**The field of border control in Mauritania**

**Abstract**

Recent work on borders has tended to overlook border control actors, practices and rationalities in West Africa. States in this region are considered origin and transit countries for irregular migration and the Sahel region that they straddle is widely seen as an emerging haven of terrorist activity. This article discusses one response to these threats by the Islamic Republic of Mauritania: a program to build new border posts with help from global partners including the European Union and International Organization for Migration. The article builds on Bourdieusian approaches in critical security studies, but draws on concepts from actor-network theory to account for the heterogeneity of border control actors and the mobility of different knowledges about how to control borders. Drawing on ethnographic research in Mauritania, the article discusses four ‘actants’ of border security: the border posts, the landscape, the biometric entry-exit system, and training practices. Throughout, the article highlights field dynamics of competition, cooperation and pedagogy, also highlighting the role of non-human agency. The article concludes with a reflection on the link between border control and statebuilding, suggesting that this is a broader paradigm of security provision in the global south.

**Introduction**

Recent work on borders has paid relatively little attention to the convergence of global border control actors, practices and rationalities in the global south, particularly in West Africa. States in this region are typically seen as ‘origin’ and ‘transit’ countries for irregular migration and the Sahel region that they straddle is widely perceived as an emerging haven of terrorist activity. In response, the European Union (EU), its member states, and international partners like the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have dramatically intensified their border management activities in West Africa. In the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, a country of 3.5 million people straddling sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb, a new emphasis on border security has emerged since 2005, fuelled by the twin issues of clandestine migration to Europe and terrorism incubated in the Sahel-Sahara region. The focus of this article 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 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 IOM have led a project to build and renovate Mauritania’s border posts, helping to train staff and install new technological infrastructures. This project 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. Through an ethnographic analysis of everyday practices of border security in the global south, this article makes an original contribution to literature in border studies and critical security studies by calling attention to the diversity of social and technical factors that enact border control, and to the global-local diffusion of ideals about how borders should be controlled.

This article fills two scholarly gaps by focusing on the sociology of security actors around African borders and by theorizing the implantation of norms about how borders should be controlled. Most work on borders continues to focus on European and North American examples, with some exceptions such as ethnographic work on customs practices (Chalfin 2010) and mobility in West Africa (Robin, 2009; Choplin and Lombard, 2010; Brachet, Choplin, and Pliez 2011) to which this article is complementary. The extensive and analytically rich literature in ‘African border studies’ (see Nugent and Asiwaju, 1996; Feyissa and Hoehne, 2010; Engel and Nugent, 2010) tends to focus on the local, anthropological realities of borderlands, which has meant less focus on global security interventions around Africa’s borders. There is also a dearth of work on how normative views about borders—who should control them and how—move, are adopted or resisted. This question of border knowledges is not ignored in theoretical work on borders, but there is little emphasis on the routines and technologies through which ideas, norms or rationalities of border control are transmitted across space, or how they interact with or displace existing approaches. In response to these two lacunae, this article asks two 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 the first question, the article builds on theoretical contributions from critical border studies (e.g. Paasi, 1998; Walters, 2002; Salter, 2004; Rumford, 2006; Vaughan-Williams, 2009) to see borders as diffuse and proliferating social spaces, enacted well beyond the territorial line. The governance of the Mauritanian border is heterogeneous and transnational. Although this paper is not primarily theoretical, is uses a lens drawing from a Bourdieusian sociological approach to critical security studies, which focuses on professionals of security (e.g. Bigo, 2001; Huysmans, 2007), supplementing it with concepts from actor-network theory (Latour, 2005; Law, 2007). Security is the outcome of interactions within a field of professionals, but is also enacted by non-human things such as buildings, landscapes, databases, and training manuals. The border is therefore a social *and* technical space. To answer the second question about rationalities, the article draws on Ruben Zaiotti’s (2011) concept of ‘cultures of border control’ to refer to the shared ideational and practical aspects of border control. Drawing on the ANT concept of the ‘(im)mutable mobile’, which describes technologies that retain or lose their shape as they move, the article argues that border control intervention in Mauritania has been a key site for the transmission of competing international standards of how borders should be controlled, but also shows the power of existing local routines and informal practices. It uses this focus on knowledges to account for the values that animate everyday practices of border control: the way biometrics dictate a technologized approach to the border, or how police training workshops are modified to local circumstances.

The remainder of the article presents conclusions drawn from ethnographic research in Mauritania. After a brief methodological aside detailing how the field of border security in Mauritania was accessed, the article presents the argument through four ‘actants’: the border posts, the landscape, the biometric entry-exit system, and training practices. These are selected because they capture the major social and technical elements of consequence for the project. Each one also provides a broad entry point into the practices, knowledges, routines, technologies and struggles of border security in Mauritania. The article concludes with reflection on the link between border control and statebuilding, highlighting the link between state formation and the development of border infrastructure in Mauritania. The idea of the border as sociotechnical demonstrates its analytical utility again, not least due to the importance of materiality in processes of state formation and statebuilding. The heterogeneity that this concept suggests also captures the diverse mix of actors that shape security provision in the global south.

**A sociotechnical lens on border governance**

The Mauritanian border is a diffuse and proliferated sociotechnical space. In this respect, it confirms a key insight in critical border studies, namely that the border is a 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.

These actors involved in and around the Mauritanian border posts project are part of a ‘field’ as defined by Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu defines a field as a “network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions” held by actors (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 97) which 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” (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. Bourdieu’s concepts have found a home in critical security studies (e.g. Bigo, 2001; Huysmans, 2007; Williams, 2007), and have been instrumental to the development of a ‘sociological’ approach, based on intersubjective practice, to the construction of security threats. Didier Bigo encapsulates this Bourdieusian view of security 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 field of security professionals disturbs the neat separation of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ of the state (Bigo, 2001), highlighting the utility of the ‘field’ concept for a transnational space such as the governance of Mauritania’s border. Indeed, the agencies involved in border control, and their practices, create a situation in which border governance and its effects are enacted and experienced far from the site of the territorial border.

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. The project, and the social relations around it, are shaped by the agency of material factors such as the posts themselves, the biometric entry-exit databases they host, and the training programmes created and modified for the police and gendarmes who staff them. This is where concepts from actor-network theory (ANT) help us to supplement—not displace—Bourdieusian approaches and see the border as sociotechnical. ANT, with origins in science and technology studies, is not a holistic theoretical approach but rather what Law calls a “diaspora that overlaps with other intellectual traditions” (2007: 2). ANT theorists’ emphasis on the world as nothing more than contingent sets of associations between humans and non-humans alike puts it in stark contradiction to what Latour (2005) calls the ‘sociology of the social’—which includes Bourdieu’s oeuvre. The radically flat ontology characteristic of ANT approaches sees little difference between human and non-human in their capacity for agency. In light of these radically different foundations, Bourdieu’s sociology and actor-network theory are not combinable or commensurable and should not be combined haphazardly. However, concepts from ANT 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 ANT are most useful to build a pluralist approach: the concept of ‘actant’, through which we can theorize the border as sociotechnical, and the ‘(im)mutable mobile’ which can describe border control knowledges and their transmission.

The term ‘actant’ (Latour, 2005) removes the difference between humans and non-humans in terms of their possibility for agency. This definition 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 three ways that technologies exert agency in Mauritanian border governance. First, non-human factors play a mediating role in social relations: they demand to be acted upon and are objects over which agents struggle: the EU delegation and IOM representative may seek to enhance their respective symbolic capital over the same object or project output. Second, material things call for or represent particular approaches to security: a biometric entry-exit tracking system incarnates a view about the link of the body to identity, and its linkage to national ID demands that the border be stretched inwards from the territorial line. Third, they act to shape border security itself: a border post is a tool that creates path dependencies on specific security solutions (biometrics, e-passports, etc.). Non-human factors also bring connections into relief: by studying a border post 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, and the deployment of security tools, and the agency of objects.

The transmission of knowledge in border governance happens as much through social fields as through these objects and materials. Even though most work in critical border studies implicitly deals with modes of bordering—such as neoliberal globalization, biopolitics, or the management of fear—there is very little work explicitly theorizing tacit or overt knowledges of border control. For instance, Andrijasevic and Walters use the IOM as an example of how contemporary migration control techniques are forms of “normalisation” (2010: 984) operating through the alignment of global migration policies in the global south with Western technical norms. However, they do not go on to provide an empirical account of how these norms travel (or fail to travel). Ruben Zaiotti (2011) provides one schema with which to discuss the ideational aspects of border control. He defines a ‘culture of border control’ 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). This is very similar in many respects to Bourdieu’s concept of ‘doxa’ that refers to the practical knowledges of a field, and it provides a way to theorize border knowledge as culturally contingent assumptions that feed into security practice. This article is interested in how practices of a field—and the agency of related objects—move these ideals between contexts with varying degrees of success. The ANT concept of the (*im)mutable mobile* helps to account for these different modes of knowledge diffusion. Immutable mobiles are “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). These packages can consist of agents’ tacit knowledges and best practices as much as material elements such as passport scanners. As Law (2007) points out, to speak of immutable mobiles is also to assume the presence of mutable ones: for instance, a border police training course that has to be modified to account for local practice. Considering border knowledges (and the objects that can stand for them) points us to their origins and histories. For instance, a US border control manual given to Mauritanian authorities reflects the American experience with hardening its southern border with Mexico, while the IOM’s approach to border management draws more heavily on the EU’s Schengen Borders Code. Finally, thinking about the transmission of border ideals in Mauritania brings into relief the pedagogical nature of field relationships in border security there. This is reflected in performances of training, workshop participation, creation of manuals, and inculcation of best practices. With this perspective we can look not only at struggles over the definition of and response to security, but also these relationships of teaching and assistance about how to deal with security threats that may already have been defined elsewhere. Most actors in the Mauritanian border security field may converge around ‘porous borders’ as a problem, but the debate over approaches to take will reflect the institutional histories and habitus of the actors involved.

The field concept is the best descriptor of the social elements of the Mauritanian border, particularly as it 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 ANT 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 highlights the motion of knowledges about border control.

**Methodological excursus**

My research took the form of an ethnographic investigation spread over two trips in February/March and June 2013. During this time, I was able to interview 25 key actors with direct experience—and often command over—border management in Mauritania. I was able to visit one renewed border post (at Nouakchott airport), observe internal police and gendarmerie controls, and carry out more interviews in the second city of Nouadhibou. The means through which I was able to access my interlocutors were as revelatory of their field as the information I ‘extracted’ from them. My experience testifies to dynamics of expertise and credibility but also to an unexpectedly important role of researcher identity.

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 or ‘global’ security professionals. Emails, LinkedIn messages, formal appointment requests, and phone calls to office numbers worked best. I used formal scripts very similar to those approved by my university’s research ethics office. Reaching Mauritanian security actors, who tended to use formality as a deflection mechanism, meant using more informal and sometimes fortuitous means. 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.

Gaining interviews with Mauritanian officials 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. My appearance meant I was usually mistaken for a Mauritanian, 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 an outsider to the field throughout. Similarly, demonstrating expertise of border security issues and terminology was essential. When I was able to demonstrate expertise in border management, and used the terminology of the field,[[1]](#footnote-1) 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.

At first, the dynamics I observed, up close, seemed to challenge the idea of a neat Bourdieusian ‘field’ in which everyone knows the rules of the game and competes for symbolic capital. The competition and struggle seemed less evident in comparison to the pedagogical dynamics of the intervener-intervened relationship, until I realized that this differential in expertise, modernity, and professionalism was actually part of the disparity of symbolic capital itself. This is something I would not have found out without an open-ended method. I was adamant that ‘letting the actors speak’ was the best way to let research subjects demonstrate their expertise and relate their own ‘hearsay’ in order to show the logic of the field and its disjunctures. This gave me a better understanding of their tacit knowledges, trajectories and lingo, even if it meant foregoing some hard-hitting questions. I can only hope that my reconstruction of these accounts here opens more critical space.

**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 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.[[2]](#footnote-2) 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 *Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire* (DST), on one side, emphasizes the utility of statistics and of document fraud reduction.[[3]](#footnote-3) The local EEAS delegation, however, emphasizes the developmental aspect of the project. Despite these conflicting justifications, different goals coexist in the same project.

There 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.[[4]](#footnote-4) 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 Mauritanians, who have greater credibility with their neighbours and from the transnational border control community. The IOM considers Mauritania by far the most ‘advanced’ country in terms of border control in West Africa[[5]](#footnote-5) and border posts also provide a physical manifestation of progress, which can be shown off to neighbours. More specifically, symbolic capital is also accrued through the promotion of the Mauritanian exemplar overseas, and the EU and IOM have organized meetings between Senegalese and Mauritanian officials 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. 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 Senegal, 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 provision[[6]](#footnote-6), it is clear that even when concrete actions such as border post construction come first, they always embody knowledge about how borders 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.

**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 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,[[7]](#footnote-7) 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 panels and be built near sources of water in order to gather useful intelligence from nomads or other passers-by.[[8]](#footnote-8) 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 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. 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.[[9]](#footnote-9) 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.[[10]](#footnote-10) 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.[[11]](#footnote-11) In turn, the desert reflects strategic battles about what is to be secured against, with the Mauritanian government more concerned about of terrorist infiltration from Mali,[[12]](#footnote-12) 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.

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 (who they perceive as better equipped), have had requests to the EU for boats of their own rebuffed,[[13]](#footnote-13) 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.[[14]](#footnote-14) 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.

**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), 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 […] 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,[[15]](#footnote-15) 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.[[16]](#footnote-16) 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.[[17]](#footnote-17) 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.[[18]](#footnote-18) 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 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 or border control. A common ‘esprit de corps’[[19]](#footnote-19) 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 don’t trust the system itself—one official called for all computers to be removed from border posts[[20]](#footnote-20)—and the country’s security officials are keen to control the source code to prevent ‘backdoor’ access to their data. That the Mauritanians 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,[[21]](#footnote-21) 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 Mauritanians called *Touche Pas À Ma Nationalité* (‘don’t touch my nationality’) has contested what it calls a “racist” biometric system.[[22]](#footnote-22) 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 Kingdom[[23]](#footnote-23) 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. 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’.

**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 programme 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’[[24]](#footnote-24) 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 donors[[25]](#footnote-25) 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.[[26]](#footnote-26)

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.[[27]](#footnote-27) 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 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 consider their role to be nothing more than rubber-stamping,[[28]](#footnote-28) 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.[[29]](#footnote-29) 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,[[30]](#footnote-30) as trainings and workshops tend 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.[[31]](#footnote-31) 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.[[32]](#footnote-32)

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 PIRS[[33]](#footnote-33)—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 job[[34]](#footnote-34) 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.[[35]](#footnote-35) 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.[[36]](#footnote-36) 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.

**Conclusion**

This article has argued for a view of borders as heterogeneous sociotechnical spaces and put forward a view of border knowledges as mobile and mutable. Using ethnographic insights from fieldwork in Mauritania, the article 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 article 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 article revealed how border control works *in practice* in West Africa, an under-explored space of analysis in critical security studies.

Throughout, the article 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 article 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 programmes 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.

**References**

Amoore L and De Goede M (2008) *Risk and the War on Terror*. London: Routledge.

Andrijasevic R and Walters W (2010) The International Organization for Migration and the international government of borders. *Environment and Planning D* 28(6): 977-999.

Aradau C (2010) Security That Matters: Critical Infrastructure and Objects of Protection. *Security Dialogue* 41(5): 491-514.

Aradau C and Van Munster R (2007) Governing Terrorism Through Risk: Taking Precautions, (un)Knowing the Future. *European Journal of International Relations* 13(1): 89-115.

Balzacq T (2008) The Policy Tools of Securitization: Information Exchange, EU Foreign and Interior Policies. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 46(1): 75-100.

Bennett J (2010) *Vibrant matter: a political ecology of things*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Bigo D (2001) Internal and External Security(ies): The Möbius Ribbon. In Jacobsen M, Albert D and Lapid Y (eds.) *Identities, Borders, Orders*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 91-116.

Bigo D (2012) Security. In Adler-Nissen R (ed.) *Bourdieu in International Relations*. London: Routledge, 114-130.

Bourdieu P (1994) Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field. Translated by Loïc Wacquant and Samar Farage. *Sociological Theory* 12(1): 1-18.

Bourdieu P and Wacquant L (1992) *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology.* Cambridge: Polity.

Brachet J, Choplin A and Pliez O (2011) Le Sahara entre espace de circulation et frontière migratoire de l’Europe. Hérodote 142: 163-182.

Chalfin B (2010) *Neoliberal Frontiers: An Ethnography of Sovereignty in West Africa*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Choplin A and Lombard J (2010) « Suivre la route ». Mobilités et échanges entre Mali, Mauritanie et Sénégal. EchoGéo 14. Available at: http://echogeo.revues.org/12127?lang=en (Accessed 1 December 2013).

Coole D and Frost S (2010) *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Engel U and Nugent P (2010) *Respacing Africa*. Amsterdam: Brill.

Feyissa D and Hoehne M (2010) *Borders and borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa*. London: James Currey.

Foster N (2010) Mauritania: The Struggle for Democracy. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Geiger M (2010) Mobility, Development, Protection, EU-Integration! The IOM’s National Migration Strategy for Albania. In Geiger M and Pécoud A (eds.) *The Politics of International Migration Management*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 141-159.

Guittet E-P and Jeandesboz J (2010) Security Technologies. In Burgess JP (ed.) *The Routledge Handbook of New Security Studies*. London: Routledge, 229-239.

Huysmans J (2007) *The Politics of Insecurity: Fear, migration and asylum in the EU*. Abingdon: Routledge.

IOM (2011) PIRS, the International Organization for Migration’s Personal Identification and Registration System. International Organization for Migration. Available at: http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/activities/ibm/09-IOM-IBM-FACT-SHEET-Personal-Identification-and-Registration-System-PIRS.pdf (accessed 21 July 2013)

IOM (2012) Workshop on the Threats and Risks of Integrated Border Management. Available at: http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/news-and-views/events/events-listing/workshop-on-the-threats-and-risk.html (Accessed 1 December 2013)

Islamic Republic of Mauritania (2011) Document de stratégie nationale pour une meilleure gestion de la migration en République Islamique de Mauritanie [National Strategy Document for Better Management of Migration in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania]. Government of Mauritania, Nouakchott.

Jourde C (2007) Constructing Representations of the ‘Global War on Terror’ in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*. 25(1): 77-100.

Kendall G (2004) Global networks, international networks, actor networks. In Larner W and Walters W (eds.) *Global Governmentality: governing international spaces*. London: Routledge, 59-75.

Latour B (2005) *Reassembling the Social: An introduction to actor-network-theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Law J (2007) Actor Network Theory and Material Semiotics. John Law’s STS Web Page. Available at: <http://www.heterogeneities.net/publications/Law2007ANTandMaterialSemiotics.pdf> (accessed 21 July 2013)

Nugent P and Asiwaju A (1996) *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities*. London: Pinter.

Nyers P (2012) The Politics of Dirt. *Radical Philosophy* 174 (July/August).

Paasi A (1998) Boundaries as social processes: Territoriality in the world of flows. *Geopolitics* 3(1), 69-88.

Poutignat P and Streiff-Fénart J (2010) Migration Policy Development in Mauritania: Process, Issues and Actors. In Geiger M and Pécoud A (eds.) *The Politics of International Migration Management*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 202-219.

Robin N (2009) La CEDEAO, un espace de libre circulation, poste frontière avancé de l’espace Schengen. In Trémolières M (ed.) *Les enjeux régionaux des migrations ouest-africaines : perspectives africaines et européennes*. Paris: OECD, 149-165.

Rumford C (2006) Theorizing Borders. *European Journal of Social Theory* 9(2): 155-169.

Rumford C (2008) Introduction: Citizens and Borderwork in Europe. *Space and Polity* 12(1): 1-12.

Salter MB (2004) Passports, Mobility, and Security: How smart can the border be?. *International Studies Perspectives* 5(1): 71-91.

Scott JC (1998) *Seeing like a state*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

*Security Dialogue* (2010) Special issue on ‘The Security-Development Nexus Revisited’, 41(1).

Torpey J (2000) *The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship and the State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vaughan-Williams N (2009) *Border Politics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Walters W (2002) Mapping Schengenland: denaturalizing the border. *Environment and Planning D* 20(5), 561-580.

Williams MC (2007) *Culture and Security: Symbolic power and the politics of international security*. London: Routledge.

Zaiotti R (2011) *Cultures of Border Control: Schengen and the Evolution of European Frontiers*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.

1. For example, the acronym IBM sometimes refers to ‘Immigration and Border Management’, but also to ‘Integrated Border Management’, depending on the organization in question. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Interview with journalist from Agence Nouakchott d’Informations, Nouakchott, 16 June 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Interview with DST director, Nouakchott, 27 February 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Interview with ICMPD staff, via phone, 18 March 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Interview with IOM staff, Dakar, 25 January 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Email correspondence with IOM head of mission, Mauritania, 3 March 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Interview with security expert at EU delegation, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Interview with interior security attaché, French embassy, Nouakchott, 4 March 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Interview with French interior security attaché, French embassy, Dakar, 22 July 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Interview with Mauritanian gendarme, 5 March 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Interview with director of Mauritanian DST, 27 February 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Interview with security expert, EU delegation, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Interview with Mauritanian gendarme, 5 March 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Participant observation with police at Nouakchott international airport, 28 June 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Interview with IOM head of mission, Nouakchott, 20 June 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Interview with IOM regional border management expert, via phone, 10 February 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Interview with IOM head of mission, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Interview with security expert, EU delegation, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Interview with attaché, EU delegation, Nouakchott, 28 February 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Interview with ICMPD staff, via phone, 18 March 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Interview with TPMN coordinator, Nouakchott, 13 June 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Interview with IOM head of mission, Nouakchott, 20 June 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Interview with Université de Nouakchott sociologist, Nouakchott, 6 March 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Interview with IOM head of mission, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Interview with IOM head of mission, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Interview with IOM head of mission, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Interview with representative of AMDH, Nouakchott, 23 June 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Interview with GIZ project manager, Nouakchott, 10 June 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Interview with security expert, EU delegation, Nouakchott, 28 February 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Interview with Mauritanian gendarme, Nouakchott, 14 June 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Interview with GIZ project manager, Nouakchott, 10 June 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Interview with IOM head of mission, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Interview with IOM head of mission, Nouakchott, 20 June 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Interview with head of training, DGSN, Nouakchott, 5 March 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Interview with IOM head of mission, Nouakchott, 19 February 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)