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Surveillance, Survival, and Incentives to Stay: Three Approaches to Governing 'Irregular' Migration from the Gambia

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Abstract

Gambian migrants have been amongst the top-nationalities arriving to European shores by 'irregular' means. While 'irregular' migration is often extremely risky and dangerous, the Gambian government has only been limitedly engaged in governing this migration. Instead, several non-state actors have stepped in. This thesis explores different approaches to governing migration from the Gambia towards Europe. Specifically, it asks: *How is 'irregular' migration from the Gambia towards Europe governed?* This is answered through a qualitative case study based on semi-structured interviews, participant observation and documentary data collected in the Gambia. Drawing on the concept of *governmentality*, specifically as used by Tania Li (2007), it is shown that different actors, techniques, and rationalities are constituting three distinct but interacting and mutually reinforcing governmental assemblages. These are categorised as the security-, humanitarian- and development assemblages. In these assemblages, the issue of migration is *problematised* and *rendered technical*, and consequently rendered non-political. Implementers of migration governance however point to economic and political structures exceeding the scope of their programmes posing a limit to what they can achieve. However, while there is a limit to government, actors continue their work, with all its unintended effects, since the three governmental assemblages are mutually reinforcing and dependent.

Keywords: *Migration governance, The Gambia, Irregular migration, Governmentality, Implementers of migration management.*

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Abbreviations

CSO   Civil Society Organisation

ECOWAS Economic Community of West African States

EU   European Union

GCM   Global Compact for Migration

HRBA   Human Rights Based Approach

IOM   International Organization for Migration

MIDAS   Migration Information and Data Analysis System

SDG   Sustainable Development Goals

1. Introduction

While migration has always been part of human history, the world is currently seeing an increasing intent to manage and control movement of populations. Global frameworks for migration governance have emerged in the last two decades, and migration is high on the political agenda especially in the Global North (Höflinger 2020; Kalm 2010; Sørensen 2012). This study set out to explore how the increasing concern with migration governance plays out in the West African country, The Gambia. Gambians have been amongst the top nationalities arriving by 'irregular' means to European shores for several years, and while this journey is extremely dangerous the issue has received relatively little attention in national government policies (Faal 2020). Instead, a number of non-state actors have stepped in to govern migration from the Gambia after the ousting of the former dictator Yahia Jammeh in 2016 (Aucoin 2022; Marino et al. 2022). The study finds that these actors work in three loosely connected clusters of cooperation following different approaches to migration governance. Some want to reduce 'irregular' migration, while others want to ensure safe migration. The three approaches are identified as a security-, a humanitarian- and a development approach. However, while the different clusters have different approaches, they work by informing and rationalising each other, and consequently depend on each other's existence and continuation.

While most migration in West Africa takes place within the region, migration from the Gambia is distinct since migrants primarily leave towards Europe (Faal 2020; Zanker & Altrogge 2019a). People aim to establish themselves to support their families back in the Gambia, where remittances are already equal to 22% of the GDP (WB 2022). Due to a lack of legal migration routes, most Gambians travel through 'irregular' means by the so-called 'backway'. This is through the desert to North Africa and across the Mediterranean or across the Atlantic towards the Canary Islands (MMC 2021; Suso 2019). These routes are extremely risky and while the numbers of casualties are largely unknown, since 2014 at least 23.000 people have lost their lives only during sea-crossings (Black 2021). Despite the significance of emigration from the Gambia, the government has only been limitedly engaged in addressing the issue (Faal 2020; Kebbeh 2013). Instead, a range of actors, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the European Union (EU), European-based organisations, and local civil society actors engage in migration issues through a range of projects and programmes. This includes border control, information campaigns, employment programmes as well as increased return migration both through 'voluntary' programmes and

deportations (Faal 2020). However, until now, none of these initiatives have been efficient in reducing 'irregular' migration from the Gambia (Faal 2020; Kebbeh 2013). While it was expected that people's desire to migrate would decrease due to hopes of economic development and political stability when a democratic government was elected, people are still leaving in the same numbers as before (Zanker & Altrogge 2019b). For this reason, the study set out to shed light on how 'irregular' migration from the Gambia is governed to explore why migration governance has not yet been successful.

This contributes to the emerging field of literature on local level migration governance in West Africa. The general literature on migration governance in the region is already relatively extensive, where the main focus has been on the EU's attempts at governing 'irregular' migration from West Africa, including how migration is linked to development (Adepoju et al. 2009; Cuny 2018; Danso & Soeparna 2020; Lavenex & Kunz 2008; Sørensen 2012; Zanker 2019) as well as critical studies on securitisation of migration governance (Carling 2007; Chou 2009; Johnson 2013; Pastore 2021; Üstübici & Ergün 2020). However, while many of these studies are based on documentary data, including policies and statistics, and some of the studies are based on ethnographies with migrants, only a limited number of studies has explored the implementers of migration governance (Andersson 2014a; Marino et al. 2022; Truong & Gasper 2011; Walters 2015). To address this gap, this study explores the ways in which 'irregular' migration towards Europe is governed specifically at the local level of implementation in the Gambia.

1.1 Research Questions and Aim

To explore how 'irregular' migration from the Gambia is governed the study draws on the concept of *governmentality,* specifically Tania Li's (2007) approach to governmentality. Governmentality is understood as the mentality of government, namely the collectively assembled rationalities, techniques, and objectives of governmental regimes (Dean 2009). Studying governmentality is not a study of the state, but rather a study of how power is exercised by multiple actors through various techniques for a range of purposes (Dean 2009). This thesis explores *governmental assemblages,* which are defined as assemblages of specific problematisations, rationalities, subjectivities and techniques devised for a certain purpose (Dean 2009; Li 2019). Li (2007) argues that two processes are intrinsic to governmental assemblages. First, issues – such as migration – are *problematised* by identifying deficiencies in the target population or the prevailing regime. Secondly, the issue is *rendered technical* by

representing it as governable with specific boundaries and characteristics, by gathering knowledge and by devising techniques to govern. Finally, while government includes careful calculation and strategising to reach a specific goal, Li (2007) argues that there are inevitably *limits to what government can achieve*. On this ground, the thesis seeks to answer the following research question:

How is 'irregular' migration from the Gambia towards Europe governed?

To shed light on the specific rationalities and techniques employed in problematising and rendering migration technical and to explore why attempts of governing migration sometimes fails, it is specifically asked:

1. *How is 'irregular' migration from the Gambia towards Europe problematised?*
2. *How is 'irregular' migration from the Gambia towards Europe rendered technical?*
3. *What are the limits to government in Gambian migration governance?*

The aim is to explore the variety of ways in which actors in the Gambia work to influence the mobility of people moving by 'irregular*'* means towards Europe. Through an embedded case study, the thesis explores three approaches to migration governance identified amongst civil society organisations (CSO), international organisations and government actors in the Gambia (Yin 2003). It explores how these approaches are constituted and how they interact and inform each other. The study is based on data collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation and documentary data in the Gambia. It aims to critique and expose the taken-for-granted and to shed light on the limits to government to explore why initiatives to reduce 'irregular' migration fails. While this contributes to the literature on how migration governance works at the level of implementation in West Africa, my hope is that this critique can contribute to a wider and deeper understanding of how migration governance works, and potentially open up spaces for alternatives (Li 2007; Walters 2012).

The term *irregular migration* is used, since this is the term employed by most actors in the Gambia in their attempts at governing migration towards Europe. However, it is worth noting that movement from the Gambia is not irregular according to law at the point of crossing the Gambian border and that some actors do not use the language of irregularity but instead are

concerned with *unsafe* migration. In the following, the context around migration governance in the Gambia is outlined. Secondly, the existing literature on migration governance in West Africa is presented. Thirdly, the concept of *governmentality* and the theoretical grounding are discussed. Fourthly, the methods used in the study are presented. Fifthly, the findings are presented and discussed. Finally, a conclusion summarises the findings and its implications, and provides suggestions for further research.

2. Background

The following outlines the context around the case of governance of irregular migration from the Gambia towards Europe. This starts with a broader overview of migration and migration governance in West Africa, followed by a more specific outline of migration governance in the Gambia.

2.1 Irregularisation of migration from West Africa to Europe

Irregular migration from West Africa towards Europe is a relatively recent phenomenon and has only been considered significant from around the 1980s (Kreienbrink 2005). While mobility between the African and European continent dates at least centuries back, the irregularisation of this mobility emerged in the 1980s when European countries introduced visa requirements for people from the African continent (Echeverría 2020). One of the most significant measures to control mobility into Europe was the introduction of the Schengen agreement in the 1990s, which gave rise to the European external border, which since then has been guarded and controlled (Castles et al. 2014; Deridder et al. 2020; Pastore 2021). The increased control with European external borders has not reduced migration from the African continent. On the contrary, improved infrastructure for transport, communication and money transfers provides better conditions for mobility (Collyer 2007). Further, the demand for cheap labour especially in the south European agricultural sector keeps attracting youth from the African continent (de Haas 2008). The increased control with mobility has however made migration journeys more dangerous, since most migrants have no other options than travelling by irregular means through the desert and across the sea (de Haas 2006; Pastore 2021). This involves risks of drowning, dehydration, and starvation, and many are exposed to violence by smugglers, border officials or rebel groups (Koser 2010; MMC 2021). While

crossing from the Gambia to the Canary Islands takes at least a week at sea in an overcrowded boat, the journey through the desert is often fragmented and extended over years, where people stay in North Africa working informal jobs to earn money for the next leg of their journey (Collyer 2007; Schapendonk 2012; Thorsen 2017). Here, people are at risk of discrimination, poor living and working conditions and lack of access to health care (Pickerill 2011). While it is often assumed that more men than women travel irregularly, the ratio of women is unknown (IOM 2020). Women, however, usually face more severe risks including rape and trafficking (Koser 2010; OHCHR 2016).

2.2 Policy response to irregular migration

While the number of migrants travelling irregularly from West Africa towards Europe is largely unknown, the phenomenon is increasingly seen as a threat to state security in Europe (Deridder et al. 2020; Echeverría 2020; Koser 2010). The notion of a 'migration pressure' in the EU since 2015 when a higher number of people arrived by irregular means, has led to increased policy responses (Üstübici & Ergün 2020). While the EU first launched an external dimension of their migration policy in Africa in 1999, the European migration governance has extended from neighbouring countries in North Africa to Sub-Saharan African countries, including the Gambia (Üstübici & Ergün 2020). This has significantly increased European funding for migration governance projects in Sub-Saharan Africa, where one of the main initiatives is the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa launched in 2015, which aims at addressing the 'root causes' of irregular migration (Cuny 2018; Üstübici & Ergün 2020).

Globally, frameworks around migration are a relatively recent phenomenon emerging in the early 2010s (Solomon & Sheldon 2018). While the 1951 Refugee Convention is aimed at protecting the rights of migrants defined as refugees and the International Labour Standards on Migrant Workers is aimed at migrant workers, it was recognised that no framework was specifically aimed at the increasingly mixed flows and new types of risks in human mobility today (Solomon & Sheldon 2018). In 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) declared that states should *"facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people"* (UNDESA 2022). This was followed in 2018 by the Global Compact for Migration (GCM), which calls for "*safe, orderly and regular migration*" and which currently is the main framework in international migration governance (Höflinger 2020, p.663).

2.3 Mobility from the Gambia

In the specific case of the Gambia, human mobility has been an integral part of livelihoods long before the borders of the country were drawn (Manchuelle 1989; Swindell 1977). From at least the 15th century, Gambia has been a transit point for several types of trade, including slave trade and trade in salt and groundnuts, which involved significant mobility throughout the region (Armitano 2017; Manchuelle 1989). Today, the right to move freely within the region is secured in the constituting treaty of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (2010). However, since the beginning of the 2000s an increasing number of people has attempted to move towards Europe. Initially, people travelled across the Atlantic towards the Canary Islands. However, since border control was stepped up through a Gambian-Spanish police cooperation in 2006, many started travelling through the desert to Libya and across the Mediterranean towards Italy (Suso 2019; Zanker & Altrogge 2019a). While many have made it abroad, an even higher number of people have had to return, often with debt and poor health conditions without reaching Europe (Suso 2019). It is argued that the aspiration to migrate is deeply embedded in the Gambian society where up to 65% of young men state that they want to leave (Bah et al. 2021). The reasons for migrating include limited employment and education opportunities and perceived better economic opportunities in Europe (Dinbabo et al. 2021; MMC 2021; Suso 2020). Further, it is argued that family and peer pressure play an important role in migration decisions where the idea of reaching Europe and being able to support one's family with remittances is considered the ultimate success in the Gambian society (Suso 2020).

3. Literature review

The following chapter reviews the existing literature on governance of West- and North African migration towards Europe. This begins with a discussion of the different narratives used to rationalise migration governance. Secondly, the emerging literature on non-state actors is reviewed, and finally, the literature on specific techniques used in local level implementation of migration governance is discussed.

3.1 Rationalities of migration governance

The literature on migration governance has dealt extensively with the discourses, narratives and rationalities used in governing migration. Generally, scholars have noted that while practitioners used to talk about *migration control*, the discourse has shifted to *migration management* (Geiger & Pécoud 2010; Kalm 2010; Riemsdijk et al. 2020). This is especially noted by critical scholars who argue that the change in discourse is part of a neo-liberalisation of migration governance, where migration is increasingly governed by non-state actors with potentially limited democratic accountability (Ahouga 2018; Bartels 2017; Kunz 2013; Pagogna & Sakdapolrak 2021). They argue that this development works to depoliticise migration by reducing it to a technical issue which is to be dealt with at local level (Ahouga 2018; Kalm 2010). Others have argued that the change in discourse has presented migration governance as more humane, and thus facilitated the 'voluntary' cooperation of African states in Europe's intent to govern migration from Africa (Cuttitta 2020; Dessel 2021).

Looking specifically at migration governance in West Africa, literature has almost exclusively focused on European policies and their effects, while the focus on West African policies is almost absent (Chou 2009; Cross 2009; Cuttitta 2020; Deridder et al. 2020; Langan & Price 2021). A major theme is how discourses of migration and development have been linked to rationalise migration governance (Carling 2004; de Haas 2010; Lavenex & Kunz 2008; Sørensen 2012; Zanker & Altrogge 2019a). Scholars argue that the SDGs and the GCM build on the notion that migration can contribute to development through diaspora engagement and remittances if managed properly – thus, *migration can contribute to development* (Carling 2004; Lavenex & Kunz 2008; Sørensen 2012; Zanker 2019). However, others have pointed to the idea that *development can reduce migration,* which is the idea underpinning the European approach to targeting the 'root causes' of migration (Castles et al. 2014; Faal 2020; Pastore 2021; Üstübici & Ergün 2020; Zanker 2019). This rationality builds on one of the earliest migration theories developed by the geographer Ravenstein (1885) who argued that human mobility is determined by push and pull factors between high- and low-income regions (Castles et al. 2014; Ravenstein 1885). However, while this theory is often cited outside of academia, it is widely recognised by scholars that economic development does not reduce migration. On the contrary, migration usually increases with increased level of income since people gain the necessary resources for mobility (Castles et al. 2014; de Haas 2010; de Haas et al. 2010; Restelli 2021). The reason why European policies and practices

still rely on this presumedly flawed assumption, is notably addressed by de Haas (2008). He argues that while European politicians need to respond to dominant right-wing public opinion with a discourse of 'curbing migration', the European economies are also relying on migrants for cheap labour in the informal sectors (de Haas 2008). This might serve as an explanation, which however, would imply that the EU purposely is using a specific discourse to respond to public demands, while in fact facilitating increased immigration.

A related but more recent strand of literature has explored the securitisation of migration governance in West Africa (Andersson 2014a; Deridder et al. 2020; Pastore 2021). Here it is argued that those who see migration as a threat to European security often are opposed to those who are concerned with migrants' rights (Koser 2010). However, others argue that in public discourses, security and humanitarianism are purposely conflated, rather than opposed (Andersson 2014a; Cross 2009; Deridder et al. 2020; Walters 2010). Andersson (2014a) explains that the term *risk* is used to refer both to people risking their lives during migration as well as to migration posing a risk to the integrity of state borders. In this way the concept of risk is used by politicians to bridge the securitised approach with a humanitarian approach in order to justify European engagement in border control in West Africa (Cuttitta 2020; Deridder et al. 2020). While Andersson (2014a) points to this double understanding of risk in discourse, other scholars have pointed to the same duplicity in practice, namely, that the EU's securitised approach often leads to increased human insecurities for migrants (Cross 2009; Pastore 2007).

3.2 The rise of non-state actors in migration governance

As a result of the externalisation, and consequently outsourcing, of European migration governance, scholars started noting the lack of research on non-state actors (Andersson 2014a; Deridder et al. 2020; Marino et al. 2022; Truong & Gasper 2011; Walters 2015). This has given rise to an emerging but still limited body of literature on the role of non-profit non-state actors in migration governance (Bartels 2017; Dessel 2021; Marino et al. 2022; Walters 2010). This includes both international organisations, mainly the IOM, as well as local organisations implementing migration governance. Lavenex (2016) has distinguished three functions of international organisations' involvement in European external migration governance. Namely, 1) as a counterweight to complement and correct EU policies, 2) as sub-contractors implementing European migration policies, and finally, 3) as rule transmitters where international organisations transfer rules and norms to policy-receiving countries

(Lavenex 2016). Scholars have mainly dealt with the latter two and have argued that while sub-contracting is a cost-effective solution for implementation, it might also undermine local state capacity, since international organisations end up working in parallel – or even in competition - to national structures (Bartels 2017; Cuttitta 2020; Geiger & Pécoud 2010). Others, however, argue that implementation through international organisations work to legitimise European policies in the Global South, since these policies become nested in the internationally agreed frameworks of the SDGs and the GCM. In this way, it creates a sense of identification and ownership of the European objectives amongst policy-receiving governments (Cuttitta 2020; Lavenex 2016). This is, however, only a sense of ownership since policies and projects are still designed by the EU and modified by international organisations during implementation (Wunderlich 2012).

A minor share of the literature on non-state actors is concerned with local CSOs in African countries where European migration policies are implemented (Cuttitta 2020; Marino et al. 2022; Pastore & Roman 2020). One study highlights that local CSOs have a human rights-centred approach to migration governance, and that they raise critique of the securitised European policies, calling them discriminatory and racist (Pastore & Roman 2020; Pastore 2021). However, since the EU and international organisations are dependent on CSOs' contextual knowledge and legitimacy, the implementing CSOs gain leverage to realign implementation with a more human rights-centred approach in practice (Bisong 2021; Geiger & Pécoud 2010; Schierup et al. 2018). Similarly, Marino and others (2022) show in a very recent study from the Gambia – one of the first on CSOs' role in migration governance in the country – that CSOs gain resources by implementing projects on behalf of the EU and international organisations, which they in turn spend on carrying out activities according to their own designs and objectives.

3.3 Techniques of migration governance

Recently scholars have directed attention to the various practices and techniques used in local level implementation of migration governance. While the issue of border control has been studied extensively, the implementation of other forms of migration governance is still an emerging area of interest (Bartels 2017; Black et al. 2022; Cuttitta 2020; Marino et al. 2022; McKeon 2018; Pagogna & Sakdapolrak 2021; Rodriguez 2019; Tjaden & Gninafon 2022; Vammen 2021). The literature on border control is mainly critical, and a reoccurring

argument highlights how the legal space around border control and visa regimes works to discriminate along lines of race, class and gender (Johnson 2013; Pastore 2021; Tesfahuney 1998). People are categorised and placed in a hierarchy of rights with implications for their protection depending on state preferences (Brandariz & Fernández-Bessa 2020; Pastore 2021; Tesfahuney 1998). Scholars argue that this creates vulnerabilities and can lead to economic, social and physical exploitation of migrants (Brandariz & Fernández-Bessa 2020; Truong & Gasper 2011). They further point out that these classifications are based on dichotomies, e.g., regular/irregular, legal/illegal, forced/voluntary, which are often not able to capture the complex journeys of migrants, but still determines their rights and opportunities (Collyer & de Haas 2012; de Haas et al. 2010).

In addition to the literature on border control, scholars increasingly pay attention to the 'softer' approaches to migration governance, including information campaigns on the dangers of irregular migration and employment programmes to create incentives for people to stay (Bartels 2017; Black et al. 2022; Geiger & Pécoud 2010; McKeon 2018; Pagogna & Sakdapolrak 2021; Rodriguez 2019; Tjaden & Gninafon 2022; Vammen 2021). Rodriquez (2019) argues that information campaigns, which are becoming more frequent, build on two assumptions; first that youth have local livelihood alternatives to mobility, and secondly, that more information would make them defer plans of mobility. Vammen (2021) further argues that these campaigns are part of the neoliberal tendency of *migration management*, where potential migrants are seen as responsible individuals who can manage their own risks. While there is still only limited evidence on the effect of these campaigns, several scholars suggest that campaigns do not have any significant impact on reducing irregular mobility (Pagogna & Sakdapolrak 2021; Rodriguez 2019). However, regardless of the effectiveness in reducing migration, Dessel (2021) argues that these campaigns work to depoliticise and obscure the actual reasons for risks during migration journeys, namely the restrictive visa regime and border control. Additionally, a few studies have explored the role of entrepreneurship and employment programmes, which is considered another 'soft' measure in reducing irregular migration from Africa (Black et al. 2022; Langan & Price 2021; McKeon 2018). These programmes build on the rationality that *development can reduce migration* (McKeon 2018). Thus, by targeting the 'root causes' of migration, people will be able to stay in their country of origin. However, scholars also argue that these projects usually fail since they are impacted by external conditions outside the scope of the project, such as potential dysfunctions in the local market (Black et al. 2022; Langan & Price 2021; McKeon 2018).

Generally, most literature on migration governance in West Africa has focused on EU's influence and the different rationalities and discourses employed. While the focus on non-state actors is increasing, the local level implementers are still almost absent from migration studies in the African context. Finally, while border control has been discussed extensively, and the focus on 'softer' forms of migration governance is emerging, no studies have yet brought these practices of control, humanitarianism, and neoliberal governance of migration together. To address this gap, the study aims at exploring how the different rationalities, techniques and actors interact, contradict, and reinforce each other. Further, the thesis aims to contribute to the literature on local level implementers by exploring how both state and non-state actors work together in governmental assemblages aimed at migration governance. Finally, the specific focus on the Gambia contributes to the literature on migration issues in the country, which is currently very limited with only a few studies on migration governance (Aucoin 2022; Marino et al. 2022; Zanker & Altrogge 2017).

4. Theoretical grounding

The following chapter presents the theoretical grounding of the thesis. First, it introduces the concept of *governmentality*. Secondly, it discusses the specific approach of this thesis, which is primarily based on Tania Li's (2007) framework for studying government.

The concept of *governmentality* originates from a series of lectures by Michel Foucault between 1977-79 (Dean 2009). While Foucault never developed an exact definition or theory around *governmentality* a large field of studies has emerged around the concept (Walters 2012). Governmentality is an approach to study how populations are governed. It is different from the study of states, since it is an analysis of the different ways power is exercised by multiple actors through various techniques for a range of purposes (Dean 2009). Foucault developed the concept through a genealogy of the western European state, showing how the state was governmentalised. This involved a move from authoritarian government relying on sovereign power expressed as the right to take life, to liberal and social forms of government that work at the level of population and are concerned with the optimisation of life, health, and welfare (Dean 2009; Walters 2012). Thus, the task of government is to regulate, order and distribute things, and the relations between humans and things to improve the welfare of populations (Li 2007). The process of governmentalisation did not replace sovereign power,

but reconfigured sovereignty and discipline to work alongside governmental power (which is also referred to as biopolitics) in a triangle with the population as its main target (Dean 2009). While sovereign power works through coercion and relies on a rationality of law, discipline works by surveillance and supervision to discipline individuals and punish unconformity (Ziai 2009). Finally, governmental power or biopower works through processes external to the state by creating the conditions for individuals and communities to govern themselves (Dean 2009).

While these three forms of power are present in government, Walters (2012) has noted a tendency in governmentality studies to mainly focus on neoliberal rationalities and techniques where power relations work through communities and self-managing individuals coordinated by the market. However, while neoliberal governmentality might be dominating in some contexts, he argues that government rarely works through a single form of power. Instead, biopolitics, discipline and sovereignty work alongside each other in heterogenous and unstable assemblages (Dean 2009; Li 2007; Walters 2012). Such governmental assemblages of loosely connected collections of specific forms of knowledge, rationalities, techniques and subjectivities are explored in this thesis (Dean 2009; Li 2007). Following Li's (2007) approach, this thesis shows how these assemblages work in the context of migration governance in the Gambia to *problematise* and *render migration technical.* Further, it shows how there are *limits to what government* can achieve.

4.1 Governmental assemblages

Li (2007) argues that two processes within governmental assemblages are involved in rendering issues into projects of government. First, issues are *problematised,* whereby gaps or deficiencies in the target of improvement are identified (Li 2007). Secondly, issues are *rendered technical* to reduce them to a governable domain. This involves representing the issue to be governed with specific limits and characteristics, gathering knowledge and information on the issue, and devising techniques and practices to govern (Li 2007). The process of rendering technical relies on specific rationalities, understood as ways of thinking in a systematic way, making calculations and applying a certain type of knowledge for a specific purpose (Li 2007; Walters 2012). Dean (2009) argues that no specific form of rationality – such as liberalism or authoritarianism – or technique can be assumed. Instead,

how specific *rationalities*, *techniques* and *subjectivities* work to govern, is what is to be empirically studied.

Li (2007; 2019) argues further that the processes of problematisation and rendering technical co-emerges, since problems are framed to fit existing solutions. Further, it is noted that there are at least two effects of rendering technical. First, when certain forms of knowledge are devised, a hierarchy is created between those who knows, those who are positioned as what she calls trustees, on one hand, and those who are subject to expert knowledge on the other. This sets trustees in a position of power to devise how people are to be governed (Li 2007). Secondly, issues that are rendered technical are also rendered non-political, since they exclude questions of political and economic structures producing systemic inequalities (Li 2007). Finally, Li (2007) argues that governmental assemblages have a dimension of what she calls *anti-politics*. This implies that government is designed to contain potential contestation to the existing regime by providing support to those who would potentially raise critique. This can be seen as similar to the pastoral form of power identified by Foucault and described by Dean (2009) and Walters (2012), which in modern government is a social form of power working to compensate for and legitimise the adversities created by the prevailing regime of government. The table below presents pastoral power along with sovereignty, discipline and biopolitics, as these are explored in the analysis.

Table 4.1: Different forms of power in government

Power	Sovereignty	Discipline	Biopolitics	Pastoral power
What?	• Law • Constitution	• Normative judgement	• Self-government through the economy and society	• Universal social solidarity • Obedience • Duty
How?	• Coercion • Repression • Limitation	• Surveillance • Supervision • Detailed control and regulation	• Incentives • Conditioning desires, habits and aspirations	• Guidance • Education • Charity
To what end?	• Legal and political subjects	• Docile and useful subjects	• Self-governing social and economic subjects	• Obedient and needful subjects

Source: Dean 2009; Li 2007; Walters 2012; Ziai 2009. Design by author.

4.2 Limits to government

Li (2007) further argues that there are *limits to government*. She diverges from some scholars in the field of governmentality studies by considering the political and the potential for

contestation a limit to government. Some scholars have criticised the concept of governmentality for paying too little attention to the political (Loomba 2005; Rodin 2017). Since power is understood as diffuse and present in multiple forms and ways, there is no basis for discussing struggles and contestations, since it cannot be explained where power originates from (Rodin 2017). However, Li (2007) argues that the political, which stands at the limit of government, is exposed through contestations by the population targeted in programmes of improvement. However, while excusing for the messiness of her approach, she draws on different traditions in addition to governmentality, including Marxism and Actor-Network theory, to be able to discuss the limits to government (Li 2007). She notes that while some governmentality scholars have argued for the ability of government to absorb the struggles and contestations of governmental programmes by rendering the issues of contestation technical, she argues that government is a project, which is not necessarily accomplished. There are limits to what government can achieve and that is why government sometimes fails (Li 2007). She argues that government is shaped by political-economic relations beyond the scope of government and thus unreachable for governmental assemblages. Further, by referring to Bruno Latour she argues that things are actants, so the climate, epidemics and even the population exceeds the power of government. Finally, she argues that there are limits to experts' or trustees' knowledge, which consequently prevents an all-comprehensive calculation and devising of techniques. Li (2007) thus, investigates the encounter between government and those processes exceeding the scope of government in order to expose the limits to government. Similarly, Walters (2015) suggests that governmentality should be encountered, rather than applied, to look for issues of contestation, negotiation, fractures, and obstacles to the functionality of government. By making government strange, exploring its constitution and its limits, Li (2007) argues that it is possible to think critically of *"what is and what might be"* (p.2).

In this thesis, the governmental assemblages aimed at irregular migration from the Gambia is encountered to provide a critique of how migration is governed. This is not to judge the 'good' and the 'bad' of governmental assemblages (Dean 2009; Li 2007). Rather, the task is to provide a critique that explores the conditions of government, how issues are problematised and rendered technical, what rationalities and techniques are used and how these conditions fall short when encountering processes that exceed the scope of government. This works to explore how power is constituted in government, expose its limits, and potentially question what ways of government are possible. While drawing on Li's (2007),

Dean's (2009) and Walters' (2012; 2015) insights to governmentality, the analysis is guided by three analytical questions drawn from Li's (2007) approach to governmentality: 1) *How is 'irregular' migration from the Gambia towards Europe problematised? 2) How is 'irregular' migration from the Gambia towards Europe rendered technical? 3) What are the limits to government in Gambian migration governance?*

5. Methodology

The following chapter presents the approach and methods for data collection and analysis. It outlines the research design, and secondly, discusses the data collection and analysis. Finally, it discusses ethical considerations and limits to the data.

The study follows a poststructuralist approach where knowledge systems are explored to expose their construction and effects (Loomba 2005). In this understanding knowledge is implicated with power, which works through everyday practices and routines both informed by and, in turn, informing systems of knowledge (Ettlinger 2011; Li 2007). Governmental assemblages are thus explored by engaging with texts drawn from the specific rationalities and techniques employed (Hansen 2009; Loomba 2005).

The study is carried out as an embedded case study exploring three approaches to government within the broader case of migration governance in the Gambia (Yin 2003). The study is treated as an intrinsic case study to gain a holistic and in-depth understanding of the specific case of the Gambia (Bryman 2012; Creswell & Poth 2018). For this reason, the research has taken an abductive approach, starting inductively and later identifying a theory that would best make sense of the collected data (Bryman 2012). Data collection started primarily inductively guided by the two observations that: 1) the Gambia has a significantly high rate of Europe-bound migration through irregular means (Armitano 2017; Faal 2020) and 2) there is a research gap on implementing actors in migration governance (Andersson 2014a; Marino et al. 2022; Walters 2015). While an extensive review of migration literature and theories was conducted before collecting data, this was continuously re-read during data collection to explore how existing frameworks could help making sense of the data (Bryman 2012; Creswell & Poth 2018). During the fieldwork, however, research participants brought up issues of power relations which resembled Tania Li's (2007) account of governmentality in

the Indonesian development landscape. Thus, the concept of governmentality was explored further and used in the analysis of data.

Similarly, the research design was adapted through the research process. Whereas I had planned to carry out a single case study, it appeared that three approaches to migration governance could be distinguished. To make sense of these approaches, the study explores these as three separate, however, interacting sub-units within the broader case of migration governance in the Gambia (Yin 2003). Thus, an embedded case study design was followed, not with the purpose of generalising across cases or assuming causality, but rather to explore diversity amongst the three approaches by mapping their differences, interactions, dependencies, and limits (Moses & Knutsen 2012; Yin 2003).

5.1 Data collection

Data was collected during eight weeks in the Gambia[1] through semi-structured interviews, participant observation and to a lesser extent documentary data to complement interviews and participant observation. Multiple methods for data collection were included to gain as holistic an understanding as possible (Creswell & Poth 2018). The research participants were chosen through purposive criterion sampling where actors working with irregular migration as one of their main activities were mapped and contacted (Bryman 2012). This included both governmental-, civil society- and international actors. Thirty-five actors were contacted, and 21 interviews were conducted (see appendix B for research participants).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted, since they allow for flexibility to explore people's thoughts and ideas, and they are open to unexpected themes and perspectives (Bryman 2012; Creswell & Poth 2018). This flexibility provided better conditions for creating trust in the interview situation, which potentially has reduced issues of unequal power relations and facilitated co-creation of the data (Punch 2005). This was important to allow for critical perspectives to be voiced especially in relation to the EU and the role of international organisations (Hammett et al. 2015). Even though most research participants were in high-level positions in their respective organisations and thus senior to me as a student, there was still an aspect of inequality specifically related to the issue of migration,

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[1] Data was collected primarily in Serekunda, the largest city in the Gambia, but also in Banjul, the capital, and in Basse, Kudang and Barra where relevant actors are located. It was prioritised to also interview actors located outside of Serekunda to explore the specific issues of actors working 'in the field'.

where I as a white researcher with a European passport have access to mobility in a way unavailable for most research participants – an issue which was pointed out by several research participants.

Research participants were contacted via email or WhatsApp with a short explanation of the purpose of the study and an initial request for an interview. They were asked about their preferred time and location for the interview to ensure it would be as convenient and comfortable for them as possible (Hammett et al. 2015). Interviews were conducted in English as this is the official language in the Gambia. I started interviews by introducing myself and the study. It was explained that participation was voluntary, they were free to not answer, to end the interview any time, and to contact me afterwards if wanting to withdraw consent or correct any information given during the interviews. It was asked how they preferred to be quoted in the report and consent to record the interview was requested. Finally, it was clarified that data would be stored safely and presented in anonymous form (Banks & Scheyvens 2014; Hammett et al. 2015). Most respondents agreed to having the interview recorded, while two interviews were documented through note taking during the interview followed by more extensive notes immediately after. The interview guide contained a number of themes to be discussed, including actors' activities related to migration, their policies and frameworks for these activities and their cooperation with other actors (see appendix A for interview guide). However, the interviews were conducted in a flexible way where the structure primarily followed the narration of the respondent, while it was attempted to have all themes from the interview guide covered (Hammett et al. 2015). All interviews were ended by asking, if participants had any additional perspectives to add as well as ensuring that all interview participants had my contacts to be able to reach out after the interview.

To complement the data from interviews, participant observation was carried out at activities related to migration governance (see appendix C for a list of settings). This has been helpful in confirming and clarifying insights gained from interviews, while it has worked to reveal unexpected issues and perspectives that was explored further during interviews (DeWalt & DeWalt 2011). Observation was primarily unstructured where no guide was followed but detailed fieldnotes were taken. This was done during the participation where possible e.g., in conferences and meetings where note-taking was appropriate. After each activity, more extensive fieldnotes were written digitally to capture as much detail as possible (DeWalt &

DeWalt 2011). I took a role of participating observer by revealing my role as a researcher during all activities, while participating as much as appropriate (Creswell & Creswell 2018). While my presence inevitably has affected situations, I did not reveal my own perspectives and opinions in an attempt to limit my influence. Further, the data collected through observation might to a higher degree be affected by my own potential biases (Patton 2015). For this reason, the data is primarily used to complement interviews. In addition to participant observation in settings relevant to migration governance, extensive fieldnotes were taken especially during the first half of my stay in the Gambia to gain as much understanding of the cultural and social context as possible (Hammett et al. 2015; Tracy 2010).

5.2 Data analysis

All interviews were transcribed and analysed through thematic analysis guided by questions drawn from Li's (2007) approach to governmentality (Braun & Clarke 2012). All data was initially mapped according to which of the three sub-cases it informed. In a second step, data within each of the sub-cases were mapped following Li's (2007) concept of *problematisations* and Dean's (2009) concepts of *rationality*, *technique* and *subjectivity*. Further, by following Walters' (2012; 2015) and Li's (2007) suggestion, issues of contestation and obstacles to the functionality of the specific governmental assemblage were mapped to capture potential limits to government. In a third step, data relevant to the three analytical questions within each sub-case was coded according to the meaning of the data. Finally, codes were collected and summarised in themes and major patterns appearing most significant and relevant to the research questions (Braun & Clarke 2012). In addition to this primarily structured approach, meta notes were taken throughout the data collection and analysis to reveal emerging issues and findings that could be further explored, confirmed or contested throughout the work with the data. This has helped in identifying issues emerging across the data and assessing the significance of issues in relation to the whole of the data (Hammett et al. 2015).

5.3 Considerations on ethics

To conduct the study as ethically as possible by not doing any harm, I ensured – in addition to the interview process described above - to be as transparent as possible about my position, the purpose of the data collection and what could and could not be expected in return for

participating (Banks & Scheyvens 2014; Tracy 2010). Further, to represent research participants' perspectives best possible, I have continuously engaged with research participants during data collection and analysis to check preliminary findings and gain additional insights (Punch 2005; Tracy 2010).

I decided not to interview migrants for the study due to ethical considerations of not wanting to bring up traumatic experiences for returnees for the purpose of this study (Wolf 2021). As an outsider, not being able to provide support for returnees, harm could potentially be done by creating unfulfilled expectations of support in return of sharing migration stories (Banks & Scheyvens 2014). While it can be argued that migrants are silenced and made invisible by not including them in a study on migration, I decided that the scope of the study could not justify the involvement of returned migrants as research participants (Kapoor 2004; Sultana 2007). This does however not mean that I am unaware of migrants' situations, since I studied the experiences of sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco for my bachelor thesis. Further, I also met several people in the Gambia who had taken the journey towards Europe and who were sharing their stories when learning that I was conducting a study on migration. However, to avoid being in a position where I would ask questions that could push people to an uncomfortable situation, I did not conduct interviews with returnees. This also means that any information obtained from conversations with returnees is not included in the study but have inevitably directed the data collection and my general understanding of the context around migration governance in the Gambia (Banks & Scheyvens 2014)[2].

5.4 Limitations to the collected data

One limitation to the study is the lack of generalisability. As the study is carried out in the specific context of the Gambia, it is not possible to generalise the findings to other contexts (Bryman 2012; Creswell & Poth 2018). This does however not mean that the findings cannot inform and add to the general literature on migration governance in the region (Flyvbjerg 2006). Further, due to the limited time spent in the Gambia and since some actors were not willing or able to participate, the case has not been covered in full by including perspectives from all actors working with migration in the Gambia (Tracy 2010). A specific case in point is the issue of women's inclusion in migration governance. While no research participant

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[2] To prepare for situations where I would talk with returned migrants, I took a course on psychological first aid and received guidance from previous colleagues working with vulnerable migrants on how to ensure that conversations on migration experiences would not do any harm.

addressed this, the only organisation claiming to work through a feminist approach was not available to participate. While the absence of issues is also worth noting, the diversity of perspectives might be limited due to availability of research participants and time spent in the field (Tracy 2010). However, since some level of data saturation was reached, it is assumed that a majority of perspectives relevant to the case are included (Bryman 2012).

6. Analysis

The remainder of the thesis presents and discusses the findings. First, it outlines the migration governance landscape in the Gambia. Secondly, it presents the three approaches to migration governance identified in the Gambia separately, as distinct governmental assemblages, starting with the security assemblage, then the humanitarian assemblage and finally the development assemblage. Finally, a discussion concludes and points to suggestions for further research.

The study finds that actors work in parallel and in cooperation in three distinct but interacting governmental assemblages. The three assemblages work according to specific problematisations, rationalities and techniques, but they interact and to some extent depend on each other for continued existence. While actors in the Gambia for the most part are the ones devising techniques in these assemblages, they are at the same time, well-aware of the reasons why their attempts at governing migration sometimes fails. These reasons are however beyond the scope of their intervention where they do not have the ability or legitimacy to act. Consequently, they continue their work - since something is better than nothing - while being aware of the irrationality and ultimately ineffectiveness of these governmental assemblages.

6.1 Migration governance in the Gambia

Generally, the Gambian government is largely absent from migration governance as indicated in literature (Faal 2020). Instead, local CSOs, European based- and international organisations have stepped in, often engaging with local authorities, especially the Gambian Immigration Department. These actors come together in three governmental assemblages. The first is labelled the security-assemblage and consists of actors working to stop migrants

through traditional security methods of border control, coast guarding and surveillance. The second, which is labelled the humanitarian-assemblage consists of actors working, not to stop migrants, but rather to protect people while they are on the move by providing assistance such as food, shelter, health care and information. Finally, the third approach is labelled the development-assemblage. These actors work to incentivise people to stay in the Gambia through business- and employment programmes and by providing information on the dangers of irregular migration. They are working according to the rationality that economic development will reduce emigration (Deridder et al. 2020; Üstübici & Ergün 2020). While these three assemblages have different objectives and work according to different rationalities and techniques, they all problematise and render the issue of migration technical (Li 2007). Likewise, they all face limits to achieving their objectives. While these assemblages are distinguished and discussed separately in the following, it is worth noting that there is no clear-cut separation or division between these. The categorisation is rather an abstraction facilitating the sense-making of the data. As is shown in the analysis, actors, rationalities and techniques work across and interact between these three assemblages.

6.2 Security assemblage

The security-approach is discussed first. This starts with an outline of how the issue of migration is problematised and rendered technical. Since these two processes are closely interlinked, where problematisations are fit to existing solutions, these are presented together (Li 2019). Finally, the limits to this governmental assemblage are discussed.

The first assemblage consists of those who aim to stop irregular migration through techniques, such as border control, investigation, and surveillance. These actors argue that their ultimate objective is to save lives by not letting people risk their lives in the sea or the desert attempting to reach Europe. The issue is thus problematised as one of the dangers of the sea, the desert, and exploitative agents[3]. In this way, a humanitarian discourse of protection is used to justify border control. Literature has highlighted how European policies use the same discourse of protection, however, with an underlying aim to reduce migration to ensure the integrity of European borders (Andersson 2014a; Cuttitta 2020; Deridder et al. 2020). European interests are however almost absent from the discussion with Gambian

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[3] 'Agent' is the term mostly used by local actors and migrants in the Gambia, while international and European organisations usually use the term 'smuggler'.

actors. Instead, they argue that they, rather than the EU, have a genuine interest in protecting their people from the sea and the desert.

The rationalities and techniques used in response to the problematisation above, such as border control, interceptions, and detention with reference to law, are associated with sovereign power. While these techniques are common in liberal government as much as in authoritarian government, Walters (2012) argue that sovereign power is rarely discussed in governmentality studies. Hindess (2001) has however, shown how this form of power and its associated techniques has historically been justified in liberal government towards people who are deemed incapable of managing their individual freedom. In the case of the Gambia, while people have the right to move, they are also deemed unable to understand why they should not embark on dangerous migration journeys. Thus, interception and detention become a necessary means to protect people from the dangers of the sea and the desert. One actor explains:

> Sometimes when we are telling them not to go; they get very angry. "You cannot keep telling us; you cannot tell us anything that will make us not to go". Because they have friends who travelled through the same way. So, it's difficult to convince them. It's difficult (04).

The presence of sovereign power that greatly constrains people's freedom is also shown by Li (2007) who explains that some extent of violence is justified in liberal government as long as it is for the welfare of the population, in this case to protect people from risking their lives.

Another problematisation identified by actors in this assemblage is the lack of equipment. For the techniques above to be efficient, they need equipment. However, by reducing the problem to a matter of procuring and installing equipment, the issue is clearly rendered technical as suggested by Li (2007). The response is equally narrow where one of the main activities is the donation, primarily from the Spanish and Japanese governments, of equipment, ranging from vehicles and boats to specialised data collection systems and furniture at border posts. This equipment is in turn used to implement the necessary measures to protect people. One example is the increasing tracking and monitoring of population movements across borders in West Africa with the Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS). This system is not only being installed in the Gambia, but also in at least 17 other countries in Africa (IOM 2018). Except from monitoring routes and migration flows, which Gambian

authorities use to rationalise interventions, the system is used to collect biometric information to track individual's movement across borders. This system works as part of what Dean (2009) calls an international biopolitics where population movements are governed by categorising and separating people to identify the 'criminal' and 'dangerous' to contain them. This resembles the categorisation made by Gambian authorities to protect those who are incapable of self-government. However, instead of framing migrants as incapable and *at risk*, this system rather presumes migrants as a threat and *a risk*. While the procurement of new equipment might solve the initial problem, one actor explains, that it might also give rise to new problems:

> *Some of them will complain about the technical know-how to operate some of those equipment. You get me a car, I don't know how to drive it, it becomes a white elephant. So, these are some of the challenges, they are affected with (08).*

In this way, the technical solution only leads to an additional problem, namely the lack of training and technical know-how for border officials. While Li (2007) explains that some governmentality-scholars argue that fractures can be absorbed by applying another technical solution - in this case trainings - she on the contrary, argues that there is a limit to what government can achieve. As long as the problem is defined narrowly to fit existing technical solutions, there will be a point where no more technical solutions can be applied to cover for earlier fractures.

Finally, as argued by Li (2007), one effect of rendering technical, is that some are positioned as experts with power to devise the right techniques. In the Gambia, this is seen in the long-term cooperation between the Gambian authorities, and the Spanish police, the Guardia Civil and German police. This includes training and supervision on how to carry out border control and coast guarding. The Spanish representation explains:

> *Even though we're not going to impose our approaches, it's useful to know the different approaches. So that was mainly on border management actions, protocols, human rights, and how to act in a way that is appropriate to protect also these vulnerable people that are being smuggled or trafficked.*

In this way, Spanish authorities are present, partially on behalf of the EU, to educate Gambian authorities on how to conduct their work in the best way. While this positions

Spanish and German actors as trustees with the power to devise techniques, it is argued in literature that when border control is outsourced in this way, the responsibility to manage risks is transferred downwards to implementing actors (Andersson 2014a, 2014b; Dean 2009). In the Gambia, this is seen when the IOM, Spain and Germany on behalf of the EU, charge the Gambian authorities with the responsibility of managing the flow of people towards Europe. Further, in a relatively secretive new initiative, young volunteers in local communities are recruited to carry out community surveillance and report peers who are planning to embark on migration journeys.

> *What we do is, we also try to develop what we call community surveillances; that we train some people in the community to serve as surveillance - to watch. Okay; there is somebody organising a boat…, they share information with us, we share information with the Immigration [department] and they take action (14).*

While surveillance is traditionally associated with disciplinary power, charging community volunteers to carry out the surveillance is closer to liberal forms of government where communities and individuals are mobilised to manage their own risks (Dean 2009). In this way, sovereign-, disciplinary- and liberal forms of power are intertwined when local communities are mobilised to carry out surveillance, if not directly on behalf of the EU, then at least contributing to European objectives of reducing irregular immigration from the Gambia.

6.2.1 Limits to government

In Li's (2007) account, limits to government are exposed by resistance from the population targeted in programmes of improvement or deducted from theory. However, in this study in the Gambia, implementing actors themselves are well-aware of and willing to express these limits. Several actors mention the lack of legal frameworks to stop potential migrants as an obstacle to their work. While interventions are rationalised by legal frameworks, there is currently no law illegalising the movement from the Gambia towards Europe at the point of crossing the Gambian border. The ECOWAS (2010) agreement provides the right to move to bordering Senegal while the right to leave one's country is stated in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (2021). Thus, to get around these frameworks, actors argue that they need a law on smuggling of people. However, in the absence of such a law, border officials are confined to work in creative or even irrational ways to justify interceptions and

punishment: "*What we do instead is to punish smugglers for small things related to the smuggling. So, things they do in the process, which are criminal. Those we can charge them for" (11)*. These are often petty crimes such as trespassing when gathering people before the journey.

In this way, the legal rationality fails when encountering the lack of legal frameworks necessary for government. A consequence is what can be called failed trusteeship. Whereas border officials are assumed to be in a position of power to stop people at the border, the lack of a legal framework means that border officials can only try to talk the right rationality into people and convince them to stay: "*We cannot stop people, but we can frustrate you... So, if we give them problems, they might confess, and then we will discourage them to go on the journey" (11)*. Border officials also explain that they feel sympathy and familiarity with migrants. They see them as *brothers* and identify with their objectives. This further contributes to failed trusteeship, since the separation and hierarchy between border officials and potential migrants necessary for the governmental assemblage to function, simply does not exist.

A second hindrance to the work of the security assemblage is the outline of the border. Almost all actors agree that the porous character of the border is amongst the main reasons why attempts to control the border fails. According to Li's (2007) framework, the border with its social and economic life cutting across, could be seen as an actant which cannot be governed. However, research participants point out that the border is not an autonomous actor, but a product of an earlier governmental regime:

> *We were only divided by colonialism. Communities are living closely together across the borders. One house might be right on the border, so in one side you are in Senegal and the other you are in the Gambia. So, the Gambian border is very difficult to control (11).*

Finally, the most significant limit to the security assemblage is the disregard of the reasons why people migrate. While the dangers of the sea and the desert are identified as the main problem, several actors point to economic inequalities as the reason why people migrate from the Gambia. They argue that migration is rooted in inequalities going back to colonial times and that current migration flows are part of a continued colonial pattern.

During the slave trade, when the Europeans were coming into this country, they actually came through the backway. So, what goes around comes around. They used the boats to come here. Now we're also using the boats. They believe that Europeans actually stole, overgraze on our land until we turn; now we have to go back using the same backway. Now they don't want us to go (04).

Hence, unsafe migration can only be reduced if these inequalities are recognised and addressed. Actors in this assemblage, however, express that they are unable to do anything or do not see it as their mandate to address global economic inequalities. That is beyond the scope of their technical field. Instead, they explain that other actors need to provide economic opportunities within the Gambia to address the reasons why people are leaving. Many point to the EU and the Gambian government as responsible for providing job opportunities for youth in the country. This is in line with the rationality of addressing the 'root causes' of migration which the development-assemblage relies on, as will be shown later (Castles et al. 2014; Üstübici & Ergün 2020). Further, it is in line with research arguing that irregular migration cannot be stopped or even reduced with more border control. Instead, people will simply be forced to move by increasingly dangerous routes as long as there are no legal ways of migrating (Cross 2009; Pastore 2021).

6.3 Humanitarian assemblage

The following chapter outlines how the issue of migration is problematised and rendered technical in the humanitarian assemblage. It shows that the humanitarian assemblage intertwines with the security assemblage and that non-state actors complement the work of state actors. Finally, it discusses the limits to this governmental assemblage.

The second governmental assemblage includes those actors working only to protect people from risks and suffering, but with no intention to influence people's mobility. They work by providing services such as shelter, food, health care, clothes, transport, counselling, and legal advice (O23). Similar to the security assemblage, they problematise the issue of migration as a matter of the dangers of the sea and the desert. It is assumed that migrants face risks due to a lack of resources and information on how to navigate safely on their journey. As a response, actors provide information on how individuals can manage their own risks, for example how

to behave when encountering border officials or smugglers. Unlike, the security assemblage, actors in this assemblage argue that migrants do not need to give up their migration journeys. They have the right to migrate, and they are seen as capable of protecting themselves during the journey with the support from humanitarian actors. In this way, actors stress humanitarian values and safety rather than legal frameworks when rationalising their work. One actor explains:

> *We work with the migrants regardless of their status. We don't encourage, we don't discourage migration. We just focus on the humanitarian needs and the humanitarian perspective. - We just focus on the vulnerabilities of the migrant, we don't look at the legal status (21).*

By referring to supposedly universal humanitarian values, actors raise the issue of protection beyond the state and politics and emphasise their impartial and neutral stance. Thus, as Li (2007) argues, when issues are rendered technical, they are also rendered non-political. Similarly, literature suggests that employing a humanitarian discourse works to depoliticise issues of migration governance, since it is difficult to argue against protection and alleviation of suffering (Cuttitta 2020; Geiger & Pécoud 2010). However, in the Gambia, migration is not only rendered non-political by discourse, but also through practices. This happens when humanitarian actors – along with most other actors - disregard the role of the restrictive visa regime despite most literature arguing that this is exactly the cause of risks and fatalities (Cross 2009; de Haas 2006; Pastore 2021). Actors do not question the fact that crossing the sea or the desert are the only options for migration from the Gambia. Instead, they work to ensure that people at least have better chances of surviving, while still struggling to move through the violence created in this restrictive regime. Drawing on Li's (2007) framework, this can be seen as a form of anti-politics to contain potential resistance against the visa regime. By showing that services and protection are provided to migrants, and by being present when security actors intercept and detain migrants, these techniques provide a humanitarian face to coercive forms of power exercised by the security assemblage.

Specifically, this can be seen as a form of pastoral power, that works to compensate for the risks and thus legitimises the security assemblage (Dean 2009; Walters 2012). This form of power operates by guiding migrants through the risks and dangers by fostering a certain form of self-government. One actor explains: "*We provide them information on migrant rights, on*

how they can access services, also on how they can build self-resilience as migrants while on their journey" (01). Walters (2010) however labels the type of pastoral power seen at the humanitarian border today, *neo-pastoralism*. He argues that this is temporary and ad-hoc, in contrast to the permanent and life-encompassing form it had originally in the Middle Ages' church (Walters 2010). While this concept of neo-pastoralism has not been explored by others, it is seen in the Gambia that assistance is precisely provided in a temporary and restricted manner where only some are eligible and there is a limit on support. Whereas security actors rationalise their interventions according to law, humanitarian actors rationalise support according to a vulnerability-criteria. One actor explains: "*When you come, we have criteria. First, you should be a migrant in transit. We target women and children, elderly people and other vulnerable people who are suit by the criteria" (09).* Walters (2010) argues that this is a form of minimalist biopolitics, where only the bare minimum is provided for people to survive the journey. Not out of lack of resources, but rather as a liberal calculation to avoid that people become dependent on social services.

While the humanitarian assemblage might work to legitimise coercive forms of power, it does however also work in more subtle ways to push for a humanitarian practice within the security assemblage. This is done by providing trainings for security actors on human rights, first aid, identification- and protection of vulnerable migrants. While literature suggests that small local CSOs might be able to negotiate a more human rights centred practice with security actors (Bisong 2021; Marino et al. 2022; Schierup et al. 2018), it is seen in the Gambia, that humanitarian non-state actors are often not small local CSOs, but to a higher degree national branches of large international networks with enough capacity and resources to push for humanitarian practices. Finally, while the humanitarian assemblage is both legitimising and subtly contesting the security approach, it is also highly dependent on the existence of the security assemblage. As argued by Walters (2010), humanitarian governance is only emerging as a product of government by sovereign power where *"border crossing has become a matter of life and death"* (p.146). If legal migration by regular routes was an option for Gambian migrants, the need for protection would simply not exist. In this way, the security and humanitarian assemblages with their distinct rationalities and forms of power are closely intertwined.

A second problematisation framed by the humanitarian assemblage is the lack of government initiative in protecting migrants. Thus, the issue to be fixed is problematised as a lack of

capacity by the government to protect its population. Based on a narrative drawn from the human rights-based approach (HRBA) actors argue that the government as 'duty bearers' are currently not fulfilling their responsibility of protecting people against the dangers of migration. While the HRBA can entail an advocacy approach where civil society pushes the government to take responsibility (Uvin 2007), CSOs in this assemblage rather see it as their role to step in to complement the work of the government by providing services. This rationality is voiced by both CSOs and government actors. One CSO explains:

> *We support efforts of the government in that area. So, I mean, of course, in any country, the state is the primary duty bearer, right? And you have the right holders who are the people, of course. So, it's up to the state to ensure that these protection services are provided, but if the state in one way or the other has a capacity gap, this is where relevant actors could step in to provide that service (01).*

In this way, humanitarian actors see it as their role to provide services rather than to advocate for the government to deliver. This rationality is conveniently appreciated by government actors:

> *They are complementing the efforts of the government. You know, the government can also not do everything. When it comes to manpower, staff, they are the ones paying the staff salary. So, the NGOs, they are there to complement the government efforts to be able to address some of these... migration issues (19).*

While the government welcomes non-state actors to provide protection services on their behalf, literature has noted that the increasing engagement of non-state actors in protecting the most vulnerable raises questions of accountability and legitimacy of the actors substituting for the government (Bartels 2017; Geiger & Pécoud 2010).

6.3.1 Limits to government

Unlike actors in the security assemblage, who willingly expressed the limits to their governmental assemblage, actors in the humanitarian assemblage are generally wary of expressing critique or contestations due to their non-political and impartial stance. Instead, actors express technical limits to their projects or hindrances within the assemblage. One limit is the strict boundaries each of the actors have drawn for their own technical field of intervention, which constrains actors from cooperating. While partnerships are prioritised and

necessary in the security- and development assemblages, actors in the humanitarian assemblage only meet and engage on an ad-hoc basis. One actor explains why they cannot work with other CSOs doing similar work: "*Because we have different mandates, the project mandates are kind of like this... they support stranded migrants, but for us, we support migrant returnees that are from the Gambia*" (15). In this way, the dependence on external funding and the technical fields defined for their work constrains actors from cooperating. While many humanitarian actors have resources and capacity to work independently, since they are supported by international networks, they end up working in parallel within the Gambia. This means, that the humanitarian assemblage is somewhat unstable and uncoordinated within the Gambia, while actors are to a higher degree attached to each their international humanitarian network.

While actors mainly express internal hindrances or dysfunctions of the assemblage itself, it is however, possible to identify at least one limit to this form of government when it encounters structures beyond the assemblage. Similar to the security approach, the humanitarian assemblage also disregards the political and economic structures producing risks and vulnerabilities for migrants. One research participant explains that the limited scope of their intervention is due to donor priorities:

> *You know that EU when they're spending their money, they already have an interest why they want to spend this money for: for Gambia or for this particular thing. So once that interest is being achieved, you see them go and the problems continue (02).*

In this way, the actor explains that the disregard of the structures causing the vulnerabilities of migrants is not necessarily because actors do not understand the broader problem. Rather, it is because of the constraints and requirements of donor funding, which might work to serve other purposes in a European governmental assemblage simultaneously with the functions assigned to it in the Gambian humanitarian assemblage. As literature explains, the EU might fund projects as a form of European anti-politics only to show their population that something is being done to reduce irregular migration, without being overly concerned with whether it has any impact or not in the country of implementation (de Haas 2008). In this way, governmental assemblages become entangled across regions. Since, if the EU did not have an agenda of reducing irregular migration, there would be less funding for humanitarian actors in the Gambia. Finally, one research participant did however point to the violence of the

border regime as one of the causes for migrants' vulnerabilities (01). However, he stressed that this was his personal view and not the view of the organisation. In this way, it can be argued, that when actors are wary of providing critique of the current regime, but instead provide a humanitarian face and compensate for at least some of the damage caused, they de-facto legitimise the violent regime and thus contributes to its continuation.

6.4 Development assemblage

The third assemblage is labelled *development*. While this term can hold a plurality of meanings, it is used here, since the rationality of this assemblage follows the idea of targeting the 'root causes' of migration with economic development (Deridder et al. 2020; Ziai 2009). In this assemblage actors argue that they do not discourage migration, since migration is a human right. Instead, they provide incentives to stay in the Gambia through business grants and skills development as well as information campaigns on the dangers of migration journeys. In this way, they appeal to individuals' self-government and 'rational' calculation of risks and benefits of staying or going.

Actors problematise irregular migration from the Gambia as caused by a lack of economic opportunities, including employment and education for youth. While this was recognised as a limit to the security- and humanitarian assemblages, the development assemblage works exactly to target economic inequality as a driver of migration. The techniques used include business grants, cash-for-work programmes, entrepreneurship- and vocational trainings. One actor explains:

> *If we are to do any proper job, we must start from here; address the root causes; that is poverty, provide employment skills maybe train youth in the Gambia and increase the pay packages, for those who are employed. Then maybe you have a chance of stopping people from leaving (07).*

Thus, trainings and economic opportunities are employed as a technical solution to target poverty and provide incentives to stay. Similar to the humanitarian assemblage, development actors also rationalise support by categorising people. In some programmes, youth are only eligible for support, if they are between the age of 18 and 35, have finished an education, and have registered a business. While this works to distinguish those deemed capable of improvement from those who are incapable of improvement, it also works to limit support

and dependency and foster the liberal idea that youth should manage their own risks (Dean 2009; Hindess 2001). Smaller local CSOs however argue that it is a flawed assumption to believe that all potential migrants are entrepreneurs with the ability and interest in starting their own business. Especially regarding returnees, it was explained that people do not work in mechanic ways, where a business grant automatically leads to a successful business. Since returnees sometimes owe money to their family borrowed to finance their migration journey, they would first need to support their family with any earnings from the business (O22).

A second problematisation identified by development actors is that migrants lack information on the dangers of migration. Actors argue that Gambians glorify the journey and the potential opportunities in Europe: "*The challenges here in the Gambia is like changing the perception of people about Europe, it is the hardest thing. Because Gambians are so attached to migration" (14).* Thus, people need to change their perception about Europe and recognise the risks of irregular migration. Contrary to the humanitarian assemblage, development actors do not provide information for people to be able to navigate the risks. Instead, they assume that if people are well-informed about the dangers, they will choose to stay.

The main technique used in response to this problematisation is information campaigns. One of the most prominent current projects is the 'Migrants as Messenger', which is currently funded by the Netherlands and implemented by the IOM. The IOM in turn mobilises returnees from Gambian grassroots organisations as volunteers to share their migration stories to discourage peers from embarking on the journey. Thus, the IOM recognises that returnees' stories and knowledge on the issue is trusted and perceived more legitimate by potential migrants and communities than if IOM employees would be telling the same story. However, this arrangement creates a hierarchy of knowledge, where returnees in local organisations might be positioned as trustees towards potential migrants. However, the ultimate trustees are the IOM programme officers who plan and design these outreach activities and set the frame around how they are carried out. One of the local grassroots organisations explains how they work with the IOM: "*Sometimes I will tell them, it is more of a contract than even a partnership, because, yea, we cannot have partnership in what we are doing. You know, we are always told what to do" (03).* Some local organisations said they felt exploited by the IOM having to work for them without salary, but only for a small allowance. However, the IOM and local organisations seem to engage in mutually dependent engagements, where local organisations might be dependent on the support received from the

IOM while the IOM is dependent on local organisations' knowledge and legitimacy. In addition to mobilising returned migrants, actors also mobilise carefully selected target groups, including rural communities, schoolteachers, and mothers, for them to spread the message of the dangers of migration (O26). As seen in the security approach, this is also part of a liberal government through the processes of society, where community structures and volunteers are mobilised to encourage people to govern others and themselves (Dean 2009).

While literature suggests that these information campaigns work to obscure the reasons why migration is dangerous (Dessel 2020), a few actors do recognise that the reason for the dangers of migration is due to a lack of legal migration routes. However, actors frame the lack of legal migration options as an issue of lack of knowledge on visa regulations. In this way, they fit the problem to a governable scope and an existing solution, namely the development of a website with information on visa regulations. The issue is framed exactly narrowly enough to fit a technical solution, and the issue is rendered non-political by disregarding the potentially discriminatory effects of the visa regime (Li 2007).

A final way of rendering migration technical and non-political is done through the development of frameworks, policies and coordination structures in line with the SDGs and the GCM. One example is the National Coordination Mechanism, which consists of 13 working groups of experts and government officials on thematic and cross-cutting migration issues. While this is referred to as one of the government's main engagements on migration, many research participants indicated that the IOM had played a major role in developing this initiative. However, an IOM employee explains:

> *The National coordination mechanism is government owned, but IOM has provided the technical assistance and has provided information of some scenarios of coordination mechanism in the African region that could be used in the Gambia. However, it is a government led process. It is a platform for the government to coordinate efforts on migration (05).*

While the IOM see their role as technical, their experts have supposedly played a significant role in designing this mechanism and thus setting the conditions for how decisions related to migration governance can be made. Further, research participants indicated that while working groups had been meeting regularly, when it came to delegating responsibilities, most working groups were silent. Thus, drawing on Li's (2007) framework, this mechanism can

also be seen as a form of anti-politics, where the government shows that they work to protect their population, while the actual implementation is rather incomplete.

6.4.1 Limits to government

The development assemblage addresses some of limits to the security- and humanitarian assemblages by targeting economic inequality as the reason for migration. However, while migration is targeted at its 'root', namely economic inequality, the roots of economic inequality are left out of the equation when actors devise techniques. They simply do not see it as their domain of intervention and do not have any available solution. However, as seen in the security- and humanitarian assemblages, this does not mean that research participants are unaware of the broader structures creating inequality. Several actors argue that the reason for economic inequality is continued foreign exploitation. The fishing industry is an often-mentioned example, where illegal fishing and European-Gambian fishing agreements undermine the local fishing industry (O22; O24). One research participant explains how he perceives the European position to migration from the Gambia:

> *I think, it's just a mind game. Why I say it is a mind game; Europe is presenting Europe to the world as the best! America is presenting America to the world as heaven! You are enticing people to come – but Europe and America are presenting Africa as hell, even in your medias. So, what do you want people to do? Everyone wants to go to heaven! This is it. And they wouldn't stop coming to exploit. They wouldn't stop coming to exploit. They continuously come to exploit. Even the trade agreements that they sign with our government are exploitative. So (silent laugh), it is not based on any reality. These are just some cynical mind games they play, because they still want to continue to exploit (10).*

In this way, actors themselves point to the fact that migration is rendered technical and thus non-political by obscuring the reasons for economic inequality. Similar to the argument raised by humanitarian actors, this can be seen as a form of European anti-politics where migration projects are used to show the European population that something is being done to stop irregular migration from the Gambia, while the exploitative economic structures persist. Further, actors mention that projects also fail, since project funding is lost to corruption and high salaries for expats working in the Gambia. However, while Li (2007) does not assign motives of economic profit, this can also be seen as part of the European anti-politics, where

the main objective is to show the European population that irregular migration is being handled. Li (2007) explains that trustees, in their attempt to bring improvement for the population across a range of issues, must balance all sorts of relations between 'men and things' and that the diverse finalities might be incompatible or even contradictory. Thus, by having to show that immigration is being tackled, while at the same time ensuring profitable trade agreements and cheap labour for the European informal sectors, the effect of the different techniques which are applied narrowly to fit each distinct problematisation might end up not having the expected outcome, but in fact having the complete contrary effect. For this reason, actors themselves suggest that isolated technical interventions are not sufficient to solve the issue of irregular migration. One actor explains: "*I think migration is a megatrend. People need to accept the reality as it is. You know. And you cannot solve megatrend with petty issue – petty strategies" (08).* As an example, some actors argue that if small-scale business programmes implemented in the name of migration management should be successful, the government needs to protect the national economy from cheaper imports. If that is not done, business grants and entrepreneurship opportunities will continue to fail, while perhaps even leading to increased migration. One actor points to the contradicting effects of 'targeting the root causes' as noted in literature:

> *It's only natural that people wish to go out, it's only natural that we might even have a side effect in the sense that if we empower people, if we give people more resources, both economically and educational, they will be even better informed to migrate. So, it even can have a side effect. But this is the theory of migration; that it is not the most poor that migrate. Neither the richest; it is the ones that are in the middle level (12).*

While this implies that current programmes would lead to increased migration, all programmes disregard this pattern. While this one actor recognises the contradiction, they explain that they still have to work within the mainstream rationality of targeting the 'root causes' in order to gain European funding.

7. Concluding discussion

Looking across the findings on how 'irregular' migration from the Gambia towards Europe is governed, the study finds that actors work in three distinct governmental assemblages where

the issue of migration is problematised and rendered technical in different but interacting ways. Across the three assemblages all actors refer to protection of people as the main reason for their engagement. They stress that migration is a human right, but due to the risks, they need to protect people. Security actors claim that the risks are due to the dangers of the sea and the desert, and since migrants are not capable of understanding this, it is their role to protect them by coercive measures as a necessary means. Humanitarian and development actors also argue that the risks are caused by the dangers of the sea and desert, but unlike security actors they believe that people are able to manage these risks themselves. The three assemblages generally disregard the restrictive visa regime as the reason for risks of migration journeys but consider it a pregiven and unchangeable condition that people have to move by irregular means, if they want to migrate. Humanitarian actors provide information and skills for people to navigate the risks on the journey, whereas the development assemblage provides information on the dangers, assuming that people will calculate risks and benefits and decide to stay in the Gambia. While the security assemblage rationalises operations with reference to law, humanitarian actors instead refer to universal humanitarian values of protection and human rights beyond the limits of both state and politics. The development assemblage builds on a market rationality implying that if people have opportunities to engage in the market in the Gambia through employment or running a business they will decide to stay.

All three assemblages provide technical solutions to the issue of governing irregular migration from the Gambia while disregarding the economic and political reasons for the risks of migration. Thus, the issue of migration governance is rendered technical and consequently non-political. No actors – at least in their role as representatives of an organisation – point to unequal economic structures as the reason why people want to move and the lack of opportunities for legal mobility as the reason for the dangers. These issues are beyond actors' control and programmes would inevitably fail if they set out to change these structures. As a consequence, the political and economic structures causing unsafe migration are made invisible.

However, beyond their programmes, research participants point to the limits of government. While Li (2007) identifies limits to government by drawing on theory and the contestations by target populations in programmes of improvement, this study finds that implementing actors in Gambian migration governance are well-aware of and reflecting on the limits to

their own programmes and the governmental assemblages of which they are part. Most actors point to the fact that their programmes are too narrow to create a real impact, since there are 'uncontrollable' factors beyond the programme. Humanitarian actors highlight the limitations by donor requirements as an obstacle to cooperation and impact. Security and development actors point to global economic inequalities as the main reason why their programmes fail. Thus, many actors know that current patterns of migration will persist as long as global economic inequalities are in place. However, as these issues are beyond their domain, programmes continue in the name of migration management either to compensate for suffering or to show that something is being done. The table below provides an overview of these findings.

Table 7.1: Problematisations, rendering technical and limits to government in migration governance in the Gambia

Governmental assemblage		Security	Humanitarian	Development
Problematisation		People risk their lives when crossing the sea and the desert…		
		… since they do not understand the dangers, and thus need to be stopped	… since they lack information on how to navigate dangers, and thus need to be protected	… since they lack information on the dangers and lack economic opportunities, and thus need to be incentivised to stay
Rendering technical	**Rationality**	• Legal frameworks	• Human rights	• Market and rational choice
	Technique	• Interception • Surveillance • Investigation • Detention	• Service provision e.g., food, shelter, clothing, transport. • Information to navigate the dangers while on the move	• Employment, business and training opportunities • Information to warn about dangers
	Subjectivity	• Incapable of understanding the dangers of the migration	• Free and self-governing, but vulnerable	• Free and self-governing
Limits		• Lack of legal frameworks • Uncontrollable border • Economic inequality	• Donor requirements • Restrictive visa regime	• Programmes provide resources for people to migrate • Economic inequality

While this schematic presentation on problematisations, rendering technical and limits to government is included for the sake of clarity, the different assemblages are entangled and intertwined in complex ways where they inform and rationalise each other, and consequently depend on each other's existence and continuation. The security assemblage identifies the lack of economic opportunities as the 'real' problem, which they are unable to tackle within

their domain. Thus, a need for the development assemblage is created. Further, the existence of the humanitarian assemblage is dependent on the suffering and violence in the security assemblage to rationalise its purpose. However, at the same time, the humanitarian assemblage works to legitimise the security approach by providing a humanitarian face to the coercive measures used. Finally, the contradictions within the development assemblage, namely the side-effect which spurs increased ability to migrate, creates an even greater need for the security assemblage to stop people, and in turn the humanitarian assemblage to protect people. Hence, while none of the assemblages manage to achieve their objectives, to reduce irregular or unsafe migration, they instead work to reinforce each other.

From this conclusion follows that while literature suggests a neo-liberalisation of migration governance with the emergence of non-state actors, a discourse of *migration management* and governing through communities, this study shows that sovereign power is not being replaced, but rather reinforced and justified through its entanglements with the humanitarian and development assemblages. While it was noted that recent governmentality studies tend to neglect sovereign power (Walters 2012), this study shows that sovereign power is perhaps even strengthened while working along with pastoral- and biopower in migration governance in the Gambia. Thus, while humanitarian- and development actors might reject the coercive measures used by security actors and instead promote a discourse of human rights, their work cannot be separated from the security assemblage, but might instead contribute to its continuation. As a soon-to-be humanitarian- or development practitioner, this conclusion encourages and reminds to keep an eye out for the power relations our programmes reinforce or legitimise. And as the research participants in this study have shown, while it might seem impossible to change structures beyond our programmes, then we can at least aim to make these visible.

However, since the emergence of non-state actors and thus these specific governmental assemblages in Gambian migration governance is relatively recent, the study argues that these assemblages are still relatively unstable and unsettled. While the internal dysfunctions and external limits to government have been characterised as 'failures' in this study, it can be argued that these are simply fractures which expose spaces for alternatives. While the security assemblage fails in exercising coercive power and the development assemblage produces the side-effect of increased migration, it is worth considering if and how these limits and fractures could be embraced – not with an additional technical solution – but by

taking the perspectives of research participants, outside of their role as programme managers, seriously. Since alternative framings would be necessary for a more humane approach to migration. While this study has shown how migration governance works in peculiar and complex ways in the Gambia, it has however, not been discussed what effects and implications these governmental assemblages have for the human experience of migrants. While this study did not include migrants' voices, an important avenue for further research should expose how the unintended and contradictory effects of Gambian migration governance influences people's lives and mobility.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Topics covered in interviews

1) Activities of your organisation related to migration in the Gambia

This topic provided background information necessary for understanding the following answers by participants and gave insights to both the rationalities and techniques used by the organisation. Furthermore, this is a relatively simple topic that would allow the interviewee to get started comfortably.

2) Cooperation with Gambian government actors

This was asked to understand the organisation's way of working and relation to the government. Further, it indirectly provided insights on the Gambian government's role in migration governance.

3) Cooperation with other actors

This was asked both to explore the individual organisation's way of working as well as to gain insight into the broader landscape of actors in migration governance in the Gambia and their cooperation.

4) Policies or frameworks guiding the work of the organisation

This was asked in order to explore how programmes and activities were designed and guided, i.e. what rationalities are guiding the programmes and where these are coming from.

5) How could migration be managed better or safer?

This was asked in order to explore actors' perception on the efficiency of current migration governance independent of what they are doing in their own programmes.

6) Anything you would like to add, or you think it is important for me to know regarding migration governance and the way migration is dealt with in the Gambia?

This was asked to make sure that no crucial aspects had been missed in relation to migration governance, but also to reveal issues that I was not aware of based on previous review of literature.

Appendix B

List of actors interviewed

Inter view	Type of actor	Date of interview	Place of interview
01	Gambian chapter of international organisation	20th January 2022	At organisation's office
02	Gambian civil society organisation	20th of January 2022	At organisation's office
03	Gambian civil society organisation	21st of January 2022	At organisation's office
04	Government actor	24th of January 2022	At organisation's office
05	International organisation	25th of January 2022	Online
06	Gambian civil society organisation	2nd February 2022	At café
07	Government actor	2nd February 2022	At organisation's office
08	Cooperation between government actor and international organisation	3rd February 2022	At organisation's office
09	Regional chapter of international organisation	4th February 2022	At organisation's office
10	Gambian chapter of international organisation	5th February 2022	At organisation's office
11	Government actor	11th February 2022	At organisation's office
12	Portuguese organisation	16th February 2022	At organisation's office
13	Government actor	17th February 2022	At Bakau beach
14	Cooperation between government actor and international organisation	20th February 2022	At organisation's office
15	Italian organisation	21st February 2022	At organisation's office
16	Gambian chapter of international organisation	24th February 2022	At organisation's office
17	Gambian chapter of international organisation	25th February 2022	At organisation's office
18	Spanish government actor	3rd March 2022	At organisation's office
19	Government actor	3rd March 2022	At organisation's office
20	Government actor	3rd March 2022	At organisation's office
21	Spanish chapter of international organisation working in the Gambia	3rd March 2022	At organisation's office

Appendix C

Settings for participant observation related to migration management

Observation	Type	Date	Venue	Comments
O22	Multi-stakeholder conference on irregular migration and transnational justice	26th January 2022, 10:00-16:00 and 27th January 2022, 10:00-14:00 (Wednesday and Thursday)	Kanifing Municipal Council building	Organised by Youth Against Irregular Migration. Attended by representatives from EU, IOM, National Human Rights Commission, the national assembly, the municipal council, Gambia Immigration Department, National Youth Council as well as several civil society organisations and returned migrants.
O23	Visit to border post	4th February 2022, 12:00-13:00 (Friday)	Sabi border post and Basse, Upper River Region	Visited Humanitarian Service Point operated by the Red Cross at the border and in Basse.
O24	Visit to Bakau fishing site	14th February 2022, 9:00 - 13:00 (Monday)	Fish port/beach, Bakau	Visited beach site where boats have left towards Canary Islands and where coast patrolling is carried out regularly.
O25	Returnee confession session	19th February 2022, 17:00 - 21:00 (Saturday)	Fort Bullen, Barra	The session was part of the 'Return and Reintegration'-activities organised for returned migrants and the purpose was for returnees to share their experiences of the journey for peer-support.
O26	Women's conference on migration	20th February 2022, 9:00 - 13:00 (Sunday)	Barra	Women were invited to receive information about the dangers of irregular migration and alternatives to irregular migration. The purpose was to ensure that they would not push their sons to take the journey.