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 (2011–2013), Mauritania

A Study of Borderwork and Security in West Africa

Borders are anxious places. In West Africa, and particularly in the Sahel, these anxieties crystallize around supposedly weak states with

porous borders, factors which we are told provide safe haven for terrorism, facilitate migrant smuggling and trafficking, and lead to weak governments that neither know nor control their mobile populations. As global fears around these cross-border threats increasingly shape West African security agendas, a variety of corollary security practices have gained prominence. Transnational forms of intervention, involving global as well as local actors, have sought to reinforce security provision in the Sahel zone – traditionally one of various flows of goods and people – and make it better legible to the security imperatives of Western states and also of post-colonial states in the region. The former seek assurances about migration and fear the mobility of terrorism and drugs from the south, while the latter prioritize the reinforcement of their security apparatus and welcome external investment in it. This book looks beyond costly and headline-grabbing military interventions to examine the raft of practices such as hardened migration control, biometric citizen identification, reinforced airport security, capacity-building and training of police forces, and a greater emphasis on migration management policy. These security practices have been extensively documented and debated in their European and North American contexts, particularly since 9/11. Yet there is a dearth of analysis of African cases and histories despite the rapid and unique proliferation of such security practices around borders, migration, and identification. In Mauritania and Senegal, the focal countries for this book, practices of border security take the form of police cooperation around irregular migration, the reinforcement of infrastructures such as border posts, and the deployment of new digital forms of identification and border screening. As post-colonial states continually seeking better knowledge of and authority over their territory and population, they are increasingly turning towards new security technologies and transnational relationships that blur the lines among policing, border security, diplomacy, and development. Contemporary border security in West Africa is so much more than patrolling a line in the sand.

What is at stake when Spain decides to help Senegal patrol its maritime borders? What effects do new identification technologies have on the role of the state's various security agencies? How does European Union (EU)-funded construction of border posts tie in to the development of state sovereignty in Mauritania? Answering these questions requires us to pay close attention to the increasingly transnational

governance of security in West Africa. This book builds on the critique made by Hameiri and Jones (2013) that security studies has not taken trans-boundary threats seriously, noting that 'as the identified range of threats and risks has widened, so have the actors and instruments tasked with managing them' (3). This book investigates a wide range of actors and tools, from beyond the world of security in many cases, who pursue security with the broad aim of assuring what Scott (1998) calls legibility – the idea of better knowing, seeing, mapping, and controlling nature and society. In what ways do West African states pursue this legibility? What kinds of actors, practices, knowledges, discourses, and objects are implicated in this pursuit? Tackling these questions and more, this book investigates the everyday practices behind new border security practices and relations adopted by states in West Africa. Its main argument is that we should understand border security in West Africa as a social and technical practice underpinned by the pursuit of state capacity. The book argues that the technocratic practices of African and international security professionals, often working together, show the role of knowledge and technology transmission in the reshaping of state structures in West Africa.

Examining border security in West Africa more closely is significant for four key reasons. First, it highlights the nature of borders as heterogeneous spaces that are policed well within and 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 includes migrant interception patrols at the territorial border as much as the biometric enrolment of populations elsewhere. Focusing on borderwork in West 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, these practices of border security 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 policies are implemented in practice, and how practices of border control in sub-Saharan Africa have stimulated the formation of new transnational military and police relations. The research avoids attributing excessive smoothness to security and showcases the material underpinnings 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, border security in West Africa incarnates and sometimes transmits 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 underpinnings of security. Security practices are transmitted through the circulation of best practices: the adoption of biometric technology, for example, draws on a desire for integration (at a regulatory level) and emulation (at a normative level). Fourth, relationships in border security point to a broader rapprochement between security and the re-articulation of state authority. Capacities to enact surveillance are 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, where border security practices lead to new clusters of authority and expertise. This focus on the interface of security and technical forms of statebuilding also points us to a renewed focus more on the technical, small-scale, and bureaucratic forms of security in Africa that go beyond conflict yet remain within the realm of security: advising, training, piloting, equipping, and reforming in the security sector.

This book is focused around three cases developed in Part II. None of these cases is a rigidly bounded case study, as each of them tackles a cluster of projects and forms of cooperation that are truly transnational and interlinked. The first case relates to one of the least studied European border security interventions in Africa, off the coasts of Senegal and Mauritania. While this case is commonly seen as part of the 'externalization' of the EU's frontiers in the name of deterrence, the chapter emphasizes the new and often enduring security institutions and relations that emerged in response to the spike in migration to the Canary Islands in the late 2000s. While numbers of migrants wax and wane, a primarily Spanish-led police cooperation effort has intensified

and produced new technologies and practices. The second case captures an ongoing trend in the construction of new border infrastructures across West Africa and the Sahel, focusing on EU-funded efforts to rebuild Mauritania's border post infrastructures. With border security cooperation in the region focused on bringing states up to international standards, this case is focused on how such interventions align a multitude of external actors, shape the technological practices of local partners, and actively promote new forms of understanding borders and security. The third case in this book is focused on how seemingly peripheral technologies such as identification tools operate as border security tools through practices of airport security and registration systems. With a focus on visas, screening systems, passports, and national ID, this case focuses on the ways that technologies bear visions of modern and efficient bordering yet in doing so actively shape inclusion and exclusion.

The prompt to which each chapter in this book responds to is: 'What are the everyday security practices around borders in West Africa, and what underpins them?' This project is concerned with the governance of borders in practice but also the logics and technologies that underlie it. 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 two more specific questions, which are tackled in the two sections that follow this one.

Border Security Assemblages

A quick glance at the myriad border security projects in West Africa shows a wide range of actors involved, often with convoluted and conflicting mandates and priorities. Projects intended to curb migration may also include public sector financial management objectives, while development actors can find themselves as uneasy bedfellows with local police forces. My first major concern in this book is therefore to map out what actors enact border control in West Africa, and how we can theorize their relations, roles, and arrangements. The overarching question is 'Who are the actors involved in the transnational governance of borders in West Africa?' This question probes who does what, but first demands a definition of what the governance of borders actually is. While it is (relatively) easy to find out what agencies are

involved in border control in West Africa, it is much harder to identify who does what, with who else, why, and under what logics. This book's conceptual approach therefore begins with an institutional topography exercise, focused on the spatial and organizational arrangement of actors and their practices. Examining this governance 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.

This book is founded on a view that borders are not simply 'lines in the sand' – this much is clear to the traveller confronted with a checkpoint, to the migrant intercepted at sea, and to the bureaucrat organizing a border management workshop. Borders are not simply territorial demarcations, but sites of governance oriented around inclusion and exclusion, which are necessarily of selective permeability. In this book, I use 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* – routinized actions – of

actors. Borderwork, then, helps us to appreciate the very making and unmaking of borders.

The heterogeneous and disaggregated empirical terrain of border control in West Africa demands a re-articulation of how we theorize the organization and agency of border control actors. How can we understand a space in which the actors and technologies combine in such unexpected ways? To do so, this book draws on the concept of *assemblage*, which has emerged across the social sciences as a means of understanding the complexity of social and material relationships. There is a vast range of approaches to assemblage, each driven by specific philosophical assumptions and methodological commitments. This book holds that *assemblages emerge from the assembly and disassembly of social and technical components without a single dominant point of organization or direction. These forms of assembly are potentially transnational, can be durable, and can contain stronger sets of connections and alliances between particular elements*. This view of assemblage is drawn from and informed by a range of social science visions of this blending of the social and technical. It is influenced in part by work on actor-network theory (ANT) as well as perspectives on 'agencement' from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. ANT is not – as the name might suggest – a theory in the sense of a coherent explanatory set of propositions. Rather, it is a methodological approach and conceptual toolbox. Its origins lie in the sociology of scientific knowledge and in science and technology studies (STS), in work on the social construction of technology and more generally in the post-structuralist trend towards emphasizing 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. ANT's understanding of assemblage is itself unfixed, but most definitions stress heterogeneity, dispersed agency, and an emphasis on materiality.

Looking beyond the lab, we see that ideas of assemblage hold considerable promise for the analysis of international politics. In particular,

this sensibility has been helpful to point out the variable disassembly of the state and its multiple engagements with the international space (Sassen 2006). Drawing heavily from Sassen's view, Abrahamsen and Williams (2016) define assemblages as 'diverse hybrid structures that inhabit national settings but are stretched across national boundaries in terms of actors, knowledge, technologies, norms, and values' (251). The analytical focus on the politics of scale, heterogeneity, and practices of (dis)assembly helps to better understand the social and technical elements that make up the international. When applied to border control actors, the idea of assemblage 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 ANT 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. More specifically, this enables a specific focus on the often decisive role of technologies of border control that one encounters, from expanding police databases all way to faulty night-vision goggles. Each of these tells a story, and assemblage helps to link it to broader concerns about agency in the field of security. This project's approach to the *socio*-technical generates a concern with the mapping of actors' self-understandings, knowledges, perceptions, histories, and relations.

Security Culture and State Transformation

In addition to thinking of the place of border control actors in the international space, this book focuses on the knowledges that underpin their work and the ways they succeed and fail in transforming governance in African states. The second question on which this book centres are 'What are the logics through which borders have become sites of security intervention in Africa, and what impacts do these interventions have?' The question of 'logics' is fraught: it raises a further question about the relationship between ideology, practices, and norms. In this book the idea of logics works 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' justifies and 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.

The book therefore builds on the discursive view of security articulated by securitization theory and practice-oriented approaches 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. The term 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.

Establishing contending knowledges as a key element of security practice, this book turns to the question of how they move, given that transnational security practice brings together actors who may have radically different understandings of how border security should look. This book therefore thinks through the movement of 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 collection of transnational spaces between which objects and ideas can move with varying degrees of success. This mobility of security knowledge is in turn underpinned by practices of intervention that focus on statebuilding,

which often targets very specific parts of the state whilst excluding others. Global and local actors associate security 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.

Assessing the effects of border security intervention requires an attentiveness to state transformation. A major objective running through this book is to show the extent and limits of the state transformations achieved by border security interventions. With border security programmes continually associated with state capacity – by African and European actors alike – one might consider the reinforcement of borders to be a fundamentally political project of realigning state sovereignty towards a more complete Westphalian model. However, this book seeks a more granular approach to state transformation that questions whether international intervention is as influential as it seems in achieving wholesale reform of the state. Although the book finds that some programmes are very effective in terms of transmitting methods and approaches to security, many others are purely symbolic. Rather than focusing on spectacular or violent forms of intervention, this book focuses on the cultivation of new forms of governance within and beyond the state.

International Political Sociology as Research Method

The research underpinning this book is guided by an interdisciplinary international political sociology (IPS) approach, which draws on