundings, coupled with the humane treatment that migrants receive could be factors that form migrants' decision to reside in Italy is seen in comments made by the interviewees. For instance, Miss B.B in her response revealed that she considered Italy as a frontline destination country for many African migrants and also added that some of the reasons that encouraged her to stay in Italy were the

existence of a higher percentage of survival for African refugees and migrants in Italy than in other European countries; higher and more effective human rights protection and aid for asylum seekers; more employment opportunities and more importantly, a receptive environment for the integration of African Migrants. Without all of these factors, these African migrants would probably have chosen other countries and not Italy.

Therefore, this discussion in summary assumed that Italy was largely seen as a prominent destination nation for migration and not simply as a transit nation to other European countries. Additionally, based on the responses presented by the interviewees, the major factors that encouraged migrants to settle in Italy are: a welcoming and conducive society; economic opportunities; favorable wages; lesser rate of racism than other European countries; upholding of fundamental human rights; ease of documentation for both refugees and asylum seekers and many other positive reasons. The following paragraphs thus present the individual responses of each interviewee.

- Analyses of Migrant Africans' Interviewees' Responses

According to the response provided by F.A, who is a Nigerian refugee in Italy, he was quoted saying that: "I don't think Italy should be considered as a transit country to other parts of Europe because of many reasons, with the most important reason being the fact that Italy offers one of the best economic opportunities for African migrants that most other European nations". In his explanation, he claimed that Italy is one of the foremost and most developed nations in Europe, therefore many Africans, including him were enthusiastic of coming to Italy to make some living for themselves. He also added that the employment opportunities and wages for African migrants in Italy were far better than the status quo in many other European nations. Therefore, he did not see any logic in passing through Italy into other European countries.

Furthermore, when asked about the factors that attracted African migrants, especially him to come to Italy, he explained that it was majorly the economic opportunities that made him risk his life through the Libyan-Italian route into Italy. In his words:

"I was jobless for more than three (3) years in Nigeria even after my master's

degree in Civil Engineering and my sufferings were getting so unbearable, so I decided to take the risks in order to get a better livelihood in Italy. In reality, I did not have any specific country in mind when I left Nigeria, but having compared the economic realities here in Italy with other European countries, I decided to stay back in Italy”.

In his opinion, in Italy, there are more employment opportunities for African migrants, even though the jobs are predominantly menial jobs. In addition, the wages are fair, while racial discriminations are far lesser in Italy than in other European nations. In his explanation, those were some of the major reasons that spurred his decision to reside in Italy and try to make a living.

Moving further, Miss T.O, who is also a Nigerian lady in her opinion stated that from a general perspective, the geographical location of Italy, which shares boundaries with a number of other European nations, especially in the northern parts of Italy makes many African migrants consider Italy as a transit country. This situation according to her response is especially the case when migrants have other particular European nations in mind apart from Italy. However, from her personal standpoint, she opined that: “For a very long time, I have always desired to come to Italy, especially due to my love and attraction to Rome. So, when the opportunity came for me, I decided to journey to Italy via the risky Libyan-Italian route”.

In her expression, she admitted that she was aware that the journey was very dangerous through the Libyan-Italian route, but she had no other choice, considering the fact that she did not have the financial capacity to travel to Italy through legal and less risky means. Therefore, according to her response, to her Italy was never a transit country rather was a destination to her because of the economic opportunities that were available to her in Italy. Quoting her words: “Now, I have a stable source of income and although it comes from a menial job, I am very satisfied with it because it caters for my needs and I am still able to take care of my family back in Nigeria. I remember that in Nigeria, I could not do all of these”.

In addition, when asked about the factors that attracted her to Italy instead of any other European nation or even her country birth nation, her response was very simple and straight to the point. According to her:

“Apart from my attraction to Rome as I mentioned earlier, there was

practically nothing for me back home. I wanted to work and spent years looking for employment but I couldn't find any. Besides, my family really depended on me and I continually disappointed them, so when my friend informed me about the opportunity to come to Europe through Libya, it reignited my desire to see Rome, so I sold my mother's only piece of land and used the money to make the journey to Italy. The journey was filled with bitter experiences, but now I'm able to take care of myself, my family in Nigeria and at least enjoy some of the basic things in life –these were the opportunities that attracted me to Italy from the beginning”.

Moving over to another interviewee known as D.G, a man from Cameroon. He claimed that his destination was to get to Sweden; therefore, Italy was merely a transit country to him. He however added that the reason he was currently in Italy was in order to get legally documented as an asylum seeker in Italy before migrating further to Sweden. In his words:

“The documentation and assimilation of African migrants into Sweden's society and economy is tougher than the situation in Italy, which permits for smoother and easier documentation and employment of African migrants, hence, my goal here is mainly to become successfully documented as an asylum seeker in Italy, after which I am able to proceed to Sweden to pursue my aspirations”.

Another interviewee from Cameroon, Mrs. S.L, in tandem with the first two interviewees from Nigeria expressed similar views that she did not see Italy as a transit country, but rather viewed Italy as a country one should aspire to live in. Quoting her verbatim: “Why should anybody, especially an African consider a whole Italy as merely a transit nation to other parts of Europe? If it were nations in Eastern Europe, then one could view any of the nations in that region as transit nations because of some of their not so impressive economies, but Italy is different”. She also added that: “For me, coming to Italy was intentional and I have never desired to migrate to another European country”.

When asked about her motivation to migrate to Italy, she expressed that: “Everyone knows that Cameroon is a third world country, and as such struggles with unlimited economic and civic challenges. Therefore, my sole goal was to escape these challenges and become empowered to create a better life for both my family and I”.

Progressing to the interview conducted on Miss. A.A, a Ghanaian national granted humanitarian status in Italy, she claimed that after comparing the prospects of remaining and working in her nation with the prospects of migrating to Europe, she discovered that travelling to any country in Europe presented her better opportunities. She pointed out that from the start of her journey, she did not have any particular country in mind, however when she began her journey through the Libyan-Italian route into Europe she made the decision to reside in Italy based on the knowledge and information that she gathered through the many conversations during the journey. Therefore, in response to the question, she revealed that: “In my opinion, the plenty employment opportunities for Africans in Italy surpasses the opportunities in other European countries, at least I know this to the best of my knowledge. Therefore, why will anyone leave these chances to go to places where the opportunities are lesser?”

In her response to the other part of this research question that attempted to discover her motivation for deciding to settle in Italy, her response was:

“I guess by now, you already know the factors that inspired me to leave Ghana and come to Italy. I simply needed a good life, which was impossible for my country to make available for me, so I simply took a life or death risk, since I was almost living a dead life in Ghana, and luckily safely got to Italy via the Libyan-Italian route into Europe”.

Meanwhile, Miss M.A, another interviewee from Senegal revealed that as a citizen of a former French colony, her dream country to migrate to had always been France. Therefore, despite the many opportunities for African migrants in Italy, her destination or target country had always been France. Therefore, to her Italy was merely a transit country through which to gain entrance into France. In her words:

“Since I became conscious of myself, my dream country has always been France. However, due to the economic situation of my birth country, Senegal I was not able to get a job, therefore meaning that I could not legally travel to France. Therefore, my only option was to travel through the very dangerous Libyan-Italian route into Europe, which was the only way I could afford to travel to France. However, all of these have changed now that I am now legally recognized in France. My only stay in Italy was while I was transiting through the country into France”.

Moving over to the series of interviews conducted on four (4) Sudanese nationals selected for this research, they all made allusion to the fact that one of the major reasons for leaving their birth country for Europe was fleeing the civic unrest in Darfur, western Sudan, a conflict that had led to the raping and killing of thousands of Sudanese, while numerous citizens had fled their homes to search for refuge in other countries.

According to the interview conducted on Miss. G.K, a former broadcaster in Sudan before the outbreak of the civil unrest, she needed to be away from Sudan in order to ensure her safety and also needed to be in a place where she could work, so as to be able to provide for her family who predominantly depended on her for basic life necessities. All of these factors inspired her decision to migrate to Europe in order to seek asylum and also get the chance to work to provide for her family. Thus, in her response to the question, she expressed that in her quest to migrate to Europe, she only desired to reside in the nearest European nation that she could afford, which happened to be Italy, after crossing through the Mediterranean Sea. She also added that she is aware that with the geographical position of Italy, it is easy to transit to other nations via Italy, but in her case, she never considered Italy as a transit country.

In her response to the other question posed in this research question, she responded that Italy has many advantages over other European nations that make many African migrants consider Italy as a target or destination country and not a transit country. These advantages include: a highly educated and civilized population; employment opportunities for migrants; education opportunities for migrants; substantially fair wages for work done; legal identification of asylum seekers and more importantly, a smoother and easier process of documentation of African migrants into the country.

Moving further, in another interview with M., another Sudanese man, who claimed to be a farmer before migrating to Europe, he revealed that after the conflict claimed his farmland and all of his other sources of income, he needed to relocate to another part of the world in order to be able to provide for himself and his family. In his words:

“I said to myself that I needed to migrate to another country and make enough money to be able to move my family out of the conflict region. So, I thought to myself, what country in Africa could provide me with the financial capacity to

facilitate my dream of moving my family out of the zone of conflict in Sudan? I automatically know the answer, as no country in Africa could provide me such financial might. That was when I knew that I had to move to Europe”.

He also added that he was a very mobile person, as such to him, Italy was a transit nation from which he could easily migrate to any other part of Europe. He also revealed that he was aware of the smooth and seamless documentation of African asylum seekers in Italy, therefore he knew that after successfully completing his documentation in Italy, it was going to be easier for him to migrate to other countries in Europe, which was his initial plan from the beginning.

Mrs Z.N, also a Sudanese woman in her response claimed there was no correct answer to this research question, as it was subjective and based on the goals of the African migrant, which would determine whether Italy ought to be deemed as a transit country or a destination country for African migrants. According to this woman, who was almost completing her doctorate degree in Sociology at the Al Neelain University in Khartoum, from her personal standpoint, she considered Italy as a destination country and set her eyes to travel to Italy and not any other European nation. In her words:

“I have always admired Italy as a nation and always considered going there for either a conference or a workshop. But that was before the conflicts that disrupted my means of livelihood and made me go bankrupt. Therefore, I needed to relocate to Switzerland to meet a former colleague who had invited me to the country to seek employment. As I said, I was bankrupt and couldn't ask my colleague for financial help after offering to accommodate me in Switzerland. So, in the end, I resorted to travelling via the Libyan-Italian route into Italy, then subsequently to France”.

She however also added that if not for her friend and former colleague that offered to accommodate her in Switzerland, she would have undoubtedly chosen to settle in Italy. Therefore, based on her experience, she believed that Italy could both be considered as a destination country or a transit country depending on the peculiar situation of the African migrant.

Finally, to the last Sudanese interviewed with respect to this study's first research question, A. R, a very young Sudanese male in his late teenage years. He revealed that he left his country partly because of the conflicts and mainly in order to

chase his dreams of becoming a successful football player. According to him, he had been playing football in Sudan since the age of twelve (12) and needed to move to Europe to get his big break.

“In my case, even since my role model, Cristiano Ronaldo moved to Juventus Football Club in the Italian Serie A, I knew that I would eventually migrate to Italy to pursue my lifelong dream of becoming a footballer. So, for me, it was either Italy or no other European country when the time for migration came for me. Therefore, I strongly consider Italy to be a destination country and not merely a transit country. Besides, it was when I came into Italy that I discovered that there were other economic opportunities for African migrants in Europe. For example, unlike in other European countries, especially parts of Eastern Europe where racism against African migrants and asylum seekers are very high, the rate of racism in Italy is low in comparison, and African migrants have more dignity in Italy more than in most other European countries. All of these are why I will never agree to the notion that Italy could be considered as a transit country.

The next sets of interviews are the ones conducted on the Eritrean nationals who participated in this research. Based on the information gathered from the interviews conducted on this sample, the researcher discovered that the predominant reason why Eritreans migrated from their country, particularly men was due to the custom of forced military service and mandatory enrolment in the army. This scenario is confirmed by Ogu, (2017) who revealed in her work titled, “Africa's Irregular Migration to Europe: A Re-Enactment of the Transatlantic Slave Trade” that: “National service is compulsory for all men and women aged between 18 and 40 and the right to conscientious objection is not recognized by the authorities”.

In an interview with Mrs. K.S.A an Eritrean national, she revealed that travelling through the Libyan-Italian route, especially crossing through the Mediterranean Sea into Europe would never have been an option for her, but the situation in her life and country forced her into embarking on the dangerous journey. According to her: “My husband had earlier fled our birth country after escaping from detention for refusing to join the army, therefore after months of being alone and frustrated from being without my husband, I decided to make my way to Europe, particularly Austria where my husband had fled to for asylum”.

Responding to the question of whether Italy is a transit or destination country, she said that from her personal point of view, since her mission was to get to Austria then she definitely viewed Italy as merely another stop over on her way to going to meeting her husband in Austria. Based on her response therefore, there is some iota of agreement with this finding and the finding made by Amnesty International (2005), which also revealed that women either fleeing military service or migrating to go and meet their husbands were some of the most common reasons that Eritreans fled their birth nation.

In another interview with another Eritrean, Miss B.B, she explained that her catering and snacks making business had just crashed and the meager savings that she had amassed was not sufficient enough to rebuild her business, simultaneously, she was constantly depleting her saving on catering to the daily expenses of taking care of her family. This was the condition that spurred her into deciding to travel through the Libyan-Italian route into Europe. According to her comments, she had always believed that there were favorable opportunities for Africans in some parts of Europe, although she did not know any particular country where these opportunities were. So in her response regarding whether Italy could be considered as a transit country or a destination country for African migrants, she claimed that when she was making her journey into Europe through the Libyan-Italian route and through the Mediterranean Sea, she had no clue of the European nation that she wanted to settle into, all she had in mind was to successfully enter any European nation. However, she included that once she came into Italy and saw the environment, she decided that Italy would be her final stop.

Thus, in her response to the research question, she is quoted saying:

“I consider Italy as a frontline destination country for many African migrant and some of the factors that encouraged me to stay in Italy were: a higher percentage of African refugees and migrants had more chances of survival in Italy than in other European countries; there existed more effective human rights protection and aid for asylum seekers; more employment opportunities and more importantly, a receptive environment for the integration of African Migrants”.

Lastly, in another interview with Mr. B. M who is also another Eritrean national from Asmara, the capital of Eritrea, he revealed that he possessed dual citizenship of both Eritrea and Greece, as his father was from Eritrea, while his

mother is from Greece. However, he was born in Eritrea and as a child occasionally travelled to visit his mother in Greece because his parents divorced when he was still a child. He also explained that he was doing fine as an architect before his mother developed a terminal illness, which he had been responsible for the treatment by sending money from Africa for his mother's treatment in Greece. However, things took an unfavorable turn for him when he got laid off from his work, while his mother health kept deteriorating.

In his words:

“I became almost bankrupt and relied solely on my savings for a long time and when I realized that my saving was getting depleted, I could afford to travel by air to Greece and I also couldn't afford to pay for visas and everything else that could make me travel legally, so I resorted to travelling via the Libya-Italy-Mediterranean route into Greece. So, in my case, in spite of the current economic opportunities in Italy, which is currently far greater than the situation in Greece, I personally considered Italy as merely a transit nation en route my destination to Greece. This is predominantly due to the nature of my mission in Europe, which is mainly to take care of my ailing mother. However, if I solely came in search of better economic opportunities and a more conducive environment, then I definitely would have chosen Italy as a destination nation to migrate to”.

After completing the interviews on the Eritreans, the next sets of interviews were conducted on two men from Somalia. According to the information gathered from the responses of these two interviewees, the researcher discovered that as at the time of the conduct of these interviews, about a quarter of Somali nationals were believed to reside outside their birth country. This discovery agrees with the findings made by Al-Sharmani, (2014), where he opined that, as a result of the immense insecurity and instability existing in Somalia, which has consequently led to the decline in the quality of life of its citizens, more than half of Somalis have migrated to other nations, either as refugees or asylum seekers.

In the interview with the first Somali national, M.N, a teenage boy from Adado, he claimed that he had never known peacetime in all of his 17years since his birth in Adado. In addition, he also revealed that due to the unrest in his country, he and his family were always compelled to move from one place to another for safety. This frequent relocation meant that his parents were constantly looking for

employments and as soon as they secured one, they relocated to another location - this meant that they always had to live in extreme poverty.

Therefore, in his response to the question about if Italy was to be considered a transit country or a destination country for migration, he stated that:

“For most Somali migrants, we always don't have any particular country in mind when we travel to Europe, especially through the Libya-Italian route. We are accustomed to travelling from one nation to another and experiencing what the socio-economic situation in each country feels like before eventually settling in one country where we feel the most comfortable. Therefore, in my journey to Europe, I passed through a number of African countries, including Libya, but I wasn't quite satisfied with the environment. However, when we crossed through the Mediterranean Sea into Europe, I became attracted to the beauty of the Italian environment and also the very organized structure and system of running both economic and government affairs. I realized that the way African migrants were treated was even better than the treatment we received even in some African countries that we passed through – all of these factors contributed in influencing my decision to stay in Italy as a destination country”.

In the second interview with the other Somali national known as K.M, who was a male cleaner in Amound University in Borama, Somalia, he revealed that in his situation, there was no external influence that compelled him to desire to migrate to Europe, not even the protracted conflict in his country. He revealed that in his own situation, the desire to provide for his large family inspired his decision to migrate to Europe, as his salary from his job at the university was increasingly becoming too little to cater to his needs.

Therefore, in his response to the question regarding if Italy ought to be considered as a transit or destination country, his response was that:

“As at the time that I was considering travelling out of Somalia, even up till the moment when I embarked on my long and dangerous journey into Europe, the least of my thoughts was whether Italy was a transit or a destination country. All I had in my mind was to go to Europe and make money to take care of my family. But after my ordeal through the desert and on the sea while journeying into Europe, my fellow travellers and I eventually got to Italy and it was the most beautiful place that

I had even been to at that time. So, after my documentation at a refugee camp in Augusta, on the eastern coast of Sicily, I couldn't imagine any other place could be as beautiful as the place, so I eventually decided to settle down here in Italy. I have to confess that it was not easy to settle in at first, but after my first year in the country, things gradually became easier for me”.

In his response about the factors that inspired him to stay back in Italy and make it a destination country for himself, he revealed that the most important factor was the fact that in the entirety of his journey into Europe, it was only in Italy that he received the most humane treatment, while their refugee camp was also the most conducive in his whole journey. In addition, Italy's beauty, and the manner in which Italians treated him were the reasons he decided to stay back in the country. Therefore, he believed that from the experiences he currently has after travelling to a number of other European nations, certainly Italy ought to be considered as a destination country for migration by Africans.

Having completed the interviews on the African migrants and also eliciting background information about their lives before their migration to Europe, the next five (5) interview analyses are for interviews conducted on different staff of human rights organizations and other institutions that are in charge of handling issues related to migration and asylum seekers. These interviewees are citizens of Italy and Germany that work in United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and Human Rights Watch (HRW).

- Analyses of Interviews with the NGO Officials

In the first interview conducted on Mr. M.B, a man from Italy that is also a staff of (UNHCR), he revealed that in this 7th year on his job, dealing with various age ranges of migrants, especially from Africa, most of the migrants were predominantly without any particular destination while travelling to Europe. However, upon their arrival in Italy, most of them are convinced to stay back in Italy, mostly because of tiredness from the very dangerous journey, and also because of the economic opportunities available in the country. Therefore, in his opinion inspired by his experience on the job, he believed that many African migrants considered Italy as a destination country.

Moving further to another interview with another female staff of the (UNHCR), Miss. V.O, she was quoted saying the following:

“As a staff of an organization that frequently and on a daily basis deals with migrants of African origin, through my constant interaction with them, I have been able to understand their motivations for migrating into Europe and also travelling via the very dangerous Libyan-Italian route. In my opinion, I strongly believe that majority of them consider Italy as a destination nation and not a transit country to other parts of Europe. From my experience, African migrants that continue on their journey to other parts of Europe after having the experience of Italy are those that have specific missions or tasks in other specific European countries. However, apart from these sets of people, majority of African migrants see Italy as a settlement and home for them”.

In the final interview conducted on the last staff of the (UNHCR), Mrs. B.A, she claimed that the question about whether Italy is a transit or a destination country is a very subjective one. In her words:

“I personally believe that the destination of these migrants determine where they consider as a destination country or a transit country. For instance, if a migrant aspires to travel to France or Switzerland, such a person can never see Italy as a destination country no matter the opportunities offered by Italy. This is because they already have their destination in mind. So, in my opinion, my response to this research question is that there is nowhere to be considered as either a transit country or a destination country, as both are left to be determined by the concerned migrant”.

Moving over to the last sets of interviews conducted on German nationals, who are staff of the Human Rights Watch, in the first interview conducted on a person who decided to remain anonymous while making contributions, the interviewee revealed that, Italy’s location automatically positioned her to be a transit nation due to its borders with the Mediterranean Sea and other seas that share boundaries with other European nations. The interviewee added that in their country of origin, which is Germany, there is also a thriving and solid economy there, however, because of its location, most African migrants that migrate into Europe through the Libyan-Italian route are always tired of travelling further, thus they finally decide to settle in Italy initially, then could subsequently move to other parts of Europe. Therefore, as revealed by the interviewee, Italy’s proximity to the sea

makes it a transit nation to migrants interested in journeying further into other countries in Europe.

In the final interview conducted to answer this research question, Miss A.V who is also a staff of Human Rights Watch, an organization that monitors how human rights are entrenched and dispensed across the world revealed that:

“After these African migrants arrive in Italy, especially at the Augusta refugee camps located on the Italian island of Sicily for their documentation, the humane treatments they receive from the Italian government officials are one of the first factors that attract these African migrants. In addition, their fundamental human rights are always ensured as much as possible, which is contrary to these migrant’s experiences, especially in Libya. Therefore, based on these reasons alone, in addition with other societal and economic attractions; all of these combine to make these migrants consider Italy as a favorable destination country”.

Therefore, from all of the foregoing analyses conducted above, findings from the interviews can be summarized into the following – in the question of whether Italy is considered as either a destination or transit country by African migrants, twelve (12) out of the 20 respondents believed that Italy is a destination country for these African migrants. On the other hand, six (6) of the interviewees out of 20 opined that Italy is merely a transit country through which migrants pass through, into other European country. However, another two (2) out of the 20 interviewees remained neutral and opined that the determination of whether Italy should be considered as either a destination country or transit country should be done by the concerned migrants.

Thus, based on this finding, it is safe to assume that Italy is predominantly a sought after destination country for migration and not merely a transit nation into other parts of Europe. In addition, based on the responses provided by the interviewees, the major factors that encourage African migrants to migrate to Italy include some of the following: a welcoming and conducive society; economic opportunities; favorable wages; lesser rate of racism than other European countries; upholding of fundamental human rights; ease of documentation for both refugees and asylum seekers and many other positive reasons.

In terms of the humane treatments that refugees and African migrants receive in Italy, it is logical to believe that this is one of the determining factors that compel African migrants and refugees to stay back in Italy, instead of proceeding to other European nations. It is also one of the major reasons why certain African migrants are willing to put their lives at risk while crossing through the Libya-Italian route into Italy especially. Based on the comments of the respondents, the situation in other nations, especially in Libya, based on the experiences of the respondents for this research is very inhumane, and the conditions of living for the refugees are at very poor and deplorable conditions. Therefore, the fact that the living conditions and treatment of refugees is different in Italy is enough motivation for many African to migrate to Europe, and especially Italy.

B. Reasons that influence African migrants to utilize the Libya-Italian route into Europe

- Summary of Research Findings

The aim of this discussion was to discover the various reasons that determined African migrants' decision to travel to Europe through the very dangerous and life threatening Libya-Italian route. Therefore, in order to achieve this discussion, data were gathered via interviews conducted on Africans who migrated into Europe, especially Italy through the Libya-Italy route. The researcher also interviewed members of staff of international organizations, especially members of their staff that are citizens of Germany and Italy. This was done in order to also get the views of refugee or asylum organizations in the topic of discussion. The data were analyzed using the discussion of the interviews to evaluate the real life situations that compelled migrants to relocate to various parts of Europe. The crux of this subtitle contains the discussions of the responses provided by the respondents while answering this second research question. The experiences of the African migrants and also the experiences of the European staff working with African migrants revealed some of the following as discussed in the subsequent subtopics.

- Poverty

According to the findings of this research, the summary of this discussion was that poverty constituted the core reason, out of many other reasons that African migrants used the Libya-Italy route to crossover into Europe. In this context, these migrants were either financially incapable to migrate into Europe through the legal route or means, or that they were attempting to escape immense poverty from their birth nations in their conquest for improved economic opportunities in Europe. Another important reason that this study found out as the reason for African migrants' utilization of the Libya-Italy route into Europe was Libya's border ties with the seashores of Italy and thus allows Africans to gain access into Italy through Libya. This alone serves as a motivating factor that inspires these migrants to attempt to migrate over into Europe via Libya's seashores, which permits the business of the smuggling of Africans through her sea into Europe.

- Governmental cooperation between Morocco and Tunisia

This study also found out that another rationale, which created the desire among African migrants to utilize the Libya-Italy route into Europe even though it was fraught with immense degree of danger was the cooperation between the governments of Morocco and Tunisia with the European Union. This governmental synergy toughened security of seashore policing in both Morocco and Tunisia, and proceeded to destroying the activities of human traffickers and smugglers along both nations' seashores. Therefore, in extension, due to the toughened seashore security in both Morocco and Tunisia, migrants were left with no other alternative routes into Europe, and therefore drove large traffic towards the Libya-Italy route into Europe, as the other routes had become unavailable.

Having summarily discussed some of the reasons that influenced or compelled African migrants to utilize the Libya-Italian route into Europe, it is also important to individually analyse some of the responses presented by the interviewees while answering this question. The subsequent paragraphs contain these individual analyses.

- Analyses of Migrant Africans' Interviewees' Responses

Mr. F.A, who is a Nigerian refugee in Italy, revealed that the major factor that made many Africans opt for the option of travelling to Europe through the Libya-Italy route is majorly due to poverty and the need to illegally migrate to Europe since

they are not able to afford all the expenses required to legally migrate to Europe.

In his words: “Travelling legally to Europe is very expensive, especially when we convert our currency to the Euro. The value of our limited finance further depreciates when we try to pay for visas and flights to Europe, so in order to reduce the cost, many African migrants decide to travel via the cheaper, but very dangerous route, which is the Libya-Italy route into Europe”.

Miss T.O in her interview revealed that she wanted to travel out of Nigeria very quickly in order to be able to cater for her family. Simultaneously, she revealed that she was bankrupt and had to even borrow the money to travel through the illegal means into Europe. Therefore, while answering the question, she stated that:

“I come from a very poor family and needed to change the trend of poverty in my family. So, as much as I dreamed of migrating to Italy, I didn't have enough money to book flights, pay for visas or even book accommodation in Italy, so the meager amount of money that I could borrow was what I used to pay for my journey through the desert, bribe the smuggling merchants and even pay for my feeding in the course of the journey. So, to answer your question, poverty was the major reason I selected this means of travelling into Europe, because I couldn't pay for any other means”.

In another interview, D.G from Cameroon revealed that he personally believed that anyone who would opt to travel to any part of Europe via the Libya-Italy route is poor. Because according to him: “There is no way you would decide to consciously travel this route into Europe if you are rich and financially capable of paying for a legal and less dangerous route into Europe”. In his response to the question therefore, he revealed that financial incapacitation was the only reason he decided to journey into Europe through the deadly Libya-Italy route.

Moving over to the interview conducted on Mrs. S.L, she expressed that as a Cameroonian, which is a third world nation, the poverty in the land was unimaginable and she was not excluded from the immense poverty. This situation in the country made a high percentage of its citizens live in extreme poverty, including her. This was why she decided to leave the country in the first instance, and also unable to “go to Europe comfortably through flight”. In her response hence, she

revealed that wide spread poverty, suffering and unemployment in many African countries compel many Africans to travel to Europe through the Libya-Italy route because they are already used to the sufferings and dangers attached to the journey. Therefore, they are willing to put their lives at risk in order to cross over to the other side.

Miss. A.A in her contribution explained that the reasons she journeyed from Africa into Europe through the Libya-Italian route were mainly because of poverty and misinformation. According to her comments:

“First of all, as at the time I made my journey, there was no way I could have afforded to legally migrate to Italy because I was absolutely broke. However, if I had access to more information, I would have been patient enough to save up enough to convey me legally into Europe. I didn't know the degree of danger that I was going to face in the course of journeying into Europe via the Libya-Italian route, especially through the desert and through the Mediterranean Sea. I almost lost my life in the process and also experienced many migrants lose their lives during this journey. So, in my opinion, I strongly believe that poverty and lack of sufficient information about the dangers of travelling to Europe through this route are the major reasons that migrants still utilize these routes while attempting to get to Europe”.

Moving further, in another interview with a woman from Senegal, Miss M.A, she revealed that her reason for travelling through this route was short and simple: “I chose this road to Europe because it was cheaper and many people were also doing it”. In her comments, she revealed that if not for the Libya-Italy route, her aspirations of migrating to Europe would have remained impossible, because there was no way she could have afforded to travel legally.

Miss. G.K revealed that a number of reasons make many African migrants decide to travel into Europe through the Libya-Italy route. According to her, the ease with which many Africans are able to get into Libya is one of the incentives that drive them to want to further travel through Libya into Europe. According to her: “It was formerly very easy for Africans from different countries to make their ways into Libya, especially because of its geographical ties with some of the world’s most indigent and warring zones. In addition, Libya’s long coastal lines and nearness to southern Italy and some parts of Malta make it easy for African migrants to cross the sea and find access into Europe”.

The interview with Mr. M from Sudan, he revealed that the reason he travelled through the Libya-Italy route was largely due to insufficient funds as at the time. He however added that all of that have changed now, as he is now able to travel to his country and back to any country in Europe both safely and legally now since he first came into Europe seven (7) years earlier.

Furthermore, Mrs. Z.N who is also from Sudan commented that she was aware of all of the dangers attached to travelling via this route, however, due to lack of financial capacity and also due to the closeness of her country to Libya, which shares international waterline borders, she made the choice to risk her life in order to gain access into Europe. Hence, quoting her words:

“If you asked me, the number one reason that makes people risks the lives on this very dangerous journey into Europe is because of poverty – either they are trying to escape out of poverty, so as to make a better life for themselves and their families or poverty in the sense that they can’t afford to migrate through other legally recognized means. Either way to look at it, poverty is involved.

In another interview with a very young Sudanese male called A.R, his comments also went in agreement with most of the previously interviewed respondents. His reason for embarking on his journey via the Libya-Italy route was because the money raised by his father could only afford travelling through this means, which was cheaper but also immensely dangerous particularly for a teenager like him.

Moving to another set of interviews conducted on Eritrean citizens, Mrs. K.S.A, who travelled to meet her husband in Austria, revealed that her journey was long, risky and painful, but she drew inspiration from her goal of going to meet her husband. She revealed that the reason she travelled through the Libya-Italy route to Europe was simply because she had no other option. In her words: “I needed to be with my husband who had recently escaped to Austria and was jobless as at the time my journey to Europe commenced. I withdrew all of my savings and used it to embark on my journey through many African countries, then into the Libya-Italy route. I eventually met my husband and we’ve been trying to live better lives since I came to join him”.

Miss. B.B revealed that if not for the crash of her catering business, she

would not have considered travelling to Europe as an option. However, the crash occurred and she had to take what she considered as the ‘best’ decision at the time, which was to travel out of the country to Europe. She explained that her savings was not enough to reopen her business and also not enough to legally relocate to any European nation, where she believed she could make something of herself quickly. Hence, quoting her directly:

“The only thought in my head as soon as I realized that my business would crash was to leave the country with my little savings. So, I quickly made enquiries about travelling to Italy through Libya and got all the information I needed. Since I can only speak for myself, the only reason I used the Libya-Italy route was because that was the way my saving could afford me to leave Eritrea”.

Another interviewee, Mr. B.M who holds dual citizenship of both Eritrea and Greece revealed that:

“Before my bankruptcy, I could conveniently travel to any part of the world legally and with comfort, but life happened and I lost everything. Meanwhile, at the same time, my mum needed care and attention, so I was forced to travel to meet her in Greece. I’m sure I would have stayed back to bounce back, but a bigger task required my attention and I decided to travel through the only cheaper way available to get into Europe from Africa, which is the Libya-Italy route. So, in my case, I could say that insufficient funds and matters of emergency compelled me into taking the journey to Europe”.

In furtherance, a teenage boy from Somalia, known as M.N claimed that the reason he embarked on the journey to Europe via the Libya-Italy route was due to the fact that there was too much poverty in his family and also in the country, thus he had to choose between being poor and remaining poor while staying back in his country, or managing the small funds in his capacity while risking his life in the desert and at sea to make it into Europe. In the end, he settled for risking it all en route into Europe via the Libya-Italy route in order to struggle for an improved life.

Meanwhile, K.M who is also from Somalia simply went short and simple and revealed that extreme poverty forced him to take the journey to Europe through the cheaper route of the Libya-Italy route. He also stressed that this same poverty is the reason why he could not afford to travel legally, but chose to risk his life through the

very dangerous Mediterranean Sea crossing into Europe.

- Analyses of Interviews with the NGO Officials

The last series of interviews were conducted on members of staff of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and Human Rights Watch (HRW). This was done in a bid to gather their opinions as citizens of different nations in Europe, regarding the reasons they believe Africans migrate through the route under discussion. Therefore, in his response, Mr. M.B disclosed that:

“Many African countries have for a long time been creating migrant whose citizens have always tried to get into different countries in Europe, even through employing smugglers to cross the Mediterranean Sea into either Italy or Spain. In addition, there has been recent intergovernmental cooperation between the European Union and nations such as Morocco and Tunisia, which has increasingly made it tougher for migrants to cross from any of these countries into Europe. This has consequently forced most migrants to focus on Libya as their major route or outlet into Europe, since countries such as Morocco and Tunisia have toughened patrol and policing on their waterline borders”.

Miss. V.O, a staff at the (UNHCR), also shared the view of her colleague, Mr. M.B above, but also added that:

“Apart from Libya being a cheaper route for African migrants into Europe, these migrants also know that once they are able to cross over into Italy, which is the first European stop, the treatment that they would receive is majorly better than the situations in their country of origin. This reason alone explains why they won't stop coming through this route in spite of the dangers and numerous deaths and trafficking that are attached to this route into Europe”.

In another interview conducted with Mrs. B.A, she revealed that in her many interactions with African migrants, she has discovered that the reasons that they continually risk their lives while attempting to cross into Europe are; desperate attempts to escape poverty; insufficiency of finance to legally migrate; hopes of a better life and future in Europe and lastly; the fact that the Libya-Italy route into Europe is cheaper although very dangerous.

Another interview conducted with a respondent who decided to remain anonymous, but works with the Human Rights Watch (HRW) declared that:

“By now, I believe it is general knowledge to Europeans especially that the major reason why Africans come into Europe using the Libya-Italy route is mainly because of widespread poverty, which goes in different forms. The first is that they are attempting to leave poverty behind, while another perspective is that since they can’t fund legal travels into Europe, then they do it illegally and cheaply too”.

Meanwhile, in the last interview with Miss A.V, while answering this question, she opined that:

“The whole of Africa is basically a developing continent, so many of Africans are on the lookout for better opportunities in Europe and other Western countries. Therefore, I strongly believe that Libya’s openness to receiving Africans and the fact that it shares waterline boundaries with Italy makes many Africans take the risks of crossing the ocean over to Italy. So for me, I believe it is Libya’s closeness to Europe that inspires many Africans to utilize the route in migrating to Europe”.

Having discussed the responses provided by the interviewees, findings discovered from the responses revealed some of the following. That poverty represented the major reason why African migrants resorted to utilizing the Libya-Italy route into Europe. Put more clearly, they were either unable to migrate into Europe legally or were predominantly trying to escape from poverty in their countries of origin, in search of better opportunities in Europe. Another reason discovered to be the rationale for utilizing the route under discussion is Libya closeness with the seashores of Italy and Libya’s openness to freely receiving Africans from other nations into the country. This motivates them to proceed further and attempt to cross over to Europe through Libya’s seashores that are inadequately policed and allows for the thriving of the smuggling of Africans through her sea.

Based on the comments and responses offered by this research’s respondents, there is credibility and agreement with the push factors, which compel African migrants to leave their nation of birth to another country. For instance, as discussed by Cuschieri (2007), where he treated some of the push factors that drove people to abandon their country for other nations, the responses provided in the interviews

conducted for this research were also buttressed by this work, which revealed that poverty, lack of natural resources, internal or tribal conflicts and unemployment were some of the push factors that led to migration to other countries. Coincidentally, these similar reason were identified as the major reasons why the respondents of this research abandoned their birth nations.

On the other hand, based on the comments of majority of the respondents, in line with the principle of the pull factors that inspire migration to a particular country. The major pull factor that pulled African migrants to Europe and particularly Italy were opportunities for employment; better economic progression than in their nations of birth; entrenchment of fundamental human rights in Italy, even as a refugee. In the majority of the comments collected during the interviews, all of the conditions above represented the pull factors in Europe and Italy in particular, that attracted African migrants to Italy.

Lastly this research also discovered that another reason that compels African migrants to travel through the Libya-Italian route into Europe in spite of its immense danger is the cooperation between the governments of Morocco and Tunisia with the European Union. This cooperation tightened policing and security on the seashores of both Morocco and Tunisia, thereby dismantling the activities of human traffickers and smugglers on the seashores of both nations. This cooperation subsequently put more pressure on the Libya-Italy route as more potential African migrants were left without any other choice but to journey into Europe through this route.

C. The human trafficking mechanisms in the Libya-Italian route into Europe.

- Summary of Research Findings

In order to meet the overarching goal of this particular discussion, which is firstly to discover the human trafficking patterns and mechanisms in the Libya-Italy route into France, and partly to suggest means through which the human trafficking in the route can be regulated, interviews served as the instruments the researcher used to collect information for this discussion. Another subtle aim of this research was to provide answers for the consequences of human trafficking mechanisms to the African migrants and to any of the receiving European country. The subsequent paragraphs below contain the summary of this discussion's findings based on the

responses provided in the interviews conducted in the course of this research.

A major finding made in this discussion was that there exists widespread belief among African migrants that are familiar with this Libya-Italy route that the human trafficking mechanism or pattern in the Libya-Italy route comprises of different phases of the journey. These phases are Africans migrants from different nations converging in Libya, then making arrangements with human traffickers or smugglers in Libya to ship them via boat or ferry crossing through the Mediterranean Sea from Libya, through the Island of Lampedusa and lastly into Italy, after which other migrants proceeding further into Europe could continue with their journeys.

Another finding was that the terrains of travelling in this route was severely extreme and frequently led to the deaths of many African migrants, as confirmed by some members of staff of the (UNHCR) and (HRW) that were interviewed during this research. In their comments, they revealed that according to a report by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in October 2013 only, about 368 migrants of African origin, journeying from Libya to Italy died because of a boat accident near the islands of Lampedusa. The report also added that around another 153 African migrants lost their lives circa August 2014, as their boat capsized. Furthermore, the report also revealed that in the year 2015, about 800 African migrants died in one of the biggest boat accidents recorded since the Libya-Italy route became popular since the year 2000.

The implication of all of these findings is that the route constitutes immense danger to travelers utilizing. However, in spite of these obvious dangers, African migrants continue to put their lives on the line, all in the goal of acquiring better lives in Europe. Another important discovery that is worth mentioning is that according to the personal experiences of the respondents, there exists high degree of cooperation in the activities of many bodies that participate in the different phases of travel in the Libya-Italy route. The evidence of this existence of agency co-operations is characterized by the smoothness of transition between one agency to another agency in various phases of the journey into Europe via this route. Having briefly done a summary of the findings made in this particular discussion, the next headings contain analyses of the interviewees' comments.

- Analyses of Migrant Africans' Interviewees' Responses

Mr. F.A in his response to this research question revealed that in summary, the human trafficking mechanism in the Libya-Italy route into Europe entails many African migrants making their ways through different African countries to assemble in Libya, from where they are transported in batches through the desert, until they get to cross the Mediterranean Sea into Europe, especially Italy. In his words, he explained that: “In this route, the Mediterranean Sea is very significant in the discussion of Africans’ irregular migration to Europe. The reason is because this sea is now a major route utilized by many illegal African migrants who travel to Libya to find their way into Europe”.

This response and finding is similar with the findings made by Jean-Dominique (2015), who also claimed that “the central Mediterranean Sea route has transformed into one out of the three major routes employed by undocumented and illegal migrants to get passage into Europe since 2013”. He also added that the other routes into Europe include the Eastern and the Western routes, which are operated by criminal gangs that constantly devise new mechanisms to counter any measure designed to tackle illegal migration.

In another interview, Miss. T.O mentioned that there is no way you would discuss the Libya-Italian route into Europe and not mention the Mediterranean Sea. According to her comments, there are human traffickers and smugglers whose daily jobs are using boats and dinghies to ferry African migrants through the Mediterranean Sea into Europe. She however also expressed that: “The ugly angle to this passage across the Mediterranean Sea is the volume of loss of lives of these migrants, which is constantly on the rise. I remember that in my time, while I was crossing the sea into Italy, two of my friends died in transit due to the very cold weather. I also recall that a lot of unlawful activities happen in this route and it is always about the survival of the fittest”.

In the interview with Mr. D.G from Cameroon, he revealed that:

“The Libya-Italy route, especially the Mediterranean Sea has statistically become one of the deadliest and most dangerous migration route in the world. This is due to the practices conducted in this route, which mostly tends to lead to the loss of lives of migrants, who lose their lives in the course of crossing the sea into Europe. I can therefore say from my experiences during my journey through this route into Europe that the human trafficking mechanisms on this route is unsafe, risky, highly

dangerous, illegal and allows for only the survival of the strongest, as any action seemed permissible as long as one's safety is concerned".

The conclusion that can be drawn from this response about the human trafficking mechanisms in the Libya-Italian route into Europe therefore is that it is illegal, does not permit for the entrenchment of fundamental human rights, it is life threatening and most of all, is unhealthily competitive.

Moving over to the interview with Mrs. S.L, her response to this research question was that based on her experience from Cameroon, she travelled from her country to Libya, where she stayed for some days in order to make arrangement with agencies that had connections with smugglers and human traffickers that were in charge of transporting African migrants across the ocean. In her words:

"There are no special techniques or mechanisms involved, only that migrants travel in different batches and begin their journeys through different parts of Libya, where some have to travel through the desert on foot, in situations where their trucks develop mechanical faults. This journey leads to the coast of Libya, and sometimes to the island of Lampedusa in Libya where migrants board boats or dinghies that transport them across the Mediterranean Sea into Europe. That's practically all I know about the human trafficking mechanism in this route, all of which are based on my personal experiences.

On her part, Miss A.A in her response simply commented that there are no specifically identified trafficking mechanisms in the Libya-Italy route into Europe, except the fact that migrants move in groups all the way from Libya till they get into various stops in Europe. She however added that migrants' financial capacities determined the type of treatment that they receive from the human traffickers. For instance, with higher fees, migrants get the best and safest seats on the transport boat and also some preferential treatments from the smugglers; however, lesser fees meant lesser quality of seats and less humane treatment from the smugglers.

Miss M.A, a Senegalese lady revealed that as a sub-Saharan African with darker skin, the travelling terrain is different and more challenging, especially in Libya because of the segregations and almost scornful treatment meted out on dark-skinned Africans. She also added that although the risk rate is high and many people

die in the course of the journey, however, in spite of this, numerous agencies and bodies control operations and activities conducted in this route, even as illegal as the travel route is considered to be. In her words:

“For instance, there are travel agencies that connect migrants with smugglers or traffickers; there are corrupt coast guards that patrol the borders between Libya and Italy; in some cases, there are international rescue teams sent out to rescue migrants in situations of boat mishaps, et cetera. Thus, despite the notoriety of the route, there are still many bodies and institutions that conduct various forms of activities in this route”.

Miss. G.K expressed that from her understanding and experience, the basic human trafficking mechanisms that existed in the Libya-Italian route into Europe was predominantly travelling in groups or batches and sticking with each other, without anyone wandering away from the group, to avoid be lost. She also added that there was the crossing the Mediterranean Sea, which is one of the most important and significant part of the journey, as it was the most dangerous part of the journey and also the journey that crossed migrants into Europe. In this process of crossing the Mediterranean, the traffickers already established relationships with the various coast guards or patrol officers, so boats are rarely stop. All of these she opined are the basic trafficking mechanisms that exist in this route.

In Mr. M’s response, he revealed that he was not knowledgeable in these affairs, however all he can contribute based on the research question was that from his country in Sudan, he travelled by road to Libya and went to the port where he met with traffickers who put him on a boat that was heading for Libya. He added that many things happened during the journey, but his main preoccupation was how to arrive his destination safely.

Meanwhile, in her own response, Mrs. Z.N revealed that as a well-educated African, she had some statistical information about some of the activities of human trafficking in the route under discussion. Quoting her words:

“Based on a report released by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in October 2013, around 368 migrants journeying from Libya to Italy died due to a boat mishap close to the islands of Lampedusa. In addition, about another 153 African migrants died around August 2014 also due to their boat

sinking. Meanwhile, in the year 2015, in another report released by (UNHCR) around 800 African migrants lost their lives in the biggest boat mishap to be recorded since the route became popular since the year 2000”.

Her comments are in agreement with Tim, (2014) who revealed that the existent human trafficking mechanism in the Libya-Italy route was a death trap, as many African have since the year 2000 lost their lives on this route into Europe. The interviewee’s comments also revealed that some of the practices of the human traffickers, such as overloading of boats and insufficient mechanical care for their boat, which leads to the development of faults in the middle of the sea also contribute to the deaths of many Africans on this route.

Furthermore, A.R who is a teenager from Sudan while answering this research question revealed that he did not know much about the human trafficking mechanisms in the Libya-Italian route into Europe, but added that based on his understanding of the research question, the human trafficking mechanism mostly adopted on the route was basically transportation by road using trucks specially built to travel in the desert; and in instances when their trucks developed fault, they travelled by road using their foot till they got to the shores of Libya, where they boarded boats or ships going to Europe.

Mrs K.S.A in her interview revealed that all she observed all through her journey into Europe through the Libya-Italy route was that there was some form of seamless cooperation between the various agencies in charge of their journeys at various stages of their journey. For instance, the agency in charge of their road travel cooperated easily with those in charge of the foot travel, and there was the same form of cooperation with the agency in charge of their foot travel and their travel by sea. She also revealed that she was also surprised that there also existed some form of synergy between the human traffickers and some agents of the governments of both Libya and Italy. She thus concluded that the human trafficking mechanisms in the Libya-Italian route into Europe appear to be very coordinated.

Meanwhile Miss B.B in her response stated that:

“The human trafficking mechanisms in the Libya-Italian route into Europe are an illegal one that most governments, especially the governments of Libya and Italy are aware of its existence. However, in spite of this, they allow it to thrive and

act as if it doesn't exist. So, from my experiences during my journey into Europe through this route, I can say without doubt that there exists tested structure and coordination that allow this route continually function successfully in spite of the many deaths that take place during the journey”.

Moving further, Mr. B.M in his interview disclosed that he was certain that certain highly placed government officials of both Libya and Italy especially - because they are the countries directly connected by the Mediterranean, are direct beneficiaries of the human trafficking that occur in this route. In his explanation, he revealed that the movement patterns are easy, as migrants from different parts of Africa converge in Libya and are transported by sea into Europe. In his words: “That’s basically the pattern of movement from Libya to Europe, especially to Italy”.

M.N from Somalia expressed that he was too young to have any information or knowledge about the research question. All he revealed was that the journey was long and very demanding, both physically and psychologically. He also revealed that he saw one of his fellow travellers die in the desert due to thirst and tiredness. So, in his opinion, the human trafficking mechanisms in the Libya-Italian route into Europe are life threatening, dangerous and illegal.

Moving further, Mr. K.M a cleaner from Somalia revealed that the terrain in the Libya-Italy route is very extreme and takes a very high degree of toughness and determination to cope in the route’s extreme conditions. He said the following:

“The human trafficking mechanisms in the Libya-Italian route into Europe thrive in extreme conditions that is capable of taking the lives of weak people. Every favor in this route requires payment, as nothing is free – from feeding, space to sleep in, seat to sit in during the sea crossing from Libya to Europe and many other expenses. I also noticed that there are different levels of cooperation among the different groups in charge of the different stages of our journey”.

- Analyses of Interviews with the NGO Officials

In the final analyses, moving over to the interviews conducted on the members of staff of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and Human Rights Watch (HRW), the first interview carried out on Mr. M.B in his words revealed that:

“Many African migrants have embarked on the very dangerous journey

across the Mediterranean Sea into Europe. And even though the route is incredibly dangerous, it remains alarming and unbelievable that an increasing number of African migrants and asylum seekers continue to utilize this route to cross into Europe. For instance, based on a report released by my organization in 2013, it revealed that around 60,000 migrants crossed the Mediterranean Sea into Europe, while in the following year - 2014, the numbers ballooned to around 219,000 migrants. Therefore, I personally feel that the human trafficking mechanism in this route is effective, although the mortality rate is high”.

Meanwhile, Miss. V.O, in her interview revealed that: “The travelling conditions in this route is terrible, as unsafe boats are mostly used during sea crossing and in some cases usually develop faults in the middle of the sea where help is far away from”. She also revealed that:

“Besides migrants that lose their lives at sea during sea crossing, many of these migrants, especially the ones that are from sub-Saharan Africa also lose their lives during the desert crossing before getting to Libya. So, for these sets of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, the travel mechanism is quite different, as theirs is even a longer journey before arriving at Libya, where the main journey to Europe commences via the sea crossing. Therefore, to answer this research question, I believe that the human trafficking mechanisms in the Libya-Italia route into Europe vary according to the parts of Africa that a migrant is commencing their journey from”.

Mrs. B.A in her comments during the interview to answer this research question stated that the human trafficking mechanism in the route under discussion was quite simple and has been the same way for a long time. According to her, African migrants from different parts of the continent gather mainly at Libya, especially since the tightening of security on the coastal lines of Morocco and Tunisia that used to be major routes to Europe too. From Libya, they proceed to Europe through crossing the Mediterranean Sea by boat into Europe. This is practically the summary of the human trafficking mechanism in the Libya-Italy route.

This research’s anonymous respondent on their part disclosed that in answering this question, there needs to be an understanding that firstly, the route is illegal, therefore, any illegal activity that happens there mostly occurs with almost

nobody to be held responsible. Having stated this, the respondent also claimed that the patterns or mechanism of trafficking in this route is quite uni-directional, a situation in which migrants travel into Europe from Africa via the sea using mostly old and faulty boats.

Finally, in the interview with Miss A.V, who was the last interviewee consulted during this research, she simply commented in a very short statement that:

“The pattern of African migration into Europe through this route is quite direct and has been general knowledge in my opinion. The trafficking mechanism in this route entails a cooperation of activities between African migrants and their handlers, who comprise mainly of travel guides within the desert and human traffickers and smugglers who help transport these migrants from Libya into Europe. This in my opinion is the major human trafficking mechanism in this route”.

In summary, from the discussion of the interview responses provided above, general findings reveal that majority of the interviewees believe that the human trafficking mechanism or pattern in the Libya-Italy route entail Africans from various countries finding their way to Libya, then from there making arrangements with human traffickers or smugglers to transport them via boat crossing the Mediterranean Sea from Libya, through the Island of Lampedusa and finally into Italy, after which other travellers going further into Europe proceed on to their journeys.

Apart from the findings above, the responses also further revealed that the conditions of travelling in this route under discussion is severely extreme and frequently leads to the deaths of many African migrants, as confirmed by some of the staff of the (UNHCR) and (HRW) that were interviewed during this research.

In conclusion, based on the findings of this research, it was also discovered that in line with the personal experiences of the respondents of this research, there appeared to be a high level of cooperation in the activities of the various bodies involved in the various stages of travel in the Libya-Italy route. This is because of the ease of transition from one agency to another in the different stages of their journey to Europe via this route. This cooperation also extends between the human traffickers or smugglers and many of the various patrol officers among the coast guards of both Libya and Italy that permit these human traffickers to continue with their illegal business even when they are caught ‘in the act’ on the sea.

IV. CONCLUSION AND PROPOSALS

Based on the set purposes of conducting this research, which are firstly, examining and discovering if African migrants consider Italy as a target country or destination country for migration or rather, as a transit point into other European countries; secondly, discovering the motivation or the rationale why African migrants go through the Libya-Italian route; and lastly, highlighting the human trafficking mechanism in the Libya-Italian route into Europe, this research makes the following conclusions:

Based on the testimonies and comments of the interviewees, some of who are refugees and asylum seekers in Italy and other countries in Europe, some of who only visited Italy for different personal reasons during the conduct of this interview, this research concludes that Italy is predominantly viewed as a sought after destination country by many African migrants and not merely a transit nation into other parts of Europe. Connecting this research finding to the theoretical framework on which this study is founded, it can be assumed that some of the reasons that these African migrants considered Italy as a destination nation, rather than merely a transit nation into other parts of Europe is due to some of the existent pull forces in Italy that constantly attract not only African migrants, but other migrants from other parts of the world, such as from the Mid-East and Indonesia, into Italy. Some of these pull factors as existent in Italy include: a stable political environment; a booming economy that supports high remuneration for workers; respect for human rights and dignity; good health care facilities and integration and absorption into the host country's society.

In addition, this research also concludes that the major factors that encourage African migrants to relocate to Italy include: a welcoming and conducive society; economic opportunities; favorable wages; lesser rate of racism than other European countries; upholding of fundamental human rights; ease of documentation for both refugees and asylum seekers and many other positive reasons. All of these were identified and discussed in the literature review section of this research as the pull

factors in host locations, nations or societies that attract migrants into these places, during their quests to relocate into places that give them better opportunities for livelihood, survival and economic achievements.

Moving ahead, this research also established the fact that some of the major motivations or reasons that compel Africans to travel into Europe via the Libya-Italy route are extreme poverty, which forced many African migrants to resort to using the Libya-Italy route into Europe. In clearer terms, most of these migrants were either unable to migrate into Europe legally or were consciously attempting to escape from poverty in their birth countries. Another reason discovered to incite Africans to use this route is Libya's closeness with the seashores of Italy and also Libya's openness to freely receiving Africans from other nations into the country. This encourages these potential migrants to proceed to cross over into Europe via Libya's coastlines, which are inadequately policed and permits the conduct of human trafficking and smuggling of Africans through her sea. In relation to the theoretical framework of this research, this finding made from the responses of the interviewees for this study makes important connection and allusion to the discussion made in the literature review section of this research about some of the push factors in migrants' birth nations that compel them to make a decision to move to other parts of the world. The responses further buttressed the discussions made in this research that some of the push factors that make migrants leave their birth nations include: extreme poverty, high rate of unemployment, wars or conflicts and political instability. All of which were also highlighted and pointed as the reasons that forced the interviewed respondents to leave their birth nations for Europe, especially Italy.

It is important to note that according to the responses provided by this research's respondents, there is an agreement with the push factors that inspire African migrants to leave their nation of origin for another country. All of the reasons for migration to Europe, as provided by the respondents agree with Cuschieri (2007) who identified some of the push factors for migration as, poverty, lack of natural resources to provide infrastructural development for citizens, internal and tribal conflicts and unemployment; all of which were also pointed as the causes for migration to Europe among the respondents of this research.

In addition, with regards to the pull factors that caught the attention of African migrants to travel to Europe, the predominant pull factors that led to

migration according to the respondents include: very serene, beautiful, welcoming and conducive society; enormous economic opportunities; high wages in comparison to their nations of origin; lesser rate of racism than other European countries; abiding by the fundamental human rights; the ease of documentation for both refugees and asylum seekers and many other positive reasons. All of which are in agreement with some of the principle of the pull factors that attract citizens of other nations to desire to move to another – ‘mostly better country’.

Furthermore, this study also confirmed that another significant reason that forced African migrants to travel via the Libya-Italian route into Europe despite its great risk is the synergy between Morocco’s government and Tunisia’s government, with the European Union, which increased policing and security on Morocco’s and Tunisia’s seashores, and consequently dismantled the activities of human traffickers and smugglers on the seashores of both countries. This governmental synergy eventually heaped more pressure on the Libya-Italy route, as increasing numbers of potential African migrants resorted to the only available option, which is the Libya-Italy route into Europe.

In the final analyses, this research concludes that the human trafficking mechanism in the Libya-Italy route entail Africans from various countries converging in Libya, then from there finalize arrangements with human traffickers or smugglers to transport them via boat crossing the Mediterranean Sea from Libya, through the Island of Lampedusa and finally into Italy, after which other travellers going further continue with their journeys into other parts of Europe. In addition, the conditions of travelling in this route under discussion are severely extreme and frequently lead to the deaths of many African migrants. This is confirmed by both the UNHCR and the HRW, some of whose staff were interviewed in this research.

Lastly, there exists high degree of synergy in the activities of the various bodies involved in the various stages of travel in the Libya-Italy route. This is proven by the seamless transition from one agency to another in the different stages of migrants’ journey to Europe via this route. This cooperation also appears to extend between human traffickers or smugglers and many of the various patrol officers among the coast guards of both Libya and Italy that permit these human traffickers to continue with their illegal business with limited amount of confrontation.

- Proposals for Further Research

Based on time and financial limitations, this research was unable to cover every of the desired issues related to African migrants and their migration into Europe using the Libya-Italy route with this research. Another limitation encountered in the course of this research was the researcher's inability to conduct interviews in Libya due to the current civic instability in the country. However, in spite of these limitations, some areas that require more academic researches have been highlighted in the outline below:

- i. The treatment and experiences of African migrants in Libya prior to their relocation to other parts of the world, or before their documentation and recognition as refugees by the UNHCR office located in Tripoli, Libya.
- ii. The living and working conditions of both African asylum seekers and African refugees in Italy and other parts of Europe.

- Proposals for Governments

Some of the proposals that this research offers include some of the following:

- i. Governments of both Libya and European nations should facilitate mechanisms that would welcome migrants or refugees in line with a common objective of allowing personal independence and freedom from poverty.
- ii. Governments in not only Europe, but across the world should incorporate education on intercultural integration; human rights and equality; migration and respect in their educational curricula, the advantage of this is to ensure that citizens are knowledgeable in matters related to meeting people from different parts of the world and interacting with them adequately.
- iii. Finally, both the governments of various European countries and especially the European Union should ascertain that every worker; inclusive of African migrants are completely shielded from abusive and uncomfortable work conditions and unsafe living conditions.

- Contribution of this Research to Immigration Researches

This study focused on examining the Libyan-Italian route into Europe, and also discovering if African migrants consider Italy as a target country for migration or merely as a transit point into other European countries. Apart from the major

research objectives above, other aims were discovering why African migrants go through the Libya-Italian route. And finally, discovering the human trafficking mechanism in the Libya-Italian route into Europe. Therefore, at the completion of this research, its contribution to immigration researches include the following:

1. Highlighting the push and pull factors that compel Africans to migrate into Europe, especially Italy.
2. Clearly revealing that Italy is widely conceived as a destination country or a host nation rather than merely a transit nation.
3. Providing insights into the travel experiences of migrants through the Libya-Italian route, especially their experiences while crossing the Mediterranean Sea. And also providing detailed information about the patterns of human trafficking in the Libya-Italian route into Europe.
4. In addition, this research also contributes to the available body of knowledge about immigration researches through the achievement of all the research aims mentioned above and would also serve as a reference material for future researchers in the field of immigration studies.

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RESUME

Name Surname: Ngo Makendi Bassonog Babette

Education

- ❖ **Bachelor:** 2016, Protestant University of CENTRAL Africa, Department of Social Science and International Relations, Translation and Interpretation.

- ❖ **M.A:** 2021, Istanbul Aydin University, Institute of Graduate Studies, Political Science and International Relations.

Professional Experience And Awards: Worked as an Intern at Optimus Translation Firm, majorly translating English to French: English to Chinese and French to Chinese.