Security Technologies and the Global Criminalization of Migration: MIDAS, the IOM, and Outsourcing Border Control



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Dedicated to the memory of Juhani Fröberg.

En koskaan unohda yhteistä aikaamme osastolla 2103.
Lepää rauhassa.

Abstract

This thesis contributes to border criminology scholarship by focusing on practices and technologies that contribute to the merging of border control and criminal justice in the Global South. Specifically, I examine the role of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and its Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) in shaping border controls in Nigeria. Empirically, the thesis draws on elite interviews with IOM officials, document analysis of technical and policy documents authored by the organization and by Nigerian federal authorities, and non-participant field observations in Abuja, Nigeria. Theoretically, I propose a synthesis of performativity and pragmatism as a useful analytical framework for understanding the political effects of MIDAS. Applying this theoretical framework to my primary empirical material, I make three substantive arguments. First, by highlighting the active role of Nigerian federal officials in shaping the roll-out of MIDAS, I argue for the importance of foregrounding Southern agency in analyses of crimmigration control as a global phenomenon. Nigerian officials actively utilize the border control system to engage in performances of 'biometric statehood,' to affirm their political authority domestically vis-à-vis competing political actors and to constitute the Nigerian state as a legitimate actor within the international system of sovereign states. Second, I characterize the IOM's MIDAS-related capacity-building practices as pedagogical performances, intended to affirm its technical expertise and supposed political neutrality. The organization's officials and public communications exhibit a solutionist understanding of migration, through which the latter is conceptualized as a technical, rather than political, problem that the IOM is well-placed to 'solve.' In Nigeria, key to this 'solution' has been the merging of the legal and practical frameworks of migration control and criminal justice. Finally, I argue that the technical components of MIDAS itself serve to constitute migration as a governable 'problem' amenable to techno-solutionist crimmigration control interventions.

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List of Abbreviations

API	Advance Passenger Information
BMIS	Border Management Information System
DSS	Department of State Services
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FR	Foreigner Registration
MIDAS	Migration Information and Data Analysis System
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NAPTIP	National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons
NBIC	National Biometric Identity Card
NDLEA	National Drug Law Enforcement Agency
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIS	Nigerian Immigration Service
IBM	Immigration and Border Management
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ILO	International Labor Organization
IO	International Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights
ONSA	Office of the National Security Advisor
PIRS	Personal Identification and Registration System
PNR	Passenger Name Record
STS	Science and Technology Studies
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOCT	UN Office of Counter-Terrorism
UNODC	UN Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOICT	UN Office on Information and Communications Technology

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1 IOM headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria (Photo credit: S Singler).

2 Map depicting Nigeria's membership in African regional organizations (ECDPM, 2017).

3 A plaque on the wall of an IOM-constructed training center at NIS headquarters in Abuja (Photo credit: S Singler).

4 An IOM-built MIDAS training room in NIS headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria (Photo credit: S Singler).

5 An IOM-built Personnel Training Resource Center near NIS headquarters in Abuja (Photo credit: S Singler).

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this particular comment has stuck with me, but decades later it motivates me to take my work seriously and to not shy away from intellectual challenges. Thank you, Mr Lahtela.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction: Digital borders and social exclusion

> *Technology captivates. Capturing bodies.*
>
> – Ruha Benjamin (2019: 1).

> *[G]overnments and non-state actors are developing and deploying emerging digital technologies that are uniquely experimental, dangerous, and discriminatory in the border and immigration enforcement context […] Not only is technology not neutral, but its design and use typically reinforce dominant social, political and economic trends.*
>
> – UN Special Rapporteur E. Tendayi Achiume (2020: 3).

Contemporary border zones are characterized by a complex web of high-tech surveillance technologies, and digital border control tools have become an everyday part of the experience of international travel on a global level. After a recent visit to Lisbon, as I arrived at London Luton Airport, I observed the mundane operation of automated biometric passport gates, which have become ubiquitous at borders in the Global North. These gates consist of a passport scanner and an automated facial recognition camera, replacing the need for identity verification by human border control officers. The gate identifies the passenger by conducting a 'one-to-one' verification process, confirming that the passport holder's facial characteristics match the biometric information found in the passport chip, and validates the traveler's arrival in the country by checking their visa status and conducting a 'one-to-many' identification process against domestic and international police alert lists (ICAO, 2017: 7).

These gates are broadly viewed as convenient technical tools that allow for 'quicker entry' than the more time-consuming method of border control officers manually checking each traveler and passport (UK Border Force, 2021). Accordingly, they are not often the

subject of political controversy, and instead have receded into the mundane background of airport infrastructure. Yet, automated passport control gates quietly enact a global hierarchy of trustworthiness and mobility. In the UK, they are only available to citizens of wealthier states[1] as well as 'Registered Travellers' who visit the country frequently, have a biometric chip in their passport, and are able to pay the £70 annual membership fee (UK Government, n.d.). At London Luton Airport and elsewhere, this hierarchy of trustworthiness is materially apparent in the separation of passport control queues according to citizenship: quicker automated controls for the privileged, increased scrutiny for everyone else.

As I stood in line waiting for my turn to step in front of the automated facial recognition camera that would allow my entry into the UK, I observed others place their passports onto the scanners and wait for the camera to verify their identity. For some, this process was smooth and quick, lasting only a couple of seconds, while for others the facial recognition process took much longer, and was only successful after repeated attempts of removing and reapplying the passport onto the scanner. A few individuals were turned away entirely, as the automated gates told them to head over to the border control desks with human officers instead. There was no discernible trend among the travelers whose faces apparently could not be read. However, as the passport booth lit up my face and verified my identity nearly instantaneously, I recalled how researchers have repeatedly demonstrated that the most popular facial recognition algorithms on the market consistently produce lower error rates for white men—such as myself—than for darker-skinned individuals and women (Buolamwini and Gebru, 2018; El Khiyari and Wechsler, 2016). My sex and skin tone likely contribute to the ease with which I pass through these gates each time I encounter them, yet such racial and gender-based privilege operates discreetly underneath the veneer of facilitation and technical progress that automated passport controls supposedly represent.

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[1] These are the Member States of the EU, Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, Liechtenstein, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland, and the United States.

The preceding account is a mundane example of a much broader process of digitizing migration control practices. Elsewhere, the deployment of novel border control technologies has been much more spectacular and controversial. As of July 2022, according to the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) 'Missing Migrants Project'[2] 24,371 missing migrants have been recorded in the Mediterranean Sea since 2014. These deaths at sea have periodically become highly politicized; in response to the tragic death of more than 350 migrants in 2013—when an overloaded vessel sank off the coast of the Italian island of Lampedusa—the European Union (EU) set up search-and-rescue operations to reduce migrant fatalities. Yet, in the context of the 'migrant crisis' of 2015–2016, such operations were halted by EU agencies, and criminalized for non-governmental organizations (NGOs), resulting in an increased death rate yet again (Lloyd-Damnjanovic, 2022). In 2019, the EU again decided to invest resources into dealing with the issue of migrant crossings in the Mediterranean, but this time the response was markedly different from the 2013 initiative. Instead of expanding search-and-rescue capacities, or even establishing more maritime patrols, the bloc instead invested approximately €100 million into unmanned aerial drones (Howden et al., 2019). These drones are unburdened by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to intervene to preserve the life of those in need, and are used explicitly for the purposes of 'real-time monitoring' and to 'assess risks at the borders and then to reduce vulnerability to challenges' (Frontex, 2022). On the other side of the Atlantic, the United States continues to expand its digital border surveillance network that consists of drones, blimps, facial recognition cameras, license plate readers, surveillance towers, and ground sensors (Hellerstein, 2021). Although the two main political parties disagree on the desirability and utility of building a physical wall at the border, both sides agree that—either

[2] The Missing Migrants Project can be accessed online at: https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean [Accessed 26th July 2022].

in addition or as an alternative to physical walls and fences—the US–Mexico border must be monitored by a 'smart wall' consisting of a plethora of digital border control technologies (Greer, 2019).

Yet, the example of the automated passport gates suggests that while the political nature of novel border control technologies becomes readily apparent in the 'spectacle' of highly visible and exceptional moments of politicization (De Genova, 2013), the politics of unequal mobility and social exclusion also underpins the everyday deployment of seemingly neutral digital tools at the border. This thesis does not focus on the surveillance tools deployed in the life-and-death contexts of the Mediterranean Sea or the Sonoran Desert, but rather the more mundane aspects of developing digital tools for what the IOM terms 'migration management.' In the organization's parlance, this term refers to 'the policy, legislation, operational systems, human resources and administrative and technical structures' that are required to 'facilitate orderly, safe and regular migration and mobility' (IOM, 2022b).

Criminology, migration management, and border technologies

The development and deployment of border control technologies is not a classically criminological research topic, and even within the context of contemporary research by border criminologists (Bosworth, 2017a; Brandariz, 2022; Franko Aas and Bosworth, 2013), some conceptual work is required to tease out the interconnections between migration management tools and broader criminological questions relating to criminal justice and social exclusion. This thesis is underpinned by three analytical assumptions that justify its focus on a border control technology developed by a large international organization, the IOM. I set out the basis for these assumptions in more detail in Chapter 2, but it is useful to summarize them here in order to unpack the conceptual cornerstones of this research.

First, this thesis is underpinned by the assumption that border control practices generally constitute a criminologically relevant topic, a premise that is validated by the empirical findings presented in later chapters. Several authors in the field of border criminology have demonstrated the increasing importance of immigration law and migration control practices in shaping contemporary forms of punishment, control, and social exclusion (Barker, 2017; Bosworth et al., 2018). In an age of globalization—characterized by the intensified cross-border mobility of people, goods, and information—sovereign states have increasingly deployed the criminal justice system to control migration and to discipline migrants, while conversely resorting to the legal and administrative frameworks of immigration control to enact their penal power (Bosworth, 2008; Hernández, 2018; Stumpf, 2006). This merging of the legal and practical frameworks of criminal justice and migration control is now regularly referred to as 'crimmigration control' (Bowling and Westenra, 2018). The upshot of this critical field of scholarship is that the use of 'criminal-justice-like powers' is no longer confined to the criminal justice system itself (Weber, 2002: 24) and that answering classical criminological questions relating to social exclusion and penal power now necessitates an examination of migration and border control (Bosworth et al., 2018).

The second guiding assumption of this thesis is that non-state actors are becoming increasingly influential in shaping crimmigration control practices in the Global South. Although penal power and migration control are in many ways the most classical sovereign prerogatives of modern states, border criminologists have demonstrated that crimmigration control is enacted by a complex network of public and private agencies and organizations (Ford and Lyons, 2013; Infantino, 2016; Lemberg-Pedersen, 2012; Walsh, 2020). In other words, it is no longer sufficient to examine the actions of state institutions when critically analyzing the practices of border control and criminal justice, as the 'expanded border includes law enforcement agencies other than state police, industry regulators, service providers and private citizens' (Weber, 2013: 114). Critical authors have illuminated how

border control functions have become geographically detached from the physical border, emanating both inward and outward through diffuse processes of 'outsourcing border control' (Infantino, 2016). Domestic non-state actors and private citizens are now forced to carry out border control practices on an everyday basis. For instance, employers, universities, landlords, and banks are now 'responsible for conducting immigration status checks, refusing people services/jobs/accommodation, and sharing migrants' data with the Home Office' (Griffiths and Yeo, 2021: 526). Externally, a range of private companies, NGOs, and international organizations are now in charge of issuing visas, carrying out forced returns, and operating offshore immigration detention centers on behalf of states (Hirsch and Doig, 2018; Infantino, 2019; Koch, 2014). Although still relatively overlooked in the field of border criminology (although see, e.g., Lee, 2022; Stambøl, 2021a), scholars of International Relations and migration studies have argued that international organizations such as the IOM and UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are particularly influential in shaping borer control practices in the Global South (Koch, 2014; Molnar, 2021). This influence is underpinned by complex socioeconomic and epistemic postcolonial hierarchies, reflected for instance in making economic aid conditional on the adoption of Northern logics and practices of migration control (Andrijasevic and Walters, 2010; Frowd, 2018; Pécoud, 2018; Stambøl, 2021b). Such hierarchies constitute a key analytical theme throughout this thesis, and I examine the dynamics of post-imperial influence, dependence, and Southern agency in detail in Chapter 6.

The final assumption underpinning this research is that novel technologies can shape human actions and social life in politically important ways that are not always intended by their human developers and operators. Criminologists have already suggested that the proliferation of new digital policing tools can have unintended effects. For instance, Alpa Parmar (2019: 948) argues that although initially developed to 'limit discriminatory practices,' digital information systems in the UK police custody context have resulted in 'increased

levels of scrutiny for target groups such as foreign nationals or black and minority ethnic suspects.' Similarly, Robert Werth (2019: 342) argues that actuarial risk assessment technologies designed to provide more objective predictions of reoffending have had the unintended consequence of justifying further criminal justice interventions by presenting all 'parolees as subjects who are definitely risky and in need of penal intervention.' More broadly, I draw on scholarship in Science and Technology Studies (STS) to argue that the development of new technical tools is a social endeavor, imbued with human interests and values, and conversely that material objects enact power relations and shape both individual and collective identities (Matthewman, 2011). Exceptional and highly visible cases—such as the deployment of drones to observe people drowning in the Mediterranean—present us with stark choices regarding our collective values. More mundane technologies can also shape dominant views about migration and criminal justice by enacting specific logics of suspicion and trustworthiness as well as social inclusion and exclusion at the border (Franko Aas, 2011a). For this reason, it is productive to critically examine not only exceptional uses of surveillance technologies, but also the everyday operation of supposedly neutral and mundane technical tools. As Ruha Benjamin (2019: 17) has argued:

> How should we understand the duplicity of technological fixes—purported solutions that nevertheless sediment existing hierarchies? First, it is important to reckon with the way that emerging technologies can reinforce interlocking forms of discrimination, especially when we assume they are insulated from human influence.

The relationship between the agency of humans and of nonhuman technologies is explored theoretically in Chapter 3 and empirically in Chapter 8, and the politics of developing new border control technologies is analyzed with reference to the IOM in Chapter 7.

Democratizing and decolonizing border criminology

Due to its focus on mechanisms of social exclusion that are based on racialized hierarchies of citizenship (Zedner, 2010), research in the field of border criminology inherently raises questions regarding postcolonial global hierarchy, privilege, and racial exclusion. Recently, some authors have called for a more sustained effort to explicitly democratize and decolonize this field (Aliverti et al., 2021), and this research constitutes an attempt to contribute to this broader project.

Following postcolonial theorists such as Dipesh Chakrabarty, Achille Mbembe, Gayatri Spivak, Aníbal Quijano and others, I understand 'democratization' in this context to mean the widening of Northern epistemological horizons to accommodate more voices and experiences from the Global South (Chakrabarty, 2008; Mbembe, 2011; Quijano, 2007; Spivak, 2013). As Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2016: 42) has argued: 'it is imperative to go to the South and learn from the South.' The process of epistemological democratization implies more than the incorporation of Southern empirical examples into a Northern-dominated corpus of criminological knowledge. In the context of the globalization of crimmigration control practices (Šalamon et al., 2020), democratization necessitates engaging with how Southern actors and their worldviews actively contribute to shaping contemporary practices of migration control and criminal justice on a global level. As Katja Franko (Franko Aas, 2012b: 16) has put it: 'Developing more democratic epistemologies is not only a question of epistemological justice, but increasingly also an analytical imperative and an opportunity for theoretical innovation.' Several authors have recently drawn on this view to highlight how Southern actors resist and reshape crimmigration control practices in various local contexts (see, e.g., Badalič, 2019; Lee, 2013; Mehta, 2016; Vigneswaran, 2013). Drawing on this existing literature, and in pursuit of expanding the democratic horizons of border criminology, I not only take Nigeria as a case study but specifically highlight how the

agency of Nigerian federal authorities is crucial to the the IOM's capacity-building interventions in the country, and how local political interests directly shape the expansion of crimmigration control practices.

The decolonization of border criminology, in turn, implies both an empirical and theoretical endeavor to illuminate the continuities of colonial hierarchies in contemporary practices of migration control and criminal justice, and in knowledge production regarding these topics (Agozino, 2019; Aliverti et al., 2021). As Walter Mignolo and Catherine Walsh (2018: 17) explain, decoloniality:

> implies the recognition and undoing of the hierarchical structures of race, gender, heteropatriarchy, and class that continue to control life, knowledge, spirituality, and thought, structures that are clearly intertwined with and constitutive of global capitalism and Western modernity.

Empirically, such an endeavor requires a critical appraisal of how contemporary practices of crimmigration control are underpinned by postcolonial inequalities that result in differential access to global mobility as well as a division of border crossers into 'trusted travelers' and inherently suspicious 'crimmigrant others' (Franko, 2020; Gundhus, 2021; Zedner, 2019). Moreover, as this thesis demonstrates, postcolonial hierarchy is also empirically reflected in the extent to which Global North actors—including the IOM, whose actions are significantly shaped by the political agendas of its wealthy Northern donor states (Geiger and Pécoud, 2014)—are disproportionately able to shape the international standards, practices, and technologies that are deployed to control migration on a global level. Theoretically, decolonization requires mounting an epistemic challenge to theories and worldviews regarding migration control and criminal justice that were developed in the Global North and primarly based on Northern experiences. As Ana Aliverti and colleagues (2021: 300) argue, 'decolonizing [criminological] scholarship involves not only a shifting of the criminological gaze to places and subjects long forgotten […] but also unveiling the

ideological dimensions through which the 'North' has been predominantly theorized and researched.'

The case study: The IOM's MIDAS in Nigeria

In view of the considerations outlined above, in this thesis I seek to develop a novel theoretical framework for assessing the political impacts of crimmigration control technologies in the Global South, and then utilize this framework to analyze an empirical case study. I focus specifically on the development and deployment of the Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) by the IOM in Nigeria.

The IOM is one of the most influential and multidimensional transnational actors operating in the field of what it calls 'the global governance of migration' (IOM, 2019: 291; Frowd, 2018). An intergovernmental organization with 173 member states, the IOM employs over 15,000 staff members across 590 offices in over 100 countries globally (IOM, 2021c). The organization is a key intermediary between wealthier donor states in the Global North and 'beneficiary' states in the Global South, providing border management trainings, humanitarian support, and technical and material assistance 'to support governments to build capacity for the governance of migration' (IOM, 2021c: 1). The vast majority of the organization's $1.2 billion annual budget is project-based and decentralized, meaning that field offices are responsible for securing funds by identifying new potential projects that donor states are willing to fund (Pécoud, 2018: 1629).

In the context of significant organizational expansion in the 2000s, the IOM sought to engage in new migration management initiatives that would be in line with the interests of its Northern donor states and of interest to beneficiary states in the Global South as well (Georgi, 2010). Reflecting the broader digitization of border control tools in the Global North (Muller, 2010), the organization developed a digital border management system called

the Personal Identification and Registration System (PIRS) in 2007 (IOM, 2011), which was renamed MIDAS in 2013 (IOM, 2018b). MIDAS is a digital border management information system (BMIS), which the IOM offers to its member states free of charge.

The system consists of a centralized digital database of passenger information, into which data are collected using a document reader, facial recognition camera or webcam, and a fingerprint scanner. The organization's internal documentation explains that collecting this data at the border allows states to 'process and record traveler information upon entering and exiting border crossing points to identify travelers, verify biometrics, inspect and authenticate travel documents, and collect and analyze data' (Field diary, 28th August 2021). Each time a traveler passes through a MIDAS-equipped border crossing point, the system collects and stores their 'biographic data, biometric data (photographs and fingerprints), travel document images examined under infrared, Ultraviolet and White Light, entry and exit data, visa data, and vehicle/flight/vessel data' (IOM, 2018b: 2). These data can also be checked against national alert lists as well as Interpol's I-24/7 global alert list (Interpol, 2022), although the extent of such interoperability varies by country. Each MIDAS setup consists of a country-wide 'Wide Area Network' which is made up of the individual 'Local Area Networks' installed at border crossing points and at the headquarters of the primary immigration control agency, meaning that all data is stored in a central server (Field diary, 28th August 2021). The system can also accommodate the installation of additional 'modules' that expand its functionality to include processing Advance Passenger Information (API) data, issuing visas, collecting travel document information via barcode rather than a machine-readable chip, and communicating with other national and international identity databases (IOM, 2018b).

For the purposes of this research, MIDAS combines the analytical focal points highlighted above, in that it is a comprehensive border control technology that most often operates in a mundane register, which has been developed by an international organization

yet is deployed on the ground by Southern state agencies. Moreover, the system directly brings into view the interconnections between the logics of migration control and criminal justice, by requiring 'secondary inspection' of traveler data by law enforcement agencies in the case of a hit in national or international alert lists (IOM, 2018b: 2).

In Nigeria, as I outline in more detail in later chapters, cooperation between the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) and the various law enforcement agencies is a novel development, as is the deployment of a digital border management system as such. MIDAS (then still PIRS) was first rolled out in the country in 2010 (Field diary, 28th August 2021). Before the introduction of the system, the NIS checked border crossers' travel documents and identities manually; as NIS officer Gabriel explained to me, before MIDAS 'we had nothing, we had pen and paper' (Field diary, 26th August 2021). Due to the federal governmental structure of Nigeria, its individual states have had significant autonomy in managing the country's external borders. Data sharing between border posts and NIS headquarters in Abuja was virtually nonexistent before the introduction of the IOM's border management system. As of 2021, MIDAS had been equipped at 13 land border posts, 3 sea borders, 6 NIS State Commands, and all five international airports in Nigeria (Field diary, 3rd September 2021). These local installations all connect to the central server at NIS headquarters in Abuja, where data is stored in a centralized database. Information on border crossers and alert lists were previously not often shared between border crossing points, and border control officers relied on checking passport stamps to validate a traveler's immigration or visa status. Now, such information is shared and updated either automatically through a real-time internet connection, or via regular manual data transfer using an external physical hard drive.

In later chapters, I demonstrate that the rollout of MIDAS has already resulted in the introduction of new technical, operational, and legal frameworks that have intensified the merging of migration control and criminal justice practices. However, the extent and

direction of future transformations remain open questions, as the rollout of MIDAS proceeds on the basis of time- and resource-limited capacity-building projects that are often contested by local agencies and dependent on continued funding from the IOM's donor states. Although some actors in the field assume that the continued expansion of the system is a foregone conclusion, the future of crimmigration control in Nigeria is not yet set in stone. It is contingent on continued political choices made by officials from Nigerian federal agencies as well as the IOM. MIDAS has reached a point of technical maturity and an established status as the preferred tool for border management in the country, yet its technical makeup has not yet been entirely determined. Thus, the next few years represent a critical juncture, which will determine how the landscape of crimmigration control in Nigeria will look like in years to come. Through this research, I aim to illuminate the contingency and the underlying politics of these future developments.

Outline of the thesis

This thesis is based on qualitative analysis of primary and secondary empirical material, as I explain in more detail in Chapter 4. I analyzed dozens of documents that are publicly available, including IOM policy briefs, technical guidelines, reports, and brochures as well as Nigerian legal documents. Later in the research process, I was also granted access to documents not in the public domain, including IOM technical documents, project outlines, donor reports, financial statements, and training materials as well as NIS training strategies, legal reports, and policies. Between January–April 2021, I conducted 28 semi-structured online interviews with officials from the IOM's Immigration and Border Management (IBM) Division in Geneva and from field offices in MIDAS-operating states. Finally, the majority of the empirical analysis in later chapters is based on non-participant field observations carried out at IOM headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria, between July–September 2021. This



Figure 1: IOM headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria (Photo credit: S Singler).

chronological progression of data collection is reflected in the structure of the thesis as well: I begin by making broader claims on the basis of the document analysis and interviews, and then move on to more detailed critical analysis of field observations in later chapters to substantiate those claims.

Based on the analysis of primary empirical evidence, this research addresses the overarching research question: What is the relationship between novel border control technologies and global crimmigration control practices? I specify this broad question by dividing it into three more specific questions:

i) How do Southern actors respond to and reshape Northern logics of crimmigration control in their deployment of MIDAS?

ii) How do the IOM's border control interventions in the Global South relate to global hierarchy, and what is the relationship between the IOM, its Northern donors, and Southern beneficiary states?

iii) How do the technical components of MIDAS themselves shape crimmigration control practices in the Global South, and how should we conceptualize the relationship between human actors and nonhuman technologies?

The next chapter grounds this research by reviewing literature on border criminology. I discuss the key findings of existing research regarding the deterritorialization of sovereign power in the context of globalization—reflected in the outsourcing of border control and penal practices to non-state actors—the postcolonial dimensions of crimmigration control, and the role of digital technologies in shaping practices of punishment and exclusion. I also identify remaining research lacunae that this research addresses: examining the role of Southern actors in the global merger of migration control and criminal justice, illuminating the relationship between postcolonial hierarchies and the IOM's capacity-building practices in the Global South, and empirically interrogating the independent role of novel border control technologies in shaping and enacting logics of crimmigration control.

Chapter 3 draws upon interdisciplinary literature on state power, border control, and technology to develop the theoretical framework that underpins the remainder of this thesis. I present a novel theoretical synthesis of the framework of performativity and the philosophical tradition of pragmatism, arguing that this framework is useful for analyzing contemporary border control practices in the Global South. Analytically, it can be used to problematize methodological nationalism and state-centric conceptions of territorial sovereignty, and to highlight the independent political effects of novel technologies while guarding against the depoliticizing tendencies of 'assemblage' theories and posthumanist perspectives. This framework highlights that nonhuman technologies can exert performative effects of their own, which are irreducible to the intentions of their developers and operators, yet only humans possess the capacity to normatively deliberate about alternative political practices and intentionally choose between them.

In Chapter 4 I discuss the methodological orientation of the thesis. I consider how my positionality and my pre-existing beliefs and assumptions shaped this research project, and I outline the specific methods undertaken to gather empirical data. This chapter also includes a discussion of research ethics. In pursuit of what Enrike van Wingerden (2022) has recently called 'unmastering research,' I resist claims to authoritative expertise by contextualizing the knowledge claims put forth in this thesis and highlighting the unpredictability and subjectivity of the research process. Thus, the chapter also includes a discussion of the role of privilege and luck in shaping the research process.

Chapter 5 begins the task of applying the theoretical framework proposed in Chapter 3 to primary empirical evidence by analyzing interviews with IOM officials. I suggest that, independently of the extent to which MIDAS has transformed border control practices on the ground, the system exerts performative effects that can be analyzed from the perspective of beneficiary states, the IOM, and the technical devices themselves. This discussion therefore prepares the ground for the in-depth examination of these three dimensions in Chapters 6–8 respectively.

In Chapter 6, I begin to analyze empirical evidence from my fieldwork in Abuja, Nigeria. Field observations of IOM-NIS interactions reveal that Nigerian state actors actively shape and reappropriate the IOM's practices in Nigeria, and that federal officials utilize MIDAS performatively in pursuit of their domestic and international political goals. The outsourcing of legal drafting and biometric border control technologies gives credence to the Nigerian state's performances of 'biometric statehood'—the dominant norm of sovereign authority—vis-à-vis both domestic and international actors. Domestically, affiliation with the IOM reinforces the authority of federal agencies over local governments and non-state actors; internationally, the deployment of MIDAS and the development of new crimmigration law frameworks legitimizes the Nigerian state's membership in an international society of biometric states.

Chapter 7 turns to an analysis of the development and deployment of MIDAS primarily from the perspective of the IOM. Based on field observations in Nigeria, this chapter builds on the conceptualization of the IOM's border control interventions in the Global South as a set of 'pedagogical performances,' which serve to reaffirm the IOM's political neutrality and technical expertise. In contrast to the organization's claims to neutrality, I argue that the organization's practices serve to reaffirm dominant Northern norms of territorial sovereignty and migration control, and in this way contribute to the reification of postcolonial global hierarchies. Yet, the organization's pedagogical performances performatively shift political accountability onto local actors as well as the technical devices and standards that compose MIDAS.

The final empirical chapter, Chapter 8, consists of an in-depth analysis of the technical components of MIDAS itself. I discuss how the technologies themselves have shaped border control practices, often independently of the intentions of the human designers and operators of the system. Nonetheless, I also highlight how normative deliberation regarding competing conceptions of border control practices, and the future expansion of crimmigration control in Nigeria, is a uniquely human activity. Insights from performativity and pragmatism are used to mediate between technological instrumentalism and material determinism, in order to highlight the importance of technologies in shaping human practices while simultaneously avoiding the depoliticizing tendencies of 'assemblage' perspectives that seek to level ontological distinctions between humans and nonhumans.

Chapter 9 summarizes the key findings of this thesis and discusses the empirical and theoretical contributions of this research to the field of border criminology. The final chapter also highlights the limitations of this thesis, and maps out potential directions for future research. Ultimately, I make three key claims that are empirically substantiated in Chapters 6, 7, and 8 respectively. First, an examination of the expansion crimmigration control can be productively conceptualized a global phenomenon, which Southern actors actively

respond to, resist, reshape in various local contexts. Second, the IOM's capacity-building interventions are underpinned by postcolonial socioeconomic and epistemic hierarchies, which are obscured by repeated performances of the organization's pedagogical orientation and technical expertise that serve to depoliticize its role in shaping migration control and criminal justice practices. Finally, I argue that border criminology benefits from an empirical analysis of novel digital border control tools, which—even when their everyday use is more accurately characterized as mundane rather than spectacular—shape human perceptions, practices, and identities in ways that are irreducible to the instrumental goals of humans themselves. Thus, these technologies actively contribute to the merging of migration control and criminal justice practices on a global level, yet their political nature is easily hidden underneath a veneer of technical neutrality and complexity.

Chapter 2 – Sovereignty, global hierarchy, and border control technologies in an age of globalization

> *MIDAS automatically captures traveler biographic and biometric data through the use of document readers, webcams and fingerprint readers. […] MIDAS enables States to more effectively monitor those entering and exiting their territory while providing a sound statistical basis for migration policy-related planning.*
>
> – International Organization for Migration (2018).

> *"What? Did I not grant your wish for the golden touch?"*
>
> *"Yes, but it is a curse to me now," Midas wept.*
>
> – Exchange between Dionysus and King Midas (Craft, 1999).

Currently operational in twenty states in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia, the Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) is the flagship 'border management information system' of the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2018b). The IOM promotes MIDAS as a 'fully customizable […] cost-effective and comprehensive' border management system to states in the Global South (Ibid.: 2). The system allows border control agencies to collect and store biometric information, verify travel documents, exchange data between other transnational biometric databases, and predict mobility patterns. MIDAS appears to live up to its name by providing a golden touch to recipient states. Yet, just as the mythical King Midas failed to foresee the negative consequences of his golden touch, the lofty promises attached to MIDAS raise difficult questions regarding its impacts on migrants, states, and migration control agencies in the Global South, as well as the IOM's role in global migration management. These questions have broader implications for the global criminalization of migration due to the extent to which novel border control technologies, particularly biometric identification systems and interoperable centralized databases, reflect a 'technologization of contemporary border

security' (Muller, 2009: 75). As border criminologists have noted, 'the idea of borders cannot easily be separated from the border control technologies used to defend them; […] borders are, in fact, largely constituted and defined through border protection technologies' (Pickering and Weber, 2006b: 209). In spite of this importance, such technologies in the Global South remain a relatively underexplored topic within border criminology; this thesis addresses this research lacuna.

Below, I review existing criminological scholarship on borders and mobility, now characterized as its own subfield: the 'criminology of mobility' or 'border criminology' (Bowling, 2013). Border criminologists have produced invaluable insights into how globalization has impacted sovereign power, reflected in the legal and territorial disassembling of sovereignty and the blurring of boundaries between criminal justice and migration control. Authors such as Katja Franko (2020: 10) have illuminated the political functions of constructing migrants as 'crimmigrant others,' suspicious outsiders whose claims to membership are 'tenuous and can be revoked through penal power.' Criminologists more broadly have highlighted the function of security practices and technologies in shaping and enacting boundaries of social exclusion, and border criminologists have illuminated the centrality of citizenship in justifying these political and technical mechanisms of exclusion (D Wilson, 2015; Zedner, 2010).

Despite the importance of globalization to border criminology, the concept of globalization itself is rarely problematized in terms of its ideational and political impacts (Larner and Walters, 2004). Instead, scholars have understood globalization mainly as a set of external transformations to which states have responded, overlooking its social and historical specificity in constructing and legitimizing a particular way of politically ordering and acting upon the world (Steger and James, 2013). For this reason, border criminologists have left underexamined the deterritorialization of sovereign power, particularly as it manifests outside the Global North. Important exceptions are discussed below, such as

research into outsourced border controls and the agency of Southern actors in reshaping Northern policy initiatives (see, e.g., Bosworth, 2017b; Infantino, 2019; Lee, 2022; Mehta, 2016; Vigneswaran, 2013; Walsh, 2020). Nonetheless, a research gap remains for examining how deterritorialized sovereign power—put into practice by a range of actors including states, private companies, non-governmental organizations, and interstate organizations such as the IOM—reifies and justifies postcolonial dynamics of global hierarchy. Exceptions notwithstanding, one reason for the persistence of this research lacuna is the lack of scholarship focusing on ground-level practices and border control technologies in the Global South. In order to address this research gap, in this thesis I focus on the IOM and its MIDAS border control system. Theoretically, my research critically examines the deterritorialization of sovereign power, the postcolonial legacies of global crimmigration control, and the role of novel technologies and technical expertise in shaping and legitimizing the global criminalization of migration.

Criminology, mobility, and the limits of sovereign power

The historical and disciplinary roots of criminology are sufficiently complex to warrant Tim Newburn's (2017: 4) assertion that '[c]riminology is a strange beast.' This complexity has periodically resulted in attempts to define 'the basis and scope of this field given the infinite activities carried out in its name' (J Wilson, 2015: 61). Traditionally, definitions of the discipline centered around a focus on crime, criminals, criminality, criminal law, and the body of scientific knowledge about these topics (see, e.g., Garland, 2002; Garland and Sparks, 2000; Sutherland, 1939). However, the boundaries of the field and its proper focus have recently become so contested that it is now pertinent to ask whether 'criminology may be fragmenting at the precise moment that, as a discipline, it is so vibrant and successful' (Bosworth & Hoyle, 2011: 3). In this context of fragmentation—and, concurrently,

theoretical and empirical exploration and innovation—one issue with which criminologists have become increasingly concerned is that of human mobility, including topics such as international migration, border security, and sovereign territorial space (Franko Aas and Bosworth, 2013; Pickering et al., 2015; Pickering and Weber, 2006a).

Of course, the roots of analyzing geographical space and human mobility from a criminological perspective stretch back long before the dawn of the twenty-first century. A prominent example from the early twentieth century is the Chicago School, which focused on the impact of human ecology and rural-urban migration on criminality (Hardyns and Pauwels, 2018: 131). The pre-eminence of the Chicago School, however, sometimes obscures earlier ecologically focused criminological work. For instance, in the late 19th century, W.E.B. DuBois argued that 'if men [*sic*] are suddenly transported from one environment to another; the result is lack of harmony with the new conditions […] lack of harmony with social surroundings leading to crime' (quoted in Gabbidon, 1996: 107). Another important example is the European 'Cartographic School,' originating in the pioneering work of André-Michel Guerry and Adolphe Quetelet, who in the 1830s utilized mapmaking techniques to visualize and analyze the spatial distribution of criminality in France (Hanson, 2015: 38–43).

More recently, criminologists have highlighted how 'the present scale of global movements of people, goods, and capital is introducing new dimensions that are radically transforming the contours of society' (Franko Aas and Bosworth, 2013: viii). The growing body of criminological scholarship on international migration, border control, and citizenship is now referred to as 'the criminology of mobility' or 'border criminology' (Bowling, 2013; Pickering et al., 2015). Border criminologists have shown that understanding issues relating to human mobility is crucial to contemporary criminology for two reasons. First, the use of 'criminal-justice-like powers' is no longer confined to the criminal justice system itself (Weber, 2002: 24). Second, it is no longer possible to fully understand classic

criminological themes relating to social exclusion, the boundaries of society, and penal power without asking how they intertwine with migration and border control (Bosworth et al., 2018).

Criminologists of mobility have shown that migration control has become increasingly characterized by legal and practical elements traditionally associated with criminal justice. The merging of criminal law and migration law—into what Juliet Stumpf (2006) influentially termed 'crimmigration law'—has been extensively documented and critically assessed by an array of academics focused on legal theory and practice (see, inter alia, Hernández, 2018; Armenta, 2017; Vazquez, 2015; van der Woude et al., 2014; Fan, 2013). Scholars have highlighted three main ways in which migration has become criminalized in past decades:

> the increasingly harsh consequences attached to violations of laws regulating migration, the use of removal as an adjunct to criminal punishment in cases involving noncitizens, and the rising reliance on criminal law enforcement actors and mechanisms in civil immigration proceedings (Chacón, 2009: 135–136; see also Hernández, 2017: 22).

Too often, however, crimmigration is understood simply as 'the criminalization of migration' (Kubal, 2014; Morales, 2014), as authors have found 'criminal law mechanisms and imagery being heavily resorted to as part of a general strategy for managing migration flows' and 'the growing use of criminal law to sanction migration law violations' (Marin and Spena, 2016: 147–148). These developments are no doubt a crucial component of crimmigration law, yet they represent only one half of crimmigration policies. In addition to newly established 'crimes of migration' (Morales, 2014), criminal justice is, *de facto*, being carried out via the *de jure* administrative frameworks of migration law. As Mary Bosworth (2017: 42) argues: 'Practices outside the criminal justice system not only feel punitive to those subject to them, but they have similar justification and effects.' Indeed, in the UK, well before Stumpf's influential article on crimmigration law, Leanne Weber and Loraine

Gelsthorpe noted how the legal and practical apparatuses of migration control appeared and were experienced as 'criminalizing,' without the protections and due process relating to criminal law (Weber, 2002: 14; Weber and Gelsthorpe, 2000). In this context, Katja Franko (Franko Aas, 2006: 150) also argued that novel border control and identification technologies in particular, presented as neutral administrative tools for 'managing the growing global flows of people,' were transforming practices of social exclusion and understandings of deviance from outside the formal criminal justice system.

More broadly, border criminologists have shown that answering classic criminological questions relating to social control, membership, and sovereign power in the twenty-first century requires analytical engagement with issues of mobility, borders, and territoriality. Traditionally, 'the natural unit of criminological inquiry' was the nation-state, and what happened outside its boundaries was viewed as beyond the purview of criminological analysis (Franko Aas, 2007: 286). Of course, there are good reasons for the traditional attachment of criminology to a nation-state framework. Modern states have been crucial to the development of criminology as a discipline, acting as the main funders and consumers of criminological research (Christie, 1997: 18). Criminal justice itself is politically and legally tied to a Westphalian notion of sovereignty based on exclusive territorial authority (Fitzpatrick, 2002: 307). Nonetheless, in the age of globalization, it has become clearer than ever that many of the key findings of contemporary criminology can no longer be understood as problems internal to territorially bounded sovereign states (Pickering and Weber, 2006a). Of particular importance is the criminological discussion relating to sovereign power and its limits.

One of the most influential theses in contemporary criminology is David Garland's (2001: 53) assertion that in the course of the twentieth century, the previously dominant 'penal-welfare framework' collapsed in the face of 'the crisis of penal modernism' within the broader social context of the market-oriented politics of neoliberalism in late modern

societies. These developments, he argues, resulted in the perception of crime as an inescapable reality of everyday life. This perception was combined with 'a more limited sense of the state's powers to regulate conduct and prohibit deviance,' in turn eroding 'one of the foundational myths of modern societies: namely, the myth that the sovereign state is capable of providing security, law and order, and crime control within its boundaries' (Garland, 1996: 447–448). The late modern state has responded to this predicament through both 'adaptive' and 'punitive' strategies. Adaptive strategies, on one hand, focus on the 'rationalization and commercialization of criminal justice functions' through public-private partnerships (Hughes and McLaughlin, 2003: 3). On the other hand, punitive strategies focus on dispensing harsh punishments, which 'magically compensates a failure to deliver security for the population at large' (Garland, 1996: 460).

Garland's analysis, however, leaves underexamined the extent to which the crisis of sovereign power is interlinked with the forces of globalization, and the fact that border control has become one of the most politically salient policy areas within which states have attempted to reassert their waning authority (Bosworth, 2008; Brown, 2017). In the words of Leanne Weber (2002: 10), 'no other area of policy so clearly unites the late modern themes of the threatened state and the impetus toward social exclusion as immigration policy.' Indeed, Garland's (1996: 461, original emphasis) distinction between adaptive strategies as a '*criminology of the self*, that characterizes offenders as rational consumers' and punitive strategies as a '*criminology of the other*, of the threatening outcast, the fearsome stranger, the excluded and the embittered' is now most apparent in the inside/outside distinctions drawn at national borders (Franko Aas, 2007).

Criminological scholarship contains many other precedents which today can no longer be fully understood without reference to border control, and which, in turn, provide important conceptual tools for analyzing mobility, borders, and territoriality. Most significantly, criminology is uniquely attuned to problems of order, social exclusion, and the

boundaries of political membership. The control of human mobility has long been a key factor in the enactment of disciplinary power and the production of order in society; Michel Foucault (1995: 141) noted that 'discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space.' Leanne Weber and Ben Bowling (2004) have shown that the control of mobile 'suspect individuals' has constituted a central component of the broader problem of 'maintaining public order' from feudal societies onwards. Furthermore, the spatial scale of strategies to control mobility has shifted upwards in time, first from the parish to the county level during the transition from feudal to industrial society, before subsequently being consolidated at the territorial borders of the nation by modern states (Weber and Bowling, 2008: 358–359). Weber and Bowling's notion of suspect mobile populations has affinities with Georg Simmel's (1950: 402) earlier discussion of 'the stranger […] the person who comes today and stays tomorrow,' as well as Stanley Cohen's (2011: 2) conception of 'folk devils: visible reminders of what we should not be.' All these notions refer to populations who are viewed as suspect due to their uncertain membership status within society. While previously the control of internally mobile populations took place in the context of relatively static and nationalistic understandings of 'society,' the spatial scale for conceptualizing 'society' today is more global and dynamic (Aas, 2007: 7). This dynamism becomes particularly apparent when keeping in mind Weber and Bowling's (2008: 359) insight that:

> The strategies adopted at any point in time to produce order in the face of suspect mobility have been contingent on specific material and political conditions, and their form and social meaning can only be fully understood in the context of a particular historical milieu.

The present 'historical milieu' is that of a globalized economy and society. Analyzing society from a global perspective attunes us to the ways in which criminological insights that have been formerly applied mainly to the domestic maintenance of social order can be applied to the processes and institutions of border control.

Two further criminological insights are of particular significance when analyzing human mobility and border control today: the conceptualization of 'punishment as a *moral* institution, shaped by collective values and social relationships rather than an *instrumental* one shaped by the demands of crime control' (Garland, 2013: 23, original emphasis), and the recognition that notions of deviance and inclusion form the basis for societal assessments of moral worth (Ben-Yehuda, 1990; Newburn, 2017: 233). Understanding punishment as a moral institution helps explain the enduring appeal of penal institutions and crime control efforts that rarely achieve their practical goal of reducing crime (Garland, 2013). A key function of institutions and practices is to demarcate and police the moral boundaries of society by punishing or excluding deviant populations. Given the moral considerations attached to penal institutions, notions of deviance and the punishment of offenders also form the basis for assessing the moral worth of individuals (Canton, 2015).

These same insights apply to the institutions of border control, which mostly 'fail the usual neoliberal standards of fiscal restraint and cost-effectiveness, but retain popular appeal as powerful expressions of order-seeking through sovereignty' (Weber and Bowling, 2008: 366). Indeed, border criminologists argue that 'crime control is one of the most legitimate reasons for border maintenance and thereby social exclusion. It transforms issues of global privilege and scarcity of resources into questions of morality and the maintenance of global order' (Franko, 2020: 168). Furthermore, conceptualizing border control as a moral institution highlights how notions of deviance and inclusion, which historically have informed societal assessments of moral worth, are shaped by the inside/outside distinction enacted at territorial borders. In the globalized and dynamic society of the twenty-first century, the privileged status of citizenship has become the main indicator of both societal inclusion and moral worth, along with the flipside of increased policing, punishment, and exclusion of non-citizen 'outsiders' (Richmond, 2002; Zedner, 2010).

It is clear that social exclusion and penal power in the twenty-first century are intimately related to mobility, borders, and territoriality. In turn, the analytical toolkit of criminology is invaluable in better understanding these issues. However, all criminological questions and frameworks cannot simply be transplanted into the field of migration control. As Emma Kaufman (2015: 19) argues, despite recognition of the transformative significance of globalization, 'academic paradigms for understanding punishment and state power have often struggled to follow suit.' Similarly, Tugba Basaran and Elspeth Guild (2017: 275) note how even scholarship that critiques distinctions between inside/outside, domestic/international, and citizen/foreigner often 'reaffirms the statist categories by leaving in place their boundaries, but providing them with different labels so as to change their normative association.' This suggests that conceptual translation is required when approaching border control from a criminological perspective; problematizing what Basaran and Guild refer to as 'statist categories' is a crucial first step in this analytical process.

Moving beyond the territorial trap

The idea that statist framings empirically and politically limit social science scholarship is by no means new. The 'territorial trap' and 'methodological nationalism' of modern social science have been critiqued extensively in a variety of fields, including International Relations, international political economy, migration and border studies, geography, sociology, cultural studies, and anthropology (see, inter alia, Walker, 1993; Agnew, 1994; Wimmer & Schiller, 2003; Newman, 2010; Brenner & Elden, 2009; Chernilo, 2006; Tawil-Souri, 2014; Malkki, 1992). The concepts of territorial trap and methodological nationalism refer to three main shortcomings linked to the dominant statist frameworks of modern social sciences: the assumption that state sovereignty maps neatly onto its territorial boundaries; analytically privileging the territorial state vis-à-vis other actors in world politics; and

equating the state with society, therefore assuming that the natural unit of scholarly analysis for any social science is the modern territorial state (Agnew, 1994, 2015; Wimmer and Schiller, 2003). Some disagreement persists over whether such assumptions have ever been empirically sound (compare Agnew, 1994 and Ruggie, 1993). Nonetheless, critics broadly agree that the aforementioned assumptions prevent 'social science from getting at the heart of the dynamics of modernization and globalization' (Beck, 2007: 287).

The point of these critiques is not to throw out previous scholarship as empirically and analytically inaccurate and thereafter start anew, but rather to ask how, and with what social and political effects, our assumptions about territoriality have been constructed. As Stuart Elden (2010: 757, emphasis added) argues, '[w]e need to investigate not simply the implications of thinking within this trap—how it constrains our thinking, and hamstrings our potential for critique—but how it is *produced*.' Critiques of methodological nationalism have shown that: *(i)* the concurrence of sovereign power and territorial boundaries is highly contestable on empirical grounds; *(ii)* states are, politically and morally, far from the only important actors in world politics, though they do exert significant power and authority; *(iii)* territoriality need not be linked to the modern state, but rather can be useful in conceptualizing all forms of the social construction of space; and *(iv)* all politics need not be territorial, particularly in the context of the dynamic networked associations of a globalized world (Adamson, 2016; Braidotti, 2010; Sager, 2016; Shah, 2012).

The very expansion of the criminological agenda to include questions of border control already challenges previously dominant understandings of state and society within criminological scholarship. However, this is not enough to overcome methodological nationalism without a deeper recognition of the epistemological and ontological distinctions between national and global notions of society (Franko Aas, 2011b). Falling short of this analytical move can reify notions of the state as a container of society, and the territorial border as a clear site of distinction between inside and outside. For instance, much literature

on crimmigration law retains a focus on the legal frameworks of particular countries, most prominently the US, UK, EU Member States, and Australia (e.g., Hernández, 2018; Stumpf, 2010; Koh, 2016; Beckett & Evans, 2015; Hartry, 2012; Waasdorp & Pahladsingh, 2017; Woude & Leun, 2017; van Berlo, 2015; Gerard & Pickering, 2013). Analyses of the practical dimensions of penal power within the field of migration control—including the imprisonment of non-citizens, migrant detention, and the policing of migrants—mostly focus on particular states in the Global North as well (Kaufman, 2015; Ugelvik, 2014; Barker, 2018; Parmar, 2018; Bosworth, 2011; although see Mehta, 2020; Milivojevic, 2019a; Baird, 2019; Vigneswaran, 2013).

At this point, some caveats are in order. In part, state-centrism and Eurocentrism spring from the historic linkages between the development of criminology as a discipline and that of modern penal power and policing in the Global North, particularly in the UK and the US (Newburn, 2017: 17). Noting that much border criminology scholarship focuses on particular states, usually in the Global North, is by no means meant to undermine the critical value of this scholarship. Indeed, as Sharon Pickering and Leanne Weber (2006a: 10–11) argue, '[t]he central normative question associated with border control is: "what actions are states entitled to take—and where can they do this—in defense of their borders?"' The aforementioned border criminology scholarship has taken invaluable strides toward answering the question of what actions states are taking in the form of crimmigration control. However, the question of where these actions are taken has received less scholarly attention. Furthermore, when this latter question has been addressed, the analysis has often moved even further into domestic spaces by highlighting how borders have diffused deeper inwards into societies in the Global North (Bowling and Westenra, 2018; Leerkes et al., 2013). Yet, this question should also be directed outwards—more accurately, the distinction between 'inwards' and 'outwards' should itself be problematized—in order to contextualize crimmigration policies within a global society and transnational dynamics of power and

inequality. Lastly, problematizing distinctions between inside and outside is not meant to undercut the enduring importance of borders themselves as places 'of presumptively high security, where ordinary principles of criminal law and due process rights can be eroded' (Zedner, 2019: 320).

Caveats aside, taking seriously the shortcomings of the territorial trap and methodological nationalism suggests that a global framing is needed to understand the contemporary criminalization of migration. Some crucial contributions in this direction have already been made by scholars examining crimmigration control in the Global South (e.g., Badalič, 2019; Ramachandran, 2019; Mehta, 2016; Vigneswaran, 2013; Lee, 2013). Such contributions, to which my research is deeply indebted and upon which it builds, are discussed at length in the next two sections of this chapter. They have highlighted how the reification of statist categories can be counterproductive by obscuring from view other important locations, actors, and practices underpinning global crimmigration control. In the context of globalization, 'we need to turn our attention to the underlying social transformations, caused by the emerging, deeply stratifying global ordering' (Franko Aas, 2007: 284).

It is important at this point to unravel the notion of globalization so as to avoid some of the main pitfalls that arise from a lack of analytical clarity regarding this concept. Globalization usually refers to a range of economic, political, and social processes by which the world is becoming increasingly interconnected (Aas, 2007: 3–6). This does not mean that national framings of politics are being completely undermined. As Katja Franko notes, 'globalization has in some contexts gone hand in hand with the resurgence of the national as a locus of identity-making and cultural belonging' (Aas, 2007: 143). Political reactions against globalization often follow in the wake of severe shocks, which appear to reveal the 'sinister underbelly of globalization that threatens the security of all countries' (Flanagan et al., 2001: 7). Such shocks include transnational terrorist attacks, global economic crises, and,

as seen during the coronavirus pandemic from 2019 onward, the transnational spread of infectious diseases. Whether globalization is viewed as broadly positive or negative, increased transnational interdependence is often understood to herald the 'waning,' 'diminishing,' or even the 'eclipse' of territorial state sovereignty (Brown, 2017; Cable, 1995; Evans, 1997). However, such perspectives overstate the extent to which state power has been undermined by external transformations, whether they are economic, technological, or environmental. Furthermore, they view globalization mainly in terms of these external transformations, thus overlooking the political nature of globalization as a new way of socially constructing and acting upon the world (Kaufman, 2015: 20; Muncie, 2005: 36).

Transnational modes of governance and public-private partnerships do not necessarily cause or reflect a decline of sovereign power. Although it might be fair to refer to a 'disassembling' of sovereignty (Sassen, 2007), how exactly and to what extent this disassembling affects the state's capacity to govern is a question for empirical analysis. In other words, globalization can be understood as 'the transformation of the state as it responds to pressures from domestic as well as international sources,' where 'transformation' need not necessarily refer to a decline (Devetak and True, 2006: 242). For instance, non-state actors—such as for-profit companies and non-governmental organizations—in the fields of migration and security governance can strengthen rather than erode state power, both within and beyond the territorial bounds of the state. Rita Abrahamsen and Mike Williams (2009: 14) have shown in their study of public security agencies and private security corporations in Sierra Leone and Nigeria that, particularly 'in states with weak administrative or governing capacities,' the outsourcing of security governance to private companies and international organizations can in fact be crucial to the 'continued functioning of state authority.' Federica Infantino (2019), meanwhile, has demonstrated how the outsourcing of border control functions in EU visa application

centers in Morocco allows states with already strong governing capacities to further strengthen their ability to govern.

Infantino makes a crucial point: the inclusion of a range of actors in governing processes can extend, rather than undermine, state capacity. The physical and legal distance created by outsourcing border controls does not diminish sovereign power; rather, 'the distance with the governed emerges as the most valuable outcome' as states govern '*through* the distance' (Infantino, 2016: 4, original emphasis). Novel border security technologies such as the IOM's MIDAS have played a crucial part in the extension of governing capacity through a disassembling of sovereign power. The development and deployment of biometric identification systems and interoperable migration databases has emerged as a key focus of public-private partnerships (Jeandesboz, 2016: 303–304). The apparent objectivity and efficiency of automated border control systems has justified an expansion of states' border control capacities across a variety of geographical locations (Dekkers et al., 2018), demonstrating the importance of novel technical tools in allowing the concurrence of the disassembling of sovereign power with the expansion of states' capacity to govern. In short, novel border security technologies can allow states to increase their governing capacity, not in spite of the disassembling of *de jure* sovereign authority but because of it.

If globalization is considered as a context for enacting new forms of governance rather than a zero-sum tradeoff between state and non-state power, it becomes clearer that globalization also refers to new ways of socially constructing and politically ordering the world. The 'rather crude technological determinism,' according to which external economic and technological pressures have prompted a straightforward 'response' from states, should therefore be discarded (Wimmer and Schiller, 2003: 596). Such material determinism can be avoided by conceptualizing globalization as a new 'social imaginary' (Steger and James, 2013). This term refers to 'the dominant commonsense' that provides 'largely pre-reflexive parameters within which people imagine their social existence' (Ibid.: 23). In other words,

globalization operates as the 'dominant problematic or interpretive grid' that shapes and legitimizes crimmigration policies (Ferguson, 1994: xiii; Foucault, 2002: 69).

In the context of the social imaginary of globalization, migration emerges as a 'problem' to be 'managed' on a global scale; it is a problem due to the threat it poses to the territorial sovereignty of states, and one which must be dealt with not only by states themselves but by a range of actors across the globe (Longo, 2018). Such 'management' involves promoting mobilities that are necessary and beneficial to the globalized economy while simultaneously excluding mobilities that are deemed dangerous or suspicious. As Mark Salter (2013: 12) argues, 'the bordering function is much more dispersed in world society,' and this dispersal allows for the management of 'circulation through the security techniques of inclusion, facilitation, and acceleration as well as exclusion, detention, and imprisonment.'

Border security technologies have been crucial to the promotion and legitimization of this new social imaginary as well. It is not simply that technologies allow for the operationalization of a pre-formulated social imaginary; these tools also shape understandings of migration as a particular type of issue to be managed through technical and supposedly neutral means. In the words of Corey Robinson (2018: 421, original emphasis), novel border security technologies can be conceptualized as 'governing technologies,' which 'bring migration into being as an object of global governance and perform it as a *global reality* to manage in technical and pragmatic ways.' In short, viewing globalization as a social imaginary illuminates the political nature of socially and technically constructing border control as an issue to be addressed on a global scale.

The above insights call for a move beyond a focus on policies and practices within states in the Global North. These states have not simply become more attuned to the 'realities' of the global nature of migration control. Rather, the construction of migration as a problem to be addressed through global crimmigration policies, characterized by the deterritorialization of sovereign power, is historically specific and politically contingent.

The postcolonial legacies of global crimmigration control

The contingent social and historical context underpinning contemporary global crimmigration control is characterized by global socioeconomic inequality, rooted in experiences of colonial rule and postcolonial power dynamics. Criminologists have already shown that the control of mobility has historically been driven by socioeconomic goals relating to the production of order and the safeguarding of privilege (Weber and Bowling, 2008). This general insight suggests that notions of migrant 'illegality' on a global scale must be understood in terms of global inequality and privilege as well (Dauvergne, 2008). In other words, crimmigration policies cannot be fully understood by looking only at their domestic legal, social, and political dimensions within states in the Global North. Instead, this thesis addresses the 'productive effects' of the global criminalization of migration, in particular 'the daily reinstatement of an unequal global order and its hierarchies of citizenship' (Franko, 2020: 83–84).

These global hierarchies are rooted in centuries of colonial domination and exploitation. Although much contemporary political discourse on migration, development, and the global economy represents present global inequality as a result of differences in 'good governance,' technological innovations, and comparative economic advantage, putting contemporary hierarchies into historical perspective indicates they are the product of 'a world economic system that was designed over hundreds of years to enrich a small portion of humanity at the expense of the vast majority' (Hickel, 2017: 101). Longitudinal economic analysis shows that contemporary global inequalities are rooted in colonial-era circuits of economic extraction by imperial powers, and that even after decolonization global income growth continues to be disproportionately captured by the Global North (Aguilera, 2020: 180–189). Moreover, global financial institutions such as the World Bank and the

International Monetary Fund, international political bodies such as the United Nations Security Council, and many influential international organizations including the UN-affiliated IOM are disproportionately funded and controlled by Western states (Abboud and Muller, 2013; Fine, 2018; Mamdani, 2010; Shaffer, 2005). Such outsized Western influence acts to the detriment of countries in the Global South which, for instance, have been forced to accept strict neoliberal conditionalities on international aid, often with disastrous consequences for domestic economies (Abrahamsen, 2000, 2004).

In spite of these insights, references to 'historical patterns of subordination of peoples and nations' within border criminology are often made only in passing, as a static background condition for analyses which focus more substantively on crimmigration experiences within the Global North (Provine & Zatz, 2015: 354; see Bosworth & Flavin, 2007). Some criminologists have, however, suggested that the continued effects of imperial domination are both material and ideational. For instance, indigenous populations still face political and legal marginalization based on colonial-era distinctions (Cunneen, 2011). Criminal justice systems as well as understandings of the relationship between politics and law in 'the postcolony' are heavily based on the ideas and practices carried over from colonial administrations (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2006). Moreover, comparative criminologists have shown that local social contexts impact the prevalence of crime and the character of criminal justice systems, and that economic inequality and absolute deprivation are consistently associated with higher levels of social disorganization (Hardie-Bick et al., 2005; Schaible, 2012). Applying these insights to economic inequalities rooted in colonial rule, it stands to reason that deprivation and notions of disorder in the Global South—and, importantly, concurrent notions of immigrant criminality in the Global North—are based on continued postcolonial power relations. However, much political discourse relating to migration and development presents these inequalities either as a result of moral and political failings in the Global South, including a lack of 'good governance' practices or an inability

to democratize (Abrahamsen, 2000; Autesserre, 2010), or as the result of 'natural' economic attributes such as technological development and comparative advantage (Hickel, 2017). The result of such discourse is to 'depoliticize our understandings of global inequality and cultural difference,' by 'localizing responsibility' for the legacies of colonial domination (Ferguson, 2006: 51). Such depoliticization serves to legitimize the construction of popular images of the 'crimmigrant other,' naturally inclined toward crime and disorder and identified through their lack of citizenship. The image of the 'crimmigrant other,' Katja Franko (2020: 180) argues:

> makes social exclusion—which might otherwise appear to be based on race, poverty, and religion—seem reasonable and legitimate. The exclusionary nature of nationalism is founded not only on the view that migrants represent a drain on the resources of the welfare state, but also on the notion of their otherness in terms of values and morality.

The relationship between postcolonial continuities in global economic inequality and the notion of the 'crimmigrant other' hint at ideational dimensions of contemporary postcolonial power. Critical scholars have highlighted the historical role of the social and human sciences in enabling and legitimizing colonial rule by 'gathering colonial knowledge linked to governance' (Bush, 2013: 453; Said, 1979). After decolonization, linkages between academic knowledge production and global hierarchy have endured as a set of dominant Eurocentric and ahistorical assumptions (Acharya, 2014; Agozino, 2004). Thus, critical reflexivity is required when applying criminological analysis to questions of global hierarchy, so as not to reify or naturalize global inequality, but instead to problematize postcolonial hierarchies as well as the historical role of the social sciences in their legitimation. Such reflexivity would include overcoming 'Northern epistemic hegemony' in the social sciences, which is constituted by four main components: '(a) the claim of universality; (b) reading from the center; (c) gestures of exclusion; and (d) grand erasure' (Franko Aas, 2012b: 7). Crucially, overcoming these epistemic issues is desirable for both normative reasons as well

as the development of criminology as a discipline, as '[d]eveloping more democratic epistemologies is not only a question of epistemological justice, but increasingly also an analytical imperative and an opportunity for theoretical innovation' (Ibid.: 16).

Existing scholarship based on a 'provincialization' of European ideas (Chakrabarty, 2008) has already uncovered important continuities and legacies between present-day political practices and discourses and those of European empires. In the field of crimmigration control, colonial-era 'raciological thinking' has been denounced yet replaced by elements of 'xeno-racism,' whereby nationalistic social exclusion in the form of border control is given 'the respectable name of xenophobia. It may be xeno, in that it is directed at aliens, strangers, but it is racism in the way it operates against them' (Sivandan, 2002). This is not to say that categories of citizenship, deviance, and socioeconomic status have entirely excised the role of differences of complexion in determining social exclusion. As Katja Franko (Franko Aas, 2007: 289–290) notes, in the field of migration control, 'Garland's "criminology of the dangerous other" meets [Edward] Said's "Oriental other"—a mirror image of the West and a prototype of all that is inferior, irrational and alien.'

Even the supposed moral neutrality of the category of citizenship as a basis for migration control is called into question by recognizing how contemporary notions of sovereignty and territoriality themselves were shaped by the colonial encounter. According to traditional accounts, the norm of territorial sovereignty was established at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 and subsequently spread across the globe, culminating in the post-World War II decolonization movements (Holsti, 2018). This story is one of European ideational and normative innovation, in which 'the remarkable globalization of sovereign statehood' is presented as a natural process of diffusion (Jackson, 2007: 13). What is missing from these accounts is not only the role of imperialism in spreading European ideas about political governance, but also the substantive impact that the colonial encounter had in shaping the character of the sovereignty norm itself. The main tenets of contemporary sovereignty—

namely exclusive internal authority, territorial control, and the conferral of membership within international society—were developed as solutions to legal contradictions that arose between notions of universal humanity and the colonial domination of non-Western peoples by European imperialists (Anghie, 1999, 2004). Similarly, the practice of demarcating linear territorial boundaries originated as a solution to dividing up what was characterized as *terra nullius* in the New World by imperial powers (Branch, 2014; Goettlich, 2019).

This last example again demonstrates the significant impact that novel technologies can have in shaping practices of political ordering and social exclusion. The problem of dividing up North American *terra nullius* arose contemporaneously to the development of novel linear mapmaking techniques, and the concurrent commercial popularity of the new maps. This popularity was largely due to their aesthetic appeal and economic function in inventorying private property rather than their accuracy in representing political boundaries (Pickles, 2004: 100). European politics at the time was still characterized by ambiguous configurations of overlapping political authority between civil societies, monarchies, and ecclesiastical authorities rather than territorially exclusive state sovereignty (Beaulac, 2000). In short, novel technical tools played a crucial role in shaping responses to problems of political order in the context of early modern colonial globalization. As Jordan Branch (2014: 69) argues, 'it was the need to divide, claim, and assign dominion over the unknown spaces of the New World that drove the first use of the abstract mathematical and geometric methods that were newly available for understanding and claiming territories.' To be clear, the mapmaking technologies shaped responses to newfound problems of political authority, not vice versa: 'Any argument that maps depicted territorial authority because rulers wished to promote that idea is undercut by the chronology and character of early modern mapping' (Ibid.: 95). The role of mapmaking techniques in shaping and legitimizing colonial-era global hierarchy and social exclusion raises questions regarding the role of contemporary border

control technologies in legitimizing global inequalities and crimmigration control in the postcolonial present.

At this point it is important to clarify what an examination of postcolonial power dynamics is not, namely a simple shift in the geographical focus of criminological research. It is not that criminology has exhausted the Global North as an object of study, and that therefore it would be interesting to examine the Global South 'in turn' as part of an 'exploration' of the unknown; the resemblance here with the pre-colonial age of discovery should already ring alarm bells. The point is rather that a proper understanding of global hierarchy, and therefore the global system of borders and migration control, requires a sustained analysis of continuities between colonial and postcolonial power as well as the connections and interdependence between former imperial powers and the postcolonies. As Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (2006: ix) argue:

> Postcolonies have become especially critical sites for the production of social theory; social theory sui generis, that is, not merely anthropological theory addressed to the lives and times of those worlds formerly known as "third" or "second" […] indeed, the comfortable cleavage between "ours" and "theirs" has a habit of vanishing under scrutiny, notwithstanding the *cordons sanitaire* that histories of violence have forced between different parts of the planet.

It is in this sense that a global border criminology can explicate the political and normative dimensions of the visions of 'society'—and their concurrent lines of inclusion and exclusion—that are being played out in the form of global crimmigration control. Such limits are not enacted only at the territorial borders of Northern states. Inclusion within 'international society' is being policed at the level of both states and individuals through the daily reification and enactment of global hierarchy, based on socioeconomic and racial distinctions (Franko Aas, 2007: 286; Jackson and Rosberg, 1986). It is on the basis of norms and practices that either originated in or were substantively shaped by the colonial encounter that peoples in the Global South continue to be disciplined into accepting and adopting

Western-centric modes of governance. This disciplining in turn legitimizes the exclusion of the Global South from the privileges that have accrued in the Global North following centuries of colonial and postcolonial subjugation, an exclusion 'most vividly expressed in the increasing visibility of the border' (Nisancioglu, 2020: 20).

In order to better understand the dynamics of social exclusion that underpin the global criminalization of migration, my research includes in its analysis a view 'from below' by focusing on actors and practices in the Global South (Franko Aas, 2011b: 413). This does not mean simply including marginalized or silenced voices, although such inclusion constitutes a significant normative rationale in itself. Moreover, this view does not excise Northern actors from the analysis, but rather situates their actions within global hierarchies of power and inequality. The point, then, is to better understand contemporary dynamics of postcolonial power and hierarchy, which are crucial to understanding crimmigration control as a global phenomenon.

Externalizing crimmigration control: Agency and subjectivity in the Global South

Much of the existing criminological and legal scholarship on crimmigration control in the Global South has focused on the externalization of border controls by states in the Global North. These studies have made important contributions by highlighting how the outsourcing of border controls has given rise to a complex public-private 'migration industry,' which operates as a 'mechanism to trade political and legal obligations toward refugees and migrants both among states and with non-state actors in an attempt to realize legal obligations at the lowest possible cost' (Sørensen and Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2012: 14). These measures have direct human costs. One disquieting example is the correlation of tighter migration enforcement practices with a higher number of migrant deaths at sea (Williams and Mountz, 2016). Moreover, externalization has the political effect of weakening

political and legal frameworks that protect migrant rights. For instance, it has contributed to the 'death of asylum' by simultaneously making asylum claims more difficult to lodge as well as hiding from view asylum-seekers themselves, who often represent the most vulnerable of globally mobile populations (Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2011; Mountz, 2020). Externalization does not only impact asylum-seekers, as a range of border control mechanisms including border checkpoints, visa application centers, detention centers, forced returns, and the deployment of border security technologies have been externalized to a variety of public and private actors (Flynn and Cannon, 2009; Franko Aas, 2006; Infantino, 2019; Lemberg-Pedersen, 2012).

The role of Southern states within the global crimmigration control system is often conceptualized in terms of their involvement in such externalization agreements with Northern states. Thus, crimmigration control practices in Indonesia are analyzed to make sense of Australian externalization efforts (Menjívar et al., 2018: 5), Tunisia's crimmigration control measures are viewed as part of the EU's 'external migration policy' (Badalič, 2019), and crimmigration control practices in West Africa are conceptualized as enacting 'penal neo-colonialism' by the EU (Stambøl, 2021b). International organizations, in particular the IOM, are key partners operationalizing Northern policy influence on the ground (Bartels, 2018; Dini, 2018; Fine, 2018). Such analyses are pertinent given the extensive policy focus and economic resources that Northern states are devoting to influencing practices in the Global South (Bøås, 2021), yet crimmigration control practices in the South are unlikely to be reducible to Northern policy interests.

Although studies of border externalization are highly important, they often remain focused on the rationalities and policy goals of Northern states, which does not yet rectify the shortcomings related to obscuring the global nature postcolonial power dynamics, as argued above. Indeed, focusing on a Northern perspective has often resulted in arguments that migrants, by being excluded from Northern societies, are excised from the law itself,

drawing on Giorgio Agamben's notion of *homo sacer*, 'bare life' (Agamben, 1998; see, e.g., Pope & Garrett, 2012). Despite the affective potency of depicting some migrants' lives as 'characterized by misery, lack of self-determination, and irrelevance,' *homo sacer* as a conceptual tool 'oversimplifies people's experiences' (Bhui, 2013: 11). For instance, this notion ultimately overlooks the ambiguity and complexity of migrant detention and expulsion within Northern states as well as migrants' own agency in responding to these practices and environments (Johansen, 2013). More broadly, the notion of 'bare life' misses the active construction of mobile individuals as particular kinds of subjects, that is, as 'migrants'; they are not excised from the law, but rather 'illegalized and criminalized through the sustained and targeted use of the state's legal apparatus' (Franko, 2020: 9). Again, novel border control technologies play a significant role in the political construction of the 'crimmigrant other,' by not only 'identifying' individuals but 'creating identities' by forcing people 'into patterns of identification, conditioning who they can be according to the state-imposed norm' (Longo, 2018: 164). One might ask whether, reminiscent of King Midas transforming all he touched into gold, the IOM's MIDAS also transforms the people it touches into a particular type of political subject, to be governed through mechanisms of crimmigration control.

While a focus only on Northern goals of exclusion can result in a conceptualization of migrants as *homo sacer*, analyzing on-the-ground practices and the deployment of novel border control technologies in the Global South politicizes contemporary crimmigration control in two ways. It highlights the active nature of constructing the category of 'the migrant' and giving it particular political, legal, and social significance—what Ben Bowling (2013: 293) refers to as the 'processes of criminalization'—and brings into view the agency and subjectivity of local actors in responding to, resisting, and reshaping these practices in the Global South. Too often are Southern public and private actors, as well as migrants themselves, viewed as 'passive recipients' of externalized border control practices (Bartels,

2018: 64; Rother, 2013). In contrast, border criminologists focused on actors in the Global South have already demonstrated the value of incorporating these voices into the analysis. At the interstate level, Mary Bosworth (2017b) has shown how governments such as those of Nigeria and Jamaica actively reshape Northern states' efforts to externalize border control. Focusing on local public agencies, Darshan Vigneswaran (2013) found that South African law enforcement officials reappropriated discourses and practices of mobility control promoted by actors such as the IOM. Vigneswaran (2013: 123) therefore argues that 'criminalizing mobility is not simply taught or imposed in a top-down fashion by global agencies concerned with migration dynamics and problems.' Focusing on the agency of migrants themselves, Sanja Milivojevic (2019b: 217) argues that migrants use digital technologies to respond to changes in border control efforts, in addition to creating 'active sites of resistance, by documenting abusive bordering practices in countries of transit and posting them on the digital knowledge commons.' Highlighting the theoretical value of including marginalized voices in border criminology research, Rimple Mehta's (2016: 296) study of the experiences and views of Bangladeshi women detained in India uncovered 'multiple meanings and interpretations […] thereby giving us insight into the fractures that exist within the apparatuses of state security.'

To stress the importance of including voices from the Global South in border criminology research is not to claim that we should discard Northern actors or discourses from the analysis. Indeed, examining the official rationales used by Northern states to justify and legitimize the externalization of crimmigration policies provides a valuable foundation for critically interrogating the global criminalization of migration. It is crucial to understand and trace these discourses for a number of reasons: uncovering their relationship to actual practices on the ground; identifying which actors—Northern and Southern, state and non-state, domestic and transnational—are involved in the enactment of these practices; examining with what kinds of responses these practices have been met in the Global South;

and, in turn, analyzing how these responses have contributed to the reshaping of crimmigration agendas in the Global North.

Existing scholarship has already highlighted some of the main discourses and policy rationales used to legitimize crimmigration policies, practices, and technologies. Security has a long history of being used to justify otherwise exceptional political and legal measures (Huysmans, 2004). In the field of border control, exceptional measures including racial discrimination and a curtailment of rights have been 'legitimized by the prioritization of security demands' (Provine and Zatz, 2015: 355). Lucia Zedner (2019: 321) argues that 'behind the phenomenon of crimmigration lies the driver of security,' which in turn has transformed the border into 'a gray zone of eroded rights protections' that 'has allowed incursions on individual liberty that would not be tolerated elsewhere.'

Another policy discourse, distinct yet often interlinked with security concerns, is that of development. Northern states as well as international organizations have long justified economic and policy interventions in the Global South in the name of international development. These measures include bilateral development aid, structural adjustment programs, and 'good governance' initiatives (Abrahamsen, 2000; Ferguson, 1994; Williams, 2010). A more recent manifestation of development practice has been what Philippe Frowd (2018: 1657) terms 'developmental borderwork,' that is, transnational interventions in the Global South aimed at managing local borders, which 'draw on the discourse of development but also its financial resources, forms of organization, and implicit understandings about the world.' The IOM, and its border management practices and tools such as MIDAS, have been central to developmental borderwork in the Global South (Ibid.: 1663–1664). Security and development rationales often combine within a broader 'security-development nexus' (Chandler, 2007; Duffield, 2001), yet there is some tension between them: increased migration is simultaneously seen as both an 'engine for development' and a source of transnational security threats (Sørensen, 2012).

To further complicate this picture, security and development in the context of border control have become increasingly intertwined with humanitarianism, thereby resulting in what Katja Franko and Helene Gundhus refer to as 'humanitarian borderlands' (Aas and Gundhus, 2015). Humanitarian discourse seeks to shift political focus from both sending and receiving states onto the migrants themselves, by demonstrating that 'border control and security practices may be the *sources* of humanitarian suffering' (Lohne & Sandvik, 2017: 7, original emphasis). These three discourses stand in uneasy relation to one another, often offering contradictory policy prescriptions. However, in the context of migration control, stricter border control measures in the name of security often prevail. Furthermore, as Mary Bosworth (2017b: 43) has pointed out, the discourses of development and humanitarianism can also be utilized to justify exclusionary measures:

> In "bordering" and "reordering," the state cannot rely solely on rhetoric and practices of security or punishment. Instead, they persuade countries to accept their returning citizens through investment and policy exchange. As border control and punishment merge, penal power and humanitarianism increasingly work together.

All three discursive framings have historically had a depoliticizing function in justifying international interventions with reference to supposedly neutral technical expertise (Death, 2014). In other words, at the intersection of security, development, and humanitarianism, transnational interventions 'are predominantly legitimated by non-democratic claims to efficiency, economics, rationality—and humanitarianism, rather than articulated claims to "order" and "governance"' (Lohne, 2020: 156–157).

Highlighting the tensions between the dominant discourses at work in justifying Northern crimmigration control practices raises a set of questions demanding engagement with and research in the Global South: what exactly do global crimmigration practices look like, if they are carried out in the name of contradictory policy discourses? Which actors enact these policies on the ground, and what kinds of frameworks of hierarchy, partnership,

responsibility, and entrepreneurialism underpin their actions? How do these actors respond to, resist, and reshape these policies in practice? Crucially, as highlighted above, these practices of global crimmigration control are highly technologized (Franko, 2020; Pickering and Weber, 2006a). For this reason, understanding the contemporary global crimmigration control system requires a critical examination of its 'constitutive governing technologies' (Robinson, 2018: 419), that is, border security tools such as the IOM's MIDAS.

Suspect identities, suspect mobilities?

Existing technology-oriented criminological research has often focused on particular security and surveillance technologies, while avoiding grand narratives and macro-level analysis. Grand theorizing in the context of technological innovation and technical practices is problematic, according to Lucia Zedner (2009: 258): 'Relying upon its distance from the details of everyday usage it ignores the fine distinctions and significant divergences, and so licenses sweeping generalizations.' In contrast, criminologists have sought to highlight 'how the classic theme of exclusion of otherness dominates everyday surveillance practices' (Franko Aas et al., 2009a: 9). Researchers have demonstrated how the diffusion of surveillance technology along with new legal frameworks undermining previous standards of due process have resulted in 'surveillant assemblages' (Haggerty and Ericson, 2000). Surveillant assemblages 'not only counteract democratic legal institutions but also substitute a new basis for governing that is patently undemocratic in its mobilization of categorical suspicion, suspicion by association, discrimination, decreased privacy, and exclusion' (Ericson, 2007: 71).

Similarly, border criminologists have argued that 'the surveillance practices directed at crimmigrant bodies also demonstrate that the crimmigrant other's identity is strongly marked by distrust and suspicion' (Franko, 2020: 30). In other words, surveillance

technologies at the border are based on an assumption of suspect identities, therefore presenting transnational mobilities as suspect as well. In this way, border control technologies such as biometric identification systems—a central component of the IOM's MIDAS—operationalize a 'logic of inclusive exclusion,' that is, justifying and enacting the exclusion of mobile populations by enrolling them into the biometric database and categorizing them as suspicious (Ajana, 2013: 590). The highly complex technical nature of novel identification technologies legitimizes their proliferation through claims to objectivity, efficiency, and reliability. As Katja Franko (2006: 151) notes, however,

> the implementation of these technologies, as any other, is not unproblematic as they are open to inaccuracy, misuse and privacy violations […]. Not only do they minimize the need for verbal communication, they almost completely eliminate the possibilities for doubt and negotiation.

Criminologists have also argued that policing tools such as predictive crime modeling algorithms can create 'a pernicious feedback loop' by justifying and intensifying the disproportionate policing of marginalized communities, as 'policing itself spawns new data, which justifies more policing' (O'Neil, 2016: 86). Even technologies not directly intended for criminal justice purposes, such as automated algorithms used to allocate welfare benefits and housing, have contributed to the disproportionate policing and punishment of poor, non-white populations (Eubanks, 2018). In all these cases, the significant political and social impacts of new technologies stand in stark contrast to the neutral, depoliticized discourse that marks their adoption. Their technical nature itself seems to afford them a veneer of objectivity, as 'technology emerges as a source of symbolic and practical capital internally, with its worth being assessed upon its use-value within the assemblage, rather than upon broader ethical or moral questions about whether it should be engaged at all' (D Wilson, 2015: 142). These insights are relevant to critically interrogating border control technologies such as MIDAS as well, as 'systems like MIDAS are a key part of the IOM's

positioning as a neutral, technical provider of border management solutions for states who may not be able to afford them' (Frowd, 2018: 1667).

The critical potential of focusing on specific technologies is particularly substantial in the field of crimmigration practices, due to the extent to which contemporary border control is marked by the deployment of a wide range of security technologies:

> The crimmigrant body is mediated by technology. Today, the exercise of power, including in the penal domain, is essentially technological. Contemporary border control systems aim to create bodies which are fused with technology (Franko, 2020: 25).

Indeed, some border criminologists have justified a focus on border control technologies simply by highlighting that 'state responses to uncontrolled mobility continue to become more sophisticated and far reaching, employing highly technical, increasingly punitive and innovative methods of border control' (Pickering and Weber, 2006a: 9). Moreover, borders and borderlands are not only sites where pre-existing security technologies are deployed, but also political and legal gray areas where new security technologies are developed and pioneered. Borders are now often described as 'laboratories' by private security companies and border control officials, 'as if migrants in those borderlands […] were not only threats but also specimens under a large security microscope' (Miller, 2019: 76). Particularly prominent among novel border control technologies have been biometric identification systems and large-scale migration databases (Franko Aas, 2006; Muller, 2010). MIDAS, too, captures and stores biometric information in a centralized database that is interoperable with other transnational biometric databases such as those maintained by Interpol and the US Department of State (Zandonini, 2019). Such technologies are highly promising as objects of border criminology research, not only due to their current prevalence at borders across the globe, but also due to the ways in which they relate to the key themes of contemporary global crimmigration control identified above, namely deterritorialized sovereign power as well as the justification and reification of global hierarchy. Dean Wilson (2006) argues that

the recent popularity of biometric technologies is not simply a result of their technical capacities. Instead, the 'symbolism of biometrics, which is engaged by nation-states as a signifier of the renewal of sovereign power,' offers a solution to the problem of governance in a globalized world (Ibid.: 89). This solution is based on the promise of biometrics to balance the porosity of borders for desirable individuals with the fortification of borders against those deemed undesirable (Salter, 2013). Biometric technologies appear as a 'technique for sorting through different forms of life according to their usefulness and legitimacy' (Ajana, 2013: 584).

Notwithstanding the novelties of contemporary automated biometric identification technologies and large-scale migration databases, it is also important to recognize continuities with older identification techniques and tools. The focus on the body itself has a long criminological history dating back to Francis Galton's attempts to identify biological markers of deviance on the human face, and Alphonse Bertillon's quest of standardizing individual identification through the use of anthropometric measurements (Maguire, 2009: 11–13). Later, Foucault (1995) noted the importance of the body as the central object of surveillance and disciplinary power. Such precedents are of importance not simply out of historical curiosity, but due to demonstrating how, in what contexts, and with what political effects identification technologies focusing on the body have been developed and deployed in the past.

Most significantly, biometric identification techniques were frequently first tested on marginalized and racialized populations, often in colonial contexts. Fingerprinting, for instance, was first pioneered by William Herschel in colonial India to overcome perceived problems in distinguishing between Indian individuals due to their ethnic unfamiliarity (Cole, 2001: 64; Sengoopta, 2003). Later, American immigration officials similarly based their use of fingerprinting at the border on racialized otherness, arguing that 'the Chinese were physically indistinguishable' (Ibid.: 124). The categorization of racialized populations

in colonial contexts shaped the development of ID cards as well, as Belgian authorities in colonial Rwanda saw ID cards as a 'reliable means of distinguishing the one from the many,' in particular distinguishing between different ethnic groups (Lyon, 2009: 43). These ID cards served to fix previously flexible social and ethnic distinctions, later used to select victims of genocide (Ibid.). These precedents need not imply that present-day biometric border security technologies conceal genocidal motivations, yet they do indicate that, historically, biometric identification has been suffused with logics of racialized othering, social sorting, and the safeguarding of privilege (Lyon, 2003). It is pertinent to ask, then, in what ways the rationales enacted by novel border security technologies such as MIDAS are similar or dissimilar to these earlier cases of biometric identification and social categorization.

Some authors argue that the proliferation of biometric technologies and complex networks of migration databases—which are often developed and managed jointly by public agencies, international organizations, and private companies—are evidence of states 'ceding classic markers of sovereignty for the sake of security' (Longo, 2018: 5). However, as argued above, the deterritorialization and disassembling of sovereign power has often increased rather than undermined the capacity of states to govern. In the context of biometrics, Katja Franko (2020: 28, original emphasis) argues that these technologies increase Northern states' capacities to police their borders and more effectively exclude 'crimmigrant others,' by 'ascribing a system of standardized identification and seeking to create the *global intelligibility* of populations.' The global scale of this rationale is highly significant. It reflects the operation of globalization as a new dominant social imaginary through which 'the global' is constructed as the appropriate scale for crimmigration control. It is for this reason that 'the identification of *other states' citizens* becomes of such vital importance' (Ibid., original emphasis).

In practical terms, using biometrics and centralized databases on a global scale extends the capacity of Northern states to surveil, profile, and deport non-citizens by further intensifying already existing dynamics of 'inclusion through exclusion […] premised upon

protracted deportability' (De Genova, 2013: 1184–1185; Koch, 2014). These technologies are particularly important in enacting processes of exclusion and expulsion due to their supposed neutrality, which serves to naturalize and depoliticize crimmigration control by obscuring dynamics of global inequality and privilege underneath a veneer of technical objectivity (Franko, 2020: 29). Moreover, even when the neutrality of decisions to include and exclude might be contested, the increased complexity of decision-making and the dynamics of discretion—caused by humans and automated systems operating in tandem—can still undermine accountability. As Dekkers and colleagues (2018: 248) argue, '[b]ecause it is difficult to establish whether [border officers'] actions were the result of a discretionary decision or an automated risk assessment, potential wrongful selection practices could be brushed aside.' Questions of accountability become increasingly tricky when global crimmigration control and forced return practices are not only highly technologized, but also outsourced to transnational actors such as the IOM and operationalized by various state agencies (Koch, 2014). It is for these reasons that biometric border control technologies such as MIDAS constitute a promising empirical foundation for critically interrogating the contemporary global crimmigration control system.

Conclusion

Existing scholarship has illuminated the importance of globalization in shaping crimmigration law and policy, the significance of notions of racialized otherness as part of a broader discourse about the 'crimmigrant other,' and the role of novel technologies in shaping practices of political ordering and social exclusion. Building on these insights, this chapter has identified remaining research lacunae: critically examining and problematizing globalization and the deterritorialization of sovereign power, uncovering the postcolonial legacies of contemporary global hierarchy, and empirically interrogating the role of novel

border security technologies in shaping and putting into practice global crimmigration control.

Satisfactory approaches to the aforementioned themes can be neither Northern centric nor state centric. As Stefan Rother (2013: 365, original emphasis) argues—his wording being particularly relevant for those of us who engage in border criminology research at Oxford—fully understanding global migration control requires an 'alternative perspective to *the world according to Oxford*, which at times seems rather Western- and state-centric, thus unintentionally mirroring the emerging architecture of global migration governance.' A focus on transnational actors such as the IOM, and particular border security technologies such as MIDAS, can rectify the privileging of Northern state actors over non-state and Southern voices 'from below.' In short, a critical examination of the IOM and MIDAS constitutes a fruitful starting point from which to begin addressing broader conceptual and political questions related to the global criminalization of migration.

Yet, as highlighted above, criminological questions and frameworks cannot always be directly transplanted into the field of migration and border control. Some conceptual translation is required. Walter Benjamin's essay on translation is useful for conceptualizing this endeavor. For Benjamin (2002: 257), 'the task of the translator' is not simply to locate surface-level correspondences between 'the ways of meaning' of two separate languages, but to dig deeper and uncover 'what is meant.' When formerly domestic notions of order, social exclusion, and political membership are transmuted into processes and technologies of border control, it is likely that differences in the political and legal registers between domestic penal power and territorial border control—distinct 'ways of meaning'—obscure important similarities in 'what is meant.' My research addresses these deeper affinities while simultaneously highlighting actual rather than superficial distinctions, moving beyond the statist framings that still often limit scholarship on migration and border control.

In order to successfully carry out this process of conceptual translation, the theoretical and empirical toolkits of criminology must be buttressed by incorporating insights from a number of other disciplines. Such interdisciplinarity is in line with existing scholarship on human mobility and borders (Basaran et al., 2017; Bigo, 2016). In recognition of the complex and multidimensional character of contemporary global politics, such scholarship has sought to overcome traditional disciplinary boundaries in favor of 'transversal' modes of analysis (Huysmans and Nogueira, 2016). Against this background, the next chapter surveys the relevant literature across a number of social science disciplines, and constructs a transversal theoretical framework that will inform my empirical research into the IOM and MIDAS.

Chapter 3 – Performativity and pragmatism: Theorizing border control technologies

> *Political agency need not be critical in the negative sense of oppositional and thus may not be aimed solely or primarily at the production of counter-subjectivities. Subjectivity is rather a process of auto-poiesis or self-styling, which involves complex and continuous negotiations with dominant norms and values and hence also multiple forms of accountability.*
>
> – Rosi Braidotti (2013: 35).

> *[N]othing is any longer able to withstand the business of knowing, since technical mastery over things bears itself without limit. Precisely in the leveling and planning of this omniscience, this mere knowing, the openedness of beings gets flattened out into the apparent nothingness of what is no longer even a matter of indifference but rather is simply forgotten.*
>
> – Martin Heidegger (1993: 129).

In reviewing the scholarship on crimmigration control and its technological dimensions, the previous chapter identified several research lacunae which the remainder of this thesis addresses. Existing work in border criminology suggested that, in the context of globalization, sovereign power has become deterritorialized. Cross-border mobility is viewed as politically and economically essential, yet its control is simultaneously a key marker of states' sovereign power, thus inviting new, geographically dispersed practices of migration management as states seek to reassert their authority. This deterritorialization has taken place against the broader backdrop of postcolonial global hierarchies, as border control constitutes a central practice through which relations of 'global privilege and scarcity' are both upheld and contested (Franko, 2020: 168). It is not only states in the Global North that are instituting new forms of social exclusion at and beyond their borders; states in the Global South are also engaging in novel practices of border control. A key component of these practices is the transnational diffusion of border control technologies, aided by international

organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Thus, this thesis analyzes the intersection of territorial sovereignty, global hierarchy, and technological development. These research topics are in part inescapably empirical, and in later chapters I turn to an examination of empirical data to analyze the significance of the IOM and its Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) to these problematics. Yet, the previous chapter also indicated a need for further theorization in and of the field of border criminology, by traversing traditional boundaries of social and criminological analysis.

Such an analytical orientation has been described as 'transversal' by scholars of International Political Sociology (IPS), the 'critical posthumanities,' feminist theory, and border criminology (Basaran et al., 2017; Braidotti, 2019; Huysmans and Nogueira, 2016; Weber, 2019; Yuval-Davis, 1999). A transversal perspective disrupts state-centric and linear narratives of border control, focusing instead on relations that are 'criss-crossing and generating diverse, plural and transnational social and political practices' (Basaran et al., 2017: 3). In the field of border criminology, Sharon Pickering and Leanne Weber (2013: 93, original emphasis; see also Weber, 2019) have productively utilized the notion of transversality to highlight how 'border policing increasingly requires activities that are both *beyond* territory and operate *within* physical borders. This decoupling from territory fundamentally changes the nature of that policing, and in turn the nature of the border.' The concept of transversality does not simply call attention to the geographical dispersal of bordering practices; it also foregrounds a plurality of subject positions by drawing on feminist standpoint epistemology, 'which recognizes that from each positioning the world is seen differently, and thus that any knowledge based on one positioning is "unfinished"—which is not the same thing as saying it is "invalid"' (Yuval-Davis, 1999: 94–95).

The problematization of state-centrism, postcolonial hierarchies, and human-technology relations raises the broader question of how to conceptualize the political agency of Northern and Southern state and non-state actors, international organizations such as the

IOM, and border control technologies themselves. To this end, I draw on the theory of performativity and the philosophical tradition of pragmatism as a basis for theorizing the relationship between structure and agency and understanding the deployment of new border control technologies in the Global South.

Pioneered by feminist philosopher Judith Butler (2007; 2010), the notion of performativity seeks to move away from essentialized and fixed understandings of social identities. In her analysis of gender, Butler does not simply suggest that pre-existing subjects choose to perform either masculine or feminine gender 'roles,' but more radically that there exist no gendered subjects independent of these performances; they are constitutive of gendered identities, in the sense that 'gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed' (Butler, 2007: 34). Examining the deployment of novel border control technologies in the Global South through the lens of performativity is useful in calling attention to the kinds of subjectivities that Southern state actors, the IOM, and the technologies themselves perform. What kinds of subjectivities are produced, and what are the social norms informing and structuring these performances? Importantly, what are the political effects of these performances in terms of social inclusion and exclusion within the broader context of global postcolonial hierarchies?

While the framework of performativity has already been extensively utilized by border criminologists (Fabini, 2019; Palmer, 2021; Stambøl and Solhjell, 2021; Wonders, 2006; Wonders and Jones, 2018), pragmatism has not figured as prominently in border criminology or indeed criminology more broadly (Wheeldon, 2015; Wheeldon and Heidt, 2007). The term 'pragmatic' has mainly been used to criticize an 'approach to crime and disorder' in which 'getting the job done was more important than legal and philosophical questions about whether issues were crimes or administrative violations' (Gundhus, 2021: 65). However, as Johannes Wheeldon (2015: 399) has argued, this colloquial usage is distinct from the thoroughly self-reflexive and critical orientation espoused by the philosophical

pragmatists, who argue that '[p]ragmatic solutions to philosophic dilemmas required abandoning traditional notions about truth and confronting the logical fallacies associated with traditional appeals to authority.'

I argue that the framework of pragmatism is a particularly useful perspective for understanding human-technology relations and engaging in ongoing discussions about democratizing and decolonizing criminology (Aliverti et al., 2021). By conceptualizing technologies as being produced within particular scientific frameworks of justification, this framework can problematize instrumentalist views of technology as a neutral tool used to solve technical issues. The perspective highlights the specifically human capacity to deliberate upon what kinds of social or political 'problems' technical tools should address, even as material objects and technologies shape these discussions (Pihlström, 2021). Pragmatism can therefore contribute to the broader criminological project of 'prizing open the black box of technology's ontology' in order to develop 'theories of technology-related harm that do not collapse the technological with the social and that avoid social determinism on the one hand and technological determinism on the other' (Wood, 2021: 627). Moreover, due to its 'rejection that there is any such thing as judgements or knowledge in general,' which foregrounds the situatedness of knowledge claims within particular social and historical contexts (Hickman, 2007: 44), pragmatism promotes an open and democratic attitude toward theorizing border control. It provides a basis for viewing both Northern and Southern perspectives and practices 'as partial, as situated knowledges shaped by their social locations' (Mehta, 2016: 297), and for broadening the range of voices partaking in contemporary discussions on borders, migration, and social inclusion.

An analytical framework that synthesizes performativity and pragmatism is useful for analyzing contemporary practices of border control in the Global South as it can be used to problematize methodological nationalism and state-centric understandings of territorial sovereignty. It asks how the Northern-influenced norm of territorial sovereignty is both

challenged and upheld by the performances of a variety of both state and non-state actors in the Global and South. Such an approach requires an analysis of how Southern states actively respond to, reappropriate, and reshape global norms of territorial sovereignty through their bordering practices, and how international organizations such as the IOM shape migration management by transmitting knowledge, best practices, and technologies across borders.

The framework set out below expands the scope of border criminology scholarship that has highlighted the postcolonial legacies of crimmigration control in the North, by examining the diffusion of border control technologies into the Global South. Border criminologists have shown how Southern actors assert their agency by resisting Northern border control practices, and by reshaping and enacting these practices in novel ways (Mehta, 2016, 2020; Sanchez, 2017; Vigneswaran, 2013; Vigneswaran and Landau, 2012). I seek to build on this scholarship while avoiding the essentialization of 'the South' either as a helpless victim of Northern neo-imperial control or a passive recipient of technical assistance from supposedly neutral organizations such as the IOM. Building upon existing border criminology research into 'the how, why, when and who of border control' (Weber and McCulloch, 2019: 509), I examine how postcolonial legacies influence not only who are the targets of crimmigration control in the Global North, but also who are the actors shaping the logics and practices of border control in the Global South.

In the context of increasing technologization of migration control (Dekkers, 2020; Milivojevic, 2019a), performativity and pragmatism also attend to the impact of novel technologies in shaping crimmigration control. As Alpa Parmar (2019: 939) has argued, contemporary border policing:

> is accomplished partly through police culture, the employment of technological tools and through the joint working practices, data sharing and alluring expectation of progress and neutrality that technology promotes. Technologies are only as good as their makers, and they bear the imprint of their designers and culture.

Parmar's insights raise two critical questions for an analysis of border control technologies in the Global South: how do technologies contribute to 'a diminished agency of humans' (Milivojevic and Radulski, 2020: 202), and, relatedly, how does technological design shape crimmigration control practices on the ground? The latter question relates to a broader issue underlined by criminologists such as Mark Wood (2021: 638): 'Designers attempt to design values into technologies, but a technology cannot be reduced to these intended normative inputs.' By problematizing the boundaries between human and non-human subject positions, performativity and pragmatism can be used to examine the impacts of novel technologies—both intended and unintended by their designers—on border control practices in the Global South, while also analyzing how technological norms and practices diffuse across borders.

I begin the chapter with a discussion of existing contributions in border criminology regarding the relationship between globalization, postcolonial hierarchies, and border control technologies. The second section argues that the framework of performativity can contribute to border criminology scholarship by explicitly theorizing the relationship between existing social structures—such as global hierarchies and dominant norms regarding territorial sovereignty—and the political agency of the actors that operate within and on those structures. When applied to material objects and technologies, the notion of performativity raises difficult questions regarding the subject position of humans relative to nonhuman technologies, which I discuss in the third section. On this basis, in the fourth section I demonstrate how performativity and pragmatism can be synthesized and applied to the field of crimmigration control by linking this framework to the case of the IOM and MIDAS in Nigeria, preparing the ground for the empirical analysis that follows in later chapters.

How, why, when, and who? Governing migration through 'racial technologies'

Leanne Weber and Jude McCulloch (2019) argue that there are three prominent 'theoretical strands' in border criminology: the 'crimmigration' thesis, the 'governing through migration control' perspective, and an 'enemy penology on the border.' Although this typology is necessarily heuristic, overstating differences and downplaying how these strands overlap, Weber and McCulloch's (2019: 509) discussion is useful in highlighting the contributions of these interrelated bodies of scholarship to our understanding of the 'how, why, when and who of border control.' By addressing these questions, existing scholarship has laid robust foundations for analyzing the intersection between deterritorialized sovereign power, postcolonial hierarchies, and novel border control technologies.

As discussed at length in the previous chapter, scholarship focusing on the crimmigration thesis (Hernández, 2018; Stumpf, 2010; Stumpf, 2006) has carefully documented how states in the Global North have reasserted their sovereign power to exclude non-citizens in an age of globalization through a merging of migration law and criminal law. By highlighting both how migration has become increasingly criminalized (Kubal, 2014; Morales, 2014) and how penal policies are carried out via the administrative frameworks of migration law (Hernández, 2017), this strand of criminological scholarship 'is particularly useful in framing analyses of *how* immigration controls are enforced' (Weber & McCulloch, 2019: 500, original emphasis). The criminalization of migration has allowed states to more stringently police migration, while immigration law has provided a context for enacting the penal power of the state relatively uninhibited by the restrictions of due process rights that are found in the criminal justice system (Zedner, 2019).

The 'governing through migration control' perspective (Bosworth et al., 2018; Bosworth & Guild, 2008), in turn, relates more directly to the 'why' of border control by highlighting 'that migration control operates relatively independently as a site of governance

in which citizenship and belonging, rather than criminalization and control, are the primary considerations of government' (Weber and McCulloch, 2019: 502). As Mary Bosworth (2008: 210) has argued:

> Non-citizens, it would seem, call into question the "limits of the sovereign state." By crossing borders, particularly if they do so without proper documentation or permission, they suggest that the barrier may be a figment of our imagination or perhaps an unrealizable dream.

In other words, in the face of claims about the 'waning' of sovereign power in an age of globalization, border control constitutes a way for states to reassert their territorial authority by showing that they have 'immigration flows under control' (Aliverti, 2012: 418). In the context of postcolonial global hierarchies, understanding migration control as an assertion of the sovereign authority of the state can highlight what Southern state actors politically achieve by adopting new border control technologies. Rather than viewing Southern states either as victims of neo-imperial control or passive recipients of neutral technical interventions at the border, this perspective can instead focus on the politically productive dimensions of border control for Southern states, by asking how they actively respond to, modify, reappropriate, or resist Northern logics of border control.

The body of scholarship that Weber and McCulloch (2019: 504) refer to as 'enemy penology on the border' has demonstrated the increasing intertwining of the logics and practices of migration control on the one hand and national security on the other (see, e.g., Zedner, 2010; Barker, 2012). Given the pre-emptive logic of national security policies, as distinct from the 'post hoc logic of criminal justice' (Zedner, 2007: 264), this strand of scholarship attends to the 'when' and 'where' of migration control. Border criminologists have shown how security-oriented border control efforts are temporally geared toward the minimization of potential future risks (Dekkers et al., 2018; Franko Aas, 2006), and geographically extend the spatial reach of border controls both inward into the territory of

the state as well as outward beyond the territorial borders through practices of 'externalization' (Leerkes et al., 2013; Lemberg-Pedersen, 2019; cf. Zedner, 2019). The frameworks of risk and security have formed an important basis for the theorization of border control technologies, as scholars have demonstrated the centrality of these technical tools to the enactment of security practices and risk calculations in criminal justice and border control contexts (Hannah-Moffat, 2019; Parmar, 2019; Ugwudike, 2020).

All three strands of scholarship have contextualized recent Northern migration and border control policies against the backdrop of global hierarchy (Barker, 2018; Bowling and Westenra, 2018; Franko Aas, 2012b). In this way, authors have contributed to the consideration of the 'who' of border control by highlighting the role of postcolonial legacies in determining who are the targets of contemporary crimmigration laws, border control practices, and risk assessment technologies in the Global North. Indeed, as Jennifer Chacón and Susan Coutin (2018) have argued, border control practices are not only influenced by racial profiling, but also directly racialize minority groups and immigrants. Alpa Parmar (2019: 939) has demonstrated that policing technologies in a border control context draw 'on established racial tropes while also accommodating new modes of racialization,' and she has called attention to these dynamics by describing these technical tools as 'racial technologies.' Illuminating the postcolonial and racialized dimensions of contemporary border control practices in the Global North is analytically and politically invaluable. In addition, consideration of the 'who' of border control can also justify a shift of analytical focus away from the boundaries of the Global North and into the Global South, by asking who are deploying crimmigration control measures and digital border control technologies in other geographical and social contexts.

Interdisciplinary scholarship on borders and migration has already indicated some of the interconnections between global hierarchies and Southern border control practices. In the previous chapter, I discussed how Northern states have engaged in direct border

control interventions in the Global South under the policy rationales of security, development, and humanitarianism (Aas and Gundhus, 2015; Frowd, 2018; Lohne and Sandvik, 2017; Provine and Zatz, 2015). Indeed, Southern bordering practices are often analyzed through the lens of post-imperial or post-imperial influence (Andrijasevic and Walters, 2010), and these notions are certainly important for understanding the diffusion of novel border control technologies as well. Ana Beduschi (2021: 579) has shown how the incorporation of new technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) in border control contexts 'can amplify the so-called digital divide between states with more advanced technologies and those lacking such technologies.' In this context, the diffusion of border control technologies can cement existing global hierarchies as Northern states 'would be placed at the forefront of the global efforts to manage migration in the years to come […] states with less advanced technological means could be further isolated' (Beduschi, 2021: 579). The practices of international organizations (IOs) such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the IOM are central to the maintenance of this digital divide, which Matthew Longo (2018: 205) calls a 'global firewall,' as they spread and uphold new technologized global norms of migration management (Frowd, 2018; Pécoud, 2018).

The importance of insights produced by border criminologists regarding practices in the Global North and the post-imperial dimensions of Northern interventions in the Global South is undeniable, yet questions remain regarding the applicability of these insights particularly in contexts where the governing capacity of sovereign states has been repeatedly called into question (Abrahamsen, 2019; Jackson and Rosberg, 1986; Menjívar et al., 2018). The rise of crimmigration law and punitive border control practices is described as a global phenomenon (Menjívar et al., 2018), but '[t]he extent to which specific countries have embraced this governmental logic is a matter for further empirical research, and raises important questions about the contrasting situations of countries within the Global South

and Global North' (Weber and McCulloch, 2019: 509). Border criminologists have demonstrated that Southern actors can redeploy and reshape Northern logics of border control in novel ways (Vigneswaran, 2013). Similarly, Inken Bartels (2018: 63–64) has argued that:

> the dissemination of knowledge by IOs in the context of the externalization of European migration policies is not a smooth top-down process but marked by struggles and strategies among and within the various state and non-state actors involved, including those that are otherwise often conceived as its passive recipients.

This view indicates the need to examine the 'how' and 'why' of border control also in the Global South—not only through the lenses of post-imperialism and externalization by the North—and inquire into the mechanisms through which Northern logics of border control diffuse across borders and are translated into local contexts. How do border control practices converge or diverge on a global level, and who are the actors responsible for the diffusion and translation of these practices? How do Southern actors productively utilize the logics and practices of border control to pursue their own political ends? If the 'racial technologies' of border control have directly contributed to the racialization of the postcolonial other at Northern borders (Browne, 2009), how should we characterize the deployment of similar technologies in the Global South by Southern actors themselves?

An examination of these technologies should avoid the essentialization of 'the South' either as a helpless victim of Northern neo-imperial control or a passive recipient of neutral technical interventions by more technologically 'advanced' states (Bartels, 2018). Such an endeavor requires explicit theorization of the relationship between the social and material structures of global hierarchy on the one hand, and the political agency of Northern and Southern states, IOs, and new digital technologies on the other. As I show below, recent scholarship on border control and transnational criminal justice has indicated the value of theorizing the relationship between structure and agency in the field of global border control

practices through the lens of performativity (Franko, 2021; Palmer, 2021; Sausdal and Lohne, 2021; Stambøl, 2021a).

Global hierarchy, Southern agency, and performativity

The term performativity connotes theatrical performances, stages, scripts, and actors. In this view, individuals enrolled in drug treatment courts have been conceptualized as 'performers' acting out 'scripts of responsibilization' (Moore and Hirai, 2014: 15); activist campaigns exposing the bodily suffering of prisoners have been analyzed as a form of 'protest theater' (Corcoran, 2020: 653); policing practices have been characterized as a 'dance' to the tune of the 'music' of the 'structure of policing' (Manning, 2008: 22); and borders have been understood as 'the performance of various state actors in an elaborate dance with ordinary people who seek freedom of movement and identification' (Wonders, 2006: 64). Importantly, this work reminds us that practices of policing, justice, control, and resistance should not always be taken at face value but should in addition be analyzed in terms of their intended and unintended communicative effects in shaping shared social understandings. As Mackenzie and Green (2008: 150) argue, in many cases criminal justice practices are 'primarily about performance rather than about substance, and [are] in this sense fake or superficial.'

Yet, by implying that practices are sometimes 'fake,' the theatrical metaphor begs the question of what an 'authentic' practice looks like. Ontologically, performativity understood mainly as a theatrical metaphor assumes the existence of subjects with 'real' identities prior to and independent of their performances, who are then able to engage in either authentic practices or superficial performances. This assumption comes to the fore when scholars argue that the object of performances—such as migration as an object of 'citizenship performances'—should '*accurately* be reframed' in terms that diverge from

dominant understandings (Wonders and Jones, 2018: 147, emphasis added). Similarly, calls for alternative immigration control policies are sometimes based on the claim that 'border constructions and enforcement should be more closely linked to the *actual dangers* posed by various kinds of border crossers' (Wonders, 2006: 65, emphasis added). Although the basis on which claims about authenticity, accuracy, and actuality are to be made remains unclear, some criminologists have expressed unease at embracing a more ontologically radical conception of performativity. Critics argue that a more radical approach 'provides no grounds for contesting its knowledge claims' and so undermines the epistemic coherence of the criminological endeavor (Edwards and Hughes, 2008: 66).

In spite of such warnings, border criminologists and scholars of transnational criminal justice have recently demonstrated the full critical potential of performativity, based on Judith Butler's (2007, 2010) formulation of the concept in her *Gender Trouble* and later writings. In her analysis of gender, Butler does not simply suggest that pre-existing subjects choose to perform either masculine or feminine gender 'roles,' but more radically that there exists no gendered subject independent of these performances; they are constitutive of gendered identities, in the sense that 'gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed' (Butler, 2007: 34). Deploying this framework in the context of border criminology, Giulia Fabini (2019: 177, original emphasis) argues that '[t]alking about border *performativity* is tantamount to saying that borders do not exist before the individuals who cross them. Borders and migrants are mutually constitutive through border performances.' This conception of performativity is more radical than the theatrical metaphor in suggesting that there is no 'real' or 'accurate' conception of borders or migrants beneath these performances. This is not to say that borders are performatively 'produced *ex nihilo* at every instant, but only that [their] apparently seamless regeneration brings about naturalized effects' (Butler, 2010: 149). In other words, performances are not singular acts free from external constraints, but are instead based on, constrained, and

shaped by existing discourses, practices, and material objects. Performances are 'ongoing citational processes whereby "regular subjects" and "standards of normality" are discursively co-constituted to give the effect that both are natural rather than cultural constructs' (Weber, 1998: 81). Seen in this light, the lens of performativity provides an avenue for critically examining how—through what discourses, practices, and material interventions—statehood, global crimmigration control, and 'the migrant' as a political subject are constituted and naturalized in a globalized age. In other words, it provides a framework for examining the interplay between the structures of global hierarchy on the one hand, and the political agency of Southern actors, the IOM, and new border control technologies on the other.

Although based on the speech act theory of JL Austin (1955), the lens of performativity brings into view more than just language and discourse. Butler's framework can also be used to highlight the performative effects of repeated embodied practices as well as techniques of calculation and governance. For instance, 'the autonomy of the market,' according to Butler (2010: 150), is not only performatively brought into being through politicians' and economists' discursive utterances, but also through repeated practices prediction and calculation by both humans and nonhuman technologies that 'enter into specific economic activities such as price-setting.' In their performative analysis of gender in the context of military conflict, Priscyll Anctil Avoine and Rachel Tillman (2015: 224) have argued that gender is performed through embodied practices of femininity by women combatants seeking to 'pass in social situations where male combatants could not.'

Performativity is not limited to an analysis of human subjects engaging in discursive and practical performances, as 'performativity is challenged by the heterogeneity of socio-technical assemblages and the proliferation of devices,' thus calling for a performative 'analytics of devices' (Amicelle et al., 2015: 299). Criminologists have already demonstrated the importance of technical devices such as surveillance cameras, databases, and biometric

identification systems to contemporary practices of security and criminal justice, arguing that these technologies 'are fashioning new, technologically mediated forms of subjectivity' (Franko Aas et al., 2009b: 5). Border control technologies have become an integral component of crimmigration control efforts by states, to the extent that 'the exercise of power, including in the penal domain, is essentially technological' (Franko, 2020: 25). Biometric border controls are particularly central to states' practical efforts to control migration, and also operate as a 'symbolic signifier of the renewal of sovereign power' (Wilson, 2006: 89; Franko Aas, 2006). A performative analysis adds to these insights by asking not only how new technical systems shape crimmigration control practices, but also how norms governing the use of these technologies have been 'created, assembled, displaced, or adopted' on a global level (Frowd, 2020: 61). Amicelle and colleagues (2015: 298) outline how security devices, such as biometric border control technologies, exert performative effects:

> they (re)configure social spaces, (re)draw boundaries and (re)distribute meanings. Therefore, security devices are performative in that they do not only enact or alter particular realities and categories depending on the successful stabilization of complex socio-technical configurations, but also draw legal, gender, race or class boundaries and lines of exclusion.

A performative analysis of technologically mediated crimmigration practices does not assume the pre-existence of political subjects prior to the performative enactment of borders. Rather, the analysis focuses on highlighting how these subjects are constituted through the performative effects of their practices and discourses. For instance, Eva Magdalena Stambøl (2021) argues that certain West African state authorities have deployed new digital border checkpoints to perform territorial statehood to international donors such as the IOM. In the West African context, political power is in fact 'expressed more as control over people rather than territory, meaning that networks of patronage, not territorial presence (as assumed by the Westphalian state model), are a more predominant method of

social control' (Stambøl, 2021a: 487). Nonetheless, performances of territoriality bring 'the state' into being as an authoritative political actor even where de facto governing capacity is still largely in question. Presuming the existence of, for instance, 'the Malian state' as a unitary actor would obscure from view divergences between Northern and local 'notions of territory, mobility, sovereignty and crime' as well as discrepancies between official discourses of state authority and realities on the ground (Stambøl, 2021a: 487).

Some critics argue that this conceptualization of performative identity formation privileges the structuring effects of discourses that give meaning to identity, and thereby 'reintroduces determinism and essentialism' as 'language determines the meanings, beliefs and so actions of individual agents' (Bevir, 2011: 10). However, this criticism overlooks how performativity provides a way to highlight agency—and therefore politics—within criminological analysis by locating it in the interstices between pre-existing discursive, practical, and material structures on the one hand and the constitutive performances of agents on the other. In other words, political agency is foregrounded by showing how 'the speaking/writing subject can move within and between discourses, can see precisely how they subject her, can use the terms of one discourse to counteract, modify, refuse or go beyond the other' (Davies, 1991: 46). For instance, Eva Stambøl and Randi Solhjell (2021: 500) have argued that on one hand 'the structures of global inequality' and dominant 'Global North problem formulations' exert significant structuring effects on practices in West Africa. On the other hand, local actors' performances of transnational criminal justice are marked by 'contestations and frictions, and sometimes outright resistance.' In this way, performativity foregrounds Southern agency while recognizing that these performances are carried out in the context of existing material and social structures (Stambøl and Solhjell, 2021: 506).

This discussion of structure and agency in performative analysis brings into view the political stakes of border criminology. Moving beyond the nation-state as 'the natural unit

of criminological inquiry' is crucial (Franko Aas, 2007: 286), and performativity provides analytical tools to do so while avoiding the opposite extreme of assuming that states no longer matter. This perspective asks instead how exactly contemporary states are able to 'govern through' their seeming deterritorialization (Infantino, 2016: 4), and how the 'territorial trap' itself is produced (Elden, 2010). A related challenge is how to move beyond Northern-centric frameworks of analysis by expanding the 'spatial imagination' of criminology to include an analysis of agency and knowledge production in the Global South (Franko Aas, 2012a: 236). Performativity highlights the agency of Southern actors in accepting, modifying, reappropriating, and resisting Northern logics and techniques of crimmigration control (Bartels, 2018; Vigneswaran, 2013). Finally, the development and proliferation of an ever-expanding socio-technical network of border control technologies and their operators challenges scholars of border criminology to account for the importance of material objects in constituting and shaping global practices of crimmigration control (Milivojevic, 2019a). As Huub Dijstelbloem (2021: 9) has argued:

> Borders have a particular relationship with technology. The term technology not only alludes to the technical aspects of devices—tools, materials, machines, instruments, and computer networks—but how they are designed, produced, and managed. Technologies inform—and limit—how societies are governed and can be imagined to be governed. Like technologies, borders are both concrete and abstract, both material and ideational.

In the context of the increasing technologization of borders, then, a performative analysis can highlight how these technical systems constitute 'the migrant' as a political subject and 'migration' as a governable, technical 'problem' by materially enacting a particular view of how migration should be managed.

This last claim, however, is more contentious than the others, since a common critique of the performativity framework is its supposed privileging of discursive performances over material and embodied practices (Harrison, 2000). Moreover, the

framework of performativity is often understood in a human-centric register whereby 'people perform surrounded by material props' (Law and Singleton, 2000: 771). Nonetheless, the increasing importance of novel digital technologies within border control and surveillance practices, combined with the increasing autonomy of these technical tools from their human designers and operators (Milivojevic, 2021), necessitates rigorous theorization of the role of technologies in shaping human practices by exerting performative effects independently from humans. As Sanja Milivojevic and Elizabeth Radulski (2020: 198) have argued, unpacking the impact of new technologies 'on human agency and autonomy is just one of the many conundrums social scientists, including lawyers and criminologists will have to unpack in the near future.' So too, an examination of the global diffusion of border control technologies requires theorization of the status of these technical tools relative to their human designers, operators, and targets.

Making sense of technology: The appeal of assemblage thinking

Interdisciplinary research into border controls has noted the increasing importance of new technologies in shaping bordering practices (Aradau and Tazzioli, 2020; Dijstelbloem, 2021; Milivojevic, 2019a). Technical innovations have allowed law enforcement and border control agencies to expand practices of surveillance and social exclusion through the institution of what Kevin Haggerty and Richard Ericson (2000) termed a 'surveillant assemblage' more than two decades ago. Expansive surveillance systems have been made possible by new tools for data collection and analysis, as well as increased capacity for real-time data sharing between agencies and nation states (Aden, 2018). In the context of twenty-first century globalization, security and border practitioners have argued that increased global interconnectivity and mobility has a dark side as well: 'organized crime, drug trafficking, and terrorism, aided by the latest information technology, are also growing, to

the point where they already form a sinister underbelly of globalization that threatens the security of all countries' (Flanagan et al., 2001: 12). Consequently, 'a key aspect of the post-9/11 window of border enhancement hinged on risk management and data-sharing protocols, rather than tactical infrastructure' (Longo, 2018: 115). One way to understand the deployment of these technologies is to view them in a relatively straightforward instrumentalist sense, as having been deployed to solve particular pre-existing problems relating to security concerns; in this view, 'technology does not cause social change, humans do' (McCarthy, 2013: 474). Adapting this instrumentalist perspective to the context of the performativity framework outlined in the previous section, technologies would figure only as tools that human actors use in their performances of particular identities, as the technologies themselves would exert no performative effects.

However, the instrumentalist conception of border technologies overlooks how they 'can also have unintended consequences and side-effects. Although they may be implemented with certain effects in mind, in practice other previously unthought-of effects may materialize […] technology can initiate changes to the social environment' (Dekkers, 2020: 1852–1853). For instance, data collection technologies initially intended for a particular context may later contribute to the increased surveillance and perceived suspicion of new target populations, as when access to the European asylum database Eurodac was later granted to law enforcement agencies (Dijstelbloem, 2021: 42). Alpa Parmar (2019: 948) has shown how reliance on digital information systems in police custody procedures in the UK was originally intended to 'limit discriminatory practices,' yet an analysis of the everyday operation of these systems has revealed 'the unintended consequences of these information systems' in the form of 'increased levels of scrutiny for target groups such as foreign nationals or black and minority ethnic suspects.'

This ability of technologies themselves to have a social impact originally unintended by their designers and operators raises the analytical issue of how to conceptualize this

technological agency vis-à-vis human agency. Interdisciplinary scholarship on borders and the transnational diffusion of technologies has sought to move beyond instrumentalist views according to which 'technology is neutral, a tool that can be turned to whatever use a user desired' (McCarthy, 2018: 6). In contrast to such instrumentalism, scholars have argued for varying degrees of technological autonomy and ability to impact social change independently from humans, arguing that the 'instrumental conception of technology […] provides no latitude for examining the impact that technologies have on their human "users"' (Wood, 2021: 629).

In order to foreground the social impacts of nonhuman technologies can have independently from humans, social scientists focusing on technology have adopted analytical frameworks that to varying extents dissolve 'the distinction between the technical and the social' (McCarthy, 2018: 12). Border criminologists have repeatedly argued that human-technology relations can be grasped by utilizing the concept of 'assemblage,' a notion which 'is particularly apt to capture the growing intertwining of the technological and the social, or better the novel forms of sociality where the digital is increasingly the social' (Franko Aas, 2012a: 241). The concept of the socio-technical assemblage levels distinctions between the materially determined and socially constructed in order to argue against both traditional positivist frameworks of science as well as constructivist perspectives that overlook the importance of the material world in shaping social practices (Brown, 2006). In other words, this notion widens 'the scope of agencies to be included in sociological inquiry' such that socio-technical 'networks are composed of people, beings and objects' in which 'associations between human agents cannot be assumed to have ontological precedence' (Jeandesboz, 2016: 295). In the context of border control, this analytical symmetry of human and nonhuman actors 'entails unpacking the institutional structures, technological and material assemblages, and emerging migrant configurations simultaneously' (Dijstelbloem, 2021: 137).

Ontologically leveling the distinctions between humans and nonhumans—instead moving toward an understanding of socio-technical networks as being composed of 'actants' with varying degrees of agency and social impact (Sayes, 2014)—can broadly be referred to as a 'posthumanist' orientation toward social inquiry, even though explicit reference to posthumanism is rarely made in criminological scholarship on technology and materiality (Berg, 2021: 27). Recognizing the growing importance of novel technologies and environmental changes to human societies in the twenty-first century (Milivojevic, 2021), the framework of posthumanism espouses a decentering of the traditional human subject of Western philosophy and social theory (Badmington, 2003; Braidotti, 2006; Hayles, 1999). Although this critique and the 'strategy of de-familiarization or critical distance from the dominant vision of the subject' (Braidotti, 2013: 88–89) is similar to earlier critiques of the 'end of Man' put forth by thinkers such as Foucault and Derrida (Foucault, 2002: 420), posthumanists seek to move beyond a focus on discourse and deconstruction. The deconstructivist or poststructuralist endeavor is viewed as counterproductive due to its inability to establish new grounds for ethical conduct (Willmott, 1998), as well as its focus on language and discourse to the detriment of embodiment and materiality (Badmington, 2003). Instead, posthumanism 'recognizes and celebrates finitude as a condition of human being, and […] understands human life is embedded in a material world of great complexity, one on which we depend for our continued survival' (Hayles, 1999: 5).

Adopting a broadly posthumanist orientation has been a crucial analytical tool utilized by social scientists to bring into view the technologized nature of border control today, as well as highlight the unintended and performative effects that novel technologies have had in shaping dominant understandings of migration control (Jeandesboz, 2016; Pallister-Wilkins, 2022; Squire, 2014; Sundberg, 2011). For instance, analyzing the IOM's digital migration databases in terms of their performative effects, Corey Robinson (2018: 421, original emphasis) has argued that these new technologies 'bring migration into being

as an object of governance and perform it as a *global reality* to manage in technical and pragmatic ways.' Similarly, Philippe Frowd (2020: 10) has argued that digital technologies have directly shaped how state capacity in the Global South is perceived both locally and by IOs: 'the ability of states to enact sovereignty' is now measured in terms of 'the technological ability, willingness, and sensory capability of a state.' Technologies are not only reshaping state practices of migration control, as migrants themselves have also deployed new technological practices to challenge securitized narratives of migration and to facilitate mobility (Milivojevic, 2019b).

However, although posthumanism has proven a useful framework to amend a lack of focus on materiality, it comes with the risk of over-emphasizing the agentic importance of nonhumans within 'actant-networks' (Brown, 2006: 235). In seeking to rectify an earlier marginalization of materiality within social science scholarship, posthumanist literature often explicitly ignores questions of human subjectivity: 'the important topic of subjectivity thus gets short shrift so that I may focus on […] the active powers issuing from nonsubjects' (Bennett, 2010: ix). Although the field of posthumanist and related 'new materialist' perspectives is varied in terms of their theorizations of subjectivity, there is an overarching risk of losing sight of politics when completely flattening ontological distinctions between '[h]uman and non-human, meaning and materiality, big and small, macro and micro, social and technical, nature and culture' (Law, 2009: 147). Jane Bennett's (2010) analysis of the 'vitality of matter' is instructive in this regard. In seeking to highlight the importance of materiality vis-à-vis human actors, Bennett (2010: 37, emphasis added) views conceptions of human 'autonomy and strong responsibility' as 'empirically false, and thus their invocation seems tinged with injustice. In emphasizing the ensemble nature of action and the interconnections between persons and things, a theory of vibrant matter presents individuals as simply *incapable of bearing full responsibility for their effects*.' Although Bennett (2010: 104) later argues that the 'political goal of a vital materialism is not the perfect equality of actants, but

a polity with more channels of communication between members,' this perspective is more likely to affirm, rather than challenge, technicist and depoliticized views of contemporary crimmigration control by obscuring the accountability of humans in shaping these technological practices; I discuss this problem with reference to the technical components of MIDAS in Chapter 8. The analytical move of 'placing things and beings, human and nonhuman, within a relational straightjacket […] risks precisely to off-stage the political' by concealing the responsibility of the human designers and operators of new border control technologies underneath the agency of these objects themselves (Swyngedouw and Ernstson, 2018: 4). Thus, in analyzing the deployment of novel border control technologies in the Global South from the perspective of the performative effects of these technologies, the insights of posthumanism need to be tempered by an attentiveness to the specifically human capacity for moral intentionality and political accountability. To this end, the philosophical tradition of pragmatism provides useful analytical tools for normatively and politically evaluating technologized border controls.

Pragmatism, political accountability, and democratizing border criminology

The central assertion of pragmatism is that 'epistemic claims are embedded in some practical context that in large part determines relevant standards of justification and conditions of success. A truth claim is thus to be judged in light of its practical consequences' (Bohman, 2002: 499). As Johannes Wheeldon (2015: 400) explains, pragmatism 'sees truth as whatever results in productive, useful, pro-social outcomes at that moment […] By remaining open to the next idea or a more comprehensive position, to be true is to allow that while one description is the best we have at the moment,' we cannot be confident that this description will forever remain the best one. As Wheeldon (2015: 399) highlights, criminological scholarship has largely neglected the analytical and normative utility of a pragmatist position,

using the term 'pragmatic' mainly as a 'criminological slur' to refer to analyses that are concerned mainly with practical policy relevance to the detriment of broader theoretical or normative analysis (see e.g. Haggerty, 2004; Tombs, 2018). For instance, in their critique of mainstream administrative criminology, Hall and Winlow (2018: 51) have argued that 'the pragmatic investigation of what can be done must be replaced by the realistic investigation of what must be done.' The philosophical framework of pragmatism, however, is in fact far removed from an uncritical assertion of the need for 'pragmatic' crime control efforts, instead highlighting the need for explicit discussion of the underlying political and normative assumptions guiding both social practices and criminological inquiry itself.

Pragmatism is compatible with the framework of performativity in that it sets aside questions of objective truth and 'real' identities in favor of a recognition that 'there is no such thing as the way the thing is in itself, under no description, apart from any use to which human beings might want to put it' (Rorty, 1991: 4). The political nature of constitutive performances—discursive or practical—is thus highlighted with reference to their practical impact on particular social or political problems. Solving social problems depends upon establishing knowledge about them, yet '[t]o establish a truth pragmatically is to settle a controversial or complex issue for the time being, until something comes along to dislodge the comfort and reassurance that has thereby been achieved, forcing inquiry to begin again' (Cochran, 2002: 527). Highlighting the contingency as well as the social and temporal specificity of any particular claims to knowledge foregrounds the inherently political nature of deliberating about how best to conceptualize social problems and solutions to them.

Technical tools often constitute a key component of proposed solutions to social problems, and pragmatists thus conceptualize technology as 'the invention, development, and cognitive deployment of tools and other artifacts, brought to bear on raw materials and intermediate stock parts, with a view to the resolution of perceived problems' (Hickman, 2001: 12). New technologies can become cornerstones of the 'habitualized tools, artifacts,

and skills' (Hickman, 2001: 12) that constitute the background conditions of most everyday practices; in such contexts, technologies themselves most powerfully shape human practices by becoming a part of everyday experiences, yet their political nature also recedes out of view precisely because of their perceived mundanity. Thus, in order to grasp the underlying politics of novel technologies, we can focus on how these tools are developed and deployed based on a particular conception of what kind of social problem they are meant to resolve. Security- and risk-focused migration control tools, for instance, would suggest that the social problem of human mobility is conceptualized by the designers of these systems mainly in terms of security threats, rather than alternative goals such as human rights or economic facilitation. In short, according to the pragmatist view of technology, the 'objects of knowledge in social inquiry have both subjective and objective elements that must be studied as a unity in the context of a specific problematic situation' (Cochran, 2002: 532).

Pragmatism is compatible with moving beyond instrumentalist conceptions of technology, yet it simultaneously highlights that only humans possess a capacity for the political and normative evaluation of particular technologized practices. In other words, this tradition of thought can incorporate the insights of performativity—which highlights the plurality of subject positions created through constitutive performances—due to its necessarily anti-totalizing ethos: it 'challenges closure' (Connolly, 1992: 147) and 'builds contingency into its very *modus operandi* which is open and attentive' to the importance of alternative worldviews (Glynos and Howarth, 2007: 155). This openness follows from the recognition of the context-specificity and situatedness of knowledge claims (Hickman, 2007). Simultaneously, pragmatism can incorporate posthumanist insights into the social importance of nonhuman objects by stressing the embodied and material nature of 'social practices of reasoning and justifying—things we *do*' (Brandom, 2021: xviii, original emphasis). Feminist pragmatists such as Shannon Sullivan (2001: 2) have been particularly insightful arguing that:

> One can acknowledge the importance, even the primacy, of corporeality to human life without opposing bodies to the mental, psychological, cultural, or other so-called nonmaterial aspects of human existence. The nonmaterial aspects of human life would not be possible without bodily materiality.

This perspective therefore highlights the importance of both social and material existence by seeking to 'articulate the categorical structure of the humanly constructed and interpreted world. Technology is naturally a part of that world' (Pihlström, 2021: 172).[3]

However, in contrast to posthumanist frameworks and 'assemblage thinking' (Amicelle et al., 2015: 295), pragmatism is also 'self-critically humanist' in that it locates the ultimate source of meanings and interpretations in human beings, even while remaining attentive to the structuring effects of nonhuman environments and objects: 'Only humans can engage in the kind of *self-critical humanism* that can, for instance, seek to broaden the scope of moral responsibility to include animals or other parts of nature' (Pihlström, 2021: 53, original emphasis).[4] This self-critical humanism guards against the depoliticizing tendencies of posthumanism which seeks to decenter the human subject. Although nonhuman materiality causally and constitutively shapes human subjectivity, 'relative to other creatures, human beings are *under*-determined by nature, and the possibilities of action available to them that much greater in consequence' (Soper, 2012: 366, original emphasis). In this way, pragmatism allows us to recognize that both human and nonhuman actors can—through the performative effects of their actions—impact social structures, yet this view distinguishes between 'decisions taken *within* a structure and decisions taken *about* a structure' (Howarth, 2013: 185, original emphasis). Whereas the former focuses on the role of both humans and nonhumans in enacting everyday practices, the latter highlights specifically

[3] Author's translation from Finnish.

[4] Author's translation from Finnish.

human political agency. Particularly in 'moments of crisis and dislocation,' the essential contestability of social and material structures becomes evident to human actors, who must then engage in political 'acts of identification' in order to construct new identities (Howarth, 2013: 182–183). Although nonhuman actors can indeed exert performative effects on these social structures, only humans possess the capacity to normatively deliberate about possible political alternatives and intentionally choose between them.

An examination of border control technologies in the Global South through the lenses of performativity and pragmatism brings with it analytical, political, and normative benefits. Analytically, as discussed above, performativity and pragmatism are useful in developing 'theories of technology-related harm that do not collapse the technological with the social and that avoid social determinism on the one hand and technological determinism on the other' (Wood, 2021: 627). Conceptualizing technological practices as having both human and nonhuman performative effects highlights the importance of material technologies in shaping contemporary practices of border control while guarding against purely discursive notions of performativity (Sullivan, 2001). Simultaneously, evaluating these practices from a pragmatist perspective underscores the fact that the attribution of meaning and deliberation regarding the normative dimensions of bordering practices are a specifically human activity.

This latter point relates to the political benefits of the framework put forth in this chapter: it can ground a critique of technologized border control practices without basing this critique on claims about the 'accuracy,' 'efficiency,' or 'neutrality' of the technologies themselves. Contesting the deployment of novel border control technologies on the basis of their accuracy fails to mount a deeper criticism, which would be aimed not at the precision of calculations regarding the risks posed by particular border crossers but the very calculability of such risks in the first place. As Louise Amoore (2014: 434) argues:

> In contemporary security calculations, everything is rendered amendable to the formulation of a decision procedure […] The procedures and rules are written as algorithmic code, in such a way that two things are forgotten: first, that these are problems for which it is possible that no definitive decision procedure can be arrived at; and second, that the ingenuity of the algorithm was written in large part intuitively.

In other words, the political nature of claiming calculability of the 'riskiness' of migrants is forgotten underneath the veneer of scientific objectivity attached to these technical procedures and justified with reference to the 'accuracy' of knowledge of the 'real' world. This is what Martin Heidegger (1993: 129), in the epigraph to this chapter, described as a process in which 'technical mastery over things' covers over the contingency of beings such that the latter is 'simply forgotten.' Contemporary technologized bordering practices are largely based on a technicist framing of 'migration management' as a 'technical, pragmatic and, in short, nonpolitical' issue (Robinson, 2018: 431). Simultaneously, the need to develop more comprehensive and accurate border control and identification technologies is presented in the language of universal rights and needs, for instance as part of the UN Legal Identity Agenda (UNSD, 2022). Hence, claims about the inaccuracy or inefficiency of technical crimmigration control practices can only go so far; apparent 'failures' of border control technologies will only serve to justify their future expansion unless subjected to a more general normative and ontological critique (Lisle, 2018). To this end, the framework put forth in this chapter can serve as a basis for demanding political accountability against the backdrop of contemporary depoliticizing rhetoric of 'evidence-based' policymaking that obscures how 'policymaking is considerably broader than technical decision-making, which means that policymakers often compromise on critical issues and act on public perceptions or fears' (Beduschi, 2021: 584).

Finally, performativity and pragmatism can be utilized for the normative ends of decolonizing and democratizing criminology and border criminology. By conceptualizing border control practices as performative, and by problematizing traditional humanist

notions of subjectivity, the framework described in this chapter highlights how knowledge claims relating to border control are inevitably situated within particular social, historical, and material contexts. Criminologists have recently argued that decolonizing the field requires shifting 'the criminological gaze away from the North, while also intending to utilize the lessons gained from such a perspectival shift to comprehensively challenge the foundations of this field of knowledge' (Aliverti et al., 2021: 299). Historically, Northern epistemological positions have—in large part, relying on a language of scientific neutrality, accuracy, and objective reality—'developed into a civilizational model, which shaped a certain idea of Europe as coinciding with the universalizing powers of self-reflexive reason' (Braidotti, 2013: 13). Such civilizational models are directly linked to the normative privileging of modern territorial statehood as a framework for societal analysis and as the marker of 'progress'; contemporary notions of state sovereignty were developed as a solution to legal contradictions that arose between notions of universal humanity on the one hand and European colonial domination of Southern populations on the other (Anghie, 2004).

Hence, the development of more democratic ontologies is a key component of the broader goal of decolonizing and democratizing criminology, to which the ontological flexibility of performativity and pragmatism can make useful contributions. Examining the performative nature of crimmigration control practices, by both Northern and Southern actors, can highlight how relations of global hierarchy are both continually reified and challenged through performances of particular kinds of subject positions. Such an examination necessitates and contributes to a democratic expansion of the horizons of border criminology. In turn, the pragmatist conception of technology undermines authoritative knowledge claims by highlighting the social specificity of developing technical solutions to particular social problems. This perspective can thus be utilized to mount a more general epistemic challenge to Northern-centric forms of knowledge production about

migration and criminal justice. In short, performativity and pragmatism highlight how debates regarding the production of criminological knowledge are 'onto-political' in nature, in the sense that different theoretical 'accounts of specific situations arrive at their conclusions by injecting ontological presumptions into their claims of actuality without disclosing their complicity in the representational process' (Campbell, 2005: 128). Making evident this onto-political dimension of contemporary criminological debates, through the deployment of an analytical framework that centers around an openness to alternative worldviews, can directly contribute to the goals of decolonizing and democratizing criminology. This framework therefore provides a way to 'labor at the interface by incorporating a range of theoretical perspectives' when analyzing contemporary border control (Weber and McCulloch, 2019: 508).

Conclusion

The analysis above has demonstrated the potential utility of the framework of performativity and the tradition of pragmatism for analyzing contemporary technologized bordering practices in the Global South. This framework resists 'reification in spatio-temporal frameworks of systemic theories, drawing, instead, transversal lines contingent on knowledges and relations that couldn't be reduced to the ontological terrain of the state' (Huysmans and Nogueira, 2016: 300). In other words, theorizing global crimmigration control practices through the lenses of performativity and pragmatism challenges methodological nationalism by traversing traditional levels of sociological and political analysis of international, national, and local. An analysis of the deployment of MIDAS in Nigeria, as demonstrated empirically in later chapters, cannot be properly understood only with reference to Northern neo-imperial influences, the concerns of the Nigerian state, or local-level political interests or technical limitations. Instead, the complex interplay between

these levels of social and material structure requires attention. Moreover, understanding the deployment of MIDAS in Nigeria necessitates an analysis of the structuring effects of postcolonial global hierarchies in relation to the performative deployment of sovereignty as a political practice both within these broader global social structures and against the background of local political considerations. Furthermore, the framing of the technology as a technical component within a broader global system of state-based 'migration management' should be deconstructed and critically appraised in terms of its role in covering over the essential contestability of state-based migration politics, thereby foreclosing non-statist political alternatives. In this endeavor, 'the insights of anti-racist, indigenous, and postcolonial scholarship' will be invaluable (Squire, 2020: 291), and the issue of postcolonial hierarchy will be taken up at length in more detail in later chapters. Performativity is useful in analyzing the politically productive dimensions of Southern bordering practices, while pragmatism explicitly focuses on what kinds of alternative perspectives are hidden from view by the particular way in which migration is problematized through the deployment of novel border control technologies.

Combining performativity and pragmatism foregrounds the recognition that 'from each positioning the world is seen differently, and thus that any knowledge based on just one positioning is "unfinished" – which is not the same as saying it is "invalid"' (Yuval-Davis, 1999: 94–95). More substantively, by theorizing the relationship between structure and agency in terms of the constitutive performances of human and nonhuman actors, this framework conceptualizes subjectivity in terms of the 'specific historical contexts in which different kinds of subjectivity come into play, and various identities are constructed' (Howarth, 2013: 185). In the context of global crimmigration control practices, this insight encourages border criminologists to examine how, by actively adopting, modifying, reappropriating, or resisting Northern logics of crimmigration control, Southern actors enact particular kinds of social and political identities. This view underscores the importance of

taking seriously the agency of both Southern actors and IOM officials in an analysis of the deployment of MIDAS in Nigeria. Such considerations are particularly relevant in the context of crimmigration control practices in Africa, where states have repeatedly been described in terms of their 'failure' (Abrahamsen, 2019; Jackson and Rosberg, 1986). This context raises the question of how the human actors representing Southern states and those working for an international organization such as IOM respond to these structural dislocations, and what kinds of identities they enact through their political performances.

In addition to these performances by human actors, a focus on border control technologies can highlight 'transversal connections among material and symbolic, concrete and discursive entities or forces, which include non-human[s]' (Braidotti, 2013: 159). This insight calls for an examination of the performative impact of the technical tools associated with MIDAS, as well as the structuring effects of material environments in the roll-out of the system in Nigeria. Again, however, the 'agency' of these technologies can never fully determine human behavior, therefore demanding a critical analysis of the 'co-production of science, technology and social order' (Martins and Jumbert, 2020: 14; Jasanoff, 2004b). Thus, performativity and pragmatism can provide a middle way between frameworks that overlook the importance of material objects in shaping crimmigration control practices, and those that struggle to relocate political accountability by ontologically flattening all distinctions between humans and nonhumans. Instead of dissolving ontological distinctions between humans and nonhuman technologies entirely, pragmatism guards against depoliticization by highlighting the specifically human capacity for normative and political deliberation about the social world (Pihlström, 2021). Although nonhuman technologies shape social practices and can enact performative effects originally unintended by their human designers and operators, these effects only have normative and political significance for people, those 'reflexive and intentional agents who can create meaning' (Brinkmann, 2017: 127).

The remainder of this thesis deploys the theoretical framework developed in this chapter to analyze the IOM's roll-out of MIDAS in Nigeria. Chapter 4 discusses the methodological and ethical implications of the framework outlined above, after which the thesis turns to an examination of empirical data. This framework calls for highlighting political relations that are 'criss-crossing and generating diverse, plural and transnational social and political practices' (Basaran et al., 2017: 3), and for this reason each subsequent chapter involves some discussion of the relationship between Nigerian state actors, the IOM and its Northern donors, and the technical components of MIDAS. Nonetheless, in order to highlight the situatedness and distinctiveness of the political practices enacted by each of these human and nonhuman actors, Chapter 5 presents a three-fold typology of the performative effects of MIDAS in terms of Nigerian state actors' performances of 'biometric statehood,' the IOM's performances of pedagogical expertise, and the performative effects of MIDAS in constituting migration as a governable problem on a global level. Chapters 6–8 then examine each of these three dimensions in turn.

Chapter 4 – Methodology and research ethics: Pragmatism as a research paradigm

> *[W]e have been taught to tidy our texts, not to reveal the struggle we have in getting somewhere.*
>
> – Sara Ahmed (2017: 13).

> *There is a familiar tale of a peasant who is stopped by a traveler in a large car and asked the way to the capital. "Well," she replies, after pondering the matter a while, "if I were you, I wouldn't start from here."*
>
> – Kwame Anthony Appiah (1992: 26).

Methodological discussions often begin by identifying a relatively clear research problem or question to be investigated, then situate the research into one of two broad methodological camps—quantitative or qualitative—before identifying the most appropriate (or most feasible) methods for answering the research question (see, e.g., Fabini, 2019; Franck & Vigneswaran, 2021; Franko, 2021; Martin-Mazé & Perret, 2021; Parmar, 2019; Stambøl, 2021). In criminology and social science more broadly, such discussions are useful in demonstrating the problem-oriented, rather than method-driven, attitude of researchers seeking the best tools for making sense of complex social issues. The 'appropriateness' and 'congruence' between method and research question are, rightly, presented as key determinants of methodological choice (Fossey et al., 2002: 724; Maxfield and Babbie, 2015: 17). Yet, as Bosworth and Hoyle (2011: 5) have argued, this seemingly neat and linear relationship between research question, hypotheses, methods, and results has meant that 'criminologists rarely explicitly address the assumptions underpinning their favored research techniques.' The construction of a methodological narrative in which researchers begin with a clearly formed research question, which logically entails the deployment of a specific method to uncover data in predictable fashion, also risks contributing to a 'methodological lie' (Bosworth and Hoyle, 2011: 5): the post hoc presentation of the research process as an

unproblematic and successful endeavor, and of the findings as logically and predictably following from the original identification of a research question. A similar phenomenon was described by pragmatist John Dewey (1929: 29) as 'the philosophic fallacy,' in which 'an inquirer analyzes a complex situation into its constituent parts for the sake of resolving some perceived difficulty, but then insists that the parts secured by the means of inquiry were present all the while—*prior* to inquiry and in some absolute sense' (Hickman, 2001: 84–85, original emphasis). As Sara Ahmed (2017: 13) highlights in the epigraph to this chapter, academics are often taught to 'tidy their texts' in order to demonstrate their expertise.

In academic research, this methodological lie relates to what postcolonial theorist Julietta Singh (2018) terms the pursuit of 'mastery' by researchers over their research subjects. Mastery in this context refers to the practice of 'assigning particular roles (the master, the slave, the researcher, the researched) and holding those roles in place within a hierarchical narrative structure' (van Wingerden, 2022: 2). By presenting the researcher as largely in control of a linear and predictable research process that uncovers unambiguous new knowledge, the methodological lie perpetuates a hierarchy between the authoritative researcher and their passive research subjects. In qualitative research, this hierarchy is established through a 'balancing act' between the researcher's position as both 'insider' and 'outsider' (Lie, 2013: 210). Social scientists often deploy the Weberian notion of *verstehen* to describe 'an ideal of deep understanding' (Aitken, 2019: 108) that reflects an intimate knowledge of the research field. Despite this intimacy, the researcher's understanding is distinguished from those of other social actors. The former is able to occupy a position 'in the hinterland between objective reality and subjective lifeworlds. Here, we can see not only how things are but what they mean and why they matter' (Aitken, 2019: 108). This ability to move between objective reality and subjective views is not usually afforded to others in the field, thus establishing the researcher's authoritative position relative to the participants.

Highlighting the risk of slipping from methodological discussions to the implicit pursuit of mastery does not mean that there is not, or should not be, anything distinct about academic research relative to more everyday forms of knowledge creation. Criminologists experience specific pressures to establish their epistemological authority owing to the intensely contested and political nature of their research topics. In this context, it is understandable and indeed necessary for criminologists to explain 'how they know what they claim to know, and why their claims to expertise are to be trusted more than those advanced by journalists, politicians or members of the public' (Gadd et al., 2012: 1).

In this chapter, I too seek to explain how I know what I claim to know. My aim is to do so while remaining wary of the pursuit of mastery, instead advocating what Enrike van Wingerden (2022) has recently called 'unmastering research.' In other words, I resist claims to authoritative expertise by contextualizing the knowledge claims put forth in this thesis and highlighting the unpredictability and subjectivity of the research process. This does not mean repudiating all claims to knowledge or methodological rigor whatsoever. Rather, my aim is to be transparent about the research process and my role in it, while simultaneously arguing that my research findings are rigorous, legitimate, and warranted based on the empirical evidence I have collected and analyzed. As van Wingerden (2022: 4) argues, 'acknowledging that we know what we know because of dynamic social and material relations that enable some paths of inquiry while foreclosing others is less an assault on truth than a reckoning with the empirical realities of truth-creation.' Recognizing that mastery over our research topics is impossible is akin to acknowledging that, in the short tale recounted by Kwame Anthony Appiah in the epigraph to this chapter, the peasant's response to the traveler is absurd; we cannot *not* 'start from here,' as we are always already shaped by our pre-existing beliefs regarding our research topics and practices, as well as our place in the world.

My view of knowledge as the product of a dynamic interplay between pre-existing beliefs and empirical realities is rooted in the philosophical tradition of pragmatism (Bohman, 2002; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019; Pihlström, 2021). In this view, 'truth' is only ever provisional. Knowledge consists of 'beliefs that have been established in inquiry and are presently not in question,' which help us practically make sense of and navigate the world around us (Bacon, 2012: 20). In other words, to 'establish a truth pragmatically is to settle a controversial or complex issue for the time being, until something comes along to dislodge the comfort and reassurance that has thereby been achieved, forcing inquiry to begin again' (Cochran, 2002: 527). Rather than basing epistemological claims upon prior assumptions about the fundamental nature of reality, pragmatism instead asks what difference these new claims make to our social practices, that is, what contribution they can make to solving or better understanding particular social problems (Bacon, 2012: 53). Thus, the production of knowledge through academic research is not 'about an abstract relationship between the knower and the known; there is an active process of inquiry that creates a continual back-and-forth movement between beliefs and actions' (Morgan, 2013: 1049). The goal of social inquiry understood in pragmatist terms is not 'truth' or 'knowledge' in some absolute sense, but rather what Dewey (1938: 9) termed 'warranted assertability.' Assertions are warranted if they are in accordance with empirical evidence and produce useful practical consequences. These assertions may later be called into question by changes in the empirical environment or in our worldviews, but until that time they can be held as 'truthful' to the extent that they are useful for our attempts to make sense of and solve a given social problem.

Building on the previous chapter, in which I synthesized insights from the pragmatist tradition with the notion of performativity to construct a theoretical framework for critically analyzing border control technologies, in this chapter I present pragmatism as a broader 'research paradigm' within which this thesis is situated (Kaushik and Walsh, 2019; Morgan, 2013). Best known from Thomas Kuhn's (2012) pioneering work on the history of science,

according to Kaushik and Walsh (2019: 1) the term 'paradigm' refers to the 'basic set of beliefs that guide the actions and define the worldview of the researcher. […] Paradigms are conceptual and practical "tools" that are used to solve specific research problems; in other words, paradigms function as heuristics in social research.' Below, I demonstrate the benefits of pragmatism as a research paradigm, arguing that it is useful in avoiding uncritical statements on researcher reflexivity, which risk implicitly reifying the pursuit of mastery over our research topics.

Discussions of positionality and reflexivity can implicitly suggest that 'it is possible to consciously survey power relations—almost as if from a distance—and situate yourself in them' (van Wingerden, 2022: 4), in turn mitigating related concerns by selectively adopting a 'gaze from nowhere' (Haraway, 1988: 581). In contrast to that view, this chapter highlights how the research process took unexpected turns, how my expectations regarding potential findings have been upended by my observations in the field, and how my position as an authoritative researcher has been challenged through professional and personal interactions with my interlocutors at the IOM. Nonetheless, the arguments I put forth in this thesis are warranted knowledge claims, albeit the production of knowledge is here understood in pragmatist terms as a dynamic tripartite relationship between the knower, the external world, and social relations with other knowers (Davidson, 2001) rather than a straightforward relationship between the external world and its accurate discursive representation. I unpack this conception below.

The aim of this chapter, then, is to lay the epistemic foundations for the theoretical and empirical claims this thesis makes. In contrast to positivistic methodological criteria of replicability, generalizability, and parsimony (Maxfield and Babbie, 2015), authors of critical research methods have identified legibility, methodological fit, and reflexivity as alternative criteria for epistemological soundness (Salter, 2013: 15). By clearly explaining how the research process developed and changed in unpredictable ways, why the chosen methods fit

the research questions, and reflecting on my role in conducting empirical research and interpreting the findings, I explain how the arguments put forth in subsequent chapters can be characterized as warranted assertions. Even as I eschew presenting my findings as absolute truths, they are well-grounded in empirical evidence and help us make sense of a particular social problem or 'indeterminate situation' (Bacon, 2012: 53). In this thesis, the problem I examine is the role of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and its Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) within the global crimmigration control system.

I begin the chapter by giving an account of the emotions and beliefs that motivated me to undertake my doctoral studies. While the theoretical, methodological, and empirical dimensions of this thesis have changed over the course of the research, my motivations for conducting the project have remained stable. This account of my motivations leads to a discussion of the role of pre-existing beliefs in knowledge production more generally, which allows me to unpack the pragmatist conception of qualitative academic research. I then utilize this pragmatist orientation to critically discuss what have now become common statements about the nature of qualitative inference, the 'positionality' of researchers in the field, and the importance of reflexivity in criminological research (see, e.g., Chan, 2000; Loader & Sparks, 2010; Lumsden & Goode, 2018; Lumsden & Winter, 2014). These methodological arguments lay the foundations for discussing the research methods I chose for my thesis: a case study based on document analysis, elite interviews, and non-participant observations. The penultimate section discusses ethical issues associated with my chosen methods and how I sought to mitigate those issues. The final section describes the practicalities of the research process, including its unpredictability, obstacles to access, and the role of luck in facilitating the research.

Starting "from here": Unease and the politics of mobility

A welcome social development in many Global North countries in recent decades has been the critical public reckoning with past and present structural inequalities, forcing many to reflect on their positions of privilege based on their race, gender, class, and citizenship (Friedman, 2020; Hirsch, 2018; Kendall, 2021; Shukla, 2016). Having moved to the United Kingdom from Finland for my university studies in 2014, I quickly became aware of how privileged my experience of migration had been compared to many others with whom I interacted in London. In that context, I began to experience a strong feeling of unease regarding the effortlessness of my move to the UK.

Like so many others across the globe, I had viewed migrating to another country as an opportunity to receive a world-class education and eventually to look for employment as well. For me, the main obstacles to moving to the UK were financial: how much would I need to work alongside my studies to afford to live in London? Would I be eligible for a student loan to cover tuition fees? Did it make sense financially and career-wise to pay for university education abroad? Once I decided to move to London, however, I did not spend much time worrying about how exactly I could make it across the English Channel, or whether I would be pulled aside by the UK Border Force at Heathrow. I did not even need to obtain a visa, thanks to the UK's membership in the European Union at that time. Indeed, I did not interact with a single British immigration or border official at the airport. I simply walked through an automated biometric passport gate, which felt like a convenient and efficient tool that facilitated cross-border mobility.

This is not how migration is experienced by millions of people across the globe. Financial considerations relating to student loan eligibility are a moot point for those risking their lives on the perilous journey across the Mediterranean or the English Channel (United Nations, 2021). Given my prior interest in technology—particularly digital surveillance

technologies—I was struck by the contrast between my experiences of digital border control tools and the experiences of those whom these tools are aimed at 'deterring' and stopping (Ahmed and Tondo, 2021). Why did the color of my passport—and skin (Buolamwini and Gebru, 2018)—determine whether a biometric passport control gate appeared as a convenient tool or as an insurmountable obstacle? I began to feel a strong sense of unease not only at the privilege evident in my experiences of border control, but also at how new border control technologies were discussed in a policy context mainly in terms of facilitation, convenience, reliability, and 'progress' (see, e.g., European Commission, 2022; IOM, 2018a). Where exactly did the politics of unequal global mobility figure amid this optimistic tech talk?

I use the term 'unease' to describe my emotional response to these issues, to capture the negative yet indeterminate character of this feeling. Feelings like 'anger or 'disgust' would suggest a much clearer normative orientation to the problems at hand, yet I have not always been able to move from unease regarding the politics of unequal mobility to a clear plan of action or political stance on borders more broadly. In his book on the securitization of migration and asylum in Europe, Jef Huysmans (2006: xi) recounts how his emotional response to a language of securitization motivated his research, even though it was not initially clear what political or ethical orientation this emotional response should engender: 'there was something awkward about analyzing migration issues through a security lens, irrespective of whether the intention was to support the idea that migration was a real threat or to argue that the fear of migration rested on a misperception.' So too, I felt—and continue to feel—that there is 'something awkward' about how border control technologies are deployed in the context of global inequalities. Nonetheless, I've often found it difficult to formulate a clear plan of action in response to this feeling of unease. Should we do away with borders entirely? Should everyone face an equal amount of scrutiny at the border? Are all attempts to facilitate cross-border mobility for some, while increasing scrutiny for others,

irredeemably unjust or racist? Although I did not have clear answers to these questions, my feeling of unease motivated me to research border control technologies to better understand what exactly is politically at stake in these issues.

I suspect some academics and activists will criticize the indeterminacy of my emotional response to questions relating to border control. Indeed, during my DPhil research, I have already faced critical questions from other academics regarding what they view as a lack of criticism in my orientation toward the IOM and MIDAS. In response to such criticism, I contend that a feeling of unease, understood as a negative but politically indeterminate emotion, should not be discounted as a motivation for action. Eric Van Rythoven (2021) has demonstrated how unease, once it begins to take hold in public discourse relating to a particular social issue, can bring about political change by forcing decision makers to distance themselves from discourses that generate a broadly negative, if vague, emotional response among the general public. Van Rythoven (2021: 263) argues that 'unease matters' because it can highlight 'starkly asymmetrical power relations' as well as continuities between current social problems and historical practices that have already been condemned as unjust. Unease may not bring about an instant termination of questionable political practices, nor immediately lead to the recognition of a clear plan for future action, but it can motivate us to engage in social inquiry to uncover what precisely is causing this emotional response, and what might be politically practicable strategies for addressing those causes.

Although my prior assumptions about border control have been repeatedly challenged by my empirical findings, as I outline below, being transparent about the motivations for this research is intellectually honest and crucial for 'unmastering research' (van Wingerden, 2022). Pre-existing beliefs are also a key component within the pragmatist research paradigm within which I situate this research. In this view, inquiry begins when prior beliefs are challenged by a problematic situation. Such challenges can manifest as

cognitive dissonance and thus give rise to an emotional response: 'Emotions and preferences operate throughout the inquiry process, starting most notably with a *feeling* that something is problematic in a situation' (Morgan, 2013: 1048, original emphasis).

Qualitative research, retroduction, and knowledge production

While social scientists occasionally refer to 'pragmatic sensibilities' in their methodological discussions (Seale et al., 2004: 5), pragmatism is rarely discussed as an overarching research paradigm. Johannes Wheeldon (2015: 399) argues that the term 'pragmatic' is commonly used by criminologists as a 'criminological slur,' particularly when criticizing scholarship that focuses on the practicalities of criminal justice and crime control rather than theoretical or normative considerations. These negative connotations are not new: more than a century ago, pragmatist Charles Sanders Peirce (1998: 335; Bacon, 2012: 43) so detested the colloquial usage of the term 'pragmatic' that he sought to distance himself from it by renaming his position 'pragmaticism,' a name 'ugly enough to be safe from kidnappers.' Notwithstanding the skepticism of a pragmatic orientation toward criminological research, a problem-oriented and practical attitude—what Gadd, Karstedt, and Messner (2011: 6) term a 'pragmatic but not prescriptive' approach—remains prevalent among criminological researchers seeking the best methodological tools for making sense of their research topics. Thus, situating this research within a pragmatist research paradigm is not so much a thoroughly innovative methodological 'first' (Liboiron, 2021) as it is an attempt to 'explicitly address the assumptions' (Bosworth and Hoyle, 2011: 5) already underpinning much criminological scholarship.

What, then, can the explicit designation of pragmatism as a research paradigm contribute to methodological discussions in the field of border criminology, and how does this paradigm relate to dominant alternatives? A core tenet of pragmatism is the view of

knowledge as a dynamic relationship between pre-existing beliefs and practical actions or experiences. In this view, knowledge is not the product of the researcher dispassionately examining empirical data in order to generate descriptions that more or less accurately 'mirror' or 'reflect' objective reality (Rorty, 2017). Rather, all knowledge claims are specific to a particular problematic context, and their 'truthfulness' depends on their practical consequences in terms of solving or alleviating those specific problems (Pihlström, 2021: 151–152). What appears as a problem to one community of researchers may appear meaningless or unimportant to another. The point of creating new knowledge is not to obtain a more 'accurate picture representation' of reality, but 'to deal with felt problems and difficulties' (Hickman, 2001: 27–28).

In contrast to dominant forms of inference in the social sciences, which can be described as deductive or inductive reasoning, this approach to research can be characterized as 'retroductive' (Giese and Schnapp, 2021). While deduction begins with a hypothesis that is tested against empirical data, and induction aims to create generalizations based on systematic observations, retroduction seeks to create new interpretations of social problems by moving back and forth between existing explanations and observations of individual cases (Giese and Schnapp, 2021: 78). Retroductive reasoning thus seeks:

> to find new factors to a well-known problem. Often, this means redefining and reconceptualizing the problem itself by assembling or discovering, based on an interpretation of collected data, combinations of features for which there is no appropriate explanation or rule (Beighton, 2019).

The distinctiveness of this view from a positivist understanding of scientific knowledge as accurately mirroring objective reality is clear, but its relation to constructivist views on the socially constructed nature of knowledge is more complex. Criminologists have long recognized that the complexity and dynamic nature of the social world undermines attempts to uncover timeless, law-like regularities in offending and crime control practices:

'Crime is socially constructed, politically influenced and historically variable' (Newburn, 2017: 120). Nonetheless, the pragmatist conception of the socially constructed nature of knowledge is distinct from the dominant constructivist view in at least two key aspects.

First, for constructivists the contextual nature of knowledge claims is dependent on the social meanings and self-interpretations of actors, which can be abstracted from a particular practical context (Carrier, 2011). For pragmatists, in contrast, the meaning of knowledge claims depends on the consequences of a given interpretation in terms of solving a particular practical problem: 'pragmatists' choice of one version of reality over another is governed by how well that choice results in anticipated or desired outcomes' (Kaushik and Walsh, 2019: 3). Although such problem solving—and thus some form of inquiry—is an everyday occurrence, academic research is nonetheless set apart from quotidian practices as 'a process of inquiry that is performed more carefully and more self-consciously than most other responses to problematic situations' (Morgan, 2013: 1047).

Second, constructivist perspectives privilege the social dimensions of knowledge and avoid a focus on material or 'external' reality: 'the *appearance of substance* is just that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief' (Butler, 2007: 192, original emphasis). In contrast to focusing solely on the 'construction of social problems' (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 2009), pragmatist perspectives hold onto the notion of an empirically knowable external world as one criterion for evaluating truth claims. Whereas critical criminologists have stressed the 'inter-subjective' nature of knowledge about crimes and harms (Yar, 2012: 59), in the pragmatist view these intersubjective understandings must be evaluated with reference to the external world in order to establish warranted assertions. Thus, neither material reality nor social construction are accorded a privileged position as ultimate arbiters of truth. According to Donald Davidson's (2001) influential formulation, knowledge is the product of a tripartite relationship between

knowledge of ourselves, knowledge of the material world around us, and knowledge of other people and what they think. In this view, as Michael Bacon (2012: 87) explains:

> The three varieties of knowledge are interrelated, and none can be had without the other two […] we can only attribute thoughts to others if we know our own thoughts, because that attribution is a matter of matching their behavior with our own. And both require a third element, namely knowledge of our shared environment.

This view on knowledge embraces neither an uncritical positivist view on 'external reality,' nor a constructivist focus on intersubjectivity that obscures the causal impact of the material world around us. Instead, it provides standards for evaluating competing truth claims without basing these standards on a supposedly authoritative 'view from nowhere' (Haraway, 1988). Situating my research within the pragmatist research paradigm, then, has the practical benefit of allowing me to critically analyze both the intersubjective and material political stakes of border control technologies. Beyond this thesis, moreover, the pragmatist research paradigm can also provide epistemic and methodological foundations for two pressing practical disciplinary problems: democratizing and decolonizing border criminology.

'Unmastering research': Democratization, decolonization, and positionality

In the context of the increasingly global nature of many criminologically relevant social problems, Katja Franko (Franko Aas, 2012b: 16) has argued that '[d]eveloping more democratic epistemologies is not only a question of epistemological justice, but increasingly also an analytical imperative and an opportunity for theoretical innovation.' International Relations authors such as Molly Cochran (2002: 526) have similarly noted how a key problem for academic knowledge production in a global age—and in the context of continuing postcolonial hierarchies—is 'how to maintain the objectivity of inquiry while exercising

ethical judgement and without effectively imposing one particular set of cultural values upon others.'

I have outlined above how pragmatism eschews claims to an authoritative and value-neutral 'view from nowhere.' In addition, this perspective is inherently pro-democratic due to its view on the problem-oriented contextuality of knowledge claims. Feminist pragmatists such as Shannon Sullivan (2001: 5) have been particularly insightful in highlighting how pragmatism naturally promotes more 'pluralistic' forms of knowledge production. Molly Cochran (2002: 542) has similarly argued that, if knowledge is understood as the attempt to solve particular social problems, it follows that these attempts are likely to be misguided unless the views of all social actors involved in these practices are properly understood and considered.

Whereas constructivist and 'postmodern' approaches struggle to establish new grounds for deliberating between competing cultural perspectives after deconstructing traditional universalist views (Beirne, 1983; Carrier, 2011), the pragmatist focus on resolving social problems sidesteps these ontological debates about relativism. In short, although there are no universally privileged perspectives on knowledge as such, there are perspectives which are better than others at addressing particular social problems—once we have agreed on which problems are worth solving—and that more closely correspond to individual beliefs and experiences (Morgan, 2013: 1050). The goal of inquiry, then, is not to uncover universal causal laws, but rather to identify and engage the community to whom a particular social problem is relevant.

The democratic credentials of pragmatism also provide foundations for decolonizing the field of border criminology (Aliverti et al., 2021). In contemporary border criminology scholarship, expanding the community of inquirers means identifying and incorporating knowledge claims made outside of the Global North, as well as those which do not necessarily meet traditional Eurocentric and scientistic criteria of epistemic

soundness. Challenging the epistemological bases of Northern-produced knowledges is a key dimension of decolonization (Tuck and Yang, 2012). Not only is pragmatism fundamentally committed to a thoroughgoing critique of epistemic essentialism—as reflected in Richard Rorty's (2021) characterization of the approach as 'anti-authoritarian'—it also foregrounds the use of eclectic methodological tools to address particular social issues. In practice, this means engaging directly with marginalized and colonized populations, such as Southern actors and indigenous peoples, when constructing claims about decolonial forms of knowledge production (Tucker, 2018: 225). Feminist pragmatist Amrita Banerjee (2012: 83–84), in her discussion of decolonization, characterizes the goal of such research practices as 'interactive plurality,' that highlights the 'politics of location' by focusing on the 'agency and action' of Southern populations. Foregrounding Southern agency is the focus of Chapter 6 of this thesis.

A key topic in discussions about decolonizing criminology has been the recognition of 'the importance of identity and positionality of criminologists for shaping methodologies and findings (in terms of their classed, gendered and racialized identities)' (Aliverti et al., 2021: 300). The notion of positionality in this context highlights the roles that the researcher's 'age, class, ethnicity, gender, language, marital status, nationality, parental status, profession, and religious beliefs play throughout the research process' (Bilgen et al., 2021: 523). In criminology, statements about positionality are seen as crucial acknowledgements of the socially situated and value-laden nature of criminological research (Richardson, 2021).

Discussions about positionality are of course a welcome rectification to social science scholarship that overlooked the role of the researcher entirely. However, authors such as Enrike Van Wingerden (2022) have recently argued that the commonality of positionality statements now risks lapsing into a box-ticking exercise, through which researchers implicitly reaffirm their authoritative status precisely by claiming to

dispassionately observe the power relations that underpin their knowledge claims. As Van Wingerden (2022: 4) explains:

> The crux is that the self-awareness inherent in positionality claims implies that it is possible to consciously survey power relations—almost as if from a distance—and situate yourself in them. […] Self-critical and self-conscious positioning is less an uncovering of power relations than a construction and objectification of the self in relation to others.

In other words, the concept of positionality is at risk of becoming more related to what Seale and colleagues (2004: 7) have termed the 'political role of methodology' rather than the 'procedural one.' The former dimension describes how methodological discussions serve to establish the researcher's expertise and authority, whereas the latter relates to how methodological considerations 'guide researchers in concrete terms' (Seale et al., 2004: 7).

Pragmatism does not view the acknowledgement of positionality as a matter of 'trading a detached, distant, and hierarchical stance for an intimate, close, and equitable position' (Israel and Hay, 2012; Preissle and Han, 2012: 599). Rather, there is no such thing as a 'detached' perspective from which to observe the nature of 'cultural constructs […] once and for all' (Sullivan, 2001: 36). Knowledge is always necessarily social and specific to a particular perceived social problem. Given the retroductive orientation of pragmatist inquiry, prior beliefs can be called into question in unpredictable ways by empirical circumstances, forcing the researcher to re-evaluate the theoretical, empirical, and methodological dimensions of their project in the course of the research. In short, a pragmatist perspective avoids uncritical positionality statements by not seeking to excise uncertainty and unpredictability from the research process, but rather embracing them as key components of academic inquiry. My account of how my feeling of unease motivates and informs my research is not followed by a discussion of the steps taken to mitigate my role in the research; rather, in this chapter I advocate 'unmastering research' in the sense of foregrounding 'the dynamic and often unpredictable interactions and relationships that

constitute research, which remain shaped by ethical decisions made in the process' (van Wingerden, 2022: 4).

Below, following my discussion of my chosen research methods and related ethical issues, I describe how I feel my identity as an Oxford-educated, white man impacted the research project in practice. The practicalities of the research often took unexpected turns, and at times I felt that my educational background, gender identity, and ethnicity put me in a privileged position for finding new ways of continuing the research successfully. My research, then, has been thoroughly shaped by my 'positionality,' yet I do not have access to an external perspective from which to dispassionately determine how the research project would have looked had I not benefitted from the forms of privilege that I possess. Nonetheless, below I offer a detailed account of how the research project developed in practice, and reflections on how I feel my identity impacted that process, in the hopes that this will allow readers to assess whether the claims I make in subsequent chapters are warranted.

Case study research: Documents, interviews, observations

Thus far in this chapter I have discussed the broad methodological dimensions of pragmatism as a research paradigm; I now turn to the more specific and practical question of the research methods I used. As Miriam Boeri and Aukje Lamonica (2015: 125, original emphasis) explain: '*methodology* refers to the epistemological values and theoretical perspectives that impact how to study a phenomenon, whereas research *methods* are the practical techniques of conducting research.' As outlined above, the pragmatist orientation to research is problem driven. Larry Hickman (2001: 75) has highlighted the affinities between a pragmatist approach and Paul Feyerabend's (2010: 12, original emphasis) statement that 'there is only one principle that can be defended under *all* circumstances and

in all stages of human development. It is the principle: *anything goes*.' In practice, this does not mean that all outcomes of inquiry are equally valid, but simply that no particular research methods are privileged before inquiry commences. In other words, pragmatism 'doesn't throw methodological caution to the winds so much as begin by being cautious about the very things the method is assumed to be about' (Seale et al., 2004: 6).

My choice of research methods was informed by a combination of methodological fit with my research questions and practical considerations relating to feasibility and costs. As outlined in Chapter 1, the overarching research question which this thesis addresses is: 'What is the relationship between novel border security technologies and global crimmigration control practices?' To narrow the scope of the research, I divided this broad question into to a number of more specific questions based on my reading of existing academic literature and the identification of remaining research gaps. As explained in Chapter 2, these gaps related to the relationship between digital border control technologies and postcolonial hierarchy, and the role of the IOM and MIDAS in shaping global crimmigration control practices. Thus, the specific research questions guiding my research are:

i) How do Southern actors respond to and reshape Northern logics of border control in their deployment of MIDAS?

ii) How do the IOM's border control interventions in the Global South relate to global hierarchy, and what is the relationship between the IOM, its Northern funders, and Southern recipient states?

iii) How do the technical components of MIDAS themselves shape crimmigration control practices in the Global South, and how should we conceptualize the relationship between human actors and nonhuman technologies?

Given the focus of these research questions on a particular technical system—MIDAS—as well as the breadth and complexity involved in asking 'how' we should

conceptualize its political effects, I have opted for a qualitative case study design for this research. As Linda Mabry (2008: 214) has argued, '[t]he raison d'être of case study is deep understanding of particular instances of phenomena.' Instead of seeking to uncover generalizable findings across a population of similar cases—for instance, a wide variety of border control technologies across the globe—a case study instead aims to produce a 'deep understanding' or 'nuanced view' of a particular social problem (Flyvberg, 2004: 392). As I sought to better understand the relationship between postcolonial global hierarchies and border control technologies, from the outset it seemed to me that researching the impact of Southern agency should constitute a key component of this research project. In order to avoid making claims about Southern agency from afar and thus risk perpetuating Northern-centric forms of knowledge creation, I sought to observe how MIDAS has been rolled out on the ground in the Global South. As I outline below, my original plan of traveling to Tanzania to observe the IOM's border guard training sessions at the organization's African Capacity Building Center were unexpectedly thwarted by the global Covid-19 pandemic, forcing me to eventually refocus the research on the operationalization of MIDAS in Nigeria instead.

I decided to approach this case through a mix of document analysis, elite interviews, and non-participant field observations. This approach is common to qualitative case studies (Mabry, 2008), as the combination of different kinds of qualitative data sources allows researchers to produce rich descriptions and to triangulate findings, in other words alleviate potential data bias by cross-checking whether, for instance, interview findings accord with official documentation (Gadd, 2012). This methodological combination also eventually divided my research chronologically into three separate phases, as each stage of the research informed the next: the findings from document analysis informed my interview questions, which in turn shaped my approach to field observations. However, this chronological ordering was imperfect; from time to time, I retroductively re-examined my assumptions

regarding the research, and thus periodically returned to re-analyze documents and interview transcripts from a new perspective.

Qualitative document analysis

Qualitative document analysis refers to the practice of 'an integrated and conceptually informed method, procedure, and technique for locating, identifying, retrieving, and analyzing documents for their relevance, significance, and meaning' (Altheide and Schneider, 2013: 5). A 'document,' in turn, is 'any symbolic representation that can be recorded or retrieved for analysis' (Altheide and Schneider, 2013: 5). Document analysis is more rigorous than a randomized reading of texts, as researchers initially develop 'inclusion criteria' for selecting relevant documents, articulate key themes of interest, and finally use these themes to code the selected documents (Wach and Wach, 2013: 2). In line with the retroductive approach adopted in this research, I characterize my approach to qualitative document analysis as 'emergent,' in the sense that 'there is an expectation that already established variables will be important, as well as the belief that new, emergent themes will materialize' (Slakoff and Brennan, 2019: 495).

In practice, this meant that upon settling on the IOM and MIDAS as the subject of my case study, I had to figure out the kinds of documentation that would be relevant for better understanding the development and deployment of MIDAS, as well as which analytical themes I would be looking for in these documents. In the initial stage, I included in the analysis all official, publicly available documentation published by the IOM that related to digital border control technologies. These included policy papers, technical briefing documents, promotional news stories, and tweets that were publicly available online. Later on, while I was based in the IOM field offices in Abuja, Nigeria, I gained access to private, internal IOM and Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) documentation and included

these in my analysis. As I explain below, before analyzing these documents I obtained written consent from the IOM that I could use this data in my DPhil research.

Informed by my background research, I developed a variety of thematic codes that related to my research questions, and used the NVivo software to code the documents as I read them (Hilal and Alabri, 2013). My thematic codes ranged from empirically specific topics such as 'biometrics' and 'interoperability' to broader concepts such as 'neutrality' and 'post-imperialism.' As my empirical research proceeded, I noticed repetition of new themes in the official IOM documentation, which I added to my catalogue of thematic codes. Emergent themes included topics such as 'data ownership,' 'governability,' and 'state capacity.' I re-read earlier documents whenever I added emergent themes to my coding process, to check whether these themes were present but had been initially overlooked.

Although I periodically returned to the documentation as new statements and reports were published by the IOM—and as I gained access to internal documents which were previously unavailable to me—I conducted the majority of the document analysis prior to conducting elite interviews. A key role of document analysis in this research, then, was to inform the elite interview process.

Elite interviews

My research does not focus on the lived experiences of those subject to border control. Many others, far more qualified than I am to conduct ethnographic research among vulnerable migrants, have written about those experiences (see, e.g., Andersson, 2014; Canning, 2020; de Noronha, 2019; Milivojevic, 2019). I focus on the views of policymakers and practitioners who are intimately involved in the development and deployment of MIDAS. This attention to elites stems from my original feeling of unease toward how border control technologies were presented in a policy context, particularly by international

organizations. Moreover, in criminological research a focus on elites can be justified due to 'the fact that much of the social problems faced by the "powerless" (e.g., poverty, precariousness, crime, violence, drug use, migration) are, in many respects, closely intertwined with actions and omissions of the powerful' (Petintseva et al., 2020: 4).

The identification of elites is always specific to a particular research project, as they are individuals who have privileged access to information relevant to understanding the specific research problem. When researching politically contested and complex topics such as border control, these are the people who can exert significant influence on important decisions relating to official policies and practices in the field of study. As Katherine Smith (2006: 645) highlights, although the term 'elite' is often only vaguely defined, it is generally used to denote individuals who control significant epistemic, financial, or political resources. In my research on the IOM and MIDAS, I define the participants in my research as elites due to their 'important social networks, social capital and strategic positions' within the field of global migration management (Harvey, 2011: 433). More specifically, the individuals I interviewed have all been directly involved either in the development of MIDAS, or in its deployment in the various IOM Member States that currently use the system.

In total, I carried out 28 qualitative, semi-structured elite interviews online between January–April 2021. The purpose of qualitative interviews is to 'delve deeply into social and personal matters' (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006: 316). This research method provides unique access to the self-interpretations and understandings of individuals, and allows the researcher to respond dynamically to the themes being raised by research participants. Interviews are effectively conversations between the researcher and the participants; conversations are central to much qualitative research due to the simple recognition that 'one of the most productive ways to learn about a person, place, or set of activities is to actually ask questions of people who have knowledge about that topic' (Tewksbury, 2009: 43). Interviews are particularly useful for researching complex social and political

phenomena and answering questions to which there is no clearly quantifiable answer. In a politically contested field such as migration control, the information elicited through elite interviewing is 'cast in terms of the exploration of respondents' perceptions and sensibilities rather than the factual accuracy of those perceptions' (Davies, 2001: 77). In other words, not only was I interested in gaining new empirical information on the complex topic of border control technologies; I was also directly interested in how exactly IOM officials would speak of their work and describe their role in the global crimmigration control system. In Chapter 7 I discuss how these interviews are themselves performative, in the sense that through them the participants reaffirmed—to me, but perhaps also to themselves—the politically neutral pedagogical nature of the organization.

The interviews I carried out are characterized as 'semi-structured interviews,' in that they were 'organized around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee/s' (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006: 315). The predetermined questions were based on my prior analysis of relevant IOM documentation combined with my pre-existing understanding of the academic literature on border control technologies. I asked participants about what they felt were the reasons for the IOM developing MIDAS in the first place, what specific Member States sought to gain by deploying the system, how much the system changed practices on the ground, and how MIDAS relates to the broader political relationship between the donors and recipient states of the IOM, among other topics. Of course, my interviewees' responses to these questions are 'polyvocal' in the sense that—like the documents I have analyzed—they are open to 'multiple readings and interpretations' (Brinkmann, 2013: 23). Again, however, any inferences drawn from these interviews in subsequent chapters are accompanied by direct quotes, to allow readers to assess whether my assertions are warranted based on the empirical data.

Interviewing elites presents a specific set of challenges, not least of which is simply 'getting in the door,' that is, gaining access to elites who are willing to discuss their work for the purposes of academic research (Goldstein, 2002). In highly politicized fields such as border control, attempting to arrange interviews by 'cold calling' participants is unlikely to work due to a lack of trust between the elites and a previously unknown researcher. I detail below how I was able to gain access to IOM elites through a combination of privilege, luck, and successfully earning the trust of my earliest IOM interlocutors.

Another challenge, once elite interviews are underway, is gaining the trust and establishing rapport with the interviewees. Academics effectively present themselves to research participants as experts in their fields of study. As expert practitioners, elite participants will sometimes 'consciously or sub-consciously challenge them on their subject and its relevance' (Harvey, 2011: 434). In my interviews, I often faced situations where my interviewees asked if I knew what a particular acronym or initialism stands for, if I was familiar with some of the technical specifications of MIDAS, and even whether I could recount specific Articles of the IOM Constitution. Passing these 'tests' nearly always resulted in a more relaxed discussion afterward, as evidenced by statements such as 'I'll be very honest with you, Samuel…' (Interview, 3rd March 2021) and 'I'm gonna get in so much trouble for this one' (Interview, 2nd March 2021), followed by the interviewee disclosing highly interesting and potentially sensitive information.

Building rapport was made more difficult due to carrying out the interviews online via Microsoft Teams, as a result of Covid-19-related travel restrictions. Before the global pandemic forced many academics to conduct research online, there was a distinct bias in qualitative scholarship against online and telephone interviews (Novick, 2008). Due to the additional mediation of a computer screen and potentially poor video and audio connections, building rapport with interviewees online can be cumbersome compared to an in-person interview. For this reason, I took additional steps to streamline the interview

process as suggested by authors such as Mealer and Jones (2014: 34), including sending written consent forms via email beforehand and obtaining verbal consent in cases where the participant had not had the chance to complete and send back the written consent form.

The interviews were recorded using a handheld recorder placed next to my laptop during the online interviews, then transcribed using the online software otter.ai.[5] The transcription process is what transforms qualitative interviews into readable and searchable research data, and for this reason the importance of transcription as an interpretive practice should not be discounted.[6] As Cindy Bird (2005: 230) has argued, not only is transcription the point at which 'analysis begins,' but the transcription process is itself shaped by decisions such as whether to transcribe the entirety of the conversation and whether to indicate changes in the participant's tone. Finally, the translation of qualitative interviews into research data becomes particularly interpretive when quotes from written transcriptions are selectively presented as research findings, and the researcher is faced with decisions over how much context and what kinds of interpretations to provide in the analysis. In this way, 'transcription necessarily involves selection,' even when all words spoken during the interviews are initially recorded (Lapadat and Lindsay, 1999: 72). When transcribing my interviews, I opted to record the entirety of the interviews. My presentation of quotes from these interviews in subsequent chapters is necessarily selective in that excerpts are deployed to support my arguments, yet at every stage I have sought to contextualize the quotes and refer to more than one source to demonstrate the warrantability of my claims.

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[5] https://otter.ai/ [Accessed 3rd May 2022].

[6] I am grateful to Dr Anne Laakkonen for this insight.

Non-participant observations

The final method deployed in this research can be characterized as non-participant observation (Pollock, 2009). Between July–September 2021, I was based in the IOM field offices in Abuja, Nigeria, where I observed the daily work of IOM officials working together with officials from Nigerian Federal State agencies, particularly the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) and the Ministry of Justice. Field observations consist of 'spending long periods watching people, coupled with talking to them about what they are doing, thinking and saying, designed to see how they understand their world' (Delamont, 2004: 206). Observations remain 'the methodological touchstone' of criminologists seeking to better understand particular social and cultural environments (Kane, 2004: 306). The aim of carrying out field observations in Abuja was to collect information on how IOM officials interacted with Nigerian officials, how a system like MIDAS was actually rolled out in practice, and whether and to what extent the implementation of such a system impacted crimmigration control practices on the ground. Furthermore, comparing my observational data with the information collected from prior elite interviews also allowed me to triangulate my research findings and compare the views of IOM officials in Geneva with those involved directly in the practicalities of rolling out the system in Abuja.

I do not characterize this component of the research as an 'ethnography,' which usually refers to longer periods of fieldwork during which the researcher achieves 'total immersion' in the local cultural and social context (Delamont, 2004: 206–208). Although I became well-acquainted with the IOM employees with whom I shared an office, throughout my stay I occupied a professional position as an external researcher. This position was complicated by the fact that, for the duration of my stay in Abuja, I was hired by the IOM as an independent Border Management Consultant to author an internal report on the technical, operational, and legal components of MIDAS in Nigeria. I explain below how this arrangement presented unique ethical challenges to the research, but was necessary to obtain

research access and thus gain information that was academically highly valuable, yet scarce in the existing literature. Despite this arrangement, however, IOM employees never referred to me as a 'colleague,' but always as 'our consultant' or an 'independent reviewer' depending on the context. I use the term 'non-participant observation' to highlight my externality to the professional and social practices I observed in Nigeria.

As Sara Delamont (2004: 213) has argued, one of the biggest problems when conducting fieldwork is uncertainty regarding what exactly 'to observe, how to observe, and what to write down […] The most important thing researchers have to do is record what they see, usually in fieldnotes but sometimes on tape or film, because anything not recorded is lost.' Throughout my stay in Abuja, I carried with me a notebook in which I recorded what I saw, heard, and did on a daily basis. I also photographed IOM buildings and MIDAS training rooms. My fieldnotes included descriptions of IOM-NIS meetings and training sessions, casual observations in the office, and reflexive descriptions of how I felt about the research. For instance:

> Ethically speaking, I find it important to reiterate my externality to the UN system when speaking with IOM colleagues and also with NIS officials – for the latter, it seems like it takes a while to get through the point that I'm a researcher. My Oxford lanyard helps establish my externality (Field diary, 28th August 2021).

Of course, not all of the notes I took eventually proved helpful in clarifying the main arguments of this thesis, but keeping a field diary was nonetheless important in making sure I remembered important details from my fieldwork. This practice also allowed me to self-consciously reflect on ethical issues arising from the research, as evidenced above. Given my involvement with human participants at various stages of the research, considering the ethicality of my research has been crucial from the outset.

Identifying and mitigating ethical issues

Before carrying out any interviews or field observations, I applied for ethical approval from the Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC). Israel and Hay (2012) have noted that for criminologists, it often feels as though the demands of working ethically have become somewhat removed from the demands of meeting the expectations of research ethics committees. In the field, Bosworth, Hoyle, and Dempsey (2011) have noted how criminologists face pressures to innovatively engage with institutional gatekeepers, due to concerns regarding the utility of academic research relative to its potential ethical risks. However, my own experience of the ethical approval process was more straightforward. Having familiarized myself with the criminological literature on research ethics, as well as the ethical guidelines set out in the British Society of Criminology's (2015) 'Statement of Ethics,' in my CUREC application I outlined the aims of my research, how I would identify research participants and obtain informed consent from them, what other ethical issues relate to my research, and how I would deal with practical concerns such as data protection issues.

Due to my focus on elites, I found that this process was much more straightforward than the kinds of 'horror stories' (Israel and Hay, 2012: 500) recounted by some criminologists in their dealings with ethics committees. These difficult experiences no doubt stem from the fact that much criminological research focuses on vulnerable populations or requires some degree of 'covert research' to examine illicit behavior (Calvey, 2013). Most ethical concerns arising in the course of criminological research relate to power asymmetries and the protection of potentially vulnerable research participants (Petintseva et al., 2020: 20). Elites, however, are by definition not vulnerable, which serves to mitigate the most pressing ethical concerns relating to diminished agency and potential harms.

Although the interviews touched upon politically charged topics such as migration and border control, my participants were professionals working in this field, and discussing these topics was highly unlikely to be distressing or cause any personal risks. These individuals were never at risk of personal harm during the interviews. However, there was a risk of disclosing sensitive information, the publication of which could have adverse professional consequences if connected to a particular interviewee. Given the relatively small pool of senior IOM officials familiar with MIDAS, it is particularly likely that country-specific information could reveal the identity of the participants. This risk raised the issue of confidentiality (Finch, 2001). In accordance with best practices identified in the methodological literature (Israel, 2004), all research data were anonymized, and any quotes reproduced in this thesis have been pseudonymized and country-specific information has been removed.

A key concern that remains when working with elites is informed consent (Sin, 2005), which I usually obtained verbally at the beginning of each interview. After my interviewees agreed to an interview, I emailed them a participant information sheet that outlined the aims of my research and how the interview data would be used in it, as well as a written consent form. Most participants told me they had been too busy to complete the consent form but had read the information sheet. At the beginning of each interview, I verbally confirmed that participants are fully aware of how their interview data would be used in my research, and that they consent to being audio recorded during the interview. I explained that all digital data would be anonymized, and any quotes used in the research would be pseudonymized to protect participant anonymity.

Even if participants consent to the interview process initially, power asymmetries between the researcher and interviewee remain. Although interview participants are elites in their professional field, I was able to determine the 'topic, initiate the interview, pose the questions, critically follow up the answers, and close the conversation' (Vähäsantanen and

Saarinen, 2013: 502). During the interview, participants can selectively respond to questions or decline to do so and attempt to steer the conversation in a particular direction, but afterward the power asymmetry between researcher and participant becomes particularly stark. As Frederick Anyan (2013: 6) has argued: 'The data analysis stage is where power seems to return to the interviewer.' By transcribing and interpreting the interviews afterward, and then selectively presenting information from them to support the arguments in this thesis, I have controlled how participants' contributions impacted the research, usually without much input from the interviewees once the interviews were completed.

Thus, a key consideration during and after interviews was transparency: how should I present my attitude toward the IOM and MIDAS to my interviewees? While ethical guidelines often stress total transparency as a golden standard for conducting research with human participants, researchers have noted how gaining the trust of research participants can depend on their perception of the researcher as generally sympathetic to their work (Schwell, 2020). This need not imply deceitfulness on part of the researcher, who secretly condemns their interlocutors. Rather, the interview process ideally involves a genuine 'suspension of judgement' that is important to 'gaining trust and/or developing rapport with interview subjects' (Austin, 2020: 104). The goal of minimizing the impact of the researcher's pre-existing beliefs on the research is thus balanced with the need for transparency. However, as Margi Bryant (2014: 139) has argued: 'suppressing personal emotions may be downright unethical. If they emerge later on in your analysis, earlier reticence may look like duplicity to research participants.' For this reason, sharing and discussing preliminary research findings with the IOM has been a key strategy for avoiding perceptions of duplicity or dishonesty (Fagerholm, 2014). I have remained in continual conversation with my primary contacts at the IOM Headquarters in Geneva throughout the research process, including regular calls to update them on how the research is going, and to discuss my preliminary research findings. The point has not been to take their critiques of my work at face value

and modify my research claims accordingly, but rather to ensure transparency throughout the research process. At times, IOM officials have disagreed with my interpretations and offered alternative views, but I have mostly found that they have been surprisingly sympathetic to kinds of critiques I have formulated in my work.

Questions of informed consent became trickier when entering 'the field' in Abuja. There, I was no longer speaking solely to individuals with whom I had agreed on a semi-structured interview beforehand, and much of the information I elicited came from informal, ad hoc conversations. Nonetheless, all IOM staff were fully aware of my status as a researcher and were explained upon my arrival that any conversations with me could be used as data in academic research. When visiting NIS offices or speaking with Nigerian officials in the context of training workshops and official meetings, I always began by explaining the nature of my research and that I would be taking notes based on our conversations. At times I felt that taking out my field diary had the effect of inhibiting interesting, potentially sensitive conversations; nonetheless, I chose to use my field diary as a material reminder that I was conducting research, so as to ensure informed consent even in these informal discussions. As the ethicality of 'covert ethnography' is highly contested (Calvey, 2013), I opted to avoid such tricky ethical terrain by erring on the side of transparency, even when this meant losing access to potentially valuable information.

A further ethical dilemma in the field arose from the practical arrangement that allowed me to secure research access: the IOM hired me as an external Border Management Consultant and tasked me with writing an internal report on the technical, operational, and legal components of MIDAS in Nigeria. My professional relationship with the IOM complicates my claims to externality as a researcher and required additional practical steps to ensure the ethicality of the fieldwork. I am not the first to find myself in this situation. Geiger and Pécoud (2014: 880) have noted that 'cooperation with [international organizations] may be crucial for researchers in order to access data and establish contacts.'

The IOM specifically has a reputation for being 'not particularly transparent' (Klabbers, 2019: 389), which has led researchers to find innovative ways of negotiating access to fieldwork sites. Important insights into the organization have been elicited by examining publicly available documents (Hirsch and Doig, 2018; Koch, 2014) and through an affiliation with other international organizations or NGOs (Bartels, 2018). However, in order to properly understand the role of the IOM and MIDAS in Nigeria, I felt it was necessary to observe practices up close and discuss how the organization's officials viewed their work; this necessitated fieldwork, which I hoped the IOM would facilitate.

Although the organization's officials have been remarkably welcoming of my research and supportive throughout the process, I knew that arranging a stay at IOM field offices, particularly in a research environment which presented safety challenges as well, could be difficult. Criminologists such as Emma Wincup (2017: 66) have argued that '[f]or access to be granted, the research project needs to be at least acceptable to the agency, and preferably perceived as beneficial to them.' Sabine Dini (2018: 1695) has offered an account of negotiating access that accords with my experience: 'I was confronted to an alternative between no access to field, on the one hand, and undertaking participant observation as an IOM employee; I opted for the latter and thus became an "embedded researcher."' I, too, became an 'embedded researcher,' yet I also took practical steps to retain distance from the organization and ensure the independence and non-censorship of my research findings. To this end, I negotiated a fixed term consultancy contract which included provisions that I would be able to use data collected for the purpose of authoring the MIDAS report in my academic research as well, and that neither the report nor my academic work could be censored by the organization. Though employed by the IOM, I was thus able to retain my status as an external researcher and non-participant. Moreover, I felt that these provisions also ensured that the report I wrote for the organization would be more ethically sound: it could not simply become rubber stamp, as the issues I highlighted relating to privacy

concerns, human rights, and outsourcing arrangements all had to be included in the final report. In accordance with existing methodological literature on the IOM, I found that partnering with the organization was invaluable to gaining access to information that is otherwise scarce in the academic literature, and that 'the up-front articulation' of provisions to ensure the independence of my work 'was an important factor that contributed to the successful completion of credible studies' (Bradley et al., 2016: 373).

Research in practice: Access, unpredictability, and luck

Having settled on clear research questions, selected an appropriate case and research methods for answering these questions, and pre-empted potential ethical issues arising from my research, I finally set out to gather empirical data. Due to the politicized nature of border control and the 'club-like' nature of transnational policymaking and international organizations (Barnett and Coleman, 2005: 609; Keohane and Nye, 2002), a strategy of 'cold calling' was unlikely result in research access. Instead, as criminologists such as Emma Wincup (2017: 62) have argued, identifying 'gatekeepers' who have 'the power to open up or block off access' is crucial in the early stages of research.

Already at that early stage I began to feel that my personal privilege relating to my educational and institutional status contributed to facilitating my research. After discussing my proposed research with my supervisor and colleagues, I was immediately put in touch with multiple researchers and practitioners who had direct links to the IOM. These individuals provided me with contact information and introductions to officials with direct experience of working on MIDAS. It is impossible for me to know how easy such networking would have been at other academic institutions, but in my previous research I had noticed how the inclusion of Oxford University and College logos and crests in email signatures seemed to elicit more positive responses from officials working for the European

Union. In the early stages of the DPhil research, as well, it seemed to me that my affiliation with the University of Oxford attached to my research project an air of authority and expertise that was not necessarily merited by my limited research experience at that stage. In spite of the IOM's reputation of being 'not particularly transparent' (Klabbers, 2019: 389), it did not take me long to identify relevant gatekeepers who could make or break the project.

My first discussion with an IOM official was with one of the country office employees to whom I had been introduced. This early discussion was very long and challenging, and mainly consisted of me trying to prove my expertise to the official in the hopes that they would agree to facilitate the research. William Harvey (2011) has noted how elite interviews often include an element of 'testing' the researcher's expertise. Indeed, the official asked me a host of technical questions to probe my pre-existing knowledge of MIDAS as well as topics such as the constitution of the IOM. By passing these spontaneous 'tests,' I was able to establish rapport with the official, whose tone slowly changed from curt to jovial during the call. Once I had passed this initial assessment of expertise, I found myself 'inside' the network of IOM officials working on MIDAS, as the official agreed to facilitate my research by putting me in touch directly with their colleagues in Geneva. Thus, as Sara Delamont (2004: 213) has argued, it seemed that 'the harder it is to gain access, the more likely the work will be rewarding once "inside."'

It is important to stress how transformational this positive initial contact with the IOM was for the remainder of the research project. I later found that the group of MIDAS-related senior officials within the organization is small enough that most individuals know each other on a first-name basis. A negative interaction with any of these officials may well have resulted in insurmountable reputational damage that could have prevented the interview- and fieldwork-based components of the research. Barak Kalir (2019: 85) has noted that 'the role that luck might have played in any successful attempt to get access to challenging research sites is usually unconsciously ignored or deliberately omitted from

methodological accounts,' despite the significance of luck in enabling successful research projects. I was most certainly lucky in being able to access a network of colleagues with links to the IOM, and in emerging from my initial contact with the organization unscathed and with the support of my first interlocutor. In some ways these outcomes reflect institutional privilege, yet it is also the case that 'luck takes nothing away from our competency as professional researchers and the need for a robust methodology and much footwork' (Kalir, 2019: 86). Building rapport with the IOM officials I spoke to often depended on the successful demonstration of expertise based on extensive background research. Nonetheless, the research was also enabled in large part by luck, and by the grace of my IOM contacts who agreed to facilitate my research despite not gaining anything from it.

Having gained research access to the senior levels of the IOM, in particular its Immigration and Border Management Unit in Geneva, I initially planned to travel to their offices and carry out the elite interviews in person. At this stage, my research was severely disrupted by travel restrictions relating to the global Covid-19 pandemic.[7] Faced with uncertainty regarding whether and when travel to Geneva would become possible again, I began considering carrying out the interviews online. Based on my previous experiences of elite interviewing in Brussels, intuitively I felt that rapport was often established while walking from the lobby to the office, or grabbing a coffee together before an interview. I was skeptical whether interviewees would feel comfortable disclosing sensitive information online, and whether I would be able to establish a relationship of trust mediated by computer screens and often a spotty internet connection. Methodological literature on the value of

[7] It goes without saying that disruptions to my DPhil research are unimportant in the context of a deadly pandemic that has cost millions of lives and caused hardship to so many across the globe. Nonetheless, the pandemic did cause significant methodological disruptions that merit discussion in this chapter. I offer this account in order to explain how the research process developed while recognizing the privilege inherent in experiencing Covid-19 mainly in terms of disruptions to my doctoral research, rather than as severe physical or emotional distress, not to mention the pains of losing a loved one.

online and telephone interviews, however, eased my concerns by suggesting that these methods 'have the potential to mirror face-to-face interactions for those that are geographically dispersed' (Novick, 2008; Sullivan, 2012: 54). Jessica Sullivan's (2012) work was helpful in highlighting how online interviewing could present an opportunity as well: expanding the pool of interviewees to geographically otherwise inaccessible areas.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic I, like many others, was forced to reformulate the my empirical research plans (Richardson et al., 2021). I chose to conduct online rather than in-person interviews, and expanded my pool of interviewees from the IOM offices in Geneva to all of the organization's country offices that had deployed the MIDAS system. I had also probed the possibility of carrying out fieldwork at the IOM's African Capacity Building Center in Moshi, Tanzania; I was initially forced to place these plans on hold and eventually abandon them entirely as travel restrictions to Tanzania remained in place for an extended period. As I inquired into conducting fieldwork at an IOM field office, my contacts in the organization suggested Nigeria as an alternative fieldwork location, largely due to the fact they were searching for a fixed-term consultant to author a report on MIDAS. As outlined above, this *quid pro quo* arrangement was necessary for the organization to support my fieldwork to the extent that it did.

Here, again, luck shaped my research project as it turned out that these Covid-related disruptions ultimately benefitted the project in several ways. Expanding my interview pool to include officials from country offices was immensely helpful in gathering information on how MIDAS had been rolled out in practice, to what extent the system had transformed practices on the ground, and how IOM officials experienced their interactions with state agencies in a variety of country contexts. Changing fieldwork locations from Tanzania to Nigeria was also fortuitous in two ways. First, although the African Capacity Building Center is mentioned repeatedly in official IOM documentation as a key site for training African state border control agencies in the use of MIDAS, I later learned that in fact most trainings

were carried out *in situ* in the Member States deploying MIDAS. An IOM contact in Abuja later joked: 'you should thank the academic gods you're in Nigeria' (Field diary, 6th September 2021). Nigeria has the most extensive roll-out of MIDAS, providing a rich corpus of technical documentation and first-hand experiences of how the system is deployed on the ground.

A second fortuitous outcome of traveling to Nigeria instead of Tanzania was the institutional support from the IOM and the United Nations that I received as a hired consultant. Mateja Peter and Francesco Strazzali (2017: 1536) have highlighted how the increasing 'securitization of research' has created a context in which, 'avoid future liability under their duty of care, universities and research institutes want to make sure that staff members sent abroad are informed and prepared.' At the time of my research, Nigeria could certainly have been categorized as a 'zone of danger' (Peter and Strazzari, 2017: 1545) owing to the fraught security situation in the Boko Haram-controlled Northeast of the country as well as an increase in kidnappings in Abuja in 2021 (Paquette, 2021). However, my experience of the University travel risk assessment process was straightforward thanks to the security guarantees provided by the IOM. As an IOM employee, I was subject to UN security procedures in the country, and was provided local transport in a white UN SUV. My in-country IOM contacts also arranged safe accommodation in what was called 'The Compound,' which I would not have been able to access without their assistance. I indicated these factors in my risk assessment application, and faced no significant obstacles to obtaining support from the University safety offices.

Once I arrived in Abuja, my field observations largely proceeded in a predictable fashion. From around 8:30am to 6pm Monday–Friday, I sat in the office, analyzed MIDAS-related documentation, spoke with IOM officials, and observed meetings between the IOM and Nigerian state agencies. Occasionally, I would accompany my IOM contacts to meetings with Nigerian officials at other locations, such as the headquarters of the NIS outside of

Abuja. In the evenings and weekends, I returned to the compound to work on my DPhil thesis.

Despite the predictability of this routine, and the support of my IOM contacts throughout my stay in Nigeria, on many occasions I felt physically and emotionally vulnerable during my fieldwork. A sense of physical vulnerability emerged in moments when it was made clear to me that I should not exit the compound unless accompanied by a UN driver, and when I had to wait at the offices after working hours whenever a driver was unavailable. Many IOM employees and residents of the compound felt these measures were overblown, but nonetheless these restrictions created a feeling of physical vulnerability by suggesting—whether accurately or not—that I would be in danger if I were to veer beyond the pale of UN-vetted, securitized spaces.

Thus far, I have described how my research developed empirically, yet there were many instances in which the project also took unexpected theoretical and emotional turns, which it is also important to highlight so as to avoid the 'methodological lie' of presenting the research as entirely predictable (Bosworth and Hoyle, 2011). A sense of emotional vulnerability arose from my outsider status when conducting fieldwork, as well as from the clear postcolonial dynamics underpinning a Northern, white researcher examining political practices in the Global South. My identity was not to be forgotten, as I was affectionately called 'white boy Sam' by the local UN drivers I befriended during my stay. Before traveling to Nigeria, I was aware of how concerns relating to the reproduction of the 'colonial gaze' have 'paralyzed some scholars into avoiding fieldwork' entirely (Sultana, 2007: 375). However, as Farhana Sultana (Ibid.: 376) argues, 'acknowledging one's own positionality or subjectivity should not mean abandoning work.' I opted to adhere to best practices in critical research methodology by adopting a stance of critical reflexivity regarding my personal and institutional positionality as well as my intellectual and political dispositions (Salter, 2013: 20–22). In practice, such reflection quickly resulted in the observation that a majority of

senior IOM and other UN officials in the compound were also white Europeans; the postcolonial underpinnings of white 'international experts' teaching Southern countries how to do border control indeed became a crucial theme in my research, which I explore more fully in Chapter 7. More generally, this chapter is a result of reflecting upon the impact of my identity on the research, and how such reflection shaped the research process in important ways.

I also felt emotionally vulnerable in the sense that I felt intellectually out of place interacting mainly with border control professionals both in and out the office while in Abuja. Many of these individuals came from law enforcement and military backgrounds, and generally viewed migration and border control through the lens of security and control. My views on border control were often dismissed as 'academic' in a pejorative sense, or as idealistic. Such discussions were emotionally challenging, but also immensely important for the development of the theoretical framework developed in this thesis. The repeated challenges to my views on migration and border control technologies inspired me to re-evaluate my earlier theoretical approach—which had been largely based on 'assemblage' theories and posthumanist perspectives—and to explore alternatives that focused on the differences that particular tools and worldviews made to social practices, and on how we might offer justifications for competing worldviews without lapsing into cultural relativism or basing our claims on their supposed absolute 'truthfulness.' The result of that critical reflection is the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 3, and situating this thesis within the pragmatist research paradigm as described above. In this sense, my social encounters in the field by no means demonstrated my mastery of my research topic. Rather, they can be positively described as 'catastrophic encounters' (Gallagher, 2016) in that they were able to 'unsettle the researcher's deeply held beliefs about the world and the self, and thereby have effects far beyond the researcher's control' (van Wingerden, 2022: 5).

Conclusion

This chapter has situated this thesis methodologically within the research paradigm of pragmatism. In line with the attempt to 'unmaster research' (van Wingerden, 2022), I have provided an account of the research process as it developed from prior motivations through to empirical fieldwork and subsequent interpretations, often in unpredictable ways. This account shows how, rather than successfully mastering my research topic, in fact my experience was often characterized by an intellectual, emotional, physical vulnerability arising from my lack of control of the research process. Jess Linz and Anna Secor (2021: 110) have argued that 'vulnerability is quite opposite to mastery.' Indeed, much of the research was possible only thanks to academic colleagues as well as my IOM contacts—and thanks to a significant amount of luck as well—rather than the result of my own independent efforts.

This does not mean I simply tagged along for the ride, and anyone else would have completed the research in the same way and with the same outcomes. I also faced obstacles that took considerable conscious effort to overcome, and the research itself was shaped by my personal prior beliefs, interests and assumptions, and my personality as well. I offer these reflections to ensure I have been as transparent as possible about the subjective and unpredictable empirical factors that have shaped the research process, and which inescapably underpin the theoretical and empirical arguments put forth in subsequent chapters. My hope is that this transparency will persuade others to agree that my interpretations of empirical data in this thesis are warranted. These knowledge claims will still not qualify as timeless truths, but they will correspond to my subjective views, to the material environment, and to the intersubjective dimension between me and the reader—at least for the time being. As Richard Rorty (2021: 48) has put it, absolute truth:

> is too sublime, so to speak, to be either recognized or aimed at. Justification is merely beautiful, but it is recognizable, and therefore

capable of being systematically worked for. Sometimes, with luck justification is even achieved. But that achievement is usually only temporary, since sooner or later, with luck, some new objections to the temporarily justified belief will be developed.

Chapter 5 – Biometric statehood, transnational solutionism, and security devices: The performative dimensions of the IOM's MIDAS

I never practice, I only perform.

– Chance the Rapper (2016).

Chapter 2 of this thesis examined existing literature in border criminology to underline the importance of examining the intersection of deterritorialized sovereign power, postcolonial hierarchies, and technological development. Border criminologists have highlighted the increasing centrality of immigration law and migration control within contemporary practices of punishment, control, and social exclusion (Bosworth et al., 2018; Franko Aas and Bosworth, 2013). In an age of globalization, states deploy the criminal justice system to control migration and to discipline migrants, while also utilizing the legal frameworks and practices of immigration control in a penal manner (Bosworth, 2008; Hernández, 2018; Stumpf, 2006). This merging of criminal justice and migration control is now regularly referred to as 'crimmigration control' (Bowling and Westenra, 2018). Citizenship has become 'a potent tool by which those at the margins of the political community are policed by the state' (Zedner, 2010: 382). However, the global scale of contemporary forms of punishment and control are distinct from earlier statist forms of penal practice, thus challenging the field of criminology to re-evaluate its earlier commitments to state-centric theorizing by asking 'how does international criminal justice challenge conventional ideas of sovereignty, the penal state and of penal power in a globalizing context?' (Lohne, 2020: 146).

In addition to overcoming state-centrism, the previous chapters indicated a need to examine similarities and differences between practices in the Global North and South: existing scholarship has shown that Southern actors are able to actively respond to and reshape Northern logics of border control when translating them to local contexts (Mehta,

2016; Vigneswaran, 2013). This Southern agency is enacted against the backdrop of postcolonial global hierarchies and dominant Northern norms of sovereign authority (Stambøl, 2021b). A key dimension of contemporary practices of border control, through which norms of territorial sovereignty are being reshaped, is the deployment of novel border control technologies (Frowd, 2020). As Katja Franko (2020: 25) has argued: 'the exercise of power, including in the penal domain, is essentially technological. Contemporary border control systems aim to create bodies which are fused with technology.'

Against this backdrop, in Chapter 3 I argued that a synthesis of the literature on performativity and pragmatism constitutes a useful analytical framework for analyzing the technologization of border controls in the Global South. Below, I begin the task of applying this framework to the empirical case of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and its Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS), on which the remainder of this thesis focuses. Border criminologists have conducted illuminating research into the role of non-state actors such as private corporations and non-governmental organizations in shaping crimmigration control practices (Bhatia and Canning, 2020; Hiemstra and Conlon, 2017; Infantino, 2016, 2019; Martin, 2017). Nonetheless, the role of the IOM in shaping migration control practices on a global level has thus far received only limited academic attention, usually by scholars of migration studies and international political sociology (Bartels, 2018; Dini, 2018; Fine, 2018; Frowd, 2020; Geiger and Pécoud, 2014; Pécoud, 2018). If indeed migration control is a key dimension of contemporary penal power which operates at the scale of 'the global,' then a critical examination of transnational actors such as IOM is relevant to the contemporary projects of border criminology. MIDAS, in turn, has been mentioned in recent scholarship in passing as 'a key part of the IOM's positioning as a neutral, technical provider of border management solutions for states who may not be able to afford them' (Frowd, 2018: 1667). However, the system has not yet received much academic attention.

The analysis below is based primarily on semi-structured elite interviews with officials from the IOM's Immigration and Border Management (IBM) Division, and document analysis of the IOM's publicly available documentation on MIDAS and its other capacity-building efforts. These interviews constituted the first stage of primary empirical research for this thesis. In January–April 2021, I conducted 28 online interviews with officials from the IOM Border and Identity Solutions Unit, located in the IOM headquarters in Geneva, as well as field project managers involved in rolling out MIDAS in over a dozen African states. All interviewees have been given a pseudonym and country names have been omitted from interview material in order to protect the anonymity of participants. As Anne Koch (2014: 910) has noted in the context of her interview-based research into the IOM, elite interviews 'constitute an appropriate empirical source for studying the motivations and concerns of international policy-makers,' generating insights into the self-perceptions of individuals intimately involved in shaping and enacting crimmigration control at a global level. Moreover, in explaining their professional views on global migration management, interview participants performatively enact the IOM's role within the global crimmigration control system, as further explained below.

This chapter demonstrates the utility of analyzing the performative effects of the development and deployment of MIDAS. The discussion below thus sets the stage for further empirical examination of the deployment of MIDAS on the ground in Nigeria, as well as a pragmatist analysis of the political effects of the technology, tasks to which I turn in Chapters 6–8. I argue that a performative analysis of the IOM's MIDAS foregrounds some of the key political and theoretical stakes in border criminology research discussed in previous chapters: it resists Northern-centric and state-centric readings of global migration control practices, thus expanding the 'spatial imagination' of criminology (Franko Aas, 2012a: 236); it highlights complex and emergent forms of both human and nonhuman agency, while retaining an intimate focus on questions of power and politics; and, particularly

when evaluated from a pragmatist perspective in following chapters, it allows for a more thoroughgoing normative critique of contemporary migration control and transnational criminal justice practices on a global level. Below, I analyze the multidimensional performative effects of MIDAS in terms of the beneficiary states, the IOM, and the technical devices themselves. For beneficiary states, the deployment of the system constitutes a performance of sovereign territorial power, affirming membership in the international society of (biometrically capable) states. For the IOM, developing and deploying MIDAS and carrying out training sessions operate as performances of pedagogical competence, technical expertise, and political neutrality. Finally, the technical components of the system itself performatively act upon their targets, constituting 'the migrant' as a governable, potentially risky subject and 'migration' as a problem amenable to depoliticized techno-solutionist interventions. Before turning to the performative analysis, this chapter begins with an introduction of the IOM and MIDAS, situating them within the broader field of global migration management.

IOM, MIDAS, and global migration management

The roots of the IOM reach back to the creation of the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movements of Migrants from Europe in 1951, renamed the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration a few months later (Pécoud, 2018: 1624). These names reflect the original goal of the organization: the postwar resettlement of displaced populations within Europe with a 'focus on logistics and transportation,' that is, the operational aspects of migration control rather than protection or human rights considerations (Geiger and Pécoud, 2014: 868). The latter issues fell under the respective purviews of the International Labor Organization (ILO), concerned with the management

of migrant workers, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), focused on the protection of refugees and asylum seekers.

The focus of the IOM on the operational dimensions of migration control remains crucial to its claims of political impartiality today, yet migration scholars have argued that from its inception the IOM has been heavily politicized (Georgi, 2010). The creation of the IOM as a separate, non-UN organization was linked to the political interests of wealthy Northern states in 'the actual transportation of people, rather than their human rights protection,' as well as concerns on part of the United States regarding potential communist influences within the UN (Pécoud, 2018: 1624). The IOM was thereby created as 'the UNHCR's operational, United States-controlled counterpart' (Parsanoglou, 2015: 64). The institutional division of labor between the IOM, ILO, and UNHCR—along with the accompanying differences in normative and operational focus—still exists today.

Although the IOM became a 'UN-related organization' in 2016, its mandate calls into question the extent to which its new status will result in any significant shifts to its operational or normative agendas (Korneev, 2018). A notable admission from its Constitution is any reference to the vulnerability or human rights of migrants; indeed, in spite of its newfound affiliation with the UN, the IOM is 'not bound by the human rights framework that forms the basis of the UN's work' (Pécoud, 2018: 1625). Overall, the Constitution therefore allows for the positioning of the IOM as a provider 'of migration-related services that governments find themselves unable or unwilling to carry out for legal and political purposes' (Ashutosh and Mountz, 2011: 22). This positioning has allowed the IOM, despite its occasional championing of humanitarian ideals, to operate in legal and geographical gray areas when carrying out operations such as migrant detention and deportation in and from Indonesia on behalf of the Australian government, as well as Canadian-funded labor brokerage schemes in the Philippines (Barber and Bryan, 2018; Ashutosh and Mountz, 2011).

Of course, it remains to be seen how resistant the IOM will be in the future to criticisms of its lack of a formalized commitment to humanitarian ideals, particularly as the organization becomes increasingly wedded to its recent self-fashioning as the 'UN Migration Agency' (IOM, 2019: xv). However, some authors have recently suggested that, rather than exerting pressure on the IOM to promote human rights in its work, closer cooperation with the UN might in fact undermine such a prospect. According to Anne Koch (2014: 919), cooperation between the UNHCR and the IOM can be characterized as 'normative task-sharing,' which 'allows for a situation in which a humanitarian agency retains the moral authority to judge certain return procedures acceptable or non-acceptable, while cooperating with an operations agency that carries out returns of dubious voluntariness with the moral support of this first actor.' In similar vein, Asher Lazarus Hirsch and Cameron Doig (2018: 685) argue that 'the IOM may actually capitalize on the UN's perceived legitimacy to deflect criticisms of its alleged rights violations.'

These criticisms notwithstanding, it is important to note that the IOM has engaged in humanitarian activities, for instance in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. While critical of the IOM's mandate, Jan Klabbers (2019: 394) nonetheless suggests that 'it would be grossly unfair to claim that the IOM does not have a humanitarian mission.' Philippe Frowd (2018) also argues that assessing the IOM's commitment to humanitarian ideals is more complicated than simply condemning those of its activities which are clearly not in line with the human rights framework of the UN. According to Frowd, rather than seeking to conclusively show that the IOM either is or is not committed to humanitarian ideals, research should focus on how exactly humanitarian narratives shape and operate within the broader field of 'borderwork' carried out by the IOM. Below, I analyze how IOM practitioners themselves performatively enact the IOM's political neutrality within the contentious field of global migration management.

In recent years, a key component of the IOM's work in the Global South has been the provision of MIDAS free of charge to beneficiary states. MIDAS is a biometric border management information system that gathers and stores biographical and biometric data, travel document information, entry/exit data, visa data, and vehicle/flight/vessel data (IOM, 2018b). It gathers passenger data through a fingerprint scanner, a document scanner, and a webcam for facial recognition, and then stores these in a centralized depository of all traveler data. The IOM (2018b: 2) characterizes MIDAS as a 'high-quality, user-friendly and fully customizable border management information system (BMIS) for States in need of a cost-effective and comprehensive solution,' and argues that the system 'enables States to more effectively monitor those entering and exiting their territory while providing a sound statistical basis for migration policy-related planning'. At the discretion of beneficiary states, MIDAS can be configured to check passenger data against national and international alert lists, although the extent of such interoperability varies significantly between states. The IOM argues that digital border management information systems are crucial to facilitating 'orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people' (IOM, 2018a: 2). According to the organization, biometric technology specifically 'is vital for protecting identity and preventing identity or entitlement fraud,' facilitating 'regular and safe cross-border mobility and migration,' and enhancing 'security in migration and border management processes' (IOM, 2018a: 3).

Currently operational in twenty countries in the Global South, mainly in Africa, MIDAS has been the source of some concern among journalists and activists, who argue that it is the latest component of 'the EU's strategy in the war on migration' aimed at reducing obstacles to deportation from the EU to Africa (Privacy International, 2019; Zandonini, 2019). These concerns highlight how MIDAS links directly to the research themes identified in previous chapters. The collection and analysis of biometric data has become a central facet of deterritorialized sovereign power in the global North (Muller,

2010), and migration studies scholars have argued that expanding these practices to the global South is linked to replicating and legitimizing Western conceptions of sovereignty at a global level (Dini, 2018). As a novel technical system that has only recently being introduced in the Global South contexts, MIDAS also provides a useful case for analyzing how the introduction of novel technical tools can shape border control practices both in ways that have been intended by their designers—thus highlighting the politics of technological design—as well as by exerting performative effects of their own, unintended by their designers (Wood, 2021).

The framework of performativity outlined in Chapter 3 suggests that MIDAS should not be conceptualized merely as a neutral technical tool that human actors use instrumentally to obtain pre-existing political goals. Rather, an analysis of the performative effects of MIDAS demonstrates that border security technologies have 'productive dimensions,' in the sense that 'productive technologies of power matter politically insofar as they contribute to the constitution of new domains of political intervention and new modalities of divisibility' (Jacobsen, 2015: 44). This insight does not excise human agency from the analysis, but rather seeks to incorporate MIDAS as one component within the broader socio-technical configuration of global crimmigration control. In the following sections, I analyze three distinct dimensions of the performative effects of MIDAS in turn: performances of (biometric) sovereign statehood by beneficiary states; performances of neutrality and expertise by the IOM; and the performative constitution of 'migration' as a governable, depoliticized 'problem' by the technical components of MIDAS itself.

Southern agency and biometric statehood

Authors across a number of social science disciplines have analyzed the impact of globalization on state power and sovereignty (Agnew, 2017; Ku and Yoo, 2013). Following

earlier arguments about the 'waning' and 'hollowing out' of the state (Brown, 2017; Rhodes, 1994), more recent scholarship has highlighted how the 'disassembling' of the state has not necessarily undermined sovereign power (Sassen, 2007). On the one hand, state power often underwrites processes of privatization and transnationalization, allowing states to govern '*through* the distance' by 'decentralizing responsibility and putting policy recipients at a distance' (Infantino, 2016: 4, 79, original emphasis). On the other hand, even in an age of transnational mobility for some and the diffusion and disassembling of state authority, territorial borders continue to matter as zones of high security scrutiny and limited judicial safeguards against state power (Zedner, 2019). More broadly, in spite of the deterritorialization of state power, the norm of territorial sovereignty continues to structure contemporary practices of crimmigration control and transnational criminal justice, which are based on the presumptive legitimacy of an 'international community' of sovereign territorial states (Leader, 2020).

Questions of sovereign power and territoriality are complex in the context of African states, which historically have occupied a marginal position in Western-centric social science theory (Abrahamsen, 2019) and whose 'statehood' has repeatedly been called into question when evaluated against the norm of territorial sovereignty (Grovogui, 2002; Jackson and Rosberg, 1986). Although a Northern-centric attitude is immediately evident in interpreting African statehood as a 'failure' to live up to Northern realities, so too can presenting sovereign territoriality in Africa as a wholly colonial imposition deny agency of local political actors. According to Camille Lefebvre (2011: 202), such critiques, 'by marking African territorial organization with the stamp of colonial artificiality […] denied Africa of a history which could, with time, have served a national or political discourse.' In order to avoid these pitfalls, a performative analysis of MIDAS interrogates how African states themselves engage in politically significant performances of sovereign territoriality. As Darshan Vigneswaran (2013) has argued in the context of South Africa, local political actors have

significant influence over crimmigration control efforts by Northern and transnational actors, who are rarely able to impose their practices in the absence of willing local partners.

The agency of African states is immediately apparent in IOM officials' views on the relationship between the IOM and beneficiary states. As an intergovernmental organization, the IOM views its operational mandate as entirely determined by its Member States:

> There's one point we cannot forget, and this is important for us: there's a line you cannot cross, it's state sovereignty. We cannot tell, let's say [country], "You have to do this, this and this." They do whatever they want, they are a sovereign country (José, interview, 2nd March 2021).

Many African states directly requested MIDAS; it was not necessarily proposed or imposed by the IOM or its Northern donors: 'The government is advocating for MIDAS […] IOM developed a project after a discussion with the government. IOM develops projects, and the government identifies the border posts where they want MIDAS to be installed' (Tom, interview, 24th February 2021). Thus, the deployment of MIDAS is shaped by local political struggles and economic interests, with election cycles, interinstitutional competition, and sometimes corruption influencing whether the local government is willing to allow the IOM to operate within the country. In sharp contrast to journalistic accounts which present MIDAS as a tool for facilitating deportations from Europe to Africa (Privacy International, 2019; Zandonini, 2019), all MIDAS data is fully owned by beneficiary states (IOM, 2018b). States zealously guard against the IOM's efforts to promote greater international interoperability between systems, and against the efforts of regional political organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to promote regional data-sharing activities:

> In regional meetings both in the West and in the East, well, the issue of data comes up quite regularly, always in the same terms, but without any progress. […] They didn't have enough reassurance on how these data were dealt with at the regional level. This is not something that they explicitly say, but this is what you may feel from the reticence to actually push forward these activities. And this is

> not just external stakeholders, like financial and technical partners like IOM or a donor, but it's also for example towards [ECOWAS] (Maria, interview, 10th March 2021).

It is not only that African states already possess enough capability to resist external interventions and exert their own influence; deploying MIDAS and limiting external intervention and integration performatively enact the territorial sovereignty of these states. In this sense, 'there is no sovereign state or state identity behind expressions of state sovereignty' (Weber, 1998: 90). That the deployment of MIDAS constitutes a performance of territorial statehood becomes particularly apparent in cases where the gap between this performance and the recognizable material effects on the ground is particularly wide. Even in contexts where the selection of border posts to be equipped with MIDAS seems not to be based on capacity-building considerations and 'systems are really underused' (Maria, interview, 10th March 2021), states still brandish MIDAS to enact their membership in the international community of territorial states by showing that 'they can control their borders too' (Jayden, interview, 6th April 2021).

While it is important to highlight the agency of African states in deploying MIDAS performatively, this policy choice should also be contextualized within the broader structuring effects of existing global discourses, practices, and materialities relating to sovereign power. In other words, performances of territorial statehood in Africa partly gain political significance through 'integration (at a regulatory level) and emulation (at a normative level)' of existing global norms (Frowd, 2020: 4). In the age of digital border controls, the norm of sovereign territoriality that African states performatively enact is one of *biometric statehood*. In the context of globalization, states conceptualize cross-border movements as both 'integral to trans-boundary communities [and] international commerce and trade' as well as 'something dangerous, threatening and potentially risky' (Muller, 2010: 15). Rather than stopping migration, states seek new technological solutions to 'order' or 'manage' cross-border movements through the 'social sorting' of potentially risky identities, in a quest to

simultaneously facilitate mobility and increase security (Jones, 2009; Lyon, 2003). Biometric identification technologies have been particularly 'vital in identifying the undesirable populations in the new global order,' due to the perception of biometrics as 'almost impossible to forge because our bodies, or rather than the information extracted from our bodies, are unique tokens of identification' (Franko Aas, 2006: 145–146). Indeed, although states ask the IOM to install MIDAS partly due to the perception that the system 'is going to strengthen the security part [of borders] very much' (Amare, interview, 31st March 2021), it is more precisely the logic of 'social sorting' associated with biometric systems that is appealing to them: 'There is always the need for the government to make sure that, you know, to let the good guys in and keep the bad guys out, something like that. So, this is what the use of biometrics is all about' (José, interview, 2nd March 2021).

African state agencies' performative deployment of MIDAS aims to affirm membership in the international community of biometrically capable states, not only through demonstrating security capacity, but more generally by demonstrating their capacity in terms of 'embracing' their citizens and making their territory and population 'legible' (Frowd, 2020; Torpey, 2000; Scott, 1998). The goal of increasing legibility is apparent in that 'the objective is not only to enhance […] border security' (Luca, interview, 3rd March 2021) but to manage and order cross-border movements for the purposes of trade, taxation, and protection:

> What we've managed to do with MIDAS has been to capture what these little trends look like, how they change, how we can facilitate trade, how trade helps development. […] We've managed to regulate migration movements, registrations of people in border communities; all of this data eventually feeds into welfare, feeds into displacement and humanitarian responses (Diego, interview, 16th February 2021).

MIDAS is also seen as a potential first step toward a more general project of making the population legible to the state through the introduction of a national biometric database of

citizens: 'if you want […] a massive national registration, you can already use what's there, and you may go backwards and go from MIDAS to from National ID registration' (Mohammed, interview, 22nd February 2021).

The extent to which these performances of biometric statehood are structured by existing international norms and standards is evident in the routine characterization of biometric border controls as 'a step forward' and 'modern' (José, interview, 2nd March 2021). To be 'left behind'—that is, to not have a biometric border management information system—is a cause of embarrassment and 'jealousy,' and 'there is this sort of emulation aspect' in requesting MIDAS once neighboring states have adopted the system (Louise, interview, 9th March 2021). Indeed, many African states requested MIDAS even when IOM officials were not convinced that a biometric border management information system would be a suitable solution to country-specific issues: 'I think in many states where we have MIDAS projects, I'm not sure if it really lacks biometric data collection at the borders to increase security in their country' (Zahra, interview, 19th March 2021). In spite of such skepticism on the part of the IOM, states themselves are 'proud' to demonstrate their biometric statehood through the deployment of MIDAS: 'I think for them, it's a sovereignty tool. […] They're quite proud to have their own system' (Mohammed, interview, 22nd February 2021).

The lens of performativity allows us to conceptualize assertions of biometric statehood by African states as more than 'fake' or 'superficial.' Although there may be an empirical gap between public discourses of biometric capability and operational realities, the deployment of MIDAS does have very real effects in constituting the biometric statehood of the beneficiary states. African states are not simply 'passive recipients' (Bartels, 2018: 64), but rather active agents who adopt, modify, and naturalize the norm of biometric statehood through their performative deployment of MIDAS. A recognition of this agency is crucial to the avoidance of Western-centric theorizing in border criminology and transnational

criminal justice (Franko Aas, 2012b). Nonetheless, Southern states' agency does not exist in a vacuum. It is conditioned by the contemporary global norm of biometric statehood, and it is to an analysis of the role of the IOM in producing, reaffirming, and spreading this norm that I now turn.

Pedagogical performances: Neutrality, expertise, and solutionism in the IOM

Scholars of transnational criminal justice have highlighted the centrality of transnational actors and intergovernmental organizations in producing the 'rules, norms and standards that condition global practices of governance, care, and control (Lohne and Sandvik, 2017: 14). The IOM produces and disseminates norms relating to 'the orderly and humane management of migration' by 'providing services and advice to governments and migrants' (IOM, 2021a). Yet this language of 'services and advice' obscures the significant political impact that the organization's activities have on crimmigration control. As others have argued, the IOM contributes to the normalization of exclusionary migration control practices (Fine, 2018), reifies state power to the detriment of undocumented migrants (Dini, 2018), legitimizes a 'post-imperial' global order (Andrijasevic and Walters, 2010), and carries out 'migration-related services that governments find themselves unable or unwilling to carry out for legal and political purposes' (Ashutosh and Mountz, 2011: 22).

How, then, is the IOM able to continue presenting itself as a neutral service-provider? Analyzing its public discourses, operational practices, and technical tools from a performative perspective suggests that the organization's political reputation of neutrality is the product of 'a lot of hard work' (Weber, 1998: 79). More specifically, the IOM enacts its organizational identity as a politically neutral actor through *pedagogical performances* of migration management. In so doing, the organization has established political influence in shaping global crimmigration control practices, while simultaneously undermining external

calls for political responsibility and accountability. IOM officials explicitly view their work in pedagogical terms, 'teaching states about security' and giving 'briefings and lectures […] to make people understand how you cannot possibly live in a modern world today without digitized information, and how it benefits you' (Diego, interview, 16th February 2021).

Of course, a pedagogical role as such does not yet confer upon the teacher the status of neutrality. As Philippe Frowd (2020: 72) argues, the IOM's educational practices are 'dependent on the prior existence of an unequal distribution of capital between teacher and learner, which the pedagogical act maintains or even exacerbates. At its root, the politics of border control pedagogy is paternalistic.' Indeed, the organization's employees are acutely aware of the 'post-imperial' implications of its position as a mainly Northern-funded actor operating in the Global South: 'We're not dealing with colonial children, but we're dealing with the children of colonial children, and the impact of that. There is a suspicion [of our] computer systems' (Diego, interview, 16th February 2021). Moreover, officials recognize that the global standard of biometric statehood has been heavily influenced by the political concerns of powerful donors such as the United States:

> I think this goes back to all the security resolutions, which came after 9/11. And I mean, I don't necessarily agree with that. I don't think biometrics are the way to go for migration. […] I would also say that the US played quite a big role in that […] the US is the biggest single donor. […] I think that this has played a major role in developing this norm of having biometric data systems for border controls (Zahra, interview, 19th March 2021).

This unease toward the post-imperial implications of the IOM's work is further reflected in officials' acknowledgement that the development of new border technologies may effectively institute what Matthew Longo (2018: 205) has termed a 'global firewall' whereby 'states that have data on their citizens are able to align forces and trust each other, whereas those that are data "dark" are vilified and excluded.' As IOM official José described this issue:

> When you launch all these new technologies, you have, European Union can do it. You have US, Canada, and you know, New Zealand, Australia, China, and Singapore that can do it. But what about the rest? What about the African continent? Nobody will be able to do it. We're talking about 44, 45 countries. So, if they don't do it, you don't trust [them] (Interview, 2nd March 2021).

Additional performative work is thus required to present the IOM as politically neutral and avoid the label of a 'post-imperial' institution. To this end, the organization's employees position the IOM as not only a border control educator, but more specifically as a technical expert organization. Kjersti Lohne (2020: 157) has argued that transnational criminal justice actors such as the International Criminal Court legitimize and depoliticize their interventions through 'non-democratic claims to efficiency, economics, rationality—and humanitarianism.' Indeed, IOM officials routinely describe the organization as promoting efficiency and rationality in border management and characterize the IOM as 'proud of being a non-norm setting organization' (Zahra, interview, 19th March 2021). Rather than actively shaping the politics of migration control through its interventions, according to officials the IOM instead simply listens when 'every country tells us exactly what they want […] after that, we don't manage the system, we don't want the system, we don't own the system. We train people to work on the system' (José, interview, 2nd March 2021).

A key motif in the IOM's performances of neutrality is its relationship to the United Nations. Kate Leader (2020: 248) has noted how transnational criminal justice actors that do not possess formal UN status increase their international legitimacy by emphasizing their links to the UN. The IOM is no exception, occupying the ambiguous position of a 'UN-related organization.' This means that it is 'not bound by the human rights framework that forms the basis of the UN's work' (Pécoud, 2018: 1625). Yet the IOM (2019) attaches the title 'UN Migration' to its name in official documents, while IOM officials oscillate between describing the organization as 'a UN agency' (Amare, interview, 31st March 2021) and highlighting 'the history of IOM not being a UN agency' (Zahra, 19th March 2021). Officials

recognize the positive reputational effects of being affiliated with the UN: 'the [country] government entrusted IOM, because the government of [country] has trusted the UN and is getting a lot of support from the UN. That being the case, they thought it wise that they can trust to work with a UN agency' (Amare, interview, 31st March 2021).

The IOM's claims to neutrality hinge on its professed technical expertise. Although systems like MIDAS play a crucial role in entrenching and naturalizing the norm of territorial sovereignty (Ashutosh and Mountz, 2011), IOM officials represent these systems as components of a neutral technical project of providing 'training and capacity building for the government' (Tom, interview, 24th February 2021). These demonstrations of technical expertise are not merely 'superficial,' but constitute the IOM as a neutral, technical expert of 'migration management,' with whom beneficiary states are more willing to work compared to donor countries:

> MIDAS is rolled out in [country], and it's funded by the Americans [but] the government does not want the Americans there. […] the US was not really present, they never negotiated, or they never met with the [local authorities] directly. It was really through IOM. So I think sometimes it also changes how present the donor is, in the view of the receiving government (Zahra, interview, 19th March 2021).

The performative nature of the IOM's provision of technical equipment and assistance to countries is reflected in the 'solutionist' attitude of the organization toward these technical capacity-building projects. Evgeny Morozov (2013: 6) uses the term 'solutionism' to refer to a preoccupation with narrow, technical fixes 'to problems that, on careful examination, do not have to be defined in the singular and all-encompassing ways that "solutionists" have defined them; what's contentious, then, is not their proposed solution but their very definition of the problem itself.' IOM officials recognize the importance of framing migration control as a technical issue to which MIDAS is the solution:

> Sometimes it's a bit seen as this technical solution to security problems. And I think when we roll out MIDAS projects, for instance, we argue that it has stabilizing effects. […] Just the framing of it, I think it can come across as quite a solutionist approach to fragile states (Katrina, interview, 17th February 2021).

In essence, the IOM acts as a solutionist policy 'entrepreneur' that is 'capable of seizing opportunities and responding innovatively to them' (Geiger and Pécoud, 2014: 870). Importantly, this solutionist entrepreneurialism serves to constitute the organization as the authoritative, neutral expert to be trusted with providing technical solutions to the 'problem' of migration. MIDAS is offered as a 'foundational building system for Member States' to begin gathering and analyzing migration data, and 'all of this data eventually allows us to actually put on more projects' by suggesting potential avenues for further technical solutions (Diego, interview, 16th February 2021).

Despite the pejorative connotations of the term 'solutionism,' viewing these activities by the IOM as performative is not to suggest that IOM officials are acting out a 'role' that is in some way 'fake.' The IOM is a self-avowedly multidimensional organization, whose work often reflects a 'genuine but overly formalist humanitarianism' (Frowd, 2018: 1658). Officials and departments within the IOM disagree over the political and normative implications of MIDAS projects: 'We have huge discussions with colleagues from the humanitarian side […] because they don't agree at all with some of the projects that IBM is undertaking' (Zahra, interview, 19th March 2021). Moreover, attempting to avoid 'post-imperial' influence on beneficiary states while simultaneously promoting global human rights standards forces the IOM into a difficult balancing act. The appearance of technical neutrality allows the organization to escape this bind. For instance, in her report on digital border technologies, UN Special Rapporteur E. Tendayi Achiume (OHCHR, 2020: 20) called on the IOM to mandate equality and non-discrimination protections when offering systems like MIDAS to Member States, 'and prohibit adoption of technologies that cannot be shown to meet equality and non-discrimination requirements.' One IOM official

highlighted how the report had ignited internal debates within the organization, in which the normative desirability of imposing international human rights standards upon Member States was pitted against the need to avoid post-imperial violations of the sovereignty of African states:

> Something that comes up quite often in these discussions [is] "How far can we go? How much can we recommend, also, in terms of data protection?" Because many times it's also seen as this, "Oh, just because the Europeans have this really nice and comprehensive framework now, this is not something that we can impose on other Member States" (Katrina, interview, 17th February 2021).

Ultimately, this tension is resolved through the IOM's pedagogical performances which constitute the organization as a neutral expert that offers MIDAS as a 'solution' to the supposedly technical issue of migration control. Although we have seen that the constitution of the IOM as a neutral, technical expert requires a significant effort from the organization's employees, it also apparent that the technological nature of its interventions—particularly the provision biometric governance through MIDAS—itself confers legitimacy to the IOM's claims to neutrality. This suggests that a final performative dimension of MIDAS relates to the nonhuman technical systems themselves.

Subjectification, governability, and depoliticization: The constitutive effects of MIDAS

Applying the framework of performativity to border security devices themselves can highlight the independent political effects of technical systems. This need not imply intentionality of nonhuman objects, but rather brings into view how technical systems 'make a difference' within broader socio-technical configurations (Amicelle et al., 2015: 297). Neither should a focus on nonhuman agency obscure the ethical and political accountability of humans who deploy technologies; rather, a performative reading of MIDAS should contribute to the broader project of theorizing 'processes of subject formation' within the

context of crimmigration control (Squire, 2017: 262). To view technical systems as having performative, constitutive effects, is to argue that technology is neither objective and neutral nor merely instrumental to human political interests. Technologies are 'influenced by the ambitions of their generators, the cultural mentalities and personal interest of their operators and the demands of their consumers' (Zedner, 2009: 267), but they also have 'constitutive agency' (Jacobsen, 2015: 48) in that they produce, structure, and modify the political contexts in which they operate. We have seen above how African states and the IOM deploy MIDAS performatively to constitute themselves as particular kinds of actors, yet criminologists have noted that in addition to their instrumental and performative use by human actors, technologies both modify human practices and produce the subjects and fields of action upon which they operate. For instance, in his analysis of risk assessment technologies, Robert Werth (2019: 341) notes how they 'exert performative effects through automatic, institutional, and bureaucratic mechanisms independent of, and sometimes in opposition to, beliefs' of human users.

Scholars of policing and borders have highlighted how security technologies exert performative effects on practices of control through mechanisms such as the creation of feedback loops which feed into technological solutionism (Martins and Jumbert, 2020), connotations of neutrality and teleological 'progress' (Frowd, 2020), and a reputation of infallibility when compared to humans (Franko Aas, 2006). These mechanisms are readily apparent in IOM officials' views on the nature of MIDAS. First, the notion of a feedback loop (O'Neil, 2016) highlights how the deployment of the system contributes to the identification of new information gaps that call for the expansion of MIDAS and interlinking it with other systems:

> Our first step was first to get all border posts first computerized, second to get them provincially connected, then to get them centrally connected, and then work with the East African Community and the intergovernmental authority by placing central databases at those HQs, and allow for the representatives of

> member states that are based at the EAC to monitor their own migration flows from a central data point (Diego, interview, 16th February 2021).

In this context, MIDAS is routinely referred to as a 'foundational building system' that subsequently 'facilitates newer systems' (Diego, interview, 16th February 2021). Second, these expansionist views relate to how novel digital technologies carry connotations of technical neutrality and teleological progress. The adoption and expansion of the system is viewed as a natural 'step forward,' which is not the result of a political decision but rather an accurate understanding of 'what are the advantages, disadvantages, and real possibilities' of the system (Maria, interview, 10th March 2021); choosing not to deploy the system is attributed to a 'lack of [awareness] of the potential of MIDAS' (Georgio, interview, 3rd March 2021). Third, the supposed infallibility of biometrics plays a significant role in the legitimization of new border control technologies. Recent research into the reliability of biometrics has suggested that:

> Efficiency gains are often overstated and fail to take into account an automated border control mechanisms' true ability to process travelers relying instead on the theoretical matching accuracy of a facial recognition algorithm while ignoring real-world accuracy challenges and related but extraneous factors (Israel, 2020: xv; see also Buolamwini and Gebru, 2018; OHCHR, 2020).

Nonetheless, IOM officials argue that, compared to non-digital methods, biometric border controls are infallible: 'the level of accuracy, it's amazing. And the level of certainty and integrity of the passport or visa, and the data inside the passport, is almost one hundred percent' (José, interview, 2nd March 2021). Perceptions of the infallibility of biometric technologies have been crucial to the widespread adoption of MIDAS: 'the sense of really one hundred percent or seemingly one hundred percent identifying a person by your bodily features, I think this is something that's, yeah, on a security lens, very attractive' (Zahra, interview, 19th March 2021).

Through the mechanisms of feedback loops, connotations of neutrality and progress, and the supposed infallibility of biometrics, MIDAS exerts its performative effects.

What, then, are these performative effects? Werth (2019) has shown how risk assessment technologies constitute the 'penal subjects' upon which they operate as necessarily 'risky' individuals, and so too biometric border controls constitute a particular kind of political subject. According to IOM official Tom, MIDAS allows states to 'understand what is a migrant' (Tom, interview, 24th February 2021). The notion that the system performatively produces migrant subjects is reflected in the description of border-crossers who remain unidentified by biometric systems as 'people that do not exist' (Michael, interview, 8th March 2021). Describing individuals as 'identity-less […] presupposes that they do not have the kind of identity required by state bureaucracy: a stable, objective, unambiguous and thing-like identity' expressed in biometric identifiers (Franko Aas, 2006: 147). By enacting a logic of risk and control related to the 'accurate' identification of individuals at the border, the technical devices constitute the 'migrant' as suspicious and potentially risky. Here, the system is argued 'to prevent, you know, criminal activities, counterterrorism, and this kind of transnational crime, and of course, improving the control and the security of the country' (Luca, interview, 3rd March 2021). However, focusing on how MIDAS constitutes marginalized subjects as suspicious gives only a partial view of the system's performative effects. In addition to marking out some migrants as suspicious, novel border control technologies also constitute the 'trusted' traveler by making all border-crossers equally 'visible'; it is important to recognize that this visibility can have both inclusionary and exclusionary effects (Martin and Taylor, 2021: 51).

More broadly, then, MIDAS constitutes 'migration' itself as a governable 'problem' amenable to techno-solutionist interventions. Rather than simply 'securitizing' migration in terms of threats and risk, the system contributes to 'a global system of standardized identification and […] the *global intelligibility* of populations' (Franko, 2020: 28, original emphasis). By framing migration in terms of infallible, neutral technologies, the IOM's new technologies bring 'migration into being as an object of global governance and perform it as

a *global reality* to manage in technical and pragmatic ways' (Robinson, 2018: 421, original emphasis). According to organization's officials, by adopting MIDAS African 'states saw and realized that a computerized border has much more to do than just security' (Diego, interview, 16th February 2021). Not all migration is risky or deviant, but all unordered migration is risky and deviant. In effect, the system constitutes migration as a field of governance, which is problematic unless it is statist in the sense of being made visible, ordered, and regulated by state power. Cross-border movements themselves are not necessarily problematic and can indeed be a 'win-win […] if migration is orderly'; the problem is 'movements that are not registered in MIDAS' (Tom, interview, 24th February 2021).

Conclusion

Uncovering the politics of global crimmigration control practices is central to the projects of border criminology and transnational criminal justice. A performative analysis of transnational actors operating in this field—as well as the border control devices they have developed and deployed—can be useful to this academic endeavor, and provides the foundations for a more thoroughgoing normative critique of technologized crimmigration control. Performativity does so by highlighting the political stakes inherent in questions about ontology, agency, and subjectivity (Squire, 2017). Claims about accuracy, identification, and technicality implicitly rest upon ontological and political assumptions about the possibility and desirability of technological and biometric governance in the context of migration control. Rather than making claims about the accuracy of biometric technologies or the actuality of dangers posed by migrants—which conform with the ontological assumptions made by technical experts themselves about the 'calculability' (Amoore, 2014) of migration-related problems—performativity provides a basis for

contesting crimmigration practices on the level of the ontological and political assumptions that underpin the deployment of technologies such as MIDAS.

In enacting migration as an object specifically of 'global governance,' MIDAS paves the way for migration control interventions by transnational actors such as the IOM. In so doing, the system simultaneously depoliticizes these interventions due to its technical nature. As Katja Franko (2020: 29) has argued, global crimmigration control practices are 'of central importance to the preservation of the current social order and to the global allocation of resources. They are vital techniques for maintaining the existing divisions between the global North and South.' Yet the relationship between crimmigration control and global hierarchy—which at times threatens to become evident in IOM officials' unease toward the 'post-imperial' nature of the organization's work—is obscured beneath the supposed neutrality of techno-solutionist interventions.

Through a discussion of elite interviews with IOM officials, this chapter has demonstrated the utility of analyzing the performative dimensions of MIDAS. However, the discussion above also indicates the need for further empirical analysis and theoretical discussion in later chapters. Thus far, the analysis has been based primarily on accounts by IOM officials. Although useful for the purposes of this chapter, these accounts are limited in the sense that Southern actors' understandings of IOM practices and of the political effects of deploying MIDAS may differ in important ways from IOM officials' perceptions. Considering the pragmatist recognition of the context-specificity and situatedness of knowledge claims (Hickman, 2007), a more complete analysis of how Southern agency has shaped the IOM's deployment of MIDAS in Nigeria requires direct engagement with Nigerian actors themselves, as well as observations of interactions between IOM officials and their Nigerian counterparts in Abuja. Chapter 6 analyzes Nigerian state actors' performances of biometric statehood in a broader historical and social context, and examines the MIDAS-related practices of Nigerian officials that were observed between

July–September 2021 in Abuja, Nigeria. Chapter 7 discusses these field observations from the perspective of the IOM, focusing particularly on the pedagogical performances of IOM officials directly engaging with their Nigerian partners. Chapters 6 and 7 not only discuss further empirical evidence, but also conceptually advance the discussion of performativity outlined in this chapter by bringing into the analysis the insights of pragmatism.

The analysis above regarding the performative effects of the technical components of MIDAS also indicates the need for deeper examination of the relationship between human-technology relations in the development and deployment of MIDAS. A pragmatist perspective will be helpful in teasing out the distinctions between the performative effects of technology and the political deliberation that sets their human designers and operators apart from the technical tools themselves. As discussed in Chapter 3, such a distinction requires a more sustained analysis of how MIDAS itself impacts 'decisions taken *within* a structure' while uncovering the moments of dislocation in which humans make decisions '*about* a structure' (Howarth, 2013: 185, original emphasis). Such an analysis is the focus of Chapter 8.

Chapter 6 – Outsourcing crimmigration control: Territory, extraversion, and Southern agency in the IOM's capacity building practices in Nigeria

> *Nigeria is not a nation; it is a mere geographical expression. There are no "Nigerians" in the same sense as there are "English" or "Welsh" or "French." The word Nigeria is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not.*
>
> – Chief Obafemi Awolowo (1947: 47–48).

> *In the chaos of relations among individuals, groups, class fractions and classes, the State tends to impose a rationality, its own, which has space as its privileged instrument.*
>
> – Henri Lefebvre (2009: 226).

Territory is a key component of modern statehood. Contemporary states are distinct from previous forms of political authority in that they lay claim to sovereignty over an exclusive geographical area demarcated by linear boundaries. Max Weber's (2009: 78) classic definition of the state specifies that the state's 'monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force' is wielded 'within a given territory.' In contrast, political authority in earlier polities and empires emanated outward from urban centers and was often overlapping among several rulers and religious authorities. Law, previously, 'was applied to peoples rather than to states or territories' (Branch, 2014: 25). Today, dominant conceptualizations of political and legal authority in general, and criminal law specifically, are geographically bounded; Emma Kaufman (forthcoming, 2022) argues that 'crime is an idea tied to geography.'

Of course, many authors have shown how the modern conception of territorially exclusive sovereignty has historically been undermined in practice by cross-border movements, sub- and supranational political arrangements, and external control and influence (Agnew, 2015; Beaulac, 2000; Osiander, 2001). Nonetheless, claims to territorial

authority remain key markers of sovereign statehood in public discourse and political practice. The ubiquity of equating the geographical boundaries of the state with the limits of society has long impacted academic research as well, resulting in what I discussed in Chapter 2 as the 'territorial trap' or 'methodological nationalism,' in other words the privileging of the nation-state as 'the natural unit of criminological inquiry' (Franko Aas, 2007: 286).

This chapter contributes to existing border criminology scholarship that problematizes territorial statehood (Franko Aas, 2012b; Stambøl and Solhjell, 2021; Valverde, 2011), not by focusing on the empirical falsity of claims to exclusive territorial control (Olonisakin et al., 2018), but rather by critically examining how Nigerian federal authorities actively construct the territoriality of the Nigerian state through their collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). In the previous chapter, I argued that several states have utilized the IOM's Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) to perform their biometric statehood to an international audience. In this chapter, I analyze such performances by Nigerian federal authorities, placing these practices within a broader historical context of territorial sovereignty in postcolonial Africa. In so doing, I highlight the political stakes of the deployment of a biometric border control system by these authorities, both domestically and internationally, by conceptualizing them as an example of 'extraversion' (Bayart, 1993). Authors focused on postcolonial politics in Africa have used this term to describe practices whereby local elites utilize 'their dependent relationship with the external world to appropriate resources and authority in order to establish or reinforce their power over domestic competitors' (Peiffer and Englebert, 2012: 361; Bayart and Ellis, 2000). Below, I demonstrate how Nigerian federal authorities leverage their relationship with the IOM, actively outsourcing the development of crimmigration control practices to the organization, as a deliberate strategy to strengthen their claims to political authority and legitimacy both domestically and internationally.

New technologies—and their deployment in colonial and postcolonial contexts—have long been an important force shaping dominant understandings and practices of territorial sovereignty, as demonstrated by the history of mapmaking techniques and technical tools such as the astrolabe (Branch, 2010; Goettlich, 2019). In this view, linear conceptions of territory 'appeared first in the representational space of maps and only subsequently in political practices on the ground' (Branch, 2014: 3). As Matthew Longo (2018: 36) has argued: 'it is through technological advances in boundary-making that the state and border co-evolved.' Against this background, in this chapter I also ask what is novel about the deployment of MIDAS as a technical practice through which Nigerian federal authorities perform their statehood. While the notion of performativity provides a useful framework for analyzing how federal authorities actively construct the territorial sovereignty of the Nigerian state, a pragmatist conception of technology—as outlined in Chapter 3—guards against an over-emphasis on discourse and human agency by bringing into view how these practices are shaped by the broader material and technological context of contemporary digitized border control systems. This technological context partly determines the nature of Nigerian performances of territorial sovereignty, by shaping international norms regarding state authority. In order to qualify as fully-fledged states in the eyes of the international community, Nigerian authorities seek to specifically demonstrate their biometric statehood. This kind of state power is characterized by the deployment of a biometric border control system that lives up to international technical standards and 'best practices' (Muller, 2010). A pragmatist conception of technology as 'the invention, development, and cognitive deployment of tools and other artifacts, brought to bear on raw materials and intermediate stock parts, with a view to the resolution of perceived problems' (Hickman, 2001: 12) focuses the analysis on the interplay between technical tools and the perceived problems which human actors attempt to resolve, within a broader global context of technological norms. Below, I argue that Nigerian federal authorities' deployment

of MIDAS is shaped by postcolonial global hierarchies to the extent that international standards, 'best practices,' and the technical components of the system have largely been developed in the Global North and embody Northern logics of territoriality and border control. However, I also demonstrate that perceptions of what social problem a biometric border control is meant to solve differ significantly between Nigerian federal authorities, the IOM, and the organization's Northern donor states.

Thus, the analysis below foregrounds the importance of Southern agency in shaping contemporary global practices of crimmigration control. While in subsequent chapters I focus on the political roles of the IOM and of the technical components of MIDAS itself, this chapter demonstrates that neither Northern states, nor international organizations, nor technical devices entirely determine practices in the Global South. Conceptualizing crimmigration control as a global phenomenon requires an account of how Southern actors actively take part in, reinforce, reappropriate, reshape, and resist Northern-produced norms of border control (Šalamon et al., 2020). In the context of MIDAS specifically, an analysis of the agency of Nigerian federal authorities complicates views of the IOM as a 'post-imperial' organization able to impose policies upon its Southern recipient states (Andrijasevic & Walters, 2009; see also Vigneswaran, 2013). The analysis in this chapter contributes to the decolonization and Southernization of border criminology (Carrington et al., 2018; de Magalhães Gomes, 2021), by both situating Nigerian federal authorities' performances of biometric statehood within postcolonial global inequalities as well as highlighting how these authorities assert their agency to reshape global norms and translate them into local practices. Central to such practices is the deployment of the technical tools of MIDAS to solve what federal authorities perceive as problems of domestic and international political authority and legitimacy. The system contributes to solving these problems by allowing state agencies to enact the dominant contemporary norm of territoriality: biometric statehood.

This chapter begins by situating contemporary performances of statehood in Nigeria within a broader historical and social context of postcolonial sovereignty in Africa. The relationship between territorial statehood and political authority is complex in the African context. Westphalian notions of territorial control were often colonial impositions, yet ones which later underpinned nationalist independence movements and statehood after decolonization (Lefebvre, 2011). States in the Global South have often figured in the literature on externalization as actors to whom Northern states outsource border controls (Frelick et al., 2016; Lavenex, 2016), but below I examine how Nigerian federal authorities themselves outsource the development crimmigration control practices to the IOM. These authorities productively utilize their relationship with the IOM, and strategically defer to the organization in the context of migration management, in a process that can be characterized as extraversion. This analysis raises the question of how we should characterize the relationship between Nigerian federal authorities, the IOM, and the organization's Northern donors. Thus, in the final section I evaluate whether Nigerian performances of biometric statehood are the result of a relationship of post-imperial dependence. I argue that while the broader context of global norms regarding biometric statehood has been decisively influenced by Northern policy interests and technical developments, nonetheless Nigerian authorities are able to significantly shape how, and to what extent, crimmigration control practices are translated into local contexts.

Postcolonial statehood and the international system

If the historical relationship between sovereign statehood and territorial boundaries has been dynamic and complex everywhere, it is particularly so on the African continent. In the European context, the development of national identities coterminous with state borders was far from natural, instead often representing the product of centuries of both public

investment and coercive cultural homogenization through lawmaking and fighting wars (Tilly, 1992). In the wake of decolonization on the African continent, postcolonial states rarely had such a history of concerted nation-building, as oppressive colonial governance had focused more on resource extraction and the violent subjugation of local populations than on societal development, notwithstanding civilizational and paternalistic rhetoric in colonial public discourse (Anghie, 2004; Swatuk, 2001). As Ruben Eberlein (2006: 576) explains:

> As in Europe, the historical roots of African state-making closely resemble organized crime, but with one decisive difference: the warlords of the Chartered Companies didn't invest their predatorily accumulated capital in the geographical entities they were aspiring to control, but transferred it to Europe or into racially confined enclave economies like plantation farming.

According to Christopher Clapham (1996: 19), after decolonization 'the territorial legitimacy of many of the newly independent states rested more on the establishment of their frontiers by prior international agreement between the former colonial powers than on any sense of nationhood or common identity among the peoples of the territory themselves.' The political elites in states such as Nigeria were well aware of this issue; in the run-up to Nigerian independence, nationalist leader Chief Obafemi Awolowo (1947: 47–48) argued that 'Nigeria is not a nation; it is a mere geographical expression.' In academic analyses of territorial statehood in Africa, it is commonplace to highlight that 'the boundaries separating African states were created by colonialism, that these boundaries were arbitrarily drawn, and that they separated peoples, linguistic entities, and cultural and political communities that formed natural and homogeneous wholes before colonization' (Mbembe, 2000: 261).

However, focusing on the arbitrariness of borders in Africa risks Eurocentrically contrasting the African experience with an idealized view of nation-states in the Global North; wars, secessionist movements, and indigenous peoples' right to self-determination all demonstrate that the fit between nation and territorial state has everywhere been

constructed, more or less coercively (Barnsley and Bleiker, 2008; Leonard, 2005; Nichols, 2014; Oksanen, 2021). Empirically, it shifts focus away from the fact that, in the African postcolonial context, these supposedly groundless and contentious boundaries have remained remarkably stable following decolonization. Wars of secession and other territorial conflicts have rarely resulted in changes to borders, and 'not a single boundary change has occurred in Africa since 1989 without the consent of concerned states. With the exception of Eritrea's negotiated exit from Ethiopia in 1993 and South Sudan's independence in 2011, Africa's borders remain fixed' (Seymour, 2013: 18). It is not clear, then, that Nigeria should be characterized as a 'mere' geographical expression, as its boundaries have remained nearly unchanged for the entirety of the country's independence.[8] Correcting these analytical shortcomings requires a conceptual shift away from Eurocentric ideals of statehood toward an examination of how territorial statehood as a norm is actively constructed. Empirically, in line with the framework outlined in Chapter 3, instead of focusing on a supposed gap between 'de jure' and 'de facto' statehood (Jackson, 1986), the fixity of borders in Africa raises the question of how, why, with what political effects, and in what technological context territoriality is performed by state agencies. These analytical moves foreground the fact that statehood cannot be conceptualized with reference only to the internal aspects of geographically bounded societies. Rather, it is a category constructed with reference to, and in interaction with, the international society of sovereign states (Bull, 1977).

The weak governance structures of postcolonial states have often been analyzed with reference to Eurocentric ideals of Westphalian statehood; in this view, state authority in

[8] The exception to this rule is the Bakassi Peninsula in the South-East of Nigeria, at the Nigeria–Cameroon border. Political control of this disputed territory was transferred from Nigeria to Cameroon in 2008 following a lengthy deliberation by the International Court of Justice from 1994–2002 (see Babatola, 2012). However, the case of the Bakassi Peninsula does not undermine the broader claim here regarding the remarkable fixity of Nigerian borders; this territory was disputed by two states rather than the ethnic and cultural groups whose interests were given short shrift by the colonially-imposed borders of Nigeria.

Africa is found lacking when compared to the idealized territorial state. Robert Jackson (1986) influentially conceptualized statehood in Africa as a manifestation of 'negative sovereignty,' in other words sovereignty in title only, lacking the positive capacity for self-government. Jackson and Rosberg (1986: 2) argued that most 'African states exist primarily by means of international legitimacy. Their sovereignty derives far more from right than from fact.' This understanding of postcolonial statehood subsequently became the dominant framework in analyses of the politics and international relations of the continent. Rita Abrahamsen (2019: 134) has more recently noted that '[t]he African state, it seems, can be almost endlessly pathologized as some deviant form of an ideal Weberian, Western state; suffice to mention the neopatrimonial state, the weak state, the failed state, the criminalized state, the quasi-sovereign state, and so on.'

Analyses of weak governance structures have been important to understanding the sources of conflict, health outcomes, and political processes of democratization in recent decades (Autesserre, 2010; Fearon, 2017; Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Harman, 2012). However, Siba Grovogui (2001: 44) has demonstrated how such analyses, whatever their authors' original 'humanitarian dispositions,' can easily lead to 'the proposition that the solution to the post-colonial condition of Africa is to further disempower its states by imposing an overt or disguised form of international trusteeship.' In addition to such obviously deplorable policy implications, such analyses also commit the analytical error of conceptualizing statehood in purely internal terms. In this view, governing capacity is an internal characteristic that societies either possess or lack, and which seems to emerge organically as the result of social cohesion within state boundaries. Once successfully achieved, this governing capacity can be described positively as state sovereignty (Jackson, 2007).

However, the norm of sovereign statehood did not emerge organically when already bounded societies achieved a sufficient level of internal cohesion. Rather, modern notions of sovereignty developed as an international norm through interactions between rulers

within Europe, and later between European states and societies in the Global South (Anghie, 2004). State boundaries do not reflect the natural limits of societies: 'for a border to have any meaning it must be accepted and validated by other nation-states as well' (Mechlinski, 2010: 96). The criteria for statehood are decisively determined by the states that are already accepted members of the international society, and these criteria have historically justified colonial and postcolonial global inequalities by marking a 'standard of civilization' that initially excluded non-European societies. Given this historical background, 'since European sovereignty is presumed, the European issue is how conflicts between sovereign states may be resolved in the absence of an overarching sovereign; the problem for the non-European world, by contrast, is how to acquire sovereignty' (Anghie, 1999: 68). Although views on 'weak' or otherwise deviant statehood in Africa have contributed to highlighting the political significance of international norms in shaping postcolonial conceptions of state sovereignty, by focusing on the internal determinants of state capacity they perpetuate the myth that 'post-colonial sovereignty constitutes a historical deviation from Western norms, both as a juridical fiction and an empirical reality' (Grovogui, 2001: 30). Such a view not only overlooks how 'sovereignty represents an historical mode of global governance intended to effect a moral order of identity and subjectivity' (Grovogui, 2001: 30), but also contributes to the exclusion of Africa from the creation of knowledge about the international system. Viewed mainly through the lens of deviance from an idealized Eurocentric norm, states in Africa do not often figure in scholarship on international politics and criminology as potential sites for theoretical innovation (Abrahamsen, 2019; Comaroff and Comaroff, 2006; Franko Aas, 2012b). Existing literature on topics such as transitional justice in post-conflict settings, and postcolonial theory more generally, however, suggests the potential utility of incorporating insights from political experiences in Africa when theorizing contemporary statehood as well (Césaire, 2000; Fanon, 2001; Gahima, 2012; Loyle, 2018; Mbembe, 2001)

What, then, has been the role of international norms regarding sovereignty in shaping postcolonial statehood in Africa, and what can the development of African states in turn tell us about these norms? The key components of sovereign statehood in the wake of decolonization were outlined in the United Nations General Assembly Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (McWhinney, 2008). Known as Resolution 1514, this declaration stated: 'Any attempt aimed at partial or total disruption of the national unity and territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations' (Seymour, 2013: 20). Thus, the territoriality of nation-states was codified into international law. As states have guarded their authority and legitimacy, 'the international community has generally been loath to permit the breakup of existing states or to admit new states to the club. The weight of international norms strongly favors the status quo, making both the birth of new states and the death of old ones, however decrepit, extremely rare' (Ahram, 2017: 348).

Of course, the extent to which the non-interference principle has in fact been upheld in the African context has been hotly contested throughout the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first. Given the globally unequal distribution of economic, political, and cultural power, Northern states have been able to indirectly influence the internal policies of states in Africa through bilateral agreements, international aid, and the practices of international organizations (Abrahamsen, 2000). Kwame Nkrumah (1965), the first president of independent Ghana, characterized such indirect influence as 'neo-colonialism' already in the 1960s. More recently, authors such as David Williams and Tom Young (2012) have argued that—given the extent to which domestic policies are shaped by the agendas of international organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund—the sovereignty of states in Africa has been severely undermined. Williams (2010: 25) describes this predicament succinctly: 'It is clear that

sovereignty is no longer a guiding or constitutive norm in contemporary international politics, at least for a significant number of states.'

Yet, states in Africa continue to assert their territorial sovereignty vigorously. They do so both discursively through political declarations about sovereign authority over any international or non-governmental organizations that operate within their borders, and practically by exerting control over these organizations' activities and even expelling them, as was the case in Sudan in 2009 (Charbonneau, 2009). In many African states, migration control has been a particularly important practical domain for demonstrating territorial authority, precisely because of the weak governance capacity of states; for rural populations in states like Tanzania, migration control checkpoints at the border are the main sites of state visibility (Landau, 2005; Vigneswaran, 2013). In this context, William Brown (2013: 262) argues that although the substantive policy autonomy of many African states has been curtailed by international interventions, nonetheless territorial sovereignty remains 'the central constitutive institution around which relations between African states and Western donors operate.' Indeed, African states have often productively leveraged their territorial sovereignty to navigate their relationships with Northern states, international organizations, and transnational corporations: 'Sovereignty as a right to rule is therefore critical to the ability of recipient states to exercise agency within the inequalities of the aid relationship' (Brown, 2013: 275).

'Who is in charge here': Border control technologies and federal territorialization

The foregoing discussion suggests that examining Southern agency can be productive for understanding crimmigration control as a global phenomenon, partly determined by postcolonial global hierarchies yet simultaneously shaped 'from below' by Southern actors themselves (Stambøl, 2021b; Stock et al., 2019). In this section, I place contemporary

practices of border control in Nigeria within the historical context of postcolonial statehood in Africa. I then relate the findings from my qualitative interviews and non-participant observations in Abuja, Nigeria, where I spoke to officials from the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and observed meetings, training sessions, and the everyday practices of NIS officials in cooperation with officials from the IOM. In so doing, I demonstrate how the development of crimmigration control practices in Nigeria—specifically, the roll-out of security-focused border control technologies and the merging of the legal and practical frameworks of migration control and criminal justice—has been driven both by international pressures at a regional level and by policy input from the IOM. However, discussions with Nigerian federal officials show that these authorities have not been passive recipients or helpless victims of influence or control by external actors. Rather, outsourcing the development of crimmigration control frameworks to the IOM constitutes a strategy of extraversion by NIS and MoJ officials, who leverage this partnership and uphold international 'best practices' and technical standards in order to affirm the territorial sovereignty of the Nigerian federal state in relation to competing sources of domestic political authority. This authority, in turn, provides federal agencies with important reputational benefits that translate into domestic political power, even as partnership with a UN-affiliated organization offers fewer opportunities to accrue private economic awards through corruption than would public-private partnerships.

The pragmatist conception of technology outlined in chapter 3 suggested that the deployment of technical tools is shaped on the one hand by a broader technological context of established and 'habitualized tools, artifacts, and skills,' and on the other hand a particular perception of the social problems that the adoption of new tools is meant to resolve (Hickman, 2001: 12). The notion of performativity, in turn, highlighted that although the adoption of new technical tools can have political effects independently of their practical impact, by constituting the actors that deploy them. When applied to states, this view implies

that 'there is no sovereign state or state identity behind expressions of state sovereignty' (Weber, 1998: 90). State agencies, through their deployment of discourses and practices relating to territorial sovereignty, continually perform their statehood in order to legitimize their political authority. While the broader postcolonial global context in which Nigerian federal agencies have adopted MIDAS is discussed in the next section, in this section I examine how federal officials have attempted to solve the perceived problem of territorial political authority through the deployment of the system, and analyze the performative effects of these technological practices.

Territory and federal political authority in Nigeria

The territorial borders of Nigeria date back to 1914, when the British colonial government united the Southern and Northern Nigeria Protectorates to form a 'unified colonial state' (Falola and Heaton, 2014: 6). These borders were inherited by the newly independent Nigerian state in 1960, despite their spurious relation to any existing cultural or ethnic boundaries as described by nationalist leader Obafemi Awolowo earlier in this chapter. Contemporary Nigerians still identify much more strongly with their local extended family and their ethnic group, of which there are hundreds within the territorial boundaries of the Nigerian state (Campbell and Page, 2018: 8). Domestic politics is profoundly shaped by religious and ethnic divisions. The population is roughly balanced between Muslims and Christians, mirrored the physical juxtaposition of the National Mosque and National Ecumenical Center in Abuja, and three major ethic groups profoundly shape national-level politics: Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo, who mainly reside in the North, West, and East of contemporary Nigeria respectively (Eze, 2016). The complexity of these religious and ethnic allegiances, combined with the relative weakness of national sentiment, has resulted in

characterizations of the country as 'one of the most deeply divided states on the African continent' (Onuoha, 2011: 407).

Similarly to its territorial borders, Nigeria's criminal justice system is also of colonial origin (Saleh-Hanna, 2008). The British colonial governors introduced criminal courts, imprisonment, and police institutions 'with the primary purpose of protecting British commercial interests in the country' (Otu, 1999: 294). British colonial criminal justice systems did not supersede local arrangements entirely; newly established police forces and English-style courts were mainly used to uphold British commercial interests, while local disputes and crimes were handled by 'traditional judicial institutions' and 'community-based' policing practices, under the banner of 'indirect rule' (Agbiboa, 2013: 259). Although the policy of indirect rule did not entirely dispense with local practices, it still undermined the political authority of local communities. Moreover, this approach should not be mistaken for a humanistic or progressive one: 'the police force in Nigeria was formed by British officials in an effort to protect themselves from the natives they were exploiting and oppressing, both economically and politically' (Otu, 1999: 304).

Political authority in independent Nigeria has been hotly contested, and the history of the state is marked by periodic military coups and dictatorial takeovers, with a democratic transition and partial liberalization from 1999 onward (Peiffer and Englebert, 2012: 360). Despite the past few decades of political democratization, Nigeria is characterized as only 'partly free' by Freedom House (2022) and ranked 154th of 180 countries in the 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International, 2021).

Political contestation and corruption within the country are often characterized by specifically territorial elements. Since independence, the states that make up the Federal Republic of Nigeria have 'witnessed an unprecedented reduction in their power and a high degree of centralization' (Onuoha, 2011). NIS officials today are keenly aware that the agency is a federal one, contrasting their role with those of more local bureaucracies. As Ike,

an official working at NIS headquarters outside Abuja put it: 'We are a federal agency. We look out for everybody, and sometimes we need to remind the states that it is Nigeria that we are protecting, not just Sokoto or Kano [states in Northern Nigeria]' (Field diary, 26th August 2021). The most significant challenges to Nigerian federal authority have historically been mounted in territorial terms. The most well-known crisis of political authority in the country's history was the civil war from 1967–1970, fought between the federal state and the secessionist Biafran army in southeastern Nigeria (Amao, 2019: 97). In a demonstration of the conservative bent of international norms of state sovereignty, only five states recognized the Biafran secessionist movement: Gabon, Haiti, Côte d'Ivoire, Tanzania, and Zambia (Seymour, 2013: 23). Although the Nigerian federal state achieved military victory in 1970, Igbo-speaking Nigerians in the South-East have continued to press for the establishment of a Biafran state in the twenty-first century, even launching a Biafran International Passport in 2009 (Onuoha, 2011: 413).

In the North-East of the country, federal officials face another pressing challenge to their authority, from the Boko Haram terrorist group. Not only does this group challenge the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of force, they specifically call into question the territorialization of the Nigerian federal state by exploiting 'the porosity of the state's borders' (Onapajo and Uzodike, 2012: 32). In NIS–IOM training sessions and project reports, this undermining of territorial authority is presented as 'the most visible challenge' to state sovereignty (Field diary, 28th July 2021), and simultaneously an opportunity for federal agencies to reaffirm their authority: 'The responsibility for border security in Nigeria rests primarily on the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), which is responsible for front-line inspection of those entering and departing Nigeria' (Field diary, 16th August 2021).

The challenge to federal state authority from the constituent states, secessionist and ethnic political movements, and Boko Haram have been a central factor within Nigerian domestic politics in the twenty-first century (Kayode, 2016). These challenges are explicitly

conceptualized by officials from the NIS and MoJ in territorial terms. As NIS official Obi explained: 'What we are really doing, what we are responsible for, is maintaining the strong state. Yes, the police do this, the military do this too, but we are the ones policing the boundaries [of Nigeria]' (Field diary, 6th August 2021). In essence, federal state authorities are engaged in an ongoing struggle for territorialization at the national level. Whereas the discourse and practice of NIS and MoJ officials 'depicts sovereignty, territorial legitimacy, and formal control of state apparatuses from above,' secessionist movements and local political groups evoke 'popular conceptions of sovereignty that are framed as the preservation of ethnic identities and achieving territorial independence from below' (Onuoha, 2011: 404). Historically, in the face of civil war, secessionist challenges, and coups d'état, the federal state has endured through the centralization of power, in particular through the military and paramilitary federal agencies such as the Nigerian Police Force, the Nigerian Customs Service, and the NIS (Olonisakin et al., 2018: 30). In the context of political liberalization since 1999, these agencies have increasingly turned outward to international partners in their efforts to exert authority over local bureaucracies and political groups.

Traversing the boundary between domestic and international: Extraversion in Africa

As I argued in Chapter 2, analyzing the political significance of African states' claims regarding territorial authority can foreground the agency of Southern actors within the broader context of postcolonial global hierarchies. The norms and practices of territorial sovereignty were historically developed in colonial contexts (Anghie, 2004; Branch, 2014; Goettlich, 2019), and these norms have subsequently been powerfully promoted and upheld by Northern states and Northern-dominated international organizations. Nonetheless, this postcolonial context does not mean that 'only structure matters'; rather, political elites in the

Global South have exhibited 'an autonomy of action' when leveraging the norm of territorial statehood to pursue their political goals both domestically and on the international arena (Bayart and Ellis, 2000: 220–221). The fixity of borders in Africa can certainly be partially explained with reference to the 'international normative foundations of juridical statehood' (Seymour, 2013: 21), yet also requires an account of the agency of how local actors have sought to secure control over those state institutions that are internationally recognized as legitimate, and then strategically deployed this sovereign status to affirm their political authority.

Many authors have utilized the notion of extraversion to undertake such an analysis (Bayart and Ellis, 2000; Eberlein, 2006; Peiffer and Englebert, 2012; Stambøl, 2021b). Extraversion refers to local political elites' strategies of 'mobilizing resources derived from their (possibly unequal) relationship with the external environment' (Bayart, 1993: 21–22). Sandra MacLean (2001: 149) explains that 'membership in the select international club of sovereign states conferred formal privileges which leaders found useful as they attempted to consolidate their power, legitimize their regimes, and enhance the economic opportunities for their jurisdiction.' International recognition confers legitimate authority over the state's security forces and financial resources, as well as access to international aid (Bayart and Ellis, 2000: 225). Despite the supposed arbitrariness of postcolonial borders, political elites in states such as Nigeria and Tanzania have leveraged their internationally-recognized sovereign status to lay claim to lucrative national resources within state boundaries (Emel et al., 2011). The practicalities of resource extraction in places such as the oil fields of the Niger River Delta are often outsourced to transnational corporations; although oil export revenues rarely benefit local populations (Onuoha, 2011), outsourcing constitutes a deliberate strategy of extraversion by local elites. Ruben Eberlein (2006: 576) argues that '[w]hat we call the Nigerian state functions as a mighty machine tasked with the privatization of public assets in favor of an extraverted neopatrimonial state class.'

In Abuja, it is impossible to miss the several abandoned building sites that materially embody dynamics of local corruption, for instance the imposing Abuja National Library building site in the city center, located between the Abuja National Mosque and the National Ecumenical Center. The building has been in construction since 2006, with wildly fluctuating cost estimates and seemingly little progress toward completion in recent years (Essen, 2022). According to one of the local IOM drivers, Akunna, that project had stalled because 'they already pocketed all the money they could from that project' (Field diary, 3rd August 2021). These and other abandoned sites bring into stark relief how the 'infrastructure of the capital Abuja is of little use to most Nigerians, but the construction of the city opened endless possibilities for the privatization of public revenues, shared between office holders, international construction businesses and their contractors' (Eberlein, 2006: 577).

Externally, local political elites use their sovereign status to resist influence by Northern donor states and international organizations, with varying levels of success. Caryn Peiffer and Pierre Englebert (2012) have demonstrated that differences in levels of reliance on foreign aid and access to natural resources impact the extent to which African political elites are able to exert autonomy within the international arena. Nigeria, as an oil-producing state, has leveraged its strong 'extraversion portfolio' to resist foreign aid conditionality and exert significant influence on regional politics in West Africa (Peiffer and Englebert, 2012: 365). While most research into strategies of extraversion has focused on resource extraction and relationships with donor states and private companies (although see Stambøl, 2021), below I examine how Nigerian federal state authorities deploy their relationship with the IOM in the context of crimmigration control in an extraverted manner domestically and perform territorial sovereignty to increase their political influence within the international system.

The development of postcolonial statehood in Africa demonstrates the centrality of the norm of territorial sovereignty in shaping global political practices independently of the

extent of empirical governing capacity possessed by state institutions. Local political practices that have ensured the fixity of borders in Africa, claims regarding the 'weakness' of states on the continent notwithstanding, can be an important source of knowledge about the nature of sovereign authority in an age of globalization. Building on existing border criminology research into the complex relationship between the increased cross-border mobility of people, goods, and the reassertion of territorial authority through penal border control practices in the Global North (Weber and McCulloch, 2019), the experiences of postcolonial statehood in the Global South can provide deeper insights into crimmigration control as a global phenomenon that operates against the backdrop of postcolonial global hierarchy, yet which Southern actors also shape in important ways.

MIDAS as extraversion

Although immigration control was established as a federal responsibility already in 1963 through the formation of the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), officials from the agency explained that border control in practice has previously been decentralized to the individual states due to the practical difficulty of coordinating at a national level. According to NIS official Ike, thanks to the deployment of MIDAS, 'this is the first time there is centralized, real-time control at NIS HQ. Before, the states had more independence, because we could not know what they are doing' (Field diary, 26th August 2021). Officials represented this control as crucial to the legitimization of federal authority over local states, comparing their strengthened centralized authority to that of the Nigerian military. Ike's colleague, Gabriel, noted: 'We invited the military to come take a look [at the MIDAS control room in NIS headquarters], and let me tell you, they were impressed! They can see that we are developing too' (Field diary, 26th August 2021). These discussions with NIS officials demonstrate that a

key problem the agency has attempted to tackle through the deployment of MIDAS is the perceived need to strengthen territorial political authority at the federal level.

Critical criminologists have noted that, in the context of globalization, '[d]igital technologies permit the organization and coordination of economic, political and cultural life without reference to national borders or the jurisdictional boundaries of legal systems' (Carrington et al., 2018: 10). Yet, in the Nigerian context, NIS officials told me that a digital border control system was crucial to their attempts at the territorialization of political authority at a federal level. The importance of MIDAS for territorial sovereignty does not arise simply from the practical affordances of the system. Indeed, the extent to which the new system has actually transformed practices on the ground is still highly limited, and large swathes of Nigeria's 'borders are not monitored, patrolled or controlled' (Ifeanyi-Aneke et al., 2021: 129). At NIS headquarters, the high-tech MIDAS control room is only partly operational, and some of the key digital components of the system, in particular its connection to Interpol's international alert lists, are not yet in use. Despite its capacity for operations such as automated facial recognition, at the time of this research MIDAS in Nigeria did not automatically compare a live facial image to travel documents, which was instead done manually by border control agents.

Nonetheless, officials performatively deploy the system to shore up their federal authority vis-à-vis local state bureaucracies as well as other federal agencies. According to NIS official Benjamin, although the system is not yet fully operational, 'MIDAS has made it clear that it is the Federal Government, not the states, who is in charge here' (Field diary, 26th August 2021). The importance of exclusive control over MIDAS to the NIS's political authority is reflected in the difficulties that the IOM has faced in setting up standard operating procedures for 'secondary inspection,' in other words the mechanism of sharing data regarding hits in alert lists with relevant law enforcement institutions and other federal agencies. These procedures are required for the system to connect to Interpol's I-24/7 alert

list and to process Advance Passenger Information (API) data, yet establishing such interagency cooperation has proven difficult due to hesitance on part of the NIS. An official from the Ministry of Justice recounted how 'setting up secondary inspection, this has been an issue for some time. We are ready, we know what are the critical agencies that are needed in secondary inspection […] But this is a problem for them [NIS]' (Field diary, 28th July 2021). According to one IOM official in Abuja, 'interagency cooperation is the most political, and this is why it is also the most difficult activity to achieve' (Field diary, 28th July 2021).

When conceptualizing the adoption of MIDAS by federal authorities as a strategy of extraversion, it is important to note that the system is free to recipient states. In other words, it does not provide federal state officials with opportunities for corruption, unlike adopting an expensive system developed by a private vendor. Such considerations are particularly significant in the Nigerian context, where researchers have noted that paramilitary organizations including the police and the immigration service have historically been particularly corrupt (Bello, 2018: 145). In a comparison of 34 African countries in 2015, the Nigerian Police Force was ranked as the least trusted and 'most corrupt' public institution among the general public (Olonisakin et al., 2018: 31). As IOM official Fabian explained, in many country contexts, when rolling out MIDAS,

> there's a corruption side. There is a complete aversion to digitizing because it interferes with daily incomes […] So there's that issue, you know, that [MIDAS] really takes over the border, the border management, from provincial managers. It's not seen as a positive development at all (Interview, 12th February 2021).

In other words, partnership with the IOM does not confer upon Nigerian federal officials the kinds of private economic rewards that often characterize extraversion. According to IOM officials in Abuja, much of the organization's success in rolling out MIDAS in Nigeria rests upon the active interventions of NIS Comptroller General Muhammed Babandede,

who has been head of the agency since 2016. IOM official Mia explained that the willingness of federal agencies to engage with IOM largely depends on the extent to which these agencies' directors seek private benefits from public office: 'Many agencies are very corrupted, and the IOM is poor, so they want nothing to do with us […] Babandede is a nationalist, he wants what's best for Nigeria, and not just his home state, you know?' (Field diary, 6th September 2021).

The lack of private economic rewards from the NIS–IOM partnership does not mean that federal officials gain nothing from this relationship. The discussion above demonstrates how NIS officials deploy MIDAS performatively to assert territorial authority at a national level; a key benefit of adopting a system developed by the IOM, as opposed to private vendors, is reputational. NIS official Obi declared that 'IOM is the chief partner of all partners' (Field diary, 6th August 2021). This reputation—which results both from the IOM's extensive field expertise as well as its affiliation with the United Nations—is highly significant in legitimizing the NIS as the key actor responsible for migration control in Nigeria. As I explore in more detail in the next chapter, the IOM has actively sought to promote international 'best practices' through their operations in Nigeria, on topics such as gender sensitivity and data security. Obi explained that the NIS has allowed the IOM to reshape national border management training curricula according to such 'global standards,' as 'the IOM is uniquely placed as a UN actor to get Nigeria up to speed' (Field diary, 6th August 2021). Partnership with the international organization, then, makes up in reputational benefits what is lacks in private economic rewards.

The relationship between the IOM and the NIS is not always perceived as entirely free from tension. As part of their promotion of international 'best practices'—many of which are related to the technical specifications of MIDAS—the IOM seeks to strengthen interagency cooperation between federal authorities such as immigration control services, police forces, customs agencies, and ministries of justice in the Member States that have

adopted MIDAS. In Nigeria, IOM officials characterize interagency cooperation as 'the most difficult activity to achieve' (Field diary, 28th July, 2021). An official from the MoJ, Tayo, commented that interagency cooperation with the NIS is 'always difficult […] Lots of work is needed to get everyone to work together' (Field diary, 29th July 2021). Nonetheless, the NIS engages extensively in IOM capacity-building exercises including workshops and working groups to promote interagency cooperation, in order to ensure continued access to the reputational benefits from working with the UN-affiliated organization. Thus, as I discuss in the next section and the following chapter, the IOM's view on the necessity of merging the legal frameworks and practices of migration control and criminal justice have begun to shape the landscape of border control in Nigeria as well.

Moments of tension between the IOM's capacity-building agenda and the NIS's attempts at affirming their political authority at a national level—ideally, unsullied by interagency cooperation and sharing responsibility with other federal actors—demonstrates the extent to which local actors have shaped the roll-out of MIDAS in Nigeria. Officials from the NIS have utilized the deployment of the system and their partnership with the IOM to solve perceived problems of asserting territorial sovereign authority. As I discuss in the next chapter, the IOM has developed MIDAS to solve very different kinds of problems, mainly relating to the ordering of migration and the legitimization of the international states system in a context of increasing cross-border mobility. A pragmatist conception of technology as a set of rationalities and technical tools deployed to resolve particular social problems, then, highlights how the political meaning of a biometric control system depends upon who uses it, and what problems it is meant to resolve. Remaining technical difficulties and empirical challenges to the more 'complete' roll-out of MIDAS are not always important from the perspective of NIS officials, so long as they can deploy the system performatively to enact their territorial authority domestically.

Biometric statehood, post-imperial influence, and Southern agency

If territorial sovereign authority constitutes the pressing domestic social problem that federal officials have attempted to resolve through the deployment of MIDAS, the broader technological context of 'habitualized tools, artifacts, and skills' (Hickman, 2001: 12) in which the system has been adopted is largely shaped by Northern-produced technical standards and 'best practices.' This section examines the external dimensions of the deployment of MIDAS in Nigeria in order to evaluate claims about the post-imperial influence of IOM (Andrijasevic and Walters, 2010). I argue that although MIDAS in many ways materially embodies Northern logics of crimmigration control, and in this sense the deployment of the system can be analyzed against the background of postcolonial global hierarchy, nonetheless the IOM has not been able to impose the system on unwitting or unwilling Nigerian federal officials. The active participation of the NIS in IOM capacity-building practices has been crucial to the successes of the organization in the country. Moreover, despite the extent to which MIDAS has shaped border control practices in Nigeria, federal officials have successfully utilized the system to strengthen—not undermine—their territorial sovereign authority. They have done so not only through strategies of extraversion designed to reaffirm their domestic political authority, but they have also performatively deployed MIDAS to demonstrate their biometric statehood to an international audience. These performances, in turn, allow the Nigerian Federal State to effectively leverage its sovereign status for influence within the international system, both regionally and vis-à-vis Northern states.

Nigeria and the international system

The Nigerian Federal State has a long history of engagement with the international system, and among African states has demonstrated particular fervor for anti-colonial political action

(Amao, 2019). Its large population and economy, significant political and military strength, and abundant oil reserves have earned the country its nickname as 'the giant of Africa' (Fagbadebo, 2007: 29). Despite its postcolonial status and relative economic and political weakness within broader North–South global hierarchies, scholars of International Relations such as Eduard Jordaan (2003: 170) characterize Nigeria as a 'middle power' that is 'regionally dominant and as such, benefit[s] from the rules of the hegemonic order vis-à-vis weaker states in the region, even though [it is] in turn in a weaker position vis-à-vis states in the core.' The regional influence of Nigeria is reflected in its dominance within several

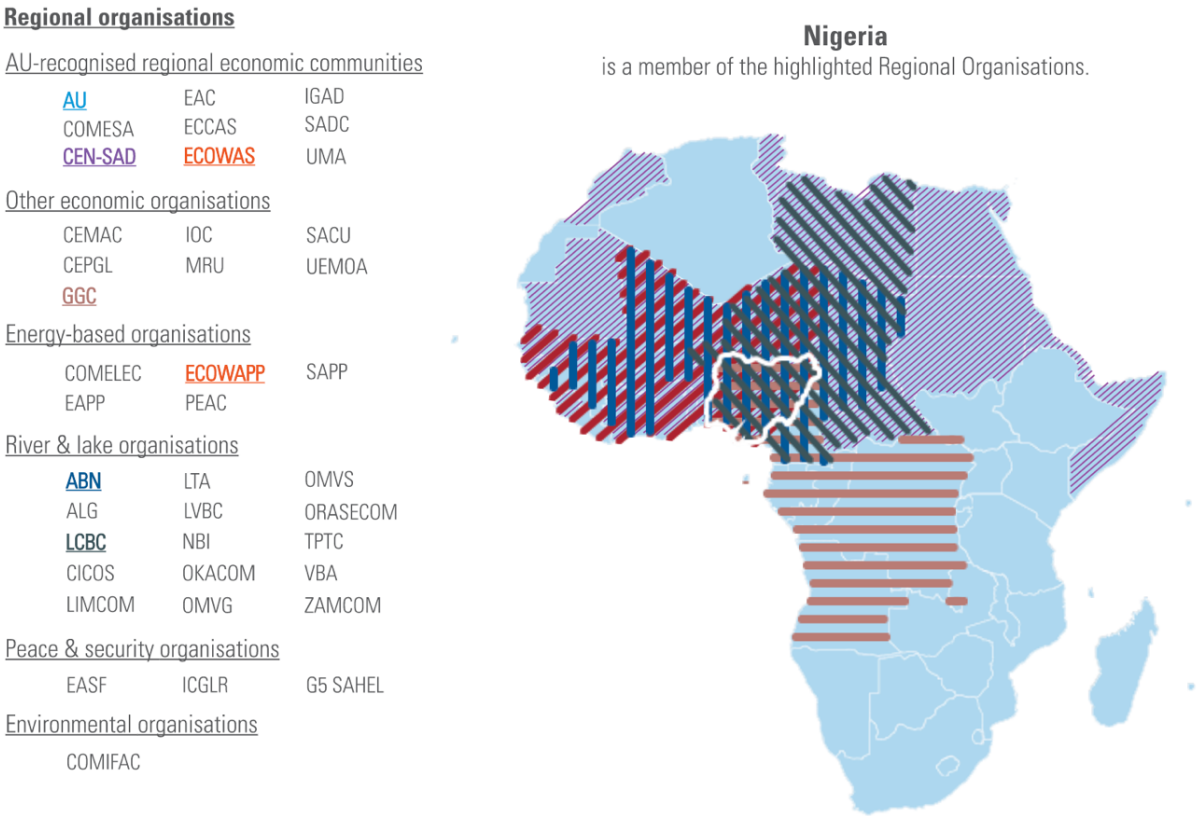


Figure 2: Map depicting Nigeria's membership in African regional organizations (ECDPM, 2017).

regional organizations (ECDPM, 2017), not least the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Nigeria played a central role in the creation of ECOWAS, an organization which has extensively shaped border control practices in the region and conferred upon its member states the power of collective bargaining when engaging with Northern actors such as the EU (Stambøl and Solhjell, 2021).

Historically, the Nigerian federal state has actively promoted anti-colonial efforts across the African continent, and has resisted neo-imperial influence from wealthier Northern states as well. Following the civil war fought against the Biafran secessionist movement, the Nigerian Federal State 'had developed strong resistance to interference in the domestic affairs of African states, and has subsequently pursued this objective as a matter of foreign policy' (Amao, 2019: 97). It severed diplomatic ties with Israel in 1973 over the latter's support for the Biafran political movement, although Israel never recognized the Biafran state as legitimate. Through its active opposition to apartheid in South Africa, Nigeria 'positioned itself as a rallying point against post-colonial attempts by the West to regain dominance in Africa, electing to support the rest of Africa against any uninvited interference' (Amao, 2019: 97). Nigerian anti-colonial efforts in Africa have also resulted in diplomatic confrontations with Northern states, including the United States, yet Nigerian authorities continued to oppose Northern state interventions on the continent. In the 1980s, Bolaji Akinyemi (1982: 227–228) characterized Nigeria as 'unique' in its 'foreign policy independence' despite significant bilateral pressure from the United States.

This active engagement in anti-colonial politics across the continent does not mean that Nigeria has been free from regional criticism or attempts at external intervention. South Africa, following the end of apartheid and the beginning of democratization, actively campaigned for the suspension of Nigeria from the United Nations in the 1990s due to the autocratic nature of the military government at the time (Ebegbulem, 2013: 33). In the period of relative political liberalization since 1999, external intervention—although, as outlined above, not without the support of certain local political elites—has manifested in the form of resource extraction, capacity building interventions by international organizations including those affiliated with the UN, as well as bilateral aid from wealthier Northern states (Ebinumo and Ikunga, 2019). Indeed, the economy of Nigeria is dependent on profits from

resource extraction by transnational oil corporations as well as on foreign aid: in 2019, Nigeria received $3.52 billion in development assistance and official aid (World Bank, 2022).

In short, Nigeria's engagement in the international system has historically been characterized by both active resistance to Northern influence across the African continent, as well as partial dependence on external involvement and aid. This engagement has been characterized by overt assertions of sovereign autonomy in response to external political pressures, and again notions of territoriality have been central to contestation about Nigerian sovereignty. Diplomatic tensions have increased in the context of challenges to Nigerian federal territorial control, as in the context of international support of Biafran succession movements in the 1970s as well as after 1999 (Onuoha, 2011); in turn, Nigeria's ability to leverage its sovereign status in international politics has rested upon the robustness of its territorial authority. International engagement with ECOWAS as well as Northern donors has often stalled when other states have questioned the ability of the Nigerian federal state to properly control its borders and assert its authority in the northeastern states where Boko Haram is active (Okunade and Ogunnubi, 2021).

The international dimensions of crimmigration control

The tension between Nigerian sovereign autonomy and its external relations, combined with the perceived importance of border control to federal authority both domestically and among an international audience, focuses the analysis of MIDAS onto the international dimensions of crimmigration control in Nigeria. International 'best practices,' diplomatic pressures, and global technical norms provide the broader background context within which the system is deployed by Nigerian federal authorities, and in this way shape the roll-out of MIDAS even as NIS officials deploy the system to solve problems of domestic political authority. MIDAS materially embodies both Nigerian federal authorities' contemporary

attempts to strengthen and legitimize their claims to national-level territorial control, and pressures toward certain—externally produced—norms regarding border control practices in the context of globalization. As outlined in Chapter 5 and further explored in Chapter 7, according to contemporary global norms regarding territorial sovereignty, statehood is conceptualized in terms of state agencies' ability to regularize cross-border mobility not by limiting or stopping it entirely, but rather sorting risky from trusted travelers using biometric data (Franko Aas, 2011a; Muller, 2010); this is what I term biometric statehood. One dimension of this norm is that the expansion of biometric systems at the border has been combined with a merger of biometric migration control databases with the legal frameworks and practices of criminal justice, in short, the global trend toward crimmigration control (Šalamon et al., 2020).

In Nigeria, the responsibilities of the NIS on the one hand and the Nigerian Police Force and the MoJ on the other have historically been quite distinct. Indeed, this distinction has differed markedly from practices in Nigeria's Francophone ECOWAS neighbors, in which 'border management and immigration administration are handled by the police' (Bisong, 2019: 1299). In the context of cooperation within ECOWAS, which NIS official Olayemi described as 'a key pillar of Nigeria's international relations' (Field diary, 3rd August 2021), the NIS faces significant pressures to establish more extensive practical and legal frameworks for interagency cooperation between the NIS, the police, and the MoJ. These pressures are partly regional, arising in the context of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement (Okunade and Ogunnubi, 2021), yet the IOM has also played a key role in the development of crimmigration control in Nigeria by creating working groups on interagency cooperation and even drafting new legislative frameworks for data sharing between law enforcement agencies and the NIS, as I discuss in more detail in the next chapter.

Yet crimmigration control practices are not only developed in response to international pressures to do so; they also performatively legitimize the territorial authority

of Nigerian federal agencies. As with the technical components of MIDAS, from the perspective of NIS officials, at least as important as any practical benefits or changes arising

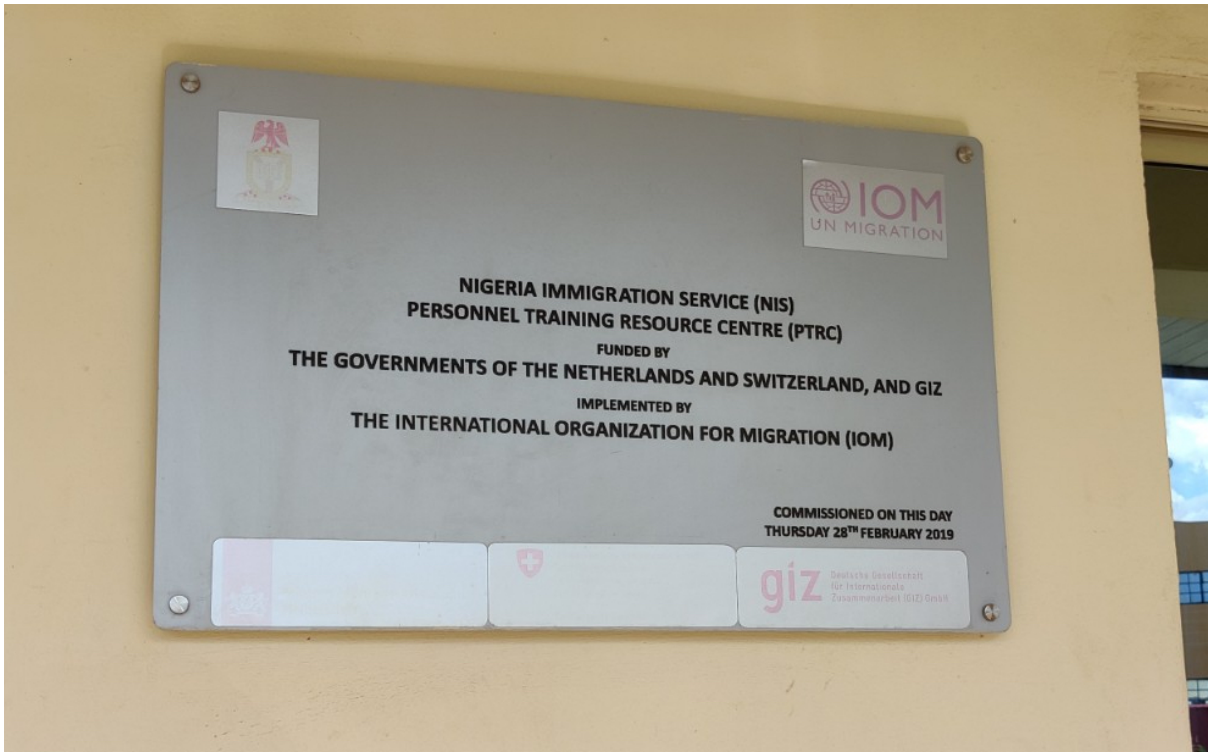


Figure 3: A plaque on the wall of an IOM-constructed training center at NIS headquarters in Abuja (Photo credit: S Singler).

from externally funded training programs or legal frameworks is the reputational benefit that arises from outsourcing the development of crimmigration control practices to the IOM and its Northern states. Each IOM-funded workshop, training center, and border post is equipped with highly visible logos and flags of donor countries, as demonstrated in Figure 3.

Highlighting the international dimensions of crimmigration control practices in Nigeria allows federal agencies to perform their biometric statehood not only domestically but also to an international audience. NIS officials are aware of the importance of border control to Nigeria's involvement in the international system. Gabriel, working at NIS headquarters, argued that '[before MIDAS] we had nothing, we had pen and paper. Having a modern, biometric system is needed for us to be active in the international system' (Field

diary, 26th August 2021). Gabriel's colleague, Ike, added: 'Data, data, it's all about data. And showing other states that you have the tools to collect it' (Field diary, 26th August 2021).

Performing biometric statehood is not only about collecting biometric data, but also demonstrating state capacity to utilize this data in a criminal justice context. Transnational organized crime, human trafficking, and counterterrorism are key policy fields in which Nigeria performs its biometric statehood to an international audience. The deployment of MIDAS has allowed Nigerian federal authorities to demonstrate their crimmigration control credentials, already resulting in a new international deal on migration with the UK in July 2022. In the context of this deal, UK Home Secretary Priti Patel explained that these two states will 'share their expertise to take the fight to criminal people smugglers who are responsible for a wide range of criminality […] This landmark agreement will increase the deportation of dangerous foreign criminals' (UK Home Office, 2022). The Nigerian MoJ is also now involved in a UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) initiative to deploy Nigerian prosecutors as liaison magistrates in Italy and Spain which, in the words of one Nigerian prosecutor has resulted in a network 'which enables the EU and African prosecutors and law enforcement authorities to reach out to each other not only through official channels but also informally' (UNODC, 2020). Discussions regarding interagency cooperation and the establishment of interoperability between biometric immigration and law enforcement databases have been central to Nigeria's cooperation with the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (UN CTITF). Shared projects between CTITF and Nigerian 'immigration, law enforcement and customs agencies' have long aimed 'to develop an integrated information-sharing system and establish a central national database linked to the national security agencies and international databases' (UN CTITF, 2012: 3, 22).

Southern agency in postcolonial context

The domestic and international dimensions of crimmigration control in the context of the roll-out of MIDAS in Nigeria complicates assessments of the IOM's role as a post-imperial organization. It is true that increasing cooperation between criminal justice and migration control agencies in Nigeria has been partly driven by pressures from other states and from the IOM. The EU, for instance, is actively involved with ECOWAS to shape the organization's migration control agenda according to the European migration control goals, through tools such as the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (Bisong, 2019: 1303). In internal IOM documents as well as discussions with IOM officials, Northern donor states' goals are often described in terms of 'curbing irregular migration flows to Europe,' as IOM official Louise put it (Interview, 9th March 2021). The organization's training programs and workshops promote a particular conception of migration control, characterized by a focus on security, crime control, and state sovereignty, all of which are promoted under the banner of international 'best practices,' as I discuss further in the next chapter.

Yet, the shaping of Nigeria's crimmigration control agenda has at every step been significantly shaped by the agency of federal authorities themselves. These officials have chosen to deploy MIDAS rather than use alternative systems, even despite the lack of potential private economic rewards involved in doing so, in order to solve perceived problems of domestic and international political authority. For these officials, partnering with the IOM accrues significant reputational benefits, and outsourcing the development of crimmigration control frameworks to the organization further strengthens the authority of the federal state by allowing it to assert its authority more effectively within Nigeria and perform biometric statehood to an international audience. Just as in other areas of transnational 'norm diffusion' (Shiffman et al., 2018), so too in the context of crimmigration control, a broader global context of norms has been translated into local contexts through the active participation of Nigerian federal authorities.

Whenever these authorities have begun to feel that the political costs of outsourcing the development of crimmigration control practices to the IOM may outweigh the benefits—as in the context of interagency cooperation—IOM officials face significant obstacles to their operations in the country. Given the increasing digitization of border controls, combined with an awareness of the transnational nature of contemporary security risks, both practitioners and academics often view international migration data sharing as a natural next step in the development of border management practices (Okunade and Ogunnubi, 2021: 127). In Nigeria, the IOM has even produced a number of reports and recommendations regarding international data sharing agreements with other states. Such initiatives have thus far been unsuccessful, however, due to the concerns of federal authorities, who view control over migration data as a reflection of their territorial authority. As IOM official Maria explained, 'the issue of data comes up quite regularly, always in the same terms, but without any progress' (Interview, 10th March 2021). So too, academic researchers have noted that 'political challenges to the successful implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol lie in what borders symbolize for some states' (Okunade and Ogunnubi, 2021: 127).

Yet, the foregoing discussion has also demonstrated that the scope of agency for Nigerian federal actors is constrained and shaped by the broader context of postcolonial global hierarchy. While federal authorities have utilized MIDAS to shore up their domestic political authority, their decision to deploy the system is also underpinned by considerations regarding economic dependency on foreign aid and a perceived need to perform state capacity to an international audience as well, in terms that are mandated by the Northern-produced norm of biometric statehood. While the IOM's 'developmental borderwork' (Frowd, 2018) is certainly shaped by the interests of Northern donor states and those of the organization itself—which I examine in detail in the next chapter—just as African political elites have been able to use strategies of extraversion in other policy areas, so too in the field

of migration control 'externalization policies are also contested and changed at local levels by actors and institutions "from below"' (Stock et al., 2019: 4). Analyzing penal aid from the EU to West African countries, Eva Stambøl (2021: 548) has noted:

> That there is power asymmetry between Africa and Europe does not mean that African governments cannot exert political agency and leverage vis-à-vis the EU. Indeed, several African countries, especially those labeled as migration 'origin' or 'transit' countries, have played on their strategic position and increased bargaining power to align EU aid objectives with their own political agenda.

In order to avoid Eurocentric analyses of crimmigration control, particularly when this phenomenon is conceptualized as global, it is invaluable to examine how Southern state agencies actively shape this system (Šalamon et al., 2020). Postcolonial state institutions provide a particularly interesting empirical context for understanding the relationship between globalization and sovereign penal power, as statebuilding in Africa has always 'been accompanied by the tendency toward globalization, far more often than it has been impeded or contradicted by globalization' (Bayart and Ellis, 2000: 242). As border criminologists have highlighted in the context of outsourced crimmigration control practices in the Global North, it is not always clear that globalization necessarily undermines state power (Infantino, 2019). Rather than starting with assessments of the relative weakness or strength of 'the state' in response to the pressures of globalization, when analyzing crimmigration control practices in places such as Nigeria it is useful to conceptualize 'the Nigerian state as *one* of many institutional expressions of social power relations, where hegemony, authority and sovereignty are fought over' (Eberlein, 2006: 590, original emphasis). If the pressures of globalization have caused a 'deterritorialization' of state power, crimmigration control practices by several state agencies, international organizations, and private actors can be understood as 'permanent attempts at reterritorialization' (Engel and Olsen, 2012: 58). In contrast to international and transnational actors, and claims about the arbitrariness or empirical porousness of Nigerian borders notwithstanding, in this chapter I have

demonstrated that federal state agencies' performances of statehood are still distinctive due to their enactment of a specifically national Nigerian territory.

Conclusion

From the perspective of border criminology, the analysis in this chapter highlights the indispensability of accounting for Southern agency when examining the global dimensions of crimmigration control. The case of MIDAS in Nigeria shows that the political significance of border control technologies depends on who is deploying the technologies, and what kinds of social problems these actors are attempting to solve through their utilization of particular technical tools. Nigerian federal officials have used MIDAS to reaffirm and legitimize their domestic political authority, which they conceptualize explicitly in national-level territorial terms, and to perform biometric statehood to an international audience in order to gain political leverage within the international system. These officials are able to exert significant influence on how, and to what extent, crimmigration control practices are translated into local contexts.

Analyzing the role of Southern actors in enacting and shaping global crimmigration control practices is not simply a matter of expanding the empirical horizons of border criminology (Brown, 2018). It can also demonstrate that the processes of globalization do not 'take their toll across the globe in the same way and to the same extent' (Walklate, 2018: 3). Nigerian federal state agencies' performative practices not only bring into view differences in how globalization and state authority are experienced and enacted in different geographical and cultural contexts, but they can also generate broader theoretical insights into the nature of state penal power in the context of migration control everywhere (de Magalhães Gomes, 2021: 91). In this way, Southernizing criminology by examining crimmigration control practices in Nigeria offers 'a unique opportunity to deal with the

objectives of critical criminology as closely as possible to its assumptions' by '[e]xercising listening, putting oneself in context, assuming the hidden provinciality in the defense of one's universal condition, [and] learning from the one who was considered alienated' (Pires, cited in de Magalhães Gomes, 2021: 99).

Alongside demonstrating the impact of Nigerian federal authorities' agency on the roll-out of MIDAS in Nigeria, the discussion in this chapter also highlighted that Southern agency within the global crimmigration control system is nonetheless situated within the broader context of postcolonial global hierarchy. The IOM—funded by wealthy Northern states and mainly intervening in Southern states—is a key actor responsible for the diffusion of norms regarding crimmigration control on a global level. Thus, in the next chapter, I turn to an analysis of the roll-out of MIDAS from the perspective of the organization, which seeks to 'facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration' (IOM, 2022a) through its capacity building efforts in Nigeria.

Chapter 7 – Pedagogical performances and technological solutionism: The IOM's capacity-building practices in Nigeria

> *Solutions to the problem of knowledge are solutions to the problem of social order.*
>
> – Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer (1985: 332).

During my fieldwork in Abuja, I attended an interagency cooperation workshop arranged by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), with several Nigerian federal agencies in attendance: the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), the Department of State Services (DSS), the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA), and the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA). The workshop focused on the development of new standard operating procedures for cooperation between these federal agencies, which in turn is a prerequisite for enabling the full operability of the Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) at the Nigerian border. The system will not be able to connect to international alert lists, prominently Interpol's I-24/7 system, or process Advance Passenger Information (API) data, until sufficient legal, operational, and technical frameworks for interagency cooperation and data sharing are put into place. The data sharing infrastructure of MIDAS constitutes the technical component, while the IOM is hard at work developing the legal and operational frameworks that will allow the system to run at its full technical capacity. The organization arranged and ran the workshop, provided an abundance of visual materials prominently displaying its 'IOM: UN Migration' logo, and explained to participating agencies that:

> This intelligence [collected via MIDAS] gives us actionable results to tackle security risks. This project is very important for your country and your agencies. Nothing of this will ever happen unless

> you are able to put into place an interagency cooperation mechanism at the border. Keeping the data all for you will only give you a limited picture, and a limited picture gives you limited results. (Field diary, 19th August 2021).

To an external observer, the IOM seemed to run the show, providing detailed guidelines on what interagency cooperation procedures should look like as well as how and to what end MIDAS should be deployed at the border. Nonetheless, the organization's officials also periodically reminded participants that, in the words of one official, 'I'm just a teacher. My only goal is convincing you that intelligence collection is absolutely important, to empower you […] to solve crime and mitigate threats' (Field diary, 19th August 2021). A slide outlining the development of standard operating procedures stated: 'The agencies need to DO the development work – Do it yourself!' (Field diary, 19th August 2021).

This chapter aims to make sense of this apparent tension between the prominence of the IOM in shaping crimmigration control practices in Nigeria, and its self-proclaimed status as 'completely neutral,' as one official put it in another meeting on the topic of interagency cooperation (Field diary, 28th July 2021). The previous chapter—by examining how Nigerian Federal authorities have used MIDAS to address perceived problems of political authority and legitimacy both domestically and internationally—demonstrated that the political meaning of border control technologies depends upon the kinds of social problems its users are attempting to resolve. Yet, the practical impact of technologies is not entirely flexible at the point of their deployment; while any particular tool is open to several uses, a hammer, for instance, would make for a painstaking writing instrument while it would be difficult to drive nails into wood using a pencil. For this reason, as Médéric Martin-Mazé and Sarah Perret (2021: 279) have argued, research into border control technologies should interrogate 'which actors contribute to assembling which rationality of border control through which devices.' In short, crimmigration control practices 'occur at the intersection

between actors' social dispositions, the socio-technical characteristics of devices and the broader social context in which both are embedded' (Martin-Mazé and Perret, 2021: 282).

The previous chapter examined the social dispositions of Nigerian authorities in the context of postcolonial statehood in Africa, and the next chapter will inquire into the socio-technical characteristics of the border control technologies that constitute MIDAS. This chapter focuses on the dispositions of the IOM within the broader social context of postcolonial global hierarchies. Although local agency has shaped the uses of MIDAS in Nigeria in important ways, the system has nonetheless been developed in the Global North by an organization that has been characterized as 'post-imperial' (Andrijasevic and Walters, 2010) and beholden to the interests of its Northern donor states (Georgi, 2010). Local actors have allowed the IOM to shape border control practices to a significant extent in pursuit of their own political goals. Below, I argue that the system performs important political functions from the perspective of the IOM as well: it legitimizes the organization's authority and depoliticizes cross-border mobility by materially enacting the discourse of 'migration management.' Given the limited flexibility of border control tools at the point of their deployment, 'the conceptions, interests and values of actors who design those devices matters as well as those who operate them' (Martin-Mazé and Perret, 2021: 281). If Nigerian federal authorities have used MIDAS to solve perceived problems of domestic and international political legitimacy and authority, what social problems has the IOM attempted to resolve through the development and deployment of the system?

My account of the interagency cooperation workshop above points to the key arguments of this chapter. The IOM uses its 'capacity-building' interventions—which include technical, legal, and operational components—to reinforce state-centric norms according to which cross-border mobility is viewed as a potential challenge to state sovereignty unless 'ordered' according to economic and security logics. To this end, the organization both reinforces Nigeria's external borders and promotes the development of

deterritorialized practices of 'migration management.' These practices and frameworks manifest as the expansion of crimmigration control, that is, increased legal and operational overlap between the fields of migration control and criminal justice (Brandariz, 2022). Yet, its extensive involvement in Nigeria—particularly when viewed against the backdrop of postcolonial global hierarchy—risks opening the organization up to criticism as 'post-imperial' and thus politicizing its activities. To neutralize such criticisms, the IOM engages in two key practices: the transfer of political accountability to local actors through pedagogical performances, and the transfer of accountability to technical tools by conceptualizing the organization's role primarily in terms of technological expertise that is based on international 'best practices.' Thus, in meetings, workshops, and policy papers the organization presents its capacity-building interventions as politically neutral technical 'solutions' to the 'problem' of unordered migration. These solutions, however, are not neutral; they have resulted in the expansion of crimmigration control practices in Nigeria, with a focus on security, risk, and crime control. Although the NIS remains the IOM's key partner in Nigeria, the expansion of MIDAS has been accompanied by an increased focus on shared operating procedures between the immigration service and a host of agencies focused on law enforcement and transnational crime.

IOM and the global politics of 'migration management': Capacity building and sovereign authority

While Chapter 5 laid the groundwork for examining the performative effects of MIDAS, to which I return below, the framework of performativity is most useful for analyzing the political effects of technical tools at the point of their deployment. Pragmatism provides a framework for responding to Martin-Mazé and Perret's (2021) call for researchers to inquire into who develops which border control tools and why. The pragmatist conception of technology as 'the invention, development, and cognitive deployment of tools and other

artifacts, brought to bear on raw materials and intermediate stock parts, with a view to the resolution of perceived problems' (Hickman, 2001: 12) can illuminate not only how existing technical tools are deployed, but also suggests that the development of new tools is shaped by two key factors: a background of dominant social practices and norms—including existing technical tools that shape human action—and the identification of perceived social problems which existing technologies have been unable to resolve. As Larry Hickman (2001: 59) explains, 'new forms of technological methods and artifacts tend to incorporate elements of older techniques and artifacts as their content. New technologies do not arise out of nothing, but are built on the basis of more or less reliable institutions, customs, and habits.' As Annabelle Littoz-Monnet (2022: 7) argues in her analysis of 'expertise in global governance,' while particular tools and practices are developed to tackle specific problems, 'they also intersect with more structural factors. Not only financial but also epistemic hierarchies structure the space within which actors operate.' The innovative process of developing new technical tools, however, is not entirely predetermined by this social and technological background, but rather motivated by the failure of existing tools to resolve social problems. The development of new tools is 'characterized by organized and deliberate transformations of existing situations in ways that generate new outcomes, or products' (Hickman, 2001: 17). In short, the pragmatist conception of technology asks what are the relevant social and technological background conditions that have shaped the IOM's development of MIDAS, and what social problems the organization has attempted to solve through the deployment of this new system.

Capacity building, postcolonial hierarchy, and bureaucratic entrepreneurialism

The IOM has become one of the most influential international organizations dealing with migration and border control on a global level. Its annual budget—approximately $1.2bn in

2022—funds migration-related interventions implemented by the organization's 15,000 staff members across 590 offices globally. Of this total budget, approximately $223 million is directed toward 'regulating migration,' including the Immigration and Border Management division, which has developed and deployed the technical tools that comprise MIDAS (IOM, 2021d). Existing research has examined the impact of the interventions that this budget has funded, demonstrating that the organization has undoubtedly had a significant effect on migration control practices on a global level (Pécoud, 2020). In order to better grasp the background conditions that have shaped the development of MIDAS, it is useful to not only examine the effects of the IOM's practices, but also conceptualize the organization itself as an entity 'to be explained. By regarding IOs [international organizations] as an accomplishment needing continued maintenance and attention the focus shifts from what IOs construct to how IOs are constructed' (Srivastava, 2013: 72).

The structure of the IOM's budget brings into view three relevant considerations regarding the background context of the organization's development of new border control tools. First, its funding comes from Member States, who seek to reaffirm what Fabian Georgi (2010: 64) has termed the 'national sovereignty project,' in other words the hegemonic view of migration primarily as a matter of sovereign authority rather than, for instance, human rights or supranational governance. Second, most of the IOM's budget comes from wealthy Northern donor states (Patz and Thorvaldsdottir, 2020). As a result, Antoine Pécoud (2020: 13) has argued that 'the IOM tends to align itself with the agenda of the Global North and is thus bound to be involved in some of the toughest measures designed to fight undocumented migration.' Third, the vast majority of the organization's budget is project-based and decentralized, meaning that field offices are responsible for securing funds by identifying new potential projects that donor states are willing to fund (Pécoud, 2018: 1629). Thus, researchers such as Franck Düvell (2015) have argued that the IOM operates within and reifies relations of postcolonial global hierarchy, aiming to export

'the European model of migration control to other parts of the world, such as West Africa.' Rutvica Andrijasevic and William Walters (2010: 984) have described the IOM as a 'post-imperial' organization due to the fact that, although the organization's activities in the Global South take 'the form of a regulated choice, not an imposition,' nonetheless '[s]ome "choices" made by governments in the global South are going to be more "voluntary" than others.' The organization's officials both in Geneva and in Nigeria are acutely aware of all three of the above conditions, namely the statist orientation of the organization, its reliance on Northern donors, and the necessity of entrepreneurial initiative to identify new projects that will 'save the jobs of the mission's staff members' (Georgi, 2010: 63).

IOM officials in Nigeria, both in casual conversation and during workshops and meetings, continually reaffirm that—as an official explained during a workshop on gender sensitivity training for NIS officials—'we are here to advocate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility' (Field diary, 3rd August 2021). Ordering and regularizing migration, according to the organization's officials, promote mobility and safeguard migrants' rights. Indeed, the stated goal of the gender sensitivity workshop was 'to realize the full potential of all migrants to development and to prevent exploitation' (Field diary, 3rd August 2021). In an age of globalization, the organization promotes migration as crucial to economic exchange; as IOM official Diego explained: 'we have the regular spiel of facilitating and assisting, but we are the interlocutor between commodifying the migrant and the migration process, [and] ensuring the humanitarian rights of that migrant' (Interview, 16th February 2021). Yet, as several researchers have highlighted, although the IOM extensively draws on discourses at the intersection of human rights and neoliberal economic governance, it conceptualizes migration primarily as a problem of sovereign authority (Ashutosh and Mountz, 2011). In practice, its interventions focus on 'capacity building' to strengthen Southern states' ability to police their borders, thus shaping local migration control practices while formally respecting their sovereignty (Geiger and Pécoud, 2014: 875).

Although several IOM officials demonstrate a 'genuine humanitarianism' (Frowd, 2018: 1658) when discussing topics such as migrant rights, nonetheless the organization's capacity-building interventions prioritize a logic of ordering migration by making it amenable to state control over alternative values such as promoting the freedom of movement. As IOM official Catherine explained to me: 'Of course we are concerned about rights, and about exploitation […] but I am always focused on security. We must put law and order first, then we can begin to promote other things' (Field diary 5th August 2021).

This statist orientation is understandable for an organization funded by sovereign states, and the specific source of this funding, in other words the IOM's reliance on wealthy Northern donor states, further shapes its conceptualization of migration control. Anne Koch (2014: 912) has noted that, of the entire IOM budget, 'return-related activities constitute an important element that accounts for the largest share of IOM funding from most European member states.' Accordingly, Asher Hirsch and Cameron Doig (2018: 684) have argued that the organization 'primarily benefits the IOM's major donor states – states of the Global North who aspire to control migration, particularly by combatting irregular migration.' IOM officials are keenly aware of the extent to which donor states control the organization's capacity-building practices: 'Donors always come with their agenda […] it is the classic problem of all support to development and emergencies as well, that the receiving country is not exactly– not always in the position to actually negotiate for the need that they have' (Maria, interview, 10th March 2021). In Nigeria, internal documents and meetings include references to, among other goals, 'bordering to curb irregular migration flows to Europe' (Field diary, 22nd July 2021). In this vein, IOM official Diego explained that:

> The narrative from Europe on migration has changed considerably. You know, the need for Africans to move regionally is now the focus, with donor money being pushed towards that. This is a change in perceptions of what migration means to Europe […] There seems to be an unspoken, "please don't try to promote too much movement to here" (Interview, 16th February 2021).

Yet, in Abuja, public mentions of donors' political interests are rare, and projects are mainly discussed in terms of the benefits they bring to Nigerian federal authorities. The organization actively avoids highlighting the relationship between its interventions and broader North-South economic and political inequalities. In a workshop with Nigerian federal agencies, an IOM official explained that: 'Law enforcement ethnocentrism is what happens when a person from Europe comes to Africa and teaches you that things must be done in a certain way because that worked in Europe. That is completely wrong!' (Field diary, 19th August 2021). Publicly available reports also stress that the organization's activities in Nigeria are based on a 'consultative and collaborative approach' (IOM, 2016: xv). These statements demonstrate that while Northern policy interests underpin the organization's activities in the Global South, officials are also aware of the political tensions that would arise from the explicit acknowledgement of the organization's status as an intermediary between Northern and Southern states.

Reliance on wealthy donors does not mean that the IOM simply waits to receive funding and project outlines from Northern states. The organization's officials actively prepare project proposals based on their perceptions of a mix of local needs and donor interests. This dynamic, Georgi (2010: 63) argues, 'creates an instrumental-rational logic that establishes the monetary value of a project as an independent and important factor in addition to its practical use-value or its normative justification.' According to IOM official Maria, the organization helps Southern states 'determine their needs, prioritize their needs, and then advocate for their needs in order for projects to be adapted to their own agendas, and not just coming in second compared to what the donor in that moment wants, or is willing to fund' (Interview, 10th March 2021). Thus, officials engage in entrepreneurial initiatives to identify projects that accord with both donor agendas and the interests of Southern state agencies. As one official explained to me in Abuja, 'the biggest problem for the Nigerian government was defining what they actually want. Our responsibility is to tell

them what they should want' (Field diary 3rd August 2021). These comments demonstrate that, caught between the organization's desire to respect local sovereignty and financial constraints related to donor interests, the IOM is acts as a 'bureaucratic entrepreneur capable of seizing external opportunities and responding innovatively to them' (Dini, 2018; Geiger and Pécoud, 2014: 870). According to another official in Abuja: 'We can't always wait for requests to come in from the government. We have to conduct assessments, to identify possible needs. Sometimes they don't even know about them before we conduct the assessments' (Field diary, 18th August 2021).

'Migration management' and the global norm of biometric statehood

The foregoing discussion demonstrates that the IOM's development of MIDAS has been underpinned by the organization's normative commitment to 'the nation-state norm' in the field of migration control (Dini, 2018: 1693), potential political tensions arising from its role in shaping border control practices in the Global South, and the organization's entrepreneurialism in proposing new projects to ensure its continued existence and affirm its authority in the field of migration governance. According to a pragmatist conception of technology, these dimensions constitute the relevant background of social norms and practices that have shaped the development of MIDAS, and are therefore relevant for understanding the political effects of the deployment of the system. Furthermore, pragmatism also suggests that new tools are developed to resolve perceived social problems that existing tools have been unable to adequately tackle (Hickman, 2001; Pihlström, 2021). What are these social problems from the perspective of the IOM?

Existing research has highlighted how, historically, the IOM has sought to achieve several goals relating to migration control, which are not always harmonious. According to Georgi (2010: 47–48), the organization has traditionally sought to balance the aims of

promoting migration, building state capacity, producing knowledge about migration, carrying out humanitarian interventions, and engaging in 'discursive practices in the struggles over hegemony in international migration policy.' Despite the ambivalent and sometimes contradictory nature of these competing goals, the IOM has presented migration as a 'win-win-win situation' benefitting migrants, countries of origin, and receiving states (Castles and Ozkul, 2014). In the words of official Tom, 'the IOM also helps, let's say, governments to understand that migration is not– doesn't only bring bad effects, but there is a win-win-win. There is an added value to having migrants, if the migration is orderly. And it benefits everyone' (Interview, 24th February 2021).

Again, the notion of 'orderly' migration is central to the organization's normative vision, expressed in writing in an IOM-branded folder I received in Abuja: 'Migration is inevitable, necessary and desirable – if well governed' (Field diary, 27th July 2021). The discourse of ordering and governance reflect how the organization attempts to simultaneously enact a state-centric view of migration control and affirm its own importance within the global governance of migration (Fine, 2018; Geiger, 2020; Pécoud, 2018). A crucial component of this attempt has been the concept of 'migration management.' This concept enacts migration control as a global issue and as a 'field of knowledge of knowledge in its own right' (Andrijasevic and Walters, 2010: 978), thus enabling the organization to make claims about expertise within this broader field. Yann Stricker (2019) has demonstrated how the categorization of cross-border mobility as 'international migration' has from its conception been intimately wound up with both a state-centric view of territorial sovereignty, and with claims to expertise put forth by international organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), which began to collect statistics on this newly categorized phenomenon in the 1920s. The conceptualization of 'international migration' as a field of transnational expertise contributed directly to 'a new national ordering of peoples and territories' as opposed to earlier 'imperial visions of governing the world' (Stricker, 2019:

471). Similarly, the concept of 'migration management' is rooted in the simultaneous enactment of migration both as an issue of sovereign authority to the member states of the IOM, and as a global field of knowledge that can only be properly grasped from 'a view from above—a God's-eye view from which all elements are related' (Dijstelbloem, 2021: 75).

In this way, the organization has been able to strike a balance between the sovereign prerogatives of its member states and affirming its own global authority. Insofar as the notion of 'management' stands in contrast to 'more binding and truly rights-based governance,' it strengthens the authority of the IOM by making its interventions more politically palatable within a broader context of a global 'retreat to the national and a resort to conventional and overly restrictive approaches to migration governance' (Geiger, 2020: 297). According to IOM official Diego, 'one of our main focus points is integrated border management […] You know, it's difficult to push the cultural side out, the concerns of our member states. But we do a pretty good job by using integrated border management and looking at a larger picture, rather than the smaller picture' (Interview, 16th February 2021). Diego's account of the power of managerial language to smooth over local political concerns is in line with the findings of Shoshana Fine (2018: 1749), who argues that in Turkey:

> The adoption of the notion of [integrated border management] as a natural and self-evident way of framing border governance is indicative of the successful lobbying practices of EU agencies and the IOM in normalizing and diffusing "migration management" terminology and "good governance" practices.

But if the notion of 'migration management' has allowed the organization to affirm its authority in the global governance of migration, while striking a political balance between its own goals and those of its member states, what perceived problem necessitated the development of MIDAS that earlier technical and policy tools had been unable to adequately address? According to IOM official José, the increasing securitization of migration in the

Global North in recent decades, combined with the digitization of border controls, motivated the organization to develop new tools that would allow the alignment of bordering practices in the Global South with those in the North:

> When 9/11 happened, the United States put some pressure on the international community, through ICAO [the International Civil Aviation Organization], to bring biometrics into the passport and border control […] "Let the good guys in and keep the bad guys out," something like that. So, this is what the use of biometrics is all about. It's not only about the, you know, being in fashion, like "Nice, they have an electronic passport" (Interview, 17th March 2021).

This new push in the Global North for internationally standardized biometric passports created significant pressures for Southern states with more limited technological and economic means to implement new biometric tools at the border. In essence, the adoption of biometric border controls created a hierarchy of trustworthiness between Northern and Southern states:

> The problem, what I'm saying, is money, right? Because when you launch all these new technologies, you have, European Union can do it. You have US, Canada, and you know, New Zealand, Australia, China, and Singapore that can do it. But what about the rest? What about the African continent? Nobody will be able to do it. We're talking about 44, 45 countries. So, if they don't do it, you don't trust [them] (José, interview, 2nd March 2021).

The adoption of biometric border control tools, and their institutionalization in international standards set by organizations like ICAO and the International Standardization Organization (ISO), effectively instituted the norm of biometric statehood, which Nigerian federal agencies have sought to perform through their deployment of MIDAS.

From the perspective of the IOM, this norm created several novel social problems that necessitated the development of this system, as existing policy tools related to 'migration management' became insufficient and politically contestable. Northern donor states now became focused on the promotion of biometric border controls, and Southern state agencies felt pressure to digitize their borders in order to demonstrate their biometric credentials:

> When you look at the Western world, what we do in Africa for border management is, for the most part, we replicate what is happening in the rest of the world. […] Southern states realized that a computerized border has much more to do than just security, it's also about economics and politics. So we are riding that wave right now in a number of our project activities (Diego, interview, 16th February 2021).

In this context, the development of MIDAS has allowed the IOM to update its capacity-building interventions according to the logics of biometric statehood. The biometric capabilities of the system aligned its new project proposals with Northern policy goals, and simultaneously made these new projects palatable to Southern state agencies by presenting the system as reflection of international standards and 'best practices.' In the context of the increasing securitization of migration and stricter border controls in the Global North, the IOM had to deal with a more explicit awareness among Southern member states regarding the impact of postcolonial hierarchies on global cross-border movements. IOM official Luca explained: 'I must say that the public narrative [among European countries] is not so well hidden anymore. […] Eventually people are going to see it. And I think a number of African member states are reacting to that' (Interview, 3rd March 2021).

In this context, MIDAS was developed to solve the new problem of how to promote the global biometric legibility of populations, which had become the central notion tying together Northern interests and Southern state agencies' aspirations. According to Frowd (2020: 10) within the field of contemporary border control practices, '[l]egibility is essential as it points us to the issue of capacity: the technological ability, willingness, and sensory capability of a state.' MIDAS allows the IOM to position itself as a service provider that strengthens Southern states' capacity to make legible populations both at the border and within the national territory, by aligning local practices with global biometric norms. In Abuja, an official explained to me that 'MIDAS creates the foundations not just for border management, it creates the foundations for national identity in a context where state control is often very, very limited' (Field diary, 6th September 2021). The establishment of biometric

identity management practices both at the border and for citizens is presented as an internationally standardized 'best practice' and therefore a key marker of statehood. IOM official Aaron described this process:

> Normally we take our Member States during the project, you know, a representative of the ministry of interior [or] the head of the Immigration Department, for example, to go to technical exhibitions and conferences and say, "Look, this is what's happening outside now. So, you can tell me that you need this, this, this and this, right?" (Interview, 2nd March).

Yet, the deployment of biometric identity management tools in the Global South is not always straightforward for the IOM:

> What we would do is make suggestions and we provide guidelines – the states are free to either take them or not to take them, you know. It's very sensitive, trying to get a state to realign its migration policy, especially when they may see it differently from us. It takes quite a fair amount of work to get them to change their minds around it (Mohammed, interview, 22nd February 2021).

Mohammed's account demonstrates that despite linking MIDAS to new global standards, the capacity-building practices intended to expand the collection and use of biometric data are nonetheless at risk of becoming politicized according to a general North–South divide. Migration is an inherently contentious political phenomenon, driven by complex social dynamics, globalization, and 'political factors within sending and receiving states, including conflicts of interest, structural dependence, welfare states and civil society pressures' (Anderson, 2017: 1528). For this reason, additional performative work is required by the organization to neutralize potential criticisms of its capacity-building activities and its biometric border control tools. Below, I argue that in pursuit of obscuring and neutralizing these broader political questions, the organization's officials engage in two key practices: transferring political accountability to local actors through pedagogical performances, and obscuring the politics of migration control by conceptualizing the organization's role

primarily in terms of technical expertise in 'solving' the 'problem' of migration through the development and deployment of supposedly neutral technical tools such as MIDAS.

"Do it yourself!" Neutralizing 'post-imperialism' through pedagogical performances

The above discussion suggests that the IOM plays a crucial role in reaffirming territorial sovereignty as the hegemonic framework for addressing migration, and that the organization has sought to solve the problem of making global populations biometrically legible by developing MIDAS. Yet, its promotion of biometric border control tools in countries like Nigeria still puts the organization at risk of being criticized as 'post-imperial,' as it seeks to align Southern practices with those in the Global North. The organization's officials are deeply concerned about the potential reputational damage of such criticisms, as the IOM's reputation as 'a neutral go-between that does not interfere with the political orientations of the contracting states' is central to its authority in the field of global migration management (Pécoud, 2020: 7). In Chapter 5, I argued that the organization's officials engage in pedagogical performances to depoliticize their role in global migration governance. In interviews and official communications, the organization's officials continually refer to the IOM's activities in pedagogical terms, describing them as 'teaching states about security' and giving 'briefings and lectures […] to make people understand how you cannot possibly live in a modern world today without digitized information' (Diego, interview, 16th February 2021). How does this pedagogical discourse translate into practices on the ground in Abuja?

IOM officials in Nigeria repeatedly demonstrated an awareness of the risk of appearing 'post-imperial,' due to the extent that their capacity building interventions encroached upon the prerogatives of the Nigerian federal agencies. Discussing the development of new data protection legislation that is required for the processing of API data by MIDAS, one official remarked that 'usually it's not the role of international

organizations to draft laws for countries […] but if we don't do it, it's just not going to happen' (Field diary, 5th August 2021). This official explicitly acknowledged that in a postcolonial state such as Nigeria, 'the country's borders are unnatural, colonial lines that cut communities in half […] we still need to keep this in mind when we talk about strengthening borders. It can be potentially sensitive, you know?' (Field diary, 28th July 2021). Indeed, Ulrike Krause (2021) has demonstrated that not only national boundaries, but also the legal frameworks for controlling migrants and refugees globally—including the UN Refugee Convention—are rooted in colonial power imbalances that shaped the development of these frameworks. Nonetheless, as I demonstrated in the previous chapter, Nigerian federal agencies have actively favored cooperation with the IOM over bilateral treaties and public-private partnerships. As one NIS official remarked: 'Our experience of IOM has been very positive. They do not try to build dependence. We've had some teething issues, of course, you know, but IOM has trained us in global standards very effectively' (Field diary, 3rd August 2021). This response by local agencies echoes findings related to IOM capacity-building practices in other contexts. In Morocco and Tunisia, for instance, Inken Bartels (2018: 57–58) has argued that '[i]n contrast to the cooperation with the EU and its Member States, IOs were not perceived as external interventions that actualized a colonial past.'

The organization's publicly available documentation stresses the pedagogical nature of its activities in order to neutralize potential criticism, and so too its capacity building practices in Nigeria are heavily focused on training, 'curriculum development,' and the provision of material infrastructure for what the organization calls the 'Training of Trainers.' Through these activities, the organization 'teaches' the NIS how to provide IOM-developed border management training courses to its officials, with the aim to ensure continuity in these practices after capacity-building projects come to an end. This pedagogical focus



Figure 4: An IOM-built MIDAS training room in NIS headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria (Photo credit: S Singler).

allows the IOM to explicitly position itself in opposition to potential post-imperial influence from wealthy donor states like the United States—which offers its own biometric border management system PISCES[9] to Southern states—as well as potentially exploitative private sector vendors. As one IOM official explained: 'We provide Nigerian authorities as much as possible with sovereign control of their own borders, which is not what PISCES provides' (Field diary, 5th August 2021). NIS officials acknowledge that the organization has profoundly reshaped local border control training curricula, but view cooperation with a 'UN actor' as nonetheless politically expedient: 'Yes, IOM shape our curricula a lot. But what they bring for us is global standards from the UN, you know, on things like gender and human rights' (Field diary, 3rd August 2021). This symbolic authority, tied to the IOM's UN-affiliated status, brings local agencies significant political benefits by strengthening their

[9] The Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) was developed by the United States Department of State as part of its Terrorist Interdiction Program.

domestic legitimacy and demonstrating their adherence to 'best practices' to an international audience.

In contrast to the view of NIS officials regarding the influence of IOM on border control practices in the country, the organization's officials often downplay their impact by reverting to the pedagogical discourse demonstrated in the account at the beginning of this chapter: 'I'm just a teacher' (Field diary, 19th August 2021). Whenever the potential issues of postcolonial hierarchy, the colonial history of borders, or the 'post-imperial' status of the organization came up in discussions, meetings, or workshops, IOM officials were quick to highlight that any political responsibility for border control practices—however much shaped by the organization's interventions—lies with local officials. In workshops, the organization's officials repeatedly stress that 'the most important thing is that the development comes from you' (Field diary, 19th August 2021). Alongside providing detailed guidelines on what kinds of legal and technical frameworks will be required for the full operationalization of MIDAS, training materials state that 'we are not the experts teaching you, it's the exact opposite' (Field diary, 19th August 2021). Immediately following the statement recounted earlier that 'usually it's not the role of international organizations to draft laws for countries […] but if we don't do it, it's just not going to happen' the official continued that, nonetheless, 'we need to make sure that NIS feels like they are leading the process' (Field diary, 5th August 2021). Simultaneously, however, the organization seeks to protect its interventions from the vagaries of local politics: 'We need to try to put as much as possible into the legislation. This will lock things in a bit and protect from changes of government' (Field diary, 6th September 2021). These statements demonstrate how in-country officials straddle the boundary between two positions: on the one hand, they have significantly shaped local border control practices, while on the other hand any political accountability for these practices is located solely with local federal agencies.

Periodically, this contradiction risks being exposed by the fact that, despite the organization's purported goal of building local capacity and reducing dependence on external actors, in fact the IOM's capacity-building programs are often expensive and difficult to sustain after project funding runs out. As IOM official Diego explained: 'We can in many cases get infrastructure to a site but once the projects finish, there's a sustainability issue that comes to the fore from member states' (Interview, 16th February 2021). In Abuja, one official commented that a key theme in recent project proposals to donors has been securing more funds for long-term engagement by the organization, as the continuation of MIDAS-related practices after projects end has proven unreliable: 'We have realized that we've created a monster, and the monster is very expensive' (Field diary, 6th September 2021). As outlined in more detail in the next chapter, rolling out the technical infrastructure at Nigerian borders is often practically very difficult, and IOM-built 'Personnel Training Resource Centers' require periodic investments into IT and electrical equipment by the NIS



Figure 5: An IOM-built Personnel Training Resource Center near NIS headquarters in Abuja (Photo credit: S Singler).

to ensure their continued operability. While the IOM attempts to ensure that procured hardware, for instance, is under warranty even after the capacity-building projects formally end, such arrangements are not always successful in cutting costs in the long run: 'This is the problem with warranties […] our service agreements don't specify that the company has to pay for shipping costs. They'll replace the hardware, but they won't pay for return shipping' (Field diary, 6th September 2021).

Thus, the successful roll-out of MIDAS-related infrastructural and training projects can result in new dependencies on external funding, and therefore also risks undermining the neutrality that the IOM achieves through its pedagogical orientation. It appears that discursive pedagogical performances are crucial, yet not sufficient, to the neutralization of the organization's role in shaping Nigerian borer control practices. As Philippe Frowd (2020: 72) has argued, '[a]t its root, the politics of border control pedagogy is paternalistic,' dependent upon an unequal distribution of resources. Additional performative work is required for the IOM to ensure that its pedagogical practices are viewed as politically neutral, rather than creating new dependencies.

Technological solutionism, expertise, and depoliticization

In addition to the pedagogical rhetoric underpinning the IOM's capacity-building interventions in Nigeria, the other key dimension of its efforts to neutralize potential criticisms of its activities can be seen in the solutionist attitude demonstrated both by the organization's officials as well as public and private documentation on MIDAS-related projects. Technological solutionism refers to the belief that complex political problems can, in fact, be 'solved' through narrow technical fixes. However, these problems 'on careful examination, do not have to be defined in the singular and all-encompassing ways that "solutionists" have defined them; what's contentious, then, is not their proposed solution

but their very definition of the problem itself' (Morozov, 2013: 6). Existing research has demonstrated that solutionist attitudes are replete both among border control professionals and within international organizations more generally (Marelli et al., 2022; Milan, 2020). Niovi Vavoula (2021: 458) argues that the increasing proliferation of novel border control tools 'constitutes part of a broader trend of techno-solutionism, which places a tremendous amount of trust in technological tools.' IOM officials in Abuja often described their work in terms of solving technical problems, as an activity entirely distinct from local or global politics. In the words of one official: 'there are two kinds of people: those who pinpoint problems but never fix them, and people who solve problems. Politicians pinpoint problems. We solve problems' (Field diary, 28th July 2021).

Such solutionism is a natural fit with the functionalism that international organizations embody, in other words the belief that these organizations perform specific technical functions that benefit the common good, rather than engaging in contestable political actions. In contrast to this depoliticized view, Jan Klabbers (2019: 385) has argued that in the IOM, 'functionalism is best seen not as theory, but as ideology: a more or less coherent set of thoughts with little explanatory power but strong normative appeal, and working so as to legitimize the use of power.' In the context of the increasing digitalization of border control tools, Didier Bigo (2020: 75–76) has similarly argued that 'what is at stake here is a strong political move where digital technology is depoliticizing questions and transforms who becomes in charge of security and who are the key targets of these policies.' These arguments suggest that from the perspective of the IOM, a techno-solutionist attitude toward MIDAS-related capacity building practices supplements the organization's pedagogical attitude by obscuring remaining critiques beneath the supposed neutrality of the technical tools that constitute this border control system. Whereas the pedagogical performances of the organization are characterized by shifting accountability to local agencies, as described above, its solutionist attitude shifts political accountability onto

MIDAS itself, as well as the international standards upon which it is based (Metcalfe and Dencik, 2019). As one IOM official in Abuja explained to me: 'My career is really about interoperability and global standards […] Our edge over competing organizations and private actors is absolutely our technical expertise' (Field diary, 6th September 2021).

Yet, as Stephan Scheel and Funda Ustek-Spilda (2019: 667) have argued in their analysis of the IOM's production of global migration statistics: 'expertise is not a fixed attribute of an organization. Instead, organizations like the IOM need to constantly perform themselves as knowledgeable, competent actors through publication of reports and studies, maintenance of research units, digital devices […] and other knowledge practices.' In Nigeria and the other states in which MIDAS has been rolled out, this system constitutes a key component within this broader performance of solutionist expertise. In workshops and meetings with Nigerian federal agencies, the organization's officials repeatedly demonstrate a solutionist belief in the power of biometric technologies and data analytics to resolve complex problems related to border control. The politically and epistemologically contestable assumption (Amoore, 2014) that risk assessment technologies could and should pre-emptively identify and neutralize risky travelers was related by one IOM official to Nigerian federal officials:

> The most important thing we are always looking for in life is information. We now know that 9/11 could have been prevented if we had the kind of information we can now get at the border […] But unfortunately politics, and competition between agencies, sometimes gets in the way of implementing effective tools at the border (Field diary, 19th August 2021).

MIDAS, then, constitutes the kind of 'effective tool' that should not be hindered by political contestation. Complex political issues surrounding the distinctions between regular and irregular migration, or the potential discriminatory nature of security-oriented biometric border control technologies, are buried beneath the veneer of technicality. In its 2014 policy recommendations for Nigeria, the IOM (2016: 10) expresses the belief that a main challenge

to nearly all migration-related problems in the country is the lack of 'the systematic gathering, analysis, dissemination, and exchange of migration data.' In meetings in Abuja, potentially controversial amendments to legal frameworks relating to the processing of API data—required for the full operationalization of MIDAS—are described as 'necessary for this law to be of an internationally acceptable standard […] Of course, our starting point was Nigeria-focused, but yes, this wording is inspired by other countries' (Field diary, 5th August 2021). The potentially political nature of MIDAS was dismissed by IOM official Fabian with reference to the supposedly neutral nature of migration data: 'No, we do not really get involved in the politics […] Our interest at the end is just that the data is collected' (Interview, 12th February 2021). Thus, as Pécoud (2018: 1629) has argued, the IOM respects state sovereignty but also 'modifies (and expands) the nature of this sovereignty' by 'depoliticizing it and making political measures sound technical and therefore more acceptable.'

Positioning itself as a technical expert organization through the provision of MIDAS not only depoliticizes its capacity building interventions, but also reaffirms the IOM's authority within the field of global migration governance. Aside from its practical impact on the ground, the very provision of a technical system confers symbolic authority on its developer, the IOM (Boswell, 2009). As explained in the previous chapter, for Nigerian federal officials the organization's adherence to international standards and 'best practices' strengthens the political legitimacy of their local partners as well. In this way, these international standards, as enacted by the IOM in Nigeria through its MIDAS-related capacity building initiatives, simultaneously significantly shape local border control practices and depoliticize this influence. Existing research has demonstrated how 'failure to meet the "international community's" standards' can exert 'significant normative or peer pressure' on the recipient states of IOM interventions (Andrijasevic and Walters, 2010: 990).

Nonetheless, these standards are repeatedly described by officials as neutral, and natural steps toward modernizing border control practices:

> I don't see anything really negative about MIDAS even because it's never an imposition. It's actually facilitation again, for countries that start from zero that are still at the level of pen, paper and register […] the big advantage of IOM is that we can give support as a technical expert for countries to improve on that (Maria, interview, 10th March 2021).

Moreover, IOM officials present the international technical standards enacted through MIDAS as entirely external to the organization by arguing that it 'doesn't have the mandate to define any norms or to set standards' (Zahra, interview, 19th March 2021). However, researchers have shown that in practice, 'the IOM exercises a significant degree of autonomy as an expert authority with the power to define migration and how to govern it' (Robinson, 2018: 423). The development and deployment of novel technical tools for border control, such as MIDAS, play a particularly important role in allowing the organization to shape current and future practices of migration management. According to Petra Molnar (2021: 70), organizations such as the IOM are 'major players and driving forces in the development and deployment of migration management technologies. […] they set the agenda in terms of prioritization when it comes to humanitarian innovation and technological development.'

Expanding crimmigration control in the Global South

Through its MIDAS-related capacity-building projects in Nigeria, the IOM has engaged in pedagogical performances and enacted a solutionist attitude to border management which allows it to simultaneously reaffirm and depoliticize its authority in the field of global migration governance. This section examines how, in contrast to the organization's presentation of MIDAS as a neutral technical tool, in fact the roll-out of the system has enacted a view of migration control as a matter of sovereignty, security, and crime control

through the merging of the fields of migration control and criminal justice. The pragmatist conception of technological knowledge highlights how technical expertise can never be neutral; if technical devices are developed in order to resolve specific social problems, their design necessarily enacts particular definitions of these problems (Hickman, 2001: 139). As Huub Dijstelbloem (2021: 57) has put it, 'borders and the technologies that comprise them […] contain within themselves implicit or explicit political goals, generate unforeseen consequences, and encourage political intervention. Borders thus function as vehicles for politics.' Against the backdrop of the postcolonial hierarchies that underpin contemporary migratory practices, an analysis of the effects of the IOM's MIDAS-related capacity-building practices should uncover whether 'behind the veil of technological solutionism lurks deeply inequitable and exploitative activities' (Taffel, 2018: 177).

The above accounts of the IOM's workshops and training sessions already demonstrated that, despite its claims to neutrality, in fact the organization's projects aim to strengthen state power by increasing the biometric legibility of domestic and migrant populations. In effect, the organization provides Nigerian federal officials with the tools to exercise territorial authority more effectively. According to one IOM official in Abuja, 'NIS are the MIDAS people, and whoever has MIDAS has the power' (Field diary, 5th August 2021). IOM officials in Nigeria conceptualize the data collected by the system specifically in terms of sovereign authority: 'we are providing a solution that guarantees their sovereign right over the data processing that MIDAS provides them with' (Field diary, 5th August 2021). This finding accords with Sabine Dini's (2018: 1692) analysis of the organization's practices in Djibouti: 'IOM straddles its border practices with state-building rationality and implements projects that generate major changes in the way African states exercise their authority over their territory and population.' Migration scholars have long highlighted how a statist orientation to migration control 'reifies the framing of migration as a security issue in need of close monitoring, regulation and control. Due to the conception of societies as

nationally bounded containers, migrants emerge as disruptive factors' (Scheel and Tazzioli, 2022: 6).

The IOM's publicly available documentation on MIDAS and biometric border controls assert that the use of biometric data 'facilitates regular and safe cross-border mobility and migration' and 'helps to protect vulnerable migrants' (IOM, 2018a: 1). In practice, however, officials describe the system as enabling local authorities to 'solve crime and to mitigate threats' (Field diary, 19th August 2021). A central theme in the organization's promotion of interagency cooperation is the notion that migration data are key to crime control. A document circulated in a workshop explained that 'the application of domestic interagency cooperation postures, represents the *principal and critical key* in the fight against transnational organized crime' (Field diary, 19th August 2021, original emphasis). Although MIDAS in Nigeria has not yet reached its full technical capacity, the system itself has been developed to communicate with Interpol's I-24/7 alert lists and to process API and Passenger Name Record (PNR) data, which were created to tackle 'terrorism' and 'conventional border crimes, such as illegal migration and smuggling in illegal drugs' (Han et al., 2017: 1048).

Thus, migration control is conceptualized as a key component within the general project of strengthening the state's capacity to ensure law and order by tackling security risks and controlling crime. For this reason, the IOM has been focused on the promotion of interagency cooperation between the NIS and various law enforcement agencies in Nigeria. Such cooperation has effectively resulted in the expansion of crimmigration control practices, as the NIS is increasingly responsible for collecting data perceived as crucial for crime control, and criminal justice agencies play an increasingly important role in dealing with migrants flagged by MIDAS at the border. As in other contexts extensively researched by border criminologists, this merging of criminal justice and migration control practices risks 'destabilizing the normal frame of criminal justice system based on fairness, due process

and equal treatment' (Barker, 2017: 453; Weber and McCulloch, 2019; Zedner, 2019). IOM officials themselves expressed some concerns about the potential misuse of state power when federal agencies begin to cooperate in their deployment of MIDAS: 'The privacy law doesn't exempt law enforcement completely, but it does exempt some provisions. […] We need to be careful not to create a situation where officials can do whatever they want with the MIDAS data' (Field diary, 5th August 2021).

Moreover, as outlined above, the deployment of the system does not only aim to tackle perceived security risks relating to migration. Rather, biometric migration data is viewed as one dimension of the general drive to strengthen state authority by ensuring the biometric legibility of populations. Thus, the IOM promotes cooperation not only between the NIS and federal criminal justice actors, but also between these agencies and the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) and the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), which are jointly responsible for the development of a national biometric identity card in Nigeria as well as a 'foreigner registration' system that also collects biometric data. In internal technical documentation, the organization explains that the Nigerian configuration of MIDAS has been modified to ensure compatibility between these different databases, thus providing federal agencies with a more 'comprehensive biometric identity management system' (Field diary, 10th September 2021). The expansion of crimmigration control related to the roll-out of MIDAS in Nigeria, then, does not simply result in a hardening of the external borders of the country, but allows these agencies to enact biometric statehood domestically as well. As Sabine Dini (2018: 1693) has argued, '[t]he biometric control system, and its effects in terms of hardening borders, are embedded in a larger context, characterized by the strengthening of the state [*sic*] sovereign power, understood as its capacity to exercise control over its own population.' This capacity to make both domestic and migrant populations biometrically legible reflects the international norm of 'biometric statehood' which Nigerian federal authorities seek to enact

through their deployment of MIDAS. As recounted in the previous chapter, NIS officials explicitly acknowledge the importance of biometric data for Nigeria's involvement in international politics: '[before MIDAS] we had nothing, we had pen and paper. Having a modern, biometric system is needed for us to be active in the international system' (Field diary, 26th August 2021).

Conclusion

The contribution of MIDAS to the expansion of crimmigration control practices, and the general expansion of biometric identity management systems in Nigeria, demonstrates what researchers have argued is a general tendency of supposedly neutral technical solutions to proliferate. As Scheel and Ustek-Spilda (2019: 665), the IOM's knowledge production and technical projects fuels 'a quest for more and better knowledge on migration,' thus paving the way for the development of new technical systems to supplement existing ones, as well as the expansion of the remit of existing systems. In a similar vein, Mark Salter (2013: 14) argues that 'surveillance and control of circulation, then, expands to fit the space available […] the dream of perfect security justifies whatever expansion technology, policy, and inattention will allow.' Such a dynamic is reflected in the development of MIDAS on the back of the organization's earlier Personal Identification and Registration System and its knowledge-production tools such as the Global Migration Flows Interactive Map, as well as the expansion of MIDAS in Nigeria from a focus on border control to crimmigration control more broadly conceived. Officials in Abuja are aware that these tools cannot proliferate or expand too quickly: 'The use of special tools needs to be built like a house. if you put the roof before the foundation, it will just collapse' (Field diary, 28th July 2021). Such moderation notwithstanding, each added component to MIDAS, such as API data processing functionality, paves the way for the next expansion of the system: 'The new API

legislation will create the foundations for PNR in the future. […] intelligence agencies will eventually be the ones who get PNR data, but only when everyone is comfortable that they actually have the capacity to use PNR data and not misuse it' (Field diary, 5th August 2021). These insights and statements raise the question of how the technical components of MIDAS itself drive the further expansion of crimmigration control in the Global South. In other words, how do the socio-technical characteristics of MIDAS shape how the system influences human practices, distinctly from the political motivations of either the Nigerian federal agencies that use the system or the IOM officials that have developed and deployed it? While this chapter has demonstrated the political effects of MIDAS from the perspective of the IOM—and how the organization engages in pedagogical performances and embodies a techno-solutionist attitude to border control—the next chapter turns to an analysis of the technical components of the system itself.

Chapter 8 – A golden touch? MIDAS, biometrics, and enacting crimmigration control

> *Trust is the key referent in shaping the biometric imaginary and the wider securitization agenda.*
>
> – Krisrún Gunnarsdóttir and Kjetil Rommetveit (2017: 201).

> *Take a look at your own fingertips under a good strong light. You may see that the patterns of their ridges are different on different fingers. […] The mesmerizing convolutions of these tiny ridges are sometimes called upon to determine people's fates.*
>
> – Simon Cole (2001: 1).

Upon my arrival at Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport in Abuja, my first order of business was to retrieve the visa that would allow me to remain in Nigeria for the duration of my fieldwork. I had been issued an approval letter for a visa on arrival, and instructed to 'proceed to Visa on Arrival section for Approval verification, biometric enrolment, and issuance of entry Visa' before going through passport control at the airport (Nigerian Immigration Service, 2022). After my forms had been verified, I was asked to enroll my fingerprints onto the NIS's national visa system by placing both of my thumbs, then the remaining four fingers on each hand, onto a Crossmatch 4+4+2 fingerprint scanner. The Crossmatch scanner is one of three models tested and approved by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Global Procurement and Supply Unit in Manila, Philippines, for use in MIDAS installations; in Nigeria, the IOM's Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) has also been configured to issue and validate travel visas. After the scanner swiftly collected and stored two viable thumb prints, flashing a green light on the computer screen as I pressed my thumbs against the glass, the screen flashed a red light instead as I placed the four fingers of my right hand onto the reader. An NIS officer sprayed the glass with a cleaning solution and wiped it, then asked me to place the same four

fingers on the scanner. The screen flashed red again. The officer grabbed my fingers and pressed them down harder against the glass, but the computer screen still flashed a red light. The officer flipped over my hand, closely inspected my fingertips, then asked me: 'What kind of work do you do?' (Field diary, 21st July 2021). I told them I am an academic, but that in my free time I am also an avid rock climber, which has caused my fingertips to form thick callouses and my fingerprints to fade. Frustrated with the disruption that my calloused fingertips introduced to what was supposed to be a smoothly operating biometric enrolment process, the official proceeded to push my fingertips against the reader harder and at various angles, trying to find a way for the scanner to successfully enroll my fingerprints into the MIDAS visa system. Eventually, the scanner was able to enroll the fingerprints from one hand, but the officer had to manually override the enrolment process for the other hand and upload fingerprints that the automated reader would otherwise not have accepted. I was issued my visa, and allowed through passport control.

This instance was my first personal encounter with MIDAS. Thanks to the pre-issued visa approval letter, a hitch in the biometric enrolment process did not prevent me from entering the country. Nonetheless, the problematic enrolment process made concrete the potential fallibility of a system that in the IOM and NIS's official discourses is presented as extremely trustworthy and accurate. As IOM official José argued: 'the level of accuracy [of biometrics], it's amazing. And the level of certainty and integrity of the passport or visa, and the data inside the passport, is almost one hundred percent' (Interview, 2nd March 2021). Yet existing research has pointed out that the 'theoretical matching accuracy' of biometric systems often ignore 'real-world accuracy challenges and related but extraneous factors' (Israel, 2020: xv). Olwig and colleagues (2020: 10–11) have highlighted potential issues related specifically to fingerprinting: 'Some individuals cannot be registered by fingerprint scanners as a consequence of problems such as skin disease, erosion of the ridges due to physical labor, intentional erasure of the fingerprints, or various dry skin- or age-related

problems.' This discrepancy between a perceived infallibility of technical tools on one hand and practical challenges to their deployment on the other hand highlights that the impact of novel border control technologies is not always entirely predictable, and thus suggests the need for a critical appraisal of the political effects of these technical tools.

Drawing on recent technologically-focused research in border criminology (Côté-Boucher, 2020; Ferraris, 2022; Milivojevic, 2021), Science and Technology Studies (STS) (Jacobsen, 2015; Lemberg-Pedersen and Haioty, 2020; Scheel et al., 2019), and critical security studies (Amicelle et al., 2015; Aradau and Tazzioli, 2020; Bigo, 2020), the central claim of this chapter is that the material components of MIDAS—including fingerprint scanners, facial recognition cameras, passport readers, centralized databases, data processing and exchange mechanisms, and other devices—have political impacts that are not reducible to the motivations of their human developers in the IOM or their operators in the NIS. As Mareile Kaufmann (2019: 144) argues, in order to understand the impact of material objects within broader socio-technical networks, '[o]ne literally has to follow the object in order to trace its workings. Such mapping exercises can include historical developments to document the life stories of objects, as well as participant observation and other (digital) cartographic methods.'

The analysis below proceeds in four sections. First, I argue that MIDAS is one of many biometric tools that have become key components of contemporary crimmigration control practices, particularly in the post-9/11 era. I then turn to the theoretical implications of examining the independent political effects of material tools, expanding the discussion of materiality and agency from Chapter 3 by empirically substantiating those arguments with reference to MIDAS in Nigeria. In this way, I demonstrate the analytical benefits of conceptualizing technology with reference to performativity and pragmatism, as distinct from other popular theoretical frameworks such as instrumentalist and assemblage perspectives. I then turn to the mechanisms through which the technical components of

MIDAS shape crimmigration control practices in Nigeria. Of course, these technical tools do not act alone, but interact with their human designers and operators. Nonetheless, I show how these political effects are irreducible to the motivations and intentions of humans, thus illuminating the importance of accounting for the agency of technical tools when analyzing crimmigration control practices. I argue that MIDAS expands what Valeria Ferraris (2022: 10) calls 'the digital version of crimmigration, where immigration and criminal law converge via the processing of data collected.' In addition to the intentions of Nigerian federal authorities, discussed in Chapter 6, and those of the IOM, discussed in Chapter 7, the technical components of the system perform a particular conception of migration. Through these devices, migration is recast as a governable problem amenable to security- and criminal justice-oriented interventions in which '[m]igrants of all different "types" are then exposed in a generalized form to the suspicion of the "crimmigrant other"' (Amelung, 2021: 157).

Biometrics, identification, and suspicious bodies

Biometric identification refers to the recognition of humans based on their physical or behavioral attributes; the term 'biometric' etymologically derives from the Greek *bios* and *metron*, 'life' and 'measure' (Maguire, 2009). More recently, this kind of recognition is increasingly carried out by automated technologies instead of humans themselves (Olwig et al., 2020: 7). Historically, the problem of individual identity arose in the context of modern states' efforts to make their populations legible, that is, individually knowable and thus 'targetable for many basic governmental operations such as taxation, enrolment into military service, or criminal investigations' (Leese, 2022: 116; Scott, 1998). Several authors have noted how the history of biometric recognition is also underpinned by colonial and racial logics of making the racialized 'other' more easily identifiable, and allowing more rigorous social sorting between populations (Browne, 2009; Lyon, 2009; Sengoopta, 2003).

The relationship between the problem of accurate identification and criminality was already apparent in the branding of convicted criminals, in order to recognize repeat offenders, in early modern European and American criminal justice contexts (Cole, 2001: 7). The practice of automated biometric recognition has now spread far beyond the context of criminal identification, as biometric passports and ID cards are common, and many of our digital devices now use automated recognition tools on an everyday basis (Milivojevic, 2021). Although in everyday contexts our use of biometrically capable digital devices is mainly motivated by considerations of efficiency and ease of use, the deployment of biometric technologies in both migration control and criminal justice contexts is driven by a belief in the importance of these tools to more accurately identify potentially risky individuals, as I discuss below. With this ubiquity of automated biometric registration, it is no longer the individual criminal who is biometrically identified and therefore rendered suspect, but instead a condition of 'categorical suspicion' is attached to all those whose identities have not yet been biometrically verified (Maguire, 2009: 13).

Territorial borders have long been a key site for the development and expansion of biometric technologies. In the twentieth century, with the intensification of international economic production and cross-border mobility, European states sought to monitor and inspect border crossers more closely, and thus 'the passport became a standard part of the travel/mobility assemblage that helped concretize identity certification, affirmed state capacity for both identification and border policing, and expanded the domain of action in which the state could act' (Salter, 2015: 24). Earlier passports only included written descriptions of their owners and were not always issued exclusively to a single person (Torpey, 2000). From 1915, the introduction of an analog biometric recognition technology—the passport photograph—allowed the individualization of these identity documents (Salter, 2015). More recently, the incorporation of automated biometric technologies into passports, including facial recognition and fingerprint matching, received

a significant boost in the wake of the 9/11 attacks on the Twin Towers in the United States, as these tools became perceived as a way to prevent such national security disasters in the future (Epstein, 2008).

In the post-9/11 world, from a statist perspective, border security has essentially been conceptualized as a problem of overcoming ambiguous or inaccurate identification, which can be solved through the deployment of biometric recognition technologies (Gates, 2011). In this view, according to Charlotte Epstein (2008: 180), 'registering the intimate details of every single body on this planet is the solution to the problem of risk.' IOM officials express this view when discussing the role of biometrics in border management:

> The use of biometrics is definitely driven by all the challenges […] you know, there's a lot of civil wars going on, there's people on the move, there's foreign fighters, terrorist fighters, there is guys from ISIS, there is a lot of people that are on the Interpol database for example. So the use of biometrics is more to be certain that when you look for somebody, you get the right person rather than the wrong person. So the a level of accuracy, it's higher […] the use of biometrics is a step forward (José, interview, 2nd March 2021).

So too, the organization's pedagogical materials in Nigeria distinguish between pre- and 'post-9/11 borders,' the latter of which are characterized by 'new threats; securitization of borders; less emphasis on borderless border; high profiling of movement of persons/goods; insurgency/terrorism/cybercrimes/TOCs [transnational organized crimes]' (Field diary, 14th August 2021). In this context, the IOM (2018: 1) conceptualizes biometrics as 'a vital part of migration management.' Its official brochures focus on facilitating travel and using these technologies for humanitarian work, with only fleeting mentions of how 'biometrics enhances security in migration and border management processes' (IOM, 2018a: 3). In Nigeria, however, the organization's officials speak of these tools in more openly securitized terms. As one official explained: 'Yes, biometrics can do many things, but usually it's all about security' (Field diary, 17th August 2021).

Conceptualizations of biometric identification tools as a technical fix to the risks of globalization rest on an assumption about the fixity of individual identity and the physical body as an 'indisputable anchor to which data can be safely secured' (Amoore and Goede, 2005: 163–164). Identity is thus conceptualized as 'detached from one's self, having an objective and thing-like quality' (Franko Aas, 2006: 147), a logic reflected in the IOM's description of unidentified migrants as 'lacking' an identity altogether (Henrikson, 2021). The organization now frames the issuance of legal identity to migrants—through their biometric verification—as a human rights issue, and presents those lacking biometric identity documents as 'more susceptible to risky, irregular migration – often at the hands of human traffickers and criminal smuggling groups' (Henrikson, 2021; IOM, 2021b). Border criminologists, however, have demonstrated that it is most often migrants and refugees themselves who are viewed as suspicious and untrustworthy until they have been enrolled into a biometric database. Katja Franko (Franko Aas, 2006: 144–145), for instance, argues that the ubiquity of automated biometric recognition systems reflects an assumption about the 'inability to establish trust through speech and linguistic communication […] Biological tokens of identification are therefore becoming vital in identifying the undesirable populations in the new global order.'

The personalization of mobility control via biometric identity means that the border itself—and suspicion of the 'crimmigrant other' (Franko, 2020)—is now 'imprinted' onto the bodies of border crossers (Aliverti et al., 2019). Rather than being tied to a particular location, whether border control checkpoints or more diffuse sites of border control within and beyond the territory of the state (Infantino, 2016; Leerkes et al., 2013), borders now 'materialize when biometric technologies, such as facial scans and fingerprints, are matched with existing digitally coded body images and fingerprints' (Olwig et al., 2020: 8). These technical tools shape how migrants are viewed, namely as suspicious until digitally verified. The flipside of Nigerian federal agencies' performances of 'biometric statehood,' discussed

in Chapter 6, is the introduction of a new form of digitalized citizenship that sorts border crossers according to their trustworthiness: 'citizenship is (re)designed as "safe" to the extent that the citizen is "becoming digital" and thus "knowable" to the state and non-state authorities allied with the state. […] Oddly, this notion of "safe citizenship" is potentially terribly unsafe for the citizen herself' (Muller, 2010: 77). IOM officials explicitly refer to this logic of social sorting when discussing biometric registration: 'There is always the need for the government to make sure that, you know, to let the good guys in and keep the bad guys out, something like that. So, this is what the use of biometrics is all about' (José, interview, 2nd March 2021). NIS officers working with MIDAS at the agency's headquarters outside of Abuja also share the IOM's belief that biometrics can solve the problem of ambiguous identity at the border. As officer Gabriel explained: 'How can we know, when someone arrives at the border, if they are lying to us? Biometrics and MIDAS shows us, you see, "this is who I am and this is what proves I'm telling the truth"' (Field diary, 26th August 2021).

Against this general background of the proliferation of biometric border control tools, differences between local contexts will also shape the political impacts of introducing a system like MIDAS. Authors focusing on the Global North have argued extensively that the proliferation of biometric borders 'attempts to transform citizenship into a quest for verifying/authenticating "identity" for the purpose of access to rights, bodies, spaces, and so forth, thus (purportedly) stripping away the cultural and ethnic attributes of citizenship' (Muller, 2004: 280). Similarly, Matthias Leese (2022: 126) examines the effects of new biometric databases while arguing that 'the European citizenry has already been biometrically fixed through the incorporation of biometric templates in passports and ID cards.' However, in Nigeria—as we have seen in Chapter 6—the existence of shared attributes of citizenship across the entire national population and the use of biometric identification tools have historically been very limited. To borrow Leese's terminology, the Nigerian citizenry has not yet been 'biometrically fixed.' The introduction of MIDAS

coincides with, and is technically linked to, the introduction of a National Biometric Identity Card and the establishment of an incipient national biometric database. In other words, biometric identification at the border is not transforming the political implications of earlier identity management practices, which elsewhere have been linked to other aspects of state governance, such as taxation and welfare provision (Scott, 1998). Rather, these practices are from the outset shaped by the logics of crimmigration control and the surveillance of mobility, as well as the attendant condition of 'categorical suspicion' (Maguire, 2009: 13) of those not (yet) biometrically verified.

If, as various authors have argued, there is something distinct about contemporary biometric border control tools compared to their earlier analog equivalents (Epstein, 2008; Gates, 2011; Gunnarsdóttir and Rommetveit, 2017; Muller, 2010), it is analytically significant that the generalization of biometric identity in Nigeria is grounded in the use of automated biometric recognition technologies in a crimmigration control context. Compared to less complex methods of recognition, the contestability and potential fallibility of automated biometric identification tools are obscured beneath a veneer of technical complexity and neutrality. These tools represent 'a binary language of ones and zeroes which radically reduces possibilities for negotiations and therefore also resistance' (Franko Aas, 2006: 150). In this context of binary digital verification, 'an identification error can deny and exclude individuals' (Jacobsen and Rao, 2018: 27), yet acknowledgement of such errors is noticeably absent from official discourses relating to the rollout of MIDAS. The previous chapter demonstrated how, through its capacity-building interventions in Nigeria, the IOM has contributed to the expansion of crimmigration control by supporting the technical, operational, and legal merging of the fields of migration control and criminal justice. This expansion has been underpinned and justified with reference to a techno-solutionist view of border control, 'which places a tremendous amount of trust in technological tools' (Vavoula, 2021: 458). But in what way do these technical components of MIDAS shape crimmigration

control practices distinctly from the intentions and motivations of either the IOM or Nigerian federal officials? What is the impact of introducing widespread biometric identification tools for the first time in the context of border control and migration management, and how do these devices shape the logics of state power, criminal justice, and migration control in Nigeria?

Technology, agency, and the politics of crimmigration control

Addressing these questions regarding the impact of the technical tools that compose MIDAS requires a framework for conceptualizing the relationship between humans and nonhumans in shaping crimmigration control practices. In Chapter 3, I suggested that synthesizing insights from the framework of performativity and the tradition of pragmatism provides a useful avenue for evaluating the development and deployment of new border control technologies in the Global South. In this section, I apply this framework to the technical components of MIDAS in Nigeria.

Instrumentalism and the impact of MIDAS on the ground

An instrumentalist view of border control technologies would focus primarily on the political motivations of the Nigerian federal agencies that have deployed MIDAS. In this view, 'technology is neutral, a tool that can be turned to whatever use a user desired' (McCarthy, 2018: 6). Accordingly, understanding the deployment of MIDAS in Nigeria would require an empirical assessment of the extent to which the system has achieved its stated goals as outlined by the NIS and IOM, namely an 'enhanced capacity to process migrants at [Nigeria's] international borders' (Field diary, 23rd August 2021).

The extensive rollout of MIDAS across various air, land, and sea border posts has undoubtedly increased the NIS's capacity to biometrically process border crossers, although,

as one IOM official explained, 'the Nigerian authorities will absolutely not share the data with us' (Field diary, 28th July 2021), which complicates empirically assessing the system's impact. Nonetheless, both NIS and IOM officials are aware of the remaining limitations of the system, not least the fact that 'MIDAS only tracks entries at legal border crossing points […] but there are thousands of migrants and foreigners who can cross by irregular means' (Luca, interview, 3rd March 2021). NIS training workshop materials state that in Nigeria, there remain 'well over 1400 illegal routes… 84 legal???' (Field diary, 14th August 2021). Moreover, due to difficult environmental and political conditions in the border zones of the country, border control checkpoints require ongoing maintenance and repeated repairs. Occasionally, in Nigeria and elsewhere, existing MIDAS installations fall into disuse due to a lack of electricity or internet connection once IOM project funding runs out:

> Now, the problem that we had, and that I'm facing now, you know, three, four years after is that the government didn't foresee maintenance costs in its budget. So for as long as IOM supported, for example, the internet connection, MIDAS was working. But since the project period ended […] the government simply didn't have resources to continue paying the internet connection (Louise, interview, 9th March 2021).

According to an instrumentalist conception, then, the deployment of MIDAS can be understood as partially successful but still highly limited in terms of its impact on Nigerian border control practices. However, despite these material limitations, the discussion in Chapters 6 and 7 demonstrated that from the perspective of both NIS and IOM officials, the rollout of the system has nonetheless had several desirable effects that are not reducible to its impact on practices at border control checkpoints. For instance, it has legitimized the political authority of the Nigerian federal state vis-à-vis other domestic actors and demonstrated the technical expertise and neutrality of the IOM within the field of global migration management. These effects are distinct from the extent to which MIDAS has actually transformed border control practices on the ground, and suggests that the effects

of material technologies reach beyond their immediate failures or successes. Foucault (1995: 272) highlighted a similar dynamic when examining the continued maintenance and expansion of the prison system despite frequent proclamations of the failure of that institution: 'perhaps one should reverse the problem and ask oneself what is served by the failure of the prison; what is the use of these different phenomena that are continually being criticized.'

Assemblage theories and MIDAS as a socio-technical network

Critical interdisciplinary research into new border control tools has sought to overcome this focus on their instrumental uses by highlighting that they 'can also have unintended consequences and side-effects. Although they may be implemented with certain effects in mind, in practice other previously unthought-of effects may materialize […] technology can initiate changes to the social environment' (Dekkers, 2020: 1852–1853). Rather than simply focusing on the extent to which the operators of a system like MIDAS have successfully deployed the system to achieve their goals at border control checkpoints, critical perspectives have sought to examine the impact that new technologies have on their human users, whether intended or not (Wood, 2021). As outlined in Chapter 3, claims about the independent effects of technologies require a theoretical reorientation away from conceptualizing agency solely as an attribute of humans, toward what Anna Leander (2021: 162) calls 'relational ontologies' that focus on the agency of both human and nonhuman 'actants' upon the socio-technical networks within which they are situated. In their analysis of EU biometric border controls, Nina Amelung and colleagues (2021: 44–45) argue that a critical analysis of bordering practices requires accounting for the effects on regulative frameworks, developments in biometric technologies, technical database infrastructures, and organizational imperatives and principles. Applying this framework to the Nigerian context,

NIS officers, IOM officials, and the technical components of MIDAS—as well as border crossers, technology vendors, and other infrastructures—have entered into a border control 'assemblage,' and agency within this 'heterogeneous network of activities' is 'distributed' among these various actors (Amelung et al., 2021: 36–37).

The metaphor of the assemblage productively highlights how the NIS and IOM's practices of border control are concretely shaped by the materiality of MIDAS and the environments within which the system operates. The materiality of the technical components of the system intervenes in official plans to construct sustainable and smoothly operating MIDAS border control checkpoints and thus disrupts the intentional actions of humans. In this way, technologies and their limitations contribute to 'a diminished agency of humans' (Milivojevic and Radulski, 2020: 202). IOM officials lament how the materiality of MIDAS occasionally disrupts the organization's plans for the smooth operation of the system after installation:

> There is definitely a sub-use of the system because of all these technical problems […] The material, the equipment is not just written off. So if a computer is used for four years, every day of the week, sometimes you find that there is no communication between the MIDAS systems between different ports. This is terrible, because we are putting in an IT system and a BMIS system that is relatively sophisticated […] but eventually they were transmitting data by just charging it on a flash disk and bringing it together maybe once a month (Maria, interview, 10th March 2021).

Georgios Glouftsios (2021: 454) has argued that it is in these moments of disruption and failure that technical systems exert their independent effects on human practices most forcefully: 'information systems materialize in the process of operational management as unruly, unstable and failing infrastructures.' To account for these effects, Glouftsios (2021: 463) suggests critical research into large-scale border management systems should focus on how these technologies require ongoing 'corrective maintenance' to ensure their continued operation, as well as 'adaptation to emerging technologies and service needs.' The account

above demonstrated how IOM officials are becoming increasingly aware of how the maintenance needs of MIDAS impact the rollout of the organization's capacity-building projects on the ground. New project proposals are increasingly factoring in long-term maintenance costs, and officials in Abuja explained that 'we have realized that we've created a monster, and the monster is very expensive' (Field diary, 6th September 2021). Conceptualizing MIDAS in Nigeria as a socio-technical assemblage also brings into view how not only the materiality of digital tools, but also other human actors shape these maintenance processes as well. When seeking to replace worn and broken equipment in the field, the organization's officials are forced to engage in tough negotiations with technology vendors regarding the scope of warranties. One official in Abuja explained that the complicated warranty policies sometimes introduce additional unpredictability into project costs: 'Sometimes the SLAs [Service Level Agreements] don't specify that the company has to pay for shipping costs. They'll replace the hardware, but they won't pay for the return shipping. So then we have to go and find that money somewhere' (Field diary, 6th September 2021).

Continued adaptation of the MIDAS infrastructure to emerging technical systems and service needs is also apparent in the Nigerian context. Indeed, from its inception within the IOM's Immigration and Border Management division as the Personal Identification and Registration System (PIRS) in 2007, the system has undergone several significant updates and a name change to MIDAS in 2013 (Aaron, interview, 2nd March 2021). It has continually adapted to newly emerging technologies, for instance those that allow real-time internet connectivity and better automated biometric matching, and the organization's officials identify broader technical developments as key drivers continually transforming MIDAS:

> Originally, there was no dynamic things, everything was on the screen, and then somehow the technologies changed. Now, when you open the system, you will see dynamic things going on the other side […] It's a bit strange waiting for the new technologies, but we attempt to consume them quickly. So we immediately leave old

> products and move to new products and new technologies (Aaron, interview, 2nd March 2021).

The technical infrastructure of MIDAS has not only adapted to streamline existing functionalities, but also to incorporate an increasing number of border control-related functions. The organization proudly tweeted a quote from the Head of the Border and Identity Solutions Unit, stating that 'innovation is at the core of IOM's MIDAS programme which has evolved to cover the whole travellers' journey.'[10]

The technical functionality of the system can also be configured to meet the technological and service needs of specific Member States. As the IOM's (2018b: 2) official brochure explains, under a section titled 'MIDAS interoperability and adaptability,' the system 'is completely customizable and can be tailored to the specific requirements of governments.' Possible functionality includes checking API data, issuing E-Visas, connecting to other border management systems, and transferring data between border management contexts and national identity databases. In Nigeria, the system has been adapted to the broader technological environment of the federal government's efforts to expand biometric identification in the country. As outlined in the previous chapter, the IOM is currently engaged in establishing the technical, legal, and operational frameworks that will allow MIDAS to process API data at air borders. In addition, the system is already interoperable with the newly established National Biometric Identity Card (NBIC) and Foreigner Registration (FR) systems run by Nigerian federal authorities. These systems were mandated by an ECOWAS Decision (A/DEC-01/12/14) in 2014, aimed to facilitate intra-ECOWAS travel. Conceptualizing these discrete systems as part of a broader 'biometric assemblage' (Madianou, 2019) highlights how the materiality of each system shapes the

[10] IOM Immigration and Border Management Twitter account, 1st July 2021. Available at: https://twitter.com/IOM_IBM_HQ/status/1410600036510035976 [Accessed 20th July 2022].

others. MIDAS has been adapted specifically to allow for interoperability with the other incipient biometric databases, and in turn exerts a kind of technical agency of its own on them. Although the NBIC and FR systems were initially established independently of MIDAS, they must now be updated to accord with the technical standards of the latter system, including international 'best practices' relating to ICAO standards on biometric portrait quality (ICAO, 2018). Thus, technical tools and standards developed in the risk- and security-focused context of contemporary border control (Muller, 2009) now shape Nigerian national identification systems as well.

Performativity, pragmatism, and the risk of depoliticization

Assemblage theories can be helpful in illuminating how the technical components of MIDAS exert independent effects on border control practices and other information systems in Nigeria. These impacts are distinct from the intended effects of the system in the instrumentalist sense, and demonstrate that socio-technical assemblages can have emergent outcomes that are irreducible to the intentions of any single actor within the broader network. Of course, the expansion of MIDAS has been underpinned by the political motivations of Nigerian federal authorities as well as the IOM's solutionism, as discussed in the preceding two chapters. Indeed, 'the biometric assemblage is not just the result of technological convergence; it equally depends on the social, political, and economic factors in which technologies are developed and used' (Madianou, 2019: 585). Nonetheless, assemblage theories can highlight how the socio-technical network as a whole has important emergent effects—such as importing technical standards and logics from crimmigration control technologies to other areas of governance—that are irreducible to the intentions of any specific actor; in this way, technological assemblages are more than the sum of their parts (Franko Aas, 2012a).

In Chapter 3 I argued that synthesizing literature on performativity and pragmatism provides a useful perspective for a critical appraisal of contemporary digital crimmigration control tools. Incorporating the insights of performativity is central to grasping the kinds of aggregate effects that assemblage theories bring into view. The notion of performativity illuminates how the technical components of MIDAS not only constrain or allow humans to engage in particular kinds of border control practices in an instrumental sense, but also how these tools performatively enact both biometrics and migration as particular kinds of social problems and contribute to the creation of 'new, technologically mediated forms of subjectivity' (Franko Aas et al., 2009b: 5). Critical researchers such as Stephan Scheel and Funda Ustek-Spilda (2019: 668) have utilized the notion of enactment to challenge perspectives that ontologically treat migration as an already existing phenomenon which digital border control tools can measure, instead arguing that new technologies 'help enact the object they set out to measure as an intelligible reality.'

In the Nigerian context, MIDAS enacts migration as a problem of risk and criminal justice by contributing to the merging of legal, technical, and operational frameworks of migration control and law enforcement. As one IOM official explained in Abuja: 'MIDAS is helping the [Nigerian] agencies understand what a migrant is' (Field diary, 17th August 2021). The processing of API data, interoperability with Interpol's I-24/7 alert lists, and requiring standard operating procedures between the NIS and law enforcement agencies all performatively enact migration as a particular kind of social problem, namely a problem of crimmigration control. The expansion and interoperability of biometric identification tools has also been a key component in recent cooperative efforts by Nigerian federal authorities an UN organizations to combat transnational organized crime, human trafficking, and terrorism (UN CTITF, 2012; UNODC, 2020). These efforts materially embody logics of crimmigration control by representing migration control and criminal justice-related databases as essentially dealing with similar kinds of policy issues. The technical logics

embedded in the MIDAS architecture thus merge previously disparate fields of governance, and not always as a result of intentional actions either on behalf of the NIS or the IOM. These technical tools, by collecting, verifying, and sharing biometric data, also 'bring migration into being as an object of governance and perform it as a *global reality* to manage in technical and pragmatic ways' (Robinson, 2018: 421, original emphasis). From the perspective of individual border crossers, MIDAS also shapes individual identities by recasting them in digital biometric terms. Now that 'without biometrics, there is no lawful mobility' (Ferraris, 2022: 11), the identity of border crossers becomes dependent on their biometric verifiability. This is why the IOM characterizes 'irregular' migrants as lacking an identity entirely (Henrikson, 2021).

Performativity is thus useful in grasping the political impacts of technical objects in shaping human practices, understandings, and identities, and I return to the performative effects of MIDAS in Nigeria in the next section. This perspective does not necessarily imply the kind of ontological leveling that proponents of assemblage perspectives presuppose when attempting to discard analytical distinctions between '[h]uman and non-human, meaning and materiality, big and small, macro and micro, social and technical, nature and culture' (Law, 2009: 147). Flattening these ontological distinctions, as I argued in Chapter 3, risks inadvertently depoliticizing of crimmigration control technologies by obscuring the political responsibility of the human designers and operators of these tools underneath a detailed examination of various technical 'actants.' Existing analyses of border control assemblages have provided extremely detailed accounts of the technical systems and networks that enact contemporary circuits of crimmigration control (Amelung et al., 2021; Ferraris, 2022; Madianou, 2019; Olwig et al., 2020). MIDAS in Nigeria would also lend itself handily to a detailed exploration of the various technical components of the system. However, such an endeavor would risk overlooking or obscuring the epistemic hierarchies

and postcolonial power relations that underpinned the IOM's capacity-building practices including its development of MIDAS, discussed in the previous chapter.

When analyzing MIDAS, it is crucial to grasp the performative effects of the system itself without losing sight of the relationship of this system to broader relations of global hierarchy. Indeed, focusing too much on the agentic powers of biometric technologies themselves may unwittingly reaffirm the techno-solutionist view of the developers of crimmigration control technologies, who elide personal responsibility for these systems and trust 'other people to determine whether the tools [they are] developing become problematic' (Olwig et al., 2020: 51). Throughout my research, IOM officials in Nigeria repeatedly abrogated responsibility for the effects of MIDAS by shifting accountability either onto Nigerian federal authorities or the systems themselves, as outlined in the previous chapter. On one hand, potential misuses of the system were presented as unavoidable 'because when a member state wants to intentionally violate some rules, you cannot do anything because they have full ownership of the system' (Aaron, interview, 2nd March 2021). On the other hand, the continued expansion of MIDAS was presented as a result of the technical requirements of the system itself, or as based on contemporary international standards, and thus explicitly apolitical: 'We add new components to the system because this is what's required to make sure everything is working properly […] This is not a political choice. That choice has been made somewhere else. We are here making sure everything works properly' (Field diary, 17th August 2021).

In order to challenge such depoliticizing statements regarding MIDAS, this thesis has drawn upon the pragmatist conception of technology as 'the invention, development, and cognitive deployment of tools and other artifacts, brought to bear on raw materials and intermediate stock parts, with a view to the resolution of perceived problems' (Hickman, 2001: 12). By focusing on what kinds of social problems humans are trying to solve by developing and deploying new technologies, the pragmatist conception of technology

tempers the agentic claims of assemblage theories by highlighting the unique capacity of humans to deliberate about possible political alternatives and intentionally choose between them, particularly in times of crisis, dislocation, and innovation (Hickman, 2007; Howarth, 2013; Pihlström, 2021). Such moderation is important when analyzing the underlying politics of MIDAS in Nigeria. As Kristrún Gunnarsdóttir and Kjetil Rommetveit (2017: 198) explain, technical experts are particularly powerful in determining 'who the relevant stakeholders are and which societal problems need consultation,' and shaping 'the framing of issues and how to address them.' Petra Molnar (2021: 70) similarly argues that:

> International organizations such as the IOM and UNHCR are major players and driving forces in the development and deployment of migration management technologies. Often, they are the first on the ground following a humanitarian disaster and they set the agenda in terms of prioritization when it comes to humanitarian innovation and technological development. As such, powerful international organizations like IOM and UNHCR get to designate spaces of technological experimentation such as iris scanning and other biometrics in grey zones of accountability such as forced migration situations or humanitarian catastrophes, in order to appease states that they may be beholden to and to cement their presence in various locations.

Thus, the IOM plays an influential role in shaping dominant problematizations of border control, by designing technologies that enact a particular view of migration as a governable problem amenable to security- and criminal justice-oriented interventions. By focusing on these moments of technological design and social problematization, pragmatism complements a performative analysis of MIDAS in Nigeria by highlighting the uniquely human capacity to deliberate upon what kinds of social or political 'problems' technical tools should address, even as material objects and technologies shape these discussions (Pihlström, 2021).

MIDAS and the technical logics of crimmigration control in Nigeria

The previous section illustrated how a synthesis of performativity and pragmatism offers a productive avenue for analyzing the political effects of the technical components of MIDAS in Nigeria, while also foregrounding the unique political accountability of humans within these broader socio-technical networks. On this basis, this section picks up the discussion of the performative effects of the system begun in Chapter 5, by analyzing the mechanisms through which MIDAS has exerted these effects in Nigeria. The key mechanisms, as identified Chapter 5, are perceptions of the infallibility of biometric recognition, the introduction of technical feedback loops, and teleological conceptions of technological development toward increasing expansion and interoperability.

Biometric borders, truthful bodies?

Trust in the accuracy of biometric recognition technologies was a ubiquitous theme in discussions with both IOM officials and NIS officers. These individuals presented analog forms of identity verification as inherently untrustworthy and arbitrary; as an NIS officer explained at the agency's headquarters:

> Before MIDAS, the officers were forced to write down information of passengers, or migrants, by hand on paper. And they will look at the photo, and look at the face, and say "yes" or "no" […] The officer has very limited time for each passenger, so the comparison must be done in an instant, so this is not always very accurate. […] MIDAS never gets tired (Field diary, 3rd August 2021).

Public IOM documents similarly state that 'biometrics considerably improves the quality and accuracy of registration processes' of migrants (IOM, 2018a: 3). The technical architecture of MIDAS also continually reaffirms the reliability of automated recognition technologies as opposed to manual alternatives, not only in the verification of border

crossers' identities but also on the side of NIS officers themselves, who must log in to the system using a fingerprint scanner. IOM official Mohammed explained that:

> People will forget a password. They will share their password. Then the agency will not know who is doing what in the system […] So, basically, that's why we initiated the connectivity of the session with fingerprint [identification], because at least we know that the border officers will not forget their fingerprint (Interview, 22nd February 2021).

Trust in the infallibility of automated identification and verification technologies thus permeates the entirety of the system's architecture, even as officers—such as the one I encountered upon my arrival in Abuja—periodically override the system manually whenever automated technologies fail.

Biometrics in the context of border management mirrors how these tools became viewed as providing 'unambiguous evidence of identity' in a criminal justice context (Lynch et al., 2008: 11). Such trust, however, belies the probabilistic and imperfect nature of automated verification based on fingerprint matching and facial recognition. Fingerprint matching, for instance, is often regarded as producing a 'binary either-or judgement' of identity, yet in fact relies on 'probability calculations' to declare whether two prints match (Amelung, 2021: 158). Facial recognition, in turn, has been shown to produce much higher error rates for darker-skinned individuals and for women. Joy Buolamwini and Timnit Gebru (2018: 11) calculated that among the most popular facial recognition systems, white men have error rates between 0.0% and 0.3%, while 'darker females have the highest error rates for all gender classifiers ranging from 20.8% – 34.7%.' In the context of a system like MIDAS, an erroneous facial recognition match can have grave consequences, preventing travel and even resulting in a false positive match in international criminal alert lists; racial disparities in the reliability of these technologies are particularly concerning for a system rolled out primarily in African states. A binary understanding of identity contributes to the expansion of crimmigration control measures by enacting bodies as suspicious until verified

by an automated matching system; in this vein, NIS officer Ike argued that 'MIDAS is not just about what the officers are doing anyway: checking the photo and checking the passenger's face. MIDAS connects to other systems like Interpol […] In this way, we know who someone really is before letting them through the border (Field diary, 26th August 2021).

IOM officials did occasionally acknowledge the limitations of biometric technologies. José, for instance, explained that: 'Facial recognition is by far the least accurate of all the systems of biometrics. […] Facial is not the most accurate one. Yes, everyone knows that, this is common sense. But the problem is, it's the only biometric which is standard, which is mandatory to be on the [passport] chip' (Interview, 2nd March 2021).[11] Officials recognize the potential shortcomings of biometrics on the one hand, while on the other hand advocating for their expansion due to their technical superiority to manual alternatives. This dynamic mirrors developments at the EU external border, where Leese (2022: 114) has shown that EU officials recognize that large-scale biometric databases are 'not always complete, accurate and reliable,' yet continue to expand and proliferate. In Nigeria, IOM and NIS officers mainly compare biometric technologies to analog recognition practices and thus present the former as a leap forward in terms of accuracy and reliability, as exemplified by NIS officer Gabriel's remarks earlier in this chapter (p. 236). IOM official José also followed up his critical remarks regarding facial recognition by arguing that:

> The reliability, it's probably not one hundred percent, nothing is. […] Is it possible that people cross the border with the wrong passport, or that there is a false alert? Yes, of course this is possible. Everything is possible. […] But otherwise, we'll still be on, you know, what we were doing twenty or thirty years ago when we had a manual system. And my question is: would that be more efficient? (Interview, 2nd March 2021).

[11] Indeed, developers of biometric technologies agree that out of the three currently most popular biometric technologies—facial recognition, fingerprinting, and iris scans—facial recognition is the least accurate (Murad, 2020).

Of course, José's question of whether a manual system is preferable to automated facial recognition is an important and relevant one; highlighting the potential fallibility of biometrics does not necessarily imply a neo-Luddite rejection of digital technologies at the border. The point is rather to demonstrate how automated biometric systems exert performative effects through their perceived infallibility, complexity, and ubiquity within the technical architecture of MIDAS. In contrast to manual facial recognition, which IOM and NIS officials recognize as inherently contestable, the identification and verification processes of automated systems are presented in binary terms and as largely trustworthy, notwithstanding the occasional critical remark. One immediate political effect of this perceived infallibility is to reduce 'possibilities for negotiations and therefore also resistance' (Franko Aas, 2006: 150). More broadly, the focus on the increased matching accuracy of MIDAS compared to analog practices serves to enact migration control primarily as an issue of accuracy, data quality, and technical sophistication. This focus sidesteps broader questions about the politics of migration control, and the potential contestability of merging migration control databases with those of law enforcement and national identity. Thus, the IOM presents the merging of MIDAS with the NBIC and FR databases as a technical exercise, in which the main considerations are to 'assess the quality and integrity of biometric and other data in national databases' (Field diary, 1st September 2021). The relevant stakeholders and independent evaluators of new biometric initiatives are not local political actors or migrants, but rather 'a biometrics expert' who assesses compliance of all databases with ICAO standards and the data quality of the MIDAS database (Field diary, 1st September 2021). Once data quality has been assessed, the expansion of biometric recognition practices and the merging of databases is a foregone conclusion.

Yet, while biometric systems turn migration control into an issue of data quality and matching accuracy, humans are nonetheless politically responsible for the initial development and deployment of such technologies. This political responsibility is obscured

in accounts that focus only on the emergent effects of 'biometric assemblages' once they are operational (Madianou, 2019). As outlined above, the expansion of biometric technologies in a border control context was underpinned by the logics of risk and security, and despite the IOM's focus on facilitating migration in its official brochures, officers in the field still repeatedly refer to the deployment of biometrics in securitized terms. Pragmatism highlights how biometric systems only exert their performative once the prior choice has been made to deploy these systems in the field, and in this way foregrounds the political responsibility that organizations like MIDAS accrue by making decisions about what kinds of biometric technologies to deploy in the context of migration management. Discourses regarding the infallibility of biometrics rest upon a prior choice to problematize migration control as a social problem that relates to the risk- and security-based context in which biometric technologies have proliferated in recent decades.

Interoperability, evidence, and feedback loops

The merging of border control and law enforcement databases points to another mechanism through which MIDAS exerts its performative effects upon the field of crimmigration control in Nigeria: the introduction of technical feedback loops that justify the continued expansion of the system (O'Neil, 2016). In Chapter 5, IOM official Diego presented MIDAS as a 'foundational building system' that subsequently 'facilitates newer systems' (Interview, 16th February 2021) and thus viewed its expansion as a natural response to previously identified information gaps. In Nigeria, a lack of communication between MIDAS and law enforcement databases is similarly presented as a technical problem resulting in information gaps that must be addressed. One IOM official explained in an NIS training workshop that 'MIDAS brings you a huge amount of information that wasn't available before. Putting

together this information with other databases gives you intelligence, and you can act on intelligence' (Field diary, 19th August 2021).

The notion of a feedback loop (O'Neil, 2016) highlights how biometric databases and surveillance technologies can proliferate even when their developers and operators do not consciously intend for these systems to expand from the outset. Rather, in recasting migration control as a matter of data collection and accurate recognition, MIDAS simultaneously transforms a lack of data—including a lack of interoperability between various biometric databases—into an 'information gap,' in other words a technical problem that must be overcome to ensure the smooth operation of the system. This feedback loop must be situated within the broader solutionist attitude of the IOM and other developers of border control technologies, reflected in the dominant 'paradigm of migration management,' which 'fuels—in tandem with the turn toward evidence-based policy-making—a quest for more and better knowledge on migration, especially in terms of its quantification' (Scheel and Ustek-Spilda, 2019: 665). IOM officials express this approach to migration management when arguing that the collection of more, and more accurate, data at the border is key goal of MIDAS-related capacity-building projects:

> We cannot do anything, if the data are not clear. The data has to be the first thing. And the policy has to be evidence-based […] And in order to do analysis, there must be data sharing also within a country. We have tried in West Africa to support on improving migration data, but it is difficult sometimes, not because they don't want to improve their own sector, but because they don't want to share with other agencies […] So we try to show them that by sharing data between sectors, between migration and police, and other systems, there are much more huge benefits that the country can achieve beyond just controlling a physical border (Maria, interview, 10th March 2021).

Although here Maria outlines data sharing as an explicit goal for the IOM, it is the technical components of MIDAS that continually represent migration control in terms of data collection and interoperability. Whenever the system successfully matches an individual

border crosser to domestic law enforcement alert lists, for instance, these technologies materially enact the borders as a site of crimmigration control. In other geographical contexts, critical researchers have already demonstrated that the performative effects of new digital border control technologies also serve to limit opportunities for politically challenging the logic of crimmigration control. By repeatedly representing migration as a matter of calculable risks and their mitigation through ever-expansive data collection practices (Amoore, 2014), this calculability itself is no longer called into question as criticism of these systems focuses instead on the adequacy of existing tools to carry out adequate matching processes or sufficiently sophisticated risk calculations (Scheel and Ustek-Spilda, 2019: 675). Thus, potential fallibility of digital border control technologies also reinforce the feedback loop that promotes the expansion of systems like MIDAS; failure itself is reconceptualized as a reason for further expansion, rather than opening up spaces for political contestation (Lisle, 2018).

The establishment of technical feedback loops related to the data collection capacities of MIDAS, and its interoperability with other systems, has reinforced the merging of migration control and criminal justice. Meneses Queiroz (2019) argues that the establishment of interoperability between the European asylum database EURODAC and law enforcement systems has resulted in the conflation of the purposes of migration and crime control, an increase in the amount of personal data that is stored in these systems, and broader law enforcement access to data originally collected for migration control and asylum purposes. In Nigeria, IOM officials also recognize that the establishment of interoperability between MIDAS and law enforcement databases comes with a risk of eroding data retention limits and the principles of purpose limitation. In a workshop regarding the processing of API data—and the establishment of related interagency cooperation mechanisms—one official expressed concern regarding data privacy when allowing law enforcement access to MIDAS data:

> Nigeria doesn't have a clear framework for data protection specifically for law enforcement agencies […] Even though data should be deleted if there is not an API hit, I think we need to worry about data protection for innocent people. Who will actually be on these watchlists? Nigerian terrorism laws are very broad (Field diary, 5th August 2021).

Despite this moment of concern, however, deliberations in the workshop were nonetheless shaped by the technical feedback loop that demanded more data in order to ensure that MIDAS is working properly. Another official argued that:

> Yes, the law should give them guidelines on what should be done. But what's most important is to make sure the systems are working properly. The data need to be globally interoperable. The national watchlist used to be printed on a piece of paper, but biometric data will give certainty that the person is the one you're looking for, so they can be used for arrest or preventing that person from leaving or entering. So we need to find a way to outline procedures for data interoperability (Field diary, 5th August 2021).

These kinds of moments demonstrate how the technical logics of MIDAS contribute to a feedback loop that expands crimmigration control. Yet despite the impact of these technical logics in shaping human perceptions and practices, pragmatism is again helpful in tempering claims about technological agency and locating political responsibility for the impacts of the system in the humans that have developed and deployed it. While technologies exert their agency most forcefully in the context of 'habitualized tools, artifacts, and skills' (Hickman, 2001: 12), pragmatism and other humanist perspectives on technological structures differentiate between 'decisions taken *within* a structure and decisions taken *about* a structure' (Howarth, 2013: 185, original emphasis). As Molly Cochran (2002: 527), '[t]o establish a truth pragmatically is to settle a controversial or complex issue for the time being, until something comes along to dislodge the comfort and reassurance that has thereby been achieved, forcing inquiry to begin again.' Workshops such as the one in which IOM officials raised potential concerns about data privacy—which were then overridden by a logic of technical necessity relating to expanded data collection—constitute

moments of rupture and uncertainty, in which humans must engage in normative deliberation and decide how to conceptualize migration as a particular kind of social problem. Although the deployment of digital migration control technologies has become widespread enough to constitute a condition of habitualized technical action, the pragmatist perspective is useful in reminding us that how 'policymaking is considerably broader than technical decision-making, which means that policymakers often compromise on critical issues and act on public perceptions or fears' (Beduschi, 2021: 584). In other words, by raising concerns about whether expansive biometric tools are suitable and safe in a migration control context, and then answering such questions in the affirmative, IOM officials are actively making decisions about the structure of crimmigration control in the Global South and therefore engaging in a uniquely human process of moral deliberation: 'Only humans can consider whether the normative system they have constructed is righteous or if it requires corrections'[12] (Pihlström, 2021: 53).

MIDAS, modernization, and teleological progress

In Abuja, I was surrounded by talk of facial recognition, positive hits between interoperable migration databases, and secondary inspection of incoming API data for risk assessment purposes. Yet, when I asked one official whether the webcams utilized in MIDAS installations are really accurate enough to reliably carry out automated facial recognition, they seemed slightly surprised by my question:

> MIDAS doesn't currently do any automated facial recognition. The live pic is just manually compared to the photo in the document. MIDAS does automatically match the photo in the document and the picture in the passport chip. But the officer compares the live image to the document (Field diary, 3rd September 2021).

[12] Author's translation from Finnish.

At NIS headquarters, I was shown a state-of-the-art control room where the entirety of Nigeria's digital borders could be monitored at once. One computer could be used to search the MIDAS visa system, another to view positive hits between migration and law enforcement databases, and an entire corner of workstations was dedicated to the interaction between MIDAS and the Interpol I-24/7 alert list. These latter workstations, however, were unmanned; the connection to Interpol alert lists is dependent on the establishment of interagency cooperation mechanisms, as outlined in the previous chapter, and is therefore not yet online.

Despite the significant remaining technical, operational, and legal obstacles to fully unlocking the potentialities of MIDAS that are promised in official brochures, training workshops and meetings often proceeded as though future additions to the system's functionality were foregone conclusions. In discussions about drafting data privacy legislation relating to the processing of API data, one IOM official asserted that not all details needed to be ironed out at this stage, as 'they'll need to amend things when PNR [Passenger Name Record] is introduced anyway' (Field diary, 5th August 2021). Used primarily for automated risk profiling at the border, PNR data is much more detailed and sensitive than API, and even more explicitly related to law enforcement, rather than migration control purposes (Leese, 2014; Vavoula, 2021). As 'PNR data infringes more on individuals' privacy than API data' (Han et al., 2017: 1056), processing its requires more stringent legal frameworks for data privacy and rights protections according to the ICAO (2010). Although it was unlikely Nigerian federal authorities would have the capacity to process PNR data at any time soon, IOM officials assumed that MIDAS data processing capabilities would expand in the future.

These examples highlight how perceptions about technical neutrality and teleological progress, as expressed by IOM officials in Chapter 5, are translated into practices in the field. Both IOM and NIS officers routinely refer to the deployment of MIDAS as 'a step forward'

and 'the beginning of modern border control in Nigeria,' as NIS officer Ike explained (Field diary, 26th August 2021). In this view, border control technologies are conceptualized in terms of a linear developmental path from earlier 'pen and paper' practices still commonly deployed in the Global South, toward the kind of 'modern, biometric system' that states in the Global North now utilize (Field diary, 26th August 2021). This view was exemplified by one IOM official's metaphor of MIDAS as a rudimentary automobile compared to the more advanced cars of the Global North:

> Of course, we need to explain to NIS that they can't jump straight to a Ferrari. Europe and the US can drive a Ferrari, but here we need to start from a slow car, and build the roads and teach them how to drive first. And then, in the future, they can drive the Ferrari too (Field diary, 3rd September 2021).

The material infrastructure of MIDAS itself underpins these teleological views. The technical architecture of the system, as developed by the Immigration and Border Management division of the IOM in Geneva, has been set up to support the kinds of data collection and interoperability mechanisms that are currently found at the external borders of Northern states. These include API and PNR data processing, Interpol alert list connectivity, and transnational biometric data sharing between the immigration authorities of different states. Moreover, the IBM team at IOM headquarters is continually searching for new ways to expand the technical capacities of the system, for instance introducing a 'MIDAS health module' in response to the 2014–2016 Ebola outbreak in West Africa and further expanding this module following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic (Katrina, interview, 17th February 2021). Such capacities are beyond what most MIDAS-operating states currently require, and indeed these states sometimes resist further expansion of the system. IOM officials argue that in the African context 'it's important for systems to all eventually move towards one system. An integrated region needs an integrated system' (Diego, interview, 16th February 2021). However, as outlined in Chapter 6, Nigerian federal

authorities view MIDAS as a cornerstone of their territorial sovereignty. For this reason, states such as Nigeria are loath to give up what they view as their sovereign prerogative to exclusive ownership of MIDAS data: 'the issue of data comes up quite regularly, always in the same terms, but without any progress' (Maria, interview, 10th March 2021).

The seeming contradiction between NIS officers' portrayal of MIDAS as a natural next step in modern border management on the one hand, and the federal government's resistance to international data sharing agreements on the other hand, again highlights the underlying politics of the technical mechanisms that contribute to the expansion of crimmigration control in Nigeria. As was the case with the debates regarding privacy legislation and API data above, disagreements between the IOM and the Nigerian federal authorities represent moments of uncertainty and ambiguity about the desirability and suitability of deploying specific technical components of MIDAS in response to the perceived social problem of migration control. The pragmatist conception of technology focuses on these moments of contingency. In doing so, it foregrounds the uniquely human capacity to engage in normative deliberation and distinguishes between conditions of habitualized action, in which technical objects are more influential upon human practices, and conditions of deliberation and innovation, which are 'characterized by organized and deliberate transformations of existing situations in ways that generate new outcomes, or products' (Hickman, 2001: 17) This perspective is helpful in challenging teleological conceptions of crimmigration control. As Kelly Gates a argues: 'Understanding the experimental status of the technology is critical, because the prevalent myth of inevitability surrounding [biometrics] and other new forms of surveillance itself performs an important role in their institutionalization.'

Conclusion

This chapter has examined some of the technical components of MIDAS in Nigeria, in order to examine the mechanisms through which these tools exert performative effects—independently of the intentions of their human developers and operators—that have served to expand practices of crimmigration control in the country. Conceptualizing MIDAS as a socio-technical network, in which both humans and nonhuman technologies are able to have performative agency, is useful in highlighting how the political impacts of the system are not always reducible directly to the motivations of the IOM or the NIS. The technical components of MIDAS themselves have several political effects: they enact migration as a matter of data collection and recognition accuracy; they introduce feedback loops that tend toward the expansion of the system beyond a focus on migration control into a law enforcement context; and they perform crimmigration control as the 'Ferrari' of migration management, in other words a neutral and desirable 'next step' in border control practices for states in the Global South. Examining the independent effects of technical tools on human practices is crucial to properly grasping the reasons why, and the mechanisms through which, crimmigration control expands and becomes depoliticized underneath a veneer of technical neutrality and complexity. Nonetheless, a pragmatist conception of technology—which recognizes that nonhuman technologies can shape human practices, perceptions, and identities, yet only humans can engage in normative deliberation and choose between political alternatives—is useful in contesting these mechanisms of depoliticization by focusing on moments of rupture, uncertainty, and debate in which the contingency of Nigerian border control practices is momentarily apparent. It is in these moments that the politics of crimmigration control in the Global South is most visible, and in which competing visions of what 'migration' is are decided.

Chapter 9 – Conclusion: Enacting the 'crimmigrant other' in the Global South

> *It is at the point of emergence, before things are completely stabilized or black-boxed, that one most easily observes the mutual uptake of the social and the natural. […] Once the resulting settlements are normalized (social order) or naturalized (natural order), it becomes difficult to rediscover the contested assumptions that were freely in play before stability was effected.*
>
> – Sheila Jasanoff (2004a: 278–279).

After I had initially decided to focus in this research on the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and its Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS), I came across several journalistic and activist accounts of the deployment of this system in countries like Nigeria and Niger. Some of these accounts represented MIDAS as a crucial component in 'the EU's strategy in the war on migration' (Privacy International, 2019). Others presented the system as one among many tools within an expanding global network enabling the surveillance and policing of migrants, involving actors such as Frontex, the US Department of State, and Interpol in addition to local government agencies (Zandonini, 2019). I was intrigued by how explicitly Orwellian this system appeared in such accounts. The idea of a global surveillance network raised the questions of why exactly states in Africa agree to deploy a system supposedly aimed at facilitating forced deportations from the Global North, and why MIDAS was still largely overlooked by academic research. When delving further into the empirical material, and later interviewing IOM officials and observing their capacity-building practices in Nigeria, it became clear that presenting the system as a globally interoperable surveillance network did not reflect the empirical realities of how exactly MIDAS operates. Far from my initial conception of an exceptionally pervasive and

technologically advanced surveillant assemblage, the everyday operation of MIDAS instead often appeared exceedingly mundane. IOM officials' accounts of developing and deploying the system were often highly technical and seemingly devoid of politics. Yet, as I have argued throughout this thesis, the lack of spectacle surrounding MIDAS is precisely why this system is so interesting, and why a critical appraisal of its role in shaping global crimmigration control practices is so important. I have endeavored to show that representations and conceptualizations of novel digital border control tools as politically neutral, due to their technical nature, are themselves some of the key mechanisms driving the increasing merging of the logics and practices of migration control and criminal justice on a global level.

In this thesis, I set out to examine the development and deployment of MIDAS in Nigeria as a case study of the broader global phenomenon of the increasing digitalization of border controls. As outlined in Chapter 2, this research addressed remaining research lacunae in the field of border criminology relating to the role of Southern actors in shaping global practices of crimmigration control, the postcolonial dimensions of migration control interventions carried out by international organizations such as the IOM, and the impact of novel digital technologies in contributing to the merging of migration control and criminal justice. To address these research gaps, I set out a theoretical framework synthesizing the literature on performativity and pragmatism in Chapter 3, which I then utilized to analyze primary empirical data in Chapters 5–8. Below, I set out the key findings of this research, and in so doing highlight the contributions of this thesis to the existing literature on border criminology.

I have carried out this research amid a critical juncture in the digitalization of border controls. As I write this conclusion, the emerging global architecture of digital crimmigration control is still in flux. Novel technologies—including various biometric systems, blockchain, and artificial intelligence—are currently reshaping the landscape of migration control as well as the governance of refugees and asylum (Cheesman, 2022). The United Nations (UN) has

established a 'UN Legal Identity Agenda' aiming to 'provide legal identity for all' by the year 2030 (UNSD, 2022). Actors such as the IOM have already argued that the expansion of biometric border control technologies will be a crucial component in this endeavor, which has created a 'nexus between migration, displacement, the protection of migrants, and universal access to legal identity' (IOM, 2021b: 7). Although framed in terms of human rights and access to social services, the findings of this thesis suggest that biometric and other surveillance technologies rolled out in the name of legal identity also come with a significant risk of subjecting migrants to increasing levels of scrutiny and suspicion.

Although large institutional actors and states often focus on the capacity of novel digital tools to increase the efficiency and speed of border control and refugee management practices, activists and non-governmental organizations have urged governments around the world to more carefully weigh the risks and benefits of new biometric technologies (The Engine Room and Oxfam, 2018). The expansion of biometric recognition systems in the context of surveillance and policing is also currently the subject of much political contestation in the United States and in Europe (ACLU, 2021; Ragazzi et al., 2021). In a 2021 report, the Office of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) called for a moratorium on the use of automated biometric recognition technologies in public spaces.

How and to what extent these technologies will be used in a crimmigration control context in the future is still an open question. Engaging in debates regarding the risks, benefits, and broader political implications of these technologies requires a critical appraisal of how they have been developed and how they influence human practices once they are deployed on the ground. A key takeaway from this research is that we need to be attentive to the political significance of decisions that are being made by technical experts out of view from the public. As technologies are always designed by someone and for some purpose, these experts also implicitly rely on a socially specific conception of migration as a particular

kind of social problem, which is then subjected to their technical 'solutions.' Once these decisions have been made, and the new digital tools become normalized, 'it becomes difficult to rediscover the contested assumptions that were freely in play before stability was effected' in the words of Sheila Jasanoff (2004a: 278–279). Thus, the technical tools developed to 'solve' or 'manage' migration in turn determine what kind of social problem global mobility really is. Katja Franko (2020: 83–84) has argued that

> The construction of the crimmigrant other thus has a number of productive effects. These include the daily reinstatement of an unequal global order and its hierarchies of citizenship […] The crimmigrant other is a "failed citizen" who does not belong to the national "community of value."

In this thesis, I have suggested that the 'crimmigrant other' is not only socially constructed through discourses about criminality, deviance, and belonging, but also materially enacted through mundane technologies that quietly merge the fields of migration control and criminal justice, and represent border crossers as inherently suspicious until biometrically verified.

Moreover, I have argued that given the global political dynamics underpinning the current deployment of biometric control technologies—in short, postcolonial hierarchy—these debates must be inclusive of voices and experiences from the Global South as well. In this thesis, I have advocated the democratization of border criminology through an examination of the role of Southern actors in shaping crimmigration control practices. I have also advocated the decolonization of this field by mounting an epistemic challenge to Northern-produced discourses regarding the political neutrality of border control technologies. These two considerations underpin the key findings of this research.

The merging of migration control and criminal justice as a global phenomenon

First, I have sought to demonstrate the analytical value of highlighting the role of Southern actors in shaping contemporary practices of crimmigration control on a global level. Border criminologists have demonstrates in other contexts that 'criminalizing mobility is not simply taught or imposed in a top-down fashion by global agencies concerned with migration dynamics and problems' (Vigneswaran, 2013: 123). So too, the case of MIDAS in Nigeria demonstrates that the relationship between novel border control technologies and global crimmigration control practices cannot be fully grasped without accounting for the political motivations of the Southern actors that translate systems such as MIDAS into specific local contexts.

This research contributes to the literature on the externalization of border control practices (Stock et al., 2019; Ford and Lyons, 2013; Martin, 2017; Badalič, 2019) by demonstrating that Southern state agencies are not only actors to which Northern states outsource border controls (Frelick et al., 2016; Lavenex, 2016), but also themselves externalize the development of border control technologies and training curricula to international organizations such as the IOM. In Nigeria, federal authorities have good political reasons for doing so.

Domestically, partnership with the IOM confers symbolic authority upon the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), which reaffirms the political power of the organization vis-à-vis other federal and local state agencies. As one IOM official put it, 'whoever has MIDAS has the power' (Field diary, 5th August 2021). The technical infrastructure of the system—whereby all border crossing points are connected to the central server at NIS headquarters, and all data must pass through this server in Abuja—also reaffirms the legitimacy of the NIS within the broader ongoing struggle for territorialization at the national

level. In the words of NIS official Benjamin, 'MIDAS has made it clear that it is the Federal Government, not the states, who is in charge here' (Field diary, 26th August 2021).

Internationally, the deployment of MIDAS constitutes a performance of 'biometric statehood' by Nigerian federal officials, whereby state capacity—and thus political legitimacy—is demonstrated through the collection of biometric data at borders, and the use of this data for law enforcement purposes. These performances allow Nigerian federal authorities to 'be active in the international system' (NIS officer Gabriel, field diary, 26th August 2021) by entering into international partnerships together with actors such as the UK Home Office, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, and the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force. Regionally, the deployment of MIDAS and its role in expanding Nigeria's National Biometric Identity Card and Foreigner Registration systems allows the NIS to fulfil its obligations as a member state of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Thus, the system demonstrates to other ECOWAS states that Nigerian authorities 'can control their borders too' (IOM official Jayden, interview, 6th April 2021).

Analyzing Nigerian federal agencies' deployment of MIDAS as a performance of 'biometric statehood' foregrounds the agency of these authorities, while situating this agency within the scripts and standards of global crimmigration control. These standards, as outlined in Chapters 7 and 8, have been developed primarily in the Global North, and then transmitted into the Global South by organizations such as the IOM. Thus, conceptualizing crimmigration control as a global phenomenon highlights the agency of Southern actors, and demonstrates how this agency is shaped and constrained by contemporary postcolonial hierarchies. These hierarchies are partly socioeconomic, as they relate to material inequalities as well as a dependence on natural resource incomes and foreign aid. As Philippe Frowd (2020: 72) argues, Northern-funded capacity-building interventions are 'dependent on the prior existence of an unequal distribution of capital between teacher and learner,' and indeed

the policy goals of Northern donor states significantly shape the IOM's project proposal process. Furthermore, the nature of postcolonial hierarchy is also epistemic, as the architecture of MIDAS is decisively shaped by operational 'best practices' and international technical standards—that is, expert knowledge—that is largely produced by Northern states and by Northern-dominated organizations such as the IOM. By providing Southern states with new digital border control systems, the organization not only helps these states achieve pre-existing goals related to migration management, but also introduces new understandings of how exactly migration should be governed. In other words, built into the technical infrastructure of MIDAS is a particular conception of 'what is a migrant' (IOM official Tom, interview, 24th February 2021). In Nigeria, the system partly enacts migration as a law enforcement and criminal justice issue by expanding the technical, operational, and legal interlinkages between these fields of governance.

The technical tools that compose MIDAS, despite their mundanity, thus reinforce the expansion of 'the digital version of crimmigration, where immigration and criminal law converge via the processing of data collected' on a global level (Ferraris, 2022: 10). The standardization of automated biometric border control technologies globally also contributes to a standardized view of the inherent suspiciousness of those not yet biometrically verified. This suspicion is underpinned by the desire to 'protect spaces of privileged sociality against unwanted entrants' within the contemporary context of postcolonial inequality (Jacobsen and Rao, 2018: 26). Southern actors themselves actively participate in the expansion of this global phenomenon, yet it is important to avoid unitary notions of 'the Global South' and instead examine which actors specifically, and for what political reasons, participate in, resist, and reshape global dynamics of crimmigration control.

The politics of border control technologies: Contingency, accountability, and the role of experts

This research also contributes to the burgeoning literature on novel technologies of border control (Amicelle et al., 2015; Aradau and Tazzioli, 2020; Jeandesboz, 2016; Molnar, 2021; Scheel et al., 2019), by focusing specifically on the role of these technologies in strengthening interconnections between the fields of migration control and criminal justice (Amelung, 2021; Franko Aas, 2006; Milivojevic, 2019a). By examining MIDAS through a framework that synthesizes the literatures on performativity and pragmatism, I have argued that the system has political effects independently of the extent to which it transforms practices at border crossing points on the ground. Indeed, the IOM's officials are aware of the material limitations of MIDAS and recognize that biometric technologies are not always necessarily the best tool for governing migration: 'I think in many states where we have MIDAS projects, I'm not sure if it really lacks biometric data collection at the borders […] I don't think biometrics are the way to go for migration' (Zahra, interview, 19th March 2021). Yet, the effects of MIDAS reach beyond their immediate impact or practical utility on the ground. Their political significance arises from how they recast migration specifically as a problem of data accuracy, expanded biometric data collection, and neutral technical expertise. These effects are less about whether biometric border controls are 'actually' more efficient, reliable, and secure, and more about whether perceptions of their neutrality and necessity are widely accepted. The proliferation of these tools is not necessarily dependent on their practical successes, as in Chapter 8 I argued that even their failure can be recast as a reason for their further expansion; thus, 'there is no opt-out, whether or not biometry works' (Gunnarsdóttir and Rommetveit, 2017: 200).

Although many contemporary digital border control tools—such as those deployed at the US–Mexican and EU external borders—have been met with political controversy, the technical components of MIDAS result in less political resistance due to their mundane

nature. These tools are presented by the IOM as a neutral, technical solution to the social 'problem' of ordering migration by making it legible to states. MIDAS does not reduce migrants to 'bare life' and its deployment cannot be characterized as spectacular or exceptional; rather, the system is constitutive of the normal, everyday operation of crimmigration control on a global level. As Valeria Ferraris (2022: 11) has argued: 'There is no state of exception or extra-legality here […] Massive data collection and the subsequent data interoperability are instruments which not only define who is or can be legal, but also who is a potential criminal.' Systems such as MIDAS serve to reinforce a technological solutionism that shifts 'accountability away from governments and human actors towards digital databases and algorithms' by enacting migration as a governable problem—devoid of politics and postcolonial hierarchy—that can be efficiently managed by neutral technical tools (Metcalfe and Dencik, 2019: 13).

In this thesis, I have demonstrated how the development and deployment of MIDAS are underpinned by discourses and practices that aim to depoliticize the system and neutralize the role of the IOM in global migration governance. In Chapter 7, I demonstrated how the IOM engages shifts political accountability onto local government agencies through its pedagogical performances, and onto the technical components of MIDAS themselves by presenting the system as a natural and neutral next step in the digitization of border control. The increasing technical complexity and interoperability of systems makes it difficult to uncover the politics that underpinned their initial development and the merging of previously disparate practices of migration control and criminal justice (Ferraris, 2022).

By highlighting the performative effects of technical tools themselves, I sought to highlight that these devices are not neutral. By conceptualizing them in pragmatist terms as tools developed in view of solving specific kinds of social problems, I have argued that while novel technologies exert political impacts independently of the intentions of their designers and operators, nonetheless their initial development is contingent upon the uniquely human

process of normative deliberation between several alternative courses of action. Migration is not an objectively knowable, neutral problem that can be dispassionately assessed and governed by technical experts. As Stephan Scheel, Evelyn Ruppert, and Funda Ustek-Spilda (2019: 579) have argued: 'what is known, negotiated and targeted as migration is mediated by a plethora of data practices […] These data practices, while often framed as matters of technocratic expertise, are of course political.' Behind each new digital border control tool are moments of deliberation, debate, and negotiation regarding the utility and desirability of these new technologies, as well as discussions regarding the kinds of social problems they are supposedly meant to solve. Once these tools proliferate and recede into the mundane background of everyday life, however, their contingency becomes increasingly difficult to uncover.

The kind of expertise that is currently seen as relevant to the management of migration has been decisively shaped by the epistemic assumptions and social attitudes of the Global North. Contemporary digital border control tools have primarily been funded and developed by Northern states and non-state organizations, in response to specific conceptions of migration as a problem of risk management that must balance the needs of state security with those of facilitating economic cross-border movement. Contesting this view, and unveiling the postcolonial politics that underpins contemporary global crimmigration control practices, requires decolonizing the field of border criminology by challenging the epistemological and ontological assumptions that underpin dominant conceptions of the nature of technology in human societies. One avenue for mounting this challenge is to conceptualize technologies themselves as reshaping practices of crimmigration control in ways that are irreducible to their human designers, yet contingent upon the postcolonial social conditions in which these humans deliberated upon the utility of these new tools.

The upshot of this view is that it undermines the supposed neutrality of technical experts, and reconceptualizes their role in the politics of migration control. These experts cannot be neutral as their preferred 'solutions' to migration management presuppose socially and historically specific conceptions of what kind of problem migration really is. Thus, their role is not to act as the ultimate authority that decides what constitutes 'proper' migration management, but rather to engage with all relevant publics to better understand what kinds of political alternatives are available to them. In this view,

> the role of the expert in democratic societies is not to make policy or to tell people what to think, but to alert people to possible ways in which their thinking about matters of importance may be improved […] all affected parties [should] be heard from not only during the planning stages of significant public projects, but during the stages of their implementation as well (Hickman, 2001: 6, 61).

Hearing from all parties affected by migration requires 'an awareness of the various aspects of global inter-connectedness and inter-dependence' (Franko Aas, 2012b: 10). Thus, the role of the expert in the context of contemporary global crimmigration control practices is not to impose an authoritative view on the kinds of technical tools that should be utilized to manage migration, but to better understand the relationship between these tools and the divisions, hierarchies, and mechanisms of exclusions upon which they are based and which they, in turn, enact.

Limitations

All qualitative research must wrestle with the issue of subjectivity. Throughout this thesis, the arguments I have put forth are based on my own subjective interpretation of the primary empirical material I have gathered through interviews and field observations. These interpretations, in turn, are shaped by my positionality as well as my pre-existing beliefs regarding the global politics of migration. Thus, I make no claims to have established

incontestable truths about the deployment of MIDAS in Nigeria; rather, I have attempted to set out warranted assertions by providing as much empirical detail as possible to support my claims and to contextualize my arguments.

While I argue that my findings can illuminate the politics underlying novel digital crimmigration control technologies more broadly, the evidence above is specific to the case of MIDAS in Nigeria. When interviewing IOM officials about the system, I tried my best to learn as much as possible about other country contexts as well, but ultimately this research was limited to an in-depth empirical examination of a single country case study. Indeed, I would expect experiences of the deployment of MIDAS to vary according to local political considerations in other countries, and establishing how much local dynamics shape the roll-out of a standardized system developed by an international organization itself constitutes an interesting and important question for further research. In my selection of potential cases I was limited to countries in which English was at least one of the dominant languages. However, in addition to having English as one of its official languages, Nigeria is also the country with the most extensive MIDAS installation, and for this reason fortunately represents a highly interesting case for critical research.

Interview-based and observational research will always raise questions regarding the reliability of participants, and whether practices in the field were shaped by the presence of the researcher. Indeed, even my IOM interlocutors in the field recognized that NIS officers were likely to 'put on a show for you' (Field diary, 29th July 2021). The organization's officials themselves were also likely mindful of my role as an academic researcher when presenting their views to me. Nonetheless, the claims made in this thesis are based upon the ways in which IOM officials perform their role in global migration management; their representations of their work to external audiences constitute an important component of these performances. Moreover, where possible I triangulated the empirical claims made by

IOM and NIS officials using other sources, including documentation and further observations.

Finally, despite advocating the democratization of border criminology through the examination of Southern agency in shaping global crimmigration control practices, I was unable to engage directly with Nigerian academics and activists to more collaboratively create knowledge regarding the deployment of MIDAS in the country. Before traveling to Nigeria, I attempted to reach out to several academics and non-governmental organizations in Abuja and other cities, yet sadly I received no responses to my inquiries. Thus, the agency of Nigerian federal authorities is still refracted through the lens of my own interpretation and analysis, without evaluation or moderation by Southern actors themselves. Fortunately, throughout the course of my doctoral studies I have benefitted from the critical feedback of many Northern and Southern academics when presenting my research, which has allowed me to continually refine and reconsider the arguments of this thesis.

Avenues for future research

In addition to the substantive arguments I have set out above, I have also attempted to lay theoretical and empirical foundations for future research. Thus far, I have conducted empirical research into the deployment of MIDAS only in a single country, Nigeria. As I write this conclusion, the system is operational in twenty states, thus raising the question of how local political dynamics impact the technical, operational, and legal configuration of a supposedly standardized system. IOM itself presents MIDAS as 'completely customizable' (IOM, 2018b: 2), yet in Nigeria at least, the technical architecture of the system was repeatedly determined by international standards and 'best practices.' In order to further develop the analysis presented in this thesis, it would be productive to examine how customizable MIDAS really is by comparing its deployment in several country contexts.

The theoretical framework set out in this thesis also provides a basis for examining other global technologies of border control. MIDAS is not the only technical tool operational in several countries and developed by UN agencies. For instance, the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the UN Office on Information and Communications Technology (UNOICT) have developed the goTravel 'software solution' which enhances interoperability between border control and law enforcement databases and allows 'law enforcement to obtain passenger data from (airline) carriers and conduct targeted analysis as well as share the findings of their data assessment' (UNOCT, n.d.). The emergent UN Legal Identity agenda also brings together a host of UN organizations, governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private companies to identify avenues for the development of new digital identity technologies and the expansion of existing ones (UNSD, 2022). Such initiatives raise questions regarding their relationship to postcolonial hierarchies, and the ways in which legal identity—within specific practical contexts for collecting identity data, such as border control—is framed as a social problem to which digital technologies are the preferred solution.

Concluding remarks

IOM official José told me in an interview that the organization was often critically interrogated by academics and activists who are suspicious of its political motivations:

> One gentleman from an international NGO was once saying that IOM is setting up or trying to have global domination through a database of biometrics in all its member states […] Everybody is thinking that we're aiming for global domination on biometrics. I said, "Are you serious? We are IOM, and we don't own anything!" There's this idea about us, you know, having some strange objectives and dark objectives to achieve global domination through biometrics. So, this is really interesting (Inteview, 2nd March 2021).

In this thesis, I have not argued that the organization's activities and discourses conceal a hidden agenda to establish a global surveillant assemblage, or that its officials self-consciously seek to subject all migrants to increased levels of scrutiny and suspicion. Through my interactions with dozens of IOM officials, I agree with Philippe Frowd's (2018: 1658) assessment that the work of the IOM is partly underpinned—whatever its other political dimensions—by a 'genuine humanitarianism' as well.

Nonetheless, I have sought to demonstrate that the political impacts of MIDAS, including its contribution to the expansion of crimmigration control practices, are not reliant on its human designers being motivated by a hidden agenda or nefarious intentions. The contemporary digital tools that are used to control borders are not neutral. Rather, through their mundane everyday operation, quietly reaffirm a hierarchy between the trusted few and the suspicious many at the border. The reification of such hierarchies is an emergent effect of a complex combination of political motivations and performative effects of the Southern actors that deploy systems like MIDAS, organizations like the IOM that develop these tools, and the technical components of the technologies themselves. More broadly, due to the ubiquity and complexity of the digital tools that shape our everyday lives, it is becoming increasingly difficult to locate responsibility for them in any particular individual or organization, or to hold these actors accountable for the political effects of these technical devices. In order to critique the exclusionary effects of digital border control technologies and achieve epistemic justice in the context of knowledge production about migration and criminal justice, the disparate and intersecting agencies of these various actors must be carefully disaggregated and empirically examined. In this way, we can avoid resorting to polemical attacks against any particular institution, whose representatives would inevitably simply defer accountability onto yet other actors. Thus, my hope is that this thesis contributes—however slightly—to more productive dialogue and critical discussion about the risks, benefits, and political implications of digital technologies at the border.

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