

Ph.D. Thesis – P.M. Frowd; McMaster University – Political Science

SECURING BORDERS IN WEST AFRICA

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SECURING BORDERS IN WEST AFRICA: TRANSNATIONAL ACTORS,
PRACTICES, AND KNOWLEDGES

By
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A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (2015)
Department of Political Science

McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Securing Borders in West Africa: Transnational Actors, Practices, and
Knowledges

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Number of pages: xiii, 150

LAY ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines efforts to boost border security in Senegal and Mauritania—two states on the Atlantic coast of West Africa—with emphasis on the international cooperation and knowledge transmission that emerges as part of these efforts. The dissertation argues that borders are not only lines on a map, but institutions in which security professionals compete and cooperate over questions such as who should carry out border control and how. It also argues that with security framed as a question of development and state capacity, securing borders becomes a question of statebuilding. To show this, the dissertation draws on data from interviews in law enforcement and national security agencies, embassies, and international organizations to provide a mapping of actors in the field of border security and their relations. Its empirical cases focus on joint migration patrols, border post construction, and the use of biometric identification

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines border security practices in West Africa, with emphasis on the effects of practices of international intervention. The dissertation advances an understanding of borders as institutional spaces, eschewing a view of borders as geographical features alone. It leverages this view of borders to examine the everyday practices of border control, focusing in particular on the security professionals who cooperate and compete over the meaning and enactment of border security. The dissertation draws from ethnographic fieldwork in Senegal and Mauritania to advance three case studies. First, it examines Spanish police cooperation with Senegal and Mauritania on the prevention of irregular migration by sea and land routes. Second, it analyzes Mauritania's construction of new border posts in response to migration and terrorism. Third, it looks into the adoption of biometric identification at airports and in official documents in Senegal and Mauritania. In each of these cases, the dissertation argues, everyday border security practices are framed in terms of capacity, with border control taking on the practical characteristics of statebuilding.

This dissertation makes three key contributions to knowledge. First, by focusing on the quotidian social and technical aspects of borders, it provides a view into the concrete knowledge practices and organizational politics that drive border control, even if they are of complex causality. Second, this dissertation contributes to security studies a theorization of the movement of security practices and understandings between global contexts. Third, by relying on fieldwork in closed and rarely accessible contexts, it provides a view into the functioning and social relations of West African fields of security.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would not have been possible without the belief, encouragement, investment, and sacrifice on the part of colleagues, friends, and family. I would like to thank my supervisor Peter Nyers for his consistent support for this dissertation and his enthusiasm for all my scholarly endeavours. Peter's composed assurance and belief have been infectious, and have given me the confidence needed to see through the various projects I've taken on while working with him. I would also like to thank the members of my dissertation committee, J. Marshall Beier has profoundly shaped my thinking about the discipline of International Relations, while Diane Enns has been a refreshing voice from outside it. I am also grateful to colleagues such as Mark Salter, who has tirelessly encouraged my ambitions and been a source of sage advice, and Michelle Dion, whose advice on academic practice has been tremendously helpful.

I am grateful for the institutional and financial support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), from which I was awarded a Doctoral Award, and the Government of Ontario, from which I was awarded an Ontario Graduate Scholarship. I am also grateful for the administrative support from Manuela Dozzi and Kathleen Hannan in the Department of Political Science at McMaster University. My desire to carry out fieldwork came with considerable costs, and I am particularly thankful to Privacy International for helping to cover a large part of them. I am very grateful to the Institute on Globalization and the Human Condition at McMaster University, which provided me financial support to go on research leave during the academic year. The fieldwork I carried out for this dissertation would not have been impossible without the help of key contacts. For my fieldwork in Mauritania, I would like to thank Saleh Cheikh, Amadou Sall, Cheikh Saad Bouh Camara, Mohamedou Moktar, and Martin Ewi. In Senegal, the help of Ababacar Diop, Abdoulaye Niang, and Fallou Kebe was essential. I am also greatly indebted to all of my interviewees for having shared their stories with me.

I could not have come this far without friends and family. I am truly privileged to have been surrounded by a truly great set of friends across the world, in particular Can Mutlu, Christopher Leite, Adam Sandor, Amrit Ahluwalia, Mike Di Gregorio, Liam Stockdale, Jennifer Mustapha-Vanderkooy, Mark Busser, Jessica Merolli, Heather Johnson, and Meagan Kinsella. I am thankful to my father Andrew, and my mother Yacine, for always stressing the value and dignity of education. Finally, this project is dedicated to my wife, Rabya, who missed me on too many evenings and weekends, and without whose love and patience this work could not have been completed.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

- ABC** – automated border control
ACBC – Africa Capacity-Building Centre (IOM)
AENEAS – Programme for financial and technical assistance to third countries in the area of migration and asylum (EU)
AFRICOM – US Africa Command
AMDH – Association Mauritanienne des Droits de l’Homme
AMPOS – Appui à la Modernisation de la Police Sénégalaise
ASACA – Appui à la Sûreté de l’Aviation Civile en Afrique
ANRPTS – Agence Nationale du Registre des Personnes et des Titres Sécurisés
ANT – Actor-Network Theory
AU – African Union
AUBP – African Union Border Programme
BOT – build, operate, and transfer
CFA – Communautés Financières d’Afrique
CGDev – Centre for Global Development
CNP – Cuerpo Nacional de Policía (Spain)
CRASAC – Cellule Régionale d’Assistance à la Sécurité de l’Aviation Civile
CRC4D – Civil Registration Centre for Development
CSS – critical security studies
DGSN – Direction Générale de la Sécurité Nationale
DAF – Direction de l’Automatisation des Fichiers
DPAF – Direction de la Police de l’Air et des Frontières
DPETV – Direction de la Police des Étrangers et des Titres de Voyage
DSE – Direction de la Sécurité de l’État
DST – Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire
EAC – East African Community
EC – European Commission
ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States
EDF – European Development Fund
EEAS – European External Action Service
EMP – Essentials of Migration Practice
EU – European Union
EURODAC – European Dactyloscopy
EUROSUR – European Border Surveillance System
Frontex – Frontières Extérieures [European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union]
GGSR – Groupement Général de la Sécurité des Routes
GIS – geographic information system
GIZ – German Development Agency (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit*)
GPS – Global Positioning System

IATA – International Air Travel Association
IBM – integrated border management
ICAO – International Civil Aviation Organization
ICMPD – International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IfS – Instrument for Stability
INTERPOL – International Criminal Police Organization
IOM – International Organization for Migration
IPS – international political sociology
JUSSEC – Justice et Sécurité
LSS – Léopold Sédar Senghor
MIDAS – Migration Information and Data Analysis System
MOU – memorandum of understanding
MRTD – machine-readable travel document
NCP – national contact point
NGO – non-governmental organization
NTWG – New Technologies Working Group
OAU – Organization for African Unity
OPP – obligatory passage point
PKD – Public Key Directory
PIRS – Personal Identification and Registration System
PRSP – Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
REC – regional economic community
SCOT – social construction of technology
SEF – Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (Portugal)
SICM – Système Intégré de Contrôle Migratoire
SIVE – Sistema Integrado de Vigilancia Exterior (Spain)
SNEDAI – Société Nationale d’Édition de Documents Administratifs et d’Identification
SSK – Sociology of Scientific Knowledge
ST – securitization theory
STP – Standardized Training Packages
STS – science and technology studies
TAG – Technical Advisory Group
TPMN – Touche Pas À Ma Nationalité
TRIP – Traveller Identification Programme
UID – Unique Identification
UN – United Nations
UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNODC – United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
VIS – Visa Information System
WAPIS – West Africa Police Information System

DECLARATION OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

This project is solely the work of the author, and the contents of this thesis are not the result of any collaboration. Any mistakes herein are solely those of the author.

1 Introduction

[Sahel] states have insufficient operational and strategic capacities in the wider security, law enforcement and judicial sectors (military, police, justice, border management, customs) to control the territory, to ensure human security, to prevent and to respond to the various security threats, and to enforce the law (conduct investigations, trials etc.) with due respect to human rights. This is notably reflected in the insufficiency of legal frameworks and law enforcement capacity at all levels, ineffective border management, lack of modern investigation techniques and methods of gathering, transmitting and exchanging information, as well as obsolete or inexistent equipment and infrastructure.

- European External Action Service, *Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel*

Combating irregular migration and establishing comprehensive migration management systems can contribute to enhancing national and international security and stability.

- African Union, *African Common Position on Migration and Development*

[The biometric identification system] will enable us to build a biometric database of all inhabitants in Mauritania, which will enhance national security and establish key statistics needed to take decisions about targeted and effective developmental policies.

- Mohamed Ould Boilil, Minister of Interior, Mauritania

1.1 A study of borderwork and security in West Africa

As counterterrorism and border control have shifted up the global agenda, a variety of corollary security practices have gained prominence. Beyond costly and headline-grabbing military interventions, we have witnessed a raft of practices including hardened migration control, biometric citizen identification, reinforced airport security, capacity-building and training of security forces, and a greater emphasis on border ‘management’. These changes are well documented and debated in their European and North American contexts, but have been taking place across the globe. Africa, in particular, remains an analytical blind spot despite the fact that security practices there around borders, migration and identification have seen a rapid yet unique proliferation. West African states’ capacities to exercise control over their borders, territory and populations have become a crucial site of intervention by a range of transnational and local actors. Postcolonial states in Africa, continually seeking to better knowledge of and authority over their territory and population, are increasingly turning towards new security technologies and relations. These are most striking in the field of border control, an activity that is not limited to patrolling the territorial border. Contemporary border politics in West Africa testify to the fact that ‘border control’ is about much more than simply controlling a territorial line.

It is in West Africa, particularly in the Sahel region, that many of these changes are most striking and current. In this region, we hear, weak states or lack of capacity provide a safe haven for terrorism, facilitate smuggling and trafficking, and lead to weak governments that do not know or control their populations. As a result, a range of transnational forms of intervention, involving global as much as

local actors, have sought to reinforce security provision. In Senegal and Mauritania, the focal countries for this dissertation, we see interventions around naval patrols, the construction of border posts, and the deployment of biometric identification solutions. In both Senegal and Mauritania, which are respectively origin and transit countries for irregular migration to the EU, local gendarmeries and navies have cooperated with the Spanish Guardia Civil (paramilitary police) and FRONTEX (the EU's external borders agency) to jointly patrol their maritime borders. Both countries also benefit from the Guardia Civil's border control capacity-building projects. In Mauritania, the EU and International Organization for Migration (IOM) have helped the country renew its border post infrastructure, driven by fears of terrorist infiltration. Both countries have moved to improve their national identification infrastructures through biometrics—the use of bodily identifiers for identification purposes. Senegal has biometric ID cards, passports and visas and is deploying a biometric entry-exit system at all border crossings. Mauritania's government completely revamped its national identification documents and re-enrolled its population in the face of popular contestation on ethnic lines.

These diverse practices, taken in the name of border control, are significant for four main reasons. First, they highlight the nature of borders as heterogeneous spaces that extend well beyond the territorial line. Controlling borders therefore brings together a diversity of actors, practices and knowledges across space. A major contribution of this research is therefore to shift the emphasis to 'border-work' as a practice that can include migrant interception patrols at the territorial border as much as the biometric enrolment of populations further inland. Focusing on border-work in Africa pushes us to think about practices of inclusion and exclusion throughout territory, and contests the view of African borders as simple lines that are poorly drawn colonial holdovers, hampering the continent's development. Second, they create new relationships and linkages between security actors. Investigating these can tell us about the functioning of international organizations, how actors work together on the ground, how EU's policies are implemented in practice EU practices of border control in sub-Saharan Africa have stimulated the formation of new military and police relations. The research avoids attributing excessive smoothness to security and showcases the materiality of security, contesting the idea of security as a 'finished article' anchored in discourse alone. By investigating the level of practices through an ethnographic approach, the research shows the complexity of state formation in Africa and the divergent desires and outcomes of the multiple agencies that operate around African borders. The research is therefore instructive about new modes of global governance, since it probes the multi-scalar forms of practices of legibility and the work that goes into maintaining them. Third, they incarnate and sometimes transmit particular culturally-situated ways of doing border control. Where there is no direct intervention, there is emulation or adaptation of global standards. This shows us the pedagogical sense of security. Security practices are transmitted

through emulation: the adoption of biometric technology is a product of the interplay of integration/intervention (at a regulatory level) and emulation (at a normative level). Fourth, these relationships point to a broader *rapprochement* between security and development, where development stands for modernization but also a form of humanitarian subjectivity. Capacity to enact surveillance is intricately associated with the consolidation of state power and the security that flows from it. Security is therefore a technique (of justification) and a technology (that enacts the border and produces identities). The research deepens our understanding of the security politics of a region that has so far been under-researched from this standpoint. More specifically, the research highlights the fusion of security with development across policies, evident in the framing of security measures by African states and foreign interveners. While security is a powerful signifier in most societies, the invocation of development in the African context has a strong rhetorical force. This suggests that security and surveillance are as much about care as they are about control.

The background against which these practices must be read includes a cross-border terrorist threat throughout the Sahel region, the continuing desire of migrants to make the risky journey towards Europe, and the low governing capacity attributed to the region's states. What these practices demonstrate, neatly illustrated by the quotes above, is the salience of transnationalism in West Africa's security context, but also a logic of development: modernization and capacity-building are the order of the day. Taking identification, border control and migration management together, we find that security is often a question of *legibility*. Surveillance and modes of visibility are inextricably linked to what James C. Scott, in his 1998 book *Seeing Like a State*, calls 'legibility'. Legibility describes the idea of better knowing, seeing, mapping, and controlling nature and society. It can be understood in the context of this dissertation as better knowledge (of population and territory), capabilities (in terms of expertise and material) and control (of movement or of identity). In what ways do West African states pursue this legibility? What kinds of actors, practices, knowledges, discourses and objects are implicated in this pursuit? By tackling these questions, we can better understand the proliferation of borders, how security and development are intertwined, and how African states negotiate globalization.

The 'big question' that each chapter in this dissertation will strive to answer is: *What are the everyday security practices around borders in West Africa, and what subtends them?*. This project is concerned with the governance of borders but also the logics that underpin these governance practices. As such, it asks questions about actors (human and non-human), their practices (discursive and material), and the subject and state formations that result from this politics of security and surveillance. This brings forward three more specific questions, which are tackled in the three sections that follow this one.

1.2 Theorizing borders

The first major concern of this dissertation is finding out what actors enact border control in West Africa, and how we can theorize their relations, roles and arrangements. In short, it is a mapping or topography exercise focused on the spatial and organizational arrangement of actors and their practices. The structuring question is *Who are the actors involved in the governance of borders in West Africa?*. This question asks ‘who’, but first demands a definition of what the ‘governance of borders’ is. This necessarily implicates contemporary debates about what borders are, who governs them, and what borders are made of. The linkages between border security, migration management, and national identification come into clearer focus. Once this analytical scope is established, the question of ‘who’ can be better answered, through mapping and a critical analysis of relevant actors. First of all, we have to ask ‘what are borders’, and what practices are associated with them. Second, we have to theorize the actors themselves.

1.2.1 Thinking beyond lines in the sand

This dissertation is founded on a view, grounded in observation and well established in academic literature, that borders are not simply ‘lines in the sand’. That is to say that borders are not simply territorial demarcations, but sites of governance oriented around inclusion and exclusion, which are necessarily of selective permeability. This dissertation uses the issues of mobility and migration to critically examine the emergence and dynamics of security arrangements in West Africa.

To speak of borders means defining them, and to speak of governance is to mean talking about a particular type of practice. What is a border? The contemporary consensus on borders in social science points out the proliferation, multiplication, hardening and displacement of borders. This is in opposition to the ‘geopolitical trajectory’ (Walters 2002) of thinking about borders, which would see them as geographical barriers along which inside and outside or justice and anarchy rest. The consensus in question emerges from a shift from thinking about borders to a more social constructivist view concerned with border-*ing* as a process.

The primary question, once we establish the nature of borders, is to understand what the process of bordering is. This is where the concept of ‘borderwork’, from Chris Rumford (2008) is particularly useful. Rumford uses ‘borderwork’ to refer to practices, by states as much as by citizens, that build and maintain borders: these can be control oriented practices like patrolling the sea and training border guards but also include practices that undermine control like police corruption or the agency of irregular migrants. Borderwork is a broadening move that highlights

the *practices* of actors: that is to say their routinized actions. Borderwork, then, helps us to appreciate the making (and unmaking) of borders.

1.2.2 A socio-technical perspective on border control

The empirical terrain of border control in West Africa—its heterogeneous, disaggregated, material, ideological facets—demands a re-articulation of how we theorize the organization and agency of border control actors. To do so, this dissertation draws on actor-network theory (ANT) which is the theoretical backbone of my dissertation. What is ANT? It is rather hard to define, as it is not—as the name might suggest—a theory in the sense of a coherent explanatory set of propositions. Rather, ANT is a methodological approach and conceptual toolbox. ANT’s origins lie in the sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK) and in science and technology studies (STS), in work on the social construction of technology (SCOT) and more generally in the poststructuralist trend towards social construction. STS, according to John Law, argues that “science is a set of practices that are shaped by their historical, organisational and social context [and] scientific knowledge is something that is constructed within those practices” (Law 2004: 8). The thrust of social studies of technology writ large is that knowledge is the product of a social-technical system that involves human—and most strikingly, non-human—actors. Michel Callon (1986) draws our attention to the dynamic and continually fluid nature of networks, and he rejects the narrow view of the social as a discrete scene independent of the material, tangible world. Herein arise the themes of heterogeneity, dispersed agency, and materiality that are the hallmarks of ANT.

When applied to border control actors, ANT pushes us to think about their organization as a *socio-technical* one. This means that human and non-human actors are considered equal in their capacity to make things happen (the principle of ‘generalized symmetry’), and that the ‘social’ is only as durable as the consistently bundled and unbundled sets of associations that make it possible. These kinds of associations—assemblages—are the main lens through which the organization of border control actors is articulated here. Although this might suggest a rejection of the structuralist sociology of Pierre Bourdieu, much of the line of questioning in this dissertation echoes his research sensibilities. This project is concerned with the mapping of actors’ self-understandings and routinized practices. The existence of prestige in the social world of security, of competition between security actors, and our capacity to think about them as part of some structure (be it a field or network) should not necessarily tie us to an orthodox adoption of Bourdieu’s worldview. Similarly, while the language of fields persists throughout, but the use of assemblage reminds us that these fields are situated in other webs of social relations that blend global and local and include a diversity of agency.

1.3 Logics of security and development

With the definition of borders and borderwork actors aside, the dissertation turns to the knowledges that underpin of borderwork. The second question on which this dissertation centres is ‘*What are the logics through which borders have become sites of security intervention in Africa?*’. The question of ‘logics’ is fraught: as it raises a further question about the relationship between ideology, practices and norms. This question is intended to tackle the way that discursive as well as material factors are involved in shaping the meaning of security, and to highlight the way that ‘security’ is subtended by corollary practices of care and control such as surveillance, development, and capacity-building. The question also seeks to get at the underpinnings of border control and to shine light on what makes border control practices seem self-evident.

1.3.1 Security knowledge on the move

The dissertation builds on the discursive view of security articulated by securitization theory (Buzan et al. 1998) and practice-oriented approaches (e.g. Bigo 2001, Balzacq 2008) to theorize the emergence of security knowledges. Both of these approaches see security as something that is enacted socially through an intersubjective process of construction. However, more sociological approaches drawing on Foucault’s and Bourdieu’s sociologies embed the context of securitization better. If we think of security as emerging from the struggles of security professionals rather the elite discourses alone (Bigo 2012) we necessarily draw attention to what Bourdieu (1977) calls the ‘doxa’ of a field. This doxa refers to practical, tacit knowledges inherent in particular actors’ perceptions of a field. But security knowledge is more than this—it is also the standards, norms, best practices and objects that transmit understandings of how security (and by extension border control) should be done. These ‘cultures of border control’ (Zaiotti 2011) not only force us to examine the sociological questions of *who* controls borders, but also the question of how ‘security’ as a concept is constructed. Border control normativities are reflected in policy documents and official pronouncements (Schengen Borders Code, Frontex Risk Assessments, ICAO Doc 9303) but also in actors’ practices and relations.

This dissertation also theorizes the movement of this security knowledge, emphasizing the fact that knowledges—usually moving from north to south—are durable and able to act at a distance to dictate specific ways of doing border control. To do so, it draws on the concept of the (im)mutable mobile from ANT, which describes “convenient packages that hold together and maintain their coherence even when they are moved, enabling them to be effective in a variety of settings.” (Kendall 2004: 65). This focus on the mobility of knowledge relies on an understanding of the international space as a set of ‘sites’ between which objects and ideas can move with varying degrees of success.

1.3.2 Security as care and control

Having discussed the mobility of knowledge, and established a pedagogical and capacity-building aspect in security in the global south, I turn to an examination of the worldview of security. This worldview, the dissertation argues, is a view of security that straddles care and control. Rather than assume a fusion or ‘nexus’ of security and development like in much of the literature on post-conflict reconstruction and statebuilding, this dissertation sees them as two sides of the same coin.

First, security is associated to state capacity, which means the ability of states to enact sovereignty through surveillance of territory and population. This refers us back to Scott’s concept of legibility, which ties in to long-standing techniques inherent to modernity such as surveillance, development, and bureaucracy. The desire for legibility, Scott argues, stems from a ‘high-modernist’ worldview that predominates in states’ grand projects: it thrives in the joining together of Enlightenment will to order and a weak civil society. Legibility is essential as it points us to the issue of *capacity*: the technological ability, willingness, and sensory capability of a state. This process of intervention makes security about modernization, which is a mode of reinforcing the state (through knowledge practices and equipment) as well as a mode of risk management (Hameiri 2010) that depends on the prevention of state failure and ties security intervention to a whole domain of administrative rationalization and state effectiveness. In the context of the Sahel region, where state power is often sporadic, intervention is intimately tied to improving the state’s ability to act and see comprehensively. Finally, security incorporates humanitarian thinking into its very fabric. Justifications for border patrols in the name of saving life, or for ID systems for the securing of citizenship rights, contribute to removing controversy and depoliticizing security practices.

1.4 Research approach

This research project is guided by an interdisciplinary international political sociology (IPS) approach which draws on critical social theory and embraces the empirically-minded insights of sociology and anthropology. The research is multi-sited, and uses multiple research sites in two countries to provide a variety of forms of evidence to sustain the broad theses of the dissertation. The IPS approach, favouring an emphasis on the interlinking of macro and micro, encourages me to identify global security norms as much as minutely local practices, and how webs of meaning and practice link the two together. To achieve this goal, I use a combination of policy analysis and an ethnographic approach combining semi-structured interviews and participant observation.

1.4.1 International political sociology

What is international political sociology (IPS)? International political sociology (IPS) is not a discipline, but rather an attempt to bring together streams of thought from IR and sociology as well as social and political theory. Didier Bigo and RBJ Walker argue, in their editorial for the initial issue of *International Political Sociology* in 2007, that the project is “a political sociology of problems that are identified by the overloaded term international” (2007: 4). Careful to insert many caveats and considerations into this argument, they call for an approach that privileges disciplinary openness, a rethinking of the scope of analysis away from the states system and an orientation to *practices* (broadly defined). Mark Salter summarizes the approach clearly in the same issue of the new journal, stating that

International political sociology balances theoretical analysis and empirical material, with an overtly political but not prescriptive frame. By focusing on the system of policies, practices, and discourses that govern particular intersections of the local, national, and global, international political sociology explores the intersections of power and authority that shape the governance of these specific institutions. By eschewing a strict linguistic turn, international political sociology examines not simply the language of politics but also a wider notion of discourse including practices, institutions, and authorities.
(2007: 49-50)

IPS methodology therefore makes use of methodological tools from sociology and conceptual tools from modern social theory to critically bring to light practices not confined to any scale of global or local. By drawing on ANT, this dissertation also keeps an inductive orientation to the social world it examines.

This dissertation takes up the task of being political without being overtly prescriptive, finding critical energy in the task of mapping actors, practices and knowledges. Bruno Latour’s view of the critic as “not the one who lifts the rugs from under the feet of the naïve believers, but the one who offers the participants arenas in which to gather” (2004: 246) is key to the sensibility of this project. In this project, that idea has been put in motion by a method of criticality through exposition. In other words, this project’s criticality comes from the exposition of everyday practice and its conditions of emergence.

1.4.2 Case selection and multi-sited ethnography

Putting an IPS approach into practice means examining particular sites of the international at which global and local forms of authority combine in interesting ways. My selection of Senegal and Mauritania as sites of fieldwork is driven by the fact that both countries display the kinds of security relationships that triggered my interest in this project: they maintain close cooperation with the EU

on the management of irregular migration, their security agencies have border security and anti-terrorism high on their agendas, and they have both launched initiatives to better ‘file’ citizens using biometrics. These countries are also part of a dynamic geographical context in the Sahel region has seen its strategic importance (and integration into security arrangements) growing. While Senegal and Mauritania are not unknown quantities in the migration literature (Choplin 2008; Kunz, Lavenex and Panizzon 2011), the security angle on their border control and identification policies is left largely unexplored. For example, in only one academic publication (see Brachet, Choplin, Pliez 2011) can any mention of Mauritania’s emerging biometric security apparatus be found, even though this technology is rapidly gaining ground in Africa.

Although I speak of states, my main research approach in this project is to undertake what George E. Marcus calls ‘multi-sited ethnography’ (1995), which emphasizes the possibilities of drawing global conclusions from in-depth studies of multiple and diverse research sites. Marcus establishes a six-point typology of types of multi-sited ethnography: follow the people, follow the thing, follow the metaphor, follow the plot/story/allegory, follow the life/biography, or follow the conflict. This dissertation sets out as an attempt to ‘follow the people’, but the principle of generalized symmetry—between human and non-human actors—of my methodological approach has meant that focusing on people alone was not a viable strategy. Following the ‘actors’ or the ‘life’, in my case, means to trace how they interact with each other, and how they understand their (border)work and relations with other actors. Following the ‘thing’ means taking into account the agency of objects (i.e. their effects). Following the ‘story’ and the ‘metaphor’ means to uncover the webs of meaning (in text, in interviews) that make particular concepts such as ‘border management’ be used in particular ways.

The IPS approach relies on an analysis of the social dimensions of international politics and lends itself neatly to methods that reveal the sociological realities of different sites of the ‘international’. That being said, this project does not rely on a gruelling 24 months of participant observation in one site, as might be the convention in the anthropological studies in which ethnography is the prevalent method. Rather, it relies on five months of research across multiple sites. This dissertation is not so much ethnographic as much as it is a project driven by an ethnographic sensibility (Wedeen 2009) to an ongoing and reciprocal engagement with the subjects of research. This is also a multi-*scalar* project: it examines the global and local and their complex imbrications: by studying similar actors in multiple sites, it does not seek to recreate the coherence of just one ‘field’ of actors, or make generalizable conclusions. The use of an ethnographic sensibility in this project reflects its purpose—to provide a view of a patchwork of actors—and as such the contours of the sites of study come into relief as much from the breadth of participants in the study as from the depth of interaction with them.

1.4.3 Gathering the evidence

This project is built on five months of research in Senegal and Mauritania, during which I undertook 57 semi-structured interviews with personnel involved in border management, from policy-makers to officers trained by various capacity-building activities. I also spoke to migrants, smugglers, embassy security liaisons, staff in border management organizations, EU diplomats, think-tank leaders, development workers, police officers, customs directors, soldiers and gendarmes. In order to procure the critical mass of interviews required, I used a ‘snowball method’ based on existing contacts. This snowball methodology was particularly revelatory about *relations* between actors as it tapped into pre-existing relationships between research subjects, and gave me crucial insights into the formal and informal perceptions actors had of each other. At times, I sought out and obtained multiple interviews with the same interlocutors to re-examine existing material or to compare perspectives of different actors. Throughout, I tried to remain aware that research subjects wear multiple ‘hats’ (and straddle public and private), and should not be pigeonholed by the role in which they are formally interviewed. In some cases, providing information to interviewees about (non-secret) activities that other interviewees and organizations are doing was a productive strategy. This enables the researcher to establish some form of credibility and expertise to integrate more easily into the security field. The research process of focusing on different ‘sites’ of the international was particularly fruitful. In both Senegal and Mauritania, I was able to visit the main international airports and was also lucky enough to gain admission to a workshop on counterterrorism in Mauritania. These specific spaces, and many more, shaped my thinking about the importance of spaces where fields of practice ‘meet’.

To access the field, I used a variety of formal and informal contact methods and forms of expertise. Formal means were most useful when approaching expatriate security professionals. Emails, LinkedIn messages, formal appointment requests, and phone calls to office numbers worked best. I used formal scripts from the university’s research ethics office out of diligence but also as an exposition of credibility. Reaching Senegalese and Mauritanian security actors, who tended to use formality as a deflection mechanism, meant using more informal and sometimes fortuitous means. In Mauritania, I drew on contacts of the families with whom I stayed, taxi drivers who happened to be gendarmes seeking extra income, and even stumbled upon security professionals’ relatives in the small Mauritanian diaspora in Canada. A chance encounter at a local development NGO in Nouakchott also yielded a major breakthrough: I was put in touch with an in-house finance professional who had been invited to speak at a training workshop on counter-terrorism destined for Mauritanian security forces. This person showed me a list of attendees—which included every major state security actor in the country—and put me in touch with the workshop organizer with a view to letting me in to the workshop. Once I established my credibility (university business

cards came in handy) with the workshop’s organizer, I was invited to sit in for the two weeks. This guaranteed me face time—rather than the endless wait for an authorization through formal channels—with key Mauritanian border security actors. In Senegal, similar chance encounters were instrumental in ensuring my access to senior police officials.

The research process is necessarily shaped by the level of financial and temporal resources available to the researcher. It is also determined by the patience and generosity of potential research subjects. In many cases, those I sought out throughout the research process effectively had very little reason to cooperate. Stonewalling is a frustrating experience but it is also quite revelatory for the research process. Instead of dismissing interviewees’ reticence as a lack of a data point, or as an inferior research outcome, I preferred to see it as being equally valid and revealing as an interview. In the African context, stonewalling is particularly indicative with regards to the fragmentation of the state: so much about obtaining access is down to the individual nature of the person being sought, and in the absence of formal codes about how to handle requests for information, there is considerable administrative discretion.

The research process is also dependent on framings of researcher subjectivity. Gaining interviews meant straddling a delicate researcher identity balance between ‘fitting in’ and ‘fitting out’. As a mixed race person with origins in West Africa, my cultural knowledge was crucial to gaining interviewees’ interest. In Mauritania, my appearance meant I was often mistaken for a local, which initiated countless small conversations that later became valuable networking encounters yielding interviews. My own ‘tacit knowledge’ of social graces and cultural rhythms was also essential in gaining trust, even though I remained a relative outsider to the fields of practice I was studying. That being said, demonstrating expertise of border security issues and terminology was essential, and the number and nature of interviews changed when I was able to demonstrate expertise in border management: interviews came thick and fast, and were no longer terse and official, becoming candid, relaxed and often brutally honest. However, ‘fitting out’ was also strategic: in some cases, stressing a ‘Western researcher’ identity afforded me more patience and the benefit of the doubt (such as easier access to secure buildings) on countless occasions when a local researcher would have been rebuffed.

1.4.4 Data analysis

I used a discourse analysis methodology, in order to dissect actors’ self-understandings and institutional contexts, what kinds of cooperation activities they undertake, as well as how they understand borders and the security-development nexus. My interviews leveraged the ‘hearsay’ knowledge of my interlocutors based on interactions I observed (Watkins, Swidler and Biruk 2009),

which ensured that interlocutors also served as rapporteurs for their own social contexts – spaces of interaction outside the interview that were hard for me as a researcher to directly access. The multi-sited ethnographic method helped me be attuned to how actors often unknown to each other share a common policy outlook (Shore and Wright 1997). The aim of this project is to chart broader understandings and motivations that actors have, and I place particular emphasis on disjunctures, tensions and disagreements between the policy analysis and the interviews I undertook. While I eschewed a formal qualitative coding method, I have remained consistently aware of the metaphors, social conflicts, stories and objects arising within and across texts.

1.5 Précis of the dissertation

The remainder of this dissertation begins with two chapters which set up the theoretical foundations of this project. These are followed by three empirically-minded chapters, whose structure is true to the prompts to ‘follow’ people, things, metaphors, stories, lives, and conflicts. These factors (such as boats, tropes, landscapes, visas, and more) are used as narrative devices to illustrate the webs of social relationships that they represent, mediate, or bring about.

Chapter 2, following this one, begins sketching the theoretical framework in relation to borders, developing the idea of ‘borderwork assemblages’. The chapter advances four ‘theses’ about borderwork as a practice: it is abstracted from territory, networked and cultural, constructed and performed, and creative of order. The chapter then traces the ‘who’ of borderwork in West Africa, providing a tentative mapping of some of the actors who shape the region’s borders. The chapter builds on Bourdieu’s sociology of fields and habitus and draws on actor-network theory to argue that we must think of the topography of border control actors as akin to *assemblages*. This allows us to grasp the heterogeneity of the social and the emergent forms of association—involving human and non-human actors—that make borders the way they are.

Chapter 3 describes the epistemic and cognitive logics that undergird borderwork. Drawing on work on the discursive and professional construction of security issues, it argues that security and its knowledges are produced sociologically through the interactions of security professionals but also through the influence of the objects that mediate these relations, stand in for them, or act to shape security itself. The chapter goes on to theorize that knowledge moves between ‘sites’ of the international space, and argues that these knowledges move, with varying degrees of success, through exemplars, emulation and pedagogical intervention. The chapter concludes that these trends show a logic that fuses security as control (state capacity to enact security and modernize to this end) and care (humanitarianism and an emphasis on citizenship that still serves security rationalities).

Chapter 4 examines Spain's growing security role in Senegal and Mauritania, beginning with the response to the 2005/2006 'crisis' of migration to the Canary Islands. The chapter argues that joint patrols with Senegal and Mauritania launched to counter irregular migration have been parlayed into a broader form of security capacity-building led by the Guardia Civil, Spain's paramilitary police (gendarmerie). The chapter uses a number of narrative devices to make this point, such as 'boats' to discuss the complex sovereignty of routine joint patrols and the role of smugglers, and 'satellites' to show how the role of information-sharing in consolidating transnational security relations. The chapter concludes by arguing that Spain is moving towards a broader security-themed cooperation, moving emphasis away from the Atlantic and migrants towards the Sahel region and concerns about drugs and terrorism.

Chapter 5 looks at an EU-funded project, administered in part by the IOM, to build new border posts in Mauritania. This project reflects concerns that emerge late in the previous chapter: a growing amalgamation of migration with other national security concerns such as terrorism. The chapter reiterates the utility of a sociotechnical lens on border control, stressing the assemblage-like nature of the competing actors involved in the project but also importance of materials in the transmission of approaches to border control. The chapter maps out the project's effects through key objects and practices: for instance, the border posts are considered as infrastructural technologies that serve to enhance the state's capacity for legibility in remote areas, while the IOM's entry-exit tracking system incarnates the successful transmission of a technicalized, risk-based border screening culture. The chapter also focuses on the use of workshops and training as tools for generating consensus and routinizing security practice.

Chapter 6 examines the growing use of biometric identification in Senegal and Mauritania, with particular emphasis on the acceptance of their benefits and their contribution to legibility. Arguing that there is a biometric 'doxa' emerging from the literature and routines of key actors like the ICAO and IOM, the chapter traces how this ideal about the effectiveness of biometrics manifests itself in West Africa. The chapter follows various sites, people, and narratives: for instance, biometric screening in airports as a form of integration into global databases, and visas as a temporal and spatial movement of the border function. The chapter does not consider biometrics as a blanket technology of legibility, however, arguing that these technologies show divisions and competition within the security field in Senegal, and in Mauritania actively contribute to the illegibility of segments of the population.

Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation with a recapitulation of the main theoretical and empirical contributions. After discussing borderwork and security knowledge more specifically, the chapter also addresses the questions of power and

inequality that arise from the research, arguing that although the relations at play in borderwork practices are not neo-colonial they remain riven with relations of inequality and domination.

2 Borderwork assemblages

2.1 Introduction

At the most general level of abstraction, a border is the space in and through which an inside relates to an outside. Borders are ubiquitous, and the concept – as it is used in the social sciences and humanities – applies to myriad phenomena from cultural frontiers to the territorial border of the nation state. Over the past century or so, borders as well as frontiers, borderlands, barriers, and demarcations have become a primary object of study across a range of disciplines. International borders, the focus of my present study, are no longer lines drawn in the sand (or on a map) but have become complex spaces of governance. However, there are some unresolved lacunae in the study of borders. First of all, there is a solid range of work in critical border studies that speaks of the proliferation of borders, and various forms of bordering. However, there is correspondingly little work that tackles of the various practices that stretch the border—whether it is biometric ID or internal immigration controls—with a same conceptual vocabulary. Secondly, there has only recently been a concerted attention given to the global governance of borders and how the ‘who’ question of borders can be addressed. In particular, this question is largely not applied in the context of the global south and there is a general dearth of work on borders and bordering in sub-Saharan Africa in critical border studies.

In three moves, this chapter theorizes the ‘what’ of borders and the practice of bordering, highlights the ‘who’ of borders by looking at the diverse set of actors around borders in West Africa, and proposes a conceptual lens attuned to the complexity of building and maintaining borders. First, I argue that we can understand a range of border-related security practices in West Africa to be forms of what Chris Rumford calls ‘*borderwork*’. I establish that there is a virtual consensus in the literature that borders are not simply ‘lines in the sand’, but rather complex and socially constructed functions that encompass diverse practices well away—spatially and temporally—from the territorial line. I move on to argue that the concept of borderwork is a way of capturing these diverse enactments of the border. I propose four ‘theses’ on borderwork: it is usually referential of the traditional geopolitical border, but can be exercised well away from it; the control it implies is carried out by networked actors who bring particular normative understandings of how borders should be controlled; borderwork is a construction as well as a performance of the border; and finally, borderwork is an order-making activity. The second major section of this chapter, I ask ‘who does the borderwork?’ and describe the range of actors involved in West Africa’s borderwork. These include UN agencies, development actors, police forces, embassies, and criminal networks, among others. Although the mapping is organized by actor for clarity, it points us further: to the range of strategies, norms, funding arrangements and projects that go into making borders

work. Faced with the complexity of the landscape highlighted there, the third section of this chapter goes on to suggest that the idea of ‘assemblage’ best captures the arrangements at hand. Drawing from actor-network theory (ANT) ideas of assemblage, I conclude that this approach provides us with several analytical payoffs: an attention to the heterogeneity of the social, avoiding rigid views of global organization, an account of power relations, a sensitivity to non-human agency, and a more nuanced view of space. Although ‘assemblage’ is intended to capture complexity and is potentially infinite, the dissertation’s three empirical chapters (4, 5 and 6) show how assemblages can be delimited. The chapter concludes by recapping the argument, and traces a preliminary link between borderwork and security that is developed in Chapter 3.

2.2 Borderwork

This dissertation examines a vast range of practices that do not always take place at the border as conventionally understood, but help to enact the border or shape and extend its effects. The IOM’s construction of border posts in Mauritania, the Spanish patrol missions in Senegal, or the uptake of biometric ID in both countries relate to some degree to territorial borders, but they also call into play much broader phenomena and much more complex decisions about inclusion/exclusion and security/insecurity. By thinking about these practices as *borderwork* activities, it becomes clearer how an ID card database system, or a national census project, can be border-related activities. In this section, I answer the ‘what’ question about the practices and policies with which this dissertation is concerned: can we identify a practice that is common to border control, migration management and national identification policies?

I suggest that the concept of *borderwork* provides a set of useful conceptual tools with which to understand the actors and practices around borders today. In using this term, I am drawing on Chris Rumford’s description of borderwork, which originates in “a concern with the ways in which borders are becoming generalised throughout society” as opposed to sitting at the edge of territory (2008:1). Rumford’s view of borders echoes an assumption that is central to recent work in critical border studies: that the border is socially constructed, multi-faceted, and not fixed either spatially or temporally. It also stresses the seemingly obvious point that borders require *work* to be put into place. Borders are nothing without the work of security professionals but also the labour (physical, emotional, or otherwise) of migrants and citizens. Borders are complex, networked spaces, in that their governance and effects are enacted and often felt far from the site of territorial demarcation.

2.2.1 More than just a line in the sand

The idea of ‘borderwork’ as put forward by Rumford challenges the view of borders as linear, strictly territorial markers of inside and outside. This more traditional view is epitomized by the 1907 Romanes lecture given by Lord Curzon of Kedleston (once Viceroy of India). Discussing the theme of *frontiers*, Curzon spoke of borders as a “razor's edge on which hang suspended the modern issues of war or peace, of life or death to nations” (Curzon 1907). In doing so, Curzon not only assumed the border’s nature as an outward-looking defence mechanism, but also the centrality of the state and its security as the border’s central corollary factors. Curzon’s view of the border typifies what William Walters (2002) calls the ‘geopolitical trajectory’ of thinking about borders, the hallmark of which is a focus on state power and its projection. Later interventions in the nascent research area of ‘border studies’, such as J.R.V. Prescott’s *The Geography of Frontiers and Boundaries* (1965) maintained this “positivist epistemology” about borders (Vaughan-Williams 2009). This positivist epistemology is most importantly reflected in the essentially Westphalian assumptions about sovereignty made in this literature, most important of all being the role of borders as limits of the national ambit.

This ‘geopolitical’ view of borders as fixed lines, demarcating tracts of sovereign political territory, was increasingly challenged by developments in the academy and beyond. In response to a growing complexity of borders, and due to the influence of poststructuralist thought, the primary source of evolution in border studies since has been a focus on modes of bordering. To focus on *modes*, and on border-*ing*, is to assume that borders are produced in a complex way, i.e. socially constructed, as well as to understand this process of making borders as one of many performed strategies of power. RBJ Walker’s (1993) seminal intervention highlights the embeddedness of the inside/outside dichotomy in political thought—highlighting the linkage between inherited political imagination and the empirical reality of a world in which concrete practices starkly reflect binaries of statism/cosmopolitanism. John Agnew’s (1994) caution against a ‘territorial trap’ similarly questions the neat alignment of state and territory, contesting the reification of the state as a hermetic container preceding society. With this ‘critical geopolitics’ came an attention to the various practices—modes of bordering—that sustain geographic representations: cartography, mapping, discourse, culture and more. With a growing concern for transnational flows and the speed and connection brought about by global interconnection, calls for borders—theorized as social processes—to be decoupled from territory (Paasi 1998) abound. In sum, a renewed ontological emphasis on social construction has increasingly animated border studies.

Current debate, largely driven by social constructivist views of borders, largely turns on the proliferation, multiplication, hardening and displacement of borders.

This is particularly the case in contributions from ‘critical security studies’ (CSS) that tackle sovereignty, migration, and the politics of surveillance and control. The persistence of extra-judicial enclaves such as Guantanamo Bay has provoked reflection on the lack of alignment between territory, political rights and sovereign power. Work on the ‘securitization of migration’ (Ceyhan and Tsoukala 2002) has shown that the experience of borders is also abstracted from the territorial line, and the use of biometrics and other information technologies for citizenship and border control (Torpey 2000, Amoore 2006, Epstein 2007, Lyon 2009, Muller 2010) means that the actual border is digital, technical and operates temporally well before the moment of crossing into national territory. A prominent example of this is the EU’s Schengen zone, in which digital surveillance has compensated for the lack of formal internal controls.

The idea that the border is rapidly spreading throughout society finds its most prominent recent expression in the work of Étienne Balibar (1998), but the idea of the multiplication and proliferation of borders has gained currency. Didier Bigo (2001), for example, sees the fusion of internal and external security apparatuses as akin to a Möbius ribbon, where inside and outside transition into one another. This fusion of inside and outside can be understood as the fusion between, on one side, the state security implied by ‘geopolitical’ boundaries, and ‘societal’ security (see Buzan et al. 1998) on the other. Contributions drawing on Foucault’s concept of biopolitics, such as William Walters’s (2002), have tended to consider the border not only as a function that is exercised throughout society, but gone further to understand the border as part of a broader strategy of governance. Walters speaks of a ‘biopolitical border’ that is productive of a population governed with attention to the traits, risks and histories of its biological bodies. Those drawing on Foucault’s account of ‘biopolitics’, and Agamben’s (1998) Schmittian reformulation, have tended to explicitly link the border function to sovereign power more generally. One example of this tendency is visible in work by Nick Vaughan-Williams (2009), who argues that his concept of the generalized biopolitical border “points to the way in which bordering practices are rather more diffused throughout society than the modern geopolitical imaginary implies” (2009: 117). My approach to borderwork as a practice builds on these claims.

2.2.2 Four theses on borderwork

Referential of geopolitical borders, exercised across territory

First of all, practices such as delimiting a territorial border or registering citizens’ biometric profiles are both similarly referential of a traditional geopolitical border. This is the case even though these do not always take place at or in the name of the territorial border, and even if it is not always clear *whose* border is being drawn or enforced. As William Walters suggests, “there is a whole apparatus connected with the geopolitical border—not just a police and military system, but cartographic, diplomatic, legal, geological, and geographical knowledges and

practices” (2002: 563). Practices such as integrated border management (IBM) are explicitly about making the border mobile, flexible, multinational, cooperative, and resilient, but still refer to a spatial border of some form. Switzerland’s IBM strategy is a great example of this, as that country’s border control relies on four ‘filters’: activities in third countries, cooperation within the EU’s Schengen area, measures at the Swiss border itself, and measures within territory (Swiss Federal Office for Migration 2012). The cooperation between the EU and West African states on irregular migration highlights the complexity of borderwork, with agenda-setting taking place in Brussels, patrols occurring off the coasts of Senegal and Mauritania, and formal detachments of Spanish police operating in both countries. These practices are referential of territorial borders, even if it is not clear whose border is being controlled (France’s? Europe’s? Senegal’s?) or where the border is being enforced (does Europe’s border stretch all the way into the mid-Atlantic?). What this shows is that the practices associated to an ostensibly fixed territorial boundary are largely independent of it in territorial terms.

Networked and cultural nature of control

The second main characteristic of borderwork is that its practices are not discrete or isolated instances. Rather, they are focal points in diffuse networks that pull together myriad policy actors, territorial locations, forms of expertise, and institutional competition, all of which are focused on decisions about inclusion and exclusion. As Rumford suggests in his piece on borderwork, “the agencies responsible for constructing and maintaining [borders] have also become more diverse” (Rumford 2008: 6), and argues that we must take into account the activities of citizens rather than states alone. I agree, and want to expand the focus further: the International Civil Aviation Organization’s (ICAO) global biometric standards, EU bilateral assistance to West African gendarmes, and Gemalto’s promotional materials all make borderwork actors of these organizations. As Kevin Haggerty and Richard Ericson argue, surveillance is increasingly “driven by the desire to bring systems together, to combine practices and technologies and integrate them into a larger whole” (2000: 610). Borderwork is also networked and spans public and private and global and local, as illustrated by how an International Organization for Migration (IOM) project can involve private sector actors, be funded by the EU, and requested by a local government. It is important to note that considering practices to be part of a network does not impute overarching strategic objectives to networks, but rather serves to situate them in broader context. This is a point to which I return in the second section of this chapter. Finally, border control is always cultural and reflective of an ideological or cultural worldview that often has a pedagogical undercurrent. The proliferation of best practices and standards about borders, often diffused through technical assistance, are imbued with such assumptions.

Constructed yet performative

Third, borderwork suggests that borders are constructed as well as performative. That is to say that the ‘stuff’ of borders is both material and semiotic, but that the associations formed by borderwork need to be continually enacted in order to retain their form. In material terms, the border is ‘made’ of physical artefacts ranging from the most obvious—walls and barriers—to the less visible such as databases and ID cards. Most importantly, the infrastructure of the border, the tools of migration control, and the tangible nature of identity systems all shape the functioning of the border. In discursive terms, borderwork is undertaken through the ‘securitization’ of migration, and through the identification and framing of particular policy problems such as ‘outdated paper documents’.

In addition to being constructed, borderwork is performed and repeated. As it is a practice, borderwork depends on repetition and habit. Borderwork is labour intensive, and it is the performed nature of authority that counts—borderwork is a mode of reproduction for the *authority* to enact the border (or claims to it) and it is the way that the various networks of border actors are held together. Continual performance of the border is precisely what imbues the material and semiotic aspects of borderwork with meaning. Borderwork necessitates actors to continually make decisions about inclusion and exclusion, whether this is interpreted territorially or in terms of citizenship or status. These decisions about inclusion and exclusion are the essential labour of borders, even though the realities of migration or identity are not so clear-cut. In short, sovereignty must have a material and ideological basis but it is the performative action of whoever is exercising it (a state or other actor) that constitutes the borderwork.

Borders are order-making devices

Finally, borderwork practices fundamentally understandable under a broader security rationale, in which the continual pursuit of order and stability and the management of contingency and risk are paramount. Part of bordering involves *ordering*. As Gavin Kendall (2004) argues, we must think of “successfully governed space, not as a self-evident object, but as the result of the associations of networks, which are composed of humans and non-humans, and which are painstakingly built from the ground up” (2004: 64). This emphasis on what could be called ‘ordering’, and on associations between networks, is what allows me to draw similarities between border control, migration management and identification/biometric practices. An example of the linkage between border technology and security is the statement by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) president, in 2011, that “for terrorists, travel documents are as important as weapons” (Canada Newswire 2011). This suggests that the insecurity of document systems is linked to dangerous types of mobility, which in turn directly threatens—by transgressing borders—the norm of order expected within states. By aiming for order across space, borderwork suggests that an analysis of borders cannot be limited to the territorial site of the border but must

account for the dispersed practices of border control aiming at stable order. This analysis begs the question of ‘whose order?’, which points us to the ambiguity of borderwork as an order-making activity. Borderwork enacted by smugglers, migrants or non-citizens can enact alternative orders based on activity that defies practices of security and control. Borderwork is therefore not only about state forms of order but includes counter-ordering techniques.

2.3 Who does West Africa’s borderwork?

In a 2009 editorial in *Geopolitics*, Noel Parker and Nick Vaughan-Williams suggest that the field of critical border studies should innovate in terms of the epistemology, ontology and space-time of borders. In particular, they highlight the question of ‘who makes borders?’ as one that deserves greater analytical attention. This is the question that I seek to answer in this section. “Who performs the borderwork?” (Rumford 2008: 3) is a question that should be extended in a number of ways. Rumford’s main emphasis in his piece, and the broader theme of the special issue of *Space & Polity* in which it appeared, was the increasing mobilization of citizens in the imagining, creation and enforcement of Europe’s borders. Rumford critiques existing approaches to borderwork for only considering the actions of states and ignoring the role of citizens. In short, I want to get a fuller picture of the ‘who’ of borderwork.

In this section, I begin to trace out some of the more recognizable agencies involved in borderwork in Africa. This exercise is intended to give an overview of what kind of borderwork is being done in West Africa, and show its essentially interlinked nature. My purpose here is to highlight the complexity of actors that carry out borderwork in West Africa with a view to showing why new conceptual tools can best account for this diverse range of actors. Although a diagram, chart or table might show this range of actors in a more visually coherent way, the difficulty of categorisation between global/local, formal/informal, state/non-state is what ensures a swift return to the simpler format presented below. Below, I highlight a range of actors that span the global and the local as well as the public and the private. The practices they undertake include: border demarcation, databases, conferences and professional networking, policy harmonization, intergovernmental dialogue, pedagogy and training, direct financial aid, document security training, maritime patrols, standard-setting, advertising, biometric enrolment, and many more.

African Union (AU)

The African Union is an important peace and security actor on the African continent and is the successor organization to the Organization for African Unity (OAU). In 1964, the OAU’s members had made the significant step of recognizing Africa’s existing colonial boundaries, guaranteeing the status quo of African states’ Westphalian sovereignty. AU projects include the African Union

Border Programme (AUBP), which aims to demarcate all of Africa's borders by 2017. The AUBP has enlisted the help of the German overseas development agency (GIZ) to demarcate borders in southern and western Africa, and uses the African Union Border Information System to collect geographical and boundary data.

European Union (EU)

The European Union is a multi-faceted player in borderwork in West Africa. The European Commission (EC), the EU's executive agency, the European Parliament, and the Council of the EU work together to pass border-related legislation (like the *Schengen Borders Code*) and set the agenda on migration issues well beyond the Union's borders. The EU provides direct assistance for border management to third countries, but also has an important policy-setting role through various dialogues, forums and communities of practice involving West African countries. Among these are the EU-Africa Dialogue, the Rabat Process, the Dakar Strategy, and communities of practice such as the Migration for Development project. The EU's global diplomatic presence is assured by the European External Action Service (EEAS), which is the largely autonomous EU foreign service under which the its embassy-like 'delegations' are managed. These delegations administer security and development projects locally with partners like the IOM, national security forces and UN agencies. In Nouakchott (Mauritania) and Dakar (Senegal), local EU delegations manage millions of euros of such funding. Beyond this, the EU has a digital footprint in Africa through the deployment of its Visa Information System (VIS) in member state embassies. The VIS records visa applicants' biometric data in order to prevent 'visa shopping'—the practice whereby migrants apply to multiple Schengen member countries' embassies to boost their chances of gaining a visa. FRONTEX, the EU agency tasked with coordinating the control of the Union's borders with non-EU countries, coordinates joint patrols with Senegal and Mauritania to prevent irregular migration by sea.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

After the European Union, the IOM is the most prominent global actor in border security in West Africa. The agency helps design border control strategies and legislation and strongly advocates the use of biometrics and border management databases. The IOM's range of activities truly typifies the fusion of practices characteristic of borderwork: it provides regional document fraud training, sets border security norms through its publications, and literally 'builds' borders through programs like the construction of border posts in Mauritania. Finally, the IOM is active in 'assisted voluntary return' deportation practices. The IOM works closely with, and receives generous funding from, the European Union and member governments. As the IOM is a project-based organization, it must continually seek funding from other global actors.

United Nations (UN) agencies

United Nations agencies play a varied role in West Africa's borderwork. While the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force forms global inter-agency linkages on the theme of border management, other agencies such as UNHCR intervene more directly and locally. The UNHCR has been an enthusiastic user of biometrics for identification of displaced or stateless persons. A recent program, for example, gave out biometric ID to Mauritanian refugees living in Senegal (UNHCR 2012) as a means of ensuring them access to limited citizenship rights. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) proposes legislation templates on trafficking and smuggling, and coordinates projects (funded by the EU and Canada among others) to train gendarmes and customs officers in West Africa's coastal countries.

International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

The ICMPD, based in Brussels, plays a key role in mediating EU relationships with third countries and administering project funding using its expertise. The agency works with the EU on projects like MIEUX-II, which provides expertise to developing countries on asylum, migration and development, and border management. The agency's normative stance—advocating integrated border management and 'open yet secure' borders—echoes the tune of many others such as the IOM and ICAO.

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

The ICAO's role is mainly in standard-setting, and it helps create the professional networks that bring diverse border control actors together. The ICAO has set a deadline of 2015 for the worldwide adoption of machine-readable travel documents (MRTDs), and Document 9303 is the ICAO publication that sets the biometric standard according to which e-passports and other biometric documents are designed and issued. Mauritania's e-passport system, for example, is a system that is funded in part by the IOM but run according to ICAO standards and put in place by Morpho, a private manufacturer. Although the name of the organization suggests a focus on civil aviation alone, its regional MRTD meetings—like those run from the ICAO's regional office in Dakar—tackle a plethora of border management issues. These meetings, and the quarterly MRTD Report the ICAO publishes, are instrumental in enabling the professional networking on which border management cooperation thrives, and in setting the global normative agenda of how borders should be managed.

Interpol

Since Interpol's mandate covers the policing of cross-border crime and terrorism, it has used this position to advocate for the worldwide adoption of e-passports (Help Net Security 2011), and it plays an important role in coordinating border management activities. Not only has it coordinated police actions against human trafficking in West Africa, but it also maintains a global database of 'stolen and

lost' travel documents, which holds information on about 31 million documents. Many West African states, including Senegal and Mauritania, have at least one border post equipped with computers that verify traveller documents against Interpol watchlists.

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

ECOWAS is the guarantor of the regional free movement protocol for West Africa. This protocol ostensibly guarantees smooth cross-border mobility for citizens of the region (which excludes Mauritania) as long as they are in possession of a valid travel document or national ID card. The regional group also maintains a relationship with the EU on migration management questions and has been the recipient of capacity-building assistance from the Spanish government to implement the ECOWAS Common Approach to Migration. ECOWAS also plays an important normative role and is developing a common visa for the region, based on the European Schengen visa. This proposal is similar to plans put in place by other regional economic communities (RECs) in Africa, such as the East African Community (EAC) which is implementing a common tourist visa (which is, incidentally, aided by the IOM).

National police and gendarmeries

Most Francophone countries in West Africa have a policing apparatus that divides the police from the paramilitary gendarmerie, with the latter more involved in border security and more militarized aspects of internal policing. As a result, they are central to border control and recipients of external capacity-building assistance. Under the EU's Project West Sahel, the gendarmeries of Senegal and Mauritania are benefiting from assistance through transfers of equipment but also of legal and technical knowledge from, the Guardia Civil, their Spanish counterparts. There is often a differential in prestige and capacity between police forces and gendarmeries which is consequential for the control of the border and the types of relationships they build with each other and with external interveners. The fields of law enforcement and national security are often fused in part due to the organizational structures in which policing agencies are placed: in Senegal and Mauritania the upper echelons of the police are represented in national security directorates (DGSN) or directorates of territorial surveillance (DST).

Corporate actors

In addition to intergovernmental actors, the for-profit sector—mainly border technology and ID manufacturers—have been prominent borderwork actors in West Africa. Companies such as Gemalto have sought to improve their positioning in key African markets by portraying themselves as reliable experts and by marketing their products as necessary and as desirable features of statehood. Morpho's identity solutions, for example, assume the public-private provision of identity services, and the company in many cases (such as Mauritania) stresses its ability to manage the entire life cycle of document

issuance. Companies such as Zetes, a Belgian ID manufacturer, compete for BOT (build, operate and transfer) contracts with West African states like Senegal, resulting in technology—and norm—transfers.

Embassies and consulates

Embassies and consulates—specifically those of European countries in West Africa—are essential actors in border control cooperation. These diplomatic missions host police cooperation offices alongside the more visible political and cultural forms of representation. Police cooperation based in embassies provides diplomatic contacts to police liaisons and provides privileged access to the host country's security services. This helps information flows between embassy and host country, and also—due to cooperation between embassies—consolidates security relationships horizontally as well.

Development agencies

One of the most striking trends in borderwork in Africa—and one that I discuss at length in the next chapter—is the role development agencies play in what is ostensibly a security practice. The World Bank has mainly played an agenda-setting role, by putting out a *Border Management Modernization Handbook* in which it suggests a type of border knowledge as to how to better leverage the trading potential of more efficient border management. Like other actors discussed here, the emphasis is borders that effectively *manage* their openness and closure. The German government's development agency (GIZ) provides its project management and training expertise to police capacity-building projects in Niger and Mauritania.

Criminal networks

Borderwork is not the exclusive preserve of control-oriented actors. In many ways, border control measures are *reactive* to the practices of non-state actors such as criminal networks of smugglers and traffickers. In West Africa, smugglers provide falsified identification papers or facilitate irregular migration flows (visualized in **Figure 1**, below). Smugglers, evading controls, shape the border by interacting with control-oriented actors. They also see this as a form of 'work' that provides them opportunities for improvement: Senegalese fisherman carrying irregular migrants to the Canary Islands to earn extra money, for instance. In turn, police and gendarmerie forces refer to the threat of trafficking (real or exaggerated) as justification for their projects and practices.

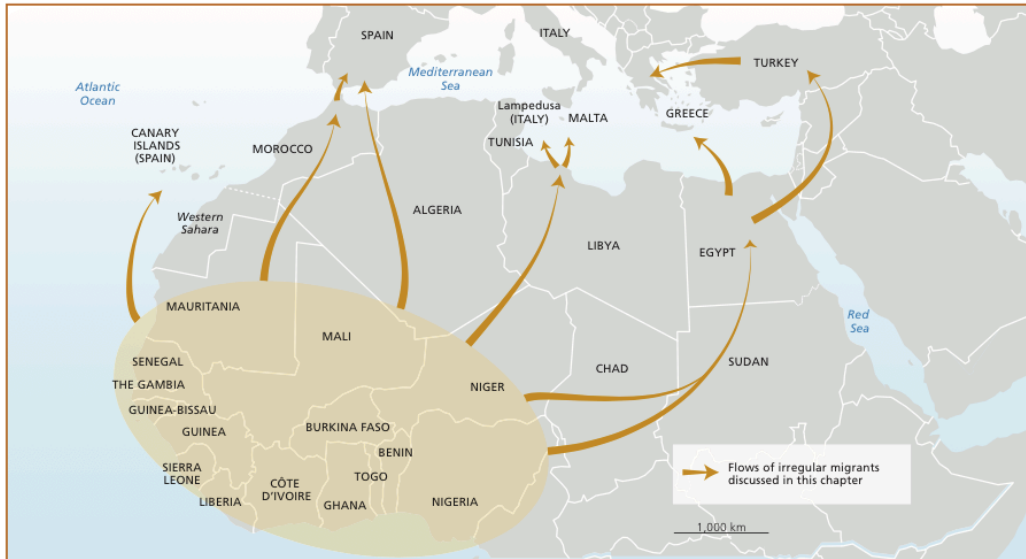


Figure 1. Overview of routes used to smuggle irregular migrants from West Africa. (UNODC 2013). (From *Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment*, by the United National Office on Drugs and Crime, © 2013 United Nations. Reprinted with the permission of the United Nations.)

Migrants and non-citizens

In addition to criminal networks, migrants and non-citizens do borderwork as an anti-statist activity. The agency of irregular migrants undermines state controls, while activists reframe narratives about citizenship. Activists like *Touche Pas À Ma Nationalité* in Mauritania advocates for Mauritians who have failed to be registered by the state’s biometric enrolment due to racial discrimination. Associations like the *Association Mauritanienne des Droits de l’Homme* in Mauritania work with European NGOs like Migreurop to document border control practices and defend migrants’ rights.

Academics, consultants and issue experts

Academics and consultants also play a crucial role in shaping border norms, by providing their expertise for program design or suggesting policy paths. The IOM uses local sociologists to adapt its training programs in West Africa, while the security situation in the Sahel has resulted in the proliferation of think-tanks and regional meetings about counter-terrorism and border control.

2.4 Thinking with assemblage

This chapter is concerned with defining borderwork but also with theorizing the *arrangements* of the various actors who do this work in the first place. What the mapping exercise above shows is the sheer complexity of the actors that perform the borderwork in West Africa and beyond: they cluster around specific issues, they operate simultaneously without necessarily coordinating, and they transcend

the global and the local in their practices. How can we theorize the relations and positions of actors while remaining conscious of the heterogeneous and disaggregated nature of the social field we look at?

Talk of relations, positions and arrangements suggests an important place for Pierre Bourdieu's sociology, notably the concepts of field, habitus and symbolic capital. The field in Bourdieu's sociology is a "network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions" held by actors (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 97), which exists in constant interrelation with the habitus which is "systems of dispositions [actors in a field] have acquired by internalizing a determinate type of economic and social condition" (1992: 105). Symbolic capital broadly refers to the resources at stake within these fields, and is "any property (any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural or social) when it is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception which cause them to know it and recognize it to give it value" (Bourdieu, Wacquant and Farage 1994: 8). Habitus tells us about the history, mentality and instincts of actors while symbolic capital points us to the kinds of prestige or regard over which actors tend to coalesce. Field, in turn, turns our attention to the possibility of mapping the more 'macro' element of the social landscape. These are inescapable factors when we think about the people that compose border control communities.

Although Bourdieu's concepts point us to important elements of social relations, the theoretical edifice in which they are implanted is not always well attuned to the nature of border control in West Africa. First of all, the concept of 'field' provides a strongly structuralist answer to the question of social organization. Beyond this, actors may not perceive themselves as part of 'one' field, or may not recognize the 'field' in question at all, which then becomes the creation of the analyst. The actors examined may not even know (of) each other, even though their actions combine to create particular visible effects in the field of border control. Finally, relations between actors are not only social but are also material, and the object of analysis should extend beyond security professionals to include the agency of other human actors (like migrants) and non-human actors (like databases). This is why I supplement my use of 'field' with the concept of assemblage, drawn from ANT. The main value addition of this particular combination is to help theorize sets of social relations (such as fields) but also the *transversal* relations between and across them.

The concept of assemblage is a widely used lens within the social sciences with which to account for heterogeneous, nonlinear, and complex systems. In sociology, Haggerty and Ericson (2000) use it to point to the flattening and decentralization of contemporary surveillance. Sassen (2006) uses the term to describe the bundling and unbundling of territory, authority and rights at the national and global scales. In international relations, Abrahamsen and Williams

(2011) use the concept to show the interrelationship of public and private security provision, describing what they call ‘global security assemblages’ as “transnational structures and networks in which a range of different actors and normativities interact, cooperate and compete to produce new institutions, practices and forms of deterritorialized security governance” (2011: 90). Salter (2013) uses the term to refer to the aviation security sector as rhizomatic, disaggregated and heterogeneous. Even though each use relies on slightly different theorizations of ‘assemblage’, they all emerge in response to the complexity of causality and the broad distribution of agency across public and private, human and non-human, global and local. Here, I use the concept of assemblage associated with actor-network theory, which is sensitive to the heterogeneous and networked nature of society, the dispersal of agency across human and non-human actors, the simplification or obfuscation of networks, the performed and contested nature of durable social order, and the precarity of all social ordering (Law 1992).

Of course, it is important to note the similarities between ANT and other approaches to social organization. Latour (1999) has called ANT ‘actant-rhizome ontology’, which echoes Gilles Deleuze’s idea of *agencement*, which is often translated as ‘assemblage’ and ‘rhizome’. The term *agencement* as it is used by Deleuze and Félix Guattari is a “common French word with the senses of either ‘arrangement’, ‘fitting’ or ‘fixing’” (Phillips 2006: 108), which means, a priori, the presence of heterogeneous objects (or subjects) brought together. *Agencement* therefore refers to some kind of concrete event or instantiation of heterogeneity. Law writes that “‘actor-networks’ can be seen as scaled-down versions of Michel Foucault’s discourses or epistemes” but that an actor-network sensibility “asks us to explore the strategic, relational, and productive character of particular, smaller-scale, heterogeneous actor-networks” rather than the “epochal epistemes” (Law 2007: 6) with which Foucault was concerned. There are two major advantages of ANT to analyse borderwork in West Africa: first, it embraces the heterogeneity of the social, and second, it emphasizes the process of associations or (un)bundling of disparate elements.

2.4.1 Heterogeneity of the social

What is the ‘stuff’ of our object of analysis? What are the objects that are brought together by assemblages? According to John Law, society is a ‘heterogeneous network’ (1992: 2) which is radically flattened in terms of who is counted. Humans are part of the social, but so are concepts, forms of knowledge, lab equipment, animals, and so on. This is ANT’s most radical claim: that the social is, ontologically, a diverse set of networks composed of human and non-human agents. ANT, in short, “does not celebrate the idea that there is a difference in kind between people on the one hand, and objects on the other” (Law 1992: 383). Latour (2005) uses the term ‘actant’ to refer to these sources of agency. Although

this is a controversial claim of ANT's, it does not—unlike the new materialisms literature (e.g. Bennett 2010)—ascribe intentionality to inorganic matter. This fundamental flattening of the social is the basis of ANT's claim that the social is necessarily *socio-technical*.

This is a particularly advantageous frame for discussing borderwork in West Africa. Rather than limit ourselves beforehand to study of human actors and their interactions, we expand our frame of analysis to other 'actants' that make the border what it is. This helps us to pose certain questions differently: rather than look only at the material as an effect of human agency (i.e. an biometric ID card *caused* by security actors' policies) we can look at materials as key actors in borderwork (security practices *shaped* by the functioning of these ID cards). By also emphasizing the agency of the material, we can consider a border post, a training manual, or a malfunctioning airport e-gate as objects with agency that shape the meaning and infrastructure of the border itself. Given the importance of technologies to border control, it makes sense to the question of technology.

This flattening of the social realm exposes ANT to the criticism that it obscures power relations. For instance, the ill-fitting word 'network' in 'actor-network' has exposed ANT to criticism, such as Mitchell Dean's that the term "risks a certain flattening-out of the relation between the members and elements of the network and may result in a kind of realist reductionism" (Dean 1996: 56). Latour admits that the term network is a source of confusion, as it refers to "a tool to help describe something, not what is being described" (2005: 131). ANT also surmounts this criticism of reductionism by stressing the idea of the 'obligatory passage point' (OPP), which signifies that some points in a particular assemblage are more powerful or sites of heavier investment than others. This idea is drawn from the work of Michel Callon (1986), who argues that an OPP is a way through which actors make themselves indispensable to a network. John Law calls an OPP "the central node in a network of delegation" (2003: 7). This helps us to account for uneven distributions of agential power by stressing the relational exercise of power in assemblages. In this way, we can also answer the Bourdieusian question: we can grasp the competition over symbolic capital by asking "how does X security agency try to make itself an OPP in the context of border control?". This gives us a sensibility to competition and symbolic capital without having to only subscribe to a sociology of 'fields'.

2.4.2 Association

So if the social is made up of diverse 'stuff', what pulls it together or keeps it together? ANT can also be called the 'sociology of association', as it is concerned with 'tracing' assemblages and their conditions of emergence. According to Bruno Latour, an actor-network is "made to exist by its many ties: attachments are first, actors are second". Assemblages are products of agency that is widely

dispersed, often coincidental, and often aiming at different outcomes. Assemblages, by their very definition, lack a linear central organizing principle. This is an advantageous way of looking at borderwork, as it allows us to examine the effects of associations without ascribing intentionality to particular practices. For instance, actors can be part of an assemblage is not by virtue of consciously taking part in a field, but by virtue of inclusion through *relations*. This pushes us to think of border security beyond ‘professionals’, including actors who may not identify as part of a field of struggles around security—such as development workers or citizens—but who are nevertheless imbricated (often not by choice) in border control.

That being said, associations can occur around particular problems, but the production of the problems themselves must be considered as equally contingent and constructed. We see this in the concept of ‘interessement’ from ANT. This latter concept, first appearing prominently in the work of Callon (1986), refers to the methods through which actors are implicated—or brought into—particular problematizations, which are themselves shaped by the researcher or the actors examined. Callon refers to this process as one that is brought about through attempts to shape an actor’s identity in order to bring them into a particular problematization. One example of this from contemporary borderwork is how the EU successfully enrolls the IOM and the Mauritanian government into fulfilling its objectives: the IOM by appealing to its identity as a border control expert, and the Mauritanian government by appealing to its self-image as a reliable partner.

That actors coalesce around particular policy problems does not imply a central organizing principle at play, and excludes the possibility of a purely linear causality. Drawing from Hannah Arendt’s distinction between causes and origins, Jane Bennett argues that “if agency is distributive or confederate, then instances of efficient causality, with its chain of simple bodies acting as the sole impetus for the next effect, will be impossibly rare” (Bennett 2010: 32). Not assuming linear causality is also a means of ensuring that we maintain the heterogeneity of the social as a starting assumption. The term ‘actor-network’ captures the complexity of objects and the relations that bring them into being. Objects therefore draw into play a huge field of relations, and John Law defines an actor as “always a network of elements that it does not fully recognise or know” (Law 2007: 8). For instance, passport issuance is an identifiable practice on its own, but it is (through discursive and professional practices) inextricably linked to a range of networks: the power grid, electronic readers at border posts, technical standards, and so on. By leaving aside linear causality or the centrality of one resource in a ‘field’, we are better able to uncover this multiplicity of the social.

Finally, using assemblage theory is a way of avoiding the reification of topographical territorial space. Although I argued earlier that borderwork is referential of a territorial border, this view is not incompatible with the idea that

the *work* of bordering and the form its actors take can defy conventional views of territoriality. The idea of an actor-network or assemblage also helps to avoid neat distinctions of global and local (Kendall 2004). An example of spatial practices that the assemblage idea can be used to understand is the deployment of border management databases in Africa by the European Union. Two of the EU's major databases—EURODAC ('European Dactyloscopy') and the Schengen zone's Visa Information System (VIS)—rely on the collection, transmission and storage of biometric data on non-EU citizens in a way that is transnational. The VIS registers applicants' biometric information at EU member states' consular missions overseas. The data is collected in a third country, transmitted and stored in the EU, but also used to later police the border in a third country. This assemblage composed of bodily information, computer servers, embassy staff, application forms and more projects European governance across space collapses the distance between the migrant and the EU's space of control, but also serves to physically restrict the movement of the potential migrant towards Europe.

By emphasizing bundling, assemblages also showcase un-bundling. The assemblage lens can allow us to, among other things, see the state as an uneven association of disparate and often competing elements that maintain varying relationships with each other and outside actors. One of the main payoffs is that by assuming becoming, flux, complexity and emergence, the assemblage concept compels us to begin from concrete practices and outcomes. In this way, assemblages begin not with a predefined set of actors but with actual manifestations in the social. As Latour argues, it is essential to avoid reifying the group, and speak of 'group formation' instead. As a result, thinking about heterogeneity also gives us an emphasis on the unlikely constellations of actors that are brought together by particular policy problems. The field of migration in West Africa is a great example of a heterogeneous (and perhaps crowded) space. Beginning with *practices* rather than with a pre-constituted idea of who is involved, we can bring into play unlikely actors in the regulation of migration in West Africa (e.g. development actors) as well as take into account the actions of actors that are—in a causal sense—quite distant from the phenomenon at hand (e.g. EU bureaucrats in Brussels).

2.5 Borders, order, and security

In this chapter, I have agreed with such a perspective on the border, concurring with much of the existing literature that sees it as a complex space of governance. However, I have sought to extend our thinking about the border in two major ways.

First, I have used the term 'borderwork' to point to trends in contemporary practice that unites diverse practices that are increasingly the hallmark of contemporary border management and which are implicitly assumed in much of

the literature in CSS and beyond. The idea of ‘borderwork’ retains the primacy of the international border, but recognizes that control is i) undertaken across territory, ii) networked and sustained by cultural normativities, iii) constructed and performative, and iv) driven by a desire for order. The concept of ‘borderwork’ is not only a snapshot of a contemporary reality, but provides an entry point into the nature of contemporary practices of control.

Second, I have tried to rethink the governance of borders, with emphasis on how borderwork is done—and by whom—in West Africa. Rather than relying on concepts like regimes, fields or hierarchies, I have preferred the figure of the assemblage to describe the often-tenuous patchwork of agencies that *do* the borderwork. Assemblages provides more openness to the heterogeneity of the social—including non-human agency, and provides a way of accounting for the uncoordinated nature of borderwork in West Africa, which is undertaken as much by the EU and IOM as by gendarmeries and informal regional dialogues.

The emphasis throughout this chapter has been on the role of borders as *making* the world, rather than simply dividing it. Borders—as defined here—take work to build and sustain, and should therefore be seen as modes of building and maintaining order. When borderwork is control oriented, its nature as an order-making activity bears striking resemblance to the way that security has tended to be spoken about in critical security studies: as a practice of inclusion/exclusion, a means of drawing a limit, a practice driven by anxiety and unease. In short, borderwork and security rely on some kind of common grounding that provides their condition of possibility. In West Africa, a nexus of security and development reflected in discourse and practice provides this logical underpinning. It is to this question that the next chapter turns.

3 Security knowledge in motion

3.1 Borderwork and knowledge

Borders are not simply ‘lines in the sand’. Rather, they are dense institutional spaces that are enacted across territory, which are constructed and performed as well as networked and cultural. The preceding chapter made this argument with particular reference to the multitude of actors who construct international borders in West Africa—those who ‘do the borderwork’. That chapter argued for a sociotechnical view of borders: in other words, the work of enacting borders is done by human as well as non-human actors, by security professionals as much as by surveillance technologies. In this chapter, I turn to the cognitive or epistemic work that goes into building and maintaining borders—in short, border security *knowledges*. The question of knowledge is inherent to practice, to be sure, but its centrality to border security in the global south is instructive about the social formations that put the border into action. In African states such as Senegal and Mauritania, border control practices are inextricable from bilateral and multilateral forms of cooperation and capacity-building, partly due to the emergence of irregular migration, terrorism and narcotics as key threats deemed as emanating from or transiting through this zone. The emphasis on transmitting knowhow and expertise to combat these threats, often through statebuilding interventions, is one of the defining features of border security practices in the global south.

Border security knowledge is reflected in myriad instances in West African states: the Spanish Guardia Civil officers who put in place capacity-building programs in Senegal have specific assumptions about how border control should work, which are transmitted in the course of their work, and these are shaped by institutional and personal histories. Similarly, IOM-run training courses for Mauritanian border guards facilitate a cognitive—and material—transfer of knowledge about border control drawn from global standards. To better understand what drives border security practices, we must come to terms with the sites from which security knowledges emerge, and how this knowledge is used or moves. A better understanding of borderwork knowledge opens up a window into global-local security relationships and helps us theorize the impetus behind security provision in the global south. This chapter therefore has a two-fold purpose. First, it seeks to understand what ‘security knowledge’ is and how it moves between different international sites. Second, the chapter asks what contemporary border control knowledges in West Africa tell us about the nature of security itself. To tackle these concerns, the chapter proceeds in three moves: it describes the emergence of security problems, highlights the role of mobile knowledges about border control in framing responses, and understands the worldview behind borderwork in the global south as straddling care and control.

The first section of this chapter argues that security is a knowledge-driven process and practice. Drawing from an international political sociology (IPS) perspective that foregrounds process and practice, the section argues that security is a practice enacted discursively (Buzan et al. 1998) but also through the sociological and material practices of security actors (Huysmans 2006). Security is therefore the result of practices—routines and quotidian professional interactions—which are productive of knowledge about how to respond to fears and anxieties. The section begins by highlighting work on the discursive construction of security, from securitization theory (ST) to sociological approaches that treat security as a routinized form of governance. The section goes on to argue that there is a well-entrenched discussion of knowledges and rationalities in critical security studies, where security problems—and solutions—are seen as emerging from the fields of practice. These practices are sustained by *doxa*, or practical knowledge (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) reflecting the social positions (and strategies) of various actors. Looking beyond actors alone, the question of knowledge is also explicit and institutional, as reflected in the concept of ‘cultures of border control’ (Zaiotti 2011). Taking knowledge to be both agential and structural, tacit and explicit, the section concludes by calling for an attention to the practical knowledge, rules, expertise, best practices, standards, norms and procedures that dictate ways of *doing* security. In short, we must look the diverse ‘people’ and ‘things’ that create and bear security knowledge.

Building on this view security knowledge, the second section of this chapter moves to understanding the rather under-theorized question of how border security knowledge actually *moves* across space. Work in critical security studies (CSS), owing to the North American and European genesis of the IPS approach, has tended to focus strongly on security practices in these places, which has meant correspondingly little work on how the governance of borders in the global south works. The diffusion of security knowledge across social fields, and across international spaces, is perhaps the key feature of border control cooperation in the global south. An international political sociology method can be very instructive with regards to these security practices in the global south through its focus on ‘sites’ of the international. This method is attuned to the interplay of global and local, to the complexity of ‘sites’ of the international, and to a sociological method that examines global factors beyond interstate interactions only: policing, migration, surveillance technologies, and more. The section goes on to describe knowledge as mobile and mutable, using the concept of the ‘(im)mutable mobile’, drawn from actor-network theory. The (im)mutable mobile highlights how knowledge bundles can be moved and exert control at a distance whilst retaining their shape (or not) to varying degrees. I go on to argue that knowledges tend to move through three modes: exemplars such as best practices, emulation of global norms, and pedagogical interventions.

The final section of the chapter describes the logics underlying the security knowledge in question. Border security knowledge in West Africa, I argue, reflects broader worldviews about capability, humanity, modernity, and control. In the final section, I argue that in light of the cognitive (and material) transfer of security knowledge, the security politics around borderwork in West Africa show security as straddling both control and care. This is because they largely fall into the pedagogical and emulating forms mentioned earlier, but also because much of the borderwork done in this region takes the form of external intervention. Rather than fall into the trap of dividing security on one side, and development on the other—or seeing them entering a ‘nexus’ (e.g. Zoellick 2008, *Security Dialogue* 2010)—I see care and control as undergirded by a common logic of security. Control emphasizes statebuilding and the reinforcement of state security capacity, and relies on a view of state modernity as improving capacity to control borders, territory and population. Care stresses the humanitarian aspects of border control and the importance of identification and legibility for development and citizenship. Ultimately, control and care are mutually sustaining, neither acting to reduce the anxieties that drive security practices.

3.2 International political sociology and security

Borders, as spaces connecting inside and outside, safe and unsafe, are sites around which tremendous fear and anxiety crystallize. For instance, Spanish and EU authorities are anxious about irregular migration from West African states, the same way that the Mauritanian government is fearful of masses of undocumented migrants from the sub-region. William Walters refers to such anxiety when arguing that ‘border’ is a “sort of meta-concept that condenses a whole set of negative meanings, including illegal immigration, the threat of terrorism, dysfunctional globalization, loss of sovereignty, narcotic smuggling and insecurity” (2008: 174-175). The border is a dense space where security (and insecurity) is created, known, assuaged, and modulated. If security is not a given, but rather given meaning by practice, the problems and solutions of security become questions of *knowledge* production, reflected in framings of threat, forms of expertise, types of common-sense about policing, social rules and norms, standards, and bureaucratic practices. In this section, I draw on social constructivist approaches to security to build towards a view of security problems and their solutions as the products and objects of routinized practices. An ‘international political sociology’ approach to critical security studies, which foreground process and practice, provides one entry point into conceptualizing security as a knowledge practice.

3.2.1 International political sociology

The approach known as international political sociology (IPS) is not a coherent view of international relations, and does not aspire to be. This is a major strength

of the approach as it draws from a range of approaches from International Relations (notably constructivism and poststructuralism) and from sociology and anthropology. IPS is driven by “the sense that sociology might be able to add something that is currently missing from the analysis of international relations” (Bigo and Walker 2007: 2). By this framing, IPS is not primarily bound up with the stakes specific to discipline of IR that pitted realism, liberalism and constructivism as competing approaches to how states interact. Rather, the focus is on examining the conditions of possibility of global politics and, through the emphasis on sociology, the very concrete and micro-level practices (often in unexpected or neglected spaces) that make international politics what it is. This is what Salter’s (2007) definition captures, by seeing IPS as “focusing on the system of policies, practices, and discourses that govern particular intersections of the local, national, and global” (2008: 49). An IPS approach is therefore sensitive to practices, broadly defined, whether they are discursive, institutional, or material. IPS places emphasis on process and practice, rather than on the given-ness or objectivity of social phenomena. This is partly why ‘critical security studies’ has become a particularly vibrant contributor to the IPS tendency. An IPS approach to security knowledge should start from two interrelated views of the constitution security: one that sees it as a process that justifies exceptional measures, and another on security as an ongoing form of governance reliant on the interactions of fields of professionals.

3.2.2 Security as process

The last two decades have seen work in ‘critical security studies’ broaden and deepen the meaning of the term ‘security’ while fundamentally politicizing the concept (see Krause and Williams 1997). The meaning of security has evolved from a state-centric notion assuming the existence of objective, material threats, towards one emphasizing the constitutive role of identity (Campbell 1998, Hansen 2006), the discursive and performative construction of security issues (Buzan, Waever and De Wilde 1998), and the importance of emancipation (Booth 2007). In CSS, security is seen as the result of an intersubjective process of construction. CSS has a complex heritage—drawing as much from the speech act theory of Austin as the social theory of Bourdieu and Foucault—but there is a consensus that, to varying degrees, its constitution implicates discourses as much as material and institutional practices. My discussion below starts from one of the seminal views on the discursive construction of security—securitization theory—later moving to a view of security as a more thoroughly sociological process.

Securitization theory (ST) emphasizes the naming of existential threats and the deployment of exceptional measures to stop these threats (Buzan, Waever and De Wilde 1998). ST starts from the basis that there is no real definition of security ‘out there’, but rather it is a question of understanding how particular issues come to be seen in the frame of security, what security (its invocation or otherwise)

does to particular issues or settings, and what responses it demands. The genesis of this informally named ‘Copenhagen school’ approach—formulated at the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute—lies in Wæver’s 1988 unpublished manuscript ‘Security, the Speech Act’. However, its clearest published iteration came in “Securitization and Desecuritization”, a chapter Wæver contributed to Ronnie Lipschutz’s (1995) *On Security*. Here, Wæver claims that “we can regard ‘security’ as a *speech act* [...] In this usage, security is not of interest as a sign that refers to something more real; the utterance itself is the act”, adding that by this very utterance the actor who performs it “moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means are necessary to block it” (Wæver 1995: 55). This conception of ‘security’ is taken up by Buzan et al. in 1998, who define the process of securitization as “the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics” (1998: 23). This zone outside of politics specifies what Wæver had earlier (1995) called simply the ‘specific area’ where exceptional actions are justified.

Securitization is therefore a *process* of moving issues outside of political or democratic contestation (Buzan et al. 1998: 23-24), and this process or ‘move’ is a discursive one – a *securitizing* move where the performance of speech itself is the act. A securitizing move is therefore a “discourse that takes the form of presenting something as an existential threat to a referent object” (1998: 25). The central elements of securitization are actors who make the discursive acts in question, an audience on whose acceptance the success of a securitization move rests, and a referent object that is presented by the discourse of security as being under existential threat (1998: *passim*). This framework, which is relatively parsimonious, has been subject to critiques and improvements adding an attention to gender (Hansen 2000), an expansion of the idea of speech acts to include images (Williams 2003), and an attention to audiences’ “psycho-social disposition” (Balzacq 2005) or professional character (Salter 2008a). These additions to the ST framework provide a greater degree of embeddedness to the question of how security comes to emerge, and bring us towards a view of security as the results of professional interplay. This view of security is what I turn to next.

3.2.3 Security as practice

Securitization is reliant on a logical trinity—an actor with authority to speak, a referent object to securitize, and an audience to accept the securitizing move—to allow exceptional measures. However, security can also be thought of as an ongoing, routinized process with wider links to various forms of knowledge. This is what Huysmans (2006) points to when linking the emergence of security issues to ‘domains of practice’ and ‘insecurity domains’. Huysmans acts to bridge ST with a body of literature, largely driven by Foucault’s and Bourdieu’s sociologies, that sees security as a routinized form of governance with linkages to broader

fields of knowledge, emerging from the interactions of professionals. This approach, informally named the ‘Paris school’ (PS) by the c.a.s.e. collective (2006), developed around “an agenda focusing on security professionals, the governmental rationality of security, and the political structuring effects of security technology and knowledge” (2006: 449). The PS is therefore concerned with the *sociological* aspects of security and its nature as an ongoing political practice. The ST approach, by emphasizing discourse and audience, implicitly favours the analysis of the speech of influential actors. For the PS approach, a focus on the oft-invisible ‘backstage’ actors of security, and specifically to their social games and competition, is central to understanding the contemporary logics of security.

Work from the PS approach stresses the influence of security professionals in particular. Bigo’s work on the transnationalization of security attributes this to ‘interpenetration’ of the police and the military (2001). The assumption underlying his work is that security is the product of competition and struggles between professionals of security. He succinctly encapsulates the sociological approach to security by defining it as “certainly not a speech act, but the result of struggles of a configuration of professionals in competition for the categorisation of threats and the priorities and forms of the struggles against them” (2012: 118). The Paris school approach does not reject securitization theory wholesale, but echoes or refines perspectives held by proponents of the original ST framework—notably the term ‘securitization’ itself. For example, Jef Huysmans (2006) conserves the idea of the securitization process as a prioritization of threats. However, the major contribution of the ‘security as norm’ approach is to see security as an ongoing governing strategy. While ST sees security as an exceptional condition, Huysmans argues for a view of security as “embedded in training, routine, and technical knowledge and skills, as well as technological artefacts” (2006: 9). Bigo, similarly, draws on “the Foucaultian approach to security, territory and population which places the emphasis on security as norm” (Bigo 2009: 113). In each case, security is a governing technology that emerges from the work of actors embedded in social fields, whose interactions, histories and interests (rather than discourse alone) shapes what security is.

It is important to look at practices of securitization because most borderwork practices in the global south are enacted almost completely outside deliberative politics in the first place, often through transnational expert networks. As a result, although policy documents may provide insight into the broad contours of various programs, public discourse is of limited analytic utility compared to an in-depth examination of the field of professionals who put security into practice. To understand the transmission of knowledge, we must theorize how this knowledge emerges in these fields.

3.2.4 Security knowledge

Investigating security in the global south entails being attentive to the practices of the diverse professionals who frame security threats and shape responses to them. Behind every practice lies a cognitive logic. For instance, a securitization move relies on claiming knowledge of a threat, of the target, of ways to ‘block’ it, and of how to persuade the audience to accept the securitizing discourse (or images), regardless of the move’s success. This makes the expertise of the speaker and the assumed knowledge of the audience into essential elements of the security equation. Similarly, the ‘security as norm’ approach identified with the Paris School assumes knowledge to be produced in social fields of practice, in which securitization may not always be an identifiable or public-facing move. Border control, similarly, is a set of contingent practices that are reflections of societal experiences and priorities, which are mediated and put into practice by particular communities of practitioners. Many scholars have tackled these intellectual schemes by which borders are governed. For example, Louise Amoore’s (2006) and Benjamin Muller’s (2010) analyses of biometric governance have both identified a turn to risk-based modes of border governance, while Walters (2002) has identified a ‘biopolitical’ turn in bordering. These all suggest that there are broader ‘normativities’ behind border control, but they are not primarily concerned with *how* these border control norms come to be created, assembled, displaced and adopted. If border security is embedded in social and historical context, those who ‘do’ it bring particular assumptions, histories, interests and dispositions into play. These are of considerable importance to any discussion of border security in West Africa precisely because this field represents a meeting of a diverse range of actors. A range of norms, rules, best practices, tacit and unspoken assumptions, and procedures sustains border control practices in this region. Social practices such as these depend on some cognitive work (see Adler and Pouliot 2011). So how is this knowledge created? From where does it emerge?

If we think of security problems and solutions as framed by professionals of security, security knowledge reflects the experiences and interactions of the agents who construct them. Bourdieu’s concept of ‘doxa’ points to what is specifically sociological about the emergence of knowledge in practices (Villumsen 2012) by tying doxa to the fields from which it emerges. The pithiest explanation for doxa—given by Bourdieu himself—describes it as something that “*goes without saying because it comes without saying*” (1977: 167, emphasis in original). Doxa is therefore intimately tied to the practical knowledge that animates the actions of agents in different fields. Bourdieu and Wacquant define doxa as “uncontested acceptance of the daily lifeworld” (1992: 73-74), which is in turn tied to social positions in a field. As a result, doxa is partly derived from the habitus of actors—the set of learned dispositions that shape their subjective interrelation to the objective set of relations in which they act. Bourdieu’s

definition of doxa sees it as a largely “prereflexive” and “infrapolitical” (1992: 74). Actors are not automatons and do have strategies, according to Bourdieu, but these are conditioned by the position they occupy rather than a rational-actor calculus.

Security expertise is derived from this doxa. While doxa is inherent in the field interactions in which actors participate, expertise is a more self-aware form of knowledge. Actors are aware of their expertise and of the fact that they derive symbolic and cultural capital from its deployment. Expertise also confers credibility in particular security fields. As Abrahamsen and Williams argue, effective participation in the security field is tied to “ideational capacities” that function as “socially recognized forms of legitimation and recognized expertise” (2011: 93). Expertise is a mode of professional advancement, highlighting the strategic (i.e. not only cognitive) applications of security knowledge. Take, for example, the work of police attachés in European embassies in countries such as Senegal. The idea that borders should be selectively permeable and buttressed by a strong policing capacity is part of their doxa as police officers in law enforcement fields, or as security attachés fluent in EU border control standards and living in migrant-sending countries. Their expertise, on the other hand, is more reflexive and strategic, and may be used to design training practices or dispense advice, which in turn reinforces their claims to expertise.

Security knowledge goes beyond the specific histories or strategies of agents in a field. The broader logic of the field, still mutually constituted by the field’s agents to be sure, dictates the knowledge that will define border control. Ruben Zaiotti’s (2011) concept of ‘cultures of border control’ captures this interplay, paying attention to micro-practices as well as how these are reflected in broader policy changes. He defines such a ‘culture’ as “a relatively stable constellation of background assumptions *and corresponding practices* shared by a border control policy community in a given period and geographical location” (2011: 23, emphasis in original). Thus, there are two important elements in the border control community: its normative or dominant ‘common sense’ and the constellation of actors that operate within these. The main elements of a ‘culture’ of border control include (2011: 25-27): the “characteristics that a border should possess”, the “proper approach to manage them”, and the “identity of the relevant border control community” which are all reflected in relevant or symptomatic texts (2011: 25). Practices, in turn, are shaped by institutional setting, number of actors involved, the relations between these actors, and how institutionalized the policy process is (2011: 26-27). What Zaiotti does is emphasize the agent as well as the community (roughly the ‘field’, in Bourdieusian terms), and the ways that their practices are co-produced with knowledges such as official policy pronouncements and texts.

Building from the approaches above, it is worth restating that security knowledge is incarnated in particular standards, best practices and texts. It should be added that although these ideational capacities are produced by the interactions of human actors, they also depend on—and are reflected by—particular instruments and tools. This is not to attribute a uniquely human intentionality to objects, but rather to broaden the scope of where we can ‘see’ security knowledge. Non-human factors act in three ways with regards to security knowledge. First, objects play a mediating role in field relationships. Actors can struggle to claim credit for or ownership over a particular technology, for instance, or struggle over the meaning of a particular tool. Second, non-human factors represent and incarnate particular ways of doing border security. A border post incarnates the norm of Westphalian territorial sovereignty, and an EU-funded training manual may draw on expertise from a particular member state’s experience. Third, non-humans actively shape practices by producing certain path dependencies: think of the corporate lock-in demanded by the provider of a biometric scanner, or the way that passport scanning equipment lying unused creates an incentive to design new biometric passports. By considering the role of such ‘actants’ (see Latour 2005 in previous chapter) we can see how non-human factors actively make a difference in modulating who controls the border and how, and what the border is in the first place.

In the next sections, I turn my attention to one crucial yet overlooked aspect of work on border knowledge: how this knowledge actually moves between different spaces of the international, and what the mechanics of its take-up (contestation, resistance, hybridization) actually tell us about the political relationships at play in border control cooperation. In the section that follows, I leverage the analytical tools of IPS to show that border security knowledge is *mobile* and *mutable*.

3.3 Knowledge on the move

Contemporary border security policies in West Africa produce and transmit knowledge about security. Security knowledge, produced in the fields of practice that emerge in response to problems such as migration and terrorism, also *moves* between global spaces. This is something that has featured in some existing literature on border control. For instance, in a 2010 article on the IOM, Rutvica Andrijasevic and William Walters argue that the technicalization of migration control is a form of “normalisation” (2010: 984) operating through the process of alignment of migration policies with Western technical norms. They speak of the desire to “generalise a particular model of statehood” (2010: 983) but are not specific as to how this model is transmitted. What this literature does not do is provide an account of how these models (knowledges) of border control actually travel (or fail to travel). This is a key question that is under-researched in more theoretical accounts of borders in CSS. Given the contemporary dynamics of north-south cooperation and the cognitive encounters it brings about, knowing

what these bundles of knowledge are and how they move is instructive about the types of global relationships being fostered.

The methodological tools of international political sociology (IPS) are particularly useful in attempting to overcome this lacuna of thinking about the transmission of security knowledge in/to/from the global south. Although the approaches to CSS mentioned above largely fall within this research sensibility, they too often focus on European and North American examples. An IPS approach, founded on an active re-evaluation of what the ‘international’ is, and attentiveness to quotidian practice, can be productively applied to think about global knowledge mobilities. In this section, I argue that the IPS approach, despite difficulties of definition, provides the theoretical attitude needed to understand the spatial ‘sites’ of knowledge production and transmission. This builds on the work on security above, leveraging the IPS emphasis on ‘sites’ of the international. Second, I suggest that transfers of knowledge between these sites are subject to a constant interplay between mutability and immutability, in that knowledge is transmitted, emulated, adapted, resisted, misunderstood, or used strategically. In short, knowledge is mobile and malleable. The concept of the ‘(im)mutable mobile’ from actor-network theory is particularly useful to understand not only the formation of this borderwork knowledge, but its transmission and reception across space. A lens attuned to the interplay of global and local, and mutable and immutable, is best positioned to show the mobility of knowledge that sustains borderwork in West Africa. Third, I argue that contemporary security knowledges in border control in West Africa are transmitted through exemplars, emulation, and pedagogy.

3.3.1 IPS in the global south

IPS has, in critical security studies, generally been ‘done’ to examine practices and policies in North America and Europe. This is not a cynical or lazy oversight, but rather a lacuna linked to the genesis and sociology of the research approach itself. The ‘Paris School’, the foremost IPS approach in security studies, has dealt with aspects of European integration such as the divergences between the sociology of EU security agencies and the borders of the union’s member states. The origins of IPS are therefore entrenched in the European experience: the binaries IPS-driven approach have tried to contest have been of integration/disintegration, national/European, police/military, and so on. Scholars working in this vein have mapped the social space of EU security (Bigo, Bonelli, Chi, and Olsson 2007) as well as examined the mobilization of discourses of insecurity (Bigo and Tsoukala 2008). Other IPS-inspired approaches to borders have produced ethnographies of citizen border patrols in the US (Doty 2009) and of the Finnish border guards (Prokkola 2013). However, very few IPS works on borders (with exceptions, such as Voelkner 2011) have used the tools of IPS to

look at security practices in the global south, or the diffusion of security policies from north to south.

One way that an IPS approach can help us grapple with the politics of security provision in the global south—where knowledge transmission is key—is by refusing to assume a traditional geopolitical view of space. Looking to the French term for IPS pays dividends for more than just pedantic purposes: the term *sociologie politique de l'international* calls for a ‘political sociology of the international’, which is not the scaled-up form of political sociology as the English translation might suggest. Doing a political sociology of the international is useful to examine knowledge transfer between north and south precisely because the global-local complexity of these transfers defies traditional geography. An IPS sensibility pushes us to critique such conceptions of the international and think of it through its various *sites*. Recalling Salter’s definition of IPS, he adds that the approach “tak[es] as its subject matter not the grand structure of a universal politics, but more modest examinations of specific sites and institutions where politics are enacted” (2007: 49). This compels us to keep in mind that global and local are not effects of distance alone. For instance, knowledge can be transmitted from ‘global’ to ‘local’ within the spatial area of a very small zone in an African country. The international, in this example, is actually not a space of anarchy between two states, but is the site of interaction between intervener and intervened.

Finally, applying IPS thinking to the global south opens up new analytical spaces of critique. The IPS approach to security in Europe is rooted in responses to EU integration, and particularly the changes (and continuities) in approaches to security and immigration that accompany this process. The critique of some of the EU-specific binaries mentioned should, in the global south, take on a rather different tack. In this case, an IPS-led suspicion of binary distinctions should push us to rethink dyads such as expert/non-expert, modern/outdated, and effective/ineffective that are much more specific to security practices in the global south. In fact, given the north-south interactions at play, the very definition of a field (in the Bourdieusian sense) should come under scrutiny, as security *relations* sit at the intersection of different fields of practice, or even in different fields, even though actors may operate in a common site.

3.3.2 (Im)mutable knowledges

Border security knowledge should be thought of as *mobile* and *mutable*. It is mobile because it can move between different sites of the international, and mutable because this process is not always smooth, one-sided, one-way or successful. The concept of the ‘(im)mutable mobile’ is useful as a heuristic device to understand this rocky and uneven takeup of border security knowledge. Immutable mobiles are sets of bundled practices that move over space and time

and retain their shape. Gavin Kendall defines them as “convenient packages that hold together and maintain their coherence even when they are moved, enabling them to be effective in a variety of settings. So, for example, a map is a conveniently packaged-up ‘knowledge’ which can be transported easily, and which can be used regardless of the war office desk or the battleship where it is spread out.” (Kendall 2004: 65). Immutable mobiles can be objects but also practices, discourses and imaginaries. They are bundles of the kinds of knowledge mentioned earlier: norms, standards, best practices, rules, tacit knowledges, rhythms, procedures, and more. Tony Porter stresses this importance of the micro and of the material, suggesting that global governance is too often

seen as consisting of large forces without sufficient consideration of the specific humans, objects and networks that are needed if these forces are to be transmitted. Alone, humans have great difficulty in transmitting actions across the distances that global governance involves, and they therefore rely heavily on objects such as written texts, electronic networks, weapons systems, transportation systems, and meeting rooms and offices (2012: 553).

The classic example of an immutable mobile in ANT is John Law’s (1986) study of Portuguese ships in the development of that country’s empire. In this work, Law points to the mobility and durability of these ships and how they acted to enact control at a distance. He also points to the network of relations that made this control possible: the role of texts, ports, navigation tools and more. Law draws our attention to the object under consideration but also the bundle that helps it to be immutable and durable. In the context of borderwork in West Africa, we can think of a patrol plane donated by Spain to Senegal as such an immutable mobile. The principles of flight that allow it to patrol the border remain immutable, but there’s more to the bundle that keeps it airborne: the fuel provided by Spain to power it, the bilateral agreement through which Senegal promises to fly daily, and the training program that builds local patrol expertise. Immutable mobiles help us to think of the human and non-human roles that transmit approaches to controlling borders.

Not all knowledges are immutable, of course, and part of the political relevance of talking about border security knowledge is that it is precisely its ability to be mutable that is instructive about the political relationships around it. As John Law (1999) argues, to speak of immutable mobiles is also to assume the presence of *mutable* mobiles. The take-up and reception of objects and knowledges in different contexts can be rocky and uneven. After all, networks are composed of materials (say, a European border training manual) and humans (a Senegalese border guard) that may form precarious or unexpected networks of their own. This can be seen in the interaction between knowledge and infrastructure: a European border management approach reliant on always-on computerized databases, may lack the mutability to exist in a border area with no internet connection (say, in

the Mauritanian desert) or with an unreliable electricity grid. In other respects, culture clashes can be important, and “[local] micro-struggles can challenge and shape externally defined programmes” (Bachmann and Hönke 2009: 99). This suggests a degree of agency in the local, disturbing ideas that intervention is about the smooth imposition of outside ideas.

3.3.3 Exemplars

The first major way that such bundles of knowledge move is through exemplars. Exemplars are very often ‘best practices’, but can also be behaviours and ideals that are tacitly worthy of emulation. The IOM’s border control programs are heavily reliant on the use of exemplars, as the organization relies on the global diffusion of its relatively standard policy prescriptions. For instance, it is the most active organization globally in terms of spreading the concept of national migration strategies (and their associated dialogue processes) as well as the use of risk analysis methods at borders. The IOM has even institutionalized structures such as the African Capacity Building Centre (ACBC) in Moshi, Tanzania, which can be understood as a site for the accumulation and dissemination of such exemplars in the field of migration management. According to the ACBC’s own literature, one of its purposes is to “develop, institutionalize and deliver on-site and off-site migration management training programmes” (IOM 2010). The construction of border posts in Mauritania and in South Sudan reflects how exemplars about how borders should be managed draw on global ideals as much as project-specific methods. In each case, the IOM construction of border posts follows a global exemplar about sovereignty—the creation of a bounded and defensible space with a state presence—but also a more specific exemplar of how border management capacity-building can work within a defined budget and timeframe.

Exemplars bring us to the idea of knowledge generation, and to the question: where do border control knowledges come from? Here we must recognize the important role that organizations like the IOM play as autonomous yet interlinked *generators* of exemplars. As a case in point, most of the IOM’s border management standards draw inspiration from documents such as the EU’s Schengen Borders Code. This Code defines border control as

“not only checks on persons at border crossing points and surveillance between these border crossing points, but also an analysis of the risks for internal security and analysis of the threats that may affect the security of external borders (European Union 2006: 1).

This suggests an extension of the border through space (into the EU space and well outside it) but also through time (future threats). This is particularly important as IOM activities in Africa—such as its capacity building project in Mauritania—explicitly aim to coordinate law enforcement at the border and

inland. This reflects how what are considered ‘international norms’ or ‘best practices’ of border control actually come from a particular and historically situated moment. In this case, the IOM’s growth has coincided with the particular historical moment in the West—and the EU specifically—in which borders have become more complex and harder to cross.

Exemplars also operate through what Hosein calls ‘policy laundering’: the way that “some countries [...] push for certain regulatory standards in international bodies and then bring those regulations home under the requirement of harmonization and the guise of multilateralism” (2004: 189). Hosein identifies the removal of certain issues from deliberation through such ‘high’ politics as a crucial part of policy laundering. This reinforces the technocratic aspects of border management, illustrating how—as discussed in the first section of this chapter—security emerges from the interactions of professionals rather than an obvious public-facing securitizing discourse. This is a particularly important factor in semi-authoritarian states (such as Mauritania) in which security policy is more likely to be a ‘backstage’ matter than a question of vibrant public debate.

3.3.4 Emulation

Knowledges about border control also flow through emulation: countries, institutions and individuals take on particular characteristics deemed desirable or advanced. The role of voluntary emulation is reflected in the agency of individual states and contests the idea that borderwork knowledges are always imposed from outside. For instance, the IOM’s Development Fund is deployed largely as the request of beneficiary states. Similarly, EU assistance for the formation of national border management strategies like Senegal’s is always provided at the formal request of the recipient.

Emulation emanates from the sheer power of the signifier of ‘modernity’ as a source of symbolic capital. The supposed simplicity of the technological ‘fix’ from countries of the global north provides a powerful source of inspiration for African countries. This is very much the case for biometric technologies, which are seen as remedies for the ages-old problem of unreliable, untraceable paper documents. The technical merits of such systems, even if assessed, take a back seat to their interoperability with global standards. Their symbolic importance as markers of technology trumps any objective utility they may have. The importance of biometric documents to the image of a state as trustworthy and ‘serious’ about security is an almost unanimous viewpoint. This is notable because many security actors in charge of these technologies must ‘save face’ in the various international police conferences and exhibitions in which they take part. Their emulation of a global standard (which often places them ahead of many Western countries) is a mode of asserting expertise.

The strategic adoption of global standards also provides symbolic capital in a more local context. As Dezalay and Garth (2002) show, such capital obtained internationally is very useful when converted into the local context. They argue that groups of professionals “can use international credentials, expertise, and connections to build capital that they can reinvest in domestic public arenas” (2002: 34). This is certainly the case when it comes to the emulation of global standards, as knowledges of these can help to solidify credibility and expert knowledge domestically. Take, for instance, how Senegalese police commanders make their office decoration illustrate their globally-oriented knowledge relationships, displaying badges and certificates from foreign-run training courses.

Emulation is also possible within individual institutions as a means of attempting to replicate practices in different spaces. Some Guardia Civil officers who work in migrant-sending countries in West Africa, as security liaisons in Spanish embassies, have prior experience working in that country’s African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. This direct experience with what is Spain’s ‘toughest’ border to police provides valued (in a symbolic sense) expertise that coincides with a hope that it can be applied in other migration hot spots such as Senegal or Mauritania. This shows how learning and diffusion do not only go north-south. They can even go in the reverse direction: from intervened to intervener. When a Senegalese navy operational group commander presents his patrol techniques at the Euro-African police conference, it is impossible to imagine the Spanish hosts failing to adopt a single lesson from this.

3.3.5 Pedagogy

Finally, the most direct and perhaps most prominent form of transmission of borderwork knowledge is the pedagogical style most associated with statebuilding and capacity-building interventions. To begin with, pedagogy is crucial to struggles within fields. Although it is seemingly altruistic or at least mildly disinterested, such forms of teaching and instruction are forms of gaining symbolic capital through the reinforcement of a (self-)perception as advanced or modern. This educational practice is therefore dependent on the prior existence of an unequal distribution of capital between teacher and learner, which the pedagogical act maintains or even exacerbates.

Pedagogy takes place through direct training but also through agenda-setting. For instance, IOM training on border control methods, as Andrijasevic and Walters (2010) highlight, makes trainees interrogate their own learning. This is visible in the IOM’s *Essentials of Migration Management*, one of that organization’s training manuals for border staff. In each section dealing with themes such as border security, travel documents, or refugee law, the reader is asked to apply her knowledge and test her competencies. Pedagogy also works through face-to-face meetings within a particular field, such as regional law enforcement meetings and

migration policy workshops. Bringing together diverse actors around particular policy problems is also effective, as has been the case in Mauritania where organizations such as the IOM and UNHCR “perform a key role in the [north-south] transfer of cognitive categories and frameworks” about migration in Mauritania (Poutignat and Streiff-Fénart 2010: 203) through, for example, the use of institutionalized migration management study groups. Pedagogy operates to responsabilize on an institutional level. Take the aforementioned case of EU assistance for border management strategies. This assistance is initially made available by the EU through its own funding programs, but it is up to potential beneficiary countries to apply for this funding with fully-formed proposals. This means that such a project is as much an exercise in strategy-building as it is in building up the good governance that generates such successful proposals. That local EU delegations will assist with the formulation of such proposals confirms this pedagogical angle.

Pedagogy is always adaptable. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) sets standards for aviation and airport security through standards (which are mandatory) and other recommended practices. For the French-run ASACA airport security program, which delivers ICAO-compliant training to airport staff in 20 African countries, training is based on standardized ICAO Standardized Training Packages (the French name, *mallettes pédagogiques normalisées*, is more telling as to its pedagogical and normalizing effects). These STPs are taught by ICAO accredited experts in each country, who modify the language and idioms used in each local context. This makes the actual pedagogical moment more effective as the local experts hired are culturally closer to the recipients of the training. The justification for this localism is that ‘the French language is not the same everywhere’, and so knowledges, even when standardized, must be mutable to fulfil their pedagogical effect.

Exemplars, emulation and pedagogy serve to transmit ways of doing border control, and in doing so also transmit understandings of what the security problem is in the first place. They also reflect the broader worldview that underpins different approaches to security provision in West Africa, and the global south more generally: that security explicitly and implicitly combines characteristics of both control and care. These are the broad rationalities to which I turn next.

3.4 Care and control

Having theorized border security knowledge and its forms of transmission, I now turn to discuss worldviews of security. Moving away from individual transfers of security knowledge, we must examine the structuring views that makes such practices possible, from the Spanish patrolling of West Africa’s coast to the use of biometrics as a marker of citizenship in Mauritania. In light of the dynamics of emulation, exemplar and pedagogy listed above, we can think of these as

reflections of a growing overlap between security and development. Literature on statebuilding, peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction, and intervention has increasingly referred to a ‘security-development nexus’, where security and development are considered as two separate things. This idea of a nexus of security and development is appealing as intervening states and organizations have sought holistic ways to address instability, insecurity and poverty in the global south. Development and institutional ‘capacity-building’, including security sector reform, are seen as necessary conditions for peace and security (see Paris 2004, Uvin 2002), and a state’s ‘capacity’ to secure itself is essential to the well-being of its population (Zartman 1995). More recent policy and academic interventions have explicitly tackled the ‘nexus’ between security and development (Fitz-Gerald 2004, Buur, Jensen and Stepputat 2007; Zoellick 2008, *Security Dialogue* 2010, Krogstad 2012). In their mapping of this ‘nexus’, Stern and Öjendal (2010) take into account the remarkably similar conceptual evolutions of ‘security’ and ‘development’ over the last fifty years, recognizing that the two concepts share some sort of ontological terrain. This is the perspective—of a similar underlying terrain—on which I draw.

Security and development are two sides of the same coin. Development “always had a security dimension” (Cooper 2006) and directly reflects global sovereign power (Duffield 2007). To reflect this, I refer to two phenomena: ‘security as control’ and ‘security as care’ respectively. Control is reflected in the particularly seductive nature of the border as a site of closure (see Parker et al. 2009) and through conceptions of state’s capacity to secure space and population. Care seeks to reinforce a transformational and compassionate humanitarian subjectivity on the part of the intervener but also coexists with fundamentally conservative security framings.

3.4.1 Control: capacity, modernization and legibility

Control is perhaps the most immediately familiar understanding of security, as it harks back to the identification of and response to threats and anxieties in the name of protection and reassurance. This can be the ‘blocking’ move that a successful securitization move authorizes, for instance. However, in the global south, this question of ability is fraught with the politics of capacity and modernization. It is impossible to think about the implantation of border security practices in places like Senegal and Mauritania without considering the modernizing politics that underlie them, and the notion of capacity that this modernizing zeal relies on. That security as an ‘ordering’ device, particularly at borders, is nothing new (see Van Houtum 2010). But *how* to ensure that order, and the state’s *ability* to maintain that order—at the border—is not commonly discussed in border studies or critical security studies. This is where the literature on statebuilding is particularly helpful, in that it reaffirms the continued analytical relevance of a Weberian view of sovereignty for security actors. Jackson and

Rosberg (1982) speak of ‘empirical’ or *de facto* sovereignty, which requires territory, a relatively stable population and an effective mode of governance. In Jackson’s later work (1993) he describes as ‘quasi-states’ those states that, although benefiting from juridical sovereignty and recognition, do not successfully lay claim to the more empirical (proto-Weberian) formulation of sovereignty as successful control and administration.

First, security capacity is conceived of as the ability to sense. It is necessarily surveillant, which in turn ties capacity to visibility and a broader form of knowability. In his 1998 book *Seeing Like a State*, James C. Scott uses the concept of legibility to describe the process of better knowing, seeing, mapping, and controlling nature and society. The idea of legibility, like surveillance, is not new: it is intimately bound to long-standing techniques inherent to modernity such as surveillance, development, and bureaucracy. The desire for legibility, Scott argues, stems from a ‘high-modernist’ worldview that predominates in states’ grand projects: it thrives in the joining together of Enlightenment will to order and a weak civil society. High-modernism is a response to the ‘illegibility’ that the state sees in the contingent forms of life represented by the local, the natural and anything else that escapes the administrative gaze. This gaze is similar to what John Torpey (2000) calls the state’s ‘embrace’ of its population, which stresses the work of identifying and ‘filing’ that goes into maintaining a body of citizens. The central problem of (il)legibility is therefore fundamental to practices of surveillance and social control. In this sense, I am using the term legibility to describe the state’s myriad practices for controlling borders, reading bodies, and managing populations and their movements. This pursuit of legibility, which is associated with grand projects of state reform in developing countries, emanates from a desire for modernization.

Capacity also implies managerial competence and willpower. For instance, ‘migration management’ implies some kind of bureaucratic capacity to—before control comes into the equation—adequately quantify and respond, at a governmental level, to flows of people. This is why the EU is so insistent on the use of migration profiles as part of its help for migration strategies. Capacity as a managerial category also means managing risks. Capacity as a managerial phenomenon makes itself a type of pre-requisite: before implementing a given security policy, a state must have the capacity to comprehend the policy itself. States in the south are candidates for intervention because, in the words of an ICAO official, they “often struggle to implement complex specifications because they lack technical expertise and/or funds” (Tiedge 2012). Beyond such issues of ability, motivation is a key part of what counts as a state’s capacity. There is a key difference between the ‘will’ and ‘ability’ of a state to enact sovereign power (Bain 2011), but the politics of capacity-building seeks to intervene on *both* of those factors. Motivational capacity includes professionalism and expertise, and capacity-building practices often rely on the formation of a cognitive consensus

(through workshops or training) as a means of ensuring that all concur on the solution at hand.

Capacity is technological—it is the tangible means through which state power is enacted. Technology is also laden with views of progress and ideas about capacity have a built-in teleological ideal of modernization. One needs to look no further than the way biometric technologies are understood by Senegalese police officials (‘finally, we’ve caught up!’) to understand the temporal element that technology embodies. Capacity as technology is also about using technology *well*. Interveners are often keen to stress that ‘low tech’ solutions work best, and that the interplay of professional culture and technology is more important than sheer advancement. However, this underlines the point that capacity is technological, since technology is by definition a socially embedded factor.

The buttressing or improvement of these aforementioned capacities can be called a form of *modernization*. In this case, it entails a movement towards Westphalian statehood. The normative assumption in capacity-building practices is that African states, hampered by colonial era borders and weak administrative efficiency, must first attain successful statehood through better territorial control (at borders) and better visibility of population (through identification). Modernization is therefore a form of statebuilding, which Hameiri defines as “the broad range of programs and projects designed to build or strengthen the capacity of institutions, organizations and agencies” (2010: 2). Statebuilding does not always concern military or traditional concerns of ‘hard’ security. Rather, it is a routine and unspectacular practice aiming at buttressing the state. Hameiri notes that this type of statebuilding outside of post-conflict settings has “taken on a more pre-emptive, risk management form than earlier post-Cold War interventions” (Hameiri 2010: 2). This emphasis on risk management explains how statebuilding can be thought of as a form of power on its own. For example, the FRONTEX missions off West Africa’s Atlantic coast have been very successful in reducing the number of migrant departures by sea, but they continue under the guise of managing the risk of new attempts.

Modernization also relies on spillover effects. An example: the Datacard Group, which was charged with overhauling Guinea-Bissau’s biometric national ID, speak of this system in terms of ‘re-establishing’ the nation’s administrative credibility. According to them, the system will “go a long way toward helping the country prevent election fraud, fictitious employment, salary remuneration fraud, illegal immigration and related identity issues” (Datacard Group 2012). This brings us back to Huysmans’ notion of ‘domains’ of security, which in the case are not criminological (the way insecurity is linked to street crime in Europe) but rather developmental. The range of meanings to which security is associated is instead one associated with state capacity.

3.4.2 Care and humanitarianism

In addition to stressing control, border security is also a humanitarian activity, according to the self-perception of many security actors in West Africa. Patrolling the sea, for instance, is as much a question of saving lives as enforcing border laws. Implementing biometrics is a means to ensure national development, rather than a technique of inclusion and exclusion. Humanitarian instincts are laudable, but remain coopted by practices of security. The EEAS's strategy for the Sahel affirms, for instance, that "poverty creates inherent instability that can impact on uncontrolled migratory flows" (EEAS 2012). The problem is framed as relational, with poverty *there* causing insecurity *over here*. Statebuilding is always relational in two ways: first, because it compares low capacity with higher capacity states, and second because security threats from the global south (the other) are understood largely in relation to what they might become in relation to northern countries (the self).

Similarly, the framing of border control as an issue of migrants' rights—and lives—justifies a presence that reinforces a security-oriented view of border control. For instance, the Spanish 'West Sahel' project in Senegal and Mauritania provides training and equipment (including canine units) on one side, but also formally provides for training on readmission and migrants' rights. The latter part of the project suggests that a human rights focus 'balances' the security element, but the project still exists in the context of reducing migration from West Africa to Spain. Humanitarian instincts can appear to be a question of equal benefit, or of generosity, but they end up being fundamentally conservative in reaffirming the norm of sovereignty and legitimizing control.

Another way that the politics of care are always imbricated with control is through the interplay of control and movement. Alternatively, this can be thought of as the interplay of the 'politics of control' and the 'politics of migration' (Squire 2011). By enforcing control mechanisms, justified by the language of care, states actually endanger migrants by forcing them to take new more treacherous routes. This is particularly telling in the way that the European Union's external border agency, FRONTEX, extolls the virtues of its cooperation with Senegal and Mauritania in its quarterly risk assessment reports. These reports show a sharp downward trend in migrant interceptions in the Atlantic whilst simultaneously showing increases from North Africa. The effect of control is not to stymie the agency of migrants or act as a deterrent. Rather, it shifts trajectories to riskier locales: rather than leave Mali for Spain through Mauritania and Morocco, a migrant might take the riskier trip through Niger and Libya towards Italy or Malta. This, in turn, requires a geographical shift in emphasis for the EU's border management apparatus, rather than an actual diminution in control.

Finally, security as a form of care is reflected in the desire to stave off crisis. Migration levels—and the possibility of (humanitarian) crisis—simply make policy future-oriented. For instance, the way the Spanish Guardia Civil detachment in Mauritania uses the spectre of potential ‘crisis’ to justify its presence also speaks to the fact that reduction in migrant numbers does not translate to a reduction in the security apparatus. In fact, as the next chapter shows, cooperation has ramped up independently of migration levels. Similarly, one of the first major tests of the EU’s external borders agency, FRONTEX, was alleviating the ‘crisis’ of migration towards the Canary Islands through its multinational ‘Hera’ patrol and readmission operations in 2006. Coming only two years after FRONTEX’s creation, this immediate need to respond to an ostensibly humanitarian situation shaped the agency’s later development as a risk-based (Neal 2008) model of operations, anticipating the movement of migrants.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have made three main points. First, I have argued that security is enacted not only by discourse but also emanates from the sociological interactions of security actors. This led me to argue that these conditions—the embeddedness of securitization—produce socially and historically situated forms of knowledge. Second, I argued that this knowledge, composed as much of cognitive as tangible matter, can be transmitted across international ‘sites’ with varying degrees of success. Using the idea of (im)mutable mobiles, I highlighted the way that security knowledges are transmitted, suggesting that exemplars, emulation and pedagogy are the three main ways knowledge is transmitted in borderwork in West Africa. Third, I have argued that given this north-south flow of knowledge, we can think of border security practices in West Africa as undergirded by a worldview that considers security as both control and care. Control stresses capacity and modernization, while care emphasizes the humanitarian aspects of security. These, however, are two sides of the same coin in that they sustain a worldview that privileges security and sovereignty.

In the next three chapters, I develop empirical arguments that illustrate the theoretical arguments about borderwork and security knowledge made to this point. In Chapter 4, I examine Spanish projects to control irregular migration from Senegal and Mauritania as a more routinized form of statebuilding. In Chapter 5, I discuss an EU funded IOM project to build border posts in Mauritania. Chapter 6 turns to the question of biometric technologies, stressing the differential (and difficult) implementation of global standards in Mauritania and Senegal.

4 Spanish police cooperation

4.1 Introduction

In February of 2014, Spain's secretary of state for security, Francisco Martínez Vázquez, visited Senegal and Mauritania. During his whirlwind tour, Martínez met with the Senegalese minister of interior but also with Spanish police officers stationed in Mauritania. It is hard to imagine such a visit taking place 15 years earlier, when Spain's political and security footprint in Africa was considerably smaller. Yet Martínez's visit was routine: high level security contacts and visits have become commonplace between Spain and Senegalese and Mauritanian authorities. Senegal and Mauritania are the two West African countries whose police cooperation relationships with Spain have intensified the most since the mid-2000s. These two states are Spain's closest security partners in the region, largely due to their interlinked roles as origin, transit and destination countries for irregular migration. In this chapter, I examine the work, by security professionals and others at varying scales, which has gone into making a visit like Martínez's seem so routine.

Since the early 2000s, Spain's involvement in the security politics of Senegal and Mauritania has grown dramatically, with relations focused on irregular migration and newer anxieties about drug trafficking and terrorism in the Sahel. Spain has become a central actor in border management in the region, particularly in coastal states prone to irregular migration by boat, and has been a catalyst for a greater EU focus on overseas actions to control its external borders. The most spectacular cause of Spain's involvement in West Africa was the 'crisis' of migration to the Canary Islands, which reached its peak in 2006 when over 31,000 migrants arrived on the islands, mainly in small boats. This movement, which peaked between 2004 and 2007, was spurred in part by strengthened controls in Morocco and around Spain's tiny African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla and also by the proximity of the Canary Islands to the coast of Western Sahara. In response to this movement of migrants, Spain initiated unprecedented security cooperation with Senegal and Mauritania to jointly patrol and observe the coasts of these countries. It also signed readmission agreements with both countries, under which Senegal and Mauritania accepted their own nationals and agreed to repatriate other nationals from the sub-region that had transited through their state. Spain successfully Europeanized the migration control issue and put cooperation with 'third countries' firmly on the EU's migration control agenda. Since 2006, Spain's Guardia Civil (gendarmerie) has jointly patrolled the waters of Senegal and Mauritania with local police and military corps and reinforced them with training and equipment. Frontex, the EU's external borders agency created in 2004, continues its 'Hera' coordination operations launched in 2006 and led by Spain, which bring patrol equipment and expertise from other EU members states to supplement the Spanish bilateral effort. Spain's role has expanded beyond

maritime patrols towards a more comprehensive involvement, and the Guardia Civil now work closely with a range of West African states to build border control capacity on land and against a wider variety of threats. Spanish intervention—in the form of bilateral police cooperation and capacity-building—shapes the everyday practices and knowledges of the Senegalese and Mauritanian security fields despite its relatively small financial and human resource footprint.¹

This chapter builds on the literature on EU border control, making two main contributions. First, the chapter focuses on the daily practices of cooperation beyond North Africa, which has to date been the main focus of literature on the ‘externalization’ of the EU’s borders in the global south. Second, by highlighting the quotidian elements of cooperation between Spain and Senegal and Mauritania, the chapter brings to light various sites (spatial, conceptual, human, and non-human) through which approaches to border control are transmitted, translated, resisted, or encounter friction. Since Spain’s border is also the external border of the European Union’s Schengen zone of free movement, the relocation of control towards the frontiers of ‘third countries’ can be seen as an outward shift of the EU’s border function. There is a vast literature on the EU border control policy (e.g. Zielonka 2001, Carrera 2007, Neal 2009, Léonard 2010, Carling and Hernández-Carretero 2011, Reid-Henry 2012), much of which focuses on the complex institutional and spatial geography of the Union’s border(s). This is visible in work on the dislocation of the EU border through databases such as the Schengen Information System (Apap and Carrera 2004) or the Visa Information System for asylum claimants (Broeders 2007, Balzacq 2008). These render Europe’s borders spatially and temporally dislocated. There is now also a considerable literature specifically on the externalization of the EU’s borders (e.g. Boswell 2003, Richey 2013) and on new security relationships with third countries (Cassarino 2005, Bialasiewicz 2012, Hernandez i Sagrera 2013), but this literature largely focuses on the EU’s cooperation with North African partners (e.g. Collyer 2008, Ferrer-Gallardo 2008, Johnson 2013). While the number of migrant interceptions in the ‘Atlantic’ region dropped over 99% between 2006 and 2012², Spanish cooperation with Senegal and Mauritania has become routinized and institutionalized, with real effects on the local security politics and practices of these countries. Despite this ongoing and intensifying security relationship between Spain, the EU and West African states in the area of migration control, there is very little literature focusing on the ongoing security

¹ For instance, the two West Sahel projects have, since 2011, cost the European Union and Guardia Civil less than €4million in total and involved only a few dozen Guardia Civil officers. Similarly, arrangements for joint patrols in both countries are put in place by fewer than a combined 60 officers.

² In 2006, the Guardia Civil’s coordination centre in the Canary Islands reported 30,246 arrivals in the islands. By the next year, arrivals were down 59% to 12,470 and these numbers continued to drop to a low of 45 migrants in 2012, a 99.85% drop from the peak six years earlier.

relationships engendered by this period or on how this new constellation of security actors is actually organized and functions. There are exceptions, of course, such as policy work on migration control arrangements in the Canaries (Arteaga 2007), on the impact of EU migration policies in Mali (Trauner and Deimel 2013) and some ethnographic work on the Guardia Civil in Senegal and Mauritania (Andersson 2014). As Andersson puts it, “[f]or all its apparent might, Europe’s emerging border regime takes on a more profane guise on African soil” (2014: 202). This chapter focuses on these more local and distant impacts of Europe’s ‘externalized’ border, but also pays attention to local practices that undermine the idea of a neat imposition of European border policies. The chapter builds on this literature, and takes a practice-oriented approach that combines policy analysis with attention to the quotidian in ‘third countries’ and how this intervention shapes local security politics.

By paying attention to the level of practice, the chapter’s second main contribution—on the transmission of border control knowledge—becomes apparent. Spanish intervention in Senegal and Mauritania has been an important catalyst for the formation and transmission of security knowledge. With capacity-building and training playing such a central role, agencies such as the Guardia Civil have created a space for the institution of new ways of *doing* border control. Materials play a key role in this normative aspect of border control: vehicles donated under capacity-building projects or the sensory infrastructures used to detect migrant movements are all the material of which border control knowledges are composed and through which they are transmitted. Spanish involvement in Senegal and Mauritania has moved the EU’s external border function to the shores of West Africa, and the quotidian interactions in this Euro-African borderland create and transmit knowledges about how border control is to be done. It has also been an exercise in reinforcing local capacity to fight migration and, as security in the Sahel has become more prominent, reinforcing security capacity beyond migration issues. The Spanish role in patrolling the coasts of Senegal and Mauritania has provided normative and technical transfers to each state. Paying attention to the ‘things’ that make up border control—vehicles, concepts, tropes, command centres, medals—highlights how small non-military interventions (like Project West Sahel, which cost under €3million) reflect and impact ways of doing security.

4.1.1 Structure of the chapter

In the first section of this chapter, I trace the emergence of ‘crisis’ in the Canary Islands from 2006 onwards, the new social space of security that emerged from it, and the turn towards migration control as risk management. I argue that the 2006 ‘crisis’ represented by a spike in migrants from sub-Saharan Africa stimulated the formation of a new security field. This field should be thought of not as a tight, coherent field of security actors but a broad socio-technical space in which a

range of security officials, boats, police officers, smugglers, migrants, satellites, planes, and cameras act to make the border what it is. Despite the end of the crisis, Spanish cooperation with Senegal and Mauritania has actually strengthened due to a risk management approach to potential migration. This is reflected in capacity-building projects such as the Guardia Civil's West Sahel project, launched in 2011 and funded by the EU, which seeks to improve overall border policing capabilities in countries beyond coastal states (such as Niger) and respond to a broad range of threats.

The second section of the chapter argues that interior security attachés or 'security liaisons' (law enforcement personnel largely based in embassies) have been key players in the Ibero-African space of border control. Spanish security liaisons and their Senegalese and Mauritanian partners occupy different security fields—each primarily originates from and competes in different social worlds—but they work together in a common socio-technical space on a common mission. This undermines the view that police liaison work is primarily competitive (Bigo 1996) or that commitments to security cooperation are primarily rhetorical (Gerspacher and Dupont 2007). Rather, the ideal of cooperation so cherished by the security actors interviewed for this chapter reflects their desire to integrate and smoothen security relations and build an autonomous local policing capacity. While there is prestige inherent in the provision of expertise, there is not a dynamic of competition between Spanish and African actors.

The third section of the chapter argues that vehicles—planes, boats, and 4x4s—are key material elements that shape (and reflect) the everyday practices of border control in Senegal and Mauritania. The boats used by the Guardia Civil and local navies are important sites for the transmission of knowledge and the joint patrols they host reflect the complexity of the sovereignty they uphold. Boats, as used by smugglers, also set the agenda. Planes and helicopters act to improve the state's ability to 'see', while 4x4s reflect new anxieties about land borders and are the sites of struggle over the fine details of border control capacity-building.

The fourth section of the chapter understands the border to be a sensory and communicative space, and argues that technologies of observation (such as infrared binoculars) and communications (such as secure geographical information system connections) are essential in fostering the ideal of the border as a technological and integrated space. The Seahorse communications infrastructure provides real-time connection between Spain and a range of West African countries—beyond the Atlantic coast—while the use of infrared cameras dictates a visual and surveillant aspect to border control. However, technological failures and the flexible deployment of non-technical tools such as canine units show the limits of building 'capacity' and the proliferation of the border.

The fifth section of the chapter discusses the large power of small, mundane symbols and of linguistic tropes. Beginning with the medals, pins and other tokens of cooperation, I argue that cooperation cuts both ways: for some it confers prestige, yet for others it confirms their inferior status in their field. Linguistic shorthand such as “Le Frontex” to refer to maritime patrols serves to crystallize opposition to border management and is the public face of largely technical, bureaucratized border practices.

The sixth section of the chapter argues that the Guardia Civil has turned away from a singular focus on migration towards an agenda focused on better overall border management. With the growing use of joint land patrols and police stations, as planned for in the second phase of the West Sahel project, activities since 2013 suggest a turn towards a more holistic security capacity-building agenda. The chapter concludes with a reflection on its main findings.

4.2 From crisis to risk management

With large-scale migration to Spain only growing since the 1970s, the country has transitioned from a migrant-sending country to one that has increasingly attracted labour migrants from South America and North Africa. While earlier forms of irregular migration were primarily due to visa overstays and gaps in the consular system, more spectacular forms of irregularity have become prominent since the 1990s. Most of these more visibly irregular forms of migration—the type more likely to provoke media spectacle and security framings—have come from North African countries whose proximity makes clandestine journeys to Spain appealing. Throughout the 2000s, there was a constant interplay between inducement through regularizations and ease of access on one side, and control achieved through policing and surveillance on the other. In this section, I give a quick overview of irregular migration to Spain since 1990, with the bulk of attention devoted to the turn towards migration in the Canary Islands. I go on to argue that although the number of migrants landing on the shores of the Canaries from 2005 was significant, it is rather the sense of emergency it created, and the enduring understanding of migration as a risk, that has dictated the Spanish (and EU) response to migration since then.

The story of border control between Spain and North and West Africa is one of an interplay between crisis and control. With the imposition of tougher visa requirements on the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa in the early 1990s, irregular migration grew. In response to an emerging crisis of irregular migration, primarily along the Straits of Gibraltar and the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, Spain introduced better policing cooperation internally and with ‘origin’ countries. For instance, Spain signed a readmission agreement with Morocco in 1992 and installed fences around its African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in 1993. In response to an increase in irregular migration from North Africa, which featured

growing numbers of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, Spain also boosted its maritime surveillance operations through the SIVE maritime radar project announced in 1999. Beyond control, Spain also regularized migrants in 2000, 2001, and 2004. These amnesties, however partial, arguably acted as an incentive for labour migration (De Haas 2008) and increased migratory pressure at Spain's southern borders. The hardening of control at Spain's borders with Morocco (at its enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla) and within Morocco itself meant that West African migrants started finding new routes into Europe. The otherwise perilous trip to the Canary Islands—the part of the EU's Schengen zone closest to Mauritania and Senegal only 100km off the coast of Western Sahara—suddenly became more appealing.

From 2000 to 2008, Spain experienced consistently high volumes of irregular migration via the straits of Gibraltar (and the country's African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla) and later to the Canary Islands. While sub-Saharan Africans have consistently represented a large part of those seeking to enter Spain through the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, it was the shift of point of entry further south to the Canary Islands, peaking in 2005 and 2006, that added an element of urgency to the 'crisis'. According to the Spanish coast guard, emergencies involving *patera* type boats for the Las Palmas rescue command centre had started rising in 2000, suggesting that migrants had begun leaving from further south before SIVE and the reinforcement of control in Ceuta and Melilla. Indeed, the Canary Islands route was a longstanding route for irregular entry into Spain, but had never been used by so many in so short a time (Willems 2007). The 'crisis' of 2006 was therefore a *productive* moment: of migrant irregularity but also of the Canary Islands themselves as a space of security intervention. It also obscured other crises that were productive of migrants' choices to move: structural adjustment policies and declining fish stocks in Senegal, to name but two. The sense of 'crisis' in the Canary Islands was fed not only by numbers, but by the humanitarian situation. From my interviews with Spanish police personnel involved at the time, it was a genuinely jarring situation marked by overcrowding and by a desperate health situation. In 2006 alone, 30,246 migrants landed in the Canary Islands (Guardia Civil 2013), having taken small fishing boats from Senegal for a long journey along the coast of West Africa, or taken the shorter journey from Nouadhibou in Mauritania. Indeed, the sharp reduction in migrant numbers between 2006 and 2012 mentioned earlier has retroactively continued to produce the traumatic power of the crisis.

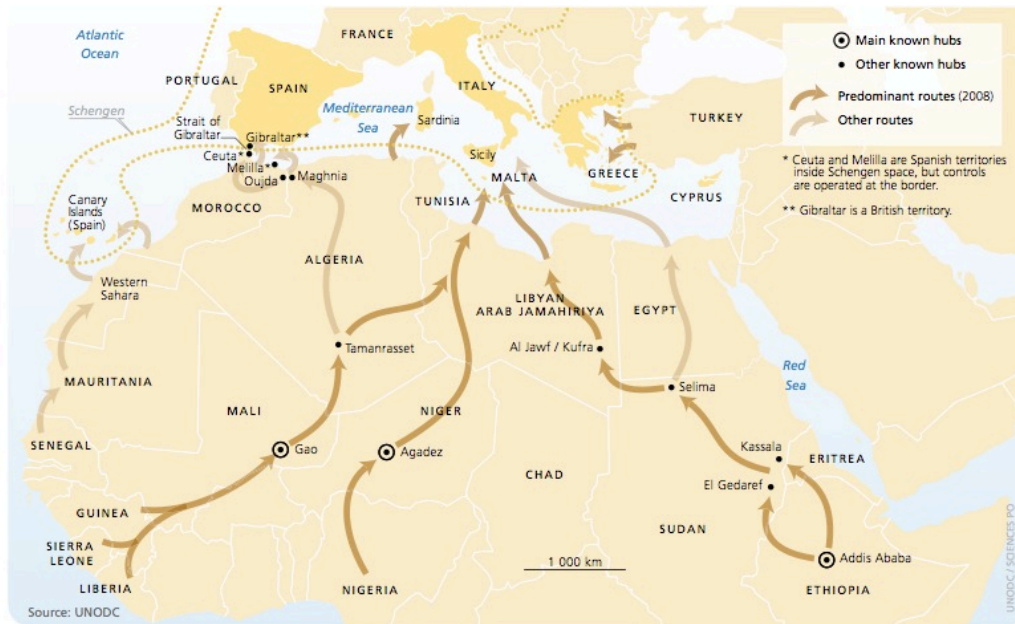


Figure 2. Migration routes between Africa and Europe between 1999 and 2008, showing movements into the Canary Islands. The border of the Schengen zone is shown by the dotted outline. (UNODC 2010: 68). From *The Globalization of Crime: A Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment*, by the United National Office on Drugs and Crime, © 2010 United Nations. Reprinted with the permission of the United Nations.

The Canaries crisis acted as a watershed moment for policy and policing. While Spain had negotiated readmission agreements and police cooperation with its North African neighbours, the country had never had close security ties with sub-Saharan African states. From crisis came unprecedented security cooperation with Senegal and Mauritania, primarily through an immediate increase in policing. Spanish police had already used a model of joint border patrols with Morocco, starting in 2005, and replicated the model in Spain’s new agreements with Senegal and Mauritania. On 24 August 2006, Senegal and Spain signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) allowing joint patrols between local gendarmeries and navies and the Guardia Civil. The patrols, Operation Gorée in Senegal and Operations Cabo Blanco and Atlantis in Mauritania, began in May 2006, the same month that logistical assistance from Frontex became available for identification and repatriation of migrants in the Canaries. The process of identification itself became a site for the application of ‘local’ knowledge, with Senegalese police using intuitions based on migrants’ knowledge of their purported countries of origin (naming heads of state) or cities of residence (asking them about their neighbourhoods).³ The agency’s Joint Operation (JO) ‘Hera’, formally hosted and coordinated by Spain, also brought together aircraft and naval resources from other EU member states such as ships from Iceland and aircraft

³ Interview, Police Nationale du Sénégal, Dakar, 18 January 2013.

from Luxembourg.⁴ There have been three such operations: Hera I (July-October 2006), II (August-December 2006) and III (February-April 2007). The initial response to migration pressure was swift, but cooperation has intensified since 2006 and created a dense border space of transnational actors, practices and knowledges.

4.2.1 The socio-technical space of the border

In response to the ‘crisis’ of the Canaries and the need to prevent the risk of renewed irregular flows, new transnational clusters of security professionals and practices have emerged in Spain, at the EU level, and in ‘third countries’ such as Senegal and Mauritania. It is too simple and analytically unhelpful to speak of a unified ‘field’ of security between Europe and Africa, or of a unified apparatus of control. Migration governance consists of “disparate strands of practices, provisions and principles” (Kunz, Lavenex and Panizzon 2011: 3-4) and existing approaches to EU border control policies in third countries have referred to an ‘archipelago’ of border control (Bialasiewicz 2012) or a ‘Euro-African borderland’ (Andersson 2014), hinting at the complex geography of the geographical and policy of migration control. Here, I consider this Euro-African social space to be a *set of sites* in which the governance of migration occurs by a range of actors including actors from policing and military fields, migrants, smugglers, bureaucrats, as well as the tangible objects that make the border what it is. Since the border is not simply a line in the sand, nor simply a social institution, it is a socio-technical space (as argued in Chapter 2). By paying attention to the technical, we can account for the borderwork done not only by humans but also the role of boats, satellites, concepts, tokens, idioms, and more in everyday border control practices such as knowledge transmission.

Who participates in this social-technical ‘set of sites’? Most prominent are Spain’s Guardia Civil officers who are first and foremost part of the field of Spanish law enforcement. The Guardia Civil is the Spanish paramilitary police force equivalent to the ‘gendarmerie’ found in many francophone countries. The tendency for gendarmerie organizations’ mandates to be in the administration of ‘territory’ outside of cities and more militarized policing operations is reflected in the Guardia Civil’s affiliation to the Spanish ministry of defence for operational activities. This mandate has put it in an ideal position for peacekeeping missions abroad but also joint operations aligned with its mandate of land and sea border surveillance, anti-trafficking, and responsibility for international cooperation. Since 2001, the Guardia Civil has had a specialized borders command (the *Jefatura Fiscal y de Fronteras*) and the agency has since built up a degree of institutional credibility for border control missions. The Spanish national police,

⁴ Interview, Marine Nationale du Sénégal, Dakar, 13 March 2013.

the *Cuerpo Nacional de Policía* (CNP), also work alongside the Guardia Civil in third countries where they have their own cooperation activities. In Mauritania, the Guardia Civil works mainly alongside the local navy (*Marine Nationale*) as well as with the gendarmerie's maritime patrol units (the *Brigades Maritimes et Fluviales*). In Senegal, the navy's operations group (GNO – *Groupement Naval Operationnel*) and the border police (DPAF – *Direction de la Police de l'Air et des Frontières*) coordinate the operational and logistical cooperation, but the Senegalese gendarmerie and air force also participate in patrols. Further afield, Warsaw-based Frontex provides technical assistance under Article 8 of its regulations, and the Brussels-based International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) contributes to the Rabat Process launched by the July 2006 Euro-African Conference on Migration and Development. The European External Action Service (EEAS), essentially the EU's foreign service, acts as a local project management organization and through its network of 'delegations' and its staff is the first point of contact for local projects. For instance, the West Sahel project, although implemented by the Guardia Civil, is administered through the delegation in Nouakchott, and Guardia Civil staff periodically report on their activities to the delegation. Migrants and those who smuggle them also play a key part in this social space as their agency is the original act that brings about the security response. Smugglers also use many of the same tools (boats, etc.) and logics (capacity-building) as their security counterparts. In short, the social space of border control cuts across different fields of practice. This social space, despite a decline in the number of migrants, continues to grow in size and complexity.

4.2.2 Migration control as risk management

The approach towards migration in the border space between Spain and West Africa has turned away from interrupting flows and moved towards pre-empting movements and managing the risk of resumption. All are aware of the net regression of the number of migrants, and the narrative that patrols and policing have been wildly successful was a point of universal agreement amongst the totality of my interviewees, with surprisingly few wanting to claim sole credit for this work. According to the Guardia Civil's figures, migrant arrivals in the Canary Islands are down over 99% from 2006. Despite this drop in numbers, the sheer risk of a resumption of irregular migration has set the agenda. Frontex, in its 2011 Programme of Work, mentioned that "[t]here is a risk that if the control is gone, the arrivals at the Canary Islands will start again" (2011: 133). The same document for 2013 explicitly links low figures to the possibility of recurrence:

According to reported detections, the situation on the Western African route has been mostly under control since 2008 but remains critically dependant of [sic] the implementation of effective return agreements between Spain and western African countries. Should these agreements be jeopardised, irregular migration, pushed by high

unemployment and poverty, is likely to resume quickly despite increased surveillance. (Frontex 2013: 20)

Similarly, most of my interlocutors were adamant that their presence was the only thing staving off a renewed crisis. In Mauritania, the Guardia Civil largely see themselves as the guarantors of this lower figure, due to a belief that local security forces are unconcerned with migrant departures.⁵ The lower numbers are therefore charged with meaning: high numbers demanded intervention, but low numbers still require increased vigilance. As a high-ranking officer in the Senegalese navy told me, policing the sea is like policing in town: “just because there’s no crime, that doesn’t mean you get rid of the police”.⁶

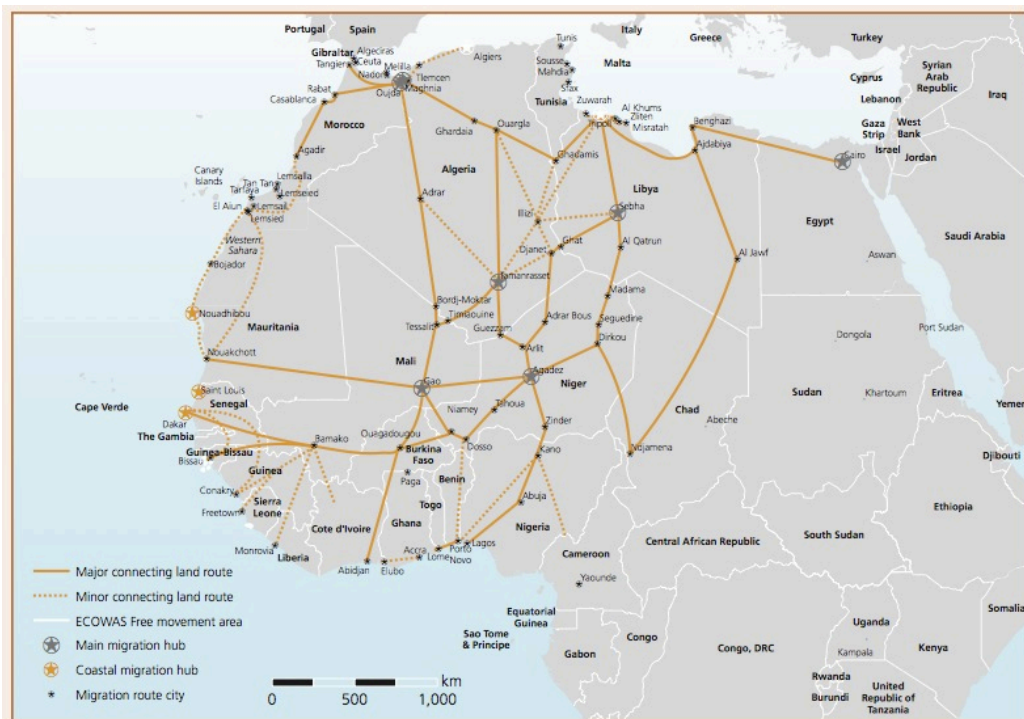


Figure 3. Main migration routes in 2012, showing land routes replacing Canaries pathway (UNODC 2013: 27). From *Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment*, by the United National Office on Drugs and Crime, © 2013 United Nations. Reprinted with the permission of the United Nations.

These numbers produce a risk-based approach to security, which responds to the low and diminishing irregular migration figures. Numbers, regardless of their content, are ripe fodder for an increase in control. It is important not to overstate the *turn* to risk, however, as the very positioning of Spanish ships in the territorial waters of Senegal and Mauritania in the first place was always a means to

⁵ Interview with Spanish interior security attaché, Nouakchott, 20 February 2013.

⁶ Interview with head of Frontex cooperation, Marine Nationale du Sénégal, Dakar, 30 June 2013.

spatially and temporally pre-empt migrant departures. The number of migrants using the sea route from West Africa has dropped dramatically since 2006, but the consensus amongst the security personnel I spoke to—Spanish, Senegalese, and Mauritanian—is that sea and land migration routes in the area could reopen at any time, once others through Mali, Niger and Libya are inevitably closed off. Multiple interviewees used some version of the metaphor of “*vases communicants*” (“communicating vessels” or “pressure valves”) to describe migration patterns in North and West Africa. This analogy suggests that migration pressures are mechanical and reactive to control—which effectively foregrounds the agency of the security actor, rather than that of the migrant. One Mauritanian army official suggested to me that migrants might even be guided by the Islamic concept of *qadar* (predestination) as a means of making sense of their otherwise risky movements.⁷ In addition to this, the idea of migration pressures as shifting (say, from Ceuta to the Canaries to Lampedusa and back again) reinforces the idea that migration is a phenomenon that can be managed by professionals. With this consensus perspective, it is not surprising that the policy and technical apparatus of joint Spanish-African border surveillance remains in place, and is indeed being strengthened, with this eventuality firmly in mind.

The EU-funded West Sahel project launched in 2011 typifies this risk management thinking, through its mix of capacity-building assistance and training. The project is run under the EU’s Thematic Programme for Migration and Asylum and aims to boost the migration management capacities of security agencies in Mauritania, Senegal, Niger and Mali. Most of its €2.44million funding (80%) comes from the European Union and the remaining 20% from the Guardia Civil (European Delegation Nouakchott 2011). The project is three-pronged, and provides material and training in border surveillance, training on assistance to migrants, and the coordination of regional law enforcement meetings between the beneficiary states (which are all origin and transit countries for irregular migration). West Sahel contributes to the expansion of cooperation between Spain, the EU and ‘third countries’, and more importantly showcases the importance of capacity-building and training as modes of managing the risk of migration ‘at the source’, through transfers of equipment and expertise. In the next section I use key human and non-human elements as narrative devices with which to showcase such everyday practices of knowledge transmission and cooperation in the expanding socio-technical space of border control straddling Europe and Africa.

4.3 Interior security attachés

When one speaks to Guardia Civil officers in Mauritania, one of the words that figures most prominently is *cooperación*, and the same applies to gendarmes and

⁷ Interview, official from DSE, Nouakchott, 25 February 2013.

police officers in Senegal, who stress the honest, close and sincere nature of their *coopération* with the Spanish police. The emphasis on this close symbiotic relationship is telling as to the types of security relationships that occur across security fields. Since the emphasis has been on building a collaborative response, dynamics of competition have taken a back seat. In this section, I argue that interior security attachés bridge the global and local by working within and between different fields of security but actively work across different law enforcement fields by virtue of their cooperation and knowledge diffusion activities. Against the idea that police liaison work is competitive (Bigo 1996) or that cooperation is disingenuous (Gerspacher and Dupont 2007), I argue that liaison work in the Spanish-African borderland does show traces of competition over symbolic capital but only within fields—not across them—leaving relations between intervener and intervened cooperative and sincere.

Security liaisons have been essential in smoothing the interaction between the different security services involved in policing migration in the Euro-African borderland. In Spanish embassies, they are known as *agregados de interior* (interior attachés), and they act as liaisons for the activities of the Spanish ministry of interior in the country in which they are posted, without formally being its representatives. The Spanish embassies in Nouakchott and Dakar have two such attachés each, one each from the Guardia Civil and from the Cuerpo Nacional de Policía. French embassies have a similar arrangement, with *attachés de sécurité intérieure* (interior security liaisons) who are usually high-ranking officers in the French national police. Although Spanish embassies have defence attachés (*agregados de defensa*), migration management is still considered as a police responsibility. This is partly because their focus is on fighting trafficking (a criminal procedure) and much of the work relating to migration involves border procedures (a police responsibility) and interviewing of migrants (investigatory work). More generally, the treatment of migration management *cooperation* as a police issue reflects the fusion of internal and external security responsibilities highlighted by Bigo (2001). This is particularly striking given that gendarmeries (such as the Guardia Civil) are paramilitary corps, that local partners are often military (navies), and that the solutions adopted (border surveillance and maritime patrols) are militarized. Spain's first security liaisons in West Africa were posted in Dakar in 2002,⁸ and their role has been increasingly defined by coordination on migration issues. This network is growing and Spain now has liaison officers in Portugal, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, and Niger.

These security attachés work within and across fields. A Guardia Civil *agregado* based in a West African country is very much a part of the field of Spanish law

⁸ Interview, Spanish internal security attaché, Dakar, 19 March 2013.

enforcement, in which prestige and expertise might be accrued from a stint in ‘tough’ Ceuta or from training African police forces. Similarly, the police patrolling the beaches in Dakar under the terms of the Senegal-Spain MOU are actors in Senegal’s law enforcement field, reaping prestige and bonuses from their work. This does not, however, mean that each competes with the other. While cooperation via the meeting of two fields of law enforcement can be a source of capital, it is ‘invested’ locally. Cooperation trumps competition at the level of these interactions across fields. For instance, in all West Sahel project countries with the exception of Niger, the Guardia Civil works with local gendarmeries. This cooperation is spurred on by an institutional similarity, since the Guardia Civil and francophone gendarmeries have very similar mandates and histories. They also have a great level of trust between them, as their African colleagues greet the Guardia Civil as “brothers in arms” with a similar *esprit de corps*.⁹ On the technical level, the similarity of mandates means that gendarmeries share similar modes and scopes of operation, and are more receptive to transfers of equipment and expertise. The very structure of gendarmeries, which straddle internal and external security (Lutterbeck 2004), has been a catalyst for the Guardia Civil’s role in transnational security cooperation.

Cooperation is the watchword from abstract policy pronouncements all the way down to quotidian practice. In July 2006, the first Euro-African Conference on Migration and Development was held in the midst of the Canary Islands crisis. At this conference, which launched the ongoing Rabat Process on migration, the need for better cooperation on preventing irregular migration was high on the agenda. The Africa-EU declaration that came out of this conference noted that “[l]arge spontaneous and illegal or irregular migratory flows can have a significant impact on national and international stability and security” and suggested “[c]ooperating to develop border control measures [...] and addressing the need for swift contacts between the EU and Africa in exceptional situations” (Africa-EU Ministers 2006). Such measures amount to what De Haas (2008) calls “declarations of good intent”, but do not have more than a small strategic agenda-setting power. However, “discourses of cooperation” are central claims to position in the security field (Bigo, Guild and Walker 2010: 14) and in the case of Spanish police cooperation in West Africa, act to obfuscate unequal power relationships and create a sense of unity behind solutions to the migration ‘crisis’.

The bulk of migration cooperation happens at the level of everyday practice, and security liaisons have proven to be policy innovators, building up novel governance arrangements on which Spanish-African cooperation rests. The most prominent of these is the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Spain and Senegal, which was one of the first of its kind in the region. A commissioner

⁹ Interview, security attaché at EU delegation, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013.

in the Senegalese national police drafted the MOU, and the document was put through an iterative drafting process and was approved by all of the police, gendarmerie, air force, and navy.¹⁰ Such governance by MOU emphasizes speed, flexibility and technical governance. It was practitioners rather than politicians who drafted the MOU in the midst of the 2006 crisis, and it was thus able to short-circuit true political discussion about how to respond to migration movements. The use of MOU as a governance tool is a practice which reflects the *background assumption* (recalling ‘cultures of border control’ from Chapter 3) that rapid, technicalized cooperation represents the most effective means of dealing with migration.

4.4 Vehicles

Although human actors such as security liaisons play a crucial role in the quotidian practices of border control, we must not lose sight of what Bruno Latour (1992) calls the ‘missing masses’: the nonhuman actors that, without usurping human agency, extend it and shape it in important ways. As argued in Chapter 2, it is impossible to speak about the emergence of fields of security without including the tangible surveillance technologies and vehicles that help them function. In particular, I am interested to show the ‘international political sociology’ of these absent technologies and objects and the roles they play as some of the ‘sites’ (see Chapter 3) for the consolidation of security relationships and the transmission of particular understandings of border control. Below, I examine the role played by vehicles in the various fields of security in Senegal and Mauritania whether they serve as sites for knowledge transmission or as representatives of security relationships.

4.4.1 Boats

Boats are essential to the routines of patrolling that make up the daily reality of Spanish-African cooperation on maritime border control. When visiting the Senegalese naval base in Dakar, which sits alongside the commercial port, one is first struck by the multitude large commercial vessels in the distance. Just next to the headquarters of the Senegalese *Groupeement Naval Operationnel*—the navy’s operations group—sits a small Guardia Civil patrol boat. Spanish-registered 4x4 vehicles occasionally drive in and out of the base, ferrying officers to and from the base and their living quarters in the nearby city centre. The Guardia Civil has three boats operating from the port of Dakar, the largest of which is an ocean-going vessel based in Las Palmas, whose crew members serve in 15 days shifts. Under the terms of the Senegal-Spain MOU signed in 2006, patrols must patrol the seas daily. These routines both confuse and augment sovereignty: they are

¹⁰ Interview at Police Nationale du Sénégal, Dakar, 18 January 2013.

‘mixed’ and incarnate an awkward mixing of authorities but also act to improve the surveillance capacities of all partners. When Spanish patrol boats patrol the coastal waters of Senegal, they must have a Senegalese officer on board. This is an obligatory concession to the juridical sovereignty of Senegal, whose officers retain the exclusive right to make arrests. It was made clear to me by the Senegalese navy that Spain is not allowed to “be the policeman” and their presence is intended only to improve “capacity to see”.¹¹ This symbolic element of sovereignty imposes itself on the boats, as the masts of Guardia Civil patrol boats fly both the Spanish flag and that of the host country. This complexity of *de jure* sovereignty should not detract from the fact that patrol boats augment the *de facto* sovereign power of each country. For Spain, the routines of their Senegalese and Mauritanian partners improve their power to intercept and pre-empt migration. For Senegal and Mauritania, the additional maritime power of the Guardia Civil provides additional sets of eyes and ears for their daily surveillance activities.

Boats are also essential pedagogical sites for the inculcation of security knowledge. While the types of training sessions that officers have tended to receive from Spain (such as theoretical training on clandestine migration in Las Palmas) reinforce *techne*—rational knowledge—it is repeated and routinized local interactions that solidify the rhythms, intuitions and reflexes required for quotidian border control. These are what James C. Scott calls *metis*. This type of knowledge involves “knowing how and when to apply the rules of thumb *in a concrete situation*” (Scott 1998: 316, emphasis in original). Joint patrols, which are the essence of bilateral cooperation between Spain and its African partners on migration control, effectively provide the physical site for this global-local transfer of *metis*. Most of the Senegalese security officials I spoke to mentioned that they did not have much to learn in terms of basic technique, but instead benefited from more advanced surveillance skills and techniques facilitated by the opportunity to use more advanced equipment¹². In short, the gap in capacity is not inherently one of human resources, but rather of the material equipment required to improve *metis*. Nevertheless, pedagogy is still dependent on an unequal distribution of capital—in this case a very tangible capital—between teacher and learner (see Chapter 3).

Boats are not only control technologies: they also represent the element of subversion of control. Smugglers’ boats, mainly small wooden fishing boats (pirogues) benefit from being easy to dissimulate. For the purpose of facilitating control, and with this camouflage in mind, Mauritanian authorities in Nouadhibou have insisted on the registration of fishing boats to facilitate control and more easily identify their owners in the event of attempts at outward migration. This

¹¹ Interview with head of Frontex cooperation, Marine Nationale du Sénégal, Dakar, 30 June 2013.

¹² Interview, Armée de l’Air du Sénégal, Dakar, 27 February 2013.

further reflects the risk management imperative behind the policing of boat migration. Rather than glorify or romanticize smugglers' attempts to subvert control, their practices should point us to their own *metis*—which mirrors the transmission of knowledge that happens between security actors. In the case of the smuggler, the 'knack' manifests itself in profiling the passengers that the boat is to carry. From the smuggler's standpoint, the transport of migrants to Europe is not an archetype of market exchange. Rather, there is a keen interest taken in precisely *who* is being transported. Women, for example, are not considered ideal candidates and "any old person can't just get on this boat".¹³ The gendered division of migration rather considers women to be beneficiaries of primarily male attempts to gain economic advancement through movement. Similarly, a migrant smuggler will draw on existing navigation experience built up over years of fishing to make the longer trip to the Canaries. While the police tend to portray smugglers as GPS-toting opportunists,¹⁴ smugglers themselves see their work as an opportunity to refine their *metis*. This smuggler capacity-building extends to material improvements, too: a fisherman taking migrants to the Canary Islands could net up to 15 million CFA francs (€22,800) for one trip—money that is reinvested. According to smugglers, this money helps to add improvements to boats such as better engines or repairs to the hull.

4.4.2 Planes

The policing of boat migration also relies on an aerial dimension provided by aeroplanes and helicopters. Unlike the maritime counterpart, the aerial dimension of patrol is entirely a surveillant presence, assuring reconnaissance and extending the vertical reach of border control. When I spoke to officers from the Guardia Civil detachment in Nouadhibou, they were very clear that their aerial support was a supplement to the work of the Mauritanian gendarmerie's maritime patrol units, and solely intended to speed up interceptions.¹⁵ The Senegalese air force, similarly, does not directly carry out any interceptions. Rather, it acts as a reconnaissance service, using BN-2T and CASA 212 patrol planes and a UH-1 helicopter donated by the Guardia Civil. Senegalese air force officers have participated in missions facilitated by aircraft provided under Frontex cooperation, where they work alongside officers from the EU member states involved. In my interviews with the Senegalese air force, they insisted that the material capacity provided is welcome but primarily provides a site for learning "new search techniques".¹⁶ The material therefore facilitates the transmission of knowledge, and the extent of material capacity-building is summed up by the fact that, under

¹³ Interview with migrant smuggler, Dakar, 17 January 2013.

¹⁴ Interview at Police Nationale du Sénégal, Dakar, 18 January 2013.

¹⁵ Interview with Guardia Civil patrol team, Nouadhibou, 18 June 2013.

¹⁶ Interview, Armée de l'Air du Sénégal, Dakar, 27 February 2013.

the terms of the Senegal-Spain MOU, Spain even provides the jet fuel for Senegalese air patrols.

4.4.3 4x4s

Four-wheel drive vehicles — 4x4s and quad bikes — highlight the turn to pre-emptive policing as well as the emergence of new security anxieties about migration over land. As Andersson (2014: 128) shows, the use of quad bikes to patrol the beaches of Dakar involves a radically different type of work than patrolling the high seas: “The patrols were instead an exercise in what police chiefs called ‘visibility’—to show ‘candidates’ that the police were ready to cut short any attempted boat journey to Europe”. This work is a further reflection of the risk management ideal, whereby the need to pre-empt and profile migration is as important as the more complex humanitarian task of stopping migrants at sea. By seeking out ‘candidates’ for irregular migration, pre-emptive patrol and policing practices are central to the *production* of irregularity, in that they undertake border control well inland while relying on a profile on the behavior and possessions of an irregular migrant. According to migrants’ rights defenders, accusing people of planning to emigrate provides states such as Mauritania justification to quickly deport other African nationals.¹⁷

The use of such vehicles reflects European funders’ change in anxieties: policing the territorial border has taken on a greater importance. Under the West Sahel project, the Mauritanian gendarmerie received Nissan 4x4 vehicles and quad-wheel 4x4 bikes from the Guardia Civil. The West Sahel project’s official description from the EU includes only Senegal, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal, but activities have also taken place in Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau (a major drug smuggling hub) as well as Burkina Faso and Chad (both landlocked countries).¹⁸ This expansion in the project’s scope highlights the turn to a focus on land borders but also to threats beyond irregular migration.

Four-wheel drive vehicles, though they dictate approaches to controlling the border, often do so tenuously. Some forms of equipment have proven more mutable than others. For instance, the original batch of Nissan 4x4s given by the Guardia Civil was a formidable set of brand new vehicles, yet spare parts for these were not readily available in Mauritania. These parts could not, in the words of an EU official, be purchased by a gendarme “along with his sugar and his flour” in a local market.¹⁹ In the end, these vehicles were replaced by Toyota 4x4s, for which parts are more ubiquitous in Mauritania. This suggests that the design of the West

¹⁷ Interview, Association Mauritanienne des Droits de l’Homme (AMDH), Nouakchott, 23 June 2013.

¹⁸ Interview with security attaché, EU delegation, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013.

¹⁹ Interview, security attaché at EU delegation, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013.

Sahel project was not responsive to local conditions and perhaps based on procurement processes far removed from the African context. In many of my interviews with European funders, it was suggested that 4x4s may not always be devoted to patrol duties, with some officers requesting superfluous premium features in the vehicles, or using the vehicles to drive their wives around town. The effectiveness of 4x4 vehicles aside, they are reflective of funder priorities but also of local forms of appropriation.

4.5 Sensing and communication technologies

The border function is dependent on sense and on communication. Watching, filming, sniffing and imaging are the sensory inputs that form the backbone of surveillance. The emphasis on cooperation in border control between Spain and its African partners has also meant that communication and information exchange are essential additions to the perceptive nature of border control. In this section, I use the examples of cameras, dogs and communications infrastructures to show the proliferation of the border function as well as the way that routines of border control transmit an ideal of an integrated, rapid border function.

4.5.1 Cameras and binoculars

As part of the West Sahel project, thermal imaging binoculars have been given to the Mauritanian gendarmerie to facilitate border controls at night, and on land, suggesting that controls should take place away from official border crossings (which are run by the police) and in desert areas—away from the sea migration route. The Mauritanian gendarmerie were also given thermal imaging cameras and while these were initially considered ideal for patrolling vast expanses of desert, particularly from a good vantage point, the dust from this same desert has interfered with their functioning and made gendarmes go back to their original, ‘local’ methods of border control.²⁰ These methods are more rooted in the traditional approach to policing outside of urban areas, focused on mobile patrols and tapping into local populations’ observations. It is also worth noting that the ‘local’ does not represent a symmetrical opposition to the ‘global’ (European) approach to border control, as many methods pre-dating Spain’s intervention are rooted in longer colonial histories. For instance, the very division of policing between police and gendarmerie in Senegal and Mauritania is the result of the colonial encounter with France. That being said, the abandonment of external advice or technologies in the present shows the persistence of local routines coupled with the opportunistic acceptance of help from outside.

²⁰ Interview, Spanish internal security attaché, Nouakchott, 20 February 2013.

4.5.2 Dogs

While equipment such as cameras can fail to adapt to new contexts, as the desert dust proved, other ‘non-humans’ such as sniffer dogs have proven to be quite malleable. As one Spanish attaché told me, dogs are largely the same everywhere,²¹ noting that dogs do not succumb to the Mauritians’ lack of interest in maintaining equipment that has been given. In this way, the low upkeep required by canine units overcomes the differential in commitment to migration control between different partners. These canine units have also been an important element of ‘function creep’— a surveillance tool’s functioning driving it beyond its intended scope of application—and have been deployed for policing beyond migration alone, and even beyond the border. For instance, canine units have facilitated searches for narcotics at the Nouakchott airport. Further evidence of the spillover effect of border control capacity-building is reflected in the use of these canine units for night-time patrols in peripheral areas of Nouakchott. The mutability of the dogs has means that their mission itself has become open-ended.

4.5.3 Satellites, data and remote sensing

In 1999, in response to increasing levels of irregular migration across the Strait of Gibraltar, Spain announced the *Sistema Integrado de Vigilancia Exterior* (SIVE). First deployed in 2002 in Algeciras at the southern tip of the Spanish coast, the system uses radar sensors, video cameras and infrared cameras to track boat movements and alert Guardia Civil units. As a policy innovator, Spain has been able to push for a Europeanization of this model of automated border surveillance through EU-funded research projects such as Seabilla which tries to “define the architecture for cost-effective European Sea Border Surveillance systems” (Seabilla 2013). This north to north policy diffusion, build on the Spanish border knowledge, yielded EUROSUR, a common European border surveillance system, which was launched in December 2013.

Communication has been the driving force of cooperation with third countries such as Senegal and Mauritania, and the Seahorse information-sharing program has provided an infrastructure for daily interactions between local forces and the Guardia Civil’s coordination centre in Las Palmas. The Seahorse project was announced in 2004 and funded under the EU’s AENEAS program from 2006 and 2008. Since 2009, the project has relied on national contact points (NCPs) in Senegal (Dakar), Mauritania (Nouakchott and Nouadhibou), Portugal (Lisbon) and Cape Verde (Praia) and Spain (Gran Canaria). The Seahorse system is not primarily concerned with visual surveillance, but rather with speeding up the communication of surveillance information through information transmitted by

²¹ Interview, Spanish internal security attaché, Nouakchott, 20 February 2013.

secure satellite communications and made available to all participants. The system allows file sharing, sharing of GIS information, chat and email and Senegalese navy officials consider this system to be a very useful means of aggregating surveillance reports. Officials were thrilled by the sheer simplicity of the system and its powers of aggregation and coordination, recalling with enthusiasm the daily routine of logging in to the system and finding new reports from the different NCPs.²² The Senegalese navy's implication in the growing Seahorse system also adds another layer to its claims to operational competence for migration control, since the service is in contention with the police for who claims true 'leadership' of border control operations against irregular migration, since Senegal's operations against irregular migration by sea are split between operational control by the navy and logistical command from the ministry of interior. Although the initial spur for the Seahorse project was human migration, the tightening of information-sharing has been enabled by the Spanish provision of capacity in the form of secure communications infrastructure.

4.6 Symbols and tropes

4.6.1 Decorations, pins and certificates

As I walked into the office of the police commissioner in charge of security at Dakar's international airport, I noticed a West Sahel award lying prominently on the desk next to a stack of business cards. Small Guardia Civil pennants also hang in the offices of police officers from the DPAF who coordinated the response to the 2006 migration crisis. Such badges, certificates, awards, banners, maps, and even stationery testify to the importance and prestige accorded to interactions between local fields of security professionals and foreign partners. These symbols wield a double-edged role as simultaneously representations of success and tokens of prestige as well as manifestations of the tokenism of capacity-building interventions. The Guardia Civil emblems and West Sahel tokens are play an important symbolic role as artefacts of expertise, which are the physical manifestation of a successful career. For some, they are also a source of pride. For others, such as a lower-level gendarme I spoke to in Mauritania, saw these tokens of cooperation as confirmations of their undesirable status within their social field. This particular gendarme, having undergone Spanish-funded training, had been given a cheap *Guardia Civil Tráfico* (traffic police) pin at the end of his training session, and a training certificate. This certificate was not even his to keep, but was kept in his personnel files, as if to show how little the training achieved for anyone involved beyond the senior officers, who did not transmit their own acquired knowledge down the chain of command.²³ Even amongst those who

²² Interview at Marine Nationale du Sénégal, Dakar, 13 March 2013.

²³ Interview with gendarme, Nouakchott, 14 June 2013.

work closely with the Spanish day to day, there is a perception that the capacity-building assistance they receive is minimal compared to the help their European partners devote to themselves.²⁴

4.6.2 “Le Frontex”

Frontex is well known beyond Europe’s shores, even if only by name. In everyday terms, people on the streets of Dakar are well aware of Frontex, as a term standing in for the wide-ranging European response to migration. Even at the highest levels of the security establishment, talk of the *dispositif Frontex* is used as shorthand for a security practice that is primarily a bilateral affair with Spain. The term ‘Frontex’, whether or not it actually refers to the organization itself or its coordination role, has given focus to opposition to Spanish border control efforts in Senegal and Mauritania. For instance, Migreurop has worked in concert with local agencies such as the Mauritanian human rights association (AMDH – *Association Mauritanienne des Droits de l’Homme*) on a campaign called ‘Frontexit’, launched simultaneously in Brussels and Nouakchott. While on the side of security, “le Frontex” provides focus on the mission, for human rights campaigners it provides means of making visible a security cooperation that remains technical, opaque and bureaucratized.

4.6.3 “Capacity”

As the turn to risk management discussed earlier shows, the question of time (in that case the future) is essential to security politics. The question of capacity to control borders, or of policing capacity in general, is always temporal. The interaction between Spanish and African forces rests on an ongoing assumption that intervention was needed because African states were uninterested in or unable to control irregular emigration. Their intervention is therefore necessarily remedial, to improve capacity. Capacity, in turn, is an idea intimately linked to an idea of temporal progress. The interveners (the Guardia Civil) place themselves temporally ahead of the intervened, with their expertise and equipment advantage standing in for claims to a greater temporal advancement and justifying their authority to guide their African partners. For instance, Spanish security attachés I spoke to used the Spanish experience as a way of attributing some kind of institutional capital to the Guardia Civil, noting that Senegal faces “the same problems [they] had in the early 1980s”²⁵. This experience gap is not necessarily paternalistic—it is actually quite sympathetic and draws on Spain’s own post-Franco statebuilding—but nonetheless betrays how self-evident the Guardia Civil considers its claims to expertise to be.

²⁴ Interview with head of Frontex cooperation, Senegalese navy, Dakar, 30 June 2013.

²⁵ Interview, Spanish internal security attaché, Dakar, 30 January 2013.

Of course, not all expertise in the field travels from ‘north’ to ‘south’. Senegalese authorities are keen to highlight their existing naval expertise and their pre-existing initiative to prevent irregular migration. Officers I spoke to at the navy were quick to recall that interceptions of irregular migrants were occurring well before the Guardia Civil or Frontex intervened, pointing to a 1998 interception of a Sri Lankan ship heading to Canada.²⁶ This is also an important reminder that it is not only the European border being policed, but also the Senegalese border. Indeed, officers are quick to place caveats on the Spanish role, which is described as providing greater “assurance” and “coordination”, rather than ascribe a foundational role to their foreign partners.²⁷ Even though field relationships are premised on relations of domination and inequality, the pedagogical nature of border control is not to be oversimplified as a form of one-way tutelage dominated by constantly unequal power relations.

Capacity is also difficult to quantify, particularly when African police forces are compared to well-equipped European forces, with the latter operating as the benchmark. Police interviewees in Senegal were proud of what they achieved given their resources, and suggested they may even be more *efficient* despite lower capacity. “If we had what they had”, one Senegalese police commander told me, “we would be far better than them”.²⁸ Senegalese security officials are also more *familiar* with their territory. One commander in the national police spent so much time in the Canaries in 2006 that police came to consider the islands “like [their] village”²⁹ or backyard, considering Madrid to be more distant than Dakar (in every sense of the term) from the tangible effects of clandestine migration. Capacity is also relative because capacity-building also flows from south to north, with opportunities for African security forces to ‘speak back’. At the yearly Euro-African Police Conference, the seventh of which was held in October 2012, officers are invited to introduce a variety of topics on transnational crime and on their areas of expertise. The head of the *Groupement Naval Opérationnel* from the Senegalese navy provided a presentation on his unique experience in handling irregular migration. The unique security arrangement initiated by the crisis of the Canaries provided useful local expertise.

4.7 Beyond the sea: a territorial turn

As argued in Chapter 2, the border is ‘more than a line in the sand’. That being said, policing lines drawn in the sand has become an increasingly important part of Spanish police cooperation with Senegal and Mauritania. This is not to say that

²⁶ Interview, Marine Nationale du Sénégal, Dakar, 13 March 2013.

²⁷ Interview, Marine Nationale du Sénégal, Dakar, 13 March 2013.

²⁸ Interview, Police Nationale du Sénégal, Dakar, 18 January 2013.

²⁹ Interview, Police Nationale du Sénégal, Dakar, 18 January 2013.

the socio-technical border control arrangement between Spain and Africa has not had territorial outposts: these have taken the form of command centres in Las Palmas, Nouakchott and Dakar but also beach patrols and intelligence gathering in areas housing potential migrants. Territory is simply increasingly appearing as a prime site of intervention in this space, reflecting the desire for greater security integration as well as new anxieties about drugs and terrorism. With the dramatic reduction in irregular migration to the Canary Islands losing its veneer of ‘crisis’, Spain has increasingly directed its police cooperation activities inland, planning joint police stations and reinforcement of regional cooperation.

The years since 2006 have seen the emergence of a more comprehensive security approach, which deliberately amalgamates cross-border flows and subsumes the response to them under a general banner of better policing capacity. The second phase of the West Sahel project, West Sahel II, was launched in March 2014 and encapsulates this comprehensive approach to security cooperation. As an extension to the first phase launched in 2011, the new phase moves the focus away from ‘migration and asylum’ towards regional security integration. One of the keystones of this approach is the creation of joint police cooperation centres in new and existing police stations. For instance, the PK 55 border post on the border between Mauritania and Western Sahara is a *commissariat conjoint* (joint police station) bringing together officers from Spain’s national police, the *Cuerpo Nacional de Policía* (CNP), and Mauritanian police and gendarmes. This joint post has been in place since the spring of 2013. As part of the West Sahel project’s extension, there are plans for a *Centro de Cooperación Policial Internacional* (international police cooperation centre) in the Mauritanian town of Sélibaby (Guardia Civil 2014). The location of this city—in the southeastern corner of Mauritania, at the borders with Mali and Senegal—reflects the triple concern with land migration, drugs and terrorism that has been the impulse behind the West Sahel project from its inception. Border officials (police, gendarmerie and customs) from Mali, Senegal and Mauritania will be housed in the new centre. Sélibaby sits both geographically and mentally at the nexus of traditional migration routes as well as more recent drug trafficking routes, and the new joint police centre fits into the drive to cooperate at the level of daily practice. This cooperation centre mirrors existing Spanish arrangements such as the joint police station at the Tanger Med port where Guardia Civil agents work alongside Moroccan gendarmes. Under West Sahel II additional Guardia Civil officers will be sent to Nouadhibou and Mauritanian liaison staff will go to the Guardia Civil’s command centre in the Canary Islands, and for the first time Spanish and Mauritanian gendarmerie will undertake *land*-based patrols together.

These new forms of cooperation beyond sea patrols are perceived as security innovations³⁰ amongst the different actors in the field and they illustrate the role of the global south as an incubator of new security practices and as a space of experimentation. They rely on a facile association between migrant smuggling and other forms of trafficking or criminal flows, with the idea that trafficking networks are amorphous and ‘always there’ representing a key mode of justification of security presence. According to one Spanish officer, the degree of threat to the border is simply a question of whether these networks are “activated” or not.³¹ Although posts such as PK 55 or Sélibaby are conceivably global spaces, the differential in knowledge between ‘north’ and ‘south’ continues to act as the overarching framework of justification for continuing security cooperation, with each donation or new construction reaffirming this gap even through its attempts to close it.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued two main points. First, I have argued that there is a large sociotechnical space created by the meeting, overlap, and interaction between different fields of security professionals. This space, I argued, must be investigated because it provides a view into the externalization of the EU border in practice, in an area that has largely been overlooked by academic literature on this phenomenon. Secondly, I went on to use the various objects, concepts and actors who compose this borderscape as a narrative device with which to explore the relationships fostered by this cooperation. Throughout, I placed particular emphasis on the question of presence, transmission and use of security knowledge in its various forms.

Looking forward, the consolidation of security relations between Spain and West African countries has correlated with a dramatic fall in the numbers of migrant departures and interceptions. As the number of migrants using the sea route to the Canary Islands has dropped, focus has shifted towards a more generalized view of security and of the response needed. This has coincided with a growing concern, since 2005, with terrorism in the Sahel region. As such, border control has become more than simply a migration issue, and security actors in the region have pointed to trafficking in drugs and small arms, as well as terrorist infiltration. As such, the threat is no longer ‘migration’ but rather ‘porous borders’. Spain has become an important player in security in the Sahel, and the Guardia Civil participates in naval exercises such as Saharan Express 2013 and the US-led Flintlock military exercises in Mauritania.

³⁰ Interview with Mauritanian gendarmerie commander, Nouadhibou, 18 June 2013.

³¹ Interview with policy officer, EU delegation, Nouakchott, 28 February 2013.

This has served to push for a broadening of the security field to include a raft of other organizations and relations. Agencies such as the International Organization for Migration have provided border management assistance, and bilateral technical assistance now serves to improve general security capacity beyond migration alone. The European Union has also come to play a central security role in West Africa, first through migration concerns but increasingly in other questions surrounding drug trafficking and military training. One program that reflects this trend is the EU-funded construction of border posts in Mauritania. This program ostensibly began as a response to the same irregular migrant movements discussed here, but has morphed into a catch-all security solution for Mauritania. It is to this program, and the broader field of security in Mauritania, to which I turn in the next chapter.

5 Border posts in Mauritania³²

5.1 Introduction

On the night of 8 August 2009, a suicide bomber blew himself up outside the French embassy in Nouakchott, the capital of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. No one other than the bomber was killed, but the embassy attack confirmed Mauritania's status, at least to outsiders, as a locus of diverse cross-border threats. Mauritania's border control arrangements were already a source of concern, with the country deemed a 'transit' space following the 'crisis' of migration to Spain from West Africa (see Chapter 4). With a spate of attacks on security personnel, aid workers, and foreign tourists occurring in the country between 2005 and 2009, largely blamed on Islamist militants straddling the Sahel-Sahara space, terrorism joined irregular migration as a new threat angle in the minds of local and global policymakers and security professionals. In the face of a multi-faceted security threat, the pursuit of better *border management*—not just migration control—has become paramount in the eyes of local and foreign security officials and bureaucrats. Transit migration, infiltration by terrorist groups, and a growing West African drug smuggling route linking South America to Europe all created a situation through which securing Mauritania's borders became paramount.

The focus of this chapter is Mauritania's decision to rebuild its border control infrastructure through the renovation and construction of its border posts. In 2010, the Mauritanian government decreed that the country would have 45 exclusive legal points of entry along its over 4,000km of borders with Western Sahara, Algeria, Mali, and Senegal, as well as 3 international airports. The national migration strategy, in force since 2011 and developed with help from the European Union (EU), called for this project under its section dealing with 'control over migration flows'. Since then, largely with €8million of funding from the EU's European Development Fund (EDF) and Instrument for Stability (IfS), the EU and International Organization for Migration (IOM) have led a project to build and renovate Mauritania's border posts, helping to train staff and install new technological infrastructures. This border post program in Mauritania has catalyzed the formation of a field of security professionals, composed of representatives of international organizations, embassy security liaisons, and even development agencies. This chapter provides an entry point into the diverse and growing field of border management actors, practices and technologies which has cropped up in Mauritania, one that has—largely for reasons of access—been neither mapped nor explored in much detail so far.

³² Sections of this chapter have appeared in the author's article 'The field of border control in Mauritania', published in *Security Dialogue* 45 (3). Reprinted with permission from SAGE.

Existing work on borders and mobility in Mauritania and the Sahel/Sahara region (e.g. Robin 2009; Choplin and Lombard 2010; Poutignat and Streiff-Fénart 2010; Brachet et al. 2011) provides novel insights into migratory patterns and policies, often through ethnographic methods, but does not give detailed accounts of the field of security professionals and technologies, and their role in the production of knowledge about border control. The everyday roles of security professionals and other bureaucrats, especially of organizations such as the IOM, are not researched in much detail in the region. This is despite the fact that organizations like the IOM have pushed strongest for the language of ‘border management’ as a means to greater security. In response to this lacuna, this chapter asks two major questions: first, ‘Who are the actors that make up the field of border security in Mauritania, and what are their roles, routines, and struggles?’ and second, ‘What rationalities of border control are transmitted, adapted, or resisted in border governance in Mauritania?’ To answer these questions, the chapter draws on the theoretical framework established in chapters 2 and 3.

The first section of this chapter builds on the theoretical framework of the previous chapters, highlighting the sociotechnical nature of the Mauritanian border supplementing the Bourdieusian conception of ‘field’ with a conception of the role of ‘actants’ from actor-network theory. The remainder of the chapter pulls the empirical analysis deeper, focusing on four key actants of border control: the border posts, the landscape, the biometric entry–exit system and training practices. In each of these empirical vignettes, the (partial) mapping of the field of border control in Mauritania undertaken in this chapter re-emphasizes the central concerns of this dissertation: showing the sociotechnical forms of border-work that build and sustain the border, whether these are done by humans or not, and asking what type of understanding these practices reflect about who should control borders and how. Each one also provides a broad entry point into the practices, knowledges, routines, technologies and struggles of border security in Mauritania. The conclusion sums up the main points and segues to the next chapter on biometrics.

5.2 Mauritania’s sociotechnical border

EuropeAid, the EU organization that administers the European Development Fund (EDF) through which the border posts project is funded, evaluated the program in 2013 and noted that

design and implementation of the EC support was rather guided by the type of events that prompted this support (drastic increase in irregular migration flows) and the experience of implementing organisations (esp. Guardia Civil, IOM) rather than by overall EU policies or programming documents. (EuropeAid 2013: 152)

This testifies to the disaggregation of Mauritanian border security as well as to the complex social space in which the various actors who work in and around the border operate. In this respect, the project confirms a key insight in critical border studies, namely that the border is diffused, abstracted from the territorial line, and part of a broader process of governance (Paasi 1998; Walters 2002; Rumford 2008). For the border posts project alone, multiple agencies and actors are involved. The EU's local presence is assured through the European External Action Service's (EEAS) delegation, which oversees the implementation of EU-funded projects in the country. Projects are funded through lines such as the European Development Fund and the security-focused Instrument for Stability. The EU's main implementing partner, the IOM, is an entrepreneurial and project-based international organization whose activities are largely shaped by its donors' specifications. In addition, European states have independently contributed to the project: France has built some posts through its security cooperation, as has Germany through its development agency (GIZ), which also provides police training in the country. Spain's Guardia Civil have also provided border patrol training and equipment to the Mauritanian gendarmerie through another EU-funded project, West Sahel. The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), a Brussels-based international organization that coordinates migration management projects around the world, has used its own direct EU funding to help Mauritania manage biometric data for its border management system.

This complex blend of actors involved in and around the Mauritanian border posts project is part of a 'field'. Recalling Bourdieu's definition, the field is a "network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions" held by actors (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 97) that is in interrelation with its agents' habitus, which are "systems of dispositions [actors in a field] have acquired by internalizing a determinate type of economic and social condition" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 105). Agents in fields vie for the symbolic capital at stake in these fields, which is "any property (any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural or social) when it is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception which cause them to know it and recognize it to give it value" (Bourdieu 1994: 8). Agents can—and in the Mauritanian case do—knowingly participate in multiple fields. In short, they play multiple games at once.

However, there is more to the sociology of the border posts project, and to border governance more generally, than Bourdieu's concepts allow us to see on their own. The project, along with the social relations around it, is shaped by the agency of material factors such as the posts themselves, the biometric entry-exit databases they host, and the training programs created and modified for the police and gendarmes who staff them. This is where concepts from actor-network theory help us to supplement—not displace—Bourdiesian approaches and see the

border as sociotechnical. Actor-network theory, with origins in science and technology studies, is not a holistic theoretical approach, but rather what Law (2007: 2) calls a ‘diaspora that overlaps with other intellectual traditions’. Actor-network theorists’ emphasis on the world as nothing more than contingent sets of associations between humans and non-humans alike puts the approach in stark contradiction to what Latour (2005) calls the ‘sociology of the social’—which includes Bourdieu’s oeuvre. The radically flat ontology characteristic of actor-network theory (generalized as an ‘assemblage’ approach in Chapter 2) approaches sees little difference between the human and the non-human in their capacity for agency. In the light of these radically different foundations, Bourdieu’s sociology and actor-network theory are not commensurable and should not be combined haphazardly. However, concepts from actor-network theory can be used as *complementary theoretical tools* with which to paint a fuller picture of border control in practice, particularly in the areas of ‘overlap’ with other approaches to practice. Two concepts from actor-network theory are most useful for building a pluralist approach: the concept of ‘actant’, through which we can theorize the border as sociotechnical, and that of the ‘(im)mutable mobile’, which can describe border control knowledges and their transmission. The latter has been discussed at length in Chapter 3, but the former merits some elaboration in this context.

The term ‘actant’ (Latour 2005) removes the difference between humans and non-humans in terms of their possibility for agency. The concept of ‘actant’ stops short of attributing intentionality to the non-human by defining agency simply as the ability to make a difference. This does not remove the importance of human agency, but simply highlights the ability of non-humans to be of consequence. An attention to non-human agency is therefore compatible with sociological approaches to the relational construction of security, as recent work on ‘policy tools’ (Balzacq 2008) and ‘technologies’ (Guittet and Jeandesboz 2010) has shown. By considering the agency of the non-human, we are better able to account for ways in which technologies exert agency in Mauritanian border governance. Agents struggle over different objects: the EU delegation and IOM representative may seek to enhance their respective symbolic capital over the same object or project output. The biometric entry–exit tracking system is a bearer of a norm of how border control should be done: its technical linkage to national ID systems demands that the border be stretched inwards from the territorial line. Technologies also shape the trajectory of the border. For instance, a border post is a security tool that weds its users to specific security solutions (biometrics, e-passports, etc.). By examining these non-human actors we do not give them human intentionality, but rather highlight their ability to incarnate cognitive relationships and shape human action. They are also lenses through which we can observe social and technical connections: by studying border posts in Mauritania, we necessarily bring in the passports they read, the Internet infrastructures that connect this passport information to centralized databases, and the risk-analysis

techniques used in mining these databases. Security is therefore not *only* the result of an institutional or professional interplay; it is also an outcome of material processes, the deployment of security tools and the agency of objects.

In sum, the field concept is the best descriptor of the social elements of the Mauritanian border, particularly as the latter is a transnational space governed as much from Brussels as from Nouakchott. Habitus and symbolic capital highlight the personal dispositions and social interactions that shape how the border is governed. The selective and careful use of concepts from actor-network theory usefully draws our attention to sociotechnical factors, notably the importance of non-humans in shaping border governance. Concretely, speaking of actants helps account for the agency of materials and objects, and the concept of the (im)mutable mobile (cf. Chapter 3) highlights the motion of knowledges about border control.

5.3 Border posts as infrastructure networks

The border posts in Mauritania are significant because they are *infrastructures* of border control. Every actor is also a network, and the border posts in Mauritania are no different: they pull together disparate knowledges, technologies and funding arrangements to extend the reach of state surveillance, provide symbolic capital in the field of border control, and create a path dependence on new ways of controlling the border. First, we should think of the posts as infrastructures of legibility (Scott 1998) of the border area itself, as well as of the populations that cross it. James C. Scott uses the concept of ‘legibility’ to describe the process of better knowing, seeing, mapping, and controlling nature and society. This idea of legibility is intimately bound to long-standing techniques inherent to modernity such as surveillance, development, and bureaucracy. This capture by the administrative gaze is similar to what John Torpey (2000) calls the state’s ‘embrace’ of its population, which stresses the work of identifying and ‘filing’ of citizens. In places, Mauritania’s border posts are quasi-developmental tools that boost the capacities of local communities, providing the only source of electricity or market space in some villages. These border posts are the state’s broader footprints in a locality, providing a new interface for populations previously out of reach of central government. As such they are not a circumscribed migration policy tool, but a much more wide-ranging infrastructure of state visibility. This visibility extends both ways, however, and the primary purpose of the posts remains one of identification—making visible and legible those who cross the border.³³ This dual purpose of the border post as an infrastructural tool is significant in terms of the broader field of border control in Mauritania because different actors provide largely different justifications and emphases. The local

³³ Interview with journalist from Agence Nouakchott d’Informations, Nouakchott, 16 June 2013.

Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire (DST), on one side, emphasizes the utility of statistics and of document fraud reduction.³⁴ The local EEAS delegation, however, emphasizes the developmental aspect of the project. Despite these conflicting justifications, different goals coexist in the same project.

There is little prestige available to foreign security actors in Mauritania, but the infrastructural nature of the border posts project means that the buildings are sources of symbolic capital. Although Mauritania's reputation as a large desert haven of terrorism has attracted funding and programs, it has made it an unattractive work destination for border management experts. For instance, the Brussels-based ICMPD found it very difficult to find personnel to go to Mauritania precisely because so few wanted to relocate, especially without their families.³⁵ Despite a generalized view that Mauritania is not a dream work destination, the border posts project has provided donors with opportunities to accrue symbolic capital in the form of prestige and pride, to varying extents. Various funders bring different strategies and levels of resources to the project, and gain differing levels of symbolic capital as a consequence. The IOM Development Fund, drawing from IOM member state contributions, offers only moderate levels of funding, typically below \$500,000 and mainly for training. Although the IOM uses UN pay scales and adopts a blue-and-white corporate identity, it is not a UN agency and therefore does not have the same degree of continuity or funding. By contrast, the EU's millions in migration management aid to Mauritania enable the local EEAS delegation to reap the benefits of a very visible intervention. The funding for the posts comes from €8million in European Development Fund (EDF) funding Mauritania receives for the implementation of its integrated migration strategy. The EEAS's desire to implement visible projects, near which a placard bearing an EU flag can be placed, is much more pressing than the IOM's. Each new post opening is marked by a press release from the local EEAS delegation, and is attended by an official from the delegation, the IOM head of mission, and local security actors. Pictures are taken, and this photographic aspect of the project is central to the day-to-day routines of EU staff: before-and-after images of the border posts line the walls of the local EEAS delegation, alongside posters for other border control projects. The IOM's global capacity-building website also features these side-by-side comparison photos, which show border posts going from dilapidated shacks held up by four sticks to brand new concrete buildings. This is testament to a self-perception of transformational presence and to Mauritania's role as an exemplar.

Symbolic capital is also accrued for the Mauritians, who have greater credibility with their neighbours and from the transnational border control

³⁴ Interview with DST director, Nouakchott, 27 February 2013.

³⁵ Interview with ICMPD staff, via phone, 18 March 2013.

community. The IOM considers Mauritania by far the most ‘advanced’ country in terms of border control in West Africa³⁶ and border posts also provide a physical manifestation of progress, which can be shown off to neighbours. However, an evaluation mission by EuropeAid (which administers the EDF) suggested that the Mauritians “appeared more concerned by short term benefits (access to funding to modernize relevant institutional bodies) than by a long term strategy for improving border management” (EuropeAid 2013: 152). This suggests something that international security professionals informally highlight in most interviews: that local security forces tend to be myopic (in the interveners’ terms) or at least have radically different beneficiaries in mind in their pursuit of foreign assistance. This is not to say that private gain trumps the public good, but rather that a Mauritanian security professional’s symbolic capital incentive may lie with the prestige of a particular unit or corps rather than of the DST or of the state as a whole. Regardless of any manipulation or resistance in the project, symbolic capital is still accrued through the promotion of the Mauritanian exemplar overseas, and the EU and IOM have organized meetings between Senegalese and Mauritanian officials to facilitate transfer of best practices, quite a feat in light of the two countries’ tenuous diplomatic relations. The EEAS delegations and IOM missions in Dakar and Nouakchott are in competition to earn credit for this facilitation of knowledge transmission. This highlights how infrastructural advancement is as much reputational as it is tangible. As Martin Geiger has argued in the context of IOM intervention in Albania, the organization is “not just the henchman of the EU” (2010: 154) and its independent accumulation of symbolic capital in the Mauritanian field is essential to accrue the credibility it requires to access more donor funding.

The border posts are also a material infrastructure of pedagogy, enabling the transmission of intangible ‘best practices’ of border control. The newly built border post at Rosso, Mauritania’s busiest post along the southern river border with Senegal³⁷, shows precisely how material infrastructures act to instil new routines through the global border management norms they convey. At Rosso, the separation of incoming and outgoing flows of people from Mauritania, essential to avoiding the goods or travel documents passing between people in each line, was not respected. By building a new border post, the new standard is effectively ‘built in’ to the material infrastructure of the border. Although IOM’s border management project cycle normally determines ‘big’ normative questions such as legal frameworks before turning to ‘smaller’ concrete infrastructure-building and equipment provision³⁸, it is clear that even when concrete actions such as border post construction come first, they always embody knowledge about how borders

³⁶ Interview with IOM staff, Dakar, 25 January 2013.

³⁷ Senegal renewed its own post at Rosso in September 2013, complete with issuance kiosks for its biometric visa launched in July 2013.

³⁸ Email correspondence with IOM head of mission, Mauritania, 3 March 2013.

should function. This reflects how rationalities of border control are present at *all* stages of the process.

Finally, Mauritania's border posts create a path dependency by favouring a particular response to the security problem of porous borders. By substituting paper registries (which are consulted 'in case' of a problem) for real-time interconnection with a point-to-point internet connection (satellite internet technology was considered too expensive at €360,000 per year) these posts privilege a turn towards data analysis—widely used for border control in the West—as a response to border security problems. This is something that the IOM's entry-exit system, to which I turn later, facilitates. The importance of having a real-time account of the border is quintessential to the leadership in the Mauritanian DGSN, who privilege the speed and better situational awareness provided by this system.

Part of the role of border posts as infrastructure networks is their *modular* approach to security—a view which understands them as small steps towards a more whole and totalizing approach. The posts are therefore considered something of a start—since progress 'has to come from somewhere'³⁹—rather than as an end product, and provide plenty of room for upgrades. For instance, the PIRS system used for entry-exit recording is a piecemeal software package that allows the post-purchase inclusion of different features, allowing border guards to attach new hardware (webcams, fingerprint scanners) and new software features (saving of scanned passport images) down the line. In this way, the software *acts* to dictate the path dependency, by prefiguring the progression of border control modernization. Similarly, the adoption of a modular technology also acts as a signal of commitment, whereby the country adopting the system demonstrates its willingness to buy in to the particular path dependency offered by the system. This importance of signalling showcases the role of border posts as symbolic infrastructure, in that they highlight the centrality of state presence to the assurance of sovereignty. As the EuropeAid evaluation mentions, border post design "does not stem clearly from a detailed analysis of flows and prevailing threats at the border" (EuropeAid 2012: 157). This leaves a certain amount of room to argue that perhaps the border posts are an incarnation of the state's commitment to security, both to outsiders and to its own citizens, regardless of what they are designed to do.

5.4 Mauritania's landscape as security terrain

The infrastructures of border control in Mauritania are shaped by the terrain they occupy, and recent work in critical security studies has acknowledged the role of

³⁹ Interview with IOM regional border management expert, via phone, 10 February 2013.

such material settings. Aradau (2010) and Nyers (2012) both draw on the nascent literature on the ‘new materialisms’ (e.g. Bennett 2010; Coole and Frost 2010), itself related to ANT, to point to the agential role of infrastructures and border landscapes respectively. Aradau looks beyond discourse alone to see the way that ‘things’ like critical infrastructure actively shape security problems, while Nyers points to the mobility of the physical terrain. Mauritania’s terrain, from the green Senegal River basin in the south to the windswept Saharan dunes of north, has been essential in framing what security problems are responded to and how. As a result, field relationships emerge around the desert as a problematic and its conditions make a difference in terms of the approaches applied to controlling different parts of the border.

The Senegal River, along which most of Mauritania’s border posts are situated, provides the natural border with Senegal to the south, and the Senegalese border post at Rosso is reachable from the Mauritanian side by ferry or by pirogue. Prior to the border posts project, the Mauritanian border security services (police, gendarmerie and customs) were housed in a building owned by the ferry operating company. The EEAS delegation, insisting on a neater separation of public and private sectors at the border,⁴⁰ preferred a purpose-built structure, which now stands a hundred metres upstream from the previous location. This reflects the delegation’s position that *acceptable* border management standards include a clear demarcation of sectors, a situation brought about by the particular landscape in question. This is reflective of the broader EU agenda in Mauritania which, unlike the IOM’s, is more holistic and centred more clearly on ensuring good governance. This is also part of a tendency to build a standalone police capacity, to ensure that the state is eventually able to independently police its border.

Beyond the Senegal River, the Sahara plays an agential role in shaping the kinds of technologies deployed at the border posts. While wired electricity connections are available in bustling border towns like Rosso, almost every other post in Mauritania is necessarily remote or, in the case of those in the north, in desertic conditions. The landscape therefore shapes the types of expertise and learning required to make the border posts project ‘work’ in Mauritania. France, having built border posts in Mali under its JUSSEC (*Justice et Sécurité*) program, shared its experience with the EU and IOM, suggesting that posts use solar panels⁴¹ and be built near sources of water in order to gather useful intelligence from nomads or other passers-by.⁴² The landscape is a source of security expertise that is then transmitted ‘south-south’ between two intervened countries through the actions of foreign interveners. The landscape also dictates the types of material

⁴⁰ Interview with security attaché at EU delegation, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013.

⁴¹ I later learned that this was because unlike solar power, fuel can easily be siphoned off by staff, who tend to be (or feel) underpaid.

⁴² Interview with interior security attaché, French embassy, Nouakchott, 4 March 2013.

infrastructure that must be put in place, as equipment in the border posts must be amenable to the production capacities of solar equipment and the speed limitations of the internet connection. The IOM's entry-exit tracking system, to which I turn later, is one such adaptable technology.

The Sahara also represents a vast space of what lies 'in-between', and as such is a blank canvas onto which anxieties about migration and terrorism are projected. The Sahara desert, which spans most of the country, has long been a space of vibrant exchange and circulation (Scheele 2012). However, a discourse of threat has tended to prevail with regards to the desert. Since 2000, Mauritanian discourse has increasingly aligned with Western perspectives on its role as a sufficiently democratized Islamic bastion against terrorism (Jourde 2007), and the country has extensively played up clandestine migration since 2006.⁴³ Between late 2007 and mid 2009, a string of attacks against Mauritanian army personnel and European tourists, culminating with Mauritania's first suicide bombing outside the French embassy in Nouakchott, created the impression of an onslaught of terror. As a result, the state has taken a sharp turn towards a security orientation, and portrayed its territory as vulnerable and vast, requiring external assistance to secure. Mauritania has allied itself to European rationalities on migration management, and Spain's interest in reducing transit migration through Mauritania has helped its president Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz avoid the full brunt of European censure for the 2008 coup that brought him to power (Foster 2010). Part of the security problem came from the desert's lack of natural obstacles, which made policing the border much tougher.⁴⁴ Members of the Mauritanian security forces describe the eastern desert border with Mali as easily penetrable, due to the sheer radius each patrol has to cover.⁴⁵ In turn, the desert reflects strategic battles about what is to be secured against, with the Mauritanian government more concerned about terrorist infiltration from Mali,⁴⁶ while EEAS and IOM staff play up the migration, asylum and human rights justifications for the project, largely due to EDF funding objectives. What is notable is that although the landscape provides different incentives and security rationales, the field of border control has converged on a comprehensive solution in the form of the border post project.

⁴³ In the second half of 2006 almost 30,000 people from across West Africa left the coasts of Senegal and Mauritania, mainly in fishing boats, attempting to reach Spain's Canary Islands, which are only 100km off the coast of Morocco. This spurred an increase in EU—particularly Spanish—involvement in migration management in the region that continues to this day with maritime patrols (via EU external borders agency FRONTEX), migration and development programs, and technical assistance of the sort seen in Mauritania.

⁴⁴ Interview with French interior security attaché, French embassy, Dakar, 22 July 2013.

⁴⁵ Interview with gendarme, Nouakchott, 5 March 2013.

⁴⁶ Interview with DST director, Nouakchott, 27 February 2013.

Finally, the physical landscape shapes the institutional division of border control, which in turn shapes the institutional cultures and methods that are applied to each border post. Mauritania, like most former French colonies, assigns policing duties through a roughly spatial division of labour, with the *Police Nationale* tasked with urban policing and the *Gendarmerie* that of rural areas and the desert. The same applies to the border posts, with the police tending to take charge of airports and urban posts. This literal landscape of policing is a window into the routines, strategies and forms of competition between Mauritanian security actors. The police run most border posts along the Senegal River, as these are near cities and experience large population flows, but maritime patrols on the river itself are carried out by the gendarmerie. Police, competitive with their colleagues in the gendarmerie (whom they perceive as better equipped), have had requests to the EU for boats of their own rebuffed,⁴⁷ with a reminder that this is beyond their mandate. However, gendarmes often work in areas of the landscape where there are no border posts, particularly along the riskier eastern border with Mali. Here, some gendarmes are sent for six-month shifts, sleeping in their vehicles in the desert, often to make room in the more desirable gendarmerie posts for officers who are friends or relatives of the regional commander.⁴⁸ Although the gendarmerie (as a military corps) is best equipped for the dangerous task of policing the desert, it is this perceived advantage of equipment and professionalism that puts it lower down the list for new border posts. The landscape is therefore intimately tied to questions of prestige (a key form of capital in the security field), modes of institutional competition, but also the tension between state directives and local practices.

5.5 The IOM's PIRS system: a technology of border proliferation

Information technology is a site for field struggles and also helps proliferate the border. The border posts bring together, and play host to, two important technological trends: the use of biometric identifiers and the creation and integration of databases. The first extracts and isolates human attributes to facilitate control, and the second makes possible a range of bordering practices such as internal controls and deportation. The Personal Identification and Registration System (PIRS)⁴⁹, an entry-exit tracking system designed in-house by the IOM, is an entry-level border management technology designed to be a key first step for nations in the developing world towards computerized immigration processing. The system “offers high-quality performances at an affordable price

⁴⁷ Interview with security attaché, EU delegation, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013.

⁴⁸ Interview with gendarme, Nouakchott, 5 March 2013.

⁴⁹ The system has since been renamed MIDAS, for the Migration Information and Data Analysis System. I have forgone the use of this name as it was not in use during my fieldwork period. However, it is noteworthy that the system's new name is reflective of the desire to move beyond 'registration' towards better 'analysis' of data gathered at border posts.

[...] is suitable for installation in remote areas” (IOM 2011), and has mainly been installed in countries from the global south, from South Sudan to Zimbabwe to Belize.

The PIRS system’s implementation in Mauritania is ongoing, but it already highlights the coexistence of digital and analogue approaches to border control. The system is in place at the two busiest posts, Nouakchott international airport (where it was piloted) and the town of Rosso on the border with Senegal. On one hand, PIRS represents the IOM’s push to technologize and integrate border security in developing countries. It connects to Interpol databases of stolen vehicles and wanted persons, and affords travellers quicker border clearance times than the paper registers used beforehand. On the other hand, PIRS has not entirely displaced analogue practices: Watching the system in action,⁵⁰ one sees that Mauritania’s border posts are not yet equipped with webcams and biometric scanners, so police must still rely on face-to-face verification of passport photos and the confirmation of entry stamps for citizens of Senegal and Mali (who have visa-free travel to Mauritania). The daily routine of border control in Mauritania, even in the presence of technological mediation, is still very much a hybrid of digital and analogue cultures. That being said, the system is progressively eliminating the need for Mauritanian officers stationed on the borders to phone neighbouring countries’ border posts to get data about its own entries and exits.⁵¹ Of course, all border regimes are hybrid in this way: passing through a US airport can involve a mix of in-person profiling and biometric registration—but in Mauritania this mix is due to the meeting of two different rationalities of border control: one based on local practice and another on global standards.

PIRS is determinate of field relationships, providing a means of accruing symbolic capital. It provides IOM staff a certain amount of credibility as development-oriented security actors in Africa. The very basic nature of the system means IOM can claim that it is building up the ‘basics’ of border management on which further progress can be made.⁵² A key task of IOM staff is therefore to actively try and ‘sell’ the PIRS technology to partner countries, but not by competing with the private sector. Rather, IOM must be altruistic and remind countries of the cost-effectiveness of PIRS. IOM Mauritania had to gently remind the authorities of PIRS’s cost-effectiveness when French ID company Morpho proposed its own immigration processing solution as part of a ‘bundle’ with the biometric civil registration system the company was already implementing in the country.⁵³ The IOM logo is displayed prominently on the PIRS software, in much the same way as the EU flag is on the outside of the

⁵⁰ Participant observation with police at Nouakchott international airport, 28 June 2013.

⁵¹ Interview with IOM head of mission, Nouakchott, 20 June 2013.

⁵² Interview with IOM regional border management expert, via phone, 10 February 2013.

⁵³ Interview with IOM head of mission, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013.

border posts: it represents a claim to symbolic capital akin to that of a development donor.

PIRS also highlights relationships of mistrust between different actors in the field of border control. A common ‘esprit de corps’⁵⁴ helps a former European gendarme working for the EU delegation in Nouakchott when dealing with colleagues at the Mauritanian gendarmerie, but technology proves to be a source of controversy. Some Mauritanian actors do not trust the system itself—one official called for all computers to be removed from border posts⁵⁵—and the country’s security officials are keen to control the source code to prevent ‘backdoor’ access to their data. That the Mauritians have been worried about clandestine access shows that relationships based on obtaining rents (in the form of border infrastructure) may not correlate with *trust* between the actors in the field. The reluctance to discuss data protection provisions with the ICMPD,⁵⁶ which uses EU funding to improve Mauritania’s national biometric database, shows how the technology’s linkages have not led to the wholesale adoption of a corresponding culture around the treatment of data.

The PIRS technology makes it possible for borders to be controlled well inland, through its deployment of identification technologies linked to emerging biometric systems in Mauritania. The country has since 2011 proceeded with a vast ‘renewal’ of all documents including passports, national ID and foreign resident cards, assured in part by making all persons resident on the territory re-register with the state’s civil documents agency. The new *Registre de Populations*, replacing the last national registration exercise from 1998, will be linked with police records of criminal activity as well as to the existing border control databases maintained by the police and gendarmerie and aggregated by the DST. This inward movement of the border has raised the social stakes of border control in a state where relations between ‘Arabo-Berber’ and black African populations have always been uneasy. A movement of black Mauritians called *Touche Pas À Ma Nationalité* (‘don’t touch my nationality’) has contested what it calls a “racist” biometric system.⁵⁷ In theory, data from Mauritania’s ubiquitous internal controls, from its borders, and from its ID databases will eventually be interlinked. In 2013, risk analysis techniques provided by the United Kingdom⁵⁸ were deployed at the DST in order for officers to be aware of the unique threats each faces. This is to enable better profiling techniques, representing a further transmission of well-documented European norms of risk management (Aradau and Van Munster 2007; Amoore and De Goede 2008) into the global south. As

⁵⁴ Interview with security attaché at EU delegation, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013.

⁵⁵ Interview with security attaché at EU delegation, Nouakchott, 28 February 2013.

⁵⁶ Interview with ICMPD staff, via phone, 18 March 2013.

⁵⁷ Interview with TPMN coordinator, Nouakchott, 13 June 2013.

⁵⁸ Interview with IOM head of mission, Nouakchott, 20 June 2013.

one IOM regional border management expert told me, part of the work of intervention is about moving from ‘capture’ to ‘treatment’ of data.⁵⁹ In other words, it is not only about the ability to see, but rather the ability to make mobility legible in a way that is effective. The proliferation of borders in Mauritania therefore dovetails neatly with the tendency towards government through identification and data capture seen in countries of the global ‘north’.

5.6 Training, routines and rationalization

Organizations such as the IOM “perform a key role in the [north-south] transfer of cognitive categories and frameworks” about migration in Mauritania (Poutignat and Streiff-Fénart 2010: 203). The border posts project reflects the importance of routinization to this cognitive transfer. Most training practices aimed at border police are short (usually 14 days) and even the *Essentials of Migration Practice* (EMP), IOM’s flagship training program for border control personnel, only takes a maximum of six weeks. The IOM favours ‘on the job’ learning and training for PIRS was done at the Nouakchott airport, in a setting familiar to trainees. The EMP also proves to be a ‘mutable mobile’ and has been modified through academic input—‘Mauritanized’⁶⁰ by a local sociologist—to better reflect local legal and social realities. Through ‘training of trainers’ workshops, norms are diffused through the ranks of the security forces at low cost. This approach seeks to reduce dependence on external donors⁶¹ by ensuring the autonomy of the intervened country. This autonomy is limited by the fact that there are only four dedicated trainers in the national police and most of them are not dedicated to this task full-time.⁶²

Part of the everyday routine of border governance in Mauritania also involves planning and attending workshops that bring together the small border management community in Nouakchott. This is to the point that there is a sense of “workshop fatigue” setting in.⁶³ One use of workshops has ensuring consensus. The IOM’s primary emphasis is moving Mauritania towards integrated border management (IBM). In September 2012, a workshop was held in Nouakchott to evaluate threats and risks at which participants, according to the IOM press release, agreed on “the importance of an integrated and coordinated border especially in the current security environment” (IOM 2012). These threats and risks are never divulged to the public (or researchers!) but a consensus around IBM in principle—even through the simple performance of bringing actors together—already sets the cognitive path. Local civil society are occasionally

⁵⁹ Interview with IOM border management expert, by phone, 10 February 2013.

⁶⁰ Interview with Université de Nouakchott sociologist, Nouakchott, 6 March 2013.

⁶¹ Interview with IOM head of mission, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013.

⁶² Interview with IOM head of mission, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013.

⁶³ Interview with IOM head of mission, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013.

involved but human rights organizations such as the *Association Mauritanienne des Droits de L'Homme*, which has consistently protested the treatment of migrants at Mauritania's borders, have considered their role to be nothing more than rubber-stamping⁶⁴ conceptions of the border devised elsewhere.

The border post project inculcates a common culture of professionalism, officialdom and bureaucratic rationalization. Professionalism is a key tenet of the project as described in the national migration strategy, which counts among its assessment metrics the “quality” of a Mauritanian delegation to be sent to Spain, results on standardized tests, and the number of agents trained (Islamic Republic of Mauritania 2011: 75-76). The professionalization of Mauritanian security forces is done independently of any national approach to border management, but still pushes for a respect for existing global norms.⁶⁵ Similarly, officialdom is imposed through pressures to abandon previous informal and unrecorded practices. For instance, the local EU delegation keeps a database of trainees to avoid double dipping by trainees,⁶⁶ as trainings and workshops tend to provide modest daily allowances to offset costs, and therefore a financial incentive to participate. The EU has also urged Mauritania to keep border guards at a specific post for a certain amount of time to build up a stock of local experience, but staffing practices at the micro level—in each regional security zone in Mauritania—mean that ‘best practices’ are balanced against family commitments, clan preferences, and personal entrepreneurial ventures. One local gendarme I spoke to expressed indifference at his border control training and instead detailed his own smuggling activities at the border with Western Sahara.⁶⁷ Best practices have been forced to be mutable. Finally, bureaucratic rationalization is a common goal of the culture of border control being imposed. Multiple interveners from IOs based locally point to the fact that the *Direction Générale de la Sûreté Nationale* (DGSN, Mauritania's national security directorate) does not have a clear strategy for training, and even when a common proposal is submitted by the DGSN, requests are still received from departments lower down the hierarchy.⁶⁸ This is something that the EuropeAid evaluation also found, noting that “various actors tend to follow their own logic and no clear common vision on short and long term priorities has been developed yet” (EuropeAid 2013: 153). In the view of foreign interveners, this is largely the case across the security field in Mauritania, not just for the EU/IOM project, but this criticism also applies to the disaggregation between different global approaches.

⁶⁴ Interview with representative of AMDH, Nouakchott, 23 June 2013.

⁶⁵ Interview with GIZ project manager, Nouakchott, 10 June 2013.

⁶⁶ Interview with security attaché at EU delegation, Nouakchott, 28 February 2013.

⁶⁷ Interview with gendarme, Nouakchott, 14 June 2013.

⁶⁸ Interview with GIZ project manager, Nouakchott, 10 June 2013.

This ‘basics first’ approach to border management training in Mauritania attributes a self-evidence to the task of reinforcing border control in Mauritania, and solidifies cooperation within the field. Capacity is so low—many border agents had to be trained how to type before being trained on PIRS⁶⁹—that the mission hardly seems to need justification. The border posts project was put in place with minimal threat assessment, and was chosen because it represented, in the IOM head of mission’s words, “low-hanging fruit”: it is a project that is easy to put in place and, and as the before and after photos referenced earlier show, it was *obvious* that the border posts needed to be brought up to scratch. This minimizes dynamics of competition in the field, as there is a perception of a common mission. Competition is also mitigated by the diversity of different actors’ habitus: personnel working in the EEAS delegation in Nouakchott and local IOM office do not have an exclusive ‘security’ orientation. The IOM head of mission has had to learn a lot about border management on the job⁷⁰ while staff members at the EEAS are just as likely to be professional project managers as detached officers from EU member state police forces. By contrast, on the Mauritanian side, most are career police officers, with some parlaying their experience into doctoral studies related to security and sovereignty.⁷¹ A cooperative element is visible in the gestures of respect for local ownership that are visible in the very architecture of the border posts, which showcase Mauritanian architecture.⁷² There is an understanding that reinforcing the very basic capacities of Mauritanian forces is a self-evident task which mitigates field dynamics of competition. The devil is always in the details, but the perception is that local capacity is not sufficiently high for an engagement with the fine details of border management.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has argued for a view of borders as sociotechnical spaces and put forward a view of border knowledges as mobile and mutable. Using ethnographic insights from fieldwork in Mauritania, the chapter made two key contributions. First, it used a modified Bourdieusian perspective to draw attention to the actors of border security and the determinative role of their backgrounds and relations. Second, the chapter argued that border control intervention in Mauritania implants international border control knowledges in a pedagogical manner but is also resisted by local routines and habits. Through a discussion of infrastructures (the border posts), terrains (the landscape), technologies (the PIRS), and training practices, the chapter revealed how border control works *in practice* in West Africa, an under-explored space of analysis in critical security studies.

⁶⁹ Interview with IOM head of mission, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013.

⁷⁰ Interview with IOM head of mission, Nouakchott, 20 June 2013.

⁷¹ Interview with head of training, DGSN, Nouakchott, 5 March 2013.

⁷² Interview with IOM head of mission, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013.

Throughout, the chapter implied at a relationship between security and development (see *Security Dialogue* 2010) that subtends border control—and security more generally—in the global south. Indeed, all four empirical sections of the chapter showed some implicit linkage between border control and statebuilding whether in the non-security actors involved in the program, the importance of infrastructures, or the purpose of training practices. In a broader context, this highlights the importance of border-making to state-making in Mauritania over the last 50 years since independence but also the *developmentalization* of security in the global south more generally. Border control intervention in Mauritania is just one instance of the myriad statebuilding interventions across the global south: the EU funds border management training in central Asia, the IOM’s construction of border posts in South Sudan is instrumental in buttressing that new state’s emerging sovereignty, while internationally-funded biometric identification programs play a dual role across Africa as development (elections, population registration) and security (border control, denationalization) tools. This broader fusion of security and development across the global south, of which Mauritania’s border post program is but one instance, demands close, nuanced empirical exploration. The next chapter does just that, analysing the uptake of biometrics in relation to buttressing the state’s capacity to make legible. Building on the theoretical approach used here — attentive to borderwork knowledges — the next chapter turns to the emergence of biometrics as key technologies for the determination of inclusion and exclusion.

6 Biometric borderwork

6.1 Introduction

When arriving in Senegal through Dakar’s Léopold Sédar Senghor (LSS) international airport, a traveller’s first encounter is with a *Police Nationale* border service agent, who scans their travel document, photographs them, and takes digital prints of both their index fingers. The biographic and biometric information collected at LSS airport is stored as part of a computerized register of entries and exits and verified against local and international databases and watchlists. This system is but one of a rapidly growing number of digital biometrics systems across the African continent, many of which are used for border control. Spurred on by international standards, African countries are adopting biometric passports, ID cards, and visas, but also less obvious borderwork tools such as national biometric enrolment. This chapter focuses on the use of biometrics in West Africa, and in Senegal and Mauritania in particular, with attention paid to the role of knowledge diffusion and to the sociotechnical nature of their everyday deployment in these two countries. Observing this rapid proliferation of digital forms of biometrics—the use of physiological elements such as bodily characteristics and behaviours for identification and surveillance—this chapter asks a number of questions concerning the spread of digital biometrics as a tool of border management in West Africa. First, in relation to knowledge diffusion practices behind the adoption of biometrics in West Africa, it asks “What drives states in the global south, such as Senegal and Mauritania, to adopt biometrics for border management?”. Second, this chapter seeks to understand the social and technical elements of biometrics, asking “What are the practices that emerge around biometrics deployments in these countries, and what forms of resistance do they engender?” This chapter builds on but also challenges existing work on biometrics in critical security studies and surveillance studies, making two main contributions by examining the knowledge politics and everyday practice of biometrics deployments in Senegal and Mauritania.

6.1.1 Biometrics knowledge and professional practice

This chapter seeks to answer the ‘knowledge’ question that has been a driving thrust of this dissertation. More specifically, it asks what kind of knowledge about biometrics is produced and how it moves between different sites of the international. This chapter focuses on a level of practice composed of formal standards and intangible ideals created and implanted through professional practices. The basis of this argument comes from a dissatisfaction with existing literature on biometrics, which has been directed either towards large-scale modalities of power on one side, and towards embodied subjects and corporeality on the other. This is particularly the case in work that relies on Foucauldian theoretical foundations. In *History of Sexuality vol. 1*, Michel Foucault identifies

biopolitics—the form of power that takes human life as its main point of regulation—as being organized around just this macro-micro bifurcation: discipline relates to the “*anatomo-politics of the human body*”, while regulation is to do with the “*bio-politics of the population*” (1990, p.139). This approach holds some explanatory power, to be sure, but work in this vein has overlooked the ‘meso’ level of practice. Contributions have either stressed the corporeal nature of biometrics as “shift of focus away from nation states to embodied individuals” (Pugliese 2010: 99) or focused on what this technology tells us about larger modalities of governance in the Western world, focusing on risk (Amoore 2006, Muller 2010), traceability (Bonditti 2004) or the government of marginal populations (Magnet 2011). Answering the question ‘how do norms travel?’, the chapter finds that there is an emerging global ideal around the effectiveness of, and necessity for, biometric technologies which is reflected in standards, policy documents, the literature of key corporate actors, as well as in the discourses and everyday assumptions of security professionals. These forms of knowledge are of varying formality and are geographically disaggregated, but together compose an ideal of biometric security in which biometrics are a solution to porous borders, a mode of reinforcing the state’s grasp of mobile populations, and a token of integration into global border control arrangements. Examining biometrics knowledge helps to explain why biometric technologies are appealing to states in the global south, and helps to elucidate the sources of epistemic authority in border management more generally.

6.1.2 The everyday life of biometrics

The second main contribution of this chapter develops the focus on professional practice to expose the actual functioning of biometrics in the context of the global south. There is a growing body of empirical work on biometrics in Africa or elsewhere in the global south: Keith Breckenridge has written about ID and biometrics in South Africa (2014) and others have written on the effects of the massive enrolment under the Unique Identification (UID) project in India (Jacobsen 2012, Thomas 2014). However, there remains little literature on biometrics in sub-Saharan Africa more specifically. More specifically, the ideal of a state’s singular pursuit of ‘legibility’, in which biometrics is hailed as a new form of security capacity (see Chapter 3), is somewhat complicated when a close empirical lens is applied. A more local take on state registration practices aiming at legibility proves to be quite revelatory: it opens the curtains on a bifurcation of the security field in which actors at different levels accept knowledges and technologies around biometrics with varying enthusiasm, and it also shows how local biometric enrolment can actually serve to produce illegibility. This illegibility is instructive as to colonial legacies and the local politics of African state-making, and also produces and drives resistance to biometric systems. This resistance and illegibility is in part technological, as biometric technologies do not always form coherent systems. It is also social, however, as the uncounted seek

enrolment into biometric systems as a means of claiming and exercising citizenship rights.

6.1.3 Structure of the chapter

The first section of this chapter discusses the question of border knowledge, arguing that there is a global doxa of biometrics emerging from a combination of standards and norms but also through knowledge produced in professional sites such as workshops and specialist magazines read by the global border management elites. The doxa of biometrics relies on certain tropes about the smartness of borders or the need to know who is crossing them, and is reflected in and produced by a range of documents and other key texts that reflect the globalized field of border managers. The section selects key publications such as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) *MRTD Report* and reports by the World Bank and Center for Global Development as key texts reflecting the global biometric doxa. With the biometric ‘state of mind’ developed, the chapter then proceeds to select key practices, institutions, groups and technologies to highlight how, in Senegal and in Mauritania, the adoption of biometric systems is mediated by security actors’ struggles and strategies as much as by technical failure and local politics. The second section of the chapter on ‘screens’ draws on immersive fieldwork at the Dakar and Nouakchott airports to argue that registration and biometric enrolment of travellers is a mimetic element of the adoption of biometric doxa and shows African states’ commitments to practically integrate into global security arrangements through connection to international watchlists. Relatedly, the third section of the chapter focuses on the documentary form of the implantation of biometric doxa in West Africa: the biometric visa. This visa as a token of modernity facilitates claims of credible border control and also reflects the role of technological solutions in displacing resistance within the field of security more broadly. The fourth section of the chapter turns to biometric data, the informational basis of legibility, arguing that its collection is central to strategies of good governance and its possession a form of symbolic capital in the field of security. The fifth section shows how the overlap of different algorithms and technologies, and professional competition over them, undermines aspirations to friction-free border management. The sixth section of the chapter further contests the idea that biometrics are always a technology of legibility, focusing on the local committees that have presided over Mauritania’s mass enrolment process. These committees highlight the interdependence between the social determination of identity through race, language, and religion and an identification system whose imperative is to register all in the name of state security. The final section turns to those who are caught by the historic and bureaucratic prejudices spawned by the paradox of biometric enrolment. Drawing on interviews with citizens protesting the biometric enrolment in Mauritania, it argues that the pursuit of legibility, rather than a fundamental recasting of

citizenship, is a central political strategy of groups such as *Touche Pas À Ma Nationalité* in Mauritania.

6.2 Knowledge: the global doxa of biometrics

Biometric technologies use physiological elements such as bodily characteristics and behaviours for the purposes of identification and surveillance. Practices such as criminal fingerprinting, airport iris scanning, and facial recognition in passports are premised on attempts to link fluid identity (as an intersubjective relation to the world) or bodies to a fixed identification (an assigned, usually recorded mode of recognition that aspires to be unchanging). Although this mode of veridiction has long been in use, and in Africa has strong links to the colonial period, the use of digital biometric technologies is a newer application whose promotion has relied on a new form of security knowledge. Recalling Chapter 2, borderwork is networked and cultural: it stretches the border function inward and outward, by bringing together an assemblage of disparate factors that cannot be limited to that geographical space, and also relies on a *normative* or cultural basis. This refers to the range of ideas, norms, hunches, statements, documents, and ways of doing that make the adoption of biometric systems possible, logical and commonsensical. The use of digital biometrics across the African continent is associated with efficient border management through modernization and improvement in the state's ability to make legible. As argued in Chapter 3, security knowledge is produced by as well as instructive about the social formations from which it emerges. The social formations that emerge around borderwork are, as argued earlier in this dissertation, heterogeneous assemblages made up as much of human as non-human actors. These 'assemblages' include creators of knowledge, such as border security professionals, but also things such as texts which are bearers and transporters of knowledge. In the case of biometric systems, these include formal policies and technical standards, reading material and promotional material from the ICAO and biometrics vendors, and from reports framing biometrics as a development issue. The perspective put forth in this social formation tends to coalesce around two factors: that biometrics are essential for the credible control of borders, and more strikingly are an effective response to questions of development. There is not always *direct* causality between individual publications or manifestations of biometric doxa and the adoption of biometrics in Africa. Rather, these are illustrative of prevalent discourses about development, good governance and modernity which carry over to varying degrees in practices observable in the African context.

6.2.1 The credible control of complex borders

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a UN agency, has leveraged its role as the central global actor in the aviation security sector to harmonize the activities of its member states in terms of travel documents, as well

as bring together a range of actors to solidify specific norms around border management and global mobility. The ICAO sets policy but also technical specifications for the adoption of biometrics. On the policy side, its Doc 9303 on machine-readable travel documents (MRTDs) and electronic MRTDs sets the standards for when and how states are to move towards passports featuring biometric information (ICAO 2015a). On the technical side, the ICAO's Public Key Directory is its means of fostering international collaboration on passport security through the proliferation of technical solutions (ICAO 2015b). These 'keys' for biometric decoding are the backbone of biometric systems, as they are the necessary supplement for the reading of the documents by a receiving country. The PKD is also the ICAO's means of making itself crucial to the global mobility system: by placing itself at the forefront of a single standard. These specifications are developed in part by the Technical Advisory Group on Machine-Readable Travel Documents (TAG-MRTD) composed of 18 ICAO states and a New Technologies Working Group (NTWG). It is noteworthy, however, that the current ICAO standard is *not* biometry but simply machine-readability of a document, which can in theory be limited to a simple optical scan of the 88-character strip at the bottom of the passport's photo page. However, biometric information (usually stored on a chip in the passport) has come to be an unofficial 'standard' through international pressure and the exemplar (cf. Chapter 3) of western states. So why are biometrics so appealing as a tool? This is largely due to the fact that a biometric ideal is promoted by the knowledge generated by the ICAO, IOM and other key actors.

The doxa of biometrics can be studied by paying attention to the articulations about these technologies – and about mobility more generally – found in the publications through which actors in this field put forward and receive knowledge about biometrics. In the case of biometrics, magazines and reports 'speak' for actors but also for the social relations in which they are embedded. The idea of biometric technology as a border control device is one that has needed to be produced, and one that has taken hold strongly as various groups of professionals (in the security and transport industries) have pushed to have this technology represent efficiency, security, modernity and credibility. The adoption of biometrics has necessitated technical and policy labour on the part of many actors, and various magazines, reports, and other documents speak on behalf of this heterogeneous community. They are also forms of social action, in that they represent plays for position within particular communities.

The ICAO's MRTD Report is one important site for the construction of this biometric ideal. While this quarterly magazine is largely aimed at a tight-knit community of travel security, aviation, and border management professionals, it is an entry point into their 'culture of border control', or their ideas about who (or what) should control the border and how. More specifically, it provides a viewpoint into the ideal of biometrics as an effective tool for the management of

complex borders. For instance, the very first issue (volume 1, issue 1, 2006) of the MRTD Report laid out the ICAO's "doctrine" on MRTDs, and most issues have provided recaps of key ICAO meetings and texts. The real doxic work, however, is to be found in invited editorial-style articles and in the advertising to be found in the magazine's pages. In this 2006 issue an advertisement for ViiSAGE, a US-based firm selling document readers, asks "Do you know who's traveling?" in an ad for its passport chip-reading scanner. In a similar vein, a full-page ad for Gemalto in volume 2, issue 1 (2007) asks "Who's behind?" above a picture of a passport behind handed from border guard to traveller, both of whom remain unseen. The MRTD Report's content encourages the idea of biometrics as proving the credibility of travellers, but also that of states: the 'you' targeted by the advertising is the globally mobile border security professional who, competing for limited resources within their state security apparatus, can justify their acquisition of technology as a reliable means of boosting the state's ability to see and control flows at borders. Credibility and integrity is central to the pursuit of biometrics, and the ICAO's Assembly Resolution 33-18 argues just this in stating that "international confidence in the integrity of the passport is the very essence of the functioning of the international travel system" (ICAO 2013).

The ICAO's publications also implicitly call for the enforcement of what Étienne Balibar calls the 'polysemic' element of borders, which refers to how "borders never exist in the same way for individuals belonging to different social groups" (2002: 79). For instance The ICAO states that:

The ability to identify rapidly and precisely "problem cases" allows governments to spend their always-limited border control and law enforcement resources on those who should be given a more detailed inspection. That efficiency also reduces the need to hire additional government personnel and facility costs. (ICAO 2010)

Such literature seeks to transform biometric technologies into highly prized items, and makes sharing of knowledge about how to implement them into a prized currency for security actors. This information changes hands in locales such as the ICAO's MRTD Regional Symposia, many of which are held in the global south. These symposia bear a striking resemblance to the role of IOM workshops in Mauritania, discussed in the previous chapter, which act to make sure that all actors commit to a common view of how borders (and travel documents) are to function. Recalling Chapter 4, in which the Euro-African police conferences provided opportunities for lessons learned and for the exchange of ideas from south to north, the MRTD symposia play a similar role. Other forms of practical implementation of this ideal are carried out through auditing practices, such as gap assessment missions as part of the ICAO's Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP), held in Costa Rica and Honduras in 2013 and 2014 respectively (ICAO 2014). The ICAO's various knowledge generation and

sharing practices put forward both an image of borders (as identity managers) and how to control them (through technology and integrated systems).

6.2.2 Legibility and development

The developmental aspect of the biometric doxa also applies to the methods through which the state of mind itself is spread. The IOM, for instance, is heavily involved in the promotion of biometrics in the global south under a developmental logic. This includes the positioning of its own MIDAS system as a low-cost alternative to expensive privately marketed immigration management systems, as discussed in Chapter 5. The IOM's role includes using a pedagogical 'workshopping' approach common in the development industry to facilitate getting actors in the global south on board with the importance of traveller identification. For instance, a 2013 workshop in Uganda was intended to "increase government awareness of the importance of identity management" (IOM 2013). This particular workshop was funded by the Dutch ID management agency and the Portuguese borders service (SEF), with EU funding. Beyond the workshop approach, the biometric ideal works through the deployment of foreign experts in the ministries of states in the global south. For example, under the French ASACA (*Appui à la sûreté de l'aviation civile en Afrique*) airport security capacity-building program, immigration and security experts (*conseillers sécurité immigration*) shortlisted by France but selected by African states to be implanted in their ministries of interior as border management consultants.

While the ways that the biometric 'state of mind' moves illustrates a developmental logic, a key aspect of the content of the doxa of biometrics is that these technologies are *pathways* to development in themselves. This is a viewpoint promoted by organizations such as the World Bank, the Civil Registration Centre for Development (CRC4D) and the Center for Global Development (CGDev), which expound the benefits of new identification technologies for citizenship as well as better development outcomes. The World Bank's Digital Identity Toolkit (2014: 2) for Africa claims that developing countries "lack robust identification systems" and goes on to refer to a "fragmented identification space, where several agencies, both public and private, compete to offer identification in the form of a health insurance card, a bank identity card, a voter identity card, or a ration card". This causes what the World Bank calls "inefficiencies in the way the government and firms interact with the population". The CGDev makes similar claims in its *Identification for Development: The Biometrics Revolution* report from 2012, which situated biometric technologies as a solution for developing countries to 'leapfrog' toward biometrics, which it portrays as crucial to solving the broader problem of how to prove one's identity in societies where many are not registered or legible to the state and market. **Figure 4**, below, reproduces a graphic from the report showing low and medium income countries with what CGDev calls 'developmental

biometrics’ programs. These states are on the losing side of what CGDev report refers to as an “identity gap” (Gelb and Clark 2013: 8), which describes how the lack of identification hampers government service provision. This discourse of identification as a precursor to development relies on a teleological modernization view whereby the identification structures of Western states are worthy of emulation (to enable citizens to claim political and economic rights) and obscures the complexity of existing identification practices in the global south, many of which have evolved through the colonial encounter. The modernizing view, as my fieldwork below finds, is nonetheless largely endorsed in the discourses of African security actors, even if everyday practice testifies to more local concerns.

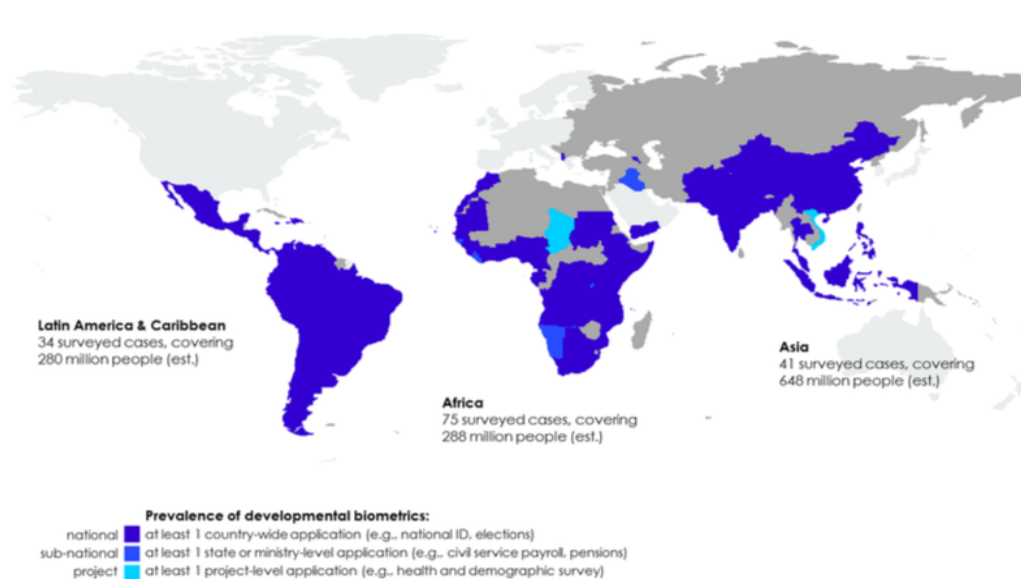


Figure 4. Map (from Gelb and Clark 2013) showing the use of biometrics in what could approximate the ‘global south’. Reprinted with permission from the authors.

The link between biometrics and development is inextricable from the problem of state capacity, and the activity of state-building, which effectively links development and security issues (see Chapter 3). As part of the push towards biometrics, there is also an ideal of the *biometric state* at play. The ‘biometric state’ referred to here differs from that to which Muller (2010) refers, which is primarily shaped by a risk logic. The ‘biometric state’ in the context of the global south represents the state’s attempt to know its population, rather than better process the data about a population that is largely already known. Risk (which Muller rightly identifies as the main criteria for trusted traveller paradigm) is not the primary valuable animating biometrics in places like Senegal and Mauritania. Rather, it is a push for integration and comprehensiveness that strives for neat, frictionless governance. Biometrics therefore come to represent a radical break from the inefficient past and are a symbol of capacity and good governance. Of

course, biometric technologies do not live and die by their technical merits alone, and the aspirations to efficient governance they embody overlook the long history of identification practices in the global south and the limits of the technology itself. Nevertheless, the optimistic view of biometrics is crucial to the position-takings of local security actors, who gain from the reputational rewards of engaging in good governance, as well as to the companies entrusted with delivering such systems, who burnish their project management credentials. The pursuit of integrated and comprehensive solutions for expanding the state’s ability to see is visible in the emphasis continually placed on the ‘overhaul’ of Mauritania’s biometric system. **Figure 5** below shows the emphasis on the ‘integrated’ solution in a slide by Morpho, the company tasked with the construction of the biometric system in Mauritania.



Figure 5. Mauritania’s ‘fully integrated’ biometric system, in a slide from Morpho. This slide shows how borderwork, as argued in Chapter 2, takes place inside (AFIS) and beyond (visa issuance) the territorial border.

It is important to specify the question of causality in discussions of the biometric doxa. While the ICAO does seek to standardize an approach to identity management, and this is largely shared by organizations such as IOM and Interpol, this does not mean that there is coordination or deliberation in every move, or that all knowledge production is always conscious or goal-driven. Recalling Bourdieu and Wacquant, doxa ‘goes without saying because it comes without saying’. Reports and publications, like the *MRTD Report*, incarnate

knowledge without necessarily being produced to add to a global biometric ideal, or without consciously being overt plays for professional position. Similarly, the ‘assemblage’ approach established in Chapter 2 shows its analytical utility here: we can avoid attributing seductively simple lines of causality (i.e. MRTD Report *causing* the adoption of biometrics in Senegal) but still acknowledge that there is a form of knowledge about biometrics that has come to be adopted (and sometimes co-produced) in the global south. As discussed above, this form of knowledge is founded on the idea that these technologies are needed to respond to the complexity of contemporary borders, and that they are essential to effective development and state capacity. This reality is found not only in policy pronouncements and reports but also in key practices such as workshops and international security cooperation. The sections to follow build on this emphasis on practice to argue that although there is a global biometric ideal of sorts, the implementation of biometrics in the ‘local’ context in Africa tells us much more about the *politics* of biometrics: how this knowledge moves in the local context, how biometrics interact with local politics and historical legacies, and how humans (and non-humans) resist their deployment.

6.3 The airport: screens / screening

Airports are one ‘site’ (see Chapter 3) in which we can observe how biometrics enables borderwork. More specifically, the use of biometric technologies at airports in Senegal and Mauritania enables these states to ‘connect’ (often literally) to global understandings of border screening, as well as how new practices necessarily supersede older materials and understandings of border security. The title of this section draws on the wordplay of ‘the screen’ and ‘screening’ in David Lyon’s (2009) work on identification and surveillance. In this text, Lyon uses this semantic similarity to highlight the way that the sorting of flows of people through various forms of profiling is increasingly enabled by the literal ‘screens’ of computers and scanners as much as by the practice of the ‘screen’ which enables sorting of flows. Airports are sites that have tended to attract a high level of interest on the part of the state’s security apparatus. In many ways, they present the most visible and internationally connected element of a state’s border. Airports, as one French official told me, are a ‘laboratory’ of border control, as they tend to be a space that is easier to police and where standard operating procedures are easier to follow and enforce.⁷³ The rise of Securiport as a key actor for border control in Senegal also testifies to the presence of private actors in this experimental space, particularly in a context in which biometrics companies increasingly focus on African airports for growth opportunities.⁷⁴ This reiterates the findings of the broad literature on airports (see

⁷³ Interview with border management expert, French embassy, Dakar, 11 March 2013.

⁷⁴ Interview with director of Senegalese data protection agency, Dakar, 25 January 2013.

Adey 2008, Salter 2008b) which identifies these sites as microcosms of broader trends in security governance. Airport border technologies in Senegal and Mauritania include entry-exit screening programs, automated border gates, and visas, which reflect a desire for integration into global mobility regimes but also the limits of the global biometric ‘doxa’ and the ways that local politics frustrate biometrics deployments.

Airport screening practices at Dakar airport are a reflection of Senegal’s integration into prevailing global understandings of digital identity management. When entering or exiting the country through LSS airport in Dakar, travellers come face to face not only with a border guard, but also with a webcam and fingerprint scanner. Travellers are asked for their documents and paper landing cards (which are being phased out) but also for an array of biometric information. The biometric registration of travellers begins with the scanning of their travel documents. The Senegalese police have electronic document readers which scan the machine-readable zone of travel documents. After this, a still image of the traveller is taken via the webcam which sits in the border guard’s booth, and the traveller is then asked to provide her right and then left index fingerprints on the scanner. Although the police is collecting raw biometric information from passengers, the optical reading and ultraviolet light equipment at the border does not allow the reading of the encrypted biometric information on a traveller’s passport chip. In this situation, Senegal participates in the biometric ideal (through collection) but is not completely technically integrated into one of the technical backbones of the global airport screening system.

The use of biometrics at the airport is noteworthy for the practices it displaces, and it reflects the sedimentation of border management practices. In Chapter 2, I argued for a greater attention to the *materiality* of border security practices as a means of tracing the composition of borderwork assemblages. In Dakar’s LSS airport, automated border control (ABC) gates are the tangible items testifying to the evolution of biometrics. In 2007, Senegal introduced a biometric passport, produced by the Malaysian company IRIS Corporation Berhad. As part of the passport project IRIS also provided Senegal with its ‘second generation’ ABC gates which were marketed as compliant with international standards but also as ways of harnessing the speed and efficiency gains of biometric technologies. These gates, connected to the Senegalese ministry of foreign affairs’ databases and supported by IRIS’s IdenPass passport lifecycle management software, now lie unused in a corner of the arrivals hall at LSS airport. This is because the IRIS database has been rendered obsolete by a comprehensive security system (SICM – *système intégré de contrôle migratoire*) at Dakar airport provided by Securiport LLC,⁷⁵ an American company. In addition to the biometric registration of

⁷⁵ Interview with chef de brigade at LSS airport, Dakar, 22 July 2013.

travellers, the SICM also manages video surveillance of the airport grounds. Traveller records are integrated, and each entry or exit can be visualized in the police's system as an individual 'transaction', which is held in a police database on-site. Information in this database, which can be viewed as one printable PDF page, is a comprehensive travel record of all passengers entering the country and includes their flight numbers, date of arrival or departure, country of citizenship and the photographic and biometric identifiers provided during each transaction. When asked to view my own file, all it took was a search by last name to pull up my entire travel history. The SICM enables Senegal's integration into global security arrangements at a very practical level. Through connection with Interpol's database of Stolen and Lost Travel Documents as well as a capacity to receive 'red notices' from Interpol for wanted persons, this border management system allows Senegal to filter out unwanted travellers. Any flag raised by the system shuts it down and requires a supervisor override. The supervisor—a more senior police commander—manually examines every flag and can override false positives. In addition, the system is integrated with local databases held by the police and gendarmerie stipulating who is prevented from leaving the national territory.⁷⁶

International cooperation is also essential to the transmission of airport screening practices, into which identity verification and biometrics are in-built. The French role is considerable in this field, largely owing to institutional similarities and postcolonial legacy. The Senegalese police have received €700,000 in assistance from France through the AMPOS (*Appui à la modernisation de la police sénégalaise*) police capacity-building project, some of which is destined for airport and border security. France has also helped to outfit a document fraud office (*Bureau de Fraude Documentaire*) for the Senegalese police and has provided fact-finding missions at French airports for senior Senegalese officers. Beyond this, Senegal and Mauritania have benefited from the French-funded ASACA civil aviation security program, which has helped carry out ICAO-compliant training across Africa including training on behavioural profiling in airports. The airport is therefore shaped by the dynamics of emulation, exemplar and pedagogy highlighted as key modes of knowledge transmission in Chapter 3.

6.4 Visas: tokens of modernity

The governance of polysemic borders, at border spaces such as airports and beyond, relies on a material backbone: documents. The visa is a useful entry point with which to understand some of the ways that a biometric doxa has installed itself in the West African context, but also shows the priorities of security officials in African states. Visas show how a common view of the effectiveness of

⁷⁶ Participant observation at Dakar airport, Dakar, 22 July 2013.

biometrics is shared across an assemblage spanning north to south, as well as the role of faith in technology in the securitization of border controls, yet their selective rollout exposes the stubbornness of older analogue ways of controlling borders. Most discussions of biometrics in the context of mobility have tended to focus on passports and identification cards, but visas are a “necessary supplement to the passport system” (Salter 2006). These effectively delocalize the border function inward (to verification systems) as well as outward (to points of issue), and are a central part of the facilitation of global mobility. The visa is no exception to the ‘biometric doxa’, and the reform of border procedures in Senegal and Mauritania has led both countries to include their visas in their emerging biometric infrastructures.

The biometric visa introduced by Senegal in July 2013 pulls together expertise from ‘north’ and ‘south’ alike, drawing in components from around the world for this modular security technology. Senegal has drawn on the expertise of two companies providing the technical and managerial elements of the project. Zetes, a Belgian ID card manufacturer, provides the enrolment kits to Senegal under a ‘build, operate and transfer’ (BOT) contract. Zetes’s contract is for 5 years and the company will build 66 enrolment stations and will also take care of biometric de-duplication, and provide a payment system through its subsidiary FasTrace, for the approximately 300,000 visas per year Senegal will need to issue (Zetes 2013). The biometric visa enrolment machines feature fingerprint sensors made by US-based Lumidigm. The company charged with administering visa issuance is the Côte d’Ivoire-based SNEDAI (the *Société Nationale d’Édition de Documents Administratifs et d’Identification*) which will deploy the Zetes-made equipment to Senegal’s border posts, some of which will be newly built. This leverages SNEDAI’s existing north-south relationship with Zetes, its main technical partner. While the technical specifics of the visa issuance process are in line with most biometrics deployments in West Africa (such as the BOT method), the justification for the visa testifies to the postcolonial context: it was introduced due to the fact that in January 2013, Senegal decided to adopt a policy of visa reciprocity – whereby countries that require Senegalese nationals to obtain visas would systematically have their own citizens subject to Senegalese visas – which has been widely cheered locally.

The Senegalese biometric visa has had a remarkably smooth uptake in that country’s local security field, and there is almost no resistance from security actors on this question. Biometrics, as a ‘rationalizing’ technology that is also associated with strategic and integrated approaches to governing borders, acts to displace the haphazard or disaggregated ways of doing border security. According to my interviews, the upper levels of the Senegalese police consider biometric screening a means of better profiling travellers and overcoming the “randomness”

of existing approaches.⁷⁷ There is very little resistance to the biometric visa within the police because trust in the seemingly self-evident superiority of biometrics overcomes it. Based on interviews in the national police, they consider the biometric visa an essential token of “modernity” whose adoption largely goes without saying.⁷⁸ This reframes debate about the visa from a political one (about the type of border control) towards a technical one (about whether the visa is more efficient). Although there are minor doubts within the police about the attribution of the contract (and data handling) to foreign companies, the supposed technical benefits of the biometric visa are not in doubt. The pursuit of a comprehensive view of who is in the country is also served by the biometric visa, as the issuance process permits the Senegalese territorial surveillance directorate (DST) based in Dakar to obtain real-time data from visa applicants from any visa enrolment centre across the world and authorize visas within 48 hours.

Beyond the ability to ‘see’ and make travellers legible faster than before, the acceptance of the biometric visa in the Senegalese security field has largely been due to the type of border and traveller targeted by the new biometric visa. This visa is largely a prestige technology, aimed mainly at Western foreigners (citizens of ECOWAS countries do not need visas to enter Senegal) and other travellers who mainly transit via LSS airport in Dakar. The visa is not just a token of modernity but also facilitates the projection of a modern identity, particularly in light of police claims that stamp visas are outmoded and any country that takes its security seriously must have something more modern.⁷⁹ With biometrics as a ‘prestige’ technology deployed only at the most crucial borders, they are a concern for the very top of the security apparatus. Dezalay and Garth (2002) refer to this as a ‘two-tier’ security field in which one part is internationally oriented and seeking symbolic capital from abroad, and the other remains rooted in existing local or informal practices and oriented towards local gains. In the Senegalese case, it is partly because the biometric visa is removed from the practices of the latter group that it is appealing to the former.

In Mauritania, whose biometric ‘sticker’ visa is part of the overhaul of that country’s ID system promised by Morpho, this visa is not ubiquitous. There are no biometrics used at Nouakchott airport and passenger profiling mainly takes place through physical examination of passport documents (such as prior stamps)⁸⁰ and the verification of places of residence during stay. Here, biometrics have not yet in practice won out over the old-fashioned ‘hunch’ and local knowledge of the border guard, even though official discourse favours technological solutions. The entire experience of visa issuance is also decidedly

⁷⁷ Interview with DST director, Dakar, 11 July 2013.

⁷⁸ Interview with DPAF director, Dakar, 15 July 2013.

⁷⁹ Interview with DPAF director, Dakar, 15 July 2013.

⁸⁰ Interview with police commissioner at Nouakchott airport, Nouakchott, 28 June 2013.

informal. When applying for a visa at the Mauritanian embassy in Dakar, one simply provides a passport, photos, and the application fee, slipped through the gate to the security guard. No biometrics are taken, and the visa is an ink stamp in the passport. There is crosschecking of sequential visa numbers (via email) between embassies and the DST in Nouakchott, but plans for real-time verification and sticker-based visas are not fully implemented. The slow rollout of the Mauritanian biometric visa, and the places where it *has* been implemented, reflect how these technological deployments bifurcate the security field into ‘tiers’ as noted above. This new visa has been launched first at the Mauritanian embassy in Paris but also at the PK-55 border post in the north of the country which has proven to be a site of experimentation and security innovation in the past (see Chapter 4). Biometrics, in this particular case, are at once a representation of modernism in the former metropole (France) but also a technology associated with the forefront of security practice.

6.5 Data: counting, tracing, and spelling

Biometrics are reliant on *data* which is used not only for identification but is also itself reflective of state priorities and the stakes present in the field of security. Contributions from surveillance studies and sociology have located biometric technologies within the historical arc of techniques of bodily identification. Joseph Pugliese (2010), adopting a genealogical approach in his study of biometric technologies, calls them the “culmination of a series of anthropometric technologies” (164), such as physiognomy, phrenology, and anthropometry. In doing so, Pugliese follows influential studies of the importance of identification practices to modernity, such as Simon Cole’s (2002) history of criminal identification. Cole and Pugliese both highlight the role of early forms of measurement of the body, such as Alphonse Bertillon’s anthropometry and Cesare Lombroso’s physiognomy, both of which were instrumental in the development of anthropometry *qua* criminal identification. But data is not just a question of identification through the information extracted from the bodies and biographies of people enrolled into biometric systems. It is also a tangible reflection of development funding priorities as well as a form of capital in struggles within fields of security. In many ways, the idea that more and better data leads to better security has been adopted wholesale in African states. In Senegal and Mauritania, biometric data collection shows a fusion of development and demographic anxiety, is a point of contention in the security field, and allows the state to surveil itself.

The need for the collection of biometric data arises in part from a fusion of developmental goals with anxiety about demographic change. In Mauritania, the justification of biometric enrolment has also been driven by the perceived security threat presented by the country’s increasingly large non-native population. The relative success of the operations to prevent Mauritania becoming a space of

‘transit’ (see Chapters 4 and 5), halting the mobility of potential migrants from the sub-region, has reframed the focus towards how to deal with ‘settlement’. As a result, the security focus is shifted from ‘who is crossing the border and how can we stop them?’ to ‘who is here and how can we track them?’. The 2012 anti-terrorism strategy released by the ministry of foreign affairs testifies to this change in mentality, calling for measures to (Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et de la Coopération 2012: 18, emphasis added) “reinforce border control and the *tracking of persons* [...] tougher visa issuance procedures and the development of civil registry and document security systems using modern technologies (like biometrics)”. My interviews with security officials in Mauritania, who rely on the biometric system for their work, revealed that the system is used primarily for national security purposes,⁸¹ even though these tend to be defined broadly. For instance, the verification of residence permits for foreigners (the *carte de séjour*) is heavily policed (especially at night) under the guise of national security yet at the same time facilitates the expulsion of foreigners. In Senegal, similarly, the biometric visa is not only an entry credential also a means of knowing who is in the country at any given time. This security principle has fused with measures intended to boost the state’s ability to make legible. Mauritania’s ministry of interior, as part of its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), has included the collection of biometric data as part of its strategic planning process. In a document produced for the PRSP from 2011-2015, the ministry includes the goal of “renovation and reinforcement of the production of an unfalsifiable national ID card based on biometrics” (Ministère de l’Intérieur 2010: 33) under both ‘Security of people and goods’ and ‘National security’ categories. The national security category calls for a “census of foreigners, issuance of secured forms of residence permits and visa application forms, and the creation of a digital database of foreigners” (2010: 41). The PRSP document includes a separate category for the *état civil* which includes harmonization of records, production of new forms, and the creation of a *lexique* of family names. The latter is of great importance in a country where Arabic and French coexist in national identity papers. This echoes Breckenridge’s (2014: 15) linkage of current practice to colonial histories, arguing that “this project – of fixing the names of illiterate African subjects in particular – remained the driving justification through the whole of the twentieth century and it is still the *raison d’être* of the current round of large-scale biometric systems, both in the former colonies and at the gates of the imperial capitals” (Breckenridge 2014: 15). In Mauritania, security and statebuilding rationales combine to animate a pursuit of data.

Biometric data is an object of struggle in the field of security. First, the collection of biometrics is part of a broader security doxa, put forward by security actors in the West, of fusing internal and external security (see Bigo 2001). The

⁸¹ Interview with official from DSE, Nouakchott, 25 February 2013.

Mauritanian anti-terrorism strategy of 2012 calls for biometrics to be used as part of a “new military and security doctrine in which notions of national defence and defence of the national territory fuse with those of internal security” (Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et de la Coopération 2012: 16). This reflects preoccupation with the global discourses around the Sahel as an ‘ungoverned space’, with biometrics acting as necessary modern tools for the reinforcement of actions against a threat at once exogenous and internal. Second, the collection of biometric data is a key element in struggles for symbolic capital, and there are institutional scraps about who controls or accesses data within the security field. In Mauritania, the police and gendarmerie have competed over how to organize data gathered from the new border posts (see Chapter 5) and there has also been tension between the police and ANRPTS, the civilian agency tasked with biometric enrolment. The decision to have a standalone agency, rather than one of the security services, carry out the enrolment has been seen in some quarters as denying the prestige of the services. In my interviews at the national security directorate in Nouakchott, police downplayed their role in the enrolment and insisted that the ANRPTS is not a police agency.⁸² This is partly due to the fact that the Mauritanian police has since 2008 been gradually side-lined in the field of security provision due to a perception of corruption and association to previous regimes, losing ground to new services such as the *Groupement Général de la Sécurité des Routes* (road traffic control) and the ANRPTS.

Beyond struggles in the field, the state relies on biometric data collection—and the surveillance around it—to watch over itself. Returning to computerized immigration processing, data is crucial not only for having a comprehensive picture of mobilities but also for the control of work. ‘Seeing like a state’ is achieved by ensuring discipline within the security field, with data from computerized immigration processing acting as a disciplinary and anti-corruption tool, appending the names of immigration officers to each entry/exit record to facilitate accountability in the case of errors in processing. When I spoke to the police commissioner in charge of security at Dakar’s LSS airport, it was clear that monitoring dashboards showing video surveillance images was a crucial part of his job. These video feeds not only reinforce the state’s ability to see travellers, but also to see *itself* through the monitoring of staff. Beyond this, the state’s ability to collect data also implies an ability to *anticipate* through analytics. Securiport, which provides the entry-exit system at LSS airport, has also used its experience in data analytics to track passengers arriving from countries with a high number of Ebola infections (Securiport 2014). Securiport’s positioning in the local security field relies on its ability to handle data, as much as the positioning of police commanders is reliant in part on their ability to surveil passengers and each other.

⁸² Interview with head of training, DGSN, Nouakchott, 5 March 2013.

6.6 Artefacts and their resistance: ‘technologies do not make systems’

Biometrics deployments are not monolithic and, since their use is subject to the people and materials in fields of practice, these modular systems often fail to come together in ways that show the persistence of analogue practices, reveal the bifurcation of the security field, and exemplify different rationales and actor strategies. The quote in the heading above⁸³ points to how this implementation of biometrics is not a frictionless process, and resistance to biometrics is not only social but *sociotechnical*. Recalling the ‘assemblage’ metaphor (see Chapter 2), it is not only the social systems in which biometrics are embedded that are worthy of analysis but also the ways that technical systems act to shape borderwork practices and, in some cases, to disrupt even the best laid plans. Failures of biometrics, such as Senegal’s fragmented biometric infrastructure, or contestation in Mauritania about the biometric enrolment, highlights the extent to which the creation of a ‘biometric state’ is always tentative and subject to the foibles of the agency of sociotechnical systems.

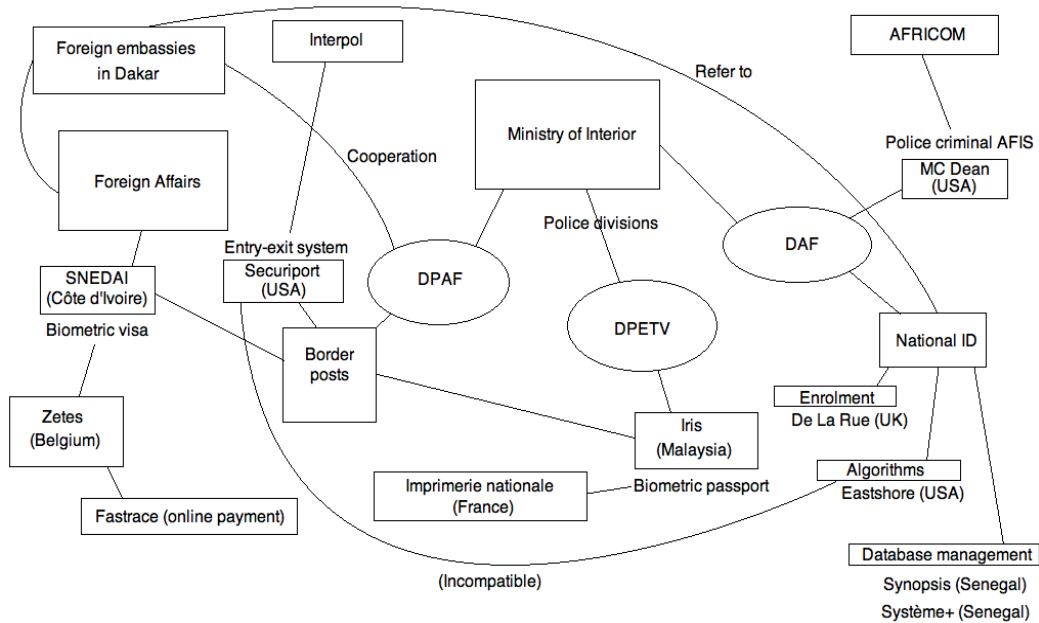


Figure 6. The biometric ‘assemblage’ in Senegal, showing key actors as well as artefacts such as databases and algorithms. Graphic by author.

Digital and analogue also exist side by side in Senegal’s biometric system. Of course, every biometric system in the world is necessarily hybrid in this way: for

⁸³ Interview with project manager, EU delegation, Dakar, 29 January 2013.

instance, in the case of the national ID card, the amount of information in the biometric system is dwarfed by what is provided and kept on the original paper application form. The ‘two-tier’ security field based on the digital/analogue split is visible at Senegalese border posts: at most posts, Senegal still uses paper registers for the recording of entries and exits into the national territory. This is especially cumbersome for customs officials who, as the author observed, mostly do not have computer or internet facilities outside of Dakar and rely on paper documents and personal wireless internet sticks. This is slowly changing with the introduction of the biometric visa, which has made SNEDAI into a major actor at the border posts through its donation of 10 patrol vehicles to the Senegalese police (AllAfrica 2013). Nonetheless, the current situation does not allow for comprehensive tracking of entries and exits, particularly those made at different points. Contesting the idea that digital is always better, many actually prefer analogue techniques: some police officers I interviewed lamented the decision to do away with paper visitor landing cards, as these in the past provided an important backup for officers who forgot to save traveller transactions in the SIGM. The value of biometrics therefore means different things to different security actors, as some rely on technological deployments for symbolic capital whereas others depend on analogue measures for purely technical reasons. In short, enthusiasm is not entirely universal in the field.

The disjointed nature of biometrics deployments in Senegal is also due to technical and professional disjuncture. This largely disaggregated governance is the result of corporate secrecy and professional competition, as well as the use of competing standards and path dependencies. Linkages do not appear to exist between the national ID and passport databases or between either and the Senegalese police’s \$1.15million criminal AFIS program, provided by the US Embassy in Dakar as a gift from AFRICOM (the US military’s Africa Command) as a tool to fight against drug trafficking and terrorism (US Embassy Dakar 2011: 3). Securiport, the company which runs the airport security system, including biometric scanning, does not have any interoperability with UK-based DeLaRue, who issue the national ID card, due to incompatible and proprietary biometric algorithms. The justification for these disjunctures is at first glance technical—competing algorithms for coding biometric data make this data incompatible—but algorithms are a matter of professional secrecy and a key selling point in the competitive biometrics marketplace. These professional and technological glitches are also manifestations of what Martin, Van Brakel and Bernhard (2010) refer to as resistance from artefacts. They argue that “apart from the potential to breakdown or fail, the absence of technologies capable of fulfilling a desired surveillance mission is as effective a resistance mode as legislative or executive modifications to the intended scope of surveillance” (2010: 224). Following this line of thought, we can consider the actors and artefacts in **Figure 6** above as representing in some cases a disaggregation of the field of security and in others reflecting the tensions within it.

In Mauritania, disaggregation comes from competing approaches to the role of public and private sectors, where public and private actors jostle for position in the field of border management. In Mauritania, the United States offered the country an entry-exit system before Mauritania adopted the IOM's MIDAS (formerly PIRS), and the MIDAS system in turn is not yet linked to the Morpho solution whose main selling point was 'integration'.⁸⁴ This reflects a tension within the biometric doxa: although the technology itself is not contested, the approaches to its rollout differ greatly. On one side, there is a 'statebuilding'-driven culture of border control approach (by the IOM, as detailed in Chapter 5) and on the other a more entrepreneurial approach that is facilitated by the companies that sell biometrics and the prestige that comes with them (such as Morpho).

6.7 Committees: linking identity and identification

Mauritania massive biometric enrolment exercise—justified as a comprehensive view of population—has neither been the exclusive privy of the field of security nor as universal as its purposes might suggest. Instead, the determination of eligibility to enrol has been adjudicated by committees composed of local notables and members of the security forces. In this case, committees are an essential part of the story of biometrics in Mauritania because they undermine the pursuit of frictionless governance advanced by the proponents of biometrics. While the bulk of this chapter has insisted on the use of biometric technologies for legibility, and the general enhancement of the state's ability to see and filter, it is crucial to note that many state practices undermine this pursuit. The view in work such as Torpey's (2000) work on identification, or Scott's (1998) own work on legibility, is that the state thrives on grand identification projects. Here the state has a desire or at least an interest to make populations legible or recorded. However some such as Keith Breckenridge downplay the existence of a "compelling desire for comprehensive and universal information" (2014: 24) on the part of African states, arguing that governments in Africa have generally tended to be marked by the absence of such as 'will to know'. Herbst (2000) echoes this sentiment, arguing that "African states, unlike those in Europe, do not face a set of immediate security challenges that make tying the population to the political center a necessity" (2000: 239). In the context of Senegal and Mauritania, it seems more accurate to say that although the biometric doxa is readily accepted at the upper echelons of the security field, these technologies tend to produce illegibility due to differing professional imperatives and the local negotiation of identity.

⁸⁴ Interview with IOM border management expert, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013.

Mauritania's demographic composition and history have made biometric enrolment, and the determination of who belongs, a fraught process. The country is home to three main population groups whose boundaries, although obviously fluid and contested, are relatively identifiable. The first is an 'Arabo-Berber' group composed of a variety of light-skinned Arabs, descended from Berber and Arab populations. The second group are the Haratin, a mainly black population of current and former slaves, who have largely been linguistically and culturally 'Arabized' through their roles as domestic workers, or farm workers (and slaves). The third group, mainly in the south of the country, is deemed the 'Negro-Mauritanian' segment of the population, who are less likely to speak Arabic and largely composed of sub-Saharan African ethnic groups such as the Peul (Fulani nomads), Wolof, Soninké, and Bambara, largely found in either of neighbouring Senegal or Mali. Given the artifices that are colonial borders, like that along the Senegal River that separates Senegal and Mauritania, these populations have been thrust into a multi-ethnic state. The governance of this multi-ethnic state is highly contested and ethnicity (as well as clan belonging) shapes political decisions in Mauritania to varying degrees, from police promotions to presidential politics to the language of education. While not directly causal to the security field, a racial construction of authority favouring Arabo-Berber populations has tended to prevail at the intersection of north and sub-Saharan Africa (Hall 2011: 34-69). While colour, ethnicity, and race do not overlap neatly in Mauritania (or anywhere else for that matter), demographic politics *a priori* make any population enumeration or registration exercise fraught with difficulties. Given these elements of Mauritania's social and political context, the biometric enrolment exercise was bound to be faced with difficulties related to race relations.

Borderwork is a set of practices aiming to answer the question 'who belongs and who does not?', and in Mauritania's biometric census enrolment committees have played a key role in answering it. This structuring of the biometric registration process exposes applicants to a great deal of discretionary power as in each enrolment centre—which are officially called citizen welcome centres (*Centres d'Accueil des Citoyens*)—enrolment commissions have the final say over who is registered or not. According to ministerial decision 937/MIDEC (Ministère de l'Intérieur 2011), these commissions are composed of the following officials:

- The local hakem (equivalent to a French prefect) acting as committee president
- A vice-president who is a representative of the territorial administration (*wilaya* or region)
- A representative of the gendarmerie
- A representative of the national police
- A representative of the national guard
- A municipal councillor
- A representative from the ANRPTS

As such, these commissions have a strong presence from the law enforcement community but also formal (and *ad hoc*) involvement of local notables, and deliberations of these committees can legally be undertaken behind closed doors.

Mauritania's enrolment commissions reveal the disaggregation of state power, whereby the orders from the strategy-making heights of the state to enrol everyone (as reflected in the PRSP document) clash with the discretionary power of local recognition. In some cases put differently, the importance of giving everyone *identification* comes up against the fact that *identity* is locally mediated and recognized. The shadow of November 1989, during which thousands of black Mauritians were expelled towards Senegal and Mali, looms over the enrolment process along with the country's ever-present demographic concerns. According to my interviews with Mauritians who have been denied enrolment—all of whom were black Mauritians—common unofficial tests have included being asked to recite portions of the Quran, quizzed of their knowledge of the Hassaniya language,⁸⁵ being asked about specific notables from their area, and being questioned about their knowledge of local geography. Although some of these questions could be justified as asking candidates to prove local knowledge, others testify to the desire to exclude from the enrolment any citizens who are perceived as not performing or embodying national or local belonging.

A central paradox in this enrolment process, launched to supersede a supposedly unreliable national identity structure, is that paper documents from Mauritania's 1998 census have often been required to show this 'local belonging', and that relatives (rather than one's biometrics alone) are often required to vouch for applicants' local ties.⁸⁶ This local approach had been lauded at launch by the Morpho program head as a way that Morpho had respected the Mauritanian government's wishes by "adjusting the system to the local culture, which calls on its more senior members to corroborate a citizen's identity" (Morpho 2010). This deference has exacerbated the potential for the type of administrative discretion that facilitates discrimination. The Mauritanian human rights association, the *Association Mauritanienne des Droits de l'Homme* (AMDH), identified some key concerns with enrolment in the city of Kaédi, noting that: errors in peoples' names often prevent enrolment; people from villages around the city are rejected for being 'unknown' even if their parents are already in the biometric system; and some who enrol never receive their confirmation 'receipt' which is crucial for job applications (AMDH 2012). The meeting of a global biometric norm centred on security and efficiency with a local norm based on intersubjective identification

⁸⁵ It is worth noting the similarity between these practices and the policing interview methods used to determine national origin of irregular migrants in the Canary Islands, discussed in Chapter 4. Both operate according to the social determinants of identity, in the absence of a document deemed a final proof of identity.

⁸⁶ Interview with professor at the Université de Nouakchott, Nouakchott, 11 June 2013.

undermines the belief held at the high echelons of the security apparatus: that biometric technologies can be both inclusive and a technology of security. Many of the glitches, paradoxes and institutional setups above have been catalysts for popular resistance articulated through the desire to be enrolled in a security technology.

6.8 The uncounted: citizens' demands for inclusion

The state's production of illegibility operates at once as a side effect of its disaggregated nature, but also as a borderwork strategy of inclusion and exclusion. In this vein, the *uncounted* are constitutive of the state's uneven production of legibility. The *assemblage* metaphor remains a useful thinking tool: while we can use Bourdieu's work to think about the knowledge claims of security professionals, and how biometrics help advance/hold back their agendas, when we look beyond the field of security we see the radically excluded actors that call for new forms of politics and a break from existing distributions of power.

In Mauritania, controversies over counting have disproportionately fallen on black citizens. This is partly because calls for the biometric census were often founded on the need to 'clean up' the country's system. The view of a Mauritania that is 'too full' is largely attributed to anecdotes about Senegalese people crossing into Mauritania to benefit from the country's supposedly lax 1998 census, and finds assurance in the level of attention given by the government as well as European countries to their country since 2006, which has stressed the country's position as a haven for transit migrants. In a context in which the whole state's ID system is considered to be in need of a 'purge' or a *refonte* (renewal), there is pressure to exclude rather than enrol. In response to the impact of the census, a movement called *Touche pas à ma nationalité* ('Don't touch my nationality') is actively monitoring and contesting the ongoing process. The group's coordinator, Abdoul Birane Wane, has been featured in a number of local and international publications and the group has used local and national extensively to advance its cause, evoking a racist campaign by the Mauritanian state against its black citizens.

The biometric registration process in Mauritania reached the peak of its contestation in September 2011. In terms of strategy TPMN has made extensive use of public sit-ins, many of which have been put down by police for being illegal demonstrations. Clashes between police and protesters—many from TPMN—across the country in September 2011 resulted in one death in the town of Maghama in the south of the country and extensive damage to public buildings and a market (France24 2011). While the TPMN movement has attributed the trouble to reaction against a racist census, figures in the state such as the president of the Senate—himself a black Mauritanian—have said that a lack of information

is at the heart of the protests (Magharebia 2011). In the southern city of Kaédi, where TPMN's contestation was most violently put down, one protester was killed and dozens of others injured in clashes with riot police on 25-26 September 2011 (Fédération Internationale des Droits de L'Homme 2011: 15). In October 2011, the Mauritanian government deported seven foreigners who had taken part in demonstrations against the enrolment back to Senegal, Mali and Guinea (Bloomberg News 2011). The demand to be counted has not been without risks, and TPMN have relied on a strategy of making demands in public and in as visible a way as possible.

TPMN's resistance to the enrolment opposes the method of the enrolment in practice, but not biometric enrolment in principle. Rather than radically opposing biometrics or the identification of citizens, it simply calls for a more "objective" assessment of the population.⁸⁷ This aspect of the TPMN movement illustrates just how resistance to biometrics need not necessarily challenge the essential functioning of the technology itself. On the contrary, the claims TPMN articulated during interviews were consistent with a view that the enrolment should be *done better* rather than reversed. What is most striking about TPMN is therefore the articulation of state that they put forward. Rather than question the very basis of the state's authority to make legible, they question those in whose hands the machinery of state rests, claiming that a fairer distribution of power might restore the procedural justice they deserve as citizens. While at first glance it might seem like TPMN are merely reaffirming the state's power and reconfirming a statist view of identity, they should be seen as radically challenging key tenets of the 'biometric doxa', which holds that biometrics are a technological and technocratic solution and obscures their fundamentally political border-making work.

6.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that existing approaches to biometric technologies in the global south have not sufficiently addressed the practical element of their rollout, and more specifically the global-local knowledge movement which animates it. Early in the chapter, I argued that we are witnessing the emergence of a biometric 'doxa', or a practical knowledge, which establishes digital biometrics as a practical solution to the implementation of polysemic borders and to the buttressing of the state's ability to make populations legible. I then argued that airports are sites in which the implementation of biometrics as a form of connection to global security norms is clearly visible. Beyond this, I argued that visas show the doxic power of biometrics in the security field, and highlighted the role that data plays as a focus of state strategy but also as a point of contention in local security fields. Turning to the structures in which biometric data is

⁸⁷ Interview with TPMN staff in Nouakchott, 13 June 2013.

processed, I argued that that failures and resistances to biometrics come from the technical glitches of these modular system as well as the professional struggles over data as a source of symbolic capital in the security field. Broadening beyond the security field alone, I then argued that the disjuncture of identity and identification is powerfully evidenced by the role of enrolment committees in Mauritania, whose emphasis on local belonging contrasts sharply with the claims of universality and efficiency that the biometric ‘state of mind’ might suggest. The chapter concluded with an examination of resistance to Mauritania’s massive biometric enrolment project, arguing that the agency of the ‘uncounted’ demands radical inclusion and contest’s the state’s selective pursuit of legibility. In the next and final chapter, I re-examine the main theoretical and empirical contributions of this dissertation.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Summary of the thesis

Borders are not just lines demarcating where national territory begins and ends. They are the vibrant social institutions and technical spaces in which decisions about inside and outside, about belonging and exclusion, are made. This dissertation has argued that border security in West Africa is undertaken by a transnational and heterogeneous set of actors whose interactions testify to the competing knowledges about what border security problems are and how to address them. Arguing that borders are heterogeneous order-making devices, the dissertation has provided a critical mapping of actors involved in what it has called *borderwork*: the labour of constructing and performing borders. Building on this idea, the dissertation has sought to find out how this enactment of borders relies on knowledge about how to secure borders, and more specifically how this security knowledge has emerged, been adopted, and moved between different international contexts. This dissertation has drawn on research examining border management practices in West Africa, specifically in Senegal and Mauritania, to give empirical context to claims about the organization and knowledge politics around border security. In doing so, this dissertation has found that key projects — transnational interventions to control migration, the construction of border posts to stop terrorism, and the adoption of digital biometric identification projects — all show the disaggregation of who ‘secures’ borders but also the circulation of forms of security knowledge across overlapping fields of practice.

This dissertation has been focused around three key issues: the construction of borders, the nature and mobility of security knowledge(s), and the relations in and between fields of security in Senegal, Mauritania and beyond. The spur for this project has been the observation of a growing importance of ‘border management’ in the practices and discourses of security actors in the West African context. ‘Border management’ is not only concerned with the policing of the territorial line, but also with controlling migrant pathways to Europe, confronting a perceived threat of terrorism and smuggling in the Sahel-Sahara zone, and securing national identity documents. This research has emerged from a broader interest in the practices states use to negotiate difference through sovereign practices at borders, as well as an interest in relations that show the disassembly of the state amidst targeted forms of international intervention: international organizations directly targeting sub-state elements of countries in the global south, corporate actors’ relationships to arms-length states agencies, or competition between sections of the same country’s security services.

The first ‘project’ of the dissertation, in posing the question of who controls borders in West Africa, has theorized the *enactment of borders* and provided the beginnings of an empirical mapping of this practice in the West African context.

This has involved grouping and synthesizing the literature on borders, and out of that, adding a novel conception of borderwork foregrounding the role of materiality and the heterogeneity of actors. In order to carry out a mapping of ‘who does the borderwork’, we need to have the right lens and be attuned to the right factors. The second task this dissertation has set itself has been to provide a theorization of *security knowledge* that takes into account its mobility and its mutability. Building on the idea that security is a knowledge-driven process, rather than a moment or event, this dissertation has focused on knowledge politics as a means of showing the stakes of border control in West Africa. The third element of this dissertation has been an empirical contribution to our understanding of the security politics of — and global governance in — Senegal and Mauritania. By drawing from interviews and participant observation with security officials from law enforcement and military backgrounds, as well as diplomats, smugglers, and bureaucrats, this dissertation has provided a window into the ways that actors understand their borderwork and their relationships to each other. The research carried for this project has primarily sought, through interviews and participant observation, to provide an account of the ‘everyday’ of border control in practice. That is to say that the project sought evidence primarily through the self-understandings and discourses of the actors involved. This, in turn, has provided a window into the relationships that segments of African states have built and maintained with European states and international organizations.

This dissertation has not sought to provide simple answers to the research questions, about borders and security knowledge, and the responses to the questions posed have been answered as much through theory development as through ‘evidence’ gathered from fieldwork. The conditions and results of my access to interlocutors necessarily mediated the image of borderwork provided in the present work. However, a number of relatively stable assertions can be made, which will be discussed in more detail the sections below. In sum, however, a number of conclusions can be drawn. First, borders in West Africa are not just remnants of the colonial era, but dense institutions in which struggles over how to define borders (and their governance) happen. Second, given the importance of transnational cooperation, the intersection of various fields of practice (police, development workers, bureaucrats) is intensified and globalized. Third, these intersections are evidenced by a number of factors, such as technology transfers or workshops, and are spaces in which knowledge contestation occurs. Fourth, these knowledge dynamics, in turn, reflect changes in global governance of security such as the growing role of paramilitary police forces, the internationalization of EU security policy, the privileging of technical expertise, and the emergence of border security as a key site where state security and development meet.

This rest of this conclusion summarizes this dissertation’s main arguments, paying particular attention to the specific contributions made throughout. It revisits ‘borderwork’, assessing how well the concept has withstood the test of empirical

examination. The section that follows it assesses the importance of knowledge to security politics and the role of intersections of professional fields. The penultimate section assesses the social relations shown in this dissertation, with emphasis on the presence of power disparities and the possibility for agency. The final section of the conclusion describes the avenues for research opened up by this dissertation, on the study of regional information-sharing tools, international organizations, and transnational security politics on the African continent.

7.2 Borderwork redux

This dissertation's use of *borderwork* developed a theoretical framework attuned to the spatial, organizational, material, and political dimension of borders. Why 'borderwork'? The term understands the 'border' as an institution as well as a form of repeated performance or process. The *-work* refers to the performances and constructions (material and epistemic) borders require to be sustained. The term is also intended to democratize the way we understand the construction of borders, including actors beyond the security field (such as irregular migrants who cross them) and pulling in a range of practices that happen far from the border line which nonetheless shape how inclusion and exclusion are determined (such as the creation of algorithms for biometric screening).

This dissertation has contributed a theorization of borders as *sociotechnical* spaces unmoored from territorial references and increasingly technicalized. Borders are social insofar as they are constructed and performed by actors of various kinds, including professionals of security who bring knowledge and expertise to bear on them. Borders are also technical, however, as their enactment is reliant on non-human materials which interact with social elements. To describe this range of actors, this dissertation has used the term 'assemblage' to capture the heterogeneity and unpredictability of social connections while still acknowledging that what is 'assembled' includes relatively identifiable and stable fields of social practice. The use of 'assemblage' to regroup a Bourdieusian sociology of fields with actor-network theory's emphasis on material agency might seem puzzling, given the large difference in the assumptions underlying each view. However, this juxtaposition has allowed this dissertation to focus on the heterogeneity of who does borderwork, how different fields of practice overlap, in what ways the state is disassembled, and how different social relations wax and wane. The emphasis on the non-human in the dissertation, while drawn from a Latourian vein, should not denote a complete rejection of the Bourdieusian focus on social fields and their limits. Rather, it is a plea to broaden what constitutes a social field and expands the evidence that can be deployed to show the stakes and struggles that exist in them. This approach has paid dividends throughout the dissertation, which has used key material elements as sites of analysis — and narrative devices — in each of the empirical chapters.

Rather than look at African borders through the lens of the artificiality of colonial frontiers, or a focus on ethnic borderlands, this dissertation has mapped the institutional topography, transnational in nature, of the actors that do borderwork in the West African context. Of course, it has not been an exhaustive exposition, but rather a the beginnings of one, intended to show the relative ‘dimensions’ and composition of what happens in the institutional space of the border. The focus on institutions and quotidian practice in African border security has built on contributions such as Chalfin’s (2010), but focused on the *patchwork* of different agencies rather than on deep work in a single one. A diverse range of actors and practices has been identified ranging from the IOM’s promotion of border management training, the EU’s funding for migration control strategies, the ICAO’s agenda-setting on identity management, or diplomats’ positions as negotiators of quotidian security cooperation. While this has been a novel view of the institutional topography of border management itself, it has allowed a more complete picture of the approaches to border control that each actor competes for and transmits, which in turn illustrates the politics at play in the buttressing of sovereignty through border control in West Africa.

7.3 Understanding security knowledge

This dissertation has concerned itself with giving an account of the actors involved in shoring up border control in West Africa, but also with the visions of security (and how it is achieved) they bring to the table. Indeed, one of the main ‘theses’ about borderwork in Chapter 2 related to the cultural nature of border control. This was no attempt to try to reduce borders to some essentialized natural or ethnic culture, but rather a reflection of the fact that security is not a neutral practice. To make these claims, the dissertation has given an account of security as a form of practice, defining it as constituted by the activities and interactions of professionals in fields of security. Chapter 2 defined borderwork as an ‘order-making activity’, and Chapter 3 defined security as the particular *type* of order-making: reinforcing sovereignty and enacted by security professionals. The question ‘what subtends the security practices around borders in West Africa?’ is therefore one about the relationship between security as a practice of sovereign power and knowledge as the epistemic basis shaping how and why security happens.

This conception of security as not a moment or an event, and not always be aimed to a public audience, has meant focusing attention on the ‘micro’ factors of how actors go about setting the agenda and shaping practices that define inclusion and exclusion. This focus on the routinization of security practice, in which threats are seen as determined bureaucratically or with reference to actors’ histories and career trajectories, has helped to bring new modes of security governance into relief whether these are the importance of memoranda of understanding (Chapter 4) or the role of institutional jostling over data ownership (Chapter 5).

Investigating these provides a polyphonic account of the enactment of security, but still locates the urge to ‘secure’ as firmly on the side of sovereign power.

The combination of assemblage and ‘field’ has provided the framework for an analysis of the mobility and mutability of knowledge about security, and for using the movement of knowledge between ‘sites’ of the international to investigate the way security relationships are justified. This dissertation has been based on the assumption that if knowledge is produced in part endogenously from the interactions and histories of actors in a particular field (i.e. their doxa), then it is likely that knowledge transmission is going to be most evidenced where these fields meet within a particular assemblage. Therefore border knowledge’s content, mobility, and mutability is largely determined by the nature and connections between of fields of security. A clear example of this is in the case of police cooperation, which is brought about the increasingly outward-facing role of European security services (as evidenced by the role of the Guardia Civil in Senegal and Mauritania) but also an international orientation of segments of security fields in West Africa. In some cases, actors have been receptive to approaches from outside their comfort zone due to institutional similarities with global interveners, while in others knowledge has moved through pedagogical practices such as workshops and the influence of trade publications.

The openness to material agency afforded by a focus on ‘objects’ has allowed us to see the way that knowledge can move across security fields through non-human agency. Objects are crucial due in part to the knowledge relations they either mediate or represent. As Chapter 5 argued, taking the ‘non-human’ as serious players in security relations does not mean making them human, but rather accounting for their place as objects of struggle, definers of path dependencies, and points that show us relations around them. Examples of this have arisen throughout the dissertation, such as the analysis of small tokens such as in Chapter 4, in which decorations, pins and certificates show plays for symbolic capital or illustrate differing self-perceptions at each end of the security field. In Chapter 5, the border posts were sites of struggle for self-promotion but also physical infrastructures inculcating a Westphalian approach to defending the border. In each of these cases, objects represent a knowledge or actively transmit a whole set of understandings of sovereignty.

The focus on knowledge transmission has in turn contributed to our understanding of the interface between security and development. Rather than thinking in terms of a fusion of two distinct worlds, the argument has instead been that security practices — whether involving international intervention or not — can be thought of straddling care and control. Even though security involves the use of sovereign power to draw limits and determine inclusion and exclusion, and the use of coercive force, these are occasionally justified in terms of state capacity (e.g. border posts) or even through humanitarian framings (e.g. joint sea patrols). This

raises the question of ‘governance’, more specifically in relation to international cooperation practices such as capacity-building, mentorship, and joint patrols, where the power inequalities between north and south raise legitimate questions about whether such relations are truly equal.

7.4 Politics and resistance

My research process throughout this thesis — investigating the social relations that drive borderwork — has continually raised conflicting answers to the question of what the politics of borderwork might be. The answers are, frustratingly, not as straightforward as the north-south encounters described might suggest. Statebuilding practices always contain the seeds of local agency, global and local are not always what (or where) they seem to be, relations are not colonial but still marked by ‘coloniality’, and there is always room for resistance even if it comes from unlikely places.

The term ‘statebuilding’ has in this dissertation stood in for intervention on a state’s ability to see and control, its will to follow specific modes of state behaviour, and its technological modernity. The states considered in this dissertation are not ‘failed’ or emerging from conflict, but they are considered either ‘weak’ or having lower capacity to effectively govern their borders. There is, therefore, a state structure in place to accept or resist attempts to impose a particular vision of statehood. As Antil and Touati (2011) argue in Mauritania’s case, it is not a failed state but simply one whose material capacity to mimic the sovereign power typical of ‘Westphalian’ states has not, from the time of independence in 1960, matched its legal sovereignty. This mismatch between *de facto* sovereignty and its *de jure* counterpart is precisely the space in which border control intervention operates: such intervention is a transmission of cognitive categories of how a state should function, but also operates within a framework of formal equality. However the question has not always been about capacity but also of acting on *will*. It is fundamentally through this that ideas about ‘mentalities’ and the need for ‘change in culture’ are prevalent in the security field. Relations are therefore not colonial, but rather marked by *coloniality*. This mode of relations is defined not by deliberate quests for territorial control or direct political authority, but is exemplified by “long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations” (Maldonado-Torres 2007: 243). This is borne out by the continuing dominance of French security cooperation in Senegal and Mauritania and even by the preservation of colonial structures and remit in the police and gendarmeries of francophone Africa.

The pedagogical element of borderwork, theorized in Chapter 3, has been the source of the clearest relations of domination. The language and logics of

mentorship (e.g. the workshops discussed in Chapter 5) and the supervisory relationship inherent to joint patrols (in Chapter 4) both bear this out. However, domination is subtle and relies on harnessing the freedom of the intervened actor. In the epistemic sense, a useful distinction is the one Graham Harrison (2001: 659) makes in the context of donor-recipient relationships in Africa, between the coercive imposition of ‘doctrine’ on one side, and the collaborative adoption of a common ‘ideology’ on the other. While his point is made to describe a ‘post-conditionality’ period in the world of aid, it applies equally to border security ‘cooperation’ practices where outright coercion is replaced by a shared common agenda. This shared agenda is still largely set by European states, even if African security forces find material and reputational benefits (new gear, or prestigious training) from participation. Ruben Andersson neatly describes this in the context of Spanish-African cooperation on migration management, calling it a “subcontracting machine” operated by African forces yet claimed as a success by Spanish police (Andersson 2014: 122). This insight echoes my own research detailed in Chapter 4 and summarizes the illusion of provided by the cover of formal, post-colonial equality.

The structure of the local fields of security I researched suggested that global and local are difficult too difficult to pinpoint with enough certainty to identify a clear relationship of continual domination, or without risking fetishizing the global and parochializing the local. Participants at the meeting of two fields of hold different levels of prestige depending on national origin and bureaucratic position, even though they may occupy identical functional roles in their national police structures. Similarly, there may exist within a single field two distinct ‘worlds’ or ‘tracks’ of the security professionals where whose authority counts may be dependent on their framing as either global or local. This is akin to what, in the context of peacebuilding interventions, Autesserre (2014) refers to as a continual tension between local knowledge and technical expertise, which sit in a relationship of competition, with the former being in a disadvantaged position of authority. However, in some cases, intervening actors from ostensibly ‘global’ backgrounds (e.g. EU or IOM) were seemingly more ‘local’, not least due to their distance from their organization’s central control. Similarly, many ‘local’ actors successfully claimed the mantle of technical expertise in ‘global’ fora. This impossibility of placing these levels on a hierarchy should be a brake on attempts to label border security cooperation as colonial or smoothly dominant.

The politics of borderwork is complicated by the fact that agency arises in unexpected places. In some cases, lack of local interest defeats interventions (e.g. Mauritanian indifference at 4x4 donations) and we should not underestimate the importance of African agency. More specifically, the mere success of a particular intervention may only be feasible once all sides stand to gain, whether it is as a form of opportunistic rent-seeking behaviour or ‘extraversion’ (Bayart 2000) in the service of ‘extraction’ (Tilly 1985) for statebuilding. Similarly, African

security officials willingly partake in meetings of fields such as the Euro-African police conference. Even though the conference's existence is partly due to EU agenda-setting through the Rabat Process, participation in it is a source of some prestige that is freely made. Resistance also appears in refusal and foot-dragging — failures to uphold one side of a bargain of sorts — as evidenced by Senegal's refusal to negotiate with the EU on a mobility partnership in which the country felt it had more to lose than to gain. Beyond local resistance, there is local initiative, and this is another major brake on any decision to call this a neocolonial or entirely dominating form of security relationship. For example, security cooperation takes place south-south (see Chapter 4) and the adoption of biometrics in West African states is very much a function of initiatives on the part of states themselves.

Finally, some of the idiosyncrasies of my research process suggest that the reality is too disorganized and disaggregated to be 'neocolonial'. The image of the field given here was heavily dependent on my own research trajectory, and by definition has exposed the impossibility of calling this an 'objective' mapping of actors. Even if relations were neocolonial, I did not have a totalizing view of the field and neither did most of the actors I spoke to. If there are any imperial effects of statebuilding, they are certainly not the result of a coordinated and totalizing plan. Instead, there are moments of domination that tilt the balance towards a general power imbalance. In other ways, intervention is such a light touch that there are often only one or two representatives of a given organization 'on the ground' to speak to. This closes one door by making the work of triangulating interview accounts difficult, but opens another by highlighting how little investment and attention projects get.

7.5 Further research avenues

This dissertation has undertaken theory development and empirical exposition, and in doing so provides the tools for framing new research on borders and security. One of its major contributions has been developing the view of African borders as institutional spaces of political struggle featuring both global and local actors. This opens up avenues for research on the organizational and bureaucratic politics of border security policies. Another contribution in this dissertation has been a theorization of the mobility of security knowledges with particular attention to the role of statebuilding logics.

The focus on information and communication technologies (ICT) afforded by a perspective attuned to 'actants' opens the door for a more sustained examination of the role of ICTs in the security field in West Africa. For example, the West Africa Police Information System (WAPIS) information-sharing platform has been piloted by the EuropeAid, Interpol, and ECOWAS in Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Benin, and Ghana. This system will allow countries in the region to share

and analyze criminal information regionally and connect to global databases. Further research into this system can tell us more about state strategies that emerge in the pursuit of informational control, but also raise the question of what the bureaucratic reactions to it have been and might be. As with any change in the nature of police work, it is likely to be met in similar ways as biometrics were shown to be in Chapter 6: an enthusiasm for technological solutions which do not capture the vast unregistered or informal policing interactions. The focus on the normative elements of border-making in this dissertation has also opened up the possibility to ask questions pertaining to the origins of such systems. In the case of WAPIS, it would be fruitful to interrogate commonalities with the EU's Schengen Information System, particularly in light of regional moves in West Africa for a common biometric visa and ID card similar to those in the European integration project. The similarities to the European experience allow us to ask questions about how and why implementations differ, and what it tells us about the international relations of African security agencies.

Relatedly, the focus on multi-level governance in this thesis, and more specifically the assemblage approach to mapping actors and their roles, has opened up avenues for research on the interplay of international organizations in the governance of global mobilities. For instance, the vast majority of border management work remains project-based, and increasingly brings together a diverse range of international agencies. These agencies in turn bring different framings of expertise and local knowledge, against which it would be productive to ask how the global/local split is performed and whether it crosscuts agencies or individuals. This could be coupled with a deeper examination of the personal and career trajectories of individuals working in international organizations such as the IOM, ICAO, or UNODC. In the African context more specifically, there are often few staff assigned to particular projects, thus making their previous experience and ability to foster local relationships crucial to the tone and success of the projects they run. This, in turn, might depend on research shining light on the recruitment practices of organizations such as the ICMPD and provide a deeper genealogy of the cultures of border control we see in African border management.

Finally, this dissertation has opened up lines of inquiry pertinent to an analysis of military relationships in Africa. Much of the work discussed in this project has related to 'policebuilding' practices, largely leaving out consideration of the emerging international positionings taken on by African military forces. The French role in military-building in West Africa is longstanding, but the consequences of American involvement (through annual regional military exercises) and Spanish training practices (in Niger and Mali) have not been explored in depth. While it is likely that the knowledge politics in these cases might mirror some of what this dissertation found, the different technologies (e.g.

drones) and policy structures are likely to lead to outcomes that reveal new insights about the internationalization of security fields in West Africa.

7.6 Conclusion

This dissertation has contributed to our understanding of how borders work, and the social and technical relationships that drive them. Coming from an interest in African politics and security, this dissertation has provided a view into the fields of security that animate the functioning of borders in Senegal and Mauritania, with particular emphasis on police cooperation practices, the construction of border infrastructure, and the use of registration practices. Bringing each of these under the rubric of ‘borderwork’, this dissertation highlighted the mobility of knowledge about border security as a determining factor in how this practice unfolds in everyday practice. The stakes of this research have also been critical and explicitly interested in the politics of borderwork, using this concept to highlight actors from outside the security field who reframe or challenge security-centered framings of borders and citizenship. Mapping the epistemic and material topology of actors, practices, and knowledges of has exposed the limits of our ontology of borders, creative understandings of borders, or even their dissolution. This dissertation has demonstrated at once the shoring up of sovereignty at borders, through which terms like ‘border management’ foreclose new possibilities, but also the ways actors of various kinds reframe or challenge border security.

8 List of references

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9 List of interviews

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4. Head of Frontex cooperation, Marine Nationale du Sénégal, Dakar, 30 June 2013 (footnotes 6, 11, 24)
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