



## *Security at the Borders*

Borders are not just lines in the sand but increasingly globalized spaces of practice. This is the case in West Africa, where a growing range of local and international officials are brought together by ambitious security projects around common anxieties. These projects include efforts to stop irregular migration by sea through international police cooperation, reinforcing infrastructures at border posts, and applying new digital tools to identify and track increasingly mobile citizens. These interventions are driven by global and local security agendas and by biometric passport rules as much as by competition between local security agencies. This book draws on the author's multi-sited ethnography in Mauritania and Senegal, showing how border security practices and technologies operate to build state security capacity, transform how state agencies work, and produce new forms of authority and expertise.

PHILIPPE M. FROWD is Assistant Professor in the School of Political Studies at the University of Ottawa. His primary research interest is in the transnational governance of security in West Africa's Sahel region, with an emphasis on interventions around irregular migration and border control. His research draws on ongoing fieldwork in West Africa, with his current work focusing on transit migration in Niger. Dr Frowd is a past winner of the Northedge Prize (2013), and his writing has appeared in *Security Dialogue* (2014), *Millennium* (2014), *International Political Sociology* (2017), and the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (2017).

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-47010-0 — Security at the Borders  
Philippe M. Frowd  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

# Security at the Borders

Transnational Practices and Technologies in  
West Africa

PHILIPPE M. FROWD  
*University of Ottawa*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-47010-0 — Security at the Borders  
Philippe M. Frowd  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

## CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,  
New Delhi - 110025, India  
79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108470100](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108470100)

DOI: 10.1017/9781108556095

© Philippe M. Frowd 2018

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2018

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

ISBN 978-1-108-47010-0 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

## Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> vi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	vii
1 Introduction	1
<b>Part I</b>	
2 Borderwork Assemblages in West Africa	23
3 Security Knowledge and the Politics of Intervention	53
<b>Part II</b>	
4 From Migration Crisis to <i>Cooperación</i>	87
5 Border Infrastructures and Statebuilding in Mauritania	118
6 Biometric Borderwork	142
7 Conclusion	177
<i>References</i>	193
<i>Index</i>	211

## *Figures*

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 2.1 A border post in southern Mauritania, inaugurated in 2016.   | <i>page 33</i> |
| 3.1 Mauritanian security officials receiving IOM training on border and migration management.  | 73             |
| 5.1 A meeting in Nouakchott marking the donation of border and migration management equipment to the Mauritanian government by the EU. | 137            |

## *Acknowledgements*

This work would not have been possible without the belief, encouragement, investment, and sacrifice of colleagues, friends, and family.

I would not have had the peace of mind, travel funding and free research time that enabled this book to become a reality without the financial support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Government of Ontario, Privacy International, and McMaster University's Institute on Globalization and the Human Condition. The fieldwork I carried out for this book also depended on the goodwill and patience of key contacts. For my fieldwork in Mauritania, I would like to thank Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, Saleh Cheikh, Amadou Sall, Cheikh Saad Bouh Camara, Mohamedou Moktar, and Martin Ewi. In Senegal, the help of Ababacar Diop, Abdoulaye Niang, Koli Ndiaye Cisse, and Fallou Kebe was essential. I am also greatly indebted to all of my interlocutors for having shared their stories with me.

I am particularly thankful for the immense intellectual and personal support I have received from academic mentors and colleagues. Peter Nyers's composed assurance and belief in my project from the very start helped me to confidently develop the ideas that underpin this book. It was a privilege to count on the advice and support of J. Marshall Beier and Diane Enns during my time at McMaster University, where I was lucky to count Mike Di Gregorio, Liam Stockdale, Jennifer Mustapha-Vanderkooy, Mark Busser, Katie Winstanley, and Jessica Merolli as colleagues. It is a great privilege to have had the tireless support of friends, colleagues, and advocates like Can Mutlu, Christopher Leite, Adam Sandor, Cédric Jourde, Mark Salter, Miguel de Larrinaga, Debbie Lisle, Heather Johnson, Vicki Squire, Ben Muller, and Paul Saurette. Thanks also go to the countless discussants, panel chairs, and audiences who helped challenge and refine the ideas developed in this book at numerous conferences, workshops, and invited talks.

Thanks are due to the outstanding editorial team at Cambridge University Press and to the two anonymous reviewers. Maria Marsh's enthusiasm for this project was contagious, and Abigail Walkington's logistical support smoothed the process of turning a manuscript into a book. Their efforts meant that my sweat and tears were limited to the process of writing and rewriting. All errors remaining herein are mine and mine alone.

I am also grateful to SAGE and to Oxford University Press. Portions of Chapters 1 and 5 appear in 'The Field of Border Control in Mauritania', which was published in *Security Dialogue* (2014), and Chapter 6 is a heavily expanded version of 'The Promises and Pitfalls of Biometric Security Practices in Senegal', which was published in *International Political Sociology* (2018).

Finally, I am thankful to my parents, Andrew and Yacine. This book is dedicated to them as well as to my wife, Rabya, and daughter, Lena, who both missed me on too many evenings and weekends. This book simply would not exist without their love and patience.