

Irregular Migration Routes to Europe and Factors Influencing Migrants' Destination Choices

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List of Abbreviations

EMN	European Migration Network
EU	European Union
FRONTEX	European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
RMMS	Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

1 Introduction

Irregular migration to Europe has become a central issue for the 28 member states of the European Union (EU). The number of migrants crossing the Mediterranean with the intention to irregularly cross a European border reached a record high in 2014, when 267,344 people were detected at the EU borders. This is more than double the number of people who irregularly crossed a European border from the Mediterranean in 2013 (Frontex, 2015). Until the mid-2000s, Morocco was the main source country of irregular migrants entering Europe, but the majority of migrants who have entered Europe irregularly in recent years are from conflict-affected countries such as Syria, Somalia, and Afghanistan (Düvell, 2011; Frontex, 2015). The same shift can be seen in the Dutch context: research from the Netherlands has indicated a decrease in the number of irregular Moroccans in the Netherlands over the past decade (Engbersen, Snel & van Meeteren, 2013). This is an example of the fact that the patterns of migration to Europe are continually changing (Collyer & De Haas, 2012). As will be shown in this comprehensive review of the literature of irregular migration to Europe, the routes of entry to the EU constantly adjust according to circumstances in the countries of origin, transit and destination.

The EU has reacted to increased irregular migration flows through increased border securitisation and the building of 'Fortress Europe' (De Haas & Czaika, 2013). As has been continually stated by De Haas (2014), however, "increased border controls do not stop migration". The record number of irregular crossings into Europe in 2014 has illustrated this well. Irregular entry poses many challenges for the nation state by both challenging state sovereignty and requiring resources to address the movements.

Border States of the EU, such as Greece and Italy, have in recent years received the largest numbers of irregular migrants. In December 2011, the European Court of Justice ruled that migrants could not be returned to Greece under the Dublin II regulation due to the over burdening of the asylum system and poor conditions for asylum seekers in Greece. Italy has placed 'burden-sharing' and migration in general as a high priority on the EU agenda given the disproportionate number of irregular migrants the country receives and the lack of resources the country possesses to address them.

1.1 Objectives and relevance

The purpose of this study is to provide a systematic review and extensive literature analysis of the existing knowledge on two aspects of irregular migration: 1) routes of irregular migrants to and within

Europe, specifically to the Netherlands, and; 2) the factors that influence destination choice of irregular migrants, specifically to the Netherlands. The review assesses existing evidence and identifies research gaps that require further research and exploration. Within the current context of irregular migration to Europe, this review is timely and relevant to both policy and research agendas that seek to understand the major trends relating to routes of irregular migrants and factors influencing destination choices.

1.2 Structure of the report

This report is structured in six sections. Following this introduction, section two provides a brief background of irregular migration, key definitions and theories of how migrants choose their destinations. The third section explains the methodological approach taken in this study, including how the evidence was assessed. The fourth section examines the literature on the routes of irregular migrants to and within Europe. The fifth section explores the different factors that influence the destination choices of irregular migrants. The sixth section provides an evidence assessment and discusses the key gaps in the literature. The concluding section returns to the research questions and offers suggestions for future research.

2 Background

2.1 Introduction

This section provides a brief introduction and theoretical overview of irregular migration. First, irregular migration is defined and second, definitions are provided of the key terms smuggling and transit. Third, the factors that influence irregular migration are explored. Fourth, the section provides an introduction to the first key topic in this review of irregular migration routes to Europe and then gives a short overview of irregular migrant stocks in EU member states. Finally, theories influencing irregular migrants' destination choices are discussed and the section concludes with a short summary.

2.2 Defining irregular migration

An irregular migrant is defined as someone who crosses a “border without proper authority or violating conditions for entering another country” (Jordan & Düvell, 2002, p. 15). A critical difference is made in the literature on irregular migration between irregular *entry* and irregular *stay* (De Haas, 2008). A migrant can *enter* a country without documentation and thus be considered irregular, but that individual can later acquire regularisation, and their *stay* is therefore not irregular. Conversely, a migrant can enter regularly, such as with a visa, but can become irregular by overstaying the visa (De Haas, 2008).

Individuals can enter irregularity through three main routes: 1) entering a country without proper authority, either through clandestine entry or with fraudulent documents; 2) entering with authorisation but overstaying that authorisation, and; 3) deliberately abusing the asylum system (Uehling, 2004). Koser (2005; 2009) adds an additional route: movement into a territory under the control of smugglers and traffickers. We can consider this similar to individuals entering a country without proper authority either through clandestine entry or with fraudulent documents. Prior to 2014, the majority of irregular migrants currently residing in the EU entered regularly, either based on short-term visa-free regimes or with a visa, but consequently overstayed their visas or took up employment in violation of their visa restrictions, thus becoming irregular migrants (i.e. Collyer & De Haas, 2012; Brekke & Aarset, 2009; Castles, De Haas, & Miller, 2014; Koser, 2010; Kromhout, Wubs, & Beenackers, 2008; Triandafyllidou, 2010; van Meeteren & Pereira).

In the Netherlands, irregular migrants are commonly referred to as ‘illegals’ (illegalen) or ‘illegal aliens’ (vreemdelingen) (Kromhout, Wubs, & Beenackers, 2008). In the Nota on Illegal Persons of April 23, 2004 (TK 29 537, no. 2), a policy document approved by the Dutch House of Representatives, the definition of irregular stay is given as “the residence of aliens in the Netherlands who do not have a valid

residence permit and are, therefore, required to leave the Netherlands” (Dutch House of Representatives, 2004). The Nota on Illegal Persons distinguishes among three categories of individuals:

- Irregular migrants who enter Dutch territory by illegally crossing the border. This can be done by, for instance, surreptitiously passing border controls or by using false or falsified travelling and/or identity papers. Often, these forms of illegal entry will include the use of intermediaries (travel agents) and smugglers.
- Irregular migrants who legally enter the Netherlands and are in possession of valid travel documents and/or visas. After entry they exceed the authorised length of stay or lose their regular residence by, for example, working illegally or committing an offense.
- Rejected asylum seekers whose application for a residence permit was rejected and who subsequently failed to leave the Netherlands.

This review is focused on *irregular entry* into the EU and the Netherlands, including all migrants who violate the conditions for entry. We do not address *irregular stay* in this review.

It is important to distinguish between irregular migrants and asylum seekers. These terms are frequently used in the same frame, particularly within policy (Düvell, 2012). There are two important ways in which these terms intersect. First, asylum seekers may enter a state irregularly, although this is clearly not always the case. Second, rejected asylum seekers without the right to stay may become irregular migrants, if they do not leave the country. In this review, we do include literature that is based on the first premise that frequently asylum seekers enter a country irregularly.

Prior to discussing irregular migration stocks and flows further, it is essential to stress that figures on irregular migration require “counting the uncountable” (Triandafyllidou, 2010). Irregular migrants by their nature are unregistered and often seek to be invisible to the authorities. Most figures that we use in this review refer to a sub-set of the irregular population, namely irregular migrants who have been apprehended by authorities; apprehension records provide some of the most reliable data on irregular migrant flows (Triandafyllidou, 2010)¹.

2.3 Main definitions

Beyond irregular migration, two key terms that must be clarified within the discussion of irregular migration are *smuggling* and *transit*. Each of these terms will be examined in further depth.

¹ For further information on determining estimates of irregular migration stocks and flows see Triandafyllidou, 2010 and Maroukis, 2012.

Smugglers often play a key role in irregular migration by transporting people. Prior to the 2003 enforcement of the Palermo Smuggling Protocol (Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air), which re-defined smuggling of migrants, there was often overlap in understandings and definitions of human trafficking and smuggling (Doomernik, 2013). The Palermo protocol defines human smuggling as “the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident” (UNODC, 2010, p. 1). Central to this definition is the premise that smuggling does not mean that the migrant is a victim, in contrast to human trafficking. Article 3, paragraph (a) of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons defines trafficking in persons as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation” (UNODC, 2014).

Second, although increasingly utilised in European discourses, the term ‘transit migration’ remains contested in the academic literature (Düvell, 2012). The term ‘transit migration’ and ‘transit countries’ emerged in migration debates in the 1990s, particularly in reaction to changing patterns of migration to Europe (Collyer, Düvell & De Haas, 2012). Despite the increasing prevalence and use of the term, there is no agreement on an exact definition of transit migration (Düvell, 2008). Key unresolved issues in the definition include: intentions of the migrant, such as the intention to migrate onwards or not; duration, referring to the point at which a country turns from a transit to destination; and legality, i.e. is the entry or exit legal or illegal through the country passages (Düvell, 2008).

Transit countries can essentially be conceived of as countries that individuals passed through *en route* to a destination country. Within the EU context, Düvell (2008) explains that six kinds of countries are involved in transit migration:

- the country of origin;
- the countries that are staging posts along the road (e.g. Russia, Yemen, Mauritania, Senegal, Mali);
- the country that acts as a stepping stone to the EU (e.g. Ukraine, Serbia, Turkey, Libya, Cape Verde, Morocco);
- the first EU country entered (e.g. Slovakia, Hungary, Greece, Cyprus, Malta, Italy, Spain);
- EU countries that are passed *en route*; and
- the final country of destination in the EU, or elsewhere.

The types of countries involved in transit migration highlight that a migrant's movement from origin to destination country in Europe can involve the crossing of several different countries. This is further examined in the routes section of this review.

2.4 Factors influencing irregular migration

When assessing routes and decision-making factors in irregular migration, it is worthwhile to first examine the factors that influence irregular migration in general. It has been argued by scholars that the decision to migrate for both regular and irregular migrants is often a complex process involving economic, social, and political factors (i.e. De Haas, 2011; Koser & McAuliffe, 2013; McAuliffe, 2013). These factors include conditions in the country of origin, conditions in the intended country of destination, individual and social factors, and the effect of policy measures. McAuliffe (2013) argues that enabling factors also impact the decision to migrate of both regular and irregular migrants. Such enabling factors can include geography and the ease of movement to a certain destination; migration policies, such as asylum regulations; and online communications technology (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014).

According to Koser and McAuliffe (2013), there is a gap in the literature regarding the specific drivers of irregular migration. There are parallels that can be drawn between the drivers of regular and irregular migration such as political insecurity, economic motivations, or a specific trigger that creates a need to flee. There are also, however, unique facets of irregular migration that must be noted, the most important of which is the prevalence of smugglers or agents in the irregular migration process. According to Koser and McAuliffe (2013), in an age of increased border control, the involvement of a smuggler or agent is commonly required to migrate irregularly. Evidence has shown that limited options for legal migration push people into irregular migration via smugglers, which often include longer journeys over several countries before reaching the EU (Düvell, 2014). Irregular migrants may thus be more likely than regular migrants to have several transit country experiences on their way to their destinations.

Further understandings of the specific motivations of irregular migrants have not been extensively explored in the literature. As will be shown in this review, the largest group of irregular migrants who have recently arrived in the EU comes from conflict countries. This highlights the importance of conditions in countries of origin in driving irregular migration. The role of living conditions in transit countries in influencing irregular migration and conditions in the destination countries will also be discussed in Section 5 of this review.

2.5 Theories influencing irregular migrants' destination choice

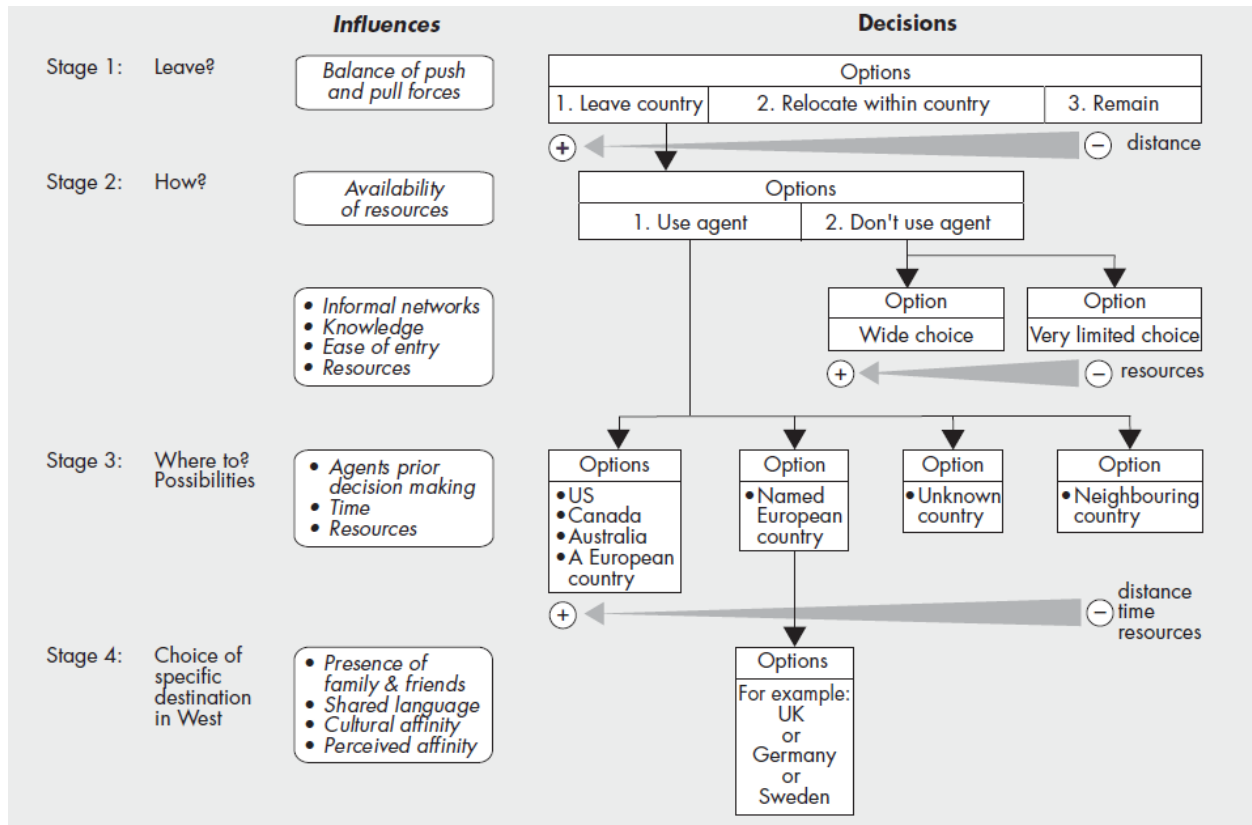
The literature regarding destination choice has changed over the previous two decades. Early scholarship portrayed irregular migrants and asylum seekers as victims with little agency in terms of destination choice (Havinga & Böcker, 1999). In the 2000s, several studies commissioned by the UK Home Office led to new insights and models that emphasised migrants' agency in the decision-making process relating to destination choice (Robinson & Segrott, 2002; Koser & Pinkerton, 2002). Towards the end of the 2000s, another key study by Brekke and Aarset (2009) commissioned by the Norwegian government, developed a new model of the migration trajectory and factors influencing destination choice.

Each of these models will be examined in further detail below. A central characteristic of these models is that they all highlight the role of migrants' agency in the decision-making process of destination choice. However several studies *have* also demonstrated that irregular migrants often do not have an intended destination when leaving their country of origin (Collyer, 2007; Hamood, 2006; Schapendonk, 2012; Düvell, 2014; Papadopoulou-Kourkoula, 2008; Grillo, 2007). This inconsistency in the literature should be kept in mind when reflecting on the theoretical models of destination choice.

It is important to clarify the two key concepts of agency and structure that are commonly referred to within these models. Within the migration context, agency can be defined as: "the limited but real capacity of individuals to overcome constraints and potentially reshape structure", while structure can be defined as: "the constraining or enabling general political, institutional, economic social, and cultural context in which migration takes place" (De Haas, 2010: 241). It is essential to recognise the role of both agency and structure in migration interactions (De Haas, 2010) and both of these aspects are highlighted in the models discussed in this section.

The theoretical models of relevance for this study can be divided into the three categories of: 1) factors relating to the asylum process; 2) hierarchies of destination choice; 3) and human smuggling. The first model is 'the generalised model on asylum seeker decision making' by Robinson and Segrott (2002) that is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Generalised model of asylum seeker decision making, Robinson and Segrott, 2002, p. 61

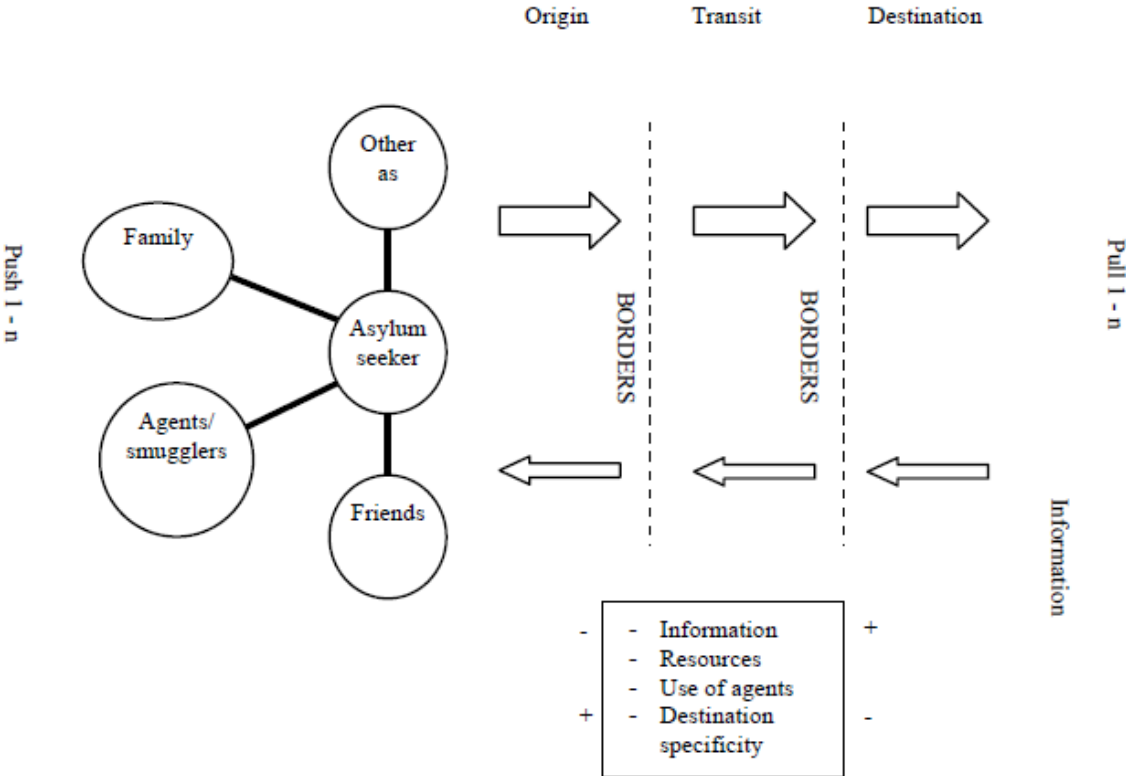


The model highlights that there are four stages of asylum-seeker decision-making and selection of a destination country: Stage 1, the decision to leave; Stage 2, the decision of how to leave; Stage 3, the decision of where to go, and; Stage 4, the selection of the specific destination country. Throughout these stages there are key influences, such as availability of resources, access to information and networks, agents’ experiences and decision making, and the individuals’ perceptions and knowledge of various countries of destination. This model is beneficial in that it displays the multiple options available to migrants and the variety of decisions that need to be made. The model does not, however, adequately account for transit experiences and changes in the migration trajectory.

Brekke and Aarset (2009) also argue that this model does not sufficiently account for the factor of time. In order to reflect the role of time in the migration journey, they propose an alternative model called the ‘asylum journey model’ that further stresses the experiences in transit countries (Brekke and Aarset, 2009). This model is shown in Figure 2. The model also seeks to further account for the role of information in the migration trajectory. Although this model incorporates more dynamics, it still does not capture the full complexity of irregular migration; while transit experiences are better incorporated,

variations in experiences in transit countries and the multiple decision-making processes a migrant undertakes are not fully accounted for.

Figure 2: Asylum Journey Model, Brekke and Aarset, 2009, p. 33



Next to the asylum journey model, Brekke and Aarset (2009) have also developed a hierarchy of pull factors that are shown in Figure 3 and 4. Two hierarchies are developed; the first is specific to the British context, and the second is specific to the Norwegian context and is based on Brekke and Aarset’s empirical work. This empirical work is based on a sample of 20 asylum seekers and thus should not be considered representative of all asylum seekers to Norway. The figures are to be interpreted as the “bottom layer being the most basic” (Brekke and Aarset, 2009: 30).

Figure 3: Hierarchy of pull factors in the British case, Brekke and Aarset, 2009

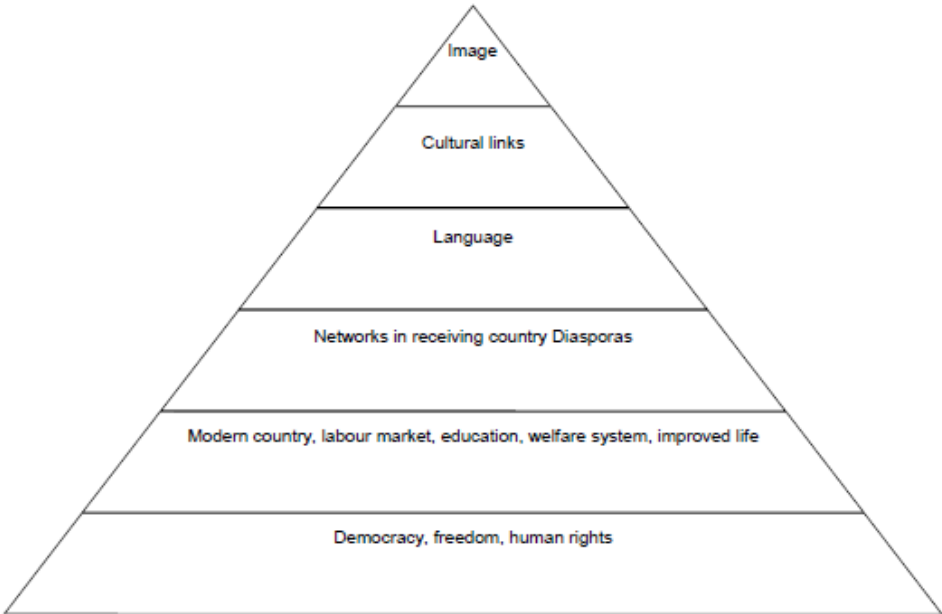
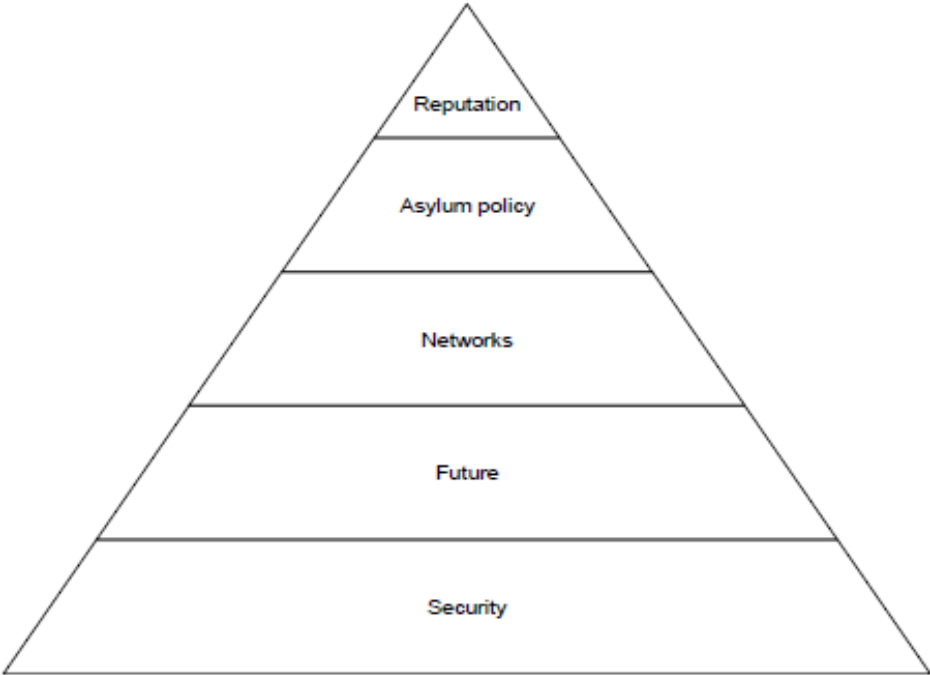


Figure 4: Hierarchy of pull factors in the Norwegian case, Brekke and Aarset, 2009



The British case has six levels of pull factors within the hierarchy, beginning with democracy, freedom, and human rights. This is followed by 'modern country', which essentially represents the hope for a better life. Networks are cited as important in this hierarchy, as has been shown in other studies. Language is a key factor for selecting the UK, which clearly contrasts to the case of Norway. Finally 'image of the UK' and cultural links, representing large, established migrant groups in the UK, are at the top of the hierarchy.

In the Norwegian case the hierarchy of pull factors looks somewhat different. The bottom is represented by security, which refers to "value for human life and the chance of being treated fairly in the asylum procedures and in society at large" (p.84). It is striking that the most common argument in the Norwegian case study did not appear in the British case study. The next level similarly reflects the desire for a better future and improving one's situation. Networks are also placed in the middle of the hierarchy, as in the British case. In contrast to the British case, asylum policy is placed near the top of the Norwegian pyramid, which refers to recognition rates and return rates. This implies knowledge of the asylum process and suggests that policies are a pull factor for asylum seekers. Finally, reputation is placed at the top of the hierarchy, which is similar to 'image' in the British hierarchy. The authors stress that reputation is not static and changes over time.

There are two central points that can be drawn from these hierarchies of pull factors. First, these hierarchies are country specific, and we can therefore assume that a hierarchy of pull factors to the Netherlands would differ from these existing hierarchies. This stresses the importance of understanding differences in destination countries within irregular migrants' trajectories. The second point is that although these hierarchies are different, they contain several similar elements. Shared elements include networks, the notion of an improved life or future, and the general goal of seeking safety and security, which reflect democracy, freedom, and human rights as central drivers in migrating to Europe.

A final model of 'trafficking as a business' by Salt and Stein (1997) and shown in Figure 5 highlights the role of smugglers in determining migrants' routes and destination choices. Although Salt and Stein (1997) use the term trafficking, the phenomenon they describe now falls under the definition of *smuggling* and should not be confused with the current use of the term trafficking (Doomernik, 2013). In this model, the transactional nature of the migration process is emphasised, wherein migrants are essentially delivered for a monetary gain by the smugglers. In contrast to the above models, which illustrate the agency of migrants, this model stresses the lack of agency of migrants in the hands of smugglers. This is a central point for considering migrants' routes and destination choices, as empirical

evidence shows that migrating via smugglers has become a norm in many sending countries (Koser & Kuschminder, 2015).

Figure 5: ‘Trafficking constituted as a business’ from Salt and Stein (1997) pg. 490

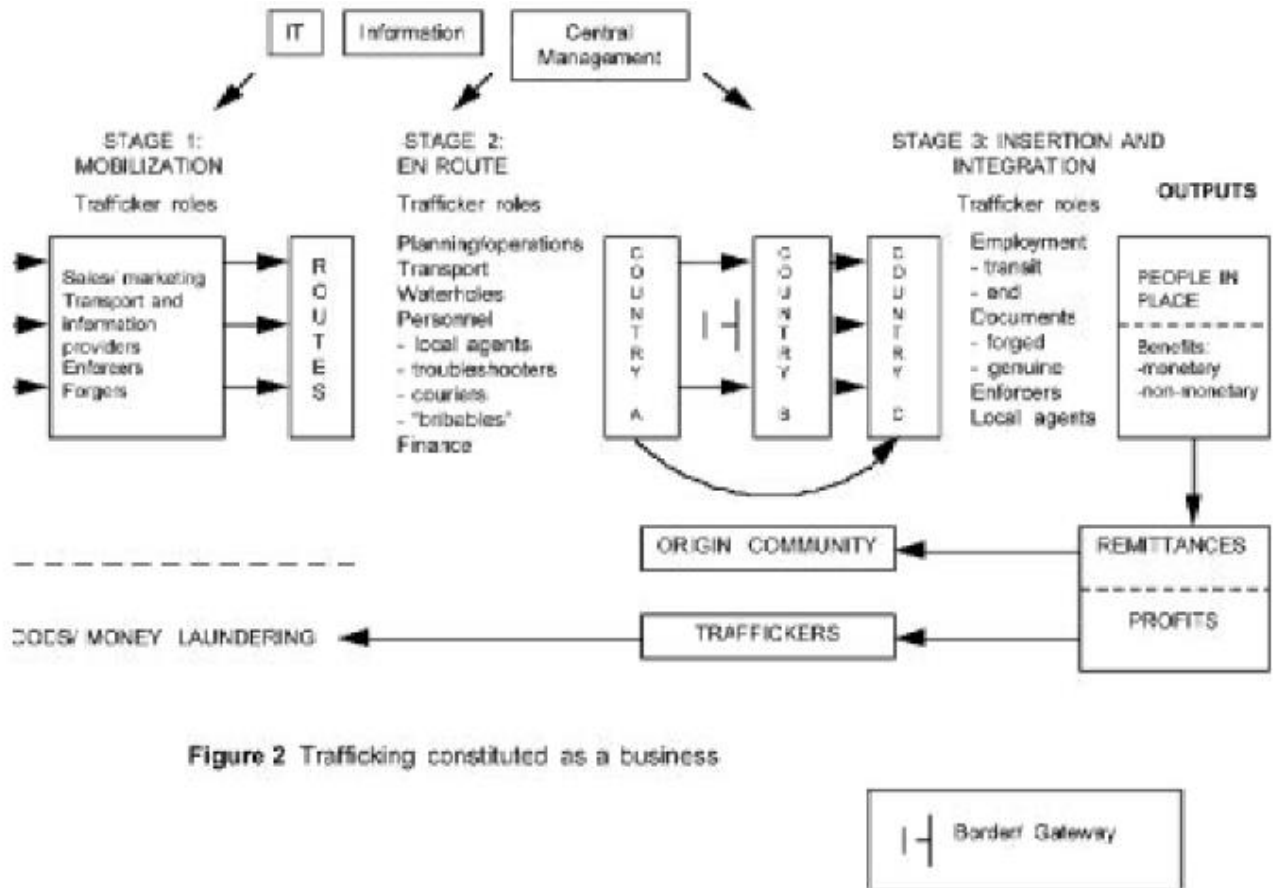


Figure 2 Trafficking constituted as a business

These three different models inform this review in the following ways. First, they highlight the complexities of the irregular migration process and the multiple factors that can influence routes and destination choices. Section 5 of this report utilises these models to assess and inform the debate regarding factors that influence irregular migrants’ destination choices. Second, these models reaffirm the importance of the structure and agency debate in irregular migration. Both structure and agency impact the routes and decision-making factors of irregular migrants. These elements are noted in the following sections of this report in which individual factors and structural factors are examined for their influence in destination choice.

2.6 Summary

Research on irregular migration is increasing both empirically and theoretically. Arguably, this is largely in reaction to the increasing stocks of irregular migrants not only in the EU, but in North America, the Middle East, and Asia. The literature is being further developed and the similar and differential characteristics of regular and irregular migration are a continued area of exploration. The models cited in this section seek to capture the complexity of the irregular migration process, but show that it is difficult to account for all the variables within this process. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, irregular migration is a difficult phenomenon to capture in figures and research. For this reason, there is frequently a lack of evidence and understanding of irregular migration.

3 Research Design

3.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of the research design and methodology applied in this review. First, the problem definitions and research questions are stated, second the research design and approach is clarified, third the sources and retrieval mechanisms are discussed, and finally the process of assessing the evidence is explained.

3.2 Problem definition and research questions

The primary research questions guiding this review are:

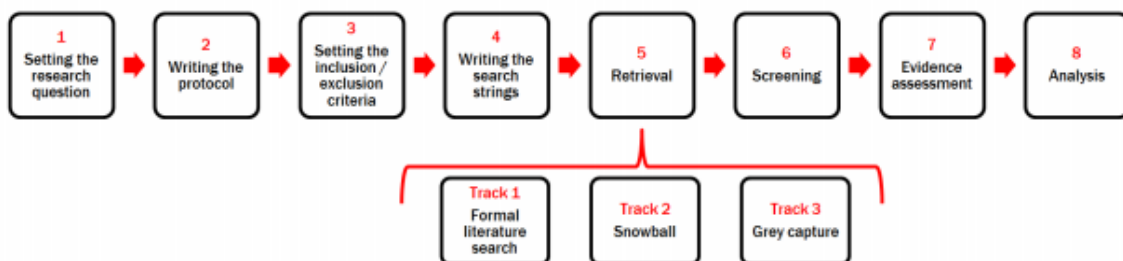
- 1) *What are the main irregular migration routes to and within Europe, especially to the Netherlands?*
- 2) *What factors influence the destination choices of irregular migrants, especially to the Netherlands?*

Section four of this review is devoted to answering question one, and section five focuses on question two. Section six returns to these research questions through the evidence assessment.

3.3 Research design and approach

The research design and approach has used Hagen-Zanker and Mallett's (2013) approach for undertaking a rigorous, evidence-focused literature review, a method that is relevant to the social sciences/development field. Hagen-Zanker and Mallett (2013) define the stages of the literature review as depicted in Figure 6. This process has been designed to best engage empirical evidence, to minimise retrieval bias, and to ensure relevance and utility of the final product (Hagen-Zanker & Mallett, 2013).

Figure 6: Stages in a rigorous, evidence focused literature review



Source: Hagen-Zanker & Mallett, 2013, p. 6.

All relevant research-based literature on irregular migration routes to Europe and factors determining destination choice were included in this study. We have included studies that used quantitative,

qualitative, and mixed-method approaches from both the academic and grey literature². We covered both English and Dutch studies. In terms of migration routes and entry, older studies might be less valid, as routes change continuously, not only geographically but also in the volume of migrants making use of them. This was taken into consideration in the evidence assessment.

We did not include media articles, blogs, commentaries, or other non-research based studies. The purpose of this review was to assess the research evidence. The one exception to this is where we have included statistics on irregular migrants from sources such as Frontex.

3.4 Selection of sources and authentication of data

The selection of sources began with an extensive search on Google Scholar, Google, and Web of Science to retrieve sources. Table 1 shows the following search terms and strings that were used to identify sources in both English and Dutch.

Table 1: Search Terms Used according to Research themes

Migration routes	Destination choice
(Irregular) migration (asylum seekers, refugees) routes (trajectory) to Europe, EU	(Irregular, undocumented) Migrant (asylum seekers, refugees) destination choice Europe, EU
Irregular (illegal, undocumented) migration (asylum seekers, refugees) routes Netherlands	(Irregular, undocumented) Migrant (asylum seekers, refugees) destination choice Netherlands
Transit migration/ countries	(Migrant) smuggling migration Europe
(Irregular) Migration (asylum seekers, refugees) routes (trajectories) within Europe, EU	Smuggling (irregular) migration Netherlands
Asia (Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan etc.) migration (asylum seekers, refugees) routes to Europe, EU	Smugglers destination choice
North African (irregular) migration (asylum seekers, refugees) routes to Europe, EU	Role of smugglers migration route destination country/ destination choice
Mixed migration routes	Human trafficking destination choice
Central Mediterranean (irregular) migration route	Economic factors migration destination
Eastern Mediterranean (irregular) migration route	Transit countries destination choice
Western Mediterranean (irregular) migration route	(Social) network migration destination choice
Western Balkan (irregular) migration route	Role of policy migration decision making/ destination choice
Eastern, western and central African (irregular) migration route	Conditions origin country (sending country) migration destination choice
	Conditions destination country (host country) migration destination choice

² The grey literature includes, but is not limited to the following types of materials: reports (pre-prints, preliminary progress and advanced reports, technical reports, statistical reports, memoranda, state-of-the art reports, market research reports, etc.), theses, conference proceedings, technical specifications and standards, non-commercial translations, bibliographies, technical and commercial documentation, and official documents not published commercially (primarily government reports and documents) (Alberani, 1990).

Once sources were retrieved, each source was initially screened on title and abstract with the objective of removing duplicates and then further screened on a review of the full text. The primary objective of this stage of the review was to ensure the relevance of sources to the study. In the initial selection overview the criterion outlined in Table 2 was used to select sources for retrieval.

Table 2: Criterion used to select sources

Criterion	Application
Relevance	Did the source address irregular entry? Did the source address irregular migration routes to Europe? Did the source address factors influencing irregular migrant destination choice?

Due to the explicit focus of this review several studies were excluded based on relevance. This included, but was not limited to, topics on:

- Cultural factors of migration
- Detention and expulsion
- Drivers of migration
- Economics of migration
- Human smuggling and smuggling prevention (when not in specific reference to irregular entry)
- Human trafficking
- Labour migration
- Maritime migration
- Migration aspirations and imaging Europe from the outside
- Mixed migration
- Migration policy
- Non-European irregular migration routes (such as in the Americas or routes towards Australia)
- Organised Crime
- Refugees and the wider asylum policies, procedures and models
- Statelessness
- Unaccompanied minors or children on the move

Although there are many possible overlaps from the above topics with irregular migrants' entry into Europe, if the source did not explicitly discuss irregular migrants' entry or routes to Europe then the source was excluded from this review.

The resulting retrieval and study selection is shown in Table 3. A total of 94 sources were included in the final analysis. In several cases, the same source was relevant for both the irregular migration routes and destination choice sections.

Table 3: Retrieval and Study selection, Number of sources by topic

	Routes	Destination Choice	Total
Studies retrieved	52	145	174
Studies screened on title/abstract (after removing duplicates)	42	120	139
Studies screened on full text	39	96	115
Studies included in final analysis	37	78	94

After the initial retrieval, key experts were contacted via email to request any further studies that may have been missed in the initial selection process. A few additional sources were emailed, which have been included in the final analysis and in the totals in the last line of Table 3 above.

3.5 Assessing the evidence and identifying research gaps

The evidence assessment in this study was conducted in two stages. The first stage involved assessment of each individual source for relevance and quality. Relevance was assessed based on the applicability of the source to the literature review objectives. After being screened for relevance, quality standards of each source were assessed based on: the rigor of the research design and methodology; the study reliability and validity; the number of informants in the study; the credentials of the author; and the creditability of the findings. All of the studies that were deemed relevant to the study met the quality standards and were included in the review.

In the second stage, sources were assessed and categorised as having strong evidence, partial evidence, or little evidence (Appendix 1 and 2) on the two major themes of: migration routes and destination choice. The criteria for this evidence assessment were:

- *Strong evidence:* Focus of the source is precisely on the topic, very high relevance
- *Partial evidence:* Part of the paper relates/addresses the topic
- *Little evidence:* Topic comes up within the paper, but is not the focus of any particular section

These criteria are based on individual sources. The final stage of the evidence assessment was to assess the certainty of the findings. This is a less precise process in qualitative research than in quantitative research, where standardised metrics for assessing degree of certainty and accuracy are available (Pettigrew & Roberts, 2006). The majority of studies included in this review are based on qualitative data, most commonly being interviews with irregular migrant (see Appendix 1 and 2). As we did not conduct the studies ourselves, we are interpreting data validity and certainty from other authors’

qualitative inquiry and cannot assess evidence relating to the raw data. Based on these uncertainties, the findings of the systemic review have been organised into the following three categories:

- 1) *Strong agreement*- Represents findings that are confirmed across multiple sources
- 2) *Mixed agreement*- Clear conclusions about these findings cannot be drawn from the literature
- 3) *Research gaps*- Represents elements where there is virtually no evidence within the literature

These criteria are based on key themes found in the literature, which contrasts the previous criteria that were based on individual sources. The findings presented in Section 6 based on the above evidence assessment categories are organised according to the three main themes of this review: irregular migration routes to Europe, factors influencing destination choice, and the case of the Netherlands.

3.6 Summary

This section has clarified the methodology used in this review. A key challenge in this study was to sufficiently limit the scope of the research to irregular entry, while also broadening the study wide enough to capture the diversity of information on irregular migration routes and factors influencing destination choice. Through the above methodology and the review of 94 sources a balance has been achieved. The following sections discuss the results of the review.

4. Migration routes

4.1 Introduction

As highlighted in the introduction, migration routes are continuously changing and evolving. Routes are highly responsive to changes in conditions in countries of origin, transit, and destination, and evidence will always lag behind the current realities on the ground due to the nature of data collection. The purpose of this section is not to ascertain the finite routes of entry to Europe but to examine the historical dimensions, flows, and changing geographies of irregular migration to the EU.

In this study we examine migration routes during three different stages:

Stage 1: The route from the country of origin to the borders of Europe;

Stage 2: The route taken to cross the borders into the European Union;

Stage 3: The route taken from the first EU country of entry to the country of destination in the EU.

Each of these routes are broken down and examined in this section. A total of 37 sources were included in the analysis on migration routes. Table 4 provides an overview of the number of sources reviewed for each migration route.

Table 4: Number of sources reviewed per irregular migration route

Route	Number of Sources Reviewed
<i>Country of Origin to the Fringes of Europe</i>	
Eastern Africa Route	9
Western and Central Africa Route	9
Asian Route	7
<i>Crossing into the European Union</i>	
Central Mediterranean Route	16
Western Mediterranean Route	7
Eastern Mediterranean Route	6
Western Balkan Route	5
<i>From the country of entry in Europe to the country of destination in Europe</i>	
All routes in this section	6

This section also examines migration routes specifically to the Netherlands, key factors influencing irregular migrants routes, and provides a summary and overview of key gaps identified within the literature.

4.2 Country of origin to the fringes of Europe

Within the literature, there are currently three dominant routes for crossing from countries of origin to the fringes of Europe: first, the East African route; second, the Central and Western African Route; and third, the Asian route. Figure 7 provides an overview of these three routes.

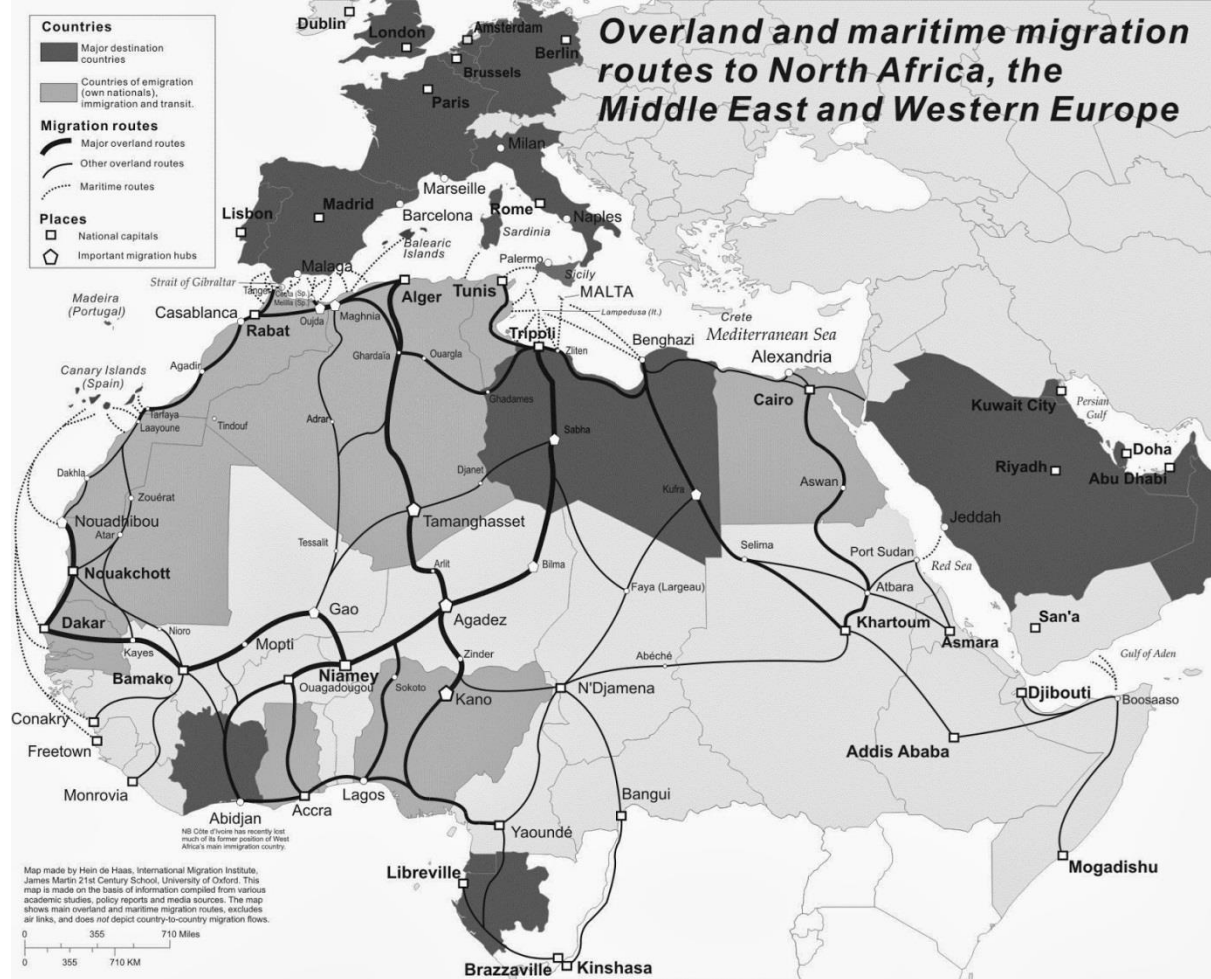
Figure 7: Overview of main irregular migration routes to the fringes of the EU as portrayed in the existing literature



Blue: West and Central African Migration Route; Red: East African Migration Route; Orange: Asian Migration Route

This can be compared to Figure 8, which shows the main routes of migrants to North Africa, the Middle East and Western Europe from within Africa. Two key differences exist between these maps. First, Figure 7 only focuses on migration routes to Europe, and not the Middle East nor North Africa. Second, we can see that in Figure 8 there were frequent flows to Morocco, which are not represented in Figure 7 as this route is no longer commonly used. This will be discussed further in Section 6 on key findings in this report.

Figure 8: Overland and maritime migration routes to North Africa, the Middle East and Western Europe according to De Haas, 2007



Source: De Haas, 2007, p. 17

The three routes described in this section represent the findings that are discussed in the sources of the literature review. It is known that irregular migration from other parts of Asia and even South America does not depict country to Europe; however information on these routes was not found within the literature.

4.2.1 The Eastern Africa Route

As illustrated in Figure 9, the Eastern Africa route is primarily comprised of migrants from the Horn of Africa who depart from Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia and usually pass through Sudan, Egypt and Libya before reaching the shores of the Mediterranean (e.g. Altai Consulting/UNHCR, 2013; Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, 2014; UNODC, 2010; RMMS, 2014).

Figure 9: Overview of the Eastern Africa Route to the fringes of the EU as portrayed in the existing literature



The latest sources on this route (e.g., Altai Consulting/UNHCR, 2013; Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, 2014; UNODC, 2010; RMMS, 2014; Lutterbeck, 2013) agree on the main trajectories and major cities that act as important hubs along this route.

In total, nine sources are included in this section of which eight make use of qualitative research methods and one is based on quantitative methods. Two sources are older than five years and are mainly used for background purposes. In general, the sources that addressed the Eastern Africa Route from the past five years do not appear to differ strongly from earlier sources on the routes taken by Somali, Eritrean or Ethiopian nationals. That said, there are too few sources available on the exact routes taken by these irregular migrants to generate an informed debate.

There are several key meeting points for migrants along this route. Somalis and Somalilanders make their way to the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, where they join Ethiopian migrants (see Figure 8). From Addis Ababa, the migrants move to Khartoum before continuing the journey to Libya (Altai Consulting/UNHCR, 2013). For Eritrean migrants who depart from the Eritrean cities of Asmara or Massawa, the towns of Kassala and El-Kadarif are the main hubs in Sudan (UNODC, 2010; Van Reisen et al, 2014). It is in these cities that migrants are likely to make their first contact with Sudanese

smugglers (RMMS, 2014). Khartoum is a major transit point for all migrants travelling through Sudan, and it is the place where migrants generally arrange their trips through the Sahara to reach Libya (UNODC, 2010; Lutterbeck, 2013). According to research by Hamood (2006), migrants remain in Khartoum for an average of one to two years before moving on, with the side note that routes can change in accordance with political developments. Sudan is strategically positioned along several key trans-African and African-European migratory routes and is a significant receiver of labour and transit migrants from neighbouring countries.

Before 2003, migrants would regularly travel through Darfur (West Sudan) to cross into Chad before moving further north. Due to the war in the region, which began in 2003 and is ongoing, smugglers have taken different routes (Altai Consulting/UNHCR, 2013). ICMPD (2010) found that the route through Darfur and Chad is still used quite regularly; however, ICMPD does recognise that the route through Dongola into Libya is more frequently used. Earlier research by Hamood (2006) indicated that even though regular traffic between Sudan and Libya halted in May 2003 as a result of the conflict, migrant smuggling continued to be operational.

Kufra, a city in the south-eastern corner of Libya, is the first major city migrants encounter in Libya after the desert crossing from Sudan; Kufra is a significant migration hub for irregular migrants from the Horn of Africa (RMMS, 2014). In 2004, the governor of Kufra assessed that, before tribal tensions between the Zway and Tebu broke out in 2012, approximately 10,000-12,000 migrants passed through the city each month (Altai Consulting/UNHCR, 2013). As a result of the tribal tensions, the number of irregular migrants dropped to 1,000 to 3,000 migrants per month in 2013 (Altai Consulting/UNHCR, 2013). According to Altai Consulting/UNHCR (2013), smugglers have been rerouting their paths through the Abdul Malek Mountains to the towns of Rebiana and Tazerbo (near to Kufra). An alternative route to circumvent Kufra is to enter Libya by first crossing into Egypt after Dongola, travelling north, and consequently entering Libya in the north-east (Altai Consulting/UNHCR, 2013). There is also a new route emerging where Sudanese migrants make their way to Cairo (usually by plane) and subsequently connect with smugglers who take them to the Libyan border at Salloum-Um Saad (Altai Consulting/UNHCR, 2013). There is no exact data on the prevalence or importance of these alternative routes. ICMPD reported in 2007 that some Ethiopians also travel north to Cairo before crossing the border into Libya. While it is unknown how many Ethiopians use this route, RMMS (2014) states that this particular migration route is still in use and of importance to some irregular Ethiopian migrants.

Costs to Khartoum and Libya differ slightly by place of origin. According to ICMPD (2010), Eritrean migrants pay around USD 100 to a smuggler for the trip to Khartoum. For Ethiopians, the journey from Addis Ababa to Khartoum is estimated to take between 3-6 days and costs migrants USD 500-800 (Altai Consulting/UNHCR, 2013). Lutterbeck's (2013) study indicates that the journey from Khartoum to south Libya costs around USD 500. Ethiopians may legally cross the border to Sudan on the basis of a one-month visa, and once in Sudan they can use the services of smugglers to reach Libya and, eventually, Europe. In a study by RMMS (2013) it was estimated that Ethiopians pay over USD 1,000 to be smuggled to Tripoli.

The only factor that appears to influence the specific routes taken by migrants over time is the occurrence of violent conflict, such as the civil strife in Darfur from 2003 onwards. There is no exact data available on the volume of irregular migrants who use the East African Route. In addition there is no data on which countries and cities are predominantly crossed. There is stronger evidence (Altai Consulting/UNHCR, 2013; UNODC, 2010; RMMS, 2014; Lutterbeck, 2013; Van Reisen et al, 2014) which suggests that the route from north Sudan to Libya is more frequently used than the route that first crosses Egypt or Chad before entering Libya.

4.2.2 Western and Central Africa Route

Depending on where West and Central African migrants start their journeys, they take different routes that lead them across either Mali or Niger. From there they continue directly to Libya and pass through Algeria to reach Libya (Altai Consulting/UNHCR, 2013). The routes are divided per country of origin:

- *Western African route:* This route is followed by migrants from Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Niger, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Gambia (Altai Consulting/UNHCR, 2013; Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, 2014).
- *Central African Route:* This route is followed by migrants from Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Chad (Altai Consulting/UNHCR, 2013; Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, 2014).

Figure 10: Overview of the Western and Central Africa Route to the fringes of the EU as portrayed in the existing literature



The Central African route runs overland northwards (See Figure 10). For migrants following the Central African route, the journey typically leads to the city of Agadez in Niger, where they join West Africans *en route* to Libya (UNODC, 2010). For migrants from Ghana, Togo, Benin, and Côte d'Ivoire who follow the Western African route, the first hub is Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso. From Burkina Faso, migrants who make the overland journey will again join the West African route, either through Gao in Mali, or through Agadez (Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, 2014). After Agadez, migrants typically pass through the Nigerian town of Dirkou and Madama to Libya's Al Wigh, and Murzuk before entering the Libyan city of Sabha. Smugglers often change off for each leg of the journey between cities (Altai Consulting/UNHCR, 2013).

Nine sources are included in this section of which five are based on qualitative research and the remaining four on secondary data. No study used to describe this route made use of quantitative research methods. Two sources are older than five years and are primarily used for background purposes. The importance of major migration hubs such as Agadez (Niger), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), Gao (Mali), Tamanrasset (Algeria) and Sabha (Libya) are not contested in the analysed literature. We

should, however, be cautious of the small amount of relevant sources found on this route to draw any solid conclusions.

Stricter European visa policies and the strengthening of migration controls at airports and other official ports of entry in the 1990s impelled a growing number of West African migrants to avoid regular air and maritime methods before entering Europe (De Haas, 2007). Instead they crossed the Mediterranean irregularly. Since the late 1990s, sub-Saharan migrants started to join the movement of migrants from the Maghreb who had begun crossing the Mediterranean Sea by boat since the early 1990s, when Italy and Spain introduced visa requirements for North African workforces. After the year 2000, North Africans became outnumbered as a total share of irregular migrants registered by EU border patrols (De Haas, 2007).

When comparing recent findings to the 2007 study of De Haas (see Figure 8), it appears that the overland route following the west coast of Africa has lost importance (see Figure 10). According to Barros et al. (2002) the route along the west coast of Africa, through Mauritania and Western Sahara to Spain, had become less favourable due to increased patrolling in the Western Mediterranean waters beginning in 2000. After 2001, a significant number of migrants from Morocco moved southward to the Western Sahara in order to reach the Canary Islands (De Haas, 2007; Carling, 2007). Increased patrols of the Spanish borders and the reinforcement of the fence between the Moroccan mainland and the Spanish enclaves Ceuta and Melilla in recent years corresponded to a decrease in the number of irregular migrants who made use of this route to cross the Western Mediterranean (see Section 4.3.2). These examples illustrate that routes from sub-Sahara Africa to Europe can transform rapidly in response to a number of factors, including the local security situation. For instance, RMMS (2014) reports how in early 2014, fighting in the Libyan city of Sabha and subsequent road and airport closures left several hundred migrants stranded in the town until the violence decreased.

The route from the major transit point of Agadez to Sabha is one of the main routes for Western and Central African migrants who travel through Niger to reach Libya. It is also one of the most dangerous parts of their trip as it involves crossing the desert (Altai Consulting/UNHCR, 2013; Lutterbeck, 2013). In the 2007 study by De Haas, Agadez was considered an important crossing point where migration routes bifurcate to Sabha in Libya or Tamanrasset in Algeria (see Figure 3). Earlier studies also recognised the significance of the city (e.g., Simon, 2004; Brachet, 2005; Monzini, 2007). There are other important hubs where migrants and smugglers consolidate their activities. For example, migrants departing from Bamako in Mali generally stop in the city of Gao (Mali). From there they proceed to Kidal and Tessalit (Mali) and cross the Algerian border to Tamanrasset, where they are

transferred to vehicles with Algerian license plates (UNODC, 2010). Algeria is easy to reach for Malian passport holders, who do not need a visa to enter the country; many migrants therefore buy counterfeited Malian passports to facilitate their travel (Altai Consulting/UNHCR, 2013; Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, 2014). Migrants also access Tamanrasset from the city of Agadez before travelling onwards to Libya or Tunisia (Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, 2014). Fargues stated in 2009 that more than 40 percent of the inhabitants of Tamanrasset are irregular migrants originating from bordering countries (Fargues, 2009).

The only data on the volume of migrants making use of the Western and Central routes are derived from a field study on the Agadez trail running from the Nigerien city to Algeria and onward conducted by the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (2014). The study suggested that the number of migrants on the Agadez trail has been increasing since the beginning of 2013, and more than 5,000 West Africans reportedly left Agadez to travel to North Africa each month between March and August 2013. The study further estimated that half of all West African migrants who arrived in Lampedusa in 2013 passed through Agadez, illustrating the importance of the city as a migration hub (Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, 2014).

Costs for migrants along this route vary depending on the points of departure and destination. The complete journey from Agadez to the Libyan coastline can cost between USD 2,000-3,000, according to the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (2014). The organisation states that the “full packet solution” to Europe can cost USD 10,000 or more and is often “payable in various instalments by the families of the migrants when they have proof that their loved one has reached a specific point” (Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, 2014, p. 10). Another study found that the route from Agadez to Sabha in Libya costs approximately USD 100 - 300, and the more dangerous desert crossing from Agadez to Tamanrasset in Algeria could cost between USD 50-300 (Altai Consulting/UNHCR, 2013). Within Libya, in 2011 the ILO reported that migrants paid around USD 800 to be taken from the southern town of Sabha to northern Tripoli (ILO, 2011).

The major difference in the literature over the past 10 years is in the decrease of irregular migrants travelling along the west coast of Africa to Spanish ground due to increased border patrolling, such as maritime surveillance outside the Senegalese coastline. Research also suggests that sub-Saharan Africans no longer make up the greatest share of irregular migrants crossing into the EU from the African mainland (De Haas, 2007). This development emphasises the shift in countries of origin of irregular migrants to Europe. From all recent literature it appears that Libya is the most important (transit) destination of sub-Saharan Africans, with Tunisia being the second most important. Again, no exact and

recent data was found on the volume of irregular migrants who made use of the routes and migration hubs.

4.2.3 Asian Route to Eastern Mediterranean Route

The Asian Route to the Mediterranean encompasses migrant groups such as Afghans, Iranians, Pakistanis, Iraqis, and Syrians. However, the only available data on irregular migrants who used this route focused on Afghans and Pakistanis, as shown in Figure 11. In total, seven sources were found to highlight the trajectory of the Asian Route, but only a few recent sources could be found that described the exact routes of Afghan and Pakistani irregular migrants to Europe. Six sources were written in the last five years and rely on qualitative research methods. Due to the dearth of sources on this topic, there is no contestation between authors on this migration route, and there is little data on the route taken by, for instance, Syrians, Iraqis and Iranians.

Figure 11: Overview of the Asian Route to the fringes of the EU as portrayed in the existing literature



According to Triandafyllidou and Maroukis (2012), the main route used to smuggle irregular Afghan migrants to Greece runs from Afghanistan to Iran, then to Turkey, and eventually to Greece (see Figure 6). This is consistent with the findings of Dimitriadi, 2013, Kuschminder & Siegel (forthcoming) and Buil and Siegel (2014). Migration routes are in part determined by the points of departure within Afghanistan. For instance, Afghans who leave from the southern and eastern parts of the country tend to first enter Pakistan, whereas migrants living in the western parts of Afghanistan directly cross into Iran (Dimitriadi, 2013). From the existing literature it becomes clear that Iran is a major transit country

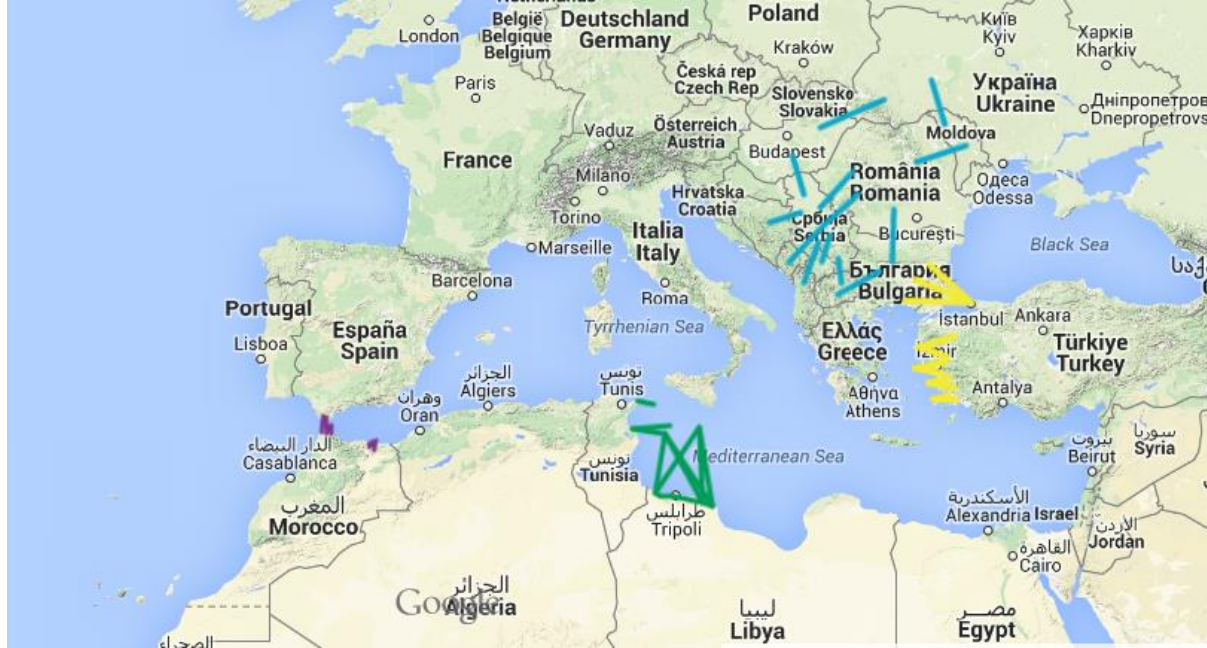
for Afghans and Pakistanis and that these groups exemplify the significant onward movement from Turkey to Greece. Crossing of the Iranian border predominantly happens by foot or by car, after which an individual usually takes a car or van to the city of Zahedan before moving to the Iranian destinations of Salmas and Orumijeh (Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012). The Tehran province is a key hub where migrants both arrange deals with smuggling brokers and wait for some time until they can continue to the next leg of the journey, which is reaching Orumijeh and the mountain of Salmas. In Pakistan, migrants mostly travel through the cities of Quetta and Balochistan on foot or by car/van before crossing the Iranian border. From a study of Yousef (2013), Pakistanis were found to follow a similar route as Afghans; many first travel through the city of Quetta before moving onward. Once migrants have crossed Iran, the mountainous Iranian-Turkish border may be traversed during the night by foot by migrants in groups of 50 to 100 people, who are often escorted by two smugglers. The irregular migrants then proceed to take a bus further into Turkey (Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012). In Turkey, the first stops are usually in the cities of Van province, from which migrants continue on to Istanbul (Dimitriadi, 2013). With the help of smugglers, migrants will then try to reach the Greek shore (Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012). According to Tonchev (2007), many Pakistanis migrated to Greece in the 1980s due to the formation of the Single European Market, and many migrants anticipated being able to easily move within the former European Economic Community. Greece is currently a popular transit point for many irregular Pakistanis seeking other European destinations (Yousef, 2013).

The trip from Afghanistan was estimated to cost around €5,500 in 2007, €7,000- €12,000 in 2009, and €4,500-€5,500 in 2010 (Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012). According to Triandafyllidou and Maroukis (2012) the cost of the route to Greece for Pakistani nationals was fast declining due to a lower demand.

4.3 Crossing into the European Union

This section examines the four main routes migrants take to cross into the EU: the Central Mediterranean, Eastern Mediterranean, Western Balkan, and Western Mediterranean routes. Compared to the other two stages of the migration trajectory (crossing to the fringes of the EU, and onwards migration within the EU), the largest number of sources related to this stage of the migration trajectory, which are depicted in Figure 12. This is unsurprising, as in the current political climate, irregular migration into the EU has been a topic of great concern over the past decade.

Figure 12: Overview of main irregular migration routes crossing into the EU as portrayed in existing literature



Green: Central Mediterranean Route; Yellow: East Mediterranean Route; Purple: West Mediterranean Route; Light Blue: Western Balkan Route

Frontex categorises irregular migrant crossings into the EU by a total of eight routes, which consist in the four routes detailed in this section, as well as: Apulia and Calabria route; Circular route from Albania and Greece; Eastern Borders route and the Western African Route. In 2014, statistics for the Apulia and Calabria route were included in the Central Mediterranean route, effectively representing a total of seven routes. The Eastern Borders route includes entry from the borders of Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania. A total of 1,270 detections were made on this route in 2014, however, very little information is available on this route, and with such low numbers it is not a main route to the EU. On the Western African route to the Canary Islands, fewer than 50 detections were reported in the third quarter of 2014, illustrating that this is no longer a main route to the EU. Finally, although detections were higher in the Albania-Greece corridor at 8,336 detections, this number represents 99 percent Albanian nationals. The circular migration route between Albania and Greece has a long history in itself and does not represent a main route for onwards migration in the EU. For this reason it was not deemed as relevant and included in this review.

Table 5 provides an overview of the four key routes that we will examine further in this section. The table indicates the number of irregular migrant detections on this route by nationality. We have

chosen to select these four routes as they represent 96.5 percent of all the detections of irregular border crossings made by Frontex in 2014 (2015).

Table 5: Main irregular migration routes to Europe, 2014

Route	From	To	Number of Irregular border crossings Jan-Nov 2014 (Frontex, 2015)	Top 3 origins of irregular migrant detections (Frontex, 2015)	Number of detections per nationality (Frontex, 2015)
Central Mediterranean	Libya or Tunisia	Italy or Malta	170,664	Syria	39,651
				Eritrea	33,559
				Unspecified sub-Saharan nationals	26,340
Eastern Mediterranean	Turkey	Greece, Bulgaria or Cyprus	50,834	Syria	27,025
				Afghanistan	11,582
				Somalia	1,621
Western Balkan route	Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania	EU Countries	43,357	Kosovo	22,059
				Afghanistan	8,342
				Syria	7,320
Western Mediterranean route	Morocco	Spain	7,842	Cameroon	1,497
				Algeria	734
				Mali	669

Source: Frontex, 2015

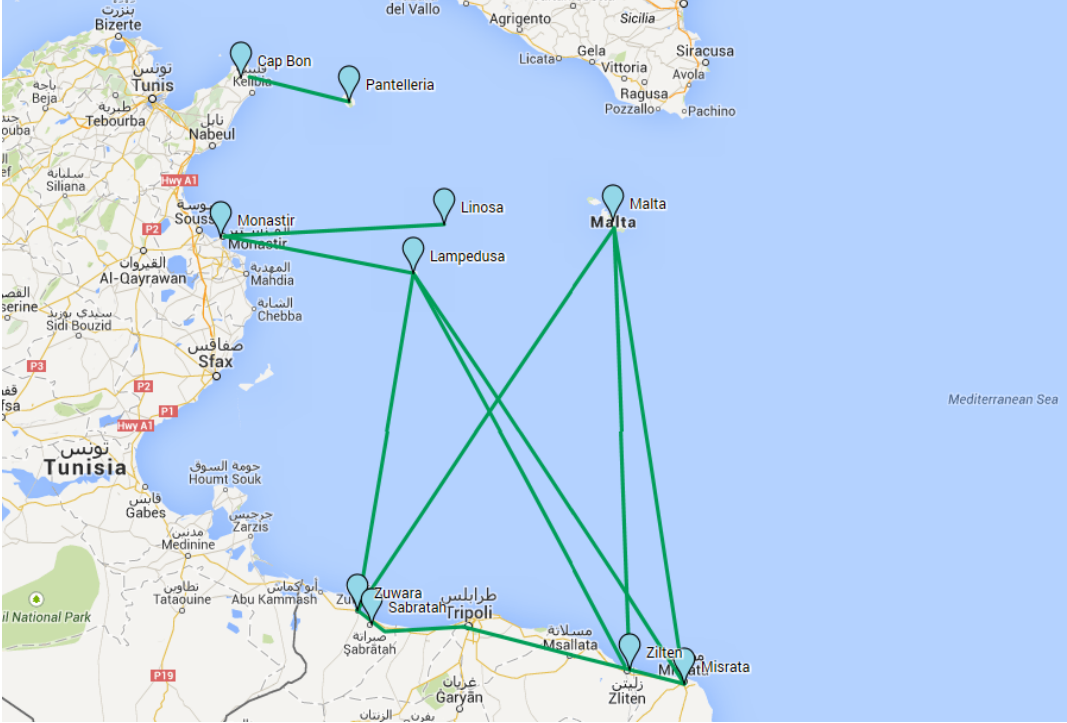
It must again be reiterated that these figures do not necessarily represent irregular migration movements as a whole, as these are a subset of the population that was halted and after that registered by Frontex (noting that Frontex receives data from member states and does not always disaggregate figures by national origin). If the number of detections is reflective of the overall scale of movement across these routes, this would suggest that the Central Mediterranean route experiences migrant flows that are three times larger than those that move through the Eastern Mediterranean route.

4.3.1 Central Mediterranean Route

The Central Mediterranean Route refers to migration movements from North Africa to Italy and, to a lesser extent, Malta (see Figure 13). As suggested in the figures from Frontex in Table 5 this is the most-frequently used route to reach the EU. The largest number of sources on irregular migration routes also

referred to this particular route. This section will describe how the Central Mediterranean route evolved over time and will highlight the pertinence of Libya as country of departure for most irregular migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea to reach the European Union.

Figure 13: Central Mediterranean Route according to existing literature presented in this analysis



The information for this section is retrieved from 16 sources of which 10 are deemed as ‘strong evidence’ in Appendix 1. Thirteen sources are from within the past five years and the older sources are mainly used for background information. Only three sources made use of quantitative research methods, while the rest relied on qualitative approaches. Although the Central Mediterranean route is the most popular pathway to enter into the European Union, there are few sources that provide exact numbers of irregular migrant crossings and details on destination places. The most recent information comes from Frontex (2014; 2015). However, the border agency does not publish specificities on where exactly detections are made. The most popular place of embarkation has changed repeatedly over the past 20 years, with Libya currently being the most commonly used transit point after the fall of the Kaddafi regime. There is no debate between sources from the past five years claiming otherwise, and we can therefore state that there is strong evidence suggesting that Libya is the central port for irregular migrants leaving for Europe over the past five years.

This section will give an overview of the number of irregular migrants making use of the Central Mediterranean route, distinguished by nationality when possible. Following, a discussion of how the migration trajectories of irregular migrants from Libya and Tunisia to Malta have changed will be discussed. Lastly, a breakdown will be given of the expected costs of crossing the Mediterranean when using the involvement of smugglers.

Migrants crossing the EU sea borders accounted for 90 percent of the detections of irregular border-crossing into European member states in the second quarter (January to June) of 2014 (Frontex, 2014). The number of detections reported in the Central Mediterranean Route by Frontex (2014) stood at 53,000 in the second quarter of 2014 and represented almost three quarters of all irregular border-crossing detections (Frontex, 2014). Frontex (2014) states that in comparison to the second quarter of 2013, detections at the EU borders in the second quarter of 2014 increased by more than 170 percent (Frontex, 2014). Italy reported eight times more detections of irregular migrants in the second quarter of 2014 than in the same period in 2013 (Frontex, 2014). According to the latest figures of Frontex (2015), the total number of detections made in 2014 stood at 170,664. The increase in number of irregular migrants detected using the Central Mediterranean is not only related to better weather conditions but also to the existence of a great number of sub-Saharan Africans and Syrians residing in the coastal areas of Libya (Frontex, 2014).

Syrian nationals represented 23 percent (39,651) of all detections made by Frontex (2015) in the Central Mediterranean Route in 2014. Detections of Syrians increased sevenfold in the third quarter of 2014 compared to the same period in 2013. Approximately 20 percent (33,559) of the irregular migrants detected by Frontex in the Central Mediterranean Route were Eritrean nationals (Frontex, 2015). The third-largest group of migrants was nationals of sub-Saharan African countries, who accounted for 14 percent (24,672) of all detections made (Frontex, 2015).

In the last two decades, the Mediterranean Sea has become the most porous and dangerous border between Europe and its neighbours, according to UNHCR (2014). Based on media reports, an Italian NGO estimated that 15,016 migrants had died or were missing at sea between January 1998 and 30 September, 2014 (Fargues & Bonfanti, 2014). Fargues and Bonfanti (2014) estimate that the risk of dying while crossing the Mediterranean Sea is close to two percent. Since the Italian government established the rescue operation Mare Nostrum in October 2013 in response to several boat accidents that resulted in the deaths of over 600 people at sea, UNHCR (2014) estimated that more than 20,000 migrants had been rescued at the time of writing. Frontex (2014) figures indicate that in 2013, a total of 29,191 migrants were saved from the Mediterranean Sea.

The increase of irregular migration to Europe by sea started in the 1990s after Spain and Italy introduced stricter visa regimes (De Haas, 2007; 2008). As stated in the previous section, Libya became the main source of migrant boats heading for Europe (i.e. Altai Consulting/UNHCR, 2013; RMMS, 2014; Frontex, 2014; UNODC, 2010; Lutterbeck, 2013). While Libya has traditionally been a destination country for migrants from other Arab and African countries, irregular migration from Libya to Europe is a relatively recent phenomenon. When irregular migration through the Central Mediterranean Route gathered momentum at the end of the 1990s, containing irregular migration became a bargaining chip for the Libyan state in its diplomatic association with Europe, as it faced international embargos and sanctions at the time. Even after the embargo was lifted, Colonel Kaddafi used the threat of mass movements of migrants to Europe as a scare tactic to strengthen his bargaining position (Fargues, 2009).

Field research conducted by Altai Consulting (Altai Consulting/UNHCR, 2013) indicated that Sabratha, Libya, used to be a main departure point for migrants travelling to Europe by boat, but this was no longer the case at the time of their research in 2013. Field teams visiting the region reported that the amount of boats departing Sabratha had decreased mainly due to an intensification of government monitoring in Libya. According to Altai Consulting/UNHCR (2013), most migrant boats now depart from the coastal area between Tripoli and Zuwarah. Research conducted by UNODC (2010) also suggested that the primary departure points in Libya included Zuwarah (56 km from the Tunisian border), Zilten, and Misratah, as well as the region around Tripoli (UNODC, 2010). Lutterbeck's research (2013) also suggested that the port towns of Zilten and Zuwarah are the most popular embarkation spots.

In the case of migrants departing from Tunisia, the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (2014) and UNODC (2010) stated that migrants heading for southern Sicily left from the ports north and south of Tunis, those headed for Pantelleria departed from Cap Bon, and those destined for Lampedusa and Linosa departed from the areas south of Monastir. From these parts it was estimated to take approximately 10 hours – weather permitting - to sail to Pantelleria or Lampedusa and between two and three days or more to sail to Sicily (Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, 2014; UNODC, 2010). Research by De Haas (2007) indicated that stricter border patrols at the Tunisian coast also led to an increased number of irregular migrants embarking from the Libyan coast (De Haas, 2007). There are no publicly-accessible estimations of the number of irregular migrants departing from Tunisia or Libya. Nevertheless, the literature suggests that Libya is the most popular place to make the crossing to the European Union.

Migrants departing from Tunisia and Libya are most commonly arriving in Malta or Italy. Dezelfde onzekerheden omtrent de bevindingen in de bestaande literatuur zijn van toepassing op het aantal irreguliere migranten dat uiteindelijk Italië of Malta bereikt. Het is bijvoorbeeld onbekend hoeveel van de 170,000+ gedetecteerde migranten die gebruik maken van de Centrale Middellandse Zee route het eiland Malta bereiken. Older literature suggests that Malta is not as popular a destination as Italy (Monzini, 2007; Düvell, 2008; Mainwaring, 2008). Until 2005, Malta was a significant point of arrival and departure for irregular migrants wanting to cross the border into the EU. In the late 1990s and up to the start of the 2000s, before Malta joined the EU, the island had been a hub for North Africans and even Asian migrants (mainly from China). According to Monzini (2007) migrants arrived by plane and soon after were transported in small boats to southern Sicily by local smugglers. According to Mainwaring (2008), many of the irregular migrants caught and imprisoned in Malta had no intention of going to the island and no wish to stay. They were rather looking for ways to travel on to Italy and other mainland EU member states. In a 2008 study by Düvell the position of Malta as a transit point has been cited as steadily declining, as it is very difficult for migrants to depart from the island to other destinations (Düvell, 2008).

There are no major differences between the cited sources regarding the cost of the journey across the central Mediterranean Sea. According to Massari (2010), the cost of the sea journey from the Libyan coast to Lampedusa was estimated to be around USD 800 in the early 2000s, rising to approximately USD 2,000 by the end of the decade. UNHCR estimated the cost to be between USD 300 - 2,000 depending on the smuggler and the season, with travel in the winter months cheaper because the sea is rougher and the trip is consequently more dangerous (Altai Consulting/UNHCR, 2013). According to testimonies taken by Triandafyllidou (2007) among Moroccan migrants arriving in Lampedusa in the summer of 2006, smugglers were paid around €2,000 for the journey from Morocco to Libya and from Libya to Italy. In 2010, UNODC reported prices of USD 3,000 between Libya and Italy compared to USD 1,200 in 2006 and USD 800 in 2004, attributing the surge in costs to the more inclusive services offered by smugglers, which are thought to include reception facilities in Italy (UNODC, 2010).

4.3.2 Western Mediterranean Route

The Western Mediterranean route includes the sea passage from North Africa to Spain and the land route to the Spanish enclaves Ceuta and Melilla, which are located in Morocco (see Figure 14). It must be noted that Figure 14 does not provide exact details on the irregular route taken to reach Spain. From

the literature it is not clear which cities or places are used by irregular migrants to embark and consequently debark in reaching Europe.

The Western Mediterranean route used to be the most popular route among Algerian and Moroccan nationals attempting to reach Spanish territory, either with the intention of staying or continuing on to another EU country. Since the late 1990s, however, increasing numbers of Sub-Saharan Africans have also made use of this route (Frontex, 2014; Schapendonk, 2012; De Haas, 2007; Boubakri, 2004; De Haas, 2007).

Figure 14: Western Mediterranean Route according to existing literature presented in this analysis



In 2003, sub-Saharan Africans made up approximately one-quarter of migrants detected after crossing the Strait of Gibraltar compared to less than two percent in the late 1990s (Carling, 2007). There is strong evidence from the existing literature (see also Section 4.3.1.) that the route from Morocco to Spain has become less frequently utilised by irregular migrants relative to the route from Libya. Due to the lack of different sources specifically on the Western Mediterranean route, there is no contestation between studies found in the last five years on the relevance or characteristics of this route. In this section, seven sources were deemed relevant of which three are older than five years.

Since 1999, stricter patrolling of the Strait of Gibraltar corresponded to diversification in the routes migrants followed to reach the EU. Triandafyllidou and Maroukis (2012) note that because the Western Mediterranean route became more heavily patrolled over time, Libya became the main point of departure to the EU, resulting in a decrease in the number of irregular migrants making use of the

Western Mediterranean route. Research conducted by Schapendonk (2012) focused on the transit dynamics along the trans-Saharan route to Morocco and eventually Spain. His study documented that several migrants chose to migrate to Libya rather than to Morocco because they found it too difficult to reach Spain. Others applied for permanent residence permits in Morocco, which consequently gave them access to tourist visas to travel to Turkey (Schapendonk, 2012). Once in Turkey, several migrants then continued to Greece (Schapendonk, 2012).

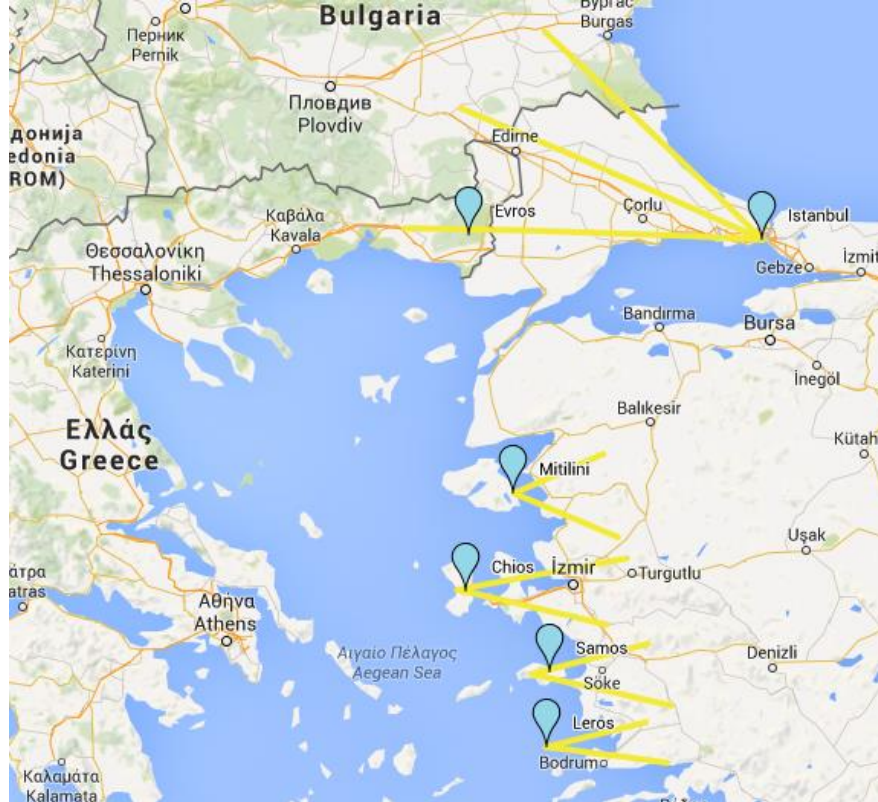
In 2014, 7,842 irregular migrants were detected by Frontex (2015) trying to cross through the Western Mediterranean route, a route that includes movement into several areas of the southern Spanish coast as well as the land borders of Ceuta and Melilla. The number of migrants detected irregularly crossing into Ceuta or Melilla decreased by 27 percent compared to 2013 due to the reinforcement of the fence along the Spanish land border (Frontex, 2015). In 2014, 3,087 migrants were detected crossing at the land border of Ceuta and Melilla, compared to , 4,229 in 2013 (Frontex, 2015). In 2014, more than 60 percent of all detections in the Western Mediterranean route were of migrants trying to cross the Western Mediterranean route by sea (Frontex, 2015).

In 2014, approximately 21 percent of the migrants detected by Frontex (2015) during attempts to enter Ceuta and Melilla came from Cameroon. Around 90 percent of all detected migrants in the Western Mediterranean route departed from Morocco and the remaining part from Algeria (Frontex, 2014). Data from Frontex indicates that in 2014, 1,497 Cameroonians were detected (amounting to almost 20 percent of total detections), as were 734 Algerians and 669 Malians. Most irregular migrants detected on this route in 2014 were nationals of various sub-Saharan countries (Frontex, 2015). In November and December 2014, the Spanish government also observed irregular land border crossings of approximately 250 Syrians (Frontex, 2015).

4.3.3 Eastern Mediterranean Route

The Eastern Mediterranean route refers to entry into Greece, Bulgaria, or Cyprus from Turkey, as shown in Figure 15. Since 2008 this route has become a progressively more important entry point to the EU. As this is a relatively new route, there are a limited number of sources on this migration route. In this section, only six sources are referenced, of which one study is older than five years. Publications by Frontex are the only sources in this section which make use of quantitative research methods. Existing sources from the past five years generally corroborate each other in describing the route and as there are so few, there is no debate on the exact details of the route.

Figure 15: Eastern Mediterranean Route according to existing literature presented in this analysis



As a result of the intensified patrols along the Greek coast, irregular migrants made more use of land than sea borders beginning in 2009. According to Triandafyllidou and Maroukis (2012), the number of detections of migrants in the Evros river area increased during the first five months of 2011, from 6,287 detections in the same period in 2010 to 8,738 detections, which represented a 40 percent increase (Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012). The number of detections further increased when Greece built a fence on its border with Turkey at the end of 2012, which cut off the Evros river route. Efforts to enhance controls on the Turkish-Greek land border in 2012 led to an increase in migrants departing from the Turkish coast to Greek islands, and the number of migrant crossing the border into Bulgaria also increased (Düvell, 2014). The substantial drop (by 95 percent) in irregular migrants crossing the border into Greece through the Evros River was offset by an increase in the number of migrants travelling by boat via the narrow straits that divide mainland Turkey from several of the Greek islands in the Aegean Sea (such as Mytilini, Samos, Chios and Leros) (Fargues & Bonfanti, 2014; Triandafyllidou and Maroukis, 2012; Icduygu, 2004). Another important development was the introduction of visa liberty by the Turkish government towards many African countries, which created the possibility for African

migrants to legally enter Turkey by plane before crossing into the EU as irregular migrants via Greece and Bulgaria (Fargues & Bonfanti, 2014).

In 2014, Frontex made almost 50 percent more detections (2015) of irregular migrants attempting to cross into the EU by using the Eastern Mediterranean route, compared to 2013. A total of 50,834 detections were made in 2014 compared to 24,799 in 2013 (Frontex, 2015). The number of detections on the Eastern Mediterranean route in the third quarter of 2014 was almost six times the number of detections in the third quarter of 2013 (Frontex, 2014). Almost 87 percent of all detections made use of the Sea route to cross into the EU (Frontex, 2015).

Among the reported detections made by Frontex (2015) in 2014, 62 percent were Syrian nationals, 25 percent were Afghans, and 3 percent were Somalis. Although the information provided by Triandafyllidou and Maroukis (2012) on the costs of the route stems from the period when most migrants used the Evros River to reach Greece from Turkey, it is the most recent academic research available. Their study reveals that East Africans and West Africans paid between €2,000 and €3,000, while North Africans paid between €1,000 and €1,500 to reach Greece from Turkey. Greek authorities note slightly higher fees, suggesting that the trip from Turkey to mainland Greece may cost between €2,000-3,000, while the trip from Greece to Italy in a safe manner may cost a further €2,500-€3,000. The discrepancy between these two information sources (migrants themselves and authorities) is caused by the authorities collecting data on safer and hence more expensive modes of transport than are used by the majority of migrants (Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012).

4.3.4 Western Balkan Route

The Western Balkan route entails two main migratory movements: those of migrants who are nationals of the Western Balkan states (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania), and those of predominantly Asian migrants who initially entered the EU through the Greek-Turkish land or sea borders and then progressed through the Western Balkans into Hungary or Romania (Frontex, 2014). Creating a visual map to depict the routes was not possible as too little details are known about the cities irregular migrants travel through in reaching a certain destination. Irregular migration trends in the Western Balkans region changed significantly following the introduction of visa-free travel within the EU in 2009 and the gradual economic and political stabilisation of the area. The Western Balkan region shifted from an emigrant-sending region to a predominantly transit area of irregular migrants coming from Greece (Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012; Molodikova, 2014).

Only five sources which originate from the last five years refer to the specific irregular migrant and smuggling routes through the Western Balkan countries onwards into the EU. The limited number of sources found does not contest the increased popularity of onward movement from transit countries in the Western Balkans to EU countries; but due to the lack of sources, there is simply too little information for an informed debate.

According to Frontex data, almost 75 percent of all detections of irregular border crossings in this area during 2012 involved transit migrants; in 2009, transit migrants accounted only for 10 percent of all detections (Frontex, 2014). Nevertheless, the latest Frontex (2015) figures indicate that Kosovars make up the largest single group of irregular migrants, representing 51 percent of detections. In the second quarter of 2014, the Hungarian-Serbian border remained the busiest in terms of irregular border-crossings (Frontex, 2014) as Hungary is a popular transit country for irregular migrants on their way to Western Europe (Molodikova, 2014). Research on Moldovan migrants by Mosneaga (2014) suggests that migrants make use of three main passages to reach the EU: the eastern passage from Moldova through Romania; the northern passage from Moldova through Ukraine and then to Hungary, Slovakia and Poland, and; the southern passage from Moldova through Bulgaria and Serbia (Mosneaga, 2014).

During 2014, Frontex (2015) detected 43,357 migrants attempting to enter the EU irregularly through the Western Balkan countries, which indicates a 46 percent rise in the number of detections made compared to 2013 (Frontex, 2014). In the third quarter of 2014, the Hungarian-Serbian border authorities registered a 193 percent increase in detections compared to the previous quarter and a 53 percent increase compared to the same period of 2013 (Frontex, 2014).

In 2014, the top three nationalities detected by Frontex (2015) were Kosovars (22,059), Afghans (8,342) in transit from Greece and Turkey, and Syrians (7,320). A substantial increase in irregular migrants making use of the Western Balkan route through Hungary appeared to occur between the second and third quarter of 2014, with substantial higher number of detections made of: Kosovars (+334 percent), Syrians (+386 percent), Afghans (+123 percent), and Palestinians (+299 percent) (Frontex, 2015).

The composition of the stream of irregular migrants, especially Afghans and Syrians, moving through the West Balkan region indicates sustained, secondary movements of migrants who initially entered Greece/Turkey before moving through the Western Balkans and eventually onwards to EU Member States. The present surge in detections corresponds to higher numbers of irregular migrants travelling from Turkey to Greece. The Western Balkan route is considered as an alternative to the direct

sea crossing from Greece/Turkey to Italy, generally owing to the lower costs of this route (Frontex, 2015). There are, however, no details available on the costs of following the route through the Western Balkan countries.

4.4 From country of entry in Europe to country of destination in Europe

A migrant's first country of entry into Europe is often not the migrant's target destination within Europe. This section examines migrants' main routes of movement *within* Europe. The smallest number of sources was found on this stage of migrants' trajectories, and insufficient information was available to provide a map with an overview of key migration routes in Europe. In total, only six sources were found which provide any details on the onward migration movement of irregular migrants after crossing into the EU. One of those is older than five years and five sources, besides publications of Frontex, are based on qualitative research.

As illustrated in Section 4.3, the primary entry points for irregular migrants into the EU are Greece, Italy, and, to a lesser extent, Spain. For some migrants, these countries are their intended destinations. For instance, Greece is a common destination country for Pakistani migrants due to pre-existing networks in the country (Yousef, 2013; Koser and Kuschminder, 2015). For other migrant groups, such as Afghans, Greece tends to be a country of transit, or at least an intended country of transit in that migrants have a different preferred destination but are unable to move beyond Greece.

4.4.1 Beyond Italy

There is very little evidence on how migrants leave Italy, but media reports and migrants claims in other European countries suggest that migrants do leave Italy. One key movement out of Italy is to cross the northern border into Switzerland, where many migrants claim asylum. According to RMMS (2014), migrants are often taken to cities in northern Italy, namely Milan, by their smugglers. In Milan, migrants have to find another smuggler who can arrange their travel to Northern Europe. To move to Northern Europe many irregular migrants use trains and Eurolines buses (RMMS, 2014). Many irregular migrants decide to stay in Italy for some time before moving on. As several respondents pointed out in the research conducted by RMMS (2014), Southern European countries tend to have larger informal economies, providing more irregular employment opportunities for migrants than North-Western European countries. The recent severe economic crisis in Italy made the country a less attractive destination for economic migrants, however (RMMS, 2014).

4.4.2 Beyond Greece

As in the case of Italy, migrants clearly do leave Greece, but limited information is available on the routes chosen. Travel from Greece is more difficult than it is from Italy, as Greece does not have a land border with other EU countries.

The clandestine crossing from Greece to Italy can take place either using forged travel documents or without any documents and generally via the ports of Patras, Corfu and Igoumenitsa (Dimitriadi, 2013; Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012). In the southern Italian region of Apulia, the majority of irregular border-crossings that are detected represent secondary movements to Italy from migrants who originally entered the Schengen area in Greece (Frontex, 2014). In practice, this means that migrants must successfully bypass the coastguard and Hellenic police in the Greek harbours before arriving in an Italian port (Dimitriadi, 2013). According to Triandafyllidou and Maroukis (2012) irregular migrants may attempt to board trucks at one of the ports without the drivers knowing, which often happens at car parks where drivers stop for a rest. Hellenic authorities have noted that migrants use cardboard boxes to avoid being crushed by the load and to create some breathing space. This method is free, but the chances of being caught or being injured are high (Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012). Alternatively, migrants who wish to travel from Greece to some other European country may buy fake documents or 'rent' real passports of people from the same country of origin who live regularly in another European country, at a cost of around €300. After acquiring these documents, migrants can then take a flight from Athens (Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012; Dimitriadi, 2013). Research by Dimitriadi (2013) on migration patterns of irregular Afghans in Greece indicates that in some cases, border crossing to Italy from Greece takes place with small boats or dinghies.

Data on apprehensions made by the Hellenic police at exit locations from Greece are provided in Table 6.

Table 6: Apprehensions of irregular migrants attempting to cross the border from Greece to Italy, from 2003 to 2012

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Apprehended Migrants (all nationalities)	464	681	815	1.084	1.634	2.483	2.593	3.859	3.859	4.681

Source: Ministry of Mercantile Affairs & Shipping, 2013, apprehensions within the port area, data for the months of January to June 2010 for both the port and surrounding area.

Source: Dimitriadi, 2013, p. 24

This data may not discern the number of unique individuals apprehended, as the same person may have been arrested several times in the same year in an effort to cross to Italy. The number of migrants who succeeded in crossing to Italy is unknown (Dimitriadi, 2013).

4.4.3 Beyond Spain

The final key entry point for irregular migrants to enter Europe is Spain, but there is also little evidence of migrants moving beyond Spain. One potential reason for this is that irregular migrants in Spain generally do not seek asylum (Gonzalez-Enriquez & Ramon, 2011). Spain also has a large population of irregular migrants, primarily of migrants from South America and Eastern Europe; the population of migrants from North Africa is comparatively small (Gonzalez- Enriquez & Ramon, 2011). Gonzalez-Enriquez and Ramon (2011) state that some police sources show that irregular migrants from African countries do transit through Spain on their way to other European destinations, but the size of the flows and the routes taken are not known.

4.4.4 Destination 'North'

From the literature review, it does not appear that migrants necessarily follow specific routes to reach countries in Northern Europe. As was argued above, migrants migrate within the EU. The literature suggests that based on the number of asylum applications Germany, the United Kingdom, and Scandinavia are top destinations (e.g. Buil & Siegel, 2014; Kuschminder & Siegel, upcoming; Brekke & Brochmann, 2014).

Within Europe, Scandinavian countries were noted as preferred destinations for Eritrean and Somali migrants in several studies (i.e. Brekke & Brochmann, 2014; Brekke & Aarset, 2009; RMMS, 2014; van Liempt & Doomernik, 2006; UNHCR, 2013; Staring & Aarts, 2010). In 2014 Dutch authorities reported detecting a large number of Eritreans in Germany, just across the border with the Netherlands, as being *en route* to Sweden (RMMS, 2014).

Although the UK and Germany appear to be key destination countries (see Table 1 and e.g. Crawley, 2010; Gilbert & Koser, 2006; van Liempt, 2011; Zimmerman, 2009), no sources addressed the exact routes migrants took to reach these countries, illustrating a significant gap in the literature.

4.5 Migration routes to the Netherlands

There is limited information available on how irregular migrants travel to the Netherlands. As per the previous section, there is very little information on how people travel once they are within the Schengen area. Unpublished data from Kuschminder and Siegel on irregular Afghans in the Netherlands indicate

that migrants primarily travelled with smugglers in vans from Italy or Greece to the Netherlands. In some cases, migrants took trains to reach the Netherlands, travelling through other countries along the way and, in some cases, staying for short periods of time in countries such as France and Belgium.

In a study by van Wijk (2008), many Angolan respondents noted that after entering Europe, they stayed for a few days or weeks with relatives or acquaintances in Lisbon before travelling onwards to the Netherlands. These travels were relatively simple, as migrants in Portugal could easily travel via other Schengen countries (Spain, France and Belgium) to the Netherlands (van Wijk, 2008).

4.6 Factors influencing irregular migrants routes

From the literature we can conclude that there are four key factors that influence irregular migrants' routes: safety and conflict along the routes; weather conditions; border surveillance and push-back policies; and changes in countries' political status or visa regimes. Arguably, there are more factors such as migrant smugglers, socio-economic status, and conditions and experiences in transit countries; however, these factors are addressed in the next section (5) on factors influencing destination choice. This section will examine each of the four factors further.

First, it is unsurprising that irregular migrant routes respond to the safety of the route and conflicts that are occurring along the route. One example of this is that irregular migrants passing through Sudan changed their routes to avoid the Darfur conflicts in 2003. A second example is in Kufra, Libya where it was estimated that due to tribal tensions and conflict the number of irregular migrants passing through Kufra decreased by approximately 75 percent (Altai Consulting/ UNHCR, 2013). An alternative route was taken to bypass Kufra. These two examples illustrate how migrant routes change in response to conflict. At the same time, conflict within a country can also lead to increased irregular migration flows. For example, the current insecurity in Libya has led to increased numbers of irregular migrants departing from Libya.

Weather is a second factor that frequently impacts irregular migrants' routes. According to Frontex, over the past 10 years, flows of migrants across the Mediterranean have decreased in the winter months (2014). For the first time this anticipated dip in flows did not occur in 2014, with flows continuing to increase over the winter months. In general, weather can be considered a factor that influences routes, however, the degree to which this occurs is not clear in the literature.

Border surveillance and patrolling, and push-back policies are all significant factors that influence migrants' routes. This is best exemplified by the changing routes in Northern Africa since 2000. According to Barros et al. (2002) the route along the west coast of Africa, through Mauritania and

Western Sahara to Spain, became less favourable due to increased patrolling in the Western Mediterranean waters beginning in 2000. After 2001, a significant number of migrants from Morocco moved southward to the Western Sahara in order to reach the Canary Islands (De Haas, 2007; Carling, 2007). Increased patrols of the Spanish borders and the reinforcement of the fence between the Moroccan mainland and the Spanish enclaves Ceuta and Melilla in recent years corresponded to a decrease in the number of irregular migrants who made use of this route to cross the Western Mediterranean (see Section 4.3.2).

As a result of increased border patrol off the Canary Islands in the mid-2000s the principal point of departure to Europe shifted again towards Libya (Fargues & Bonfanti, 2014). From 2009 on, enhanced controls between Libya and Italy led to yet another shift of migration movements to Turkey and on to Greece. The Italian and Libyan governments reached an agreement on immigration control, and Italian authorities began returning migrants intercepted on the high seas back to Libya in 2009. As a result of this Italian-Libyan partnership and the controversial “push-back” policy, irregular migration in the Central Mediterranean abruptly decreased, corresponding to a steep decline in arrivals in both southern Italy and Malta from mid-2009 onward (Lutterbeck, 2013). After the overthrow of the Kaddafi regime in 2011, political chaos broke out and police controls around the Libyan shore ceased, therefore paving the way for increased migrant smuggling activities (Fargues & Bonfanti, 2014; Lutterbeck, 2013). This exemplifies how surveillance and push-back policies influence migrant routes. This can also be observed at the Turkey- Greece border where increased surveillance led to a change from land to sea routes, and more recently, to irregular migrants going to Bulgaria instead of Greece (Düvell, 2014).

A fourth factor that influences irregular migrant routes is changes in countries’ visa regimes. For example, visa liberalisation for many African countries in Turkey led to African migrants flying directly to Turkey and attempting to migrate irregularly onwards from Turkey (Schapendonk, 2012). Similarly, the introduction of visa-free travel in the Western Balkans and stabilisation of the area led to the Western Balkans becoming a region of transit migration for irregular migrants coming from Greece (Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012; Molodikova, 2014).

4.7 Summary

This section has examined the different stages of migrant crossings into and within Europe, the specific case of the Netherlands, and the factors that influence irregular migrant routes to Europe. The majority of research on migration routes has been conducted on migrants coming from Africa. Descriptions of these routes are the most established and detailed. This review highlights (as is further evidenced in the

tables in Appendix 1) that the majority of literature on crossings into Europe focuses on the stage of crossing into the European Union. Given current externalisation of EU borders and discussion of 'Fortress Europe', it is not surprising that the majority of research has focused on this area. Few debates have been identified within the literature regarding routes taken by irregular migrants. As the body of literature on each specific route is so small, and the pace at which routes can change is so rapid, there is not enough reliable evidence to have debates between authors. It appears that authors are instead building on each other's work to create a body of evidence on how routes develop, change, and evolve, which highlights the complexities of irregular migration.

4.8 Overview of key gaps in the literature

There are several significant research gaps in understanding routes of irregular migrants to and within Europe:

- **The majority of quantitative data on these flows is from Frontex and there is a lack of alternative quantitative information:** Although the data provided by Frontex is highly informative, it is limited to capturing statistical information and leaves out more nuanced information such as migrants' experiences along the routes.
- **There is a dearth of information on routes from Asia to the EU:** Partial information exists on the routes of Afghans, but no information was found on the routes of migrants from countries of the Indian sub-continent such as Iran, Iraq, Syria and Sri Lanka. Given the recent increase in the Syria migration stream, this is not surprising as time has not been sufficient for research on Syrian migrants to be published, but for the other groups the lack of information is unexpected.
- **There is a lack of information on migrants' routes after having entered the EU:** There is some recent evidence on how migrants move onwards from Greece and Italy, but this information is quite sparse. There is a clear gap in the literature on migrants' movements once they have entered the EU. There are several possible reasons for this. First, clearly due to the clandestine nature of irregular migration, irregular migrants are difficult to find and to conduct research upon. Second, when research is conducted with irregular migrants, they may genuinely not know the routes that they travelled. This is frequently the case with unaccompanied minors (Hopkins & Hill, 2008). One study conducted with unaccompanied Afghan minors in Sweden found that those who had been in school and learned geography were better able to describe their routes within Europe compared to other minors who had not yet attended school (UNHCR, 2010). Migrants without formal education from countries such as Afghanistan or Pakistan

generally have very little knowledge of European geography and would not know the countries through which they travelled, and smugglers may or may not provide them with this information *en route*. Further, when migrants are aware of the routes that they travelled, they may not be willing to share this information. Irregular migrants frequently seek to avoid being sent back to the country of entry (as per Dublin II) and may thus not be willing to discuss their route of travel within the EU. Another possibility is that if the same route is being used by other migrants, they do not want to provide this information to researchers in fear that the other migrants will be apprehended.

- **Virtually no data exists on migrants' routes to the Netherlands from within the EU:** One study has been cited that examines the routes of migrants from within Europe to the Netherlands, and some evidence on these routes has been garnered from unpublished work. One reason for the lack of information is that there is limited research conducted with irregular migrants in the Netherlands. The few studies that do exist focus on migrants' aspirations, smuggling, or the size, concentration, and general stay of irregular migrant populations in the Netherlands (i.e. Bijleveld & Taselaar, 2000; van der Heijden & van Gils, 2011; Jennissen et al., 2009; Kromhout, Wubs & Beenackers; Staring & Aarts, 2010; van der Heijden, Cruijff & van Gils, 2011). Further research is required to understand migrants' trajectories to the Netherlands.

5. The factors influencing irregular migrants' destination choices within Europe

5.1 Introduction

The second key objective of this study is to examine the factors that influence the destination choice of irregular migrants. Section 2.5 of this review discussed three different models that seek to explain migrants' destination choices. Following from Section 2.5 and the overall literature review, five key factors have been identified from the literature that influence the destination choice of irregular migrants: economic factors, the role of migrant smugglers, access to information and social networks, experiences and conditions in transit countries, and the role of migration policy. These factors are not mutually exclusive but are, in fact, often overlapping. A total of 78 sources were reviewed on factors influencing destination choices and table 7 shows the number of sources assessed per each factor arising from the literature.

Table 7: Number of sources reviewed per factor influencing destination choice

Factor	Number of Sources
Economic factors	23
Migrant smugglers	21
Social networks and access to information	40
Transit countries	41
Migration policy	20

After reviewing these factors, this section will examine further when and where decisions regarding destination choice are made. The specific case of the Netherlands is then discussed, followed by a short summary and identification of key gaps in the literature regarding destination choice.

5.2 Economic factors

Economic factors primarily include the cost of travelling to a certain destination but can also include the economy of the destination country and a migrant's perception of the mix of economic factors such as employment, wages, and benefits in the destination country. Both of these elements will be discussed in this section. A total of 23 sources reviewed in this study referred to economic factors in irregular migrants' destination choices, however, only nine of these articles were assessed as strong evidence. These included quantitative, qualitative and secondary data sources. On the whole, there was consensus among the sources that economic factors play a role in determining destination choices.

A key element determining destination choice is the cost of the journey (Robinson and Segrott, 2002; Van Hear 2014); as a respondent in one study stated: "I went as far as my money would take me"

(Van Hear, 2006, p. 1). Migrants with limited financial means may choose more accessible locations, which stresses the importance of class and socio-economic status in influencing the destination choice (Van Hear, 2014). Clearly, migrants with more resources have options for a 'total package' of travel, which could include flying directly to Europe; those with fewer resources often travel shorter distances over more dangerous routes (Van Liempt & Doomernik, 2006). This has two important implications: first, it reinforces that notion from De Haas that "the poorest of the poor do not migrate" (De Haas, 2005), as some access to resources is clearly required for mobility. Second, as indicated above, class and socio-economic status play a role in shaping migration flows and trends.

The second aspect of economic factors in determining destination choice is the migrants' perceptions of the economic environment in the destination country. In relation to the changing migration trends between Morocco and Europe, Aderghal and Berriane (2013) argue that the economic environment in Europe since the economic crisis and the difficulty in finding jobs had an impact on the views of potential migrants in Morocco on/about Europe. Neumayer (2004) found in a macroeconomic analysis based on UNHCR asylum applications in western industrialised countries that asylum seekers judge the economic desirability of a destination country by looking at its general level of economic development, which he measured as per capita income. He concluded that richer countries are more attractive than poor countries, and migrants do not take into account unemployment and economic growth rates. Neumayer (2004) reasoned that potential asylum seekers have mostly a basic picture of destination countries and do not consider short-term economic changes.

These examples suggest that economic factors play a central role in determining destination choice; such factors include cost of the migration journey as well as options of selecting a country for its (perceived) economic environment. None of the sources documented if irregular migrants choose destination countries based on the relative economic situation of different European countries.

5.3 The role of migrant smugglers

In many parts of the world, migrant smugglers have become an embedded part of the migration journey. Two decades ago, migrant smuggling clearly existed, but the growth, prevalence, and normalisation of migrant smuggling in several countries is a more recent phenomenon: recent research has indicated that roughly two-thirds of migrants use smugglers to access Europe (Koser & Kuschminder, 2015; Crawley, 2010). A total of 21 sources were reviewed that reference migrant smuggling. From these sources, we identified three ways that smugglers can play a key role in influencing destination choice: 1) the routes and destination choices that they offer (or exclude) to the migrant, 2) in making the

destination decision for the migrant, and 3) in deviating from an agreement with a migrant and delivering/ leaving them in a different destination than agreed.

As indicated by Robinson and Segrott (2002), once migrants decide to use a migrant smuggler, they become restricted in their destination choices based on the routes the smuggler operates within. Migrants interested in a specific destination may shop around assessing different smugglers, but in many cases, the choice of smuggler implies a certain destination choice based on the options presented by the smuggler. Gilbert and Koser (2006) found in a study on asylum seekers in the UK that smugglers were crucial in determining, or at least strongly influencing, the country of destination.

Second, migrants may not be involved at all in making the decision of destination, meaning that the decision is either made entirely by the smuggler or perhaps by someone else on behalf of the migrant. In a study of unaccompanied minors in the UK, many participants who had their destination chosen for them were not told where they would be going until they were in transit, or in some cases, after arrival (Crawley, 2010). Similarly, in a study of irregular Afghan migrants in the Netherlands, over a third of the sample of 47 participants reported not having chosen their destination, with the destination decision made either by the smuggler or a relative who arranged the migration (Kuschminder & Siegel, forthcoming).

A third way in which smugglers influence destination choice is when the migrant and the smuggler agree on a destination but the smuggler does not deliver the migrant to the agreed place. This situation has been found in several qualitative studies (Kuschminder & Siegel, forthcoming; van Liempt & Doornik, 2006). In this scenario, the smuggler becomes responsible for the destination of the migrant, which could become their final destination, depending on their resources and desires or ability to migrate onwards.

In this review, the prevalence of these three scenarios occurring was unclear. It is also quite plausible that smugglers play additional roles in influencing the destination choices of migrants such as making decisions *en route* based on new information that changes the destination of the migrant. On the whole, there was consensus in the literature that smugglers play a key role in influencing destination choice.

5.4 Social networks and access to information

Network connections, such as family and friends in the destination country, are recognised as playing a central role in determining destination choice for both regular and irregular migrants (i.e. De Haas, 2010; Mabogunje, 1970; Massey et al., 1993; 2009; Brekke & Aarset, 2009; Neumayer, 2004; McAuliffe, 2013).

In a theoretical discussion paper that is not based on empirical evidence, Crisp (1999) argues that asylum seekers should not be excluded from existing network theories and that those with social networks in the country of destination are better able to access information on asylum procedures. A total of 40 sources were identified that made reference to the role of social networks and access to information, of which 20 were assessed as strong evidence. This section highlights the findings from these sources that networks can be both an attraction and a deterrent for irregular migrants' destination choices.

First, it has been found that network connections in destination countries can act as a draw towards that country. Koser and Pinkerton (2002) found that information received from social networks was more valuable and trusted by migrants than information from other sources. In general, such connections were established prior to a migrant leaving the country of origin and influence the destination at the beginning stages of the migration. In a survey of 1008 recently-arrived visa protection holders in Australia, approximately 40 percent reported having connections with people in Australia prior to their migration (McAuliffe, 2013). Similarly, Brekke and Aarset (2009) found that half of the participants in their study of asylum seekers in Norway mentioned a social network connection as a reason for choosing Norway. It is important to note, however, that in some cases migrants have no contact with the individuals within their networks. For instance, a migrant may have a weak or latent tie in a country such as (they know that there is) a distant relative in a particular country and seek to migrate to that country because they have some knowledge of it or hope to find the relative; they may not, however, actually contact that relative directly prior to migration. This scenario was found in several studies of irregular migrants (Brekke & Aarset, 2009; Brewer & Yüксеker, 2009; Kuschminder & Siegel, forthcoming).

In contrast to the above, Collyer (2006) found that among Algerian migrants, the capacity of social networks to support migrants has weakened with the increase of border controls and securitisation in the EU. The cost of a family to support the arrival of an irregular migrant is greater than it used to be, which makes some families less willing to do so. As a result, Collyer found that some Algerian migrants preferred to migrate via weak ties to the UK rather than via strong ties to France. Social networks can thus act both as an attraction for a particular destination as well as a deterrent.

Information can be received from multiple sources, not only social networks. The media, internet, social media and migrant smugglers can all act as information sources. These sources are found to have a less sizeable impact on destination choice than social networks but can still be an important source of information. In research conducted by McGregor and Siegel (2013) on unaccompanied Afghan

minors in the Netherlands, many respondents—both migrants in transit and in the diaspora in Europe— noted the use of social media (such as Facebook, YouTube and online fora) to acquire contemporary information on, for example, irregular migration routes and weather conditions. Little research has been conducted on how social media may factor into the decision to migrate and the choice of location of irregular migrants specifically (McGregor & Siegel, 2013).

5.5 Conditions and experiences in transit countries

In this review, transit countries are denoted countries that a migrant stays in *en route* to their final destination. A total of 41 sources referenced transit countries. Transit countries can be inside or outside of the EU. The majority of research on transit countries has been conducted in periphery countries to the EU, including Morocco, Tunisia, and Turkey (i.e. Aderghal & Berriane, 2012; Collyer, 2007; De Haas, 2007; Boubakri, 2004; IOM, 1995; Schapendonk, 2012). More recently, there is increasing evidence of Greece becoming a key transit country within the EU (i.e. Dimitriadi, 2013; Triandafyllidou & Vogel, 2010; Triandafyllidou, 2010; Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012). Greece is now a country of both destination and transit, and the poor conditions for asylum seekers in Greece may instigate onward migration. From the sources reviewed, the conditions in transit countries and the access to information that migrants receive in transit can be categorised to influence destination choice in three central ways: first, poor conditions in transit countries can instigate onwards migration; second, transit experiences can become settlement; and third, access to new sources of information in transit can redirect migrants' destination choices.

Poor conditions in countries such as Greece and Italy encourage migrants to move further, making these transit countries (Düvell, 2014; Jordan and Düvell, 2002; Kuschminder and Siegel, forthcoming; Roman, 2006). For instance, Jordan and Düvell (2002) found that among Kurdish refugees in Greece who had struggled to survive whilst trying to obtain refugee status, some eventually gave up hope and moved on to the UK. In a second example, Kuschminder and Siegel (forthcoming) found that among Afghan respondents in the Netherlands, the migrants had agreed with a smuggler to take them to Europe and became unhappy with the situation in Greece after arriving, leading them to seek to migrate further and eventually to the Netherlands. National differences in the asylum reception system, integration support, and the comprehensiveness of different welfare states have been found to fuel migrants' aspirations to move onwards (Brekke and Brochman, 2014). Conditions in the periphery countries of the EU also instigate onward migration to the EU (Munteanu, 2007; Molodikova, 2014). In the case of Africans in Istanbul, Brewer and Yüксеker (2009) found that hostile environments, including

discrimination, racism, racial violence, and police harassment prevented migrants from settling in Turkey and inclined them to move on, most commonly to Greece.

While they are in transit countries, migrants are often able to access new sources of information regarding destinations (Koser & Pinkerton, 2002). Such new sources can include other migrants or individuals who are a source of help and information on how to survive in transit and, if possible, on destinations and travel routes. Collyer (2007) termed this phenomenon “spontaneous social networks”, which include individuals encountered during the migration journey. While in transit, migrants may have more time to process this information and make further decisions based on it than they did before leaving the origin country, particularly if they did so during an emergency (Koser & Pinkerton, 2002). Lutterbeck (2013) observed that migrants typically look for co-nationals or members of their community or (extended) family when arriving in a particular city *en route* to their destination. In these settings, a migrant may receive help not only with temporary accommodation and work but also with organising their onward journey. Kuschminder and Siegel (forthcoming) found that Afghans in Greece, when moving to other countries within the EU, were most often advised to migrate to Sweden by other migrants, who can be considered members of their spontaneous social networks. Buil and Siegel (2014), in their study of Afghan unaccompanied minors in the Netherlands, also found that Sweden was often the intended destination country of minors who were caught by police in the Netherlands. Similarly, Brekke and Brochman (2014) found that Eritrean migrants in Italy were advised to migrate to Norway. Scandinavian countries have a good reputation among migrants seeking asylum.

Transit countries can also influence the destination choice when they become the country of settlement. For example, Collyer (2006) found that a significant number of migrants and refugees who intended to migrate to Europe became ‘stuck’ in countries such as Morocco because of a lack of means to cross to Europe, with many staying for longer periods of time (Collyer, 2006). Schapendonk’s (2012) analysis also highlighted that the settlement of sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco and Turkey varied from rather tenuous waiting conditions to quite settled lives. Whilst in the early 1990s Africans spent an average of 13 months in Turkey before moving on (IOM, 1995), the average stay of African refugees in Turkey, before they are considered for resettlement, has increased to 2–3 years (Brewer & Yükeker, 2009). Factors influencing the length of stay in a country of transit include the political situation in the country of transit, tightened border control regimes in the EU, social capital, access to help through networks and NGOs, and the ability to accumulate funds to pay for the crossing to Europe (Brewer & Yükeker, 2009). Among migrants living in Italy, Brekke and Brochman (2014) found that fear

of being returned under the Dublin II Convention prompted migrants who aspired to migrate to Norway to stay in Italy.

Transit countries can thus play multiple roles in determining the destination choice country. The conditions in the transit country can instigate further movement or settlement, and access to information, networks, and resources acquired in the transit country plays a critical role in migrants' subsequent decisions.

5.6 Migration Policy

Migration policy can also play an important part in shaping both regular and irregular migration movements (Brochmann & Hammar, 1999; Castles, De Haas, & Miller, 2014; Collyer, 2006; Strikwerda, 1999; Thielemann, 2006). Twenty of the sources included in this review mention the role of policy in determining destination choice. In this review, we consider migration policy to be inclusive of: border restrictions, police interventions, state asylum policies, and incentive policies to return (such as Assisted Voluntary Return). This section first examines the role of asylum policies and economic support for refugees; second, it examines the extent to which restrictive asylum policies influence irregular migration.

It is often assumed by politicians and members of the public that migrants are attracted to certain countries because of favourable policies relating to the asylum process and economic support available to refugees. The evidence of this is conflicting. For example, Gilbert and Koser (2006) interviewed asylum seekers in the UK about what they knew of the country policy on migration prior to their arrival, and they found that the migrants knew virtually nothing (Gilbert & Koser, 2006). On the other hand, Kuschminder and Siegel (forthcoming) found in a study on irregular Afghan migrants in the Netherlands that migrants communicated with each other, and Sweden was the most popular country of destination because migrants (said they) had heard that conditions were good there for asylum seekers and refugees.

Other research has investigated if restrictive asylum policy might also push potential and rejected asylum applicants into irregular status. Research conducted by Czaika and Hobolth (2014) examined the extent to which the deterrence effect of asylum policy is counterbalanced by such a 'deflection into irregularity'. Their analysis drew on a new, large dataset detailing the asylum and visa policies and forced and irregular migrant flows to 29 European states in the period 2001 to 2011. The authors found that restrictive migration policies do not decrease the volume of migrants claiming asylum, but there is also a noteworthy deflection dynamic at work. Czaika and Hobolth found that a 10

percent increase in asylum rejections corresponded to an increase in the number of (apprehended) irregular migrants by, on average, around three percent. Correspondingly, a 10 percent increase in short-stay visa denials corresponded to a five percent increase in irregular migration (Czaika & Hobolth, 2014).

The evidence on the role of policies in determining destination choice is mixed. Migration policies play a role in determining the routes taken by migrants and can influence migrants' decisions to stay in a country of destination/transit or migrate onwards. A systematic review of the role of policies in different stages of the migration trajectory would provide necessary evidence to understand the relationship between states' policies and migrants' destination choices.

5.7 When and where is the destination chosen?

This review has sought to illustrate the stages involved in migration to Europe, highlighting that the decision of a destination can be made at many different moments in the migration trajectory. To summarise from the routes section, and utilising the model of Robinson and Segrott (2002), the decision for destination choice can be made:

- When leaving the country of migration
- When in transit:
 - a. Outside of the EU
 - b. At the periphery of the EU
 - c. Within the EU

At each of these different moments during a migrant's journey the migrant may receive information on destinations, access resources, and encounter government policies that can either provide opportunities or limit their options of destination.

One conclusion that can be drawn is that migrants who have a strong network tie and economic resources are more likely to select their destination choice upon leaving the country of migration based on this tie and remain consistent in their aspiration for destination choice (i.e. Brekke & Aarset, 2009; Havinga & Böcker, 1999). It appears that migrants who do not have a strong aspiration from the outset or who aspire to reach a broad destination such as 'Europe' are more likely to determine their specific destination *en route*. This is an area where further research is clearly needed to articulate when, where, and how decisions are made.

5.8 Why the Netherlands?

One key reason for migrants to choose the Netherlands is due to a network tie and the opportunity to join family or friends already residing in the country (Havinga & Böcker, 1999; Jennissen et. al., 2009; Bijleveld & Taselaar, 2000; van Meeteren & Pereira, 2013; Staring, 2004). Van Wijk (2008) accounted for the surge in Angolan migrants who arrived in the Netherlands at the end of the 1990s to a relatively small group of Angolan nationals who already resided in the Netherlands and stimulated their compatriots to also migrate to the country. Staring (2004) found in his study on irregular migrants in the Netherlands that the arrival of the migrants to the Netherlands is predominately guided by relatives in existing transnational networks.

There are at least three ways that migrants intending to get to another destination arrive in the Netherlands. The first way is being apprehended at Schiphol airport *en route* to a further travel destination (van Liempt & Doomernik, 2006). Similarly, the second way is being apprehended in trains or vehicles while migrating primarily northward. This highlights the role of interventions by the authorities in determining the Netherlands as a destination country (van Liempt & Doomernik, 2006). Third, migrants may be left in the Netherlands by smugglers even though this was not the migrants' intended destination (Kuschminder & Siegel, forthcoming; van Liempt & Doomernik, 2006).

Furthermore, several studies have indicated that the Netherlands is often not the preferred destination of migrants living within the country (i.e. Staring & Aarts, 2010; van Meeteren & Pereira, 2013, Kuschminder & Siegel, forthcoming; Buil & Siegel, 2014; van Liempt & Doomernik, 2006). Kuschminder and Siegel (forthcoming) found that 40 percent of their research participants in a study on Afghan irregular migrants in the Netherlands had other intended destinations when they were apprehended in the Netherlands while *en route* to another country, most often Sweden. Staring and Aarts (2010) researched the migration destination choices of 103 (former) unaccompanied minors to the Netherlands and found that 38 considered the country as their desired destination, while 27 explicitly wanted to move to another country (Staring & Aarts, 2010). According to these migrants, the Netherlands was merely intended as a transit country on their way to the UK, Norway, Denmark, Sweden or Canada. Several of the interviewed Afghan adolescents were on their way to Scandinavian countries but were stopped at the borders with Belgium or Germany (Staring & Aarts, 2010). The unaccompanied minors who considered the Netherlands as their desired destination attributed their choice to family members already residing in the country or because their smuggler had connections in the Netherlands (Staring & Aarts, 2010). Research by van Meeteren & Pereira (2013) indicated that Brazilian migrants who had the intention to migrate to the UK remained in the Netherlands because of

work opportunities, often facilitated through personal networks, and because they found the UK difficult to reach irregularly.

Researchers have also identified factors that do *not* influence migrants in their perceptions of the Netherlands as a destination choice. In comparison to the UK, where colonial ties were a key factor for influencing asylum flows, Havinga and Böcker (1999) found this was not the case in the Netherlands.

Finally, when migrants become regularised, they may not choose to stay in the Netherlands. Van Liempt (2011) estimated that from 2000 to 2010, between 10,000 and 20,000 Somali migrants moved from the Netherlands to the UK. The presence of a large Somali community in the UK, economic and educational opportunities in the UK, and differences in integration policies have influenced Dutch Somalis' decision to relocate (van Liempt, 2011). It is argued by van Liempt (2011) that the wider context in which these movements take place should also be taken into account. Immigrants may (initially) not always be in a position to move to their preferred destination. As such, Somalis' relocation from the Netherlands to the UK could also be seen as a follow-up to an earlier movement that was interrupted along the way (van Liempt, 2011). A similar study by Nielsen (2004) found that members of transnational social networks in Britain circulated information to the connections in Somalia that projected an idyllic image of Britain. This factor combined with the nomadic lifestyle of many Somalis resulted in a decision to continue on to the UK.

There is little evidence available as to why migrants choose the Netherlands. This is an important area for consideration and a research gap.

5.9 Summary and key gaps in the literature

This section has provided an overview of the existing literature on the factors that determine irregular migrants' destination choices. A few conclusions can be drawn from the literature. First, there appears to be consensus that network ties with family or friends in the destination country are an important determinant of destination choice. Notably, both strong and weak ties appear to be influential. Migrants may migrate to a country where a distant relative is thought to live with the hopes of finding that person upon arrival. In the case of Algerian migrants, networks actually became a deterrent to migration; however, this does not appear to be the norm. Second, decision-making factors in the absence of a network tie are more varied. These include the resources of the migrant, with class and socioeconomic status often determining how far an individual can migrate, the experience and options provided to them by a smuggler, and their experiences *en route*, including in transit countries. These factors are overlapping and highlight that the decision for destination choice is based on a multitude of factors and

experiences. Third, there is a group of migrants who simply do not choose their destination. This is left entirely to the smuggler or perhaps a family member and migrants may be unaware of their destination. This appears to be more common among unaccompanied minors.

The review has uncovered three key gaps existing within the literature on destination choice:

- **The role of migration policy:** There are indications in the literature review that policy interventions can have a key role in determining destination choice, yet exactly which policies and how this occurs is not certain. It has been suggested that increasing border controls deter migrants from crossing to Europe. Policy can also play a role through apprehension. Migration authorities, such as those identified in the Netherlands, can determine destination choice for migrants by apprehending them *en route* to another destination. Other research has found that migrants in Italy chose to stay in Italy for fear of being returned under the Dublin II convention. There is a need for further research in understanding how migrants perceive the role of policies in influencing their destination choices, if at all.
- **Conditions in transit countries:** The review suggests that migrants make important decisions about their trajectories in transit countries. These decisions are impacted by conditions in the transit countries, spontaneous networks made in transit, and migrants' access to resources. Further research is required to clarify how migrants make decisions in transit. In particular, under what conditions do migrants decide to stay/ settle in a country of transit, migrate onwards, or return to their country of origin?
- **The Netherlands as destination choice:** The literature regarding why migrants choose the Netherlands appears particularly scant. More research is required in the Netherlands to understand the specific dynamics occurring within the country and to understand the differences in destination country choice with nearby countries such as Belgium, Germany, and Scandinavia. Much of what is known for the Netherlands also focuses on specific migrant groups such as Afghans and Angolans, and more knowledge is needed on migrants from other countries of origin.

6. Evidence Assessment

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to provide an evidence assessment of the sources reviewed based on strength of evidence for a given topic. As shown in Appendix 1 and 2, although a large number of sources were reviewed on the key topics of irregular migrants routes to Europe and the factors influencing irregular migrants' destination choices there were a relatively small number of sources that were highly relevant to the particular topic of irregular migrant routes. The result of this is that the number of sources comprising the evidence is often too small to enable rigorous debates among authors. The findings of this systematic review have been organised into the following three categories:

- 1) *Strong agreement*- Represents findings that are confirmed across multiple sources
- 2) *Mixed agreement*- Clear conclusions about these findings cannot be drawn from the literature
- 3) *Research gaps*- Represents elements where there is virtually no evidence within the literature

Due to the relatively small number of high relevant sources on some of the topics of the review it will be apparent in the following assessment that more research gaps have been identified than areas of stronger evidence.

6.2 Strong agreement

This section details key themes from the literature review that have been assessed as stronger evidence.

6.2.1 Strong agreement: irregular migrants' routes

It is first important to stress that when considering migration routes to Europe, it is difficult to assess with any certainty the utilisation of a route at a certain time. There is consensus that migration routes and trajectories are continually changing and evolving. Migrants may not always know their next step and may assess their options based on information and resources that are continually being received and weighed. From this perspective, we conclude the following key points regarding routes to Europe with stronger evidence:

- **The migration journey to Europe takes place in different stages** (with the exception of individuals who fly directly and have been excluded from this review). We have focused on three stages in this review, but additional stages could be defined such as leaving the country of origin, country of first transit, and so on (see Düvell, 2008). For example, the work of the RMMS has illustrated that migration takes place in a series of small stages from one destination to another in Libya and Sudan (RMMS, 2014).

- **Over the past decade, migration routes to Europe have changed in importance**, with Libya and Turkey becoming central transit countries bordering the EU. Libya provides a good example of how conditions in countries on the periphery of Europe can influence routes to Europe. As Morocco and Tunisia have both increased security in efforts to reduce irregular migration, the instability in Libya has created an environment that enabled increased irregular migration.
- **Over the past decade the countries of origin of irregular migrants have changed.** Prior to 2005 the main group of migrants crossing into Europe irregularly from Africa consisted of North Africans. At present, media reports and Frontex suggest that this has now changed to Syrians being the largest country of origin group crossing irregularly; however, this was not found in the literature reviewed.
- **The largest number of irregular migrants cross into Europe using the Central Mediterranean Route.** This is substantiated not only by the Frontex detections data, but is also suggested by other sources, as there are more sources on this route than on any other route.
- **Police patrols and surveillance and push-back policies impact the routes that the migrants take.** It is evident that irregular migrants' routes change according to police patrols and surveillance and push-back policies. This is not to say that these interventions stop irregular migration flows, however, it is clear that they impact the routes.
- **Irregular migrants' routes change according to conditions in countries along the route, and specifically to avoid areas of conflict.** This has been evidenced by both the cases of Sudan and Libya.

6.2.2 Strong agreement: factors influencing destination choice

- **The resources of the migrant, which are largely dependent upon class and socio-economic status, play a key role in determining immediate destination.** A lack of resources creates further stages in the migration trajectory, as migrants seek to acquire more resources *en route* to their chosen destination. Further, class and education can play a role in determining destination choice, as migrants from lower-class backgrounds are frequently unaware of the many destinations available to them. 'Europe' itself can be a destination.
- **Smugglers play a role in influencing destination choice.** The role a smuggler plays in the choice of destination can differ based on the experiences of the smuggler, the costs the smuggler requires, and the information provided by the smuggler. Often smugglers are a trusted source of information for migrants, and their advice on destinations may be highly valued. In some cases,

smugglers entirely decide on the destination of the migrant. It is clear that smugglers are central actors in irregular migration and play a key role in determining destinations of migrants, but the prevalence of how smugglers influence destination choices is less well known.

- **Transit is a common reality of irregular migration trajectories, and experiences in transit influence destination choices.** Although there is growing recognition in the literature that transit plays an important role in migration trajectories, this role can take on different dimensions. Conditions of the country of transit can influence the choice of the migrant to settle in that country or move on. Within transit countries, migrants may be able to think further about their movement, access new information, and create new strategies regarding both their routes and destination choices. Therefore ‘spontaneous networks’ made in transit, access to resources, information (including from social media), and experiences in transit all influence destination choices and migrants’ trajectories.

6.2.3 Strong agreement: The Netherlands

Although a growing body of literature on irregular migration in the Netherlands has been produced over the past decade (see authors: Dekker, Engbersen, Leerkes; van Liempt; van Meeteren; Kuschminder and Siegel; Buil and Siegel), most of this research does not focus on routes to the Netherlands or the factors influencing the destination choice of the Netherlands. For these reasons, none of the findings relating to the Netherlands can be considered *stronger evidence*.

6.3 Mixed agreement

6.3.1 Mixed agreement: irregular migrants’ routes

- **There is some evidence that once within Europe migrants continue onwards from countries of entry into the EU to other destination countries within Europe.** Greece and Italy have become key countries of transit within the EU. The number of migrants apprehended while trying to cross the border from Greece to Italy has increased 1000 times from 2003 to 2012 (Dimitriadi, 2013). It is unclear to what extent this is reflective of changing flows or increased police apprehensions, but these figures do indicate movement beyond Greece. Furthermore, active smuggling networks operate onward migration from Greece.
- **Migrants’ routes react to changing environments, including security and policy interventions.** Insecurity in transit countries can be viewed as an opportunity to migrate irregularly with less risk of apprehension. A key example is that Libya is now the central transit country to cross the Mediterranean. Libya is preferred to Morocco, for instance, due to the lack of border security in

Libya as compared to Morocco. The relationship between policy interventions, securitisation, and migrant routes is an area for further exploration, as increased border controls and countries insecurity can both change irregular migrants routes.

- **Weather impacts migration routes.** In the past this would have been considered with greater certainty, but due to the increasing flows during the winter of 2014, this trend now appears to be changing. However, the increased flows during winter 2014 may only be due to the higher than normal temperatures.
- **Changes in countries' visa policies can impact irregular migrants' routes.** Increasing restrictions in visa policies for North Africans to Italy and Spain have been cited as one of the key reasons for rises in flows of irregular migrants in the 1990s to Europe (De Haas, 2007). More recently, it has been the case in Turkey where Schapendonk (2012) has reported that African migrants fly directly to Turkey to then try and access Europe. Visa liberalisation for many African countries has made Turkey a more attractive transit country for African migrants. Although this does appear to be a key factor influencing irregular migrants' routes, there are few sources and examples to triangulate this further.

6.3.2 Mixed agreement: factors influencing destination choice

- **Migrants' agency in choosing destination country:** Early research in this field suggested that migrants had limited agency in choosing their destinations, yet more recent research and theoretical models account for the greater role that migrant agency plays in making decisions on destinations. At the same time, however, recent studies also find that large proportions of migrants have limited to no knowledge of their destination. This raises questions about the conditions under which migrants are able to exercise agency in their destination choices.
- **Networks play a role in determining destination choice:** There is contrasting evidence within the sources as to the role networks play in attracting or deterring migrants from certain destinations. The majority of sources suggest that when a migrant has a network tie (either strong or weak) in a destination country, the migrant will seek to migrate to that country. This decision is generally made prior to leaving the country of origin and is maintained through the migration trajectory. There is contrasting evidence, however, that the presence of networks sometimes deters a migrant from selecting the destination choice of the network tie (Collyer, 2007). This does seem to be more of an exception than a rule, but it does signal that the role of

networks is mixed. The absence of a network tie appears to make the decision-making process more complex, as a wider range of factors may then come into play.

- **Information access is critical in determining destination choice:** Several studies have indicated that access to information through social networks, 'spontaneous' networks, or the internet and social media is a central factor in determining destination choice. Other studies suggest that migrants have no information prior to coming to a certain destination. This suggests that there is mixed agreement in the role of and access to information in determining migrants' destination choices.

6.3.3 Mixed agreement: The Netherlands

- **The Netherlands is frequently not the favoured destination choice of irregular migrants.** In some cases, the Netherlands can in fact be characterised as a 'transit' country wherein migrants get 'stuck' when they are apprehended by the police while seeking to migrate onwards to Scandinavian countries or further afield to Canada or the United States. This does raise questions as to the status of the Netherlands as a destination country. The frequency with which this occurs is unknown and is thus mixed evidence that requires further research.

6.4 Research gaps

The research gaps have been categorised into methodological and empirical research gaps.

6.4.1 Methodological research gaps

- **Quantitative research-** The majority of studies conducted have been qualitative and based on small sample sizes. A total of 22 quantitative studies were found in the systematic review on either migration routes or factors influencing destination choice. The majority of these quantitative studies had relatively small sample sizes of fewer than 200 respondents. As previously mentioned, irregular migrants are a difficult group to find and access for research purposes, and the complexity of information in their stories may lend itself better to qualitative research. At the same time, however, the evidence base would benefit from complementary quantitative research that is able to cover larger sample sizes and offer further comparisons between groups of migrants. Sources for quantitative data could include: asylum case files or border apprehension data.
- **Comparative analysis-** Relating to the previous point, most studies (one exception being Triandafyllidou and Maroukis, 2013) focus on one to two countries in their analysis. There is a

need for comparative research across countries of origin, countries of transit, and countries of destination to provide a further evidence base to understand different migrants' routes and migration trajectories.

- **Tracking studies** – With the exception of Schapendonk (2012a,b), limited research has followed migrants during their migration trajectories. Schapendonk's work highlights the need for longitudinal studies to understand how migrants encounter challenges in their migration trajectories and make decisions.
- **Countries of origin**- Given the lack of comparative studies, experiences of migrants from different countries of origin can generally not be compared. Some nationalities have been researched more than others (e.g., Afghan, Somali), whereas other groups are not as visible in recent research as expected (e.g., Syrians, Iraqis).
- **The role of age, sex, and vulnerability**- Migration researchers in general have emphasised the different experiences of women, children, and vulnerable individuals in their migration trajectories, in particular in their experiences as asylum seekers (Pickering, 2011). Few studies have examined the experiences of women in transit to the EU (Hamood, 2006; Gerard and Pickering, 2013), yet many argue that women's gendered experiences must be further understood within the migration and security context. There is an emerging body of literature exploring the case of unaccompanied minors in Europe (Hopkins and Hill, 2006; Vervliet et al., 2014), however this has not been compared and contrasted to other migrant groups, and literature on the experiences of accompanied children is very limited. There is thus insufficient evidence to understand the unique experiences of women, children, and vulnerable migrants.

6.4.2 Empirical research gaps

- **Routes of migrants from non-African countries**- The majority of research on routes to Europe focuses on African migrants, with some literature addressing Afghan migrants. There is a gap in the literature in understanding the trajectories of migrants from countries such as Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Sri Lanka, and from regions such as far-east Asia and South America.
- **Transit migration, particularly in the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe**- More literature has addressed transit migration in North Africa, Turkey and Greece, but transit migration through the Western Balkans and Eastern European countries of the EU such as Poland, Croatia, and Romania has remained understudied.

- **Factors influencing decision-making in transit-** Experiences in transit are highly complex, and several factors have been identified as influencing migrants experiences in transit. However, understanding the relationships and hierarchies among or between decision-making factors is an area lacking evidence.
- **Migrant smugglers-** Although there is an increasing body of research on the role of migrant smugglers, their role in determining destination choices of migrants, their relationships with and treatment of migrants, and how they themselves make decisions regarding migrants' destinations and routes are not clear.
- **Migration trajectories within the EU-** There is a key gap in the evidence on understanding routes and factors that influence migrants' migration trajectories after they entered the EU.
- **The Dutch case-** More research within the Netherlands on the specific Dutch context would be required to elicit understandings on the specific routes of migrants to the Netherlands and reasons for choosing the Netherlands, or other countries, as a destination.
- **The role of migration policy-** The evidence is inconclusive on the role of policy in influencing migrants' decisions regarding destination choice. Further research is required on how migrants perceive policies in influencing their decisions.
- **Influence and use of social media-** Research is emerging on the use and importance of social media in irregular migration (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014; McGregor & Siegel, 2013), but the evidence is insufficient to draw conclusions regarding the role and importance of social media in determining migrants' routes and destination choices.

6.5 Summary

The evidence assessment shows that there are few aspects of irregular migration routes and destination choices that can be assessed with strong evidence. Although a large number of studies were retrieved and reviewed in this study, it is evident that more questions remain on this topic than there is evidence available.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

In this systematic review, 94 sources were reviewed, assessed, and categorised according to their contribution to the evidence base on irregular migrants' routes to Europe and factors influencing destination choice. Two key objectives guided this document: first, to assess and understand irregular migration routes to and within Europe, and second, to examine the factors that influence irregular migrants' destination choices. Clearly, both of these issues are highly pertinent to the Dutch and EU migration policy agendas. Building on the evidence assessment in the previous section, this section will discuss some of the challenges of irregular migration research, and provide recommendations for further research.

7.2 Research questions

Returning to Section 3.2 at the beginning of this report, the two research questions that guided this study are:

- 1) *What are the main irregular migration routes to and within Europe, especially to the Netherlands?*
- 2) *What factors influence the destination choices of irregular migrants, especially to the Netherlands?*

This section will provide a brief summary to each of these research questions.

In regard to the first question, and summarising from Section 4, the main irregular migration routes to Europe can be classified in three stages: 1) from the country of origin to the fringes of Europe; 2) crossing the EU borders and 3) from the country of entry in the EU to the country of destination in the EU. There is strong evidence that the current most frequently used irregular migration route to cross into the EU is the Central Mediterranean route. This route is primarily used by people crossing from Libya and Tunisia to Italy and to a lesser extent Malta. Recently, Libya has become the central hub for people crossing the Mediterranean Sea irregularly. The number of migrants using the Central Mediterranean route in 2014 is more than three times greater than the number of migrants using any other route. The second most frequently used route to access Europe is the Eastern Mediterranean route from Turkey to primarily Greece and to a lesser extent Bulgaria and Cyprus. This route has changed over the past three years due to the increased surveillance on the Greek Turkish border. People used to enter Greece by land, but due to increased land crossing apprehensions this changed to increased sea crossings. The final main route for irregular migrants to Europe is the Western Balkan

route. However, far less is known about this route. Unfortunately, it is not possible to answer the second part of this question as there is insufficient information in the literature to assess the main irregular migration routes to the Netherlands.

In regards to the second question, five overarching factors have been identified from the literature review as influencing the destination choice of irregular migrants'. The first factor is economic factors, which include not only the costs of the migration, but also migrants' perceptions of the economic environment in the country of destination. The costs of the migration journey can determine destination choice as migrants can only migrate as far as they can afford. A strong economy and job opportunities can act as a draw for migrants to a destination country.

The second factor identified in the literature was migrant smugglers. Migrant smugglers have been identified as playing a key role in influencing destination choice in three ways: 1) the destinations that they offer services to, 2) making the destination choice decision for the migrant; and 3) in breaking an agreement with the migrant and leaving them in a different destination than agreed. The frequency with which each of these situations occurs is unknown.

Third, social networks and access to information arose as a key factor influencing irregular migrants' destination choice. This includes close and distant networks, as well as information through the media, internet and social media. There is mixed agreement on the role of networks in influencing migrants' destination choice as in some cases it can be a draw and in others a deterrent. Further, there is little information available on how irregular migrants use social media to form their destination choice.

The fourth factor identified was conditions and experiences in transit countries. The conditions in transit countries can be categorised to influence irregular migrants' destination choice in three ways: 1) poor conditions can instigate onwards migration; 2) transit experiences can become settlement; and 3) access to new sources of information in transit countries can redirect migrants' destination choice. Again, the frequency with which each of these situations occurs is unknown.

The fifth factor identified to influence irregular migrants' destination choice was migration policies. Migration policies were widely defined to include: border restrictions, police interventions, asylum policies, and return policies. The evidence on the role of migration policy on destination choice is inconclusive. As an example, some studies find that migrants are attracted to countries due to favourable asylum policies, whereas others find that the majority of asylum seekers know very little about asylum procedures in the destination country prior to arrival. This is a key area for further

investigation and in particular to understand how different policies have different impacts on destination choice.

Regrettably, it was also evident that there was not enough information in the literature to draw conclusions regarding why irregular migrants choose the Netherlands as their destination choice. Older studies indicate that networks are the main reason that migrants choose the Netherlands. The review did bring forth that the Netherlands is often not the destination choice of migrants within the country, and was actually intended as of country of transit but that migrants were apprehended while in transit in the Netherlands.

7.3 Challenges of irregular migration research

Given the significant gaps in knowledge uncovered in this review, it is worthwhile to reflect on several key challenges that appear to be inherent to research on irregular migration.

First, the distinction between regular and irregular migration, and between forms of irregular migration, is not always definitive. Migrants can move between irregular and regular statuses at different stages of their trajectories. For this reason, it is often useful to draw parallels to the regularised migration literature in order to understand why and how people make migration decisions, but using regular migration trends to understand irregularity has to be done with caution, as there are several defining elements of irregular migration that differentiate this flow. In addition, sources and authors themselves are not always clear on migrants' statuses. Sometimes the status of a migrant is unclear, and different definitions are used to establish regularity. In this review, we sought to focus only on irregular entry, which captures only migrants who enter a state without permission to do so. The literature on irregular migration is not arranged based on the distinction between irregular entry and irregular stay, however, which meant that our initial source retrieval had to be inclusive of all forms of irregular migration.

Second, irregular migrants are a challenging group to research. By nature this is a 'clandestine' target group; it is often difficult to find irregular migrants, create trust, and conduct research among them. This is one key reason why the sources in this review are mostly of a qualitative nature that features small sample sizes.

Third, although the number of studies on irregular migration has significantly increased over the last two decades, it is still a largely under-theorized phenomenon. Three models were identified in Section 2.7 that guided the information in this review in terms of factors that influence destination

choice and the role of migrant smugglers. As mentioned in Section 2.7, none of these models sufficiently capture the complexities of decision-making factors in the destination choices of irregular migrants. The findings of this review suggest that although Brekke and Aarset's model of pull factors is highly informative, it does not adequately account for the multiple situations that can occur and influence destination choice. As one example, it does not account for migrants who do not make it to their intended destination but who instead choose to settle in the country of transit due to the favourable conditions in the transit country. Further empirical evidence is needed to test these models and then refine and build upon them to create further theoretical understandings of the factors influencing destination choices.

Finally, it is important to stress that although a large number of studies were included in this review, the evidence assessment and identified literature gaps highlight that few areas can be assessed as having clear evidence, and far more areas require further research and understanding. The literature on destination choice is a particularly new field that gained prominence in the early 2000s, and although several sources were found that was highly relevant to the topic there were few studies that focus precisely on this topic. Following the publication of a handful of key studies (mostly commissioned by the UK Home Office) on this topic in the early 2000s, there have been few studies directly on this topic within the past decade. This clearly indicates that further research is required to increase understandings of migrants' destination choices and the factors that influence how migrants' routes change and evolve over time.

7.4 Recommendations for future research

There are several recommendations for future research that can be made based on the identified research gaps and overall findings of this review. We will focus on three specific areas for further research:

- **Comparative mixed methods approaches:** Migrants are a highly heterogeneous group, and future research should aspire to: 1) be comparative across countries of origin; 2) be comparative across countries of destination, and 3) have large enough sample sizes to draw out differences between groups. Comparative research, including both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, is essential to capture the nuances and differences between migrant groups in their migration trajectories.
- **Understanding the Dutch case:** There is clearly a need for more research on irregular migration in the Netherlands. A key challenge with irregular migration is that flows are continually

changing and research quickly becomes outdated. New research is needed in the Netherlands, particularly on growing groups of irregular migrants and asylum seekers, as very little research has been conducted with irregular migrants who were rejected asylum in the Netherlands. Further, research needs to take into account the Netherlands as a destination and transit country.

- **Understanding decision-making factors in transit countries:** Experiences in transit play a pivotal role in migrants' migration trajectories and in particular in determining their decisions for settling in transit or for seeking onward migration through particular routes. There are several factors that influence decision-making in transit, including networks and access to information, policy interventions, smugglers, and conditions in the country of transit and intended destination countries. A key area for future research is in understanding decision-making factors in transit and how these different factors are prioritised and reconciled.

7.5 Summary

The results of the study highlight that although irregular migration is an increasing area of both research and policy salience, there are still many unanswered questions within this field, and little information is known with certainty. Potential reasons for the lack of research on this topic is that irregular migrants are a difficult group to research, and irregular migration is a complex social phenomenon that is rapidly changing and difficult to research at a pace that matches current events. At the same time, comparative studies with larger sample sizes could have a meaningful impact to increase the evidence base in this field.

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Appendix 1: Articles included in Literature Review Evidence Assessment: Routes to Europe

#	Title	Author	Year	Country/ Region	Methodology			Sample Size	Route to EU border (1-3)	Route crossing into EU (1-4)	Route within Europe
					Quantitative	Qualitative	Secondary Data				
Strong Evidence											
1	Mixed Migration: Libya at the Crossroads. Mapping of Migration Routes and Drivers of Migration in Post-revolution Libya	Altai Consulting/UNHCR	2013	Libya		X	X	178 (92 irregular migrants and 86 key informants)	1,2,3	1	
2	Stuck in Transit: Secondary Migration of Asylum Seekers in Europe, National Differences, and the Dublin Regulation	Brekke, J. & Brochmann, G.	2014	Italy and Norway		X	X	89 (65 asylum seekers, 24 informants)		1	
3	Migration from Afghanistan to third countries and Greece	Dimitriadi, A.	2013	Greece		X	X	12 (irregular migrants)	4	2	X
4	Transit Migration in the European Migration Spaces: Politics, Determinants and Dynamics	Düvell, F.	2014	EU			X		1,2	1,2,4	
5	Declining migration from Morocco to the Netherlands and the diminutive causation of migration	Engbersen, G., Snel, E., & van Meeteren, M.	2013	Morocco and the Netherlands		X	X	74 (30 migrants in NL and 44 return migrants)		4	
6	Frontex Risk Analysis Network (FRAN) Quarter 2 April - June 2014.	Frontex	2014	EU	X					1,2,3,4	
7	Migratory routes map	Frontex	2015		X					1,2,3,4	
8	Circular Migration between Morocco and Spain: Something more than agricultural work?	Gonzalez-Enriquez, C. & Ramon, M.R.	2011	Morocco, Spain		X	X	29 (stakeholders)		4	X
9	Across the Desert, Across the Sea: Migrant Smuggling into and from Libya	Lutterbeck, D.	2013	Libya, EU		X	X	60 (irregular migrants)	1, 2	1	
10	Irregular Immigration in Malta	Mainwaring, C.	2014	Malta		X	X			1	
11	Hungary and the System of European Transit Migration	Molodikova, I.	2014	Hungary	X	X	X	Survey: 30 (asylum seekers) Interviews: 20 (3 border guards, 5 local population, 12 civil servants)		2,3	
12	Irregular Migration of Moldovan Citizens to the European Union Countries	Mosneaga, V.	2014	Moldova		X	X	200 (economic migrants)		3	
13	Turbulent Trajectories: African Migrants on Their Way to the European Union	Schapendonk, J.	2012	EU		X	X	107 migrants <i>en route</i> , 50 migrants in EU)		1, 2, 4	

#	Title	Author	Year	Country/ Region	Methodology			Sample Size	Route to EU border (1-3)	Route crossing into EU (1-4)	Route within Europe
					Quantitative	Qualitative	Secondary Data				
14	Migrant Smuggling: Irregular migration from Asia and Africa to Europe	Triandafyllidou, A., & Maroukis, T.	2012	Various		X	X	114 (20 key informants, 94 smuggled migrants)	1,2,3	1,2,3,4	X
15	Smuggling of migrants into, through and from North Africa: A thematic review and annotated bibliography of recent publications	UNODC	2010	North Africa			X		1,2,3	1,2,4	
16	Going West: Contemporary mixed migration trends from the Horn of Africa to Libya & Europe	RMMS	2014	East Africa, Mahgreb, EU	X	X	X	Surveys: 391, Interview: 18	3		X
17	Smuggled Futures: The dangerous path of the migrant from Africa to Europe	Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime	2014	Sub-Sahara Africa, EU		X	X	Not specified	1,2,3	1,2,4	
Partial Evidence											
18	We risk our lives for our daily bread. Findings of the Danish Refugee Council study of mixed migration in Libya.	DRC	2014	Libya	X			1,031 (irregular migrants)		1	
19	When the best option is a leaky boat: why migrants risk their lives crossing the Mediterranean and what Europe is doing about it	Fargues, P., & Bonfanti, S	2014	Mediterranean Sea			X			1, 4	
20	Trafficking in persons overseas for labour purposes The case of Ethiopian domestic workers	ILO	2011			X	X	121 (key informants)	3		
21	Transit Migration. The Missing Link Between Emigration and Settlement	Papadopoulou-Kourkoura, A.	2008	Greece, North Africa, Eastern Europe			X			2,3	
22	Luanda – Holanda: Irregular Migration from Angola to the Netherlands	van Wijk, J.	2008	Angola, Netherlands		X	X	380 (100 key informants, 150 case files, 130 migrants)			X
23	The vicious circle of irregular migration from Pakistan to Greece and back to Pakistan	Yousef, K.	2013	Pakistan, Greece		X	X	11 (key informants)	4		X
24	Unauthorized Migration from Africa to Spain	Carling, J.	2007	Morocco, Spain			X			4	
25	Work, Refuge, Transit: An Emerging Pattern of Irregular Immigration South and East of the Mediterranean	Fargues, P.	2009	Maghreb, Southern and Eastern Mediterranean EU countries			X		1,2	1,2,4	
Little Evidence											

#	Title	Author	Year	Country/ Region	Methodology			Sample Size	Route to EU border (1-3)	Route crossing into EU (1-4)	Route within Europe
					Quantitative	Qualitative	Secondary Data				
26	S.O.S. Europe. Human Rights and Migration Control	Amnesty International	2012	Libya and Italy			X			1	
27	States of insecurity: Consequences of Saharan transit migration	Collyer, M.	2006	EU		X	X	100 (irregular migrants)		4	
28	The myth of Invasion: Irregular Migration from West Africa to the Maghreb and the European Union	De Haas, H.	2007	West Africa, Maghreb, EU			X		1, 2	4	
29	The Myth of Invasion: The Inconvenient Realities of African Migration to Europe	De Haas, H.	2008	Maghreb and EU			X		1,2	4	
30	African Transit Migration Through Libya to Europe: The Human Cost	Hamood, S.	2006	Libya	X	X	X	65 (refugees, asylum seekers, migrants)	3	1	
31	Migrants' Uncertainties versus the State's Insecurities	Içduygu, A., & Sert., D.	2014	Turkey			X			2	
32	Transit Migration in Turkey	IOM	1995	Turkey	X	X	X	61 (53 irregular migrants, 8 smugglers)		2	
33	On the Edge of Exclusion: the changing nature of immigration in Cyprus and Malta	Mainwaring, C.	2008	Cyprus and Malta			X			1	
34	Migrants' im/mobilities on their way to the EU: Lost in transit?	Schapendonk, J.	2012	EU	X	X	X	57 (migrants <i>en route</i>)	2, 4		
35	Irregular migration to Coastal Areas of Southern Europe. An Overview, Assessment and Policy Proposals	Triandafyllidou, A.	2007	South Europe			X			1,2,4	
36	Human Trafficking in the Sinai: Refugees between Life and Death	van Reisen, M., Estefanos, M., & Rijken, C.	2012	Sinai	X	X	X	123 (refugees)	3		
37	Irregular secondary movements to Europe: seeking asylum beyond refuge	Zimmermann, S.	2009	Somalia, UK	X	X	X	13 (irregular migrants)	3	X	

*Routes to the EU Border: 1- Western Africa Route; 2- Central Africa; Route 3- Eastern Africa Route, Route 4- Asian Route

**Routes Crossing: 1- Central Mediterranean Route, 2- Eastern Mediterranean Route, 3 – Western Balkan Route, 4- Western Mediterranean Route

Appendix 2: Articles included in Literature Review Evidence Assessment: Factors Influencing Destination Choice

#	Title	Author	Year	Country/ Region	Methodology			Sample Size		Destination choice			
					Quantitative	Qualitative	Secondary			Economic	Smuggling	Transit	Networks
Strong Evidence													
1	Mixed Migration: Libya at the Crossroads. Mapping of Migration Routes and Drivers of Migration in Post-revolution Libya	Altai Consulting/UNHCR	2013	Libya		X	X	178 irregular migrants and 86 key informants)	(92 and key)	X	X	X	X
2	Motieven van asielzoekers om naar Nederland te komen; verslag van een expert meeting	Bijleveld, C., & Taselaar, A.	2000	Netherlands	X	X					X		
3	Human Smuggling as a Transnational Service Industry: Evidence from Austria	Bilger, V., Hofmann, M., & Jandl, M.	2006	Austria		X	X	46 (irregular migrants)			X	X	X
4	Why Norway? Understanding Asylum Destinations	Brekke, J., & Aarset, M.	2009	Norway		X	X	20 (asylum seekers)			X	X	X
5	Stuck in Transit: Secondary Migration of Asylum Seekers in Europe, National Differences, and the Dublin Regulation	Brekke, J. & Brochmann, G.	2014	Italy and Norway		X	X	69 (15 asylum seekers, 54 key informants)				X	
6	A survey of African migrants and asylum seekers in Istanbul.	Brewer, K., & Yüксеker, D.	2009	Istanbul, Turkey	X	X	X	Survey: 133 Interviews: 21				X	X
7	States of insecurity: Consequences of Saharan transit migration	Collyer, M.	2006	EU		X	X	100 (irregular migrants)					X
8	In-Between Places: Trans-Saharan Transit Migrants in Morocco and the Fragmented Journey to Europe	Collyer, M.	2007	Morocco		X	X	180 (142 migrants, 38 key informants)				X	X
9	Chance or Choice? Understanding why asylum seekers come to the UK	Crawley, H.	2010	UK				43 (asylum seeker, refugees)			X		X
10	Migration from Afghanistan to third countries and Greece	Dimitriadi, A.	2013	Greece		X	X	12 (irregular migrants)				X	
11	Transit Migration in the European Migration Spaces: Politics, Determinants and Dynamics	Düvell, F.	2014	EU			X					X	
12	Declining migration from Morocco to the Netherlands and the diminutive causation of migration	Engbersen, G., Snel, E., & van Meeteren, M.	2013	Morocco and the Netherlands		X	X	74 (30 migrants in NL and 44 return migrants)	(30)	X			X
13	Coming to the UK: What do asylum seekers know about the UK before arrival?	Gilbert, A., & Koser, K.	2006	UK		X	X	87 (asylum seekers)			X	X	X

#	Title	Author	Year	Country/ Region	Methodology			Sample Size	Destination choice			
					Quantitative	Qualitative	Secondary		Economic	Smuggling	Transit	Networks
14	Betwixt and Between: Trajectories and Projects of Transmigration	Grillo, R.	2007	n/a			X				X	
15	African Transit Migration Through Libya to Europe: The Human Cost	Hamood, S.	2006	Libya		X	X	65 (refugees, asylum seekers, migrants)			X	
16	Country of Asylum by Choice or by Chance: Asylum seekers in Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK	Havinga, T., & Böcker, A.	1999	Belgium, the Netherlands and Belgium		X	X	15 (key informants)	X	X		X
17	Migratie naar en vanuit Nederland. Een eerste proeve van de Migratiekaart	Jennissen, R. et al.	2009	Netherlands			X					X
18	Irregular Migration. Dilemmas of Transnational Mobility.	Jordan, B., & Düvell, F.	2002	EU		X	X		X		X	X
19	The Social Networks of Asylum Seekers and the Dissemination of Information about Countries of Asylum	Koser, K., & Pinkerton, C.	2002	n/a			X					X
20	Irregular Afghan Migration to the Netherlands	Kuschminder, K., & Siegel, M.	forthcoming	Netherlands		X	X	47 (irregular migrants)		X	X	X
21	Irregular Immigration in Malta	Mainwaring, C.	2014	Malta		X	X			X	X	
22	Asylum destination choice: what makes some West European countries more attractive than others?	Neumayer, E.	2004	West Europe	X		X		X			X
23	Understanding the decision making of asylum seekers.	Robinson, V., & Segrott, J.	2002	UK		X	X	65 (asylum seekers)		X		X
24	Migrants' im/mobilities on their way to the EU: Lost in transit?	Schapendonk, J.	2012	EU		X	X	57 (migrants <i>en route</i>)			X	
25	Turbulent Trajectories: African Migrants on Their Way to the European Union	Schapendonk, J.	2012	EU		X	X	107 (57 migrants <i>en route</i> , 50 migrants in EU)			X	X
26	Jong en Illegaal in Nederland - Een beschrijvende studie naar de komst en het verblijf van onrechtmatig verblijvende (voormalige) alleenstaande minderjarige vreemdelingen en hun visie op de toekomst	Staring, R., & Aarts, J.	2010	Netherlands	X	X	X	118 ((former) unaccompanied minors)		X	X	X
27	Reconsidering Migration and Class	Van Hear, N.	2014	Various			X		X			
28	Navigating Borders: Inside Perspectives on the Process of Human Smuggling	van Liempt, I.	2007	Netherlands		X	X	74 (18 key informants, 56 migrants)		X	X	

#	Title	Author	Year	Country/ Region	Methodology			Sample Size	Destination choice			
					Quantitative	Qualitative	Secondary		Economic	Smuggling	Transit	Networks
29	And then one day they all moved to Leicester': the relocation of Somalis from the Netherlands to the UK explained	van Liempt, I.	2011	Netherlands, UK		X	X	33 (regularized migrants)		X	X	
30	Migrant's Agency in the Smuggling Process: The Perspectives of Smuggled Migrants in the Netherlands	van Liempt, I., & Doornik, J.	2006	Netherlands		X	X	56 (asylum seekers)		X	X	
31	The differential role of social networks - Strategies and routes in Brazilian migration to Portugal and the Netherlands	van Meeteren, M., & Pereira, S.	2013	Portugal, Netherlands	X	X	X	Survey: 606 (migrants), Interview: 168 (migrants)	X		X	X
32	Social Networks and Selectivity in Brazilian Migration to Japan and the United States	Zell, S., & Skop, E.	2011	Japan, US	X		X	Survey: 3134 (migrants), Interview: (34 migrants)	X			X
33	On the Way to a Better Future: Belgium as Transit Country for Trafficking and Smuggling of Unaccompanied Minors	Derluyn, I., & Broekaert, E.	2005	Belgium, UK	X		X	1093 files of unaccompanied minors		X	X	
34	Morocco-Europe Relations through the Image of the Other	Aderghal, M., & Berriane, M.	2012	Morocco	X	X		500 (migrants)	X			
Partial Evidence												
35	Arguing and Justifying: Assessing the Convention refugees' choice of moment, motive and host country	Barksy, R.	2000	US								X
36	Migration routes and strategies of young undocumented migrants in England: a qualitative perspective	Bloch, A., Sigona, N., & Zetter, R.	2011	UK		X	X	75 (irregular migrants)	X			X
37	The Factors that Make and Unmake Migration Policies	Castles, S.	2004	Various			X					X
38	When Do Social Networks Fail to Explain Migration? Accounting for the Movements of Algerian Asylum-Seekers to the UK	Collyer, M.	2005	UK		X	X	103 (65 migrants, 38 key informants)				X
39	Critical Approaches to Transit Migration	Collyer, M., Duvell, F. & De Haas, H.	2012				X				X	
40	How social media transform migrant networks and facilitate migration	Dekker, R., & Engbersen, G.	2014	Netherlands		X	X	90 (migrants)				X
41	The crucial meso-level	Faist, T.	1997				X					X
42	Networks, linkages and migration systems	Fawcett, J. T.	1989	Various			X					X

#	Title	Author	Year	Country/ Region	Methodology			Sample Size	Destination choice			
					Quantitative	Qualitative	Secondary		Economic	Smuggling	Transit	Networks
43	Irregular migration, state security and human security	Koser, K.	2005				X	X				
44	On the Edge of Exclusion: the changing nature of immigration in Cyprus and Malta	Mainwaring, C.	2008	Cyprus and Malta			X			X		
45	Social Structure, Household Strategies, and the Cumulative Causation of Migration	Massey, D.	1990	n/a			X				X	
46	Theories of international migration: A review and appraisal	Massey, D., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kouaouci, A., Pellegrino, A., & Taylor, J.	1993	Various			X	X			X	
47	Seeking the views of irregular migrants: Decision making, drivers and migration journeys.	McAuliffe, M.	2013	Australia	X		X	1,008 (irregular maritime migrants)	X		X	
48	Social Media and Migration Research	McGregor, E., & Siegel, M.	2013	n/a			X				X	
49	Hungary and the System of European Transit Migration	Molodikova, I.	2014	Hungary	X	X	X	Survey: 30 (asylum seekers) Interviews: 20 (3 border guards, 5 local population, 12 civil servants)			X	X
50	Irregular Migration of Moldovan Citizens to the European Union Countries	Mosneaga, V.	2014	Moldova		X	X	200 (economic migrants)	X		X	X
51	Comparing Notes: Perspectives on Human Smuggling in Austria, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands	Neske, M., & Doomernik, J.	2006	Austria, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands			X			X		
52	Transit Migration. The Missing Link Between Emigration and Settlement	Papadopoulou-Kourkoula, A.	2008	Greece, North Africa, Eastern Europe			X				X	
53	Migrant Smuggling in the Horn of Africa & Yemen: the political economy and protection risks	RMMS	2013	West Africa, Yemen, Maghreb, EU			X			X	X	
54	Going West: Contemporary mixed migration trends from the Horn of Africa to Libya & Europe	RMMS	2014	East Africa, Mahgreb, EU	X	X	X	Survey: 1,031 (migrants), interview: 139 (38 key informants, 85 migrants, 16 diaspora)	X		X	

#	Title	Author	Year	Country/ Region	Methodology			Sample Size	Destination choice			
					Quantitative	Qualitative	Secondary		Economic	Smuggling	Transit	Networks
							members					
55	State Responses and Migrant Experiences with Human Smuggling: A Reality Check	van Liempt, I., & Sersli, S.	2012	Western Europe, Canada		X	X	63 (migrants)		X		
56	Irregular secondary movements to Europe: seeking asylum beyond refuge	Zimmermann, S.	2009	Somalia, UK		X	X	13 (irregular migrants)	X		X	
57	Pre-flight experiences and migration stories: the accounts of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children	Hopkins, E. & Hill, M.	2008	UK		X	X	100 (70 service providers, 30 unaccompanied minors)	X		X	
58	Secondary movement in Romania: the asylum-migration nexus	Munteanu, A	2007	Romania			X	52 (42 refugees and asylum seekers, 10 key informants)			X	
59	Irregular and Illegal Migration through Ukraine	Uehling, G.	2004	Ukraine		X	X	20 (migrants)			X	
60	Destination Europe: Afghan Unaccompanied Minors Crossing Borders	Buil, C. & Siegel, M.	2014	Various		X	X					
61	Destination anywhere? Factors affecting asylum seekers' choice of destination country	Spinks, H.	2013	Australia			X		X	X	X	X
Little Evidence	Diasporas	Beine, M., Docquier, F., & Ozden, C.	2011	195 countries	X							X
62	Transit Migration between Tunisia, Libya and Sub-Saharan Africa: Study Based on Greater Tunis	Boubakri, H.	2004	sub-Saharan Africa and the Mahgreb			X				X	
63	The myth of Invasion: Irregular Migration from West Africa to the Maghreb and the European Union	De Haas, H.	2007	West Africa, Maghreb, EU			X				X	
64	The determinants of international migration: conceptualizing policy, origin and destination effects	De Haas, H.	2011	Various			X					X
65	Migrants' Uncertainties versus the State's Insecurities	İçduygu, A., & Sert., D.	2014	Turkey			X				X	
66	A Comprehensive Survey of Migration Flows and Institutional Capabilities in Libya	ICMPD	2010	Libya		X	X	9 (key informants)			X	
67	Asylum Policies, Trafficking and Vulnerability	Koser, K.	2000	EU		X	X	32 (asylum seekers)				X
68	The effect of income and immigration policies on international migration	Ortega, F., & Peri, G.	2013	Various	X		X		X			
69	Transit Migration in Egypt	Roman. H.	2006	Egypt			X				X	

#	Title	Author	Year	Country/ Region	Methodology			Sample Size	Destination choice			
					Quantitative	Qualitative	Secondary		Economic	Smuggling	Transit	Networks
70	On Migration and Risk in LDCs	Stark, O., & Levhari, D.	1982	Developing countries			X	X				
71	Tides of migration, currents of history: the state, economy, and the transatlantic movement of labor in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries	Strikwerda, C.	1999	Various			X	X				
72	The effectiveness of governments' attempts to control unwanted migration	Thielemann, E. R.	2006	EU	X		X	X				
73	Irregular Migration in Europe: Myths and Realities	Triandafyllidou, A.	2010	Europe	X		X				X	
74	Migrant Smuggling: Irregular migration from Asia and Africa to Europe	Triandafyllidou, A., & Maroukis, T.	2012	Various		X	X	114 (20 key informants, 94 smuggled migrants)		X		
75	Luanda – Holanda: Irregular Migration from Angola to the Netherlands	van Wijk, J.	2008	Angola, Netherlands		X	X	380 (100 key informants, 150 case files, 130 migrants)				X
76	The vicious circle of irregular migration from Pakistan to Greece and back to Pakistan	Yousef, K.	2013	Pakistan, Greece		X	X	11 (key informants)				X
77	Afghan unaccompanied minors in the Netherlands: Far away from home and protected?	Buil, C. & Siegel, M.	2014	Netherlands		X	X	29 (19 key informants, 10 unaccompanied minors)				
78	The Age of Migration. International Population Movements in the Modern World	Castles, S., De Haas, H. & Miller, M. J.	2014	Various			X		X	X	X	X