

**NAVIGATING RISK AND UNCERTAINTY:THE EXPERIENCES OF FOREIGN
MIGRANTS RETURNING TO LIBYA**

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**NAVIGATING RISK AND UNCERTAINTY:THE EXPERIENCES OF
FOREIGN MIGRANTS RETURNING TO LIBYA**

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the motivations driving foreign migrants to re-migrate to conflict-afflicted Libya after returning to their home countries, exploring the complexities underlying this decision-making process amidst the upheaval caused by the Libyan conflict.

Using a comprehensive theoretical framework encompassing push-pull theory, circular migration theory, social capital theory, and transnationalism and network theory, the study analyzes the structural forces influencing migration dynamics and recurrent migratory patterns.

Furthermore, it examines the role of social capital theory in migrants' decisions, focusing on the significance of social networks, communal support, and cultural ties, as well as the impact of factors such as family reunification and community support networks on migrants' intent to re-migrate.

Semi-structured interviews are utilized to explore migrants' experiences, offering flexibility and structure for deep insights, with purposeful and snowball sampling techniques ensuring a diverse and representative sample of participants. The findings emphasize the crucial role of social networks in shaping migrants' mobility decisions, intertwining with economic drivers and facilitating re-migration choices. Gender dynamics further complicate migration patterns, revealing unique challenges faced by women and pressures encountered by men, highlighting the need for targeted policies.

Understanding remigration to conflict zones like Libya is crucial in today's changing migration landscape, aiming to inform evidence-based policies and interventions and support effective reintegration.

Keywords: Remigration; Conflict Zones; Libya; Migration Dynamics; Qualitative Research

ÖZ

Bu araştırma, yabancı göçmenleri kendi ülkelerine döndükten sonra çatışmaların yaşandığı Libya'ya yeniden göç etmeye iten motivasyonları incelemekte ve Libya'daki çatışmaların yol açtığı kargaşanın ortasında bu karar verme sürecinin altında yatan karmaşıklıkları araştırmaktadır.

İtme-çekme teorisi, döngüsel göç teorisi, sosyal sermaye teorisi ve ulusötesicilik ve ağ teorisini kapsayan kapsamlı bir teorik çerçeve kullanan bu çalışma göç dinamiklerini ve tekrarlayan göç modellerini etkileyen yapısal güçler.

Ayrıca, sosyal ağlar, toplumsal destek ve kültürel bağların öneminin yanı sıra aile birleşimi ve toplumsal destek ağları gibi faktörlerin göçmenlerin yeniden göç etme niyeti üzerindeki etkisine odaklanarak sosyal sermaye teorisinin göçmenlerin kararlarındaki rolünü incelemektedir.

Göçmenlerin deneyimlerini araştırmak için, derin içgörüler için esneklik ve yapı sunan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler kullanılmış, amaçlı ve kartopu örnekleme teknikleri ile katılımcıların çeşitliliği ve temsiliyeti sağlanmıştır. Bulgular, sosyal ağların göçmenlerin hareketlilik kararlarını şekillendirmede, ekonomik etkenlerle iç içe geçmede ve yeniden göç tercihlerini kolaylaştırmada oynadığı önemli rolü vurgulamaktadır. Toplumsal cinsiyet dinamikleri, kadınların karşılaştığı benzersiz zorlukları ve erkeklerin karşılaştığı baskıları ortaya çıkararak göç modellerini daha da karmaşık hale getirmekte ve hedefe yönelik politikalara duyulan ihtiyacı vurgulamaktadır.

Libya gibi çatışma bölgelerine yeniden göçü anlamak, günümüzün değişen göç ortamında, kanıta dayalı politika ve müdahaleleri bilgilendirmeyi ve etkili yeniden entegrasyonu desteklemeyi amaçlayan çok önemlidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yeniden Göç; Çatışma Bölgeleri; Libya; Göç Dinamikleri; Nitel Araştırma

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INTRODUCTION

Migration is a phenomenon that is deeply entangled with the complexities of human experience, motivated by diverse causes, circumstances, and environments. In recent years, conflict zones have become critical areas of focus that have stirred huge migration movements around the world. Among these areas, Libya is the most poignant case study. The prolonged conflict has caused chaos and forced migration there, putting questions to the traditional understanding of safety and security.

This thesis explores the reasons and drivers behind re-migration of African foreign migrants to Libya, a country facing ongoing challenges and political instability. What sets this study apart is its unique focus on the phenomenon of re-migration specifically to a conflict-ridden country, adding originality and depth to the existing discourse on migration dynamics in Libya.

The major findings of this study indicate that opportunities for higher economic returns, social links, and cultural familiarity are fundamental in such decisions. Through these factors, this research contributes to fresh insights into the already existing scholarship in migration literature, with special attention paid to the intricate interplay between economic and relational factors in decision-making.

Despite the problems with the limited availability of data, the research, by all available means and qualitative methods, constructs a comprehensive analysis. Semi-structured interviewing is the primary methodology used in this research as it helps to elicit very detailed, even nuanced responses. This approach allows for deeper understanding of migrants' personal experiences, motivations, and perspectives, which are crucial for capturing the full dimensions of their re-migration decisions.

The theoretical framework of this study integrates push-pull theory, circular migration theory, social capital theory and transnationalism and network theory. These frameworks collectively provide a robust foundation for examining the structural forces, individual motivations, and social networks that influence re-migration dynamics.

Three main questions will be the main drivers of this study;

How do structural factors within Libya, such as economic strength and seasonal migration patterns, influence the decision to remigrate to Libya?

In what ways do individual factors, including familial connections, business networks, and the return of personal possessions, impact the decision to re-migrate?

What are the gender-specific differences in re-migration decisions and migration patterns among individuals re-migrating to Libya?

The findings in this study underline the importance of social networks in shaping migrants' mobility trajectories. The prevalence of individual factors points out that relationships and networks established during earlier sojourns in Libya are pivotal for decisions on re-migration. These social networks provide familiarity, support, and opportunities, opening pathways to employment and housing while offering emotional comfort and a sense of belonging. Migrants often rely on these established connections, which mitigate the risks and uncertainties associated with returning to a conflict zone.

While structural factors, such as economic strength and seasonal migration, are still a primary driver for migration, their significance becomes deeply intertwined with social dynamics when it comes to re-migration. Initially, the search for economic opportunities prompts migration to Libya. Over time, as migrants establish themselves and build social ties, their decision-making processes evolve to incorporate these relational factors. Thus, economic motivations take on new dimensions in light of these social relationships. Securing a job through a friend or relative, for example, not only means an easier way to economic stabilization but also strengthens the emotional and social support mechanisms that become indispensable for migrants.

These findings unravel that social networks not only opens a way for finding a job and housing, but they also represent an important source of support that increases migrants' capacity to cope and adjust to life in a conflict situation. Such that these economic and social factors link a complex web wherein most economic opportunities are sought within the parameters of well-defined social relationships. Thus, even if social networks act as the primary factor of variables driving re-migration, they do this in combination with

economic realities, making the migration experience deeply relational and multi-dimensional in character.

Gender dynamics further complicate this picture, as evidenced by the exploration of gender-specific differences in re-migration decisions and migration patterns among individuals re-migrating to Libya. The study highlights significant differences in the re-migration decisions and migration patterns of men and women. Women often face unique challenges, including limited economic opportunities, increased exposure to exploitation, and safety concerns. Conversely, male migrants frequently encounter pressures related to labour market dynamics and societal expectations to be providers. The gendered nature of these experiences underscores the importance of targeted policies that address the unique vulnerabilities and capacities of both male and female migrants.

Thus, the research contributes not only to the advance of the theoretical understanding of re-migration processes but also to the comprehensive and empathic policy response to migration, particularly in the context of conflict zones. By amplifying the voices of migrants, research brings into the light the complex realities lived through by migrants, enriching the broader discourse on migration and giving valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners.

This thesis makes several important contributions. It fills a notable gap in the existing literature by examining the re-migration of African foreign migrants to Libya, an area that has not received much attention. The study highlights how both economic and social factors play crucial roles in migration decisions, and it stresses the importance of considering gender differences in migration policies. By offering these insights, the thesis provides a detailed perspective that can inform future research and help shape policies aimed at better supporting migrants and aiding their reintegration.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Migration Dynamics in Libya: Historical Trends and Contemporary Realities

2.1.1. Historical Role of Libya as a Destination for Foreign Workers

Since the discovery of crude oil, in 1963 Libya has drawn in migrants from other countries to help with the growing oil sector. Everything changed dramatically after the revolt and the fall of Muammar Gaddafi's regime. What was once a place for migrants, during Gaddafi's rule has now become a harsh reality where migrants are treated as goods, reminiscent of the tragic events of the transatlantic slave trade (Onuoha, F., & Okafor, C., 2021).

During the 1960s and 1970s, Libya's development drove the demand for workers in all fields. Libya was perceived as stable and more developed than most of its fellow Sahelian states; it absorbed many workers, especially from Egypt, to build its infrastructure and education. Much of the work on infrastructure and education was done by Egyptian labor, mostly on temporary contracts. This was the case for almost two decades as Libya's oil production, marketing, and educational sectors became developed. The work force was contributed to by very few sub-Saharan Africans before the early 1990s (Elbreki, R., 2018).

Historically, Libya has served as a significant destination for African migrants, with around 250,000 third-country nationals residing there in 2011. Additionally, some North African countries unintentionally became destinations for sub-Saharan migrants as they moved north (Browne, 2015). Libya's appeal as a migration hub in the region is due to its attractive combination of higher pay, employment prospects, and strategic geographical position, which has enticed migrants from neighboring countries.

Libya had around 600,000 regular and up to 1.2 million irregular foreign workers prior to the crisis, with an estimate of a total of around 2.5 million migrants (Di Bartolomeo et al., 2011). In 2011, 768,372 foreign migrants fled. In spite of these movements, Libya's migrant population has remained similar to major European destinations, at about 12% of the population. Recently, Libya has also become one of the major transit countries on the Mediterranean migration route (Fargues, 2020). Based on this, it can be inferred that the geographical characteristics of Libya play a crucial role in its transformation from a primary destination country to a transit country.

2.1.2. Geographical Context and Migration Patterns

Considering Libya's expansive geographical area of 1,775,500 square kilometers, ranking the 17th largest country globally. Its northern border meets the Mediterranean Sea, while Tunisia and Algeria border it to the west. Niger lies to the southwest, and Chad and Sudan to the south, with Egypt to the east. Notably, Libya boasts the longest coastline along the Mediterranean among all African nations, spanning 1,770 kilometers. This geographical context sheds light on Libya's status as a destination country for immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa (Elbreki, R., 2018).

The geographical position of Libya makes it a key transit and labor immigration point, sharing borders with six countries and a population of 6 million. Around 64% of migrants are from neighboring countries like Chad, Egypt, Niger, and Sudan, impacting local economies. Many seek job opportunities or aim to reach Europe. Despite a decline in arrivals from 2017 to 2019, Libya still hosts over 653,800 regular and irregular migrants, with 64% from neighboring countries, even after the 2011 emigrations. (Borgnäs, E., Cottone, L., & Teppert, T., 2020).

Before 2011, Libya attracted over 2.5 million foreign migrants with high salaries, primarily from neighboring countries (Teppert, T., & Rossi, L., 2020). However, Libya lacks comprehensive migration data. According to the UN DESA, the inward migrant stock significantly changed between 2012 and 2019. In 2012, after a series of uprisings,

the count was 187,372, which increased to approximately 818,216 by 2019. The events of 2011 significantly altered migratory patterns from Libya (Fargues, 2020).

Migration patterns saw significant changes from February 2016 to December 2019. In 2016, a total of 445,000 migrants relocated to Niger, Libya, and Algeria, with the bulk (70%) consisting of foreign migrants, primarily destined for Libya or European nations (Yuen, L., 2019). The majority of respondents stated Italy as their intended destination, although there was a decline from 54% in 2016 to 27% in 2018 for men and from 42% to 22% for women. Following Italy, about 10% of respondents targeted Europe as their next destination, including countries like Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland. Notably, approximately 7% of respondents, particularly men, initially aimed for Libya. While a small fraction mentioned immediate family members residing in their desired relocation country (less than 5% across the three years), a higher percentage reported extended family members in the destination country, fluctuating from 15% in 2016 to 17% in 2018. (Bartolini, L., & Zakoska-Todorovska, I., 2020).

Furthermore, migration dynamics in North Africa, particularly Libya, are influenced by networks and self-reinforcing mechanisms, which are not solely governed by state policies. Effective responses to irregular migration must consider both economic and conflict-related drivers comprehensively (Browne, 2015).

Nevertheless, the implementation of strict laws targeting the illegal transportation of migrants in the Niger resulted in a substantial 62% reduction in the movement of people to and from Algeria and Libya in 2017. In order to get around restrictions, migratory routes became more dispersed, resulting in more pronounced circular migration patterns between Libya and Niger starting in 2017 (Yuen, L., 2019).

Among the countries of North Africa, Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia have emigration rates of 4.5–8.6% of their populations, mainly towards Europe. On the other hand, Libya continues to be relatively attractive to migrant workers coming from within its borders. Locally recruited hundreds of thousands, with approximately 650,000 declaring their intention to stay for longer by mid-2019. (Migration in West and North Africa and Across the Mediterranean, 2020).

In April 2020, Libya hosted approximately 625,638 migrants, with 62% originating from neighboring countries. Despite the challenges, they sought better economic conditions. Most migrants settled along the coastline, with 58% having spent over a year in Libya. Despite violence having displaced some, the majority were economically driven and employed at 76%. Surprisingly, 73% intend to stay in Libya, with recent arrivals more inclined to move to Europe at 21% versus 13% overall. However, 27% of long-term migrants and 12% of recent arrivals consider returning home owing to living conditions or job scarcity, reflecting economic motivations and challenges in their home countries. (Teppert, T., & Rossi, L., 2020).

According to the International Organization for Migration (2024), as of September 2023, the number of migrants in Libya has risen to record levels since the establishment of the Displacement Tracking Matrix in the country. This increase reversed a former decline resulting from the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. This increase is due to many causes. First, a surge in the number of Sudanese nationals was registered, especially in the eastern regions, where conflict is underway in their own country. Additionally, there's been a notable uptick in Egyptians and Sudanese migrants in certain areas, attracted by expanding opportunities in construction and agriculture. The latest DTM Libya report, covering January-February 2024, identified 719,064 migrants. Among them, roughly eight in ten were adult males, with adult females and children each comprising 11 percent, including 4 percent unaccompanied minors (International Organization for Migration, 2024).

The existing data on migration objectives and intents in North and West African nations, as well as on migratory outflows from these nations and their destinations outside of Europe, is incomplete and insufficient. Thus, the reasons behind the decision of numerous prospective migrants from these two regions to neither migrate to Europe nor choose another destination with regards to the available literature remains incompletely comprehensible at present (Schöfberger et al., 2020).

2.1.3. Challenges During Migration and Resilience of Migrants

According to Bergsten (2022) and Daffeh (2024), migrants in Libya frequently avoid public areas to evade arrest and confinement in detention camps, where they face harsh conditions without basic necessities such as food and water. Bergsten (2022) notes that these centers are characterized by severe overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, poor nutrition resulting in malnutrition, insufficient healthcare, and distressing accounts of abuse by guards, including physical attacks and electric shocks. Upon arrival in Libya, migrants are often immediately arrested and confined in rebel-controlled camps. Daffeh (2024) highlights pervasive violence against migrants, with testimonies documenting deaths in detention due to starvation and other severe human rights abuses. Unfortunately, Libyan authorities neglect to address these issues, while migrants with work contracts endure wage non-payment and torture for raising concerns. Female migrants, in particular, suffer sexual abuse, and returnees recount exploitation by criminal gangs. Such widespread exploitation and violence prompt many migrants to seek repatriation (Daffeh, 2024).

The literature review underlines that common challenges faced by returnees often include the same dismal conditions that triggered emigration in the first place, such as poverty, food insecurity exacerbated by climate change, lack of access to essential services such as healthcare and education, separation from family, poor living conditions, and denial of access to developmental rights (Deena, 2023). Nevertheless, the migration dynamics observed in the region of North Africa exhibit considerable variation. According to Raineri (2020), existing ethnographic data indicates that, despite an increasing understanding of the difficult security and economic situation in Libya, the idea of migrating northwards to North Africa or Europe continues to appeal to many individuals from sub-Saharan Africa. Sadek (2019) found that reasons for migrating to Libya include convenient travel costs and relatively good living conditions compared to other Gulf States. As reported by Sadek (2019), migrants in Libya benefited from a low cost of living, which made basic needs affordable despite minimal income. However, they frequently encountered challenges such as non-payment of wages and conflicts with

employers, illustrating the complexities of migrant life. In contrast, findings from Deena (2023) indicate that returnees from Libya to Bangladesh expressed satisfaction with their employment and wages but faced difficulties in remitting their earnings home due to constraints in the Libyan financial system.

The discussion by Pace, Zayed, & Borgnäs (2020) states that a prevalent misconception in the region is that North African countries, such as Libya, primarily serve as transit countries en route to Europe. Findings from the 2019 DTM Libya - Migrant Vulnerability and Humanitarian Needs Assessment by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) derived from 13,228 quantitative interviews carried out using the Displacement Tracking Matrix Flow Monitoring Surveys with migrants from January to August 2019, along with 2,312 key informant interviews performed in June-July 2019, indicate a different outcome. More than 80 percent of the migrants surveyed by IOM stated that Libya was their planned destination upon leaving their home countries and that they had come to Libya in search of employment prospects (International Organization for Migration, 2019; Pace, Zayed, & Borgnäs, 2020).

Nevertheless, studies by Coetzee (2019) and Onuoha & Okafor (2021) state otherwise. The re-migration of foreign migrants back to Libya after returning to their home countries is driven by a combination of worsening economic conditions, conflict, and the quest for better opportunities. In many African nations, deepening poverty propels individuals to seek refuge in Libya, with Nigeria serving as a poignant example. With over 87 million Nigerians living below the poverty line, many embark on perilous journeys through Libya in hopes of reaching Europe (Onuoha & Okafor, 2021). A study by Coetzee (2019) mentions Sami, a migrant from Eritrea, employed at a mosque in Tripoli. He dedicates himself to assisting fellow Eritreans who are stuck in the city. Despite his desire to leave Eritrea, he expressed a preference for risking his life at sea in order to have a chance of migrating to Europe, rather than returning to the dreadful conditions he witnessed in Libya and the torment that awaits him in Eritrea.

From a study done by DeVargas and Donzelli (2013), there seems to be a connection between the racist, classist, and gendered constructs of identity and the sub-Saharan

migrants' position at the bottom of Libyan society and their vulnerability during the war. The dynamics of these constructs are largely shaped by contextual factors and are not fixed. The perception of black migrant workers in the Libyan political system has evolved from being seen as essential recruited labor to being viewed as economic burdens that should be deported (DeVargas & Donzelli, 2013). The overall conditions in Libya were reported by migrants as unstable. Migrants face serious protection concerns, such as arbitrary arrest, systematic extortion, abduction by armed groups, and so on, which are worsened by the country's continuing weak security conditions and the politicized backdrop of migration in Libya as well as abroad (Di Maio et al., 2022; Sanchez, 2020). Instances of racial discrimination, name-calling, thefts, unprovoked assaults by the younger Libyan generation, arbitrary imprisonment and detainment, difficulties getting rental housing, difficulty using the official banking system, and an absence of safety from the Libyan security services were also identified (Kandilige & Hamidou, 2019). According to Sanchez (2020) and DeVargas and Donzelli (2013), the offers and risks that migrants faced were frequently defined by their color, class, gender, and age.

In contrast, despite an overall decrease in migration, an increasing percentage of Nigerien migrants now prefer to go to Libya instead of returning to Niger, indicating longer migration periods. Sudanese migrants, particularly from Darfur, are fleeing conflict and insecurity, with Libya as a primary destination after crossing borders (Yuen, 2019).

Therefore, and as stated by Nissling & Murphy-Teixidor (2020), Onuoha & Okafor, (2021) and Yuen (2019), the motivations behind these migrations are multifaceted, including the search for shelter from war, the pursuit of improved livelihoods, and the need to provide financial support to families through remittances. Although reports highlight incidents of protection and rights violations during these journeys, the vulnerability of migrants is influenced by various factors, not solely conflict or violence. This raises a critical question: why do individuals from conflict-affected regions seek refuge in countries like Libya that are also experiencing their own crises?

Migration dynamics in Libya have been heavily influenced by political conflicts and strict mobility rules. Many migrants, particularly from countries like Ghana, have historically

spent years in Libya, supporting their families back home. The 2011 war forced many to return to their home countries, where they often faced limited economic opportunities (Kleist, 2020). Contrary to perceptions of conflict and according to Kleist (2020) and Sanchez (2020), despite these challenges, Libya continues to attract migrants due to the more lucrative opportunities available there compared to their home countries where they often find safety and supportive employers in Libya, with many intending to settle there due to promised employment and perceived stability. Despite opportunities, most show little interest in migrating to Europe, preferring to remain in Libya to address financial obligations from previous journeys (Sanchez, 2020). These insights challenge conventional narratives on migration experiences in Libya.

According to Afifi (2011), Di Maio et al. (2022), Sanchez (2020), and Young et al. (2007), several pull factors attract foreign migrants back to Libya after returning to their home countries. For many Nigerien migrants, the primary objective of migrating to Libya is to enhance their income. Libya's geographical proximity and its position on the same continent make it a preferred destination, as migrants can maintain strong ties with their relatives and easily return whenever possible (Afifi, 2011). Additionally, despite the vast distance separating Darfur from Libya, robust economic, social, and political connections have facilitated significant labor migration from Darfur to Libya for the past two centuries. The crucial role of remittances sent back to Darfur underscores the economic importance of these migrations (Young et al., 2007).

Furthermore, migrants have established strong networks to address challenges related to housing, health, unemployment, and personal safety. Close relationships with Libyans, particularly employers, provide invaluable support, such as lodging, which enhances security and reduces transportation costs (Sanchez, 2020). Even in Libya's volatile political environment, opportunities in the informal economy are plentiful. While wages in the informal sector may be low, they are often sufficient to meet basic needs, and the strength of the Libyan dinar compared to the currencies in migrants' home countries allows for remittances. This financial stability, combined with the informal support networks and opportunities for economic improvement, makes Libya an attractive destination for migrants seeking better livelihoods (Di Maio et al., 2022; Sanchez, 2020).

Migrants also believed that either they had improved over those in their origin countries or had evolved through time. Given their familiarity with the local area, migrants returning to poor conditions in their country of origin are frequently eager to re-migrate, usually to the nation from which they fled (Kandilige & Hamidou, 2019; Kelly, 2012). This can be seen in the case of Nigerien migrants as Niger's poverty and unemployment are the key factors driving its citizens to migrate to Libya. Libya is a prosperous country in need of labor and provides migrants with very decent pay (Kandilige & Hamidou, 2019; Sanchez, 2020).

In other words, according to Kandilige and Hamidou (2019) and Di Maio et al. (2022) migration to Libya is motivated by migration culture or the existence of migrants from the same nation from which they originate, expectations of household livelihood, geographical proximity, the presence of social ties, and the prevalence of migrant smuggling networks (i.e. linkages to various routes). Given migrants' familiarity with Libyan society and its customs and the fact that they are often eager to re-migrate to the country they have left, migrants who return to such impoverished conditions are frequently unaware of the potential repercussions of doing so in a place that has recently experienced civil war or political turmoil (Kelly & Wadud, 2012).

According to Bergsten (2022), Fargues (2020), and Teppert and Rossi (2020), the literature underscores the severe challenges faced by migrants in Libya. These include malnutrition, illness, violence, abuse, exploitation, and even death, highlighting the dangerous conditions within the country (Bergsten, 2022; Fargues, 2020). Structural factors such as the limited public and private health systems, restricted access to public services, and the risks associated with irregular migration and ongoing conflict negatively impact all migrants (Teppert & Rossi, 2020). These conditions create a challenging environment that foreign migrants often face upon their return to Libya, reflecting the broader issues of instability and lack of adequate support systems.

In addition, it is imperative to acknowledge the substantial influence of political instability on the overall state of migrant security within the context of Libya. The inquiry into whether the circumstances in the migrants' country of origin had substantially

declined or whether they perceived Libya as a more favorable destination with greater prospects and potential for a better life, thus far, emerges as a crucial concern in comprehending the intricacies of migration (Bergsten, 2022; Fargues, 2020; Teppert & Rossi, 2020).

The literature presents a grim view of the deplorable conditions that most migrants experience in Libya and its overcrowded detention camps, malnutrition, and abuse. Nevertheless, many are still lured to the state by economic opportunities and better wages, and because of geographical proximity. Social networks and the possibility of sending remittances home also play significant roles in their decisions to return. The situation is complex, with economic incentives often overshadowed by severe risks and instability. This highlights the urgent need for policies that protect and support these vulnerable groups. Understanding these migration dynamics is crucial for creating effective interventions and helping migrants who endure such challenging conditions.

2.1.4. Economic Implications of Migration in Libya

Before the 2011 revolution, Libya attracted an estimated 1.35 million to 2.5 million foreign workers (Borgnäs, Cottone, & Teppert, 2020). According to IOM (2023a), nearly half of migrants (47%) interviewed by DTM Libya between September and December were employed in main fields. Both Borgnäs, Cottone, and Teppert (2020) and IOM (2023a) indicate that these main fields include construction, encompassing roles like laborers, carpenters, and electricians. These sectors—construction, manufacturing, and agriculture—are associated with high risks of injuries and fatal accidents (IOM, 2023a).

The allure of higher wages and steady job opportunities continues to draw migrants, despite challenges posed by ongoing violence and economic instability (Borgnäs, Cottone, & Teppert, 2020; IOM, 2023c). According to the latest available data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2023a), in late 2023, 16 per cent of migrants were actively looking for work in Libya. This is a lower rate than that observed in the past and similar to that recorded before the outbreak of COVID-19. The unemployment rate for female migrants stood at 49 per cent, significantly higher than for

men at 14 per cent—a persistent gender gap. In addition, there were higher unemployment rates for those from the Middle East, with 27%, and Sub-Saharan Africa, with 18% of those unemployed, compared to the North African average at 12% and Asia with 7%. The fall in overall unemployment since the middle of 2023 was in keeping with World Bank forecasts for 2024 of sustained economic growth, following an upsurge in both economic volatility and mounting living costs (Borgnäs, Cottone, & Teppert, 2020; Browne, 2015; IOM, 2023c).

A greater proportion of migrants aged less than 20 were unemployed and actively seeking employment compared to other age groups. Employers paying less than agreed was the main issue highlighted by the majority of migrants aged 20 or less (65%) while a lack of job security was the top challenge for those aged 21 or over (53%). A greater proportion of migrants below the age of 20 were employed on a short-term or casual basis (70%) compared to those over 21 (48%) (IOM, 2023a).

The labor market in Libya reflects a two-tiered structure, marked by significant migrant involvement alongside observable unemployment rates among indigenous inhabitants. This scenario stems from factors like discrepancies between demanded skills and locally available talents, the dominant role of the public sector, and indigenous reluctance toward specific employment types (Borgnäs, Cottone, & Teppert, 2020).

Immigrant labor has multifaceted effects on the job market. While it may lead to job displacement among native workers, it also plays a vital role in enhancing productivity and creating opportunities for local labor (IOM, 2023c). Libyan labor market appears sufficiently large to absorb foreign labor force, with migrants reportedly finding little to no difficulties in employment compared to their home countries (IOM, 2022). As per DTM's 2022 June-July "Migration Report", 76 per cent of migrants reported being employed in Libya at the time of the interview, while only 52 per cent said they were employed in their country of origin. Migrants are primarily employed in sectors like construction, water supply, electricity and gas, agriculture, pastoralism, and food industry (IOM, 2023c).

Migrants are not necessarily perceived by the local community as competing with Libyan citizens in the job market, since they often occupy jobs that Libyans are generally not willing to do. Employers in key sectors like construction or agriculture report difficulties hiring Libyans because many lack the technical skills for specific positions and desire to perform jobs requiring physical labor (Borgnäs, Cottone, & Teppert, 2020). Therefore, these industries rely to varying levels on migrant workers. Despite security challenges over the past decade, migrants continue to provide key contributions to the Libyan labor market (IOM, 2023c).

Through their entrepreneurial endeavors, immigrants stimulate demand and efficiency in the labor market, thereby making significant contributions to economic growth and job creation (Münz et al., 2007). In Libya, a country heavily reliant on foreign workers due to its petrostate status, sub-Saharan migrants often occupy the lowest socioeconomic rung. They face unfair scapegoating for societal problems and are compelled to undertake undesirable jobs in exploitative conditions (DeVargas & Donzelli, 2013). Therefore, the labor market might be filled by asylum seekers and low-skilled legal immigrants who could work in fields that legal residents avoid, making a decent living in the meanwhile (Münz et al., 2007).

Promising prospects in sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing offer potential for enhanced job opportunities and improved quality of life for migrants, yet they encounter obstacles in entrepreneurial pursuits due to cultural barriers and limited financial resources (Borgnäs, Cottone, & Teppert, 2020). The Libyan job market, notably in construction, agriculture, and commerce, historically attracts a significant migrant workforce, often relying on social networks for employment (Sadek, 2019; Borgnäs, Cottone, & Teppert, 2020). According to Sadek (2019), many Egyptians secure laborer roles in construction, driven by high demand and personal referrals within Libyan networks. Libya's economic opportunities are perceived as more advantageous than those in countries like Ghana, despite ongoing instability, prompting many migrants to return in search of stability and financial security (Kleist, 2020).

Borgnäs, Cottone, and Teppert (2020) highlight empirical data emphasizing the significant impact of migrants on Libya's economy, particularly in agriculture, manufacturing, and construction. Migrants frequently occupy job vacancies and transmit an average of USD 2,500 per individual in remittances to their countries of origin. Nearly a third of migrants mentioned having sent remittances since arriving in Libya, a percentage that has remained stable over the last three years. In comparison, prior to the onset of conflict in Tripoli in April 2019, around half of migrants reported sending remittances (IOM, 2023b). This sharp decrease points to the long-lasting impact of armed conflict and the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrants in Libya. Over four in five respondents surveyed in August 2023 (82%) reported that sending money home was one of, or the main reason for their migration to Libya (Borgnäs, Cottone, & Teppert, 2020; IOM, 2023b).

DTM research indicates a positive correlation between the duration of migrants' stay in Libya and improvements in their economic opportunities and ability to send remittances back to their home countries (Migration in West and North Africa and Across the Mediterranean, 2020). Seasonal movements are prevalent among Nigerien migrants, especially in agriculture in Libya and Algeria, sectors prone to seasonal variations such as construction and agriculture, fostering short-term or circular migration patterns (Yuen, 2019; Black, 2020; IOM, 2023b). According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2023b), migrants who regularly commute between their home countries and Libya—whether monthly, seasonally, or annually—report higher rates of remittance sending (64%) compared to non-regular commuters (36%). This highlights stable and circular migration dynamics between neighboring countries and Libya, where migration serves as a strategy to enhance household income through remittances during periods of job scarcity or seasonal hardships, such as high food prices and low food availability in their home countries.

The majority of labor migration occurs with little to no government intervention; instead, workers secure employment opportunities through social networks, private and often unofficial recruiters, or upon arrival in Libya (Le Coz & Hooper, 2021). The public sector, a major employer, faces challenges such as overstaffing and educational shortcomings,

particularly affecting female workers. Migrants often lack official documentation and protection of their rights due to outdated legislation, weak labor unions, and inadequate governance (Borgnäs, Cottone, & Teppert, 2020).

Libya's demand for foreign labor, driven by its status as a petrostate, ensures ongoing migration from sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere. Economic factors and the prospect of independence motivate migrants to seek opportunities abroad despite societal challenges and economic instability (Brachet, 2015).

To sum up, Libya's labor market heavily relies on foreign workers, particularly in industries like construction, agriculture, and manufacturing. Despite the ongoing conflict and economic instability, migrants are drawn to Libya by the prospect of higher wages and more consistent job opportunities. The unemployment rate among migrants remains a significant issue, with notable disparities affecting women and migrants from the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. Nevertheless, many migrants find better employment opportunities in Libya compared to their home countries, often taking up jobs that locals are less inclined to accept. This situation underscores the need for stronger protections and support for migrant workers, who are essential to Libya's economic stability through their contributions and remittances.

2.2. The Dual Crisis: COVID-19 and Conflict

Migrants in Libya constitute a significant part of the population, estimated to be eleven to twenty-five percent, amounting to around 2.5 million prior to 2011. From this, the Sub-Saharan Africans constitute about 1 to 1.5 million who, during the period of the 2011 war, were in a state of repeated violence and precarious life conditions. Following the post-conflict period, approximately 790,000 migrants and their families crossed borders to neighboring countries, and an unknown quantity were stuck at transit zones and camps, still more so for sub-Saharan Africans who could not escape. (DeVargas & Donzelli, 2013).

Even prior to the Arab Spring, migrants were in precarious situations in Libya as the country's migration policy gave way to entry based on economic needs but expelled them during economic downturns. Environmental factors and systematic human rights violations were also major push factors for migration to Libya. Migrants were subjected to robberies, beatings, and extortion, particularly in the 2011 crisis period, when armed groups targeted the Egyptians in view of job competition. (Sadek, S., 2019; Coetzee, J. A., 2019).

Libya has historically attracted many Egyptian migrants, especially as Gulf countries began preferring workers from South and Southeast Asia. Before the 2011 Libyan crisis, over one million Egyptians lived in Libya, constituting the largest migrant group. (Sadek, 2019).

However, this number dropped to about 700,000 after the crisis, with most returnees predominantly employed in construction, agriculture, and fishing (Sadek, 2019). Surveys conducted during the conflict revealed that over 95 percent of returnees were young males aged 20 to 40, including sub-Saharan migrants, Bangladeshis, Tunisians, and Egyptians (DeVargas & Donzelli, 2013).

Post-2011, violence in Libya escalated, particularly against Egyptians, driven by false beliefs about their involvement in the uprising despite their economic motives. According to Sadek (2019), discrimination, which existed prior to 2011, intensified thereafter. Many Egyptians returned home in 2011, but economic pressures led some to stay or return to Libya. Remarkably, remittances to Egypt from Libya increased by 15% in 2011 and by 34% in 2012, indicating a complex migration pattern where many Egyptians stayed or quickly returned despite the crisis. Notwithstanding the difficulties, interviewed migrants expressed a strong desire to return to Libya once conditions improve. They relied on information from Egyptian friends in Libya to inform their decisions, as Libya remains more appealing compared to Gulf countries (Sadek, 2019).

According to Browne (2015), conflict in mid-2014 forced many migrants and Libyans to flee, with the majority opting to cross the Mediterranean. Those who remained in Libya either faced stranding or benefitted from stable employment, leading to a decline but not

a complete halt in migrant inflows. Economic and security concerns primarily influenced the decision to depart Libya post-2011 and post-2014, with economic hardships often preceding security issues. Some migrants were shielded by their Libyan employers, who later faced security threats, resulting in the migrants' departure for safety. Sadek (2019) observed a noticeable shift in mistreatment experienced by migrants before and after 2011.

Perceived socioeconomic opportunities significantly influence migration decisions. An interview conducted by Citi TV, as reported by Ntenhene (2021), reveals that individuals shared experiences of migration to Libya based on these perceptions. Successful stories of friends who migrated during chaotic times and acquired significant assets, such as cars and houses, contrast with those who saw little improvement in their circumstances. The visible prosperity of returning migrants serves as a persuasive argument for potential migrants, sustaining the perception of Libya as a land of opportunity (Ntenhene, 2021).

Irregular migration is significantly influenced by violent conflicts, which act as pivotal moments prompting individuals to seek safety elsewhere. Despite the dangers, worsening situations in home countries force migrants to take risky paths in search of refuge. Browne (2015) indicates that since 2012, increased migration from Nigeria and Mali underscores conflict as a factor shaping migration trends in these regions. Upon returning home, many individuals faced challenging circumstances after leaving their assets and savings in Libya (Browne, 2015).

According to Onuoha and Okafor (2021), the collapse of the post-Ghaddafi Libyan state has led African migrants to mistakenly assume that development would allow unrestricted transit through Libya to Europe. Conversely, this collapse has increased the danger of traveling through Libya. During the international community's evacuation process, as stated by DeVargas and Donzelli (2013), sub-Saharan migrants were notably overlooked. While Libyans and certain migrant groups found escape routes, sub-Saharan migrants were often stranded without basic necessities. The conflict in Libya resulted in job loss, reduced income, and increased vulnerability due to limited access to essentials like food

and healthcare, pushing many migrants to return home. Their families faced additional financial challenges due to the lack of remittances (DeVargas & Donzelli, 2013).

Since 2019, the Government of National Accord (GNA) and the Libyan National Army (LNA) have been at war, vying for control of Tripoli and other key sites. As Bloem and Salemi (2021) report, the GNA initiated a counter-offensive tactic toward the LNA. Political instability has increased dangers across the Sahel, Sahara, and Libya. Lawlessness has made these desert regions more challenging to cross or survive. Despite no concrete statistical evidence on disappearances and mortality in the deserts, reports explain violence due to the absence of rule of law and state control (Migration in West and North Africa and Across the Mediterranean, 2020).

In Libya and as Kandilige and Hamidou (2019) and Sanchez (2019) note, intimidation and violence were ongoing issues amid the broader instability. Sanchez (2019) claims that the re-occurrence of civil war in 2019 put migrants in dangerous situations, decreasing employment options. Kandilige and Hamidou (2019) add that over 100,000 migrants were obliged to return home due to the violence, with many facing trauma, injuries, and lack of travel documentation. In crisis zones, foreign labor migrants are often more susceptible to danger than locals, as local governments and civil society do not prioritize their needs (Kelly & Wadud, 2012; Kelly, 2012).

Heavy conflict and political turmoil in Libya have dramatically shaped migratory trends. Most migrants remain hidden due to their irregular status, making it difficult for humanitarian organizations to reach them. According to Di Maio et al. (2022), the fragile security situation and politicization of migration leave migrants at high risk of dangers such as arbitrary detention, blackmail, and kidnapping by militia groups. Entering Libya with a valid visa is highly unlikely due to the volatile political situation.

Since April 17, 2020, the Libyan government has enacted lockdown regulations, including the closure of all educational institutions, factories, and other private businesses. The first confirmed COVID-19 case in Libya was reported on March 24, 2020, causing significant fear, especially in Tripoli, the capital of Libya (Mahmoud et al.,

2021). The number of verified COVID-19 cases rose sharply by mid-July 2020, totaling 3,691 documented cases and 80 fatalities by July 31, 2020 (Tresh, 2021).

The violent war in Libya increased in the spring of 2020, reversing only after several victories by the internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA). Despite the enforcement of policy measures during the COVID-19 pandemic, there was little visible improvement in the rate of inter-group disputes (Bloem & Salemi, 2021). The civilian conflict around Tripoli since April 2019 impacted the socio-economic effects of COVID-19, potentially worsening the situation as the pandemic's effects spread throughout Libya (Elhadi et al., 2020; Bloem & Salemi, 2021).

Restrictions on mobility in West and North Africa have affected all migrant segments, including labor migrants, asylum seekers, displaced persons, students, traders, and tourists. Despite political instability and IOM's recommendation to suspend migrants' returns to Libya, the number of disembarked persons rose by 60% during the first half of 2020 compared to the previous year (Schöffberger et al., 2020). Despite the suspension of nearly all non-governmental rescue operations due to COVID-19, Italy and Malta declared their ports unsafe, forcing migrants to seek other options, with Italy being seen as more accessible. The number of irregular departures from Libya between January and May 2020 more than doubled compared to the same period in 2019 (Cusumano et al., 2020; Deena, 2023).

Countries like France, Spain, and Germany postponed or reduced efforts to forcibly repatriate individuals due to the United Nations Network on Migration's request to halt such operations during the pandemic. However, Libya and Algeria continued similar operations, repatriating refugees to the desert (Schöffberger et al., 2020). Evaluations by DTM Libya emphasized the socioeconomic repercussions of the epidemic, revealing that rising unemployment posed a substantial risk, exacerbating migrant vulnerability and resulting in negative humanitarian outcomes (Schöffberger et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic worsened the vulnerability of refugees and migrants to protection incidents in Libya, including broader socioeconomic and political implications. According to Nissling et al. (2020), conflict in Tripoli exacerbated the

pandemic's effects within Libya. The inadequate health system and the everyday hardships from the civil war since April 2019 were major causes of panic. Political unrest combined with the COVID-19 pandemic had the potential to devastate African healthcare systems (Elhadi et al., 2020). The targeting of healthcare facilities by the LNA, as revealed by Libyan data, showed that only 55% of public health centers and 52% of public hospitals were fully operational. Nearly all towns (98%) reported limited availability of pharmaceuticals, particularly for chronic illnesses (Teppert et al., 2020). Attacks on hospitals treating COVID-19 patients were reported in several instances (Mahmoud et al., 2021; Bloem & Salemi, 2021).

The Libyan government took several measures to battle the COVID-19 pandemic in accordance with a national COVID-19 prevention and control scheme (Mahmoud et al., 2021). The pandemic hit migrant workers in the Mediterranean hard. In Tunisia, many migrants lost their jobs and had to rely on support. Surveys by the Mixed Migration Secretariat found that more than half of all migrants in Libya and Tunisia witnessed a decline in income due to COVID-19 measures (Knoll, 2020). Inflation more than doubled since the outbreak began, and unemployment rose as many, particularly in the private sector, lost their jobs and earnings (Elgimati et al., 2021). Schöfberger and Rango (2020) noted that rising unemployment ranks among the main risk factors making migrants more susceptible to harm, with detrimental humanitarian effects. The pandemic-related mobility regulations reduced migrants' access to livelihoods by limiting their mobility (Schöfberger & Rango, 2020).

Abruptly repatriating a substantial proportion of migrant workers had extremely detrimental effects, such as lost foreign exchange revenues and increased unemployment, as seen in the wake of the Libyan crisis (Kelly, 2012). Migrants were occasionally abandoned in the desert due to forced-return initiatives by governments, such as those in Libya and Algeria (Schöfberger & Rango, 2020). Knoll (2020) highlighted that Italy, Malta, and Libya blocked their harbors to boat arrivals in response to the pandemic, leaving rescued migrants stranded for days or weeks.

The help provided by IOM and other humanitarian players was disrupted, worsening conditions for migrants in unstable governments or conflict countries like Yemen, Somalia, and Libya (Le Coz & Newland, 2021). Immigrants entering Italy had to quarantine on government-chartered boats. Despite escalating political unrest in Libya and IOM's calls to halt migrant returns to Libya, disembarkations in Libya increased by 60% in the first five months of 2020 compared to 2019. Libyan authorities shot and killed three migrants attempting to flee after disembarking in Khums on July 29, 2020. In June 2020, 1,496 migrants arrived in Libya, up from 1,333 in June 2019 (Schöffberger & Rango, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored institutional flaws exacerbating the vulnerabilities of marginalized communities, including migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons (IDPs). These groups, along with women and children, struggled to take necessary precautions against the virus due to persistent conflict in Libya (Badi, 2020). COVID-19 has introduced new motivations for greater collaboration on migration-related issues while also presenting additional obstacles to migration management (Le Coz & Newland, 2021). Maunganidze and Abebe (2020) argued that stricter immigration and movement restrictions could reduce migrant flows, but the pandemic also showed how quickly migrant smuggling practices adapted to COVID-19 travel regulations.

While COVID-19 affected Libyans, it hardly impacted the dynamics of the country's civil conflict (Badi, 2020). The ongoing civil unrest worsened the already poor economic and social situation, and COVID-19 did not significantly impact the population's psychological wellness. Research by Tresh (2021) and Badi (2020) demonstrates that COVID-19 was not viewed as an immediate existential threat but rather another layer of complexity in Libya's crisis.

In conclusion, Libya's migration landscape is profoundly shaped by historical and contemporary conflicts, particularly evident in the motivations and experiences of migrants returning to or re-migrating from the country. The aftermath of the 2011 revolution and subsequent conflicts has had a significant impact on migrant populations, leading to large numbers leaving Libya amidst violence and economic downturns. Despite

these challenges, economic opportunities continue to attract migrants, particularly from Sub-Saharan Africa and Egypt, reflecting a complex interplay of push and pull factors influenced by social networks, economic conditions, and perceptions of stability. Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing effective policies that support migrant integration and address their diverse needs in Libya's evolving socio-political landscape.

2.3. From Gaddafi to Present: Evolution of Migration Policies in Libya

In March 1989, in the capital city of Tripoli, Gaddafi declared a reconciliation with neighboring nations. This reconciliation notably included the unilateral opening of the eastern border with Egypt, followed shortly by the western frontier with Tunisia and Algeria. This alliance facilitated the influx of more than 70,000 individuals from these countries, particularly after an agreement permitting passport-free travel among their citizens was reached (Elbreki, R., 2018).

During the 1990s, Gaddafi's pan-African agenda drew around 1.5 million Sub-Saharan workers to Libya through an open-door migration policy. Yet, the adoption of strict anti-migrant measures by Schengen countries in North Africa altered traditional trans-Saharan routes as a result of changing geopolitical conditions. Gaddafi implemented policies in the 2000s to limit illegal migration, specifically targeting individuals from Sub-Saharan countries and blocking their entry through land routes. Nevertheless, Libya became a significant entry point for irregular routes into the European Union (Palillo, 2020).

In 1995, Libya altered its approach to foreign labor to tackle illegal immigration and domestic unemployment, resulting in the repatriation of roughly 335,000 foreign nationals, with 200,000 forcibly deported and the remainder leaving voluntarily. By 2000, Libya's immigrant population had swelled to around 2.5 million, profoundly affecting a society where discussions on economic and democratic issues were scarce. This influx inadvertently provided a platform for expressing Libyan frustrations, often blaming immigrants for societal problems like prostitution, violence, and drug-related issues (Young et al., 2007).

Gaddafi was obliged to drastically alter his strategy and turn to his African allies when he discovered that he was singled out amid the global embargo. The strengthening of this partnership became evident following the proclamation of the African Union in the Libyan town of Sirt, which served as a stronghold for the Gaddafi's government, in 1999 (Elbreki, R., 2018).

According to Black (2020), since the mid-2000s, the majority of migrants have faced growing difficulties in acquiring the necessary documentation to legitimately enter Maghreb countries, primarily as a result of alterations in immigration rules. Most countries in this region possess extensive and permeable borders that traverse isolated desert regions, posing challenges in terms of regulating travel. Consequently, migration has persisted, albeit through unregulated methods.

Libya's migration policy has a substantial impact on migration patterns, notably in terms of luring international workers. The laws enacted in the 1980s, including Law No. 6 of 1987 and Law No. 10 of 1989, made it easier for Arab nations to enter and live in Libya. These laws granted them privileges that were comparable to those of Libyan citizens (Borgnäs, Cottone, & Teppert, 2020). This approach attracted Arab workers, thus alleviating the labour shortage.

Libya's legal system establishes Arab nationality, but its impact on acquiring Libyan nationality for individuals from other Arab nations lacks empirical support. The country has enacted laws, such as No. 02 of 2004 and No. 19 of 2010, targeting irregular migration, with penalties including imprisonment and fines. Law No. 10 of 2013 prohibits offenses like torture and abduction, safeguarding detained migrants' rights. Notably, Libya was the last in the Maghreb region to implement penalties for clandestine escape under Law No. 19 of 2010 (Fargues, 2020).

The evolution of migration policies in Libya has been shaped by internal economic and political needs, as well as international alliances. Initially adopting a strong anti-Western stance, Libya later embraced pan-Arabism under Gaddafi, offering preferential treatment to Arab migrants. However, this stance shifted towards a more open-door policy for sub-Saharan nationals to strengthen ties with African countries and due to a perceived lack of

support from Arab nations post-UN sanctions, Libya shifted its focus to Africa (Borgnäs, Cottone, & Teppert, 2020) (DeVargas, M., & Donzelli, S., 2013).

The Joint Africa-Europe Strategy, which was established at the second EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon in December 2007, sets down the framework for the partnership between Africa and the EU with regard to mobility and migration (Maunganidze & Abebe, 2020).

This changing dynamic may have an impact on how Africa and Europe interact with each other and collaborate in the future for cooperation among the two continents. Negotiations between the two sides aimed at upgrading the joint Africa-EU policy have already been derailed by the pandemic and different perspectives on mobility (Maunganidze & Abebe, 2020).

Migration to Libya reached its highest point during Gaddafi's rule, as he actively promoted sub-Saharan migration as part of his Pan-African foreign policy, supporting liberation movements and enabling the free movement of people. Consequently, plenty of young men from Ghana relocated to Libya, primarily working in manual labour fields like bricklaying, woodworking, and construction (Ntenhene, F., 2021).

Visa restrictions for sub-Saharan Africans were lifted, easing labour entry. Yet, this led to job market division as Libyans hesitated to take key roles in industries such as construction and agriculture, despite government's push for nationalization (Borgnäs, Cottone, & Teppert, 2020). Cooperation with the EU, including agreements with Italy, further influenced migration management in Libya. These policies, while aiming to serve Libya's interests, have also heightened vulnerability and exposed migrants to violence, highlighting the complex dynamics of migration governance and its impacts on migrant security (DeVargas, M., & Donzelli, S., 2013).

In recent years, Libya has attracted a notable influx of migrants, including both environmental and traditional migrants. During this period, the Libyan president actively promoted migration from Niger to Libya, especially during the international embargo. African labour was encouraged to contribute to Libya's economy through infrastructure projects and economic activities. However, once the embargo ended, the reception

towards African labour shifted, and they were no longer as welcomed as before (Afifi, 2011).

In 2007, non-Arab foreigners were suddenly subjected to new visa rules, resulting in their immediate irregular status. The need for employment regularization arose, along with limited access to public services (Borgnäs, Cottone, & Teppert, 2020).

Due to the stricter immigration laws and border controls in Libya, many Ghanaians now prefer irregular migration as it enables them to avoid travel document requirements. Life has become more challenging for irregular Ghanaian migrants in Libya due to the stricter laws and policies on irregular migration, which have been further complicated by the downfall of Gadhafi's regime (Ntenhene, F., 2021).

Several catalysts have caused notable changes in migration patterns, including the Libyan crisis and heightened border instability since 2011, the implementation of Niger's law against illegal migrant trafficking (Loi N0 2015-36 relative au trafic illicite de migrants) in May 2015, the shutdown of gold mines, and more stringent immigration measures in Algeria (Yuen, 2019).

Yuen (2019) noted that the implementation of Niger's 2015-36 Law, criminalizing irregular migration, caused notable shifts in migration patterns. This led to fractured routes and a decrease in migration into Libya starting in 2017. The migrant composition also changed, with fewer foreigners passing through Niger and more Nigeriens heading to Algeria and Libya.

Libya and Niger have recently signed a memorandum of agreement to protect migrant workers by streamlining work visa issuance and meeting Libya's labour market needs to regulate labour migration. With over 600,000 foreign migrants in Libya, 20% are from Niger, contributing significantly to both countries' economies. The Sahara Desert poses dangers along migratory routes, prompting a collaboration between IOM, Libya, and Niger to enhance capabilities in labour migration, statistics, and migrant security. Additionally, IOM facilitates discussions to improve labour mobility policies and international cooperation, aiming to uphold migrant workers' rights (Libya and Niger Move Forward on Strengthening Migration Management and Labour Mobility, 2021).

Therefore, in order to establish a framework of international cooperation in the area of labour mobility between Libya and major countries of origin, the goal of this agreement is to promote discourse (Libya and Niger Move Forward on Strengthening Migration Management and Labour Mobility, 2021).

As of 2019, migrant workers can enter Libya through the acquisition of work permits in compliance with the regulations in their countries of origin and by securing employment contracts. In October 2019, Libya agreed with Niger to organize a bilateral labour accord to ensure safe and orderly migration. Additionally, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) set up a regional forum to help Libya collaborate with 14 other countries on strategies for safe and organized labour migration. (Borgnäs, Cottone, & Teppert, 2020).

It is widely recognized that detention in Libya violates fundamental rights, especially impacting black African migrants who face pervasive racism. Although Libya is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, it only acknowledges nine nationalities as potentially exempt from deportation. However, even individuals from these nationalities can still be detained. Despite initial expectations in the mid-2000s, Libya has not ratified the convention and has not yet officially acknowledged the UNHCR (Kirby, 2020).

Libya's migration policies are characterized by repression and periodic violent collective repatriation, especially against African migrants. This influx has fuelled Libyan grievances, initially targeted migrants but later encompassing broader societal issues. Migrants are often blamed for social problems, reflecting systemic limitations on their agency. Similar scepticism about repatriation initiatives exists in neighbouring regions like Niger. Despite changes in Libyan governance, European migration policies remain consistent, contributing to border militarization and human rights violations (Brachet, 2015).

Despite its fragmented detention system managed by militias and criminal groups, Libya benefits from EU migration policies. Policies continued after 2011, with Libya failing to fully observe UN Refugee Convention protocols. The 2011 Constitutional Declaration mentions asylum rights but lacks formal procedures. Libya criminalizes only some forms

of sex trafficking but does not prohibit labour trafficking and fails to protect trafficking victims who are male or those who were deceived or coerced. These security challenges make the government identification of trafficking victims difficult and, therefore, perpetuates the susceptibility of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants, even in formal detention camps. (Al-Dayel et al., 2021).

Although EU policy officially opposes indefinite detention by Libyan authorities, its continued existence does not pose a threat to the partnership. The perseverance in pullback containment is quite remarkable, as it goes against Europe's stated values but is deemed necessary to deviate from the liberal order (Kirby, 2020).

The migration restriction policies of the EU are tightly closely interlinked with the migration practices that exist in Libya. This connection has impacted the decision-making procedures of both migrants along with the people who assist them on their travels, frequently with tragic results (Sanchez, 2020).

The EU policy on migration from Libya notably changed in June 2018, when EU leaders called for increased measures against illegal immigration through the Central Mediterranean route. At the end of 2018, the new Italian government started to implement initiatives aimed at increasing military control over the territorial sea, with the objective of stopping the crossings of migrants from Libya to the ports of Italy. (Di Maio et al., 2022).

The migration restriction policies of the EU are tightly closely interlinked with the migration practices that exist in Libya. This connection has impacted the decision making procedures of both migrants along with the people who assist them on their travels, frequently with tragic results (Sanchez, 2020).

Nonetheless, the numerous agreements that Libya's governance authorities have signed with EU member states, most notably Italy, demonstrate the country's unique position in the EU's agenda combating irregular migration from Africa. (Sanchez, 2020).

In 2018 and 2019, the EU and Libya worked together to reduce illegal immigration, although insufficient EU funding has arguably exacerbated violence and corruption at

Libyan borders. The EU has acknowledged the terrible conditions in the Libyan detention centers but has achieved little, according to Human Rights Watch interviews. Criticism has crept in over whether the EU's emphasis on border control undercuts the safety of migrants. Some scholars have claimed that framing the refugees as threats and funding Libya to deter immigration inadvertently contribute to human rights abuses against migrants (Bergsten, J., 2022).

An increasing number of undocumented migrants traversing unstable countries such as Libya become victims of criminal syndicates involved in human and organ trafficking due to stringent immigration regulations and advanced border surveillance technologies in affluent nations (Onuoha, F., & Okafor, C., 2021).

Amidst civil unrest, Libya gained status as a critical transit country for illegal migration to Europe. Migration control measures from Libya were mostly challenged on legal grounds, such as the 2008 Treaty between Italy and Libya, which established the joint patrolling of migration flows. However, in 2012, the European Court, in the case of *Hirsi Jamaa and Others v. Italy*, ruled that Italy violated the non-refoulement principle by returning migrants back to Libya, a place where their rights would be endangered (Cusumano & Villa, 2020).

The Memorandum of Understanding on Migration, signed on February 2, 2017, aims to counteract the illegal entry of migrants by offering technical and financial assistance to Libyan officials (Marsi, 2023).

The renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding on Migration on November 2nd, 2020 has been very contentious, especially about the Italian and EU involvement. The said agreement with Libya has put into question their involvement in human rights violations. A report from the United Nations Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya back in June 2022 pointed out alarming abuses against migrants, which include killings, abductions, abuse, enslavement, sexual exploitation, rape, and other cruel violations happening in illegal detention facilities (Marsi, 2023).

A crucial first step in establishing migration policies that can control migration flows and ensure the utmost respect for human rights and moral standards is to better understand the

migratory phenomenon in Libya (Di Maio et al., 2022). Research emphasizes the significance of developing national migration policies that explicitly specify policy and institutional frameworks to evacuate nationals from crisis-affected countries (Kandilige & Hamidou, 2019).

In conclusion, the evolution of Libya's migration policies under Gaddafi's regime and beyond has profoundly shaped the country's migration dynamics. Gaddafi's open-door policies initially attracted a significant influx of Sub-Saharan and Arab migrants, driven by economic opportunities and geopolitical alliances. However, shifts in international relations and domestic economic priorities led to stricter immigration measures and increased vulnerability for migrants, exacerbated by human rights abuses and challenges in migration governance. The ongoing collaboration between Libya and international bodies like the EU highlights the complex interplay between migration control, security concerns, and humanitarian imperatives. In the future, such complex issues must be addressed in a manner that is sensitive to human rights but also acknowledges the economic and security priorities of Libya. Indeed, this review underlines why sophisticated policy frameworks are desirable in encouraging safe and orderly migration while also valuing the rights of migrants within an ever-changing Libyan socio-political environment.

2.4. Gender Dynamics in Migration to Conflict-Afflicted Libya

Migration through the Sahara is affected by various factors such as economic opportunities and geopolitical instabilities (Adeniran, 2020). However, in the midst of complexity within the migratory landscape, an important topic arises – the lack of adequate gender profiling among those partaking in these movements especially re-migration to conflict ridden countries. Hence, it is important to comprehend migration in terms of gender, which shows how distinctive female migrants' journeys can be in real-life.

The experiences of female migrants are often shaped by a lack of autonomy in making travel decisions. Studies show that many women embark on dangerous journeys with their

partners or to join family members in Europe, frequently falling victim to human trafficking upon arrival in Libya (Oloruntoba et al., 2018). This highlights a critical aspect of gendered migration where women's choices are constrained, and their vulnerabilities are heightened during transit.

Evidence from Kandilige and Hamidou (2019) indicates strong opposition in Ghana to unmarried women migrating to Libya, primarily due to the stigma associated with the work they might undertake. The study identified only one female re-migrating migrant who joined her husband in Libya, working as a domestic worker responsible for housework and childcare. A study by Anand (2023) also supports the evidence by Kandilige and Hamidou (2019) stating that a number of Ghanaian women have relocated to work as domestic workers or to be with their partners. This reluctance is compounded by significant risks, such as sexual violence, that Ghanaian women face during overland travel, discouraging their migration (Anand, 2023). Similarly, the male-dominated migration profile in Niger can be attributed to the perilous and physically demanding journey to Libya, and cultural restrictions in the majority-Islamic community that prevent women from migrating independently (Kandilige & Hamidou, 2019).

Women migrants face severe safety risks, particularly within the Libyan Corridor where issues like slavery are prevalent. Globalization has exacerbated their vulnerabilities, leading many into sex work and exposing them to gender-based violence. Key concerns include access to basic facilities, processing of asylum requests, and conditions at refugee camps. REACH research emphasizes the unequal access to essential services for refugee women, particularly those without male companions, highlighting the critical need for gender-sensitive support mechanisms (Coetzee, 2019).

According to Coetzee (2019) and Nissling & Murphy-Teixidor (2020), the migration experiences of women, girls, some men, and boys are often fraught with traumatic events, including torment, sexual and gender-based violence, and rape. Nissling & Murphy-Teixidor (2020) states that between May 2017 and October 2019, 37% of respondents in Libya reported protection incidents, with physical abuse being the most frequent at 21%, followed by robbery at 14%, and detention, death, and sexual abuse each at 12%. Coetzee

(2019) noted that the severity of human security threats in Libya is highlighted by the fact that many women fled the country more due to fear of sexual assault by militias than because of the war and armed conflict itself. This fear was not only a post-Arab Spring phenomenon; even before the uprisings, Nigerian women in Libya lived in fear of apprehension, violence, and mistreatment by militias, often facing incarceration while their husbands worked (Coetzee, 2019).

Sexual violence significantly impacts female migrants, resulting in pregnancies, births, and miscarriages during their journeys. For instance, Esther, who was nine months pregnant, sought asylum in Syracuse, Italy, after fleeing Libya, illustrating the complexities and dangers faced by female migrants. A 2014 survey revealed that approximately 11% of female migrants were pregnant, underscoring the prevalence of this issue (Coetzee, 2019). These narratives emphasize the need for a deeper understanding of contemporary migration and gender disparities.

Reports from Libya describe young women coerced into prostitution by traffickers. A Nigerian woman explained that, while waiting in Sabha for departure, a smuggler locked four women in a room and forced them to undress while he chose one, threatening them with a handgun (Murphy-Teixidor et al., 2020). Additionally, there has been an apparent increase in intricate systems for the illegal transportation of women in regions such as Gao (Mali), Agadez (Niger), and throughout Libya. The rapid rise of these systems, which often go unnoticed and unreported, suggests the significant influence of well-coordinated Nigerian crime organizations (Raineri, 2020).

Another notable and regrettable limitation is the absence of female participants who may offer valuable perspectives on the gender dynamics involved in facilitating mobility. There is a high probability that a considerable number of women engage in smuggling activities. However, the way these duties are categorized based on gender may suggest that they are not considered important or noteworthy (Sanchez, 2020). Therefore, the necessity for gender-sensitive immigration policies and integration programs that pay particular attention to the socioeconomic condition and involvement of migrant women has been emphasized by both the European Commission and the Global Commission on

International Migration (GCIM). There is evidence, though, that these programs should also take cultural sensitivity into account (Münz et al., 2007).

The migration patterns of men to Libya often revolve around employment opportunities in sectors such as construction, farming, and oil. Uneducated young men from rural Ghana typically engage in these sectors to remit money back home and accumulate savings for their future (DeVargas & Donzelli, 2013; Anand, 2023). A significant number of male migrants expressed their intention to relocate with the purpose of enhancing their family's circumstances. The necessity of acquiring wealth becomes a crucial factor in the construction of both masculinities and northward movements, as described by participants in various studies (Anand, 2023; Palillo, 2020). In Senegal, boys are taught to make significant sacrifices for the welfare of their parents. For instance, Lamine, mentioned in a study, expresses his difficulty in finding a suitable profession that would enable him to support his family. Consequently, he states that he would never consider going to Libya if he had the means to fulfil his familial responsibilities, given his awareness of the challenges faced upon departure to Libya (Anand, 2023).

The Libyan case underscores the significance of masculine traits, including physical strength, courage, and integrity, in influencing the role of male migrants in conflicts, emphasizing the intricate relationship between masculinity and power dynamics (DeVargas & Donzelli, 2013). Male endurance is therefore tested by high-risk migration to Libya; it's not viewed as an adventure but as a necessity tied to hegemonic masculinity values of provision and respectability. Failure—like coming back empty-handed—is seen as an existential crisis as well as a setback. An involuntary return is perceived as a blow to masculine dignity, even in the face of post-return family support. Thus, re-migrating to Libya is often a means of reclaiming and asserting masculinity (Kleist, 2017).

Despite the diversity of motives driving migrants and the diversity of their cultural contexts, a general pattern of gendered scripts in their movements emerges, primarily linked to particular moments in their life cycle and family roles. Similar to the experiences in the Sahara, testimonies show that the repetition of violence in Libya constantly impacts and shapes complex gender, class, and ethnic intersections. Male migrants, being at the

bottom of the local masculine hierarchy, especially find themselves in a context of structural exposure to violence (Palillo, 2020).

Violence poses a constant threat to men, women, and children traveling through the smuggling routes connecting East and West Africa to the Libyan coast. Children and women are particularly vulnerable, with at least 50% of migrant women in 2016 reporting being victims of sexual assault while traveling. Survivors indicated that traveling alone or with males perceived as weak increased their likelihood of sexual assault and rape (Al-Dayel et al., 2021).

In considerations of migrant protection, decisions are influenced not only by race and gender but also by how bodies are delineated within border zones. Here, vulnerability may be acknowledged to some extent, but agency and responsibility are often disclaimed by political figures, diplomats, and practitioners. According to Kirby (2020), violence against detained migrants is widespread, recurring, and severe, often manifesting in sexual or gendered forms. Interviews suggest that sexual violence in Libya is among the most severe encountered by respondents. Similarly, Bartolini and Zakoska-Todorovska (2020) reported that individuals of both genders experienced instances of being detained and subjected to acts of sexual violence and physical aggression, including same-sex intercourse. Such acts are often committed by members of armed forces and smugglers in connection houses, sometimes openly, with the aim of asserting control and dehumanizing migrants, thus facilitating the operation of the illegal industry in Libya.

The depiction of women as passive victims and men as active agents indicates a consistency in the cultural construction of masculinity and femininity, influenced by both the illegal industry and the European asylum regime. This essentialist view of gender roles suggests that sexual violence against women serves as a means for migrant men to expose the brutality of the smuggling industry (Coetzee, 2019; Palillo, 2020).

Migrants traveling through the smuggling routes connecting East and West Africa to the Libyan coast face constant threats of violence. Female migrants, particularly those not adhering to Muslim attire, face significant risks of sexual assault, while male migrants are often compelled into labor and endure physical abuse (Palillo, 2020). Although men are

typically more susceptible to a range of hazards, the circumstances vary when it comes to abuse, including both witnessing and experiencing it. Notably the investigation done by Bartolini and Zakoska-Todorovska (2020) did not produce significant evidence establishing a connection between susceptibility and religion. Contrary to previous assumptions commonly found in literature, there was no notable association between religious membership and vulnerability to security incidents among migrants in Libya (Bartolini and Zakoska-Todorovska, 2020).

Research indicates that male migrants in Libya exhibit greater vulnerability to coerced labor, whereas females encounter elevated risks of sexual abuse and rape (Teppert & Rossi, 2020). A study by Nissling and Murphy-Teixidor (2020) highlighted that women reported higher experiences of sexual abuse, either personally or witnessed, at 19%, compared to men at 6%. The study also found that respondents from Nigeria and Eritrea were more vulnerable to these experiences, even when accounting for other factors.

Female migrants face greater challenges in securing asylum due to a lack of evidence compared to men, who often have documented proof of persecution. This situation exposes women to higher possibilities of sexual assault and discrimination both by practice and law (Coetzee, 2019). Reception centers in Libyan refugee camps are usually overcrowded and strictly gender-segregated, making females more vulnerable and less likely to access support and protection programs. Policies in migration and the provisions set do not include gender considerations, further increasing the risks for women (Coetzee, 2019).

Teppert and Rossi (2020) found that only 4% of interviewed migrants were female. Among those in the country for more than a year, the percentage of women was 5%, while for recent migrants, it was only 3%. This bias results from the fewer proportions of female migrants in public spaces where surveys are conducted, nonresponse bias, and their smaller proportion in Libya's migrant population, estimated at 11% (Münz et al., 2007). Notably, a greater percentage of females have resided in Libya for over a year compared to males. Of the females interviewed, 68% had resided in Libya for more than a year, compared to 58% of males. The data also indicated disparities in marital status: 69% of

female migrants were married, whereas only 39% of males were married. Key informant interviews revealed that male migrants frequently embark on their journeys unaccompanied or with companions, while female migrants often migrate with their families, usually their husbands. The proportion of married migrants was greater among those who had been in Libya for over a year compared to recent arrivals (Teppert & Rossi, 2020).

Traffickers employ different tactics depending on the migrants' gender. Female migrants are often approached by traffickers in their countries of origin with promises of lucrative jobs in Libya or elsewhere. In contrast, male migrants are kidnapped in transit locations and sold into slavery, with ransoms typically extorted from families and conscripted into forced labor (Palillo, 2020; Yuen, 2020). Gender dynamics heavily affect the level of violence in transit locations, with women being more susceptible to sexual exploitation and men to forced labor. When examining the data according to gender, Yuen (2020) found that the majority of women chose Libya and Italy as their ultimate destinations in 2017, while the majority of men selected Niger, Mali, and Algeria. However, no discernible trend in gender-based disparities in ultimate destinations was observed in 2018 and 2019.

Since the 1970s, there has been a notable influx of young men migrating from rural areas in Egypt to oil-producing Arab countries. These individuals, typically employed outside their homes, have the chance to relocate for employment. Migration can offer women improved economic prospects and a society with greater equality, but the influence of patriarchal gender systems in certain Arab nations might hinder gender dynamics in Egypt (Samari, 2019). Overall, it is more challenging for migrant women from middle- and low-income countries to learn a foreign language and build the social networks needed for integration into their new communities compared to men, as they are more inclined to stay home and are less likely to be employed (Münz et al., 2007).

The migration experiences of women and men through Libya are fraught with gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities. Women are disproportionately affected by sexual violence and trafficking, while men often endure coerced labor and physical abuse.

Addressing these challenges requires not only acknowledging the gendered dynamics of migration but also implementing policies that protect the rights and safety of all migrants, regardless of gender.

2.5. Conclusion and Gaps in the Literature

In concluding the analysis of Libya's migration landscape, it becomes evident that multiple factors, including historical, geographical, economic, and social elements, intricately shape migration patterns in the region. Libya's transition from a destination for economic migrants to a transit point highlights the necessity for nuanced policy solutions addressing various migration drivers. Despite challenges such as political instability, the country's allure persists due to economic prospects and strategic positioning. However, conflict since 2011 has fundamentally altered the migration scene, presenting new hurdles for migrants.

The narratives of migrants in Libya illuminate their resilience amid exploitation and adversity. These experiences underscore the need for comprehensive approaches to address migration-related issues, including rights protection and support services provision. While migration significantly contributes to Libya's economy, challenges like job displacement persist, necessitating investments in education and economic diversification. Furthermore, the crisis in Libya has transformed it into a failed state, exacerbating migrants' vulnerability and prompting the international community to prioritize stability restoration efforts. Additionally, addressing gaps in migration policies, particularly regarding human rights and gender disparities, is crucial for fostering a more inclusive and equitable migration system in Libya and beyond.

To sum up the above-stated facts; while there's body of information on migration in Libya, it is mainly sourced from NGOs like the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Additionally, significant gap in Arabic literature on the topic exists. Although my study, conducted in English, will not directly address this linguistic gap, it aims to fill other research voids. Specifically, there's a scarcity of studies on the re-migration of foreign migrants to Libya, including re-migration patterns of African nationals and gender-

specific dynamics in migration. By delving into this area, this research seeks to enrich existing literature and provide insights for policymakers crafting readmission policies for these migrant groups.

Moreover, there are several other areas that warrant further investigation, the impact of conflict on migration trends, analysis of domestic policies, and evaluation of international interventions to address border-crossing challenges. Addressing these gaps will facilitate informed policymaking aimed at protecting migrants' rights, enhancing their living conditions, and establishing a sustainable framework for managing migration.



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Exploring the complexities of foreign migrant returns in the context of a conflict zone necessitates a comprehensive analysis that takes into account the interaction of multiple individual, social, and institutional factors.

The conflict in Libya has caused significant upheaval and forced migration, resulting in the dispersion of foreign migrants who had previously sought opportunities in the country. The phenomenon of foreign migrants re-migrating to conflict zones challenges the conventional wisdom that individuals would seek safety and security in their native countries or neighboring regions. Therefore, to investigate their motivations and considerations for re-migrating to Libya, push-pull theory, circular migration theory, social capital theory as well as transnationalism and network theory are reviewed to provide the backdrop to this study.

3.1. Push-Pull Theory

The push-pull theory offers a useful framework to investigate the factors that influence foreign migrants to re-migrate to Libya despite the ongoing conflict in the context of this study. It is the interrelationship of "push" factors—conflict, political instability, economic deprivation, or reduced opportunities in the home country—and "pull" factors—job prospects, economic inducements, or social and cultural links to the host country—which drive migration. The push-pull theory applied to foreign migrant re-migration into Libya gives insight into the complex factors influencing decisions to move back to a conflict zone.

Despite all the criticisms imposed by researchers who perceive push-pull models as overly simplistic and predictable, it is evident that there is truth in the basic concept of push-pull. Given that it acknowledges the influence of structural forces on migration processes, this idea is both intuitive and empirically supported.

According to Van Hear et al. (2017), some of the classical literature proposed push-pull theories, suggesting that poor earnings in origin countries or regions drove people to migrate, while greater opportunities in destination countries or regions pulled people to those destinations. One of the limitations of these models is their fixed nature. The original push-pull framework, by presenting migration as a singular action rather than a dynamic process, did not adequately consider the evolving motivations, unforeseen events, or modified decisions that occur during the course of migration (Van Hear et al., 2017).

The framework for migration drivers that is employed, incorporating push-pull factors, does not provide a comprehensive solution to all the inquiries at hand. A comprehensive analysis would necessitate the inclusion of agency, specifically migration desires and wants (Van Hear et al., 2017).

As stated by Lee (1966), throughout history, human migration has been driven by a desire to improve one's living conditions or escape adverse circumstances in one's country of origin. Therefore, the 'push and pull' theory, which is grounded in economic, environmental, social, and political factors, constitutes the fundamental drivers behind the migration phenomenon. These drivers operate by exerting pressure on individuals to leave their homeland and simultaneously attracting them towards the destination country.

The first person to examine migration from an individual perspective using a push-pull model and to do so while considering both the supply and demand sides of migration was Lee (1966). Migrants are pushed and pulled towards migration or non-migration by positive and negative circumstances at the origin and destination, which are hampered by intervening variables such as migration restrictions and modified by human factors such as how the migrant interprets the factors. He makes a number of predictions, one of which is that increased demographic variety will lead to an increase in the number of individuals migrating, which is one of the reasons why there is such a high rate of migration within the United States.

Hagen-Zanker (2008) critiques this theory by suggesting that it is not so much a theory as it is a collection of factors that affect migration, without taking into consideration the

specific causation mechanisms. Notwithstanding, the push-pull theory constitutes a valuable theoretical framework for comprehending the cognitive mechanisms implicated in migration-related decision-making.

3.2. Circular Migration Theory

The theory of circular migration provides valuable insights into the recurring pattern of migration, whereby migrants participate in several migratory episodes, such as return migration and subsequent re-migration.

Constant and Zimmermann (2011) state that circular migration refers to the recurring and organized relocation of migrants between their native countries and other countries, often in pursuit of employment opportunities. Migrants that engage in circular movement voluntarily include both skilled and unskilled workers. Circular migration, despite its outward appearance of indecisive and perpetual movement, may in fact represent a strategic means of optimizing or re-optimizing one's economic, social, and personal circumstances at each juncture. In a sense, circular migration serves to maintain the migrant's mobility in both the host and home countries, thereby mitigating the potential for enduring obligations.

As stated by GFMD's (2008) research, circular migration can be defined as a cyclical and transitory pattern of human mobility between two or more nations, primarily motivated by employment or educational opportunities. The Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) posits that circular migration diverges from conventional notions of permanent or temporary migration, which are typically construed in a linear and static fashion (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 2016).

Through the application of this theoretical framework within the context of migrants who have re-immigrated to Libya, an analysis can be conducted to explore the determinants that influence their choice to re-migrate to Libya subsequent to a period of temporary residency within their respective home countries. The theoretical framework employed in

this study facilitates comprehension of the intricate dynamics of recurrent migration and the underlying incentives that impel migrants to re-establish their place in Libya.

3.3. Social Capital Theory

The utilization of social capital theory offers a framework for examining the significance of social networks, communal support, and cultural connections in the determination to revisit regions of conflict. The theoretical framework underscores the significance of social bonds, trust, and communal assets in either enabling or constraining the determination to migrate. The present investigation employs social capital theory to explicate the impact of social and cultural determinants on the repatriation decisions of foreign migrants to Libya. Specifically, this study examines the role of family reunification, cultural identity, and community support networks in shaping the return intentions of these migrants.

Within the migration literature, the concept of migrant social capital is widely recognized as a valuable resource that potential migrants can leverage through their social connections to various sources, including but not limited to previous migrants. The formation of social ties is facilitated through diverse interpersonal connections, including but not limited to kinship, friendship, or shared origin communities, thereby engendering migrant networks. The networks in question function as intermediaries that facilitate the acquisition of resources by prospective migrants, such as information and support pertaining to the process of migration (Garip, 2008). This definition highlights the three distinct dimensions of migratory social capital, each of which can influence migration propensities in a unique manner (Garip, 2008).

Within the framework of the present thesis, an investigation into the function of migrant social capital may serve to elucidate the impact of social bonds established by migrants who experienced re-immigration to Libya on the re-immigration determinations of prospective migrants. Through an analysis of the information and support exchanged within migrant networks, it is feasible to gain insight into the ways in which these

resources impact the decision-making and re-immigration motivations of migrants to Libya.

The present study employs the theoretical framework of migrant social capital, which encompasses three dimensions, namely information, assistance, and social ties, to elucidate the underlying factors that motivate migrants to undertake re-immigration to Libya despite their prior departure from the country.

3.4. Transnationalism and Networks Theory

In contrast to the focus on social capital theory in the preceding section, the subsequent exploration delves into transnationalism and network theory as an alternative lens for understanding migration dynamics.

Social capital theory emphasizes the importance of social networks and communal support in migration decisions. In contrast, transnationalism theory expands the focus to explore the ongoing ties and involvement that migrants maintain with both their country of origin and residence. Similarly, network theory explores the structure and dynamics of social networks, going beyond the individual or community level to examine patterns of cross-border activity and communication.

Despite these common interests in social connections and interactions across borders, transnationalism theory specifically highlights the influence of the nation-state on migratory experiences, whereas network theory focuses on the structure and dynamics of networks. As the study transitions from social capital theory to transnationalism and network theory it aims to explore the intricate relationship between social, economic, and cultural elements that influence migration decisions and behaviours, specifically in the context of re-immigration to Libya.

Schiller et al. (1992) definition of transnationalism pertains to the mechanisms through which immigrants establish social networks that interconnect their nation of origin and their nation of residence. The term "transmigrant" refers to immigrants who contribute to the development of new social spheres. Family, business, social, organizational, religious,

and even political ties can cross continents and oceans for transmigrants. Across social networks that link them to two or more societies at once, trans-migrants act, make decisions, experience worries, and form identities.

In an attempt to transcend methodological nationalism, a significant portion of theoretical development overlooks the persistent influence of the nation-state. The study of transnational migration, which involves the clear monitoring of individuals and their interconnections, serves as a valuable fix to the aforementioned gaps in scholarship by emphasizing the notion of a social field (P. L. a. N. G. Schiller, 2004).

Transnational phenomena are marked by cultural and social contexts within which individuals act, make choices, and shape their identities, all intertwined within networks of relationships linking them to multiple nation-states simultaneously. Consequently, the immigrant's engagement in both their home and host societies is a fundamental aspect of transnationalism. Put differently, transnational migrants adopt a dual-placement mindset and undergo acculturation instead of assimilation into the dominant culture. Research also indicates that many migrant communities maintain their identities rooted in their home nation-states even as they reside and participate in the life of the host country (Alfred, 2010).

The theory of transnationalism highlights the persistent connections and involvement that migrants preserve with their country of origin and their country of residence. An important aspect of transnationalism is reflected in the expansion of networks, the increase in cross-border activity, and the speed of communications (Vertovec, 2004). The present study offers a conceptual framework that discusses the complex interplay of social, economic, and cultural factors that shape the re-immigration decisions of migrants. Through an analysis of the transnational behaviors, affiliations, and connections that migrants establish during their initial migration to Libya, it is possible to obtain valuable insights into the factors that motivate their decision to re-migrate to the country, regardless of their prior repatriation to their countries of origin.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter presents the theories that this thesis benefits from to explore the various factors that impact the choices of foreign migrants to re-migrate to conflict-ridden Libya. By incorporating a range of theoretical perspectives, such as push and pull factors, individual agency, subjective considerations, and institutional influences, our goal has been to offer a comprehensive understanding of this intricate phenomenon.

The analysis recognizes the complex relationship between structural forces and individual motivations in influencing migration dynamics. Through an examination of the various factors influencing migration patterns, we have uncovered the multitude of motivations driving individuals to pursue re-immigration to Libya. In addition, I have emphasized the importance of individual agency, acknowledging the subjective experiences, familial connections, and personal aspirations of migrants as key factors influencing their migration choices.

In studying social capital and networks, it becomes evident that social ties and support structures play a crucial role in migrants' efforts to reintegrate themselves in Libya. Through a thorough examination of familial, communal, and cultural connections, the study have shed light on the complex network of relationships that shape the decisions of migrants when it comes to re-immigration.

In addition, the analysis of transnationalism has highlighted the lasting connections between migrants' countries of origin and destination. By delving into the transnational behaviors and affiliations of migrants, valuable insights have been obtained regarding the motivations behind re-migration to Libya, even after being repatriated to their home countries.

Ultimately, this chapter establishes the foundation for the upcoming sections of our study, where we will further explore methodological considerations and present our empirical findings.

METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research Design

The present investigation employed a qualitative research approach to acquire a thorough comprehension of the determinants that impact the choices of migrants to re-migrate to Libya subsequent to their departure from the nation and their return to their respective homelands. The utilization of qualitative research methodology enables a comprehensive investigation into the experiences, motivations, and perceptions of migrants who are re-immigrating to Libya, thereby yielding a wealth of intricate and nuanced insights.

The research is therefore based on three main questions:

How do structural factors within Libya, such as economic strength and seasonal migration patterns, influence the decision to re-migrate to Libya?

In what ways do individual factors, including familial connections, business networks, and the return of personal possessions, impact the decision to re-migrate?

What are the gender-specific differences in re-migration decisions and migration patterns among individuals re-migrating to Libya?

4.2. Data Collection

4.2.1. Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews constitute the principal mode of data collection employed in this investigation. The semi-structured interview method has transformed, multiplied, and developed since the 1990s, from a way to conduct research into an autonomous method of research that has become more utilized by a variety of disciplines. Semi-structured interviews allow for a wide range of philosophical presuppositions that could represent neo-positivist, vital, feministic, and intentionality objectives (McIntosh & Morse, 2015).

They also provide a harmonious blend of flexibility and structure, thereby facilitating an in-depth investigation of fundamental research inquiries while also affording respondents the opportunity to impart supplementary insights and experiences. They are used to gather the interviewees perspectives (Foreign migrants in Libya) on an experience connected to the subject of the research (Re-migration of foreign migrants to Libya after return migration). Because it presents the topic with a high level of relevance while still being sensitive to the participant, it stands out among interview techniques (McIntosh & Morse, 2015).

The interviews served as a medium for individuals to articulate their cognitive, affective, and volitional factors pertaining to their decision to re-immigrate. The utilization of open-ended questions served as a means to prompt participants to furnish comprehensive narratives and elaborate on their experiences. Both the breadth of the data obtained which is qualitative and the quantity of data collected which are quantitative words were used to define adequate data in this form of research. The study involved conducting interviews with African migrants who have re-migrated to Libya, as they exhibited first-hand knowledge and lived experiences that are pertinent to the study's findings.

A specific purposive research methodology is employed in this study, which is homogeneous sampling. This particular sampling methodology centers its attention on individuals who exhibit common attributes or specific characteristics. In the context of sampling techniques, Homogenous Sampling entails the deliberate selection of participants who exhibit similarities in various demographic and experiential aspects, such as age, cultural background, occupation, or life experiences (Etikan et al., 2016).

A criticism of semi-structured interviews is that they are frequently viewed as a simple approach for gathering data. When creating a guide for interviews, the researcher should take a number of factors into account, with a central question as the depth of information being gathered being a key one. It is morally questionable to gather data that is not entirely relevant for the research, even though the objective of the qualitative researcher is to get an in-depth knowledge of the subject phenomenon (Kallio et al., 2016).

4.2.2. Sampling

Purposive sampling, otherwise known as judgment sampling, is a method where participants are selected deliberately, based on the certain characteristics they possess, in the expectation that they will provide relevant and valuable information. This is a non-random method which is neither based on basic theories nor follows a predetermined number of participants (Campbell et al., 2020; Etikan et al., 2016; Tongco, 2007). The implementation of this methodology guaranteed the inclusion of a diverse range of viewpoints and life encounters in the research and chose cases that optimized the utilization of scarce research resources.

The selection of the 21 participants for the semi-structured interviews was conducted through purposive and snowball sampling, with the objective of encompassing individuals from diverse backgrounds, including varying countries of origin, a range of migration experiences, and different motivations for re-immigration. I reached out to various institutions, which I cannot disclose for privacy reasons. My primary facilitator in getting me in contact with the migrants was my uncle, whose profession involves frequent interaction with many migrants. His assistance was crucial in establishing trust and facilitating communication with the participants for this study.

The demographics of the sample interviewed (Table 4.1) as well as where the interviews took place (Table 4.2) is shown in the tables below:

Table 4.1. Demographics

Nationality	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Number of Children	Education Level	Prior Country of Residence	Prior Occupation	Present Occupation
Niger	33	Male 1	Married	2	No	Niger	Farmer	Doorman
Niger	25	Male 2	Married	1	No	Niger	No specific job	Janitor

Niger	25	Female 3	Married	2	No	Niger	Unemployed	Cleaning Lady
Niger	35	Male 4	Married	5	No	Niger	Farming	Ceramicist
Nigeria	21	Female 5	Single	0	Secondary school	Nigeria	Unemployed	Cleaning Lady
Nigeria	23	Female 6	Single	0	Highschool	Nigeria	Babysitter	Cleaning Lady
Nigeria	30	Female 7	Married	1	Bachelors	Nigeria	Housewife	Cleaning Lady
Egypt	58	Female 8	Widow	3	Bachelors	Egypt	Unemployed	Cleaning Lady
Egypt	50	Male 9	Married	2	Secondary School	Egypt	Farmer	Apartment Building Manager
Egypt	45	Female 10	Married	2	No	Egypt	Housewife	Housewife
Egypt	60	Male 11	Married	4	No	Egypt	No specific job	Transportation Company Owner
Morocco	45	Male 12	Married	2	Highschool	Morocco	No specific job	Factory worker
Morocco	34	Male 13	Single	0	No	U.A.E	Doorman	Waiter
Morocco	41	Female 14	Married	2	Highschool	Morocco	Unemployed	Housewife
Morocco	60	Female 15	Married	3	No	Morocco	No specific job	Cleaning Lady
Sudan	66	Male 16	Married	4	Bachelors	Sudan	Accountant	Accountant
Sudan	25	Female 17	Married	1	Bachelors	Libya	Unemployed	Doctor

Sudan	22	Female 18	Single	0	Masters	Libya	Unemployed	Architect
Ghana	34	Male 19	Single	1	Highschool	Ghana	Carpenter	Construction worker
Ghana	30	Male 20	Single	0	Secondary School	Nigeria	Shop Vendor	Construction worker
Ghana	26	Female 21	Single	0	Bachelors	Ghana	Unemployed	Cleaning Lady

Table 4.2. Interview Locations and Participants Counts

Place	Number of Participants
Online	3
House	3
Office	3
Factory	2
Hospital	5
Restaurant	1
Apartment Building	2
Construction site	2

The rationale behind employing a purposive methodology is predicated upon the underlying presumption that, in light of the research's aims and objectives, certain individuals may possess distinct and consequential perspectives pertaining to the concepts and matters under investigation; in this research it is foreign African migrants who re-migrated to Libya. Consequently, it became imperative to incorporate these individuals within the sample in order to ensure comprehensive coverage and a nuanced understanding of the subject matter (Campbell et al., 2020).

In essence, responsibility is taken by the researcher to determine the requisite knowledge and embarks upon the task of identifying individuals who possess the capacity and willingness to furnish the desired information, owing to their possession of relevant expertise or experiential insights. Purposive sampling is a kind of non-probability sampling that is most useful in the study of cultural domains possessing qualified specialists (Tongco, 2007) (Etikan et al., 2016). This technique was used in this research, selecting cases with sufficient data to allocate resources most efficiently.

Snowball sampling has gained significant popularity as a method for recruiting research participants, particularly when targeting populations that are difficult to access. This can be attributed to its networking features and inherent adaptability. The utilization of these methodologies has demonstrated efficacy in the selection of samples derived from populations characterized by fragility (Naderifar et al., 2017) (Parker et al., 2019). Populations that are potentially unattainable (i.e., Re-migrating foreign migrants in Libya) exhibited characteristics such as limited size, geographical dispersion, lack of documentation or inconspicuousness, preference for anonymity, heightened sensitivity and vulnerability, and a need for security for the purpose of fostering willingness to participate.

To increase the sample size, snowball sampling was used in addition to purposive sampling. Snowball sampling is a method employed in social research wherein the selection of participants from a delicate population occurs within a social framework and involves a multi-stage procedure. Upon obtaining authorization to utilize the initial samples, subsequent individuals are gradually incorporated into the research endeavor (Naderifar et al., 2017). Typically, academic researchers commence their investigations by initially identifying a limited cohort of potential subjects who satisfy the predetermined criteria for the study. Subsequently, these individuals are extended invitations to partake as participants in the research endeavor.

In this research, participants who exhibited agreeable traits (African migrants who have remigrated to Libya) were subsequently prompted to provide recommendations for additional contacts who aligned with the established research criteria and who possessed

a willingness to participate. These recommended individuals were then encouraged to further suggest other potential participants, thereby initiating a chainlike process of participant referrals. Through this chainlike process trust was built between me and the participants as the referrals are mainly acquaintances and so when one participant trusted and felt comfortable with me during the interviews this trust transmitted to their referrals as well.

Sampling typically concludes when one of two conditions is met: either a predetermined target volume of samples has been attained, or a state of saturation has been achieved (Parker et al., 2019). In this study it was the former.

Snowball sampling offers the chance to include various viewpoints in the study and allows for the recognition of people who might not be easy to reach through other methods. Using this sampling technique a wide spectrum of re-immigration related experiences and reasons were collected. The sample was made to reflect several demographic factors, including gender, age, educational attainment, and occupation which is shown in Table 4.1. A lot was learned about the factors shaping migrants' decisions to re-immigrate to Libya by engaging a varied set of individuals.

4.3. Data Analysis

The qualitative data obtained from the interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis. Systematically locating patterns, themes, and meanings within the data is the task of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis, a qualitative analytic method, holds a prominent position within the social sciences, spanning various disciplines including sociology, anthropology, and psychology. Thematic analysis is widely regarded as the initial qualitative method that researchers should familiarize themselves with due to its provision of a fundamental framework comprising essential techniques and skills. These techniques and skills are not only applicable to thematic analysis itself, but also extend to various other forms of qualitative analysis, as previously alluded to (Swain, 2018).

According to Braun and Clarke (2016), thematic analysis is characterized by its inherent flexibility, making it suitable for application across various epistemological and ontological perspectives. This alternative instructional approach aims to enhance the understanding of the fundamental principles and objectives underlying pattern-based approaches in qualitative data analysis. It also facilitates the comprehension of the similarities and differences among various methodologies, including their respective terminologies and conceptual frameworks.

Thematic analysis makes hermeneutic content analysis simple, therefore, involves the identification of themes necessary to describe a phenomenon. It involves the detailed reading and rereading of the data for the identification of those themes. It is a process of pattern identification in the data, whereby themes that arise act as categories for the purpose of analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

This analysis is part of a larger category of non-numerical data studies. The above method is pattern recognition used in content analysis. The study endeavored to identify recurring themes that manifest to be significant and meaningful in relation to the comprehensive depiction of the phenomenon under investigation. Themes from the dataset were used as analytical categories in this method. The technique involved identifying themes relevant to the research focus, question, context, and theoretical framework. This strategy allowed for thorough data depiction and analysis, revealing important insights and ramifications. The research process commenced with a thorough examination and subsequent iterative analysis of the collected data, aimed at discerning patterns and recurrent themes. With the participants' permission, the interviews were mainly audio recorded and accurately transcribed with several being handwritten as some participants refused to be recorded. This accurately captured their experiences, providing an all-rounded insight. These recordings were transcribed on Microsoft Word in English or Arabic depending on the participant and stored securely to maintain confidentiality and the integrity of the data; this was crucial for the analysis and presentation of findings in this thesis.

After that, both deductive and inductive methods were utilized, the data was encrypted and divided into themes and sub-themes. The present study involved an examination of

pattern identification within the dataset, wherein the categories for analysis are derived from the emergent themes.

The keywords identified in this research include "motivating factors for re-migration," "individual factors influencing re-migration," "familial connections and business networks," "economic strength and seasonal migration patterns," and "gender dynamics in re-migration decisions." The key themes that were highlighted include the role of social capital, economic and structural factors, social networks, and the challenges and opportunities posed by re-migration to Libya on grounds of gender. A thorough grasp of the factors shaping migrants' inclinations to re-immigrate to Libya was gained through meticulous comparison and contrast.

4.4. Ethical Considerations

During the process of conducting research, ethical considerations were given the highest level of significance that they merit. Subjects gave their informed consent and were fully informed of the study, its aims, and its methods, possible benefits, and setbacks. All study participants were afforded the option to discontinue their involvement in the research at any point in time without incurring any form of liability. Identification of participants through the assignment of case numbers to transcripts was done to protect their identity. An open and respectful communication approach was employed to handle the power differentials, facilitating a positive and secure environment (Table 4.2) for sharing experiences. Informed consent was obtained through assurance that participation was voluntary and was free to avoid answering any question that may cause discomfort.

Furthermore, research adhered to all pertinent ethical standards and endeavor and obtained ethical clearance from Istanbul Bilgi University ethics board. The issuance of this approval ensured that the research was conducted in an ethical manner and in compliance with the pre-established ethical standards.

4.5. Measures Against Risks and Limitations of Method

It is critical to recognize any potential restrictions on this research. First off, because participants are chosen based on their availability and willingness to participate, the sample selection procedure can create certain prejudices. Thus, it's possible that not all migrants who re-immigrate to Libya can be properly included in the findings of the study. To ensure a variety of viewpoints, attempts were made to involve participants from various backgrounds.

Second, the sensitivity of the topic may contribute to participants not being keen to share their experiences. To avoid this, the research focused on aspects of confidentiality and created a supportive environment in which openness was enhanced. Building rapport and trust helped in mitigating this limitation's impact on the data.

Last but not least, to decrease the limitations of the study and as stated by Dearnley (2005) some practicalities needed to be taken into account when conducting semi-structured interviews. Time was the first practicality to consider for this research as it is an important factor for both the researcher and the participants. One or even two hour-long meetings might not bother the respondents, but any more may be considered an annoyance. Therefore, the measures implemented with time were to ensure all the semi-structured interview questions were ready, the place is setup, and all equipment was charged.

Another crucial factor is the interview locations which are shown in Table 4.1. Respondents had to be at ease and calm enough to be honest with the interviewer. With careful consideration given to the decorations and layout of seating, each site provided seclusion, had a relaxed mood and was a familiar place for the participant. As stated by Dearnley (2005) the interviewer might also want to think about how they are dressed, as formal attire might be intimidating and suggest a hierarchy that could hinder connection with the respondents. Accordingly, the attire I wore was carefully considered during the semi-structured interviews.

Hardware needed to be considered. The level of accessibility at the time of the interviews, operation, and electricity sources are important considerations. Batteries tend to deplete

at an astonishing pace, and it is extremely simple to lose important data by forgetting to record an interview (Dearnley, 2005). This was also taken into account, ensuring that voice recorders were always charged and had backup batteries available.

In sum, the following different practicalities and potential limitations were taken care of through the measures enacted over the semi-structured interviews. These measures helped mitigate various biases and aimed at adding quality and credibility to the study by including comprehensive and unbiased data.

Although efforts were made to mitigate any challenges some remained and must be acknowledged despite what was contributed by this study. First, all the migrants that were interviewed mainly only spoke their mother tongue and so, few difficulties with communication were faced when the migrants spoke neither Arabic nor English. Therefore, some information might have been wrongly interpreted or miscommunicated during the semi-structured interviews.

Second, I have noticed that most migrants interviewed who held illegal status in Libya were anxious. This anxiety might have stemmed from the enhanced search and deportation of illegal migrants and therefore, their answers might have slightly been influenced by the fear they have of being caught and deported. This anxiousness might have made them withhold from revealing some sensitive data or their true reasons behind their re-migration.

Furthermore, for safety reasons many semi-structured interviews were held during work hours and so some participant had time restriction as they had to get back to work. This affected the length of the interviews and hence the quantity and depth of the data collected.

Moreover, it is possible that certain participants may have felt uncomfortable or offended, albeit unintentionally by the term “migrant” as has been observed from the behavior of some participants during interviews. As certain participants have been residing in Libya for a long time and are very well connected and familiar with the Libyan community, this term can hold a negative connotation for some. Therefore, they might not associate themselves with the term “migrant” due to its negative connotations of temporariness or

being an outsider. This sensitivity to terminology emphasizes the importance of using culturally and contextually appropriate language in research settings.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the study lays a solid basis for further investigations in migration studies. The usage of interpreters or multimedia techniques to collect data are examples of additional choices that future researchers could implement during their research to overcome these language barriers.

Being more conscious of the terminology used during the period of data collection and interactions with the migrants is an important aspect to consider when doing this type of research.

Additionally, in order to follow the reintegration experiences of migrants over time and to offer data on the long-term effects of re-migration on individuals and communities, a longitudinal study could be put into practice.

Despite these limitations, the results of this study have important policy and practice implications. Specifically, this research yields data-driven policies and interventions for migrants in conflict zones. Dealing with economic disparities, social support networks and equality, reintegration of people who have returned home would be made easier thus maximizing on the chances for remigration by host communities.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The findings of this research were derived from a one-on-one face to face and online semi-structured interviews (Table 4.1 and Table 4.2). By analyzing the viewpoints and insights provided by the interviewees, several thematic areas were identified. The thematic categories provide insights into the factors influencing the re-migration decisions of African migrants after they have left Libya the first time around considering various structural, individual, and gender-related factors. Grounded in theoretical frameworks such as push-pull theory, circular migration theory, trans-nationalism and network theory and social capital theory, this chapter delves into the narratives, experiences, and demographics of the migrants to provide a comprehensive understanding of their re-migration experiences. The subsequent conversation thoroughly explores these conceptual areas:

5.1. Motivating Factors for Re-migration

5.1.1. Individual Factors Influencing Re-migration: Familial Connections and Business Networks

Based on the observations from the semi-structured interviews, it becomes clear that familial connections and business networks play a significant role in the re-migration of foreign migrants to Libya. According to these factors, the presence of strong familial connections, personal or business obligations, and the desire to establish a stable home base are all important factors in this phenomenon.

Additionally, the presence of social networks and support systems in Libya significantly influences the decision to re-migrate. The re-migration trajectories of migrants are greatly influenced by their social ties, such as family and other relationships. These social networks, built during previous stays in Libya, provide not only familiarity but also support and opportunities—a critical combination in re-migration decisions. They not

only facilitate access to employment and housing but also offer emotional comfort and a sense of belonging.

A migrant from Egypt, shared her experiences during the interview. She explained:

"The first time I went to Libya, I made many friends who have been just like a family to me. After going back home to Egypt, we kept on communicating. When I wanted to go back to Libya, it was based on a fact that I knew I would have people there who could assist me in getting a job and offering me a place to stay. They made me feel welcome and supported, which made the decision to re-migrate much easier." (Female 8)

In another interview, a migrant from Morocco, underscored the role family ties play in his decision to re-migrate. He said:

"My brother has been living in Libya for years. He has a small restaurant and offered me a job when I was struggling back home. Knowing that I had family there, someone I could rely on, gave me the confidence to go back. It's not just about the job; it's about having someone who understands and supports you." (Male 13)

A female migrant from Ghana described the influence of the social network on the re-migration journey:

"During my first stay in Libya, I built a network of fellow Ghanaians and other migrants. We built a community in which we assisted each other in finding work and housing. When I returned to Ghana, I missed that sense of community. Re-migrating to Libya was a way to regain that support system. I felt part of a community that cared about me." (Female 21)

These stories illustrate just how much social networks and familial connections are of paramount influence in decisions to re-migrate to Libya. They demonstrate how these ties provide important support, opportunities, and belonging that influence migrants' re-migration trajectories.

This trend is especially evident among migrants from countries that have borders with Libya, including Sudan, Niger, and North Africa. The close geographical proximity of these countries to Libya, along with their shared cultural and religious traits, creates a

feeling of familiarity and connection among migrants. One way to comprehend this phenomenon is by examining it through the perspective of social capital theory.

Sharing insights into her family's decision to re-migrate to Libya, a Sudanese female migrant recounted her experience of cultural adaptation. She expressed:

"I found it relatively easy to adapt to the Libyan culture and community, given its striking similarity to the Sudanese culture. Consequently, I knew how to navigate social norms and dress appropriately in accordance with the local culture and religious practices."
(Female 17)

This narrative illuminates the sense of familiarity and comfort migrants may discover in environments reminiscent of their homeland.

A male migrant from Niger shared his experiences of re-migrating to Libya for the fourth time. Since his last re-migration, it has been seven years since he last settled in Libya. While in Libya for the third time, he had the opportunity to bring his wife along and was present for the birth of his first child. Upon his return to Niger, he found himself drawn back to Libya, enticed by the strong sense of community he had established and the high quality of life he had enjoyed there. On this occasion, he came back accompanied by his wife, two children, and brother, stating that:

"I kept coming back to Libya because of the community and better opportunities. This time, I brought my family with me." (Male 1)

His story and statement sheds light on the importance of family bonds and the allure of existing connections in influencing decisions to migrate again.

Furthermore, a male migrant from Sudan, who is 66 years old and has been residing in Libya since 1987, shared his experience of re-migration. His statement was as follows:

"I came to Libya for work in 1987 and found a strong Sudanese community. After going back to Sudan briefly, I realized life was better here, so I re-migrated with my family because of the community I had built here." (Male 16)

Initially attracted by economic opportunities, he discovered a warm and inclusive community of Sudanese migrants that made him feel a sense of belonging. However, he

later decided to return to his family and discovered that the quality of life in Libya was more favorable. Following a short return to Sudan, he and his family relocated back to Libya, thanks to the connections he had formed during his initial time there. This indicates a transition from economic factors to the influence of family and community on his decision to re-migrate.

For these migrants, the Libyan community provides a sense of familiarity and support, which influences their choice to re-migrate despite the ongoing conflict and instability in the country. This emphasizes the significance of social networks and community connections as facilitators in migration processes.

Amidst periods of conflict and instability in Libya, a considerable number of migrants were forced to go back to their home countries as a result of involuntary deportation or the chaotic circumstances in the host nation, particularly during the conflicts of 2011, 2014 and 2019. Despite the difficulties, a significant number of migrants opted to go back to Libya. For a significant number of individuals, Libya was not just a place to pass through, but a location they felt compelled to re-migrate to. A significant factor that influenced their decision to re-migrate was their familiarity with Libya and its community.

One individual worth mentioning is a female Egyptian worker who resided in Libya since 2005. The 2019 conflict compelled her, along with her son and husband, to depart due to heightened risks. However, the sense of belonging and robust connections they cultivated within the Libyan and Egyptian communities prompted their re-migration. By 2021, they were back in Libya, motivated by the warmth and assistance they received from neighbors and acquaintances. For her family, Libya transcended being merely a workplace; it had evolved into their residence. She expressed:

"We left Libya during the 2019 conflict because it was too dangerous, but we returned in 2021. We had lived here since 2005, and the Libyan community made us feel so welcomed and at ease. The support from the Egyptian community in Libya also played a big role in our decision to come back. It felt like home." (Female 10)

The sense of familiarity was frequently developed during their previous time in Libya, as migrants formed relationships with the local community. As they established their own community there, their experiences were spread to others in their respective home countries. As a result, Libya became a popular destination for migration among individuals who were aware of these experiences. Friends, family members, or acquaintances who had either migrated to Libya before or were currently residing there had a significant impact on migrants' decisions to choose Libya as a migration destination. The network effect led to a cyclical pattern in which migrants, influenced by the experiences of others, were motivated to re-migrate to Libya in search of opportunities and a sense of belonging within the existing community.

Relating these findings to theory, we can understand them through the lens of social capital theory. Social ties and networks, built during previous stays in Libya, function as valuable resources that influence re-migration trajectories. These networks not only facilitate access to employment and housing but also offer emotional comfort and a sense of belonging, echoing the principles of social capital theory. Moreover, the narratives shared by migrants from Sudan, Niger, and other countries demonstrate how cultural adaptation and the formation of strong community bonds can lead to a sense of familiarity and belonging in Libya, reinforcing the importance of social connections in migration decisions.

Furthermore, the accounts of migrants who chose to re-migrate to Libya despite conflicts and instabilities highlight the enduring appeal of the Libyan community. These migrants were drawn back by the warmth and assistance they received from neighbors and acquaintances, emphasizing the significance of social networks and community connections as facilitators in migration processes.

Transnationalism theory broadens the scope to explore migrants' ongoing ties and involvement with both their country of origin and their country of residence. It highlights how migrants maintain connections and engage in cross-border activities, shaping their identities and experiences across multiple nations simultaneously. Additionally, network theory within this framework examines the structure and dynamics of social networks,

shedding light on the ways in which migrants navigate and utilize these networks in their migration journeys. By considering the transnational behaviors, affiliations, and connections established by migrants, this theoretical perspective enriches our understanding of the motivations behind re-migration decisions, particularly in the context of migrants returning to Libya despite previous repatriation to their countries of origin.

Overall, the findings align with social capital theory, emphasizing the role of social ties and networks in shaping re-migration decisions and reinforcing the importance of community connections in migration dynamics. Additionally, transnationalism and network theories provide further insight by highlighting the ongoing cross-border connections and the structure of social networks that migrants utilize in their journeys. Together, these theories illustrate the complex interplay of social, economic, and cultural factors influencing migration decisions and behaviors.

5.1.2. Structural Factors Driving Re-migration: Economic Strength and Seasonal Migration Patterns

As established in the preceding section, although individual factors such as familial connections are identified as the primary element influencing the re-migration of migrants, it is important to recognize the function of structural factors in this intricate situation. This debate focuses on a detailed examination of the intricacies and consequences of the structural factors on the re-migration of the migrants, in contrast to earlier studies that have emphasized the importance of individual factors in influencing re-migration trends.

Prior to delving into the intricacies and ramifications of the structural factors, I would like to address the more apparent factors that may influence certain migrants to choose or be subject to economic strength or seasonal migration as reasons behind the re-migration. Setting aside the debate over whether the migrants perceive Libya as a temporary stop or a permanent destination, one of the primary factors driving their migration is the scarcity of employment prospects. This serves as a force that compels them to leave their home

countries and attracts them to Libya. The majority, if not all, of the migrants have expressed that their countries of origin are significantly more costly, making it extremely challenging to maintain a daily existence compared to Libya, where it is considerably more manageable.

This narrative highlights the reasons that drive individuals to seek employment in Libya, especially during times of increased economic activity like the agricultural season. Additionally, fluctuations in labor demand based on the time of year were primarily detected in migrants originating from Niger, indicating the recurring pattern of migration movements.

A Nigerien immigrant provided insights into the difficulties of finding stable job in his home country due to challenging economic circumstances. He stated:

"It's difficult to obtain steady work in Niger due to the country's terrible economic conditions. I can support my family better if I re-migrate to Libya, especially during periods when jobs are plentiful." (Male 4)

Similarly, a Ghanaian migrant shared his thoughts on his decision to re-migrate to Libya, providing insights into the limited job prospects in Ghana, especially for individuals without a higher education. He expressed:

"In Ghana, the employment opportunities are scarce, particularly for individuals lacking higher education. Re-migrating to Libya when jobs are available in the construction sector offers me greater opportunities to earn money and provide financial support for my family back home." (Male 20)

This narrative highlights the strategic factors that influence migration choices, as individuals look for improved economic opportunities in Libya to provide for their families.

In addition to the economic stability experienced in Libya, migrants have reported a significantly higher standard of living compared to their countries of origin. This observation applies universally to all participants interviewed.

A migrant from Ghana offered a perspective on the cost of living and earning potential in Ghana compared to Libya, saying:

"In Libya it is easy to make around 50 dinars a day from working and only 10 dinars a day are needed to sustain me compared to how much money I need per day in Ghana to sustain myself where the prices for basic necessities are high." (Male 19)

This reflection focuses on the economic factors that influence decisions to migrate back to Libya, highlighting the country's favorable earning potential and cost of living.

On top of that, a Nigerian migrant concisely expressed the economic necessity of migration, claiming:

"We are here for the money as Nigeria's economy is not good. Back home, finding a job that pays enough to live on is very difficult. Here in Libya, I can earn enough not just to support myself but to send money back to my family in Nigeria. The opportunities here make a huge difference in our lives." (Female 7)

This statement puts further emphasis that economic factors play a significant role in the decision-making process of these migrants re-migrating to Libya.

From a geographical point of view, throughout my observations and interviews, migrants from countries farthest from the Libyan border were more likely to move because of structural factors. Migrants frequently mentioned economic reasons for re-migrating to Libya but still consider it as a transit country on their way to Europe. They choose to work in Libya because of the job prospects available there or the lack of opportunities in their own countries. Most of their motives are to raise funds and go back home, or more frequently, to finance their passage to Europe. In many instances, this is because of the push factors in their countries, such as economic difficulties and a lack of jobs, and the pull factors in Libya, such as job prospects that may be better and economic conditions perceived to be relatively more favorable. This pattern is apparent for migrants who view Libya merely as a steppingstone and whose period of stay is always temporary and financially driven.

One way to understand this aspect of their migration experience is by using the push-pull theory. In this scenario, the economic challenges, and limited prospects in their countries of origin contribute to their decision to leave, while the perceived job opportunities in Libya attract them.

One additional factor that categorizes migrants from countries distant from Libya and its border as structural factors being the sole reason behind their re-migration is their lack of cultural or religious similarity to the Libyan community. These cultural and religious differences mostly result in re-migration to Libya after some unsuccessful attempts to reach Europe or for temporary stays to earn money for supporting families back at home. Among the migrants interviewed, this pattern is particularly common among those from Nigeria and Ghana.

These migrants often find it challenging to fully integrate into Libyan society due to these cultural differences, which reinforces their perception of Libya as a temporary stopover. Despite such challenges, the already established networks and communities of fellow countrymen in Libya somehow provide a support system that helps to deal with the temporary stay. Their stories and experiences underline the complex interplay of economic, cultural, and social factors that influence their decisions on migration.

Another noteworthy observation regarding these migrants relates to the time aspect of their movement patterns, specifically in reference to the post-revolutionary situation in Libya. An observable pattern arises when analyzing the time of migrants' migrations to and from Libya, particularly among African migrants from faraway nations who began their migratory route to the country following the revolutionary turmoil of 2011. It is clear that migrants who arrive in Libya during the chaotic period after the revolution have a strong tendency to repeatedly migrate to the nation.

Recognizing the presence of hidden intentions among African migrants from more geographically remote nations is crucial. The semi-structured interviews have revealed that certain migrants have a main goal of re-migrating to Libya, not only to find work but also to use job prospects as a way to gather enough money to support their journey to Europe. This disclosure prompts the formulation of a fresh conjecture, indicating that

illicit networks involved in smuggling in the area might trick migrants into returning to Libya by offering them job prospects, all with the ultimate intention of aiding their covert journey to Europe.

A Nigerian woman who had migrated shared her story, mentioning that it was her second time in Libya. She conveyed her dissatisfaction, remarking:

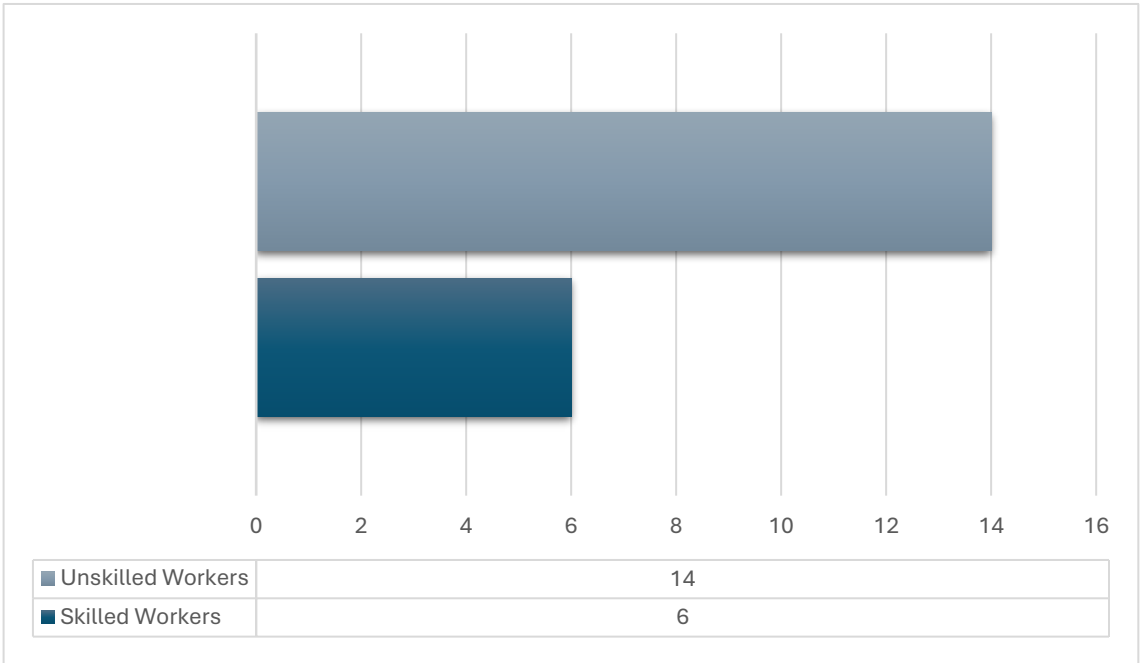
"I thought I was on my way to Italy but found myself here. Now I have to work to get the money to leave or return to Nigeria, like the failed last attempt." (Female 5)

There is another story that parallels this one, involving a male migrant from Ghana. This individual was making his third attempt to migrate to Libya when he expressed a firm determination, stating:

"I have no intention of re-migrating to Libya again. If I decide to do it, it will be solely for the purpose of working and saving money to eventually travel to Europe." (Male 20)

Another important point shown in Figure 5.1 is that the allocation of skilled and unskilled migrants among the group of African migrants in Libya offers great insights into the complex dynamics of re-migration decisions in conflict-affected areas.

Figure 5.1. Distribution of Skilled and Unskilled Migrants in Sample



The presence of a larger percentage of unskilled migrants highlights the significant role of economic factors in promoting re-migration, which is consistent with the principles of push-pull theory. Individuals may be inclined to return to Libya in pursuit of job prospects in sectors that have less stringent requirements for entrance, such as construction, hospitality, or domestic work. Moreover, the allocation of proficient and unskilled migrants provides insight into the underlying factors that affect re-migration, such as the demand in the labor market and the presence of employment prospects. Skilled migrants may encounter distinct structural obstacles and enablers in comparison to unskilled migrants, which could result in difficulties with the acknowledgment of their skills and the availability of job opportunities in specialized areas. Moreover, the combination of professional and unskilled migrants overlaps with social capital and networks, influencing their experiences of reintegrating and the support systems available to them in Libya. Highly skilled migrants can utilize their professional networks and social connections to aid in their reintegration, whereas low-skilled migrants may depend more on informal networks and community ties.

An interesting angle of re-migration dynamics is presented through the experiences of a 28-year-old Sudanese architect. She first arrived in Libya at the age of 5 and then left at the age of 18 to pursue her bachelor's in Sudan. She then did her master's in the country. However, after completing her studies, she was unable to find a job, which led to her decision to re-migrate back to Libya. Through family links already in place and by being familiar with the community, she found a job quickly and was easily readmitted. Her statement was as follows:

"I grew up in Libya, so it's always felt like a second home to me. After finishing my education, I faced some challenges in finding employment in Sudan. Returning to Libya felt like a natural choice; I knew the community well, and my family's connections made the transition smoother." (Female 18)

In contrast, a Moroccan migrant working as a waiter exemplifies the dynamics of finding employment through informal networks. After moving back to Libya, he found his job by referring a friend who already worked in the same factory, saying:

"When I decided to come back to Libya, I did not know how I would find a job. Luckily, my friend, who was already working here as a waiter, told his boss about me." (Male 13)

This is an example of how social connections and personal references make a difference in the process of labor market adjustment for immigrants entering the service industry.

The experiences of the Sudanese architect and the Moroccan waiter illustrate the varied pathways to employment for migrants re-migrating to Libya. While the architect emphasizes the importance of familial and social networks in securing job opportunities, particularly in skilled sectors, the waiter's story highlights the role of personal referrals in service-oriented industries. Despite their differing backgrounds, both narratives underscore the resilience and adaptability of migrants in navigating the Libyan job market.

Connecting these findings to theory, the push-pull theory provides valuable insights into the structural factors influencing re-migration to Libya. Economic challenges and limited opportunities in migrants' home countries serve as push factors that compel them to leave, while perceived job opportunities and economic conditions in Libya act as pull factors that attract them. This dynamic illustrates how economic considerations shape migration decisions and underscore the role of structural factors in influencing migration patterns.

Moreover, the experiences of skilled and unskilled migrants in navigating the Libyan job market offer insights into the intersection of structural factors and social networks. Skilled migrants may leverage professional networks and social connections to secure job opportunities, while unskilled migrants rely more on informal networks and community ties. This dynamic highlights how structural factors intersect with social capital and networks to influence migrants' experiences and opportunities in Libya.

Overall, the findings underscore the multifaceted nature of migration dynamics and highlight the importance of considering both individual and structural factors in understanding migration patterns. Together, these theories illustrate the complex interplay of social, economic, and cultural factors influencing migration decisions and behaviors.

5.1.3. Interplay of Factors of Re-migration

Upon closer examination during the semi-structured interviews, a more detailed understanding emerged. When discussing the reasons why these migrants initially migrated to Libya and as mentioned in the structural factors driving re-migration section, many participants indicated the availability of employment opportunities and the desire to improve their economic circumstances, which aligns with the factors that drive migration. For these individuals, Libya was seen as a place where they could find better job opportunities and the chance to work seasonally in industries like construction, agriculture, and hospitality.

For example, one Egyptian migrant told his story:

"I first came to Libya in 2009 in search of work. In Egypt, it was hard to find any job, and the pay was really low. Here in Libya, I found a job as an apartment building manager. The pay was good enough to send money back home to my family. I returned to Egypt after a few years but came back to Libya in 2018 because I knew I could find work here." (Male 9)

Similarly, a migrant from Niger recounted his experience:

"In 2010, I travelled to Libya hoping to make enough money to support my family. In Niger, even finding a job was a struggle. In Libya, I worked as a janitor, which paid much better. After 9 years, I went back to Niger but returned to Libya in 2021 because the economic situation in Niger had not improved, and I needed to earn more." (Male 2)

A male migrant from Morocco explained his decision:

"I first came to Libya in 2007 to work in a factory. The money I earned here was very good for me and my family back home. I went back home during the 2011 revolution, but in 2013, I decided to re-migrate to Libya because the job opportunities were still better here, and I could save more money for my children's education." (Male 12)

Yet, as the interviews continued and participants started discussing their experiences and thoughts on their re-migration journeys, a deeper complexity started to become apparent.

A noteworthy observation was the frequent occurrence of social ties and community networks among the migrants. Several participants noted that they chose to bring friends or family members with them when they returned to Libya, which suggests that they had formed close social connections and felt a sense of belonging in the country. This phenomenon is in line with the principles of social capital theory, where social networks and community connections play a significant role in migration decisions and outcomes.

Moreover, the participants frequently highlighted the importance of the social networks they had formed during their prior stays in Libya. These networks offered practical assistance, which included accommodation and job referrals, as well as emotional support and a feeling of unity. Re-migrating to Libya was not only about seeking economic opportunities, but also about reuniting with a familiar and supportive community. This reflects the transnational nature of their social ties and the influence of network theory in migration dynamics.

For instance, the migrant from Egypt explained:

"When I decided to come back to Libya in 2018, I did not come alone. I brought my cousin with me. We both knew people here from our previous stay, and it made the transition much easier. Having family around provided a support system that helped us settle quickly." (Male 9)

Similarly, the migrant from Niger shared his perspective:

"On my second trip to Libya, I brought two friends with me. We had all worked together in the past, and we knew people in the community here. Our friends in Libya helped us find a place to stay and recommended us for jobs. It felt like coming back to a second home." (Male 2)

The Moroccan migrant further stressed the importance of social networks:

"Re-migrating to Libya was not just about finding a job. I brought my sister with me this time. The community we were part of before was very supportive. They helped us with accommodation and introduced us to employers. It was the social connections that made us feel secure and welcome." (Male 12)

Moreover, all participants emphasized the relevance of the social networks they had established during their previous stays in Libya. These networks provided practical assistance, which included accommodation and job referrals, as well as emotional support and a feeling of unity. Re-migrating to Libya meant not only seeking economic opportunities but also reconnecting with a familiar and supportive community. This displays the transnational nature of their social ties and, by extension, the influence of network theory in migration dynamics.

Furthermore, the preference for re-migrating to Libya instead of exploring opportunities in other countries highlights the importance of circular migration patterns. In chapter 2, the theory of circular migration is explored, which suggests that migrants frequently participate in repeated movements between their home country and destination country. These movements are typically motivated by factors such as economic opportunities and social networks. In the context of Libya, circular migration is made possible by the extensive social networks formed by migrants. Additionally, many migrants found employment opportunities in Libya by utilizing their personal networks and relying on the insights provided by their acquaintances regarding the job market for foreign migrants in the country. The significance of social connections is evident in the way circular migration is intertwined with the influence of social networks on migration choices.

Therefore, the migration patterns observed among foreign migrants re-migrating to Libya are influenced by a variety of factors. These include familial connections, social networks, economic opportunities, and cultural familiarity. Overall, the interplay of these factors contributes to the complexity of the migration patterns.

The narratives shared by migrants illustrate how social networks and community connections play a crucial role in migration decisions and outcomes. Many participants chose to bring friends or family members with them when returning to Libya, indicating the formation of close social connections and a sense of belonging in the country. This phenomenon aligns with the principles of social capital theory, which emphasizes the importance of social networks in facilitating access to resources and support.

Moreover, participants frequently highlighted the practical assistance and emotional support provided by their social networks in Libya. These networks not only helped with accommodation and job referrals but also fostered a sense of unity and belonging. Re-migrating to Libya thus involved not only seeking economic opportunities but also reconnecting with a supportive community, underscoring the transnational nature of their social ties. This phenomenon exemplifies the principles of transnationalism and network theory, emphasizing the pivotal role of migrants' cross-border social networks. These networks not only provide practical assistance but also crucial emotional support, essential for migrants re-migrating to Libya.

Additionally, the preference for re-migrating to Libya instead of exploring opportunities in other countries reflects the significance of circular migration patterns. In this context, circular migration is therefore facilitated by the extensive social networks formed by migrants, highlighting the intertwined nature of social connections and migration choices.

In summary, the migration patterns of foreign migrants returning to Libya are shaped by a complex interplay of factors, including familial connections, social networks, economic opportunities, and cultural familiarity. Theoretical frameworks such as social capital theory, circular migration theory, push-pull theory, and transnationalism and network theory offer valuable insights into these dynamics. By incorporating these theoretical perspectives, this thesis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the decision-making processes and the intricate factors driving re-migration to conflict zones.

5.2. Gender Dynamics in Re-migration Decisions

The qualitative analysis suggests that there are notable variations between women and men in their choices regarding re-migration and migration patterns. The narratives of female migrants highlight the gender-specific obstacles and possibilities linked to re-migration to Libya. Women encountered specific challenges, such as restricted job prospects, instances of discrimination, and safety considerations. Nevertheless, a significant number of them opted to re-migrate primarily to reunite with their families and/or provide financial support. On the other hand, male migrants faced various

challenges, including physical labor and security risks. They also mentioned economic needs and family responsibilities as reasons for re-migration.

From the study it was observed that the main nationality that supports the migration of both men and women from the country of origin are Nigerians. They both travel to Libya seeking jobs and mainly view it as a transit country rather than a destination.

A migrant originating from Nigeria shed light on the diverse composition of migrants in Libya. She aptly pointed out that migration to the country is not exclusive to men but also includes women seeking opportunities, driven by various factors. She remarked:

"Not just Nigerian men choose to come here to work but also Nigerian women as it is also a Muslim country." (Female 6)

This highlights the multifaceted nature of migration influenced by cultural and religious considerations.

In contrast, gender typically influences migration decisions differently for other nationalities interviewed. For men, there is often pressure to fulfill the role of the provider, driving them to seek job opportunities in other countries.

Despite acknowledging the inherent risks, a Ghanaian male migrant revealed his rationale behind re-migrating to Libya, emphasizing the pragmatic considerations at play. Motivated by a profound sense of duty to provide for his family, he articulated:

"As a man, I felt compelled to secure our financial stability by seeking better economic prospects in Libya. The opportunities available far outweighed those in my home country." (Male 19)

This narrative underscores the predominant economic motivations and responsibilities shaping the migration decisions of numerous African migrants in Libya.

However, this pressure is not as prevalent for women, and migration is not typically encouraged or viewed as a primary motivating factor for them. In many cases from the

nationalities interviewed a mahram¹ is preferred to be with the women who are migrating as most of the participants are from cultural and religious backgrounds that prefer that women are either married or with a family member in order for them to migrate. Most women I interviewed had a mahram present with them in Libya and for most, the mahram is the husband as they either joined or came with them.

There are some limitations to note here. The presence of a mahram likely influenced the women's responses. They might have shared more if their mahram was not present. This creates a challenge in understanding gender differences in migration decisions, as the presence of these male family members could affect how openly and honestly the women spoke. For example, one Moroccan woman participated in a semi-structured interview with her husband present. She stated:

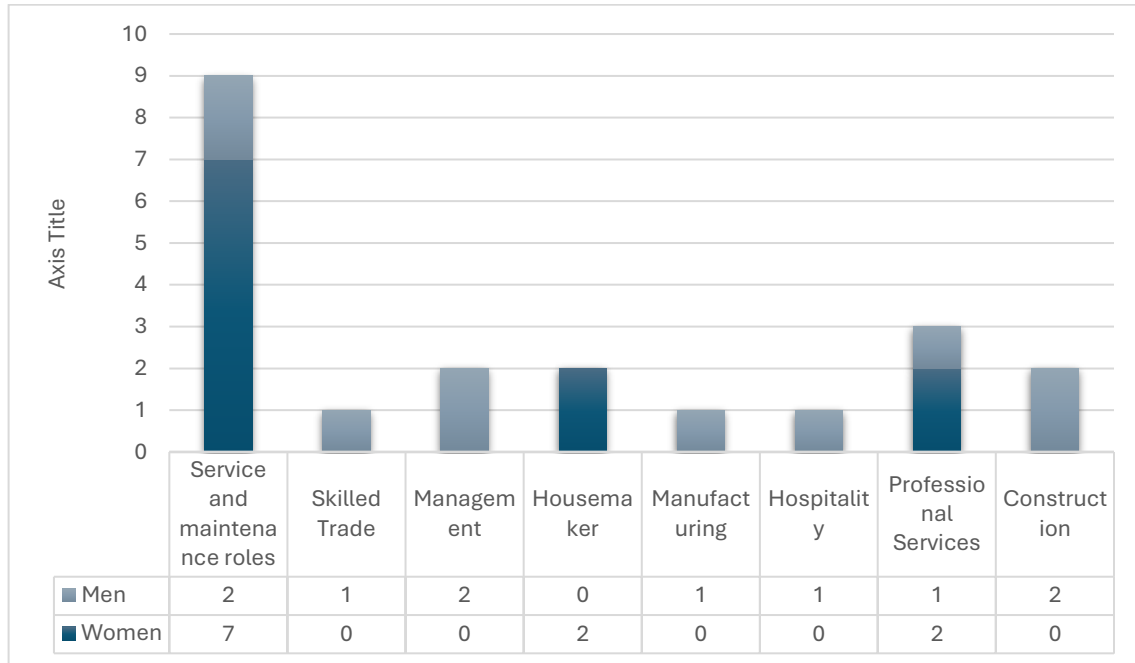
"I wanted to leave Libya and go back to Morocco to live with my family but had to re-migrate back to Libya to be with my husband and kids." (Female 14)

Later, I found out from people close to her that she wanted to return to Morocco to escape her abusive husband but decided to re-migrate to Libya because the living situation in Morocco was worse. It is likely that if her husband had not been present during the interview, she would have felt more comfortable sharing her true experience and reasons for re-migrating to Libya.

This study also gave light to the gendered dynamics of employment among the African migrants who chose to re-migrate to Libya (Figure 5.2). Almost all the foreign female migrants that I have interviewed are domestic workers or housewives versus foreign male migrants who are dispersed among different industries such as construction, management, hospitality and so. This shows that women are mainly employed in lower paying jobs which might showcase economic vulnerabilities and restricted access to other employment opportunities.

¹ In Islam, a **mahram** (Arabic: محرم) is a family member with whom marriage would be considered permanently unlawful (**haram**). A woman does not need to wear **hijab** around her mahram or spouse, and an adult male mahram or husband may escort a woman on a journey, although an escort may not be obligatory.

Figure 5.2. Job Distribution Among Migrants in Libya



This discussion also intertwines with another topic; the feeling of safety and security of the migrants themselves. When this topic came up in many instances during the semi-structured interviews it often ended with the observation that female migrants are safer and treated better than male migrants in Libya. Strikingly, this was stated by both men and women during the interviews. What was observed is that safety and employment roles go hand in hand as explained by migrants. The reason that they have this perspective is due to the fact that men have to go out on the streets seeking jobs and are in a more vulnerable position as they have to socialize. Women on the other hand, are safer as they are mostly employed in domestic work meaning they are in a somewhat closed environment from the outside world and do not need to socialize as much which also leads to less discrimination and violent incidents compared to men.

For example, a Ghanaian migrant stated:

"Women are safer than men as most women are employed as cleaning ladies and are in safe, closed environments, but men are not as they work outside." (Male 20)

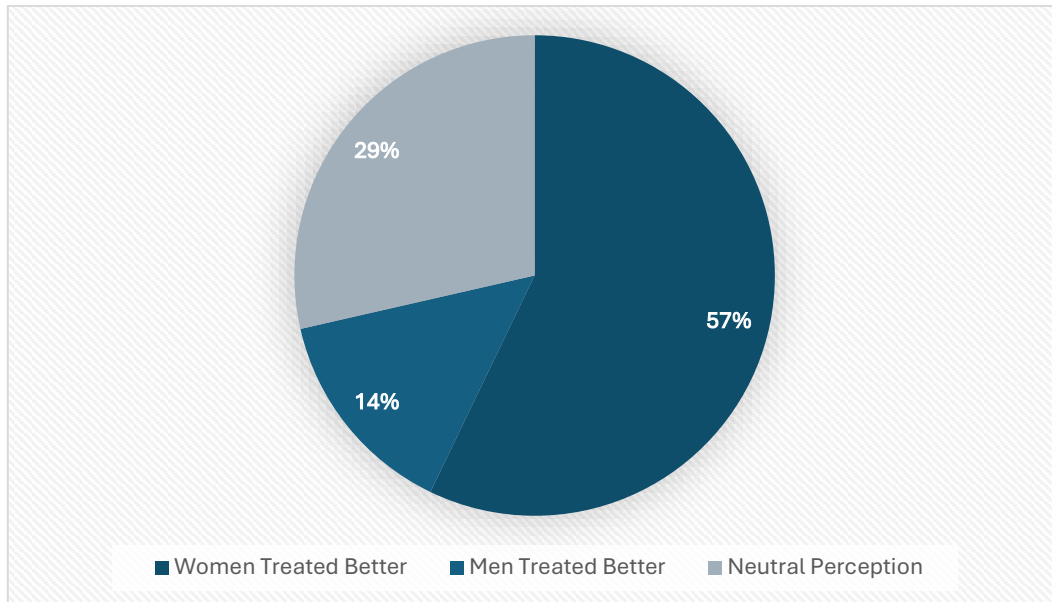
Many interviewees shared this view, noting that men mainly work in jobs such as construction, which require them to be outside and socialize, exposing them to more danger. Women, on the other hand, are often placed in safer environments such as homes and hospitals, where they are less exposed to the outside world and generally treated better. This dynamic highlights how employment roles significantly influence the perceived safety and treatment of migrants in Libya. This view is portrayed in Figure 5.3 below.

A contradicting story is of a Nigerien female migrant who conveyed a sense of feeling "safe and welcomed" in Libya. She expressed:

"When I first came to Libya, I was really scared because of all the things I heard about how tough it is for migrants here. But honestly, my experience has been pretty good. The Libyan community has been so supportive, and I've felt safe and welcomed since I got here. Everyone's been really kind, and I've been able to find work, which means I can support my family better. Back in Niger, it was so hard to find a steady job because the economy is just so bad. But here in Libya, I've had a chance to make a better life for myself and my family." (Female 3)

However, subsequent revelations revealed a stark contradiction to her initial statement. It emerged that she had endured a traumatic kidnapping ordeal in the desert, an experience she chose not to disclose during our conversation. This contradiction underscores the intricate challenges and complexities migrants often grapple with, sometimes concealing distressing experiences for various reasons.

**Figure 5.3. Perceived Gender Disparities Among Foreign Migrants in Libya
(migrants, %)**



Another reason behind this which was also analyzed from the interviews is that due to societal norms within the Libyan community, women, Libyans, or migrants are mainly treated with respect and care within the community especially if they adhere to what is considered as modest wear within the Libyan community. This topic on dressing modestly was mainly brought up by foreign male migrants during the interviews with some statements from female migrants as well.

For instance, a Ghanaian man stated:

"If women dress modestly and stay in their own lane, then they are safe." (Male 20)

Similarly, a male migrant from Niger said:

"If a woman dresses according to cultural standards, they will not be bothered." (Male 1)

Female migrants on the other hand did not directly make statements about clothing but generally said they felt safe and secure within the Libyan community.

When discussion about culture came up during the interviews it was usually intertwined with gender. The way it was intertwined with gender was mostly prominent with safety

and security as well as the integration of women within the Libyan community and a factor behind why a lot of male migrants when choosing to re-migrate back to Libya brought along their families. Most migrants from countries of origin bordering Libya that re-migrated back to it stated that it is very identical to their cultural background in the way women are treated and so their integration within the Libyan community in this case is easier.

The study of gender dynamics in re-migration decisions to Libya reveals a complex interplay of social, economic, and cultural factors, illuminated by social capital theory, transnationalism, and gender studies. Women often choose to re-migrate driven by familial ties and economic support, despite facing challenges such as limited job opportunities and safety concerns. This aligns with social capital theory's emphasis on family networks and community support in migration decisions. Conversely, men predominantly cite economic imperatives and provider roles, echoing themes from push-pull theory and circular migration theory, which highlight economic incentives and recurrent migration patterns.

The disparities in treatment and safety perceptions between male and female migrants in Libya underscore transnationalism's focus on navigating socio-cultural contexts while maintaining connections across borders. Women's safer environments in domestic roles contrast with men's more exposed positions in outdoor employment, illustrating how employment dynamics intersect with gender-specific migration experiences. These findings underscore the need for nuanced policy interventions addressing gender disparities in migration outcomes, informed by insights from social capital and network theories.

In conclusion, this study underscores the critical role of theoretical frameworks in understanding migration complexities, especially in conflict-affected regions like Libya. By exploring how social connections, global ties, and gender differences shape migrants' decisions, this study offers valuable insights into what drives them and shapes their experiences. These insights can guide policymakers in creating strategies that help

migrants reintegrate successfully and tackle specific challenges related to gender in migration settings.



DISCUSSION

6.1. Discussion

It is crucial to understand the numerous elements inherent in the repatriation of migrants back to Libya so as to gain insight into their rationale. Weaved into this process are the key questions that direct this study:

- How do structural factors within Libya, such as economic strength and seasonal migration patterns, influence the decision to remigrate to Libya?
- In what ways do individual factors, including familial connections, business networks, and the return of personal possessions, impact the decision to re-migrate?
- What are the gender-specific differences in re-migration decisions and migration patterns among individuals re-migrating to Libya?

Intersections of a multitude of factors influence the decision to re-migrate among migrants. The initial migration was motivated by economic factors, but the reasons for further re-migrations are complex and may have to do with social connections, family members, and community relationships. Such a move epitomizes the changing nature of migrants' relationship to destination countries from primarily economic motivations to decisions more embedded in social networks, therefore typical in light of the dynamic nature of migration flows.

Furthermore, the process of re-migrating to Libya is complex and nonlinear, in the sense that priorities and circumstances keep changing. Though economic opportunities may be the initial drivers for migration, migrants will be more likely to stay in the migration process if they have social networks and support systems in Libya. This further complicates the decision-making process, where migrants may return to Libya to take advantage of job opportunities that are facilitated by their social connections, or to reunite with family and friends already established in the country. Further, already existing social

networks can mitigate some of the difficulties that are associated with the process of reintegration, hence allowing the returning migrants to have a smooth transition.

The prevalence of familial connection and business network in line underscores the significance of relational factors in shaping migrants' mobility trajectories. Social networks established during earlier sojourns in Libya often play a crucial role in the decision to re-migrate, as migrants get familiarity, support, and opportunity from the social networks. These networks not only open the way for employment and housing but also provide emotional comfort and a feeling of belonging. In this regard, economic considerations, though still influencing migration decisions, become more significant if social ties are in place, shaping the whole migration experience.

However, it is important to note that structural factors, such as economic opportunities and seasonal migration, remain interwoven with individual factors such as familial connections, business networks, and the return of personal possessions. The search for economic opportunities is usually what drove migrants' initial migration to Libya, setting the ground for the establishment of social ties and networks over time. As migrants become established within these networks, their decision-making processes become increasingly relational, with economic considerations taking on new dimensions within the context of social relationships. Thus, while social networks may serve as primary drivers for re-migration, they intersect with economic realities in complex ways.

The dynamics of relational and social factors interplay as an influence on the migration phenomenon of African migrants re-migrating to Libya. During the process of migration decision-making, migrants balance a number of influences, from economic opportunities to social relations, and come up with the eventual shaping of the migration trajectory.

The findings also highlight the demand for gender-sensitive policies and interventions that address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of all migrants, including provisions for economic empowerment, access to education and healthcare, and gender-based violence. Recognition and addressing of gender disparities in the dynamics of migration could lead to more inclusive and equitable pathways for migrants' participation and empowerment in migration processes.

CONCLUSION

7.1 Conclusion

In order to make better sense of the re-migration phenomenon, it becomes important to realize the interrelation between economic and relational factors, while also designing efficient policies and interventions to assist migrants on their journey. The analysis of gender differences in the context of African migration to Libya makes salient nuanced patterns that underline the difference in experience and problems faced by male and female migrants. The results show that while women continue to face particular challenges throughout the migration process—from limited economic opportunities and increased exposure to exploitation and discrimination, to increased safety concerns—male migrants also go through unique challenges that are a result of socially determined expectations and structural factors. For male migrants, challenges are often labor market dynamics and physical work requirements, coupled with security risks associated with the search for opportunities in Libya. Despite the desires for socio-economic improvement, both male and female migrants face systemic barriers of gendered norms and cultural expectations shaping their migration trajectories and circumscribing their agency. Furthermore, our results bring to the light the importance of social networks in mediating the experiences of both male and female migrants, where familial and communal ties serve at one time as sources of support and constraints to mobility.

During the course of our study, an interesting trend from the accounts and experiences revealed through interviews conducted with migrants pointed out their perception of Libya as either a country of destination or transit. An interesting distinction in this regard was observed between migrants originating from countries geographically close to Libya and those from greater distances. Such migrants tended to view Libya more as a destination country rather than simply a transit country, while migrants originating from geographically more distant countries viewed Libya as a transit country—that is, one step along a greater migration path. This may indicate that geographical proximity has a say

in migrants' perception of the role of Libya in their migration. Much more research would be needed on the factors determining such different perceptions.

Empirical research reveals the texture of the narrative when migrant stories are situated within the theoretical framework and empirical evidence. Any meaningful policy discussion about migration must be cognizant of the complexity of the process while also offering practical recommendations. In this instance, a development-centered, structural, and social approach to migration policy, which promotes gender equity, would unlock the transformative potential of this process as a catalyst for resilience and sustainable development in the region.

The complexity of re-migration among African migrants to Libya points out how multifaceted migration dynamics are. The analysis, to this effect, is that while economic considerations are primarily the main driver, the presence of social networks and support systems in Libya significantly influences the decision to re-migrate. The migrants' social ties, defined in terms of family and other relationships, are a significant determinant in shaping migrants' re-migration trajectories.

Moreover, the study of gender disparities in migration experiences provides ground for differentiated interventions and tailoring to specific vulnerabilities of male and female migrants. Women often undergo limitation in economic power, labor exploitation, safety concerns while male migrants undergo these challenges in respect of societal expectations and labor market dynamics which are uniquely male. Considering these differences in gender is crucial for inclusion and fairness in migration matters now more than ever.

The findings of this study show that the economic and relational factors are intertwined in influencing the trend of migration. While economic factors may be regarded as a trigger for migration, the existence of social networks amplifies their significance and influences the general migration experience. Policymakers must thus have a comprehensive perspective on migration policy by addressing structural inequalities, fostering social cohesion, and ensuring gender equality.

In the future, it is important for policies, as well as interventions, to be designed in a way that enables the socio-economic incorporation of migrants into receiving societies.

Transformationalism in migration only manifests to benefit resilience and sustainability. Thus, policymakers can encourage greater inclusion, equality, participation for migrant's potential empowerment in migration path-crafting.

7.2 Contributions to Existing Knowledge and Future Research Directions

This study provides a thorough examination of the factors influencing African foreign migrants to re-migrate to Libya, a conflict-ridden country, addressing a notable current gap within the literature. The findings play a significant role in developing evidence-based policies and interventions.

While there might be existing studies on migration to Libya on the reason behind the choice of foreign migrants' choice, there is yet to be a study that focuses on this certain demographic (African foreign migrant who have re-migrated to Libya). Focusing on African foreign migrants who re-migrate to Libya is important because this group offers unique insights into migration patterns. Their decision to return, despite Libya's challenges, lays bare the role social capital, established networks, economic opportunities, and particular obligations play. The study of their experiences closes an existing gap within current research and offers valuable information for developing migration policies and support systems, furthering our understanding of migration in regions affected by conflict.

This study has important implications for policy and practice. As policies of re-integration of migrants into their country of origin exists, reintegration policies and practices for foreign migrants who re-migrated to Libya have yet to exist. This study then, helps policy makers and migration experts to identify reasons behind re-migration and how to re-integrate them into the Libyan community again.

Most studies focus on the primary reasons behind the migration patterns of foreign migrants, but re-migration is a more complex phenomena that needs to be studied, especially when foreign migrants choose to re-migrate back to Libya, a conflict-ridden country, significantly unstable or safe for the Libyan citizens themselves.

This sparks question and intrigue of the factors that influence their decision to re-migrate to Libya. When we come to understand the findings of this study, it creates a pillar to further develop migration and re-integration policies, alongside interventions that cater to this demographic in order to address their needs and promote sustainable integration.

With this complex phenomenon in hand, gender disparities were regarded during the data collection and analysis of this study. This gives a new perspective to policy makers as it helps them look at re-migration of African foreign migrants to Libya through a gendered lens and will impel said policy makers to put gender into consideration when developing new policies and interventions to ensure the wellbeing and integration of migrants.

Acknowledging these gender disparities also plays a role in addressing the access to job opportunities and better working conditions when informing stakeholders and policy makers regarding the necessity of gender-sensitive policies and interventions.

The insights this study provides on the employment distribution of foreign migrants in Libya along several industries and the occurrence of gender-based employment segregation, further contributes to a broader analysis of the labor market in Libya.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Result of the Evaluation by the Ethics Committee

Result of the Evaluation by the Ethics Committee is available in the printed version of this dissertation.



Appendix B. Informed Consent Form

Introduction:

I, [], have agreed to participate in an interview for the purpose of the study titled "Navigating Risk and Uncertainty: The Experiences of Foreign Migrants Returning to Libya," conducted by Samar Bakoush, a master's student at Istanbul Bilgi University.

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to explore the reasons behind the decision to re-migrate back to Libya among foreign migrants who have previously left the country. The information gathered from this interview will be used to better understand the experiences and perspectives of foreign migrants in Libya.

Procedure:

During the interview, you will be asked a series of questions about your experiences living in Libya, your reasons for leaving the country, and the factors influencing your decision to remigrate. The interview is expected to last approximately 1 hour and will be audio-recorded for accuracy.

Confidentiality:

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and all information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will not be linked to any quotes or data shared in any reports or publications resulting from this study. To maintain your anonymity, any identifying information will be removed from the interview transcripts, and pseudonyms will be used in any reporting or analysis.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions or to end the interview at any point without providing a reason.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions or concerns about the study or your rights as a participant, please contact:

Samar Bakoush / +90xxxxxxxxxx

Consent:

I have read and understood the information provided in this consent form. I agree to participate in the interview for the study "Navigating Risk and Uncertainty: The Experiences of Foreign Migrants Returning to Libya" under the terms outlined above.

Participant's

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C. Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Case number:

Age:

Gender:

Ethnicity:

Marital Status:

Number of children:

Education level:

Prior country of residence:

Prior occupation:

Present occupation:

What was the factor or factors that made you re-immigrate to Libya?

o H1: Availability of employment and/or Seasonal migration

o H2: Family ties, Personal or business matters, and/or established a home base

H1: Remigration to Libya is driven by the structural dynamics within Libya which encompass its economic strength and/or seasonal migration patterns.

1. How long did you reside in Libya before reimmigration?

2. How long have you been here after reimmigration?

3. Please list the main difficulties you had after leaving Libya and moving back to your country.

4. What economic factors attracted you to consider returning to Libya, including job opportunities and/or seasonal migration patterns?
5. How did job prospects in Libya compare to other countries you explored?
6. Did Libya's economy influence your decision to return despite political unrest?
7. How did Libya's economy align with your financial goals and aspirations?
8. Did Libya's resources and infrastructure impact your decision to return?
9. How did the cost of living in Libya compare to other potential destinations?
10. Were social services in Libya, like healthcare or education, influential in your decision to return?
11. Did you encounter any unique financial incentives or support systems in Libya that influenced your decision?
12. Have you noticed any changes in how often or why people return to Libya over time?
13. Besides work, what else motivates you to return to Libya periodically?

H2: Decisions about remigration are significantly impacted by familial, entrepreneurial, and individual variables.

1. How long did you reside in Libya before reimmigration?
2. How long have you been here after reimmigration?
3. Please list the main difficulties you had after leaving Libya and moving back to your country.
4. What were the specific personal or professional reasons that prompted your return to Libya after leaving?
5. How would you describe your sense of belonging or attachment to Libya based on your previous stay there?

6. How did your prior connections and experiences in Libya affect your decision?
7. How did the local community or friendships you developed in Libya impact your decision to re-immigrate despite the ongoing conflict?
8. Were there any cultural aspects or traditions in Libya that contributed to your sense of belonging?
9. Did any possessions or assets or unresolved personal or professional issues in Libya significantly influence your decision to re-immigrate? How?
10. Did discussions or advice from your family influence your decision to re-immigrate? If so, how?
11. How did you weigh the importance of family connections against safety concerns in Libya?
12. Besides personal or business matters, what else motivates you to return to Libya periodically?

H3: Remigration patterns are influenced by gender disparities, as male foreign migrants are more likely to return to Libya compared to their female counterparts.

1. How did cultural expectations or conventions about gender roles affect your decision to re-immigrate? Can you give any examples?
2. Were there any particular advantages or difficulties you experienced as a male or female immigrant thinking about returning to Libya?
3. Do you notice why men and women choose to return to Libya?
4. Are there specific cultural or societal factors influencing their decisions?