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Borderlessness and the 20th-Century Rise of the Ndau People's Subaltern Economy in the Zimbabwe–Mozambique Borderland

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The Ndau society in the Zimbabwe–Mozambique borderland has seemingly been neglected by colonial and post-independence governments. Exclusion from the mainstream economies of the region by the Zimbabwean and Mozambican governments has forced the Ndau to rely largely upon themselves to survive in the remote, poverty-stricken borderland. This survival practice means that many borderland residents embrace an economy of illegality in which trade in drugs, used clothes, game meat and fuel has become a coping mechanism against hardships in the borderland. Among other reactions, the Ndau people take advantage of the remoteness of the borderland to criss-cross the border to seek opportunities and resources to sustain themselves. Relentless cross-border transgressions have thus contributed to a virtual state of ‘borderlessness’ in the region, and this is manipulated by the Ndau to participate in a variety of informal cross-border survival pursuits. The discussion that follows provides a critical review of the lives and economic practices of the marginalised Ndau communities within an illegal borderland economy. It is the authors’ contention that the borderland illegal economy has sustained the Ndau community’s existence.

Keywords: borderlessness; borderland economy; Ndau; subaltern; Mozambique; Zimbabwe

Introduction

The Ndau people living on both sides of today’s Zimbabwean–Mozambican border are one of many examples of people of common origin who were separated by the demarcation of borders in Africa by colonial powers in the late 19th century.¹ Their history and current border status is the focus of this research, which builds upon academic debate about the demarcation of Africa’s colonial borders and the consequences of this since formal colonial

1 T. Kevil, ‘Borders of Violence, Boundaries of Identity: Demarcating the Eritrean Nation State’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22, 6 (1999), pp. 1037–60; P. Englebort, S. Tarango and M. Carter, ‘Dismemberment and Suffocation: A Contribution to the Debate on African Boundaries’, *Comparative Political Studies*, 35, 10 (2002), p. 1096.

times.² The colonial border of Zimbabwe–Mozambique was created after the Anglo-Portuguese agreement of 1891.³ This divided even further what was already a stressed Ndau community and added further challenges to the troubled history of their migration.⁴ The current situation is one of division characterised by fragmented Ndau chiefdoms resident on both the Zimbabwean and Mozambican sides of the border. Examples include the Garahwa, Gwenzi, Mapungwana and Musikavanhu.⁵

Whereas colonial borders were regarded as mechanisms to define the spaces better and to simplify their administration, these borders resulted in the limitation of movement because cross-border migration had to be negotiated.⁶ Current scholarship on border studies describes borderlands as areas of cultural interface and exchanges between people from various backgrounds; as areas where there is hybridisation, creolisation and negotiation.⁷ Lamarque notes that some scholars have previously likened borderlands to semi-permeable membranes. This metaphor symbolises the state's understanding of the border: it simultaneously allows and rejects the entry of individuals and commodities into a country.⁸ But the reality is that, at official level, the border represents an impassable barrier.⁹ The borderland (the region adjacent to the colonial border)¹⁰ and the communities that live there, as is the case with the Ndau people, are often compelled by hardship to violate colonial borders. The interest in crossing the boundary is, therefore, a result of lopsided conditions existing in the borderland.¹¹ It can thus be argued that borderlands are often places of contestation because communities of the same culture live astride a formally demarcated border.¹² At the same time, these communities belong to different political and administrative areas and can barely survive without interaction and collaboration. In this context, the border loses its practical meaning because communities cross it back and forth seek opportunities and/or resources.¹³ Such a border area can be referred to as expressing features of 'borderlessness' in the daily grind of affairs.

This study joins a growing body of scholarship on borderland issues. Significant studies have been carried out among other borderland regions in North America,¹⁴

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- 2 J. Hlongwana, 'Borderless Boundary? Historical and Geopolitical Significance of the Mozambique/Zimbabwe Border to the Ndau People (c.1940–2010)' (PhD thesis, North-West University, 2021), p. 16. Available at <https://repository.nwu.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10394/37053/Hlongwana%20J%2025846434.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>, retrieved 19 January 2023.
 - 3 M. Patrício, 'Legal Pluralism in Mozambique: Boundaries between the Local State and Traditional Authorities in Mossurize District', 56th African Studies Association Annual Meeting, 2013, p. 4. Available at https://repositorio.iscte-iul.pt/bitstream/10071/8989/1/Legal_pluralism_in_Mozambique.pdf, retrieved 19 January 2023.
 - 4 D.N. Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe 900–1850* (Gweru, Mambo Press, 1980), p. 170.
 - 5 E.G. Konyana, 'Euthanasia in Zimbabwe? Reflections on the Management of Terminally Ill Persons and the Dying in Ndau Traditions of Chimanimani and Chipinge, Southern-eastern Zimbabwe', in D.Olagula (ed.), *Death and Life after Death, African Philosophy and Religion, a Multiple Disciplinary Engagement* (Harare, Africa Institute for Culture, Peace, Dialogue and Tolerance, 2014), p. 122.
 - 6 R. Jones, 'Why Build a Border Wall?', *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 45, 3 (2012), p. 72.
 - 7 A.C. Diener and J. Hagen (eds), *Borderlines and Borderlands: Political Oddities at the Edge of the Nation State* (Toronto, Rowman and Littlefield, 2010), p. 10.
 - 8 H. Lamarque, 'On Asymmetry and Imbalance in Urban Borderlands', paper delivered at African Borderlands Research Network (Aborne) annual meeting, 'Materiality and Immateriality in the Reproduction of African Borders', University of Cagliari, 2018.
 - 9 Hlongwana, 'Borderless Boundary?', p. 19.
 - 10 T. Jabeen and S. Sultan, 'Evolution of Borders and Borderlands: A Historical Overview', *Pakistan Social Science Review*, 4, 3 (2020), p. 951.
 - 11 Lamarque, 'On Asymmetry and Imbalance'.
 - 12 M. Dear and A. Bridge, 'A Cultural Integration and Hybridisation at the United States–Mexico Borderlands', *Cahiers de Geographic de Quebec*, 49, 138 (2005), pp. 301–18.
 - 13 Private collection of James Hlongwana (hereafter PC–JH), B. Jara (Immigration officer), Espungbera Border Post, Mossurize, Mozambique, 5 December 2016.
 - 14 B. Dupeyron, 'State Borders in North America', in S.V. Sevastianov, J.P. Laine and A.A. Kireev (eds), *Introduction to Border Studies* (Vladivostok, Dalnauka, 2015), p. 245.

Europe,¹⁵ south-east Asia¹⁶ and Africa.¹⁷ It is important to note that some governments in North America and western Europe have initiated borderland integration processes to promote the movement of people, goods and services across regional frontiers.¹⁸ One example is the Basel region, which unites communities in the border areas of Switzerland, France and Belgium.¹⁹ Arguably, separatism is eradicated in favour of regional solidarity based on peaceful coexistence. However, African borderlands are usually remote and marginalised and pose serious challenges to regional security as they tend to become localities from which political insurgents operate.²⁰ In east central Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo–Rwanda borderland has become a sanctuary for rebels fighting the DRC government.²¹ In west Africa, Boko Haram in northern Nigeria launches its offensives from border regions with Cameroon and Chad.²²

However, it is important to note that not all borderlands are extremely porous. Border transgressions in the Tonga borderland, for instance, where the Zambezi river separates Zimbabwe and Zambia, are a rarity because the river's depth, width and crocodile population limit cross-border migration.²³ While global literature on borderlands exists, limited scholarly work has been published on cross-border migration in the Zimbabwe–Mozambique borderland. Nor has this been the focus of much postgraduate research, such as that of Fernando Florêncio on the Ndau in 2003.²⁴ An applicable source of the debate, published in 2007, is that by MacGonagle, who explores Ndau ethnicity. She centres her argument on the premise that the Ndau community views the border between Zimbabwe and Mozambique as no more than an 'imaginary line'.²⁵ Related research undertaken by Patrício in 2010 investigates the issue of Ndau identity and concludes that cross-border interaction among the Ndau in the borderland is mostly a consequence of cultural affinity.²⁶

Equally important to this topic is Duri's 2012 doctoral thesis, which focuses on cross-border informal survival pursuits in the Mutare–Chimoio borderland. Duri argues that, in the face of extreme hardship, marginalised borderland residents manipulate governing and managerial weaknesses in the area in order to survive.²⁷ Although Duri's study provides

15 P. Pupier, 'Spatial Evolution of Cross-Border Regions: Contrasted Case Studies in North-West Europe', *European Planning Studies*, 28, 1 (2020), pp. 81–104.

16 M. Pangestu and L. Yan Ing, 'ASEAN: Regional Integration and Reforms', *Policy Brief*, 5 (2017), p. 3.

17 D.K. Flynn, "'We are the Border": Identity, Exchange and the State Along the Benin–Nigeria Border', *American Ethnologist*, 24, 2 (1997), pp. 311–30; M.O. Bonchuk, 'Nigeria–Cameroon Borderlands: Prospects of Economic Cooperation and Integration', *American Journal of Social Issues and Humanities*, 4, 2 (2014), pp. 99–111; W.F.S. Miles, 'Postcolonial Borderland Legacies of Anglo-French Partition in West Africa', *African Studies Review*, 58, 3 (2015), pp. 191–213.

18 S. Wang, 'An Imperfect Integration: Has Schengen Alienated Europe?', *Chinese Political Science Review*, 1, 4 (2016), pp. 698–716.

19 C. Sohn, B. Reitel and O. Walter, 'Cross-Border Metropolitan Integration in Europe: Luxembourg, Basel and Geneva', *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 27, 5 (2009), p. 3.

20 A. Tandia, 'Borders and Borderlands Identities: A Comparative Perspective of Cross-Border Governance in the Neighbourhoods of Senegal, the Gambia and Guinea Bissau', *African Nebula*, 2 (2010), p. 18.

21 J.K. Mbugua, *Cross-Border Insecurity in Eastern Africa: The Case of Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo* (Nairobi, International Peace Support Training Centre, 2013), p. 15.

22 E. Camili, 'Nigeria: Under the Fire of Boko Haram', *European Strategic Intelligence and Security Centre*, 13 June 2014, p. 1, available at <http://www.esisc.org/upload/publications/briefings/nigeria-under-the-fire-of-boko-haram/Nigeria%20boko%20haram.pdf>, retrieved 19 January 2023.

23 See J. McGregor, *Crossing the Zambezi: The Politics of Landscape on a Central African Frontier* (Oxford, James Currey, 2009).

24 F. Florêncio, 'As autoridades tradicionais Vandau, Estado e Política Local em Moçambique' (PhD thesis, ISCTE–Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, 2003).

25 E. MacGonagle, *Crafting Identity in Zimbabwe and Mozambique* (Rochester, University of Rochester Press, 2007), p. 109.

26 M. Patrício, *Ndau Identity in Mozambique and Zimbabwe Borderland* (Lisbon, ISCTE, 2010), p. 10.

27 F. Duri, 'Antecedents and Adaptations in the Borderlands: A Social History of Informal Socio-Economic Activities across the Rhodesia–Mozambique Border with Particular Reference to the City of Umtali, 1900–1974' (PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 2012), p. 12.

valuable insights, it has somewhat limited geographical and temporal extent. For the most part, his work covers the Mutare–Chimoio border region, which lies at a considerable distance from the Ndauborderland under discussion here. Furthermore, Duri’s research does not focus on a particular cultural group; in the present study of the Ndauborderland, an attempt is made to address this shortfall.

In the sections that follow, the state of ‘borderlessness’ in the Ndauborderland is explored, and an examination made of how it has been exploited by the Ndauborderland people to sustain an illegal borderland economy. While the study focuses primarily on the Ndauborderland experience, reference is also made to non-Ndauborderland individuals, such as government officials who indulge in illegal activities in the Ndauborderland.

A multi-pronged methodological approach was utilised to collect data for the doctoral study, which was completed in 2021.²⁸ Informal interviews were conducted with the Ndauborderland people to gain baseline information. To solicit information from those interviewed, semi-structured questions were asked, which placed emphasis on interviewees’ opinions and thoughts.²⁹ Relevant responses from 44 informants (24 Zimbabweans and 20 Mozambicans) contributed to the current study. The research was strengthened by a formal documentary analysis of archival sources held at the National Archives of Zimbabwe and the Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique in Maputo, Mozambique. Field notes, diaries and reports compiled by the Native Commissioners were also consulted. Emphasis was placed on the origins of the Ndauborderland, the colonial border demarcation and its implications for the Ndauborderland community. Several published secondary sources were of value to the topic.

The Ndauborderland Group and Origins

The Ndauborderland community is a cultural group located largely in the south-eastern region of Zimbabwe and the central and western regions of Mozambique (see [Figure 1](#)).³⁰ The Ndauborderland people are the descendants of the Hungwe and Mbire Bantu-speaking migrants who arrived in pre-colonial Zimbabwe from east Africa around 700–800 AD³¹ and 1000–1050 AD,³² respectively.

The word ‘Ndauborderland’ remains contestable, as scholarly opinions differ regarding its origins. One viewpoint suggests that the word ‘Ndauborderland’ was coined by the Nguni who invaded present-day south-eastern Zimbabwe and western districts of Mozambique in the 1860s.³³ Marashe and Maphosa postulate that the word ‘Ndauborderland’ originated as a nickname for the former Rozvi immigrants (now Ndauborderland), whose customary greetings were punctuated with the term ‘Ndauborderlanduwe’.³⁴ Another scholarly opinion coming from missionary circles suggests that the American missionaries who established mission stations in the Chipinge region and the Mossurize district of Mozambique in the 1890s contributed to the rise and usage of the word ‘Ndauborderland’. It is suggested, in the archives consulted, that the Americans wanted a common language for ease of doing business in the areas they dominated. So, instead of using an

28 Hlongwana, ‘Borderless Boundary?’, pp. 15–19.

29 W.C. Adams, ‘Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews’, in J.S. Wholey, H.P. Hatry and K.E. Newcomer (eds), *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation* (San Francisco, Jossey Brass, 2015), pp. 492–505.

30 C. Singauke, ‘The Establishment of the Rhodesia–Mozambique Border and its Socio-Economic and Political Effects on the Mapungwana Chiefdom, 1900–1974’ (BA Hons mini-research essay, Great Zimbabwe University, 2013), p. 9.

31 F.T. Duri, ‘The Colonial Experiences of Mutasa Traditional Rulers 1888–1979’ (MA dissertation, University of Zimbabwe, 1996), p. 17.

32 S. Chigwedere, *From Mutapa to Rhodes, 1000 to 1890 AD* (London, Macmillan, 1980), p. 7.

33 Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique (AHM), José Fontes Pessoa de Amorim, ‘Os Vatsangas ou Mundaue’, *Beira*, 1956, *Seccao Especial*, a 111, p. 6, no. 80.

34 J. Marashe and R.S. Maposa, ‘The Shona Socio-Cultural Landscape: A Reflection of the Salt Taboo among the Ndauborderland of South-Eastern Zimbabwe’, *International Journal of Humanities*, 2, 3 (2010), p. 2.

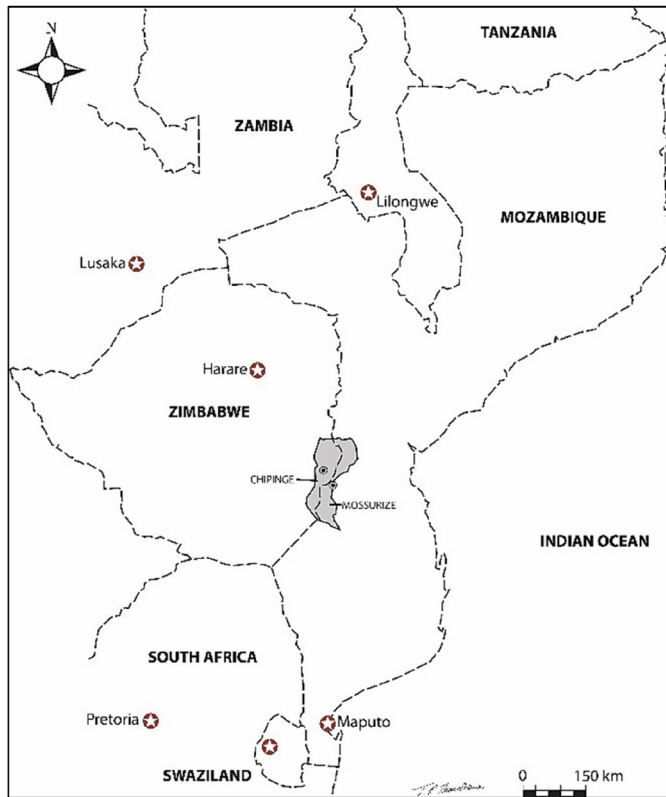


Figure 1. The shaded area shows the Chipinge and Mossurize districts of Zimbabwe and Mozambique. (Illustration by Thomas Thondlana, 2019.)

English Bible, the missionaries printed and used the Ndau Bible in their evangelical teachings when they established mission stations among Ndau-speaking people.³⁵ Evangelical sermons in the Ndau language raised the status of the language in the region where the Ndau people live. In addition, the classification of Ndau as a dialect of the Shona language by colonial administrators brought recognition of Ndau as a local language in the 1930s.³⁶ This classification was conducted to create linguistic references for administrative functions, but, in the process, it also elevated the status of Ndau as a language.³⁷ In view of the preceding discussion, it can be argued that the word ‘Ndau’ was coined by the Nguni and later popularised by Europeans such as missionaries and white settlers for administrative purposes.

The colonial powers’ demarcation of the boundary between Mozambique and Zimbabwe in 1891 transformed the Ndau’s geographical space of living in many ways.³⁸ The border exercised a geopolitical role where the divided Ndau were enclosed within controlled British and Portuguese colonial spaces (see Figure 1). These two European powers, as elsewhere

35 National Archives of Zimbabwe (hereafter NAZ), UN 3/20/1/11/8, Printing Report, Historical Manuscripts, United Church Board for World Ministries, 1915, p. 196.

36 C.M. Doke, *The Unification of the Shona Dialects*, a photographic reprint (Oslo, ALEX Project, 2005 [1931]), p. 5.

37 Marashe and Maposa, ‘The Shona Socio-Cultural Landscape’, p. 2.

38 F. Duri, ‘Negotiating the Zimbabwe–Mozambique Border: The Pursuit of Survival by Mutare’s Poor, 2000–2008’, in S. Chiumbu and M. Musemwa (eds), *Crisis, What Crisis? The Multiple Dimensions of the Zimbabwean Crisis* (Cape Town, HSRC Press, 2012), p. 124.

with borders, used the border between them as an identity symbol and also as a guarantee of their sovereignty. On the other hand, the border compromised social unity because it caused social disparity among the Ndaus. For the Ndaus living astride the border, encumbered as they were with colonial labels such as ‘Rhodesian’ and ‘Mozambican’, this caused a troublesome sense of otherness in the groups.³⁹

Towards ‘Borderlessness’ in the Ndaus Borderland

Boundary-marking on the African continent followed the recommendations made at the Berlin Conference of 1884–85 to partition Africa.⁴⁰ Consequently, borders became markers of statehood, which regulated the movement of people and commodities.⁴¹ This led to the inception of ‘hard’ borders, which separated one state from another.⁴² After that, borders did not feature prominently in international discussions.⁴³

However, as a result of the predicted globalisation-induced ‘borderless world’, the 1980s saw growing interest by scholars in border research.⁴⁴ Further, the inauguration of the European Union, which embraced the concept of Europe without borders, also popularised the concept of the borderless world.⁴⁵ The aforementioned developments contributed to a shift from sovereignty-insistent politics to policies of accommodation in border locations.⁴⁶ This represents features of ‘borderlessness’ or soft border approach to which Ndaus socio-economic history relates.

Informal cross-border migration has been practised since 1891 by Ndaus borderland communities to alleviate conditions of marginalisation in the remote borderlands.⁴⁷ Through decades, the official border has featured ‘debordering’ practices by Ndaus cross-border violations, leading to a state of ‘borderlessness’.⁴⁸ In the ensuing borderlessness, the Ndaus communities became involved in illegal activities such as the drug trade.⁴⁹ The underlying past causes that led to the present status of the Ndaus requires a concise revisit to appreciate the present context.

Underlying Rationale for Borderlessness in the Ndaus Borderland

Border administration in early colonial times (from 1891) was difficult to implement because of financial challenges. So Portuguese administrators in Mozambique, for instance, left the duty of monitoring African cross-border movement to local African chiefs. Many of

39 Hlongwana, ‘Borderless Boundary?’ pp. 15–19.

40 A.I. Mazrui, ‘Conflict in Africa: An Overview’, in A. Nhema and P.T. Zeleza (eds), *The Roots of African Conflicts: The Causes and Costs* (Pretoria, Unisa Press, 2008), pp. 36–49.

41 A. Horstmann, ‘Incorporation and Resistance: Borderlands, Transnational Communities and Social Change in Southeast Asia’, *Research Institute of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa*, Tokyo, 2004, p. 8.

42 A. Daimon, ‘Commuter Migration across Artificial Frontiers: The Case of Partitioned Communities along the Zimbabwe–Mozambique Border’, *Journal of Borderland Studies*, 31, 4 (2016), p. 471.

43 Diener and Hagen (eds), *Borderlines and Borderlands*, p. 9.

44 A. Kolosov, ‘Theoretical Approaches in the Study of Borders’, in Sevastianov, Laine and Kireev (eds), *Introduction to Border Studies*, p. 43.

45 A.I. Asiwaju, ‘Respacing for Peace, Security and Sustainable Development: The African Union Border Programme in the European Comparative Historical Perspective’, in U. Engel and P. Nugent (eds), *Respacing Africa* (Boston, Boston University Press, 2010), p. 90.

46 Duri, ‘Antecedents and Adaptations in the Borderlands’, p. 12.

47 J.K. Akokpari, ‘Globalisation and Migration in Africa’, *African Sociological Review*, 4, 2 (2000), p. 74.

48 J. Hlongwana, ‘Borderless Boundary?’, p. 17.

49 Cf. A. Hartnett and S. Dawdy, ‘The Archaeology of Illegal and Illicit Economies’, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 42 (2013), pp. 37–51; A. Wagner, ‘America’s Forgotten History of Illegal Deportations’, *The Atlantic*, 6 March 2017, pp. 1–11, available at https://inside.sfuhs.org/dept/history/US_History_reader/Chapter10/Americas%20Forgotten%20History%20of%20Illegal%20Deportations%20The%20Atlantic.pdf, retrieved 21 April 2022.

these chiefs co-operated readily with colonial administrators, and their task was to ensure that the sanctity of the border was not violated.⁵⁰ Some Ndaу chiefs residing in the borderland became notorious for their high-handed conduct in the enforcement of colonial border management policy. Among these were Chief Mapungwana and Chief Gwenzi.⁵¹

The concept of rigid boundaries was completely foreign to the Ndaу who lived in the Zimbabwe–Mozambique borderland. A considerable section of the community argued that, since time immemorial, the region was part of the sprawling Ndaу space. Chief Gwenzi, for example, claims that the border was forced upon them and that the subjective demarcation of the colonial border was unsolicited.⁵² Expressing similar sentiments, Tavuyanago argued that the majority of the Ndaу rejected the colonial border from its inception in the late 19th century. It is seen as an irritant that undermines the Ndaу’s socio-economic and cultural interests.⁵³ In demonstrating their dislike for the international border, some residents say the border is the Save river, which divides the Ndaу area from the Karanga region.⁵⁴ Documentary evidence shows that the Save river was initially proposed as a possible boundary between Mozambique and Zimbabwe.⁵⁵ However, the current boundary was eventually imposed on the Ndaу by the British after they had defeated the Portuguese in 1891 at Masekessa near the present-day town of Mutare in Zimbabwe.⁵⁶ Consequently, borderland residents, particularly the Mozambican Ndaу, are arguing for reunion with their Zimbabwean counterparts.⁵⁷

While boundary revision has been proposed by opposition Ndaу politicians, especially those who support the Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Renamo), the Mozambican and Zimbabwean governments have shown indifference to the thorny border question.⁵⁸ Zako, a respondent in this study, opined that boundary revision was likely to remain on the long-term wish list of the Ndaу borderland residents because the Mozambican and Zimbabwean governments shared positive bilateral relations that have roots in the liberation war period in the 1960s and 1970s.⁵⁹ Commenting on the problems that have been caused by the boundary, Singauke, a Ndaу scholar, postulated that the border region should be a place of unconstrained interaction in which residents have unfettered access to space and resources.⁶⁰ In reality, the hard border barely exists, since the Ndaу communities barely respect it and have crossed it illegally since 1891. That governments also delegated obligations of ‘policing’ the border to chiefs demonstrated their indifference towards border management and also created a sense of disregard for the hard boundary.

Governments’ Indifference to Border Management

While illegal cross-border movement is regarded globally as a flagrant breach of law,⁶¹ Zimbabwean and Mozambican governments were, over time, visibly lax about cross-border

50 PC–JH, E. Zako (border region settler), Gwenzi, Chipinge, Zimbabwe, 24 December 2018.

51 Singauke, ‘The Establishment of the Rhodesia–Mozambique Border’, p. 9.

52 PC–JH, D. Gwenzi (Chief), Gwenzi, Chipinge, Zimbabwe, 5 December 2015.

53 B. Tavuyanago, ‘The Renamo War in South-Eastern Zimbabwe’ (MA dissertation, University of Zimbabwe, 2002), p. 35.

54 PC–JH, T.F. Dlakama (border region settler), Gwenzi, Chipinge, 19 December 2015; E. Zako (border region settler), Gwenzi, Chipinge, Zimbabwe, 24 December 2018.

55 D.N. Beach, ‘The Origins of Mozambique and Zimbabwe: Paiva de Andrada, The Companhia de Mozambique and African diplomacy 1881–91’, seminar paper no. 89, History Department, University of Zimbabwe, 1992, p. 7.

56 N. Jones, *Rhodesian Genesis: The Story of the Early Days of Southern Rhodesia Compiled from the Reminiscences of Some Early Pioneers* (Bulawayo, University Press, 1953), pp. 59–60.

57 PC–JH, D. Gwenzi (Chief), Gwenzi, Chipinge, Zimbabwe, 5 December 2015.

58 Tavuyanago, ‘The Renamo War and its Impact’, p. 35.

59 PC–JH, E. Zako (border region settler), Gwenzi, Chipinge, Zimbabwe, 24 December 2018.

60 Singauke, ‘The Establishment of the Rhodesia–Mozambique Border’, p. 22.

61 H. Srebro (ed.), *International Boundary Making* (Helsinki, FIG, 2013), p. 9.

transgressions in the borderland under discussion. Economic constraints militated against their ability to police the border (which is 1,100 kilometres long),⁶² and borderland governments are accused of being slack on border management policy.⁶³ The Mozambican and Zimbabwean governments appear to have abandoned strict border management for fear of aggravating the challenges already afflicting borderland communities. Economic problems persuade governments to overlook cross-border transgressions, and the authorities are aware of the border's illegitimate status since 1891 in the eyes of the local Ndaу population.⁶⁴ In many ways, the two governments tend to condone cross-border migrations, thereby contributing to the state of 'borderlessness' in the Ndaу border region.⁶⁵

However, it can be argued that the governments' laxity is largely informed by the political situation obtaining in the borderland. In the face of security challenges, governments resort to their own rebordering-like tactics. This confirms Rumford's view that 'debordering and rebordering accompany each other' in the borderland discourse.⁶⁶ For example, the Rhodesian government planted land mines along the border in the 1970s to prevent infiltration by Zimbabwean freedom fighters who operated from Mozambique.⁶⁷ The border region became what Martínez, an exponent of the boundary closure and openness, called an 'alienated/closed borderland', which prohibits border crossing owing to estranged relations between adjacent states.⁶⁸ In spite of the presence of land mines in the border region, hardship pressed the Ndaу of Mozambique to cross the perilous border into Rhodesia through safe informal entry points.⁶⁹ So 'borderlessness from below' continued to coexist with the official border in the study area. This resonates well with Baud and van Schendel's argument that, '[n]o matter how clearly borders are drawn on official maps, how many customs officials are appointed, or how many watchtowers are built, people will ignore borders whenever it suits them'.⁷⁰ What can be drawn from the above discussion is that governments' policy on border management is a consequence of the state of security in the borderland.

The Ndaу Practising Borderlessness

Cultural Interaction

Cultural historians have made significant contributions to the historiography of cross-border migration in the Zimbabwe–Mozambique borderland. Researchers such as MacGonagle,⁷¹ Patrício,⁷² Daimon,⁷³ Zhou⁷⁴ and others have emphasised the role of cultural connections as motivation for cross-border migration. The cultural practices included rain-making (*makoto*),

62 Daimon, 'Commuter Migration across Artificial Frontiers', p. 465.

63 PC–JH, T.F. Dlakama (border region settler), Gwenzi, Chipinge, 19 December 2015.

64 Tavuyanago, 'The Renamo War and its Impact'.

65 Hlongwana, 'Borderless Boundary?', p. 245.

66 C. Rumford, 'Theorising Borders', *Journal of Social Theory*, 9, 2 (2006), p. 157.

67 M.R. Rupiyah, 'A Historical Study of Land Mines in Zimbabwe, 1963–1995', *Zambesia*, 22, 1 (1995), p. 63.

68 For example, O.J. Martínez, *Border and People: Life and Society in the US–Mexico Borderlands* (Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 1994), p. xviii.

69 PC–JH, E. Zako (border region settler), Gwenzi, Chipinge, Zimbabwe, 24 December 2018.

70 M. Baud and W. van Schendel, 'Towards a Comparative History of Borderlands', *Journal of World History*, 8, 2 (1997), p. 211.

71 See MacGonagle, *Crafting Identity in Zimbabwe*, p. 20.

72 See Patrício, *Ndaу Identity in Mozambique and Zimbabwe Borderland*.

73 A. Daimon, 'Commuter Migration across Artificial Frontiers: The Case of Partitioned Communities along the Zimbabwe–Mozambique Border', *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 31, 4 (2016), pp. 463–79.

74 T.M. Zhou, 'Partition of Africa and Impact of Borders on African Societies in Colonial Zimbabwe', in F. Duri and N. Marongwe (eds), *A Social History of Zimbabwean Borderlands and Beyond since the Colonial Period* (Gweru, Booklove Publishers, 2018), pp. 73–131.

appeasing cultural spirits (*marombo*) and memorial services (*kurovaguva*).⁷⁵ Influenced by MacGonagle's research on the Ndaui identity in Mozambique and Zimbabwe borderland, Patrício offers a nuanced analysis of the role of state borders in African communities. He is of the opinion that cultural communities living astride a border are held together by common culture, which in turn drives people's movement across state borders.⁷⁶ Patrício's argument builds on earlier research by Cooper, who argues that cross-border interaction in remote borderlands is influenced largely by historical ties.⁷⁷ Another common thread in the research undertaken by these scholars is that the need to survive in the border regions has forced inhabitants to forge a transnational identity,⁷⁸ which explains the development of a Ndaui cross-border community that enjoys unbounded movement in the search for resources and opportunities in the borderland. This, therefore, makes border regions areas of trans-boundary flow.

Regardless of constraints imposed by the border, Ndaui borderland inhabitants conduct regular cross-border ceremonies in line with their culture.⁷⁹ As cultural and historical limits extend beyond the state border, Ndaui borderland residents easily traverse the boundary, engaging freely with their co-ethnic members in the borderland.⁸⁰ This reality has considerably reduced the significance of the border as a government mechanism to regulate the movement of people and commodities.⁸¹

The Emergence of an Asymmetric Borderland Economic Environment

Tornimbeni's contribution to the cross-border migration discourse of the Ndaui is worth highlighting in this study.⁸² His argument is that economic inequality in the Ndaui borderland after the establishment of the boundary, particularly on the Mozambican side, compelled the Ndaui to cross the border into what was then Southern Rhodesia (later Zimbabwe) in search of job opportunities.⁸³ This lends credence to Nerves's argument that most Ndaui men from Mozambique crossed into Southern Rhodesia in search of employment.⁸⁴ The dependence on Southern Rhodesia for survival led to what Daimon describes as the development of 'commuter border settlements in the Zimbabwe–Mozambique borderland'.⁸⁵ According to Grier, dwellers in what he calls 'commuter settlements' crossed the border during the day to undertake economic activity in Chipinge border regions of Zimbabwe and then returned home to Mozambique at the end of the working day.⁸⁶ The Ndaui community thus manipulated the state of borderlessness to meet

75 J. Hlongwana, 'A People of Two Worlds? Reflections on the Role of Cross-Border Ethnicity in Sustaining Partitioned Ndaui Community in Mozambique and Zimbabwe', in Duri and Marongwe (eds), *A Social History of Zimbabwean Borderlands*, p. 135.

76 Patrício, *Ndaui Identity in Mozambique and Zimbabwe Borderland*, pp. 7–11.

77 F. Cooper, 'Networks, Moral Discourse and History', in T.M. Callaghy, R. Kassimir and R. Latham (eds), *Intervention and Trans-Nationalism in Africa: Global–Local Networks of Power* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 23–46.

78 Flynn, "'We are the Border'", p. 315.

79 The cultural ceremonies include appeasing cultural spirits (*marombo*) and chiefs' enthroning (*kugadza mambo*).

80 Patrício, *Ndaui Identity in Mozambique and Zimbabwe Borderland*, pp. 9–11.

81 PC–JH, E.Z.S. Chikaka (councillor), Muzite, Chipinge, Zimbabwe, 7 December 2015.

82 C. Tornimbeni, 'Migrant Workers and State Boundaries: Reflections on the Transnational Debate from the Colonial Past in Mozambique', *Lusotopie*, 11 (2004), pp. 107–20.

83 J. Hlongwana, 'Estate Farming and the Ndaui People's Displacement from Zimbabwe into Mozambique, c.1940–2010', *New Contree*, 86 (2021), p. 72.

84 J.M. Nerves, 'Economy, Society and Labour Migration in Central Mozambique 1930–1965: A Case Study of Manica Province' (PhD thesis, University of London, 1998), p. 37.

85 Daimon, 'Commuter Migration across Artificial Frontiers'; cross-border settlements are sometimes referred to as trans-border communities in this article.

86 B.C. Grier, *Invisible Hands: Child Labour and the State in Colonial Zimbabwe* (Portsmouth, Heinemann, 2006), p. 163.

their subaltern economic needs, which do not exclude ‘illegal’ business practices on both sides of the border.⁸⁷

Politics and War Furthering Ndaus Subaltern Economies since the 1970s

In the context of this article, a ‘subaltern’ economy simply refers to the unsanctioned, lower level, shadow, subterranean or underground⁸⁸ (usually not morally acceptable) economic activities that have been adopted by borderland inhabitants as a result of economic and other hardships. After decades of being ignored by governments, borderland inhabitants display limited emotional commitment to the relevant political systems. We must note in this regard that the Ndaus have been marginalised partly because of their political role in both Zimbabwe and Mozambique. In Mozambique, for example, Renamo, whose leadership is dominated by Ndaus,⁸⁹ fought a brutal civil war against the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Frelimo).⁹⁰ The civil war forced thousands of Mozambicans, mainly the Ndaus from Mossurize district, to relocate to Zimbabwe.⁹¹ Furthermore, according to interviewees, the Ndaus politicians Alfonso Dlakama and Ndabaningi Sithole, by winning parliamentary seats, frustrated proponents’ prospects of establishing one-party state systems in Mozambique and Zimbabwe, respectively.⁹² It has been argued that marginalisation is a weapon with which to punish the Ndaus for challenging the Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front) (ZANU[PF]) and Frelimo in Zimbabwe and Mozambique, respectively.⁹³ Consequently, the underground survival pursuits by the Ndaus are adaptive strategies against segregation and other kinds of injustices committed by the two states against them.

There is the belief that the Mozambican and Zimbabwean governments still fail to accommodate borderland communities in their developmental programmes.⁹⁴ Drawing on the same line of reasoning, the utilitarian perspective avers that governments exist mainly for the enhancement of happiness of the citizenry by securing essential services, notably social amenities, security and infrastructure.⁹⁵ However, when such communities perceive that their economic well-being is not taken into account by the government concerned, they cease supporting the state and give priority to economic activities⁹⁶ that secure food and a regular income despite their illegality.

87 Hlongwana, ‘Borderless Boundary?’, p. 245.

88 See O. Lippert and M. Walker, (eds), *Underground Economy: Global Evidence of its Size and Impact* (Vancouver, Fraser Institute, 1997); F. Schneider and D. Enste, ‘Shadow Economies, around the World: Size, Causes and Consequences’, *IMF Working Paper*, WP/00/26 February 2000; F.P.T. Duri, *Resilience Amid Adversity: Informal Coping Mechanisms to the Zimbabwean Crisis during the New Millennium* (Gweru, Booklove Publishers, 2016), p. 12.

89 M.E. Mubai, ‘People’s War: Military Supplies During the Mozambican Civil War 1976–1992’, *Southern Journal for Contemporary History*, 45, 2 (2020), pp. 125–51.

90 See S. Regalia, ‘The Resurgence of Conflict in Mozambique: Ghosts from the Past and Brakes to Peaceful Democracy’, *Notes de l’Ifri* (French Institute of International Relations) (2017), available at <https://www.ifri.org/en/publications/notes-de-lifri/resurgence-conflict-mozambique-ghosts-past-and-brakes-peaceful-democracy>, retrieved 5 January 2023.

91 A. Alao, ‘The Metamorphosis of the Unorthodox: The Integration and Early Development of the Zimbabwean National Army’, in N. Bhebe and T.O. Ranger (eds), *Soldiers in Zimbabwe’s Liberation War, vol. 1* (Harare, University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1995), p. 114; Regalia, ‘The Resurgence of Conflict in Mozambique’.

92 PC–JH, E. Zako (border region settler), Gwenzu, Chipinge, Zimbabwe, 24 December 2018.

93 PC–JH, R. Jambaya (cross-border farmer), Zamchiya, Chipinge, Zimbabwe 13 December 2015.

94 Hlongwana, ‘Borderless Boundary?’, p. 96; PC–JH, E. Zako (border region settler), Gwenzu, Chipinge, Zimbabwe, 24 December 2018.

95 U.B. Odoemelam and E. Aisien, ‘Political Socialisation and Nation Building: The Case of Nigeria’, *European Scientific Journal*, 9,11 (2013), pp. 237–53.

96 E. Banfield, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (Glencoe, The Press, 1958), pp. 17–18.

Cross-Border Trade in Illicit Beer and Cannabis

Generally speaking, the border region on the Mozambican side is in a state of neglect in terms of infrastructure development.⁹⁷ Basic social services are not provided, and meaningful employment opportunities are non-existent.⁹⁸ The Ndauborderland is some distance from industrial cities such as Beira, Maputo, Mutare and Harare in the adjacent countries. The nearest towns are Chimoio in Mozambique and Chipinge in Zimbabwe.⁹⁹ However, Chimoio and Chipinge are primarily agricultural towns and, as such, provide limited employment opportunities to the local people. Since the late 19th century, many men from the borderland have opted to seek employment as workers in the South African mines.¹⁰⁰

On the Mozambican side, some Ndauborderland people have devised strategies to alleviate their plight. Ndauborderland women from the Mozambican side of the borderland, for example, brew potent alcoholic beverages such as *chikeke*, *sope/nips*, *mutsaratsara* and *chipedzaviki*.¹⁰¹ The beers are distilled from bananas, sugar-cane and the wild fruits *matamba*, *mbura*, *tsubvu* and others.¹⁰² These brews are then smuggled into Zimbabwe and are popular with the local people. Some chiefs and even certain state officials are involved in criminal activities of selling and consuming these beers.¹⁰³ In addition to alcoholic beverages, Mozambicans have also been smuggling marijuana across the border into Zimbabwe for sale to the locals since the 1970s.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, marijuana plantations are common in the unpoliced borderlands of Mozambique such as Muzite, Nyakufera, Nyabanga, Cita and Chikwekwete.¹⁰⁵ Amali argues that individuals and trucks cross into Mozambique via remote unpoliced areas of the border at night, and goes on to note that Mozambican cross-border drug traders are difficult to apprehend because they network with relatives and acquaintances resident in Zimbabwe.¹⁰⁶ While cannabis and the intoxicating beers from Mozambique known as *Terteçao*, *Lauzane*, *Zed* and others are traded in the Zimbabwean and Mozambican border regions, even larger quantities of the contraband are sold clandestinely in Zimbabwe's big cities Harare, Mutare, Bulawayo and others.¹⁰⁷ These cities are lucrative markets for beer and cannabis. Although there are police roadblocks mounted along major roads leading to the metropolitan cities to curb those economic activities viewed as unacceptable, and despite some interceptions being made,¹⁰⁸ one informant observed that traffickers continue to evade the police. Respondents also allege that beers from the borderland are readily consumed in the big cities, especially by the youth.¹⁰⁹ Commenting on cross-border transgressions in the borderland, Duri argues that international borders are extremely porous during times of debilitating socio-economic hardship. People

97 J. Hlongwana, 'Fertility Trends among the Ndauborderland People: A Case of Gwenzi Area in Chipinge District, Zimbabwe (1980–2019)', (MSc dissertation, Great Zimbabwe University, 2019), p. 34.

98 Hlongwana, 'Borderless Boundary?', p. 96.

99 PC–JH, E. Zako (border region settler), Gwenzi, Chipinge, Zimbabwe, 24 December 2018.

100 S.F. Malan, E.J. Carruthers and B.M. Theron, *History of South Africa, 1806–1902* (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 1997), p. 13.

101 PC–JH, R. Jambaya (cross-border farmer), Zamchiya, Chipinge, Zimbabwe 13 December 2015.

102 PC–JH, E. Zako (border region settler), Gwenzi, Chipinge, Zimbabwe, 24 December 2018.

103 PC–JH, F.B. Kwanayi (border region settler), Mupingo, Mossurize, Mozambique, 20 December 2016.

104 PC–JH, R. Jambaya (cross-border farmer), Zamchiya, Chipinge, Zimbabwe 13 December 2015.

105 Hlongwana, 'A People of Two Worlds?', p. 142.

106 I. Amali, 'Informal Survival Strategies across National Borders: A History of Mozambican Nationals in Umtali, Rhodesia, 1897–1975' (BA Hons mini-research essay, Great Zimbabwe University, 2014), p. 27.

107 PC–JH, E.Z.S. Chikaka (councillor), Muzite, Chipinge, Zimbabwe, 7 December 2015.

108 R. Mphisa and S. Sithole, 'Five Years Jail for Possessing *Mbanje* [Cannabis]', *News Day*, Harare, 16 January 2021, p. 1.

109 PC–JH, B. Mutondoro (border region settler), Mugondi, Chipinge, Zimbabwe, 5 December 2018.

then easily devise a plethora of mechanisms to survive.¹¹⁰ But other forms of smuggling have been recorded, as we shall see.

Smuggling Clothes into Zimbabwe

For many years, Zimbabwe had been the source of basic commodities for Mozambicans, but that situation changed radically after 2000. The Zimbabwean economy collapsed in 2000 following the controversial land reform programme. This had a negative effect on the entire Zimbabwean economy because the supply of basic commodities had previously been the mainstay of the Zimbabwean economy.¹¹¹ The Zimbabwean economy also had to contend with the impact of the sanctions imposed by the USA and her allies in the European Union in 2011. Zimbabwe continues to be plagued by a struggling economy and the impact of sanctions.¹¹² The Ndau community in the borderland made capital of the void left by the formal economy in the post-2000 period and continues to do so by participating in the informal market. Zimbabwean Ndau entrepreneurs sneak into Mozambique and, using ethnic relations and illegal identity documents, move about undetected while purchasing wares in Mozambique. Articles of clothing are among the goods smuggled into Zimbabwe, usually during the night through undesignated entry points.¹¹³ The wares from the Far East, especially China, are obtained in Chimoio, the capital of Manica province in Mozambique. The items include second-hand clothes (known as *mabhero* in the local vernacular), footwear and other items.¹¹⁴ The smuggled goods are sold in Zimbabwe in open spaces and the townships.¹¹⁵ The impact of these illegally imported goods from Mozambique into Zimbabwe has apparently been felt by both government and industry.¹¹⁶ Following the ubiquitous presence of these commodities and the fall in business in the Zimbabwean textile sector, the Zimbabwean government banned the sale of second-hand clothes in the country in 2016.¹¹⁷ While some smugglers have been arrested, articles of clothing brought in surreptitiously from Mozambique continue to be sold on the Zimbabwean side of the borderland.¹¹⁸ By 2021, the textile industry was reportedly struggling to recover in the face of stiff competition from the cheap Chinese goods smuggled from Mozambique.¹¹⁹

While the marginalised Ndau border communities earn a living through illegal trade in clothing, formal business remains constrained, and the Zimbabwean and Mozambican governments have lost valuable income because of the cross-border movement of undeclared goods.¹²⁰

110 Duri, 'Negotiating the Zimbabwe–Mozambique Border'.

111 M. Masiwa, 'The Fast Track Resettlement Programme in Zimbabwe: Disparity between Policy Design and Implementation', *Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, 94, 379 (2005), p. 221.

112 'Zimbabwe: Farmers Suffer the Effects of Sanctions', *Herald*, Harare, 11 April 2011, available at <https://www.herald.co.zw/farmers-suffer-effects-of-sanctions/>, retrieved 5 January 2023; M.Chifamba, 'Zimbabwe's Economic Woes: Sanctions or Poor Governance', *African Report*, Paris, 21 October 2021.

113 Z. Murwira, 'Zimbabwe: Forbes Border Porous, Parliament Heard', *Herald*, 15 June 2015, p. 1.

114 PC–JH, B. Mutondoro (border region settler), Mugondi, Chipinge, Zimbabwe, 5 December 2018.

115 PC–JH, R.Jambaya (cross-border farmer), Zamchiya, Chipinge, Zimbabwe 13 December 2015.

116 R. Butaumocho, 'Billion-Dollar Used Clothes Industry Tears Apart Textiles', *Herald*, 31 July 2020, available at <https://www.herald.co.zw/billion-dollar-used-clothes-industry-tears-apart-textiles/>, retrieved 5 January 2023.

117 N. Tshuma, 'Reverse Ban on Second Hand Clothes: MPs', *Chronicle*, Bulawayo, 6 August 2015, available at <https://www.chronicle.co.zw/reverse-ban-on-second-hand-clothes-mps/>, retrieved 5 January 2023.

118 PC–JH, B. Mutondoro (border region settler), Mugondi, Chipinge, Zimbabwe, 5 December 2018.

119 P. Dembedza, 'Textiles Smuggling Cases Increase', *Herald*, 9 November 2021, available at <https://www.herald.co.zw/textiles-smuggling-cases-increase/>, retrieved 5 January 2023.

120 L. Gumbo, 'Chinamasa Defends Imports Ban', *Chronicle*, 23 June 2016, available at <https://www.chronicle.co.zw/chinamasa-defends-imports-ban/>, retrieved 5 January 2023.

Illegal Importation of Fuel from Mozambique

Another thriving illegal practice is that of fuel trading. The illegal importation of fuel into Zimbabwe from Mozambique is a consequence of the fall of the Zimbabwean economy in the 21st century.¹²¹ Since 2000, Zimbabwe has faced a chronic fuel shortage as a result of the limited availability of foreign currency reserves in the country.¹²² The problem is exacerbated by corrupt practices in government. A leading newspaper alleges that certain untrustworthy businessmen were allocated foreign currency from the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe to procure fuel for the country but channelled the money to the black market instead of buying fuel.¹²³ The result was that a deep, incessant fuel problem arose in the country, especially after 2018. The Zimbabwean government responded to the problem by decentralising the procurement and selling of fuel in the country. In addition, a green fuel plant was set up in 2009 in Zimbabwe's Chipinge district. While these initiatives eased the fuel shortage in Zimbabwe, borderland communities exploited the problems that still remained. The decentralisation process made fuel available, but it was (and still is) inaccessible to most residents because it is sold on the black market in exchange for US dollars.¹²⁴ Equally, the use of green fuel has its problems because it is unpopular with motorists who believe this fuel is uneconomic because it burns easily and the vehicles cover fewer miles.¹²⁵ It is also claimed that it damages engines.¹²⁶ Consequently, instead of exposing cars to the dangers of the green fuel, car owners resort to non-blended fuel from Mozambique.¹²⁷ The fuel situation in Mozambique is remarkably different; Mozambican fuel is attractive to Zimbabweans because it is not blended with ethanol.¹²⁸

Both Mozambicans and Zimbabweans in the borderland partake in smuggling and selling fuel on the Zimbabwean side of the border.¹²⁹ Individuals who participate are aware of the dangers inherent – such as that it is a highly flammable substance. Upon reaching their destinations, the dealers store the cross-border fuel surreptitiously in pits dug carefully beneath heavily leafed trees to keep the fuel cool and, importantly, as far away as possible from dwellings that could be damaged by fire.¹³⁰ This explains why no fatalities have yet been recorded in the borderland. The smuggled fuel is buried everywhere in the borderland, ready to be sold by both informal fuel dealers and those running filling stations.¹³¹ As a result of the popularity of smuggled fuel from Mozambique, the sale of official fuel on the open market in Zimbabwe, at the time of writing (2022), has lost its significance.¹³² Informal fuel dealers in the borderland have taken over this market.¹³³

121 M. Masiyiwa, 'The Fast Track Resettlement Programme in Zimbabwe: Disparity between Policy Design and Implementation', *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, 94, 379 (2005), pp. 217–24.

122 S. Nyakanyanga, 'Why Zimbabwe is Running on Empty Again', *New Humanitarian*, 23 July 2019, available at <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2019/07/23/zimbabwe-economic-crisis-inflation-fuel>, retrieved 5 January 2023.

123 A. Moyo, 'Corruption Worsens Fuel Shortages', *Herald*, 31 December 2018, available at <https://www.herald.co.zw/corruption-worsens-fuel-shortages/>, retrieved 5 January 2023.

124 P. Chikonyora, 'Stringent Regulations for USSFuel', *Herald*, 10 March 2020, available at <https://www.herald.co.zw/stringent-regulations-for-us-fuel/>, retrieved 5 January 2023.

125 D. Mabumbo and P. Mafongoya, 'Motorists' Perceptions and Attitude towards Ethanol Blended Fuel in Zimbabwe', *Journal of Energy and Power Engineering*, 13 (2019), p. 73.

126 O. Gagara, 'Zimbabwe: E15 Damages Nissan Vehicles', *Zimbabwe Independent*, Bulawayo, 6 December 2013, available at <https://bulawayo24.com/index-id-news-sc-national-byo-39878-article.htm>, retrieved 5 January 2023.

127 PC–JH, B. Mutondoro (border region settler), Mugondi, Chipinge, Zimbabwe, 5 December 2018.

128 PC–JH, R. Jambaya (cross-border farmer), Zamchiya, Chipinge, Zimbabwe 13 December 2015.

129 K. Nyangani, 'Police Bust Fuel, Dagga Smugglers', *News Day*, 27 July 2021, available at <https://www.newsday.co.zw/local-news/article/27588/police-bust-fuel-dagga-smugglers>, retrieved 5 January 2023.

130 PC–JH, R. Jambaya (cross-border farmer), Zamchiya, Chipinge, Zimbabwe 13 December 2015.

131 PC–JH, B. Mutondoro (border region settler), Mugondi, Chipinge, Zimbabwe, 5 December 2018.

132 PC–JH, E.Z.S. Chikaka (councillor), Muzite, Chipinge, Zimbabwe, 7 December 2015.

133 L. Mapepa, 'Fuel Smuggling Syndicate Busted', *Manica Post*, Manica, 3 June 2022.

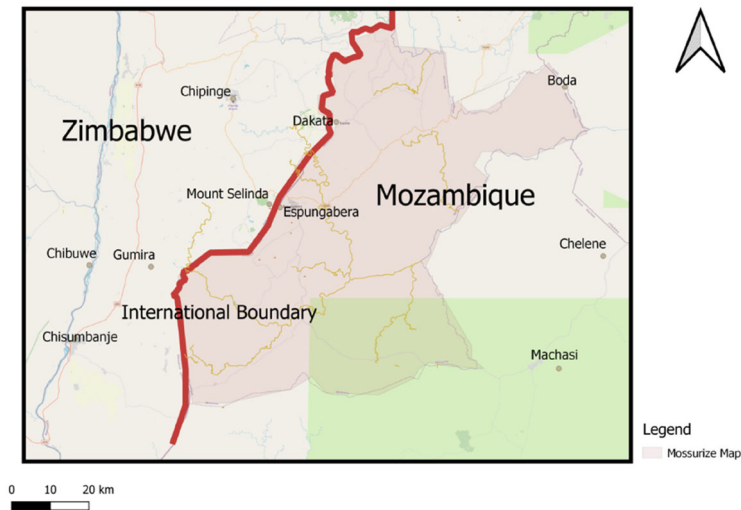


Figure 2. Hunting areas in the borderland region. (Source: Google Maps, distrito de Mossurize, modified by Lino Hlongwana, 2022.)

Poverty-stricken communities sometimes disregard any form of border that they might feel infringe their political rights, about which they have not been consulted or that prevents them from having enough food while there seems to be an abundance elsewhere. This seems to be especially true for game reserves in the border region, as the next section will discuss.¹³⁴

Poaching in the Borderland Game Reserves

Historical sources indicate that hunting has traditionally been one of the Ndaus' main economic pursuits.¹³⁵ Over the years, it was practised widely during the dry season. It is a source of meat throughout the year, and, in times of drought, people resorted to hunting as a means of survival.¹³⁶ It was commonly practised in the region between Espungabera and Machasi (see Figure 2).¹³⁷ Although some individuals hunted alone, it was more popular to organise expeditions to distant places commonly referred to as *kwanyamaza* (places with abundant wildlife).¹³⁸

Before the hunting could proceed in an area, permission was sought from the local traditional leader, who, in turn, gave his blessings to the success of the hunt.¹³⁹ According to Ndau tradition, failure to consult the local leader was a serious transgression that attracted misfortune to the hunting party.¹⁴⁰ This, in a way, ensured that the natural animal population was preserved.¹⁴¹

In the more recent past, however, especially from about the 1980s, the Ndau borderland communities have resorted increasingly to poaching in the nearby Mozambican game reserves to obtain meat for selling.¹⁴² Some respondents opined that the advent of

134 Cf. Hlongwana, 'Borderless Boundary?', p. 96.

135 Hlongwana, 'Borderless Boundary?' p. 122.

136 W. Roder, *The Sabi Valley Irrigation Projects* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 63.

137 PC-JH, D. Gwenzi (Chief), Gwenzi, Chipinge, Zimbabwe, 5 December 2015.

138 PC-JH, W. Mututu (cross-border farmer), Nyakufera, Mossurize, Mozambique, 11 December 2016.

139 NAZ, N1/1/11, Annual Report, 7 March 1896.

140 PC-JH, T. Mazayamba (cross-border farmer), Makuu, Mossurize, Mozambique, 15 December 2016.

141 PC-JH, W. Mututu (cross-border farmer), Nyakufera, Mossurize, Mozambique, 11 December 2016.

142 PC-JH, T. Mazayamba (cross-border farmer), Makuu, Mossurize Mozambique, 15 December 2016.

independence in Mozambique and Zimbabwe in 1975 and 1980, respectively, changed people's perceptions of hunting game. One respondent remarked that the 'independence mentality' destroyed all restraint and the local communities tended to hunt animals in the game reserves with impunity.¹⁴³ Several interviewees gave a grim picture of the situation in the game reserves where several animal species have been depleted and others wiped out.¹⁴⁴

Cattle Rustling

Apart from illegal game poaching, cattle rustling is another cross-border illegal practice. Informants interviewed in this research expressed concern over the increasing incidences of stock theft in the Ndau borderland.¹⁴⁵ Expressing similar sentiments, a Zimbabwean named Mahaka, cited in the *Manica Post*, remarked: '[t]here is a high prevalence of stock theft because if our stock enters the Mozambican territory, it is difficult to repossess them'.¹⁴⁶ The cattle are reportedly being stolen from Zimbabwe by Mozambican cattle rustlers and sold in Mozambique. For many years, people had been blaming Renamo fighters for stealing cattle.¹⁴⁷ However, when stock theft continued after the civil war had ended, it became clear that cattle were stolen by non-combatants. Informants alleged that the stolen animals had a ready market in locations in Mozambique such as Dongi-Redhuna, Machaze, Muxungwe and other places.¹⁴⁸ Cattle rustlers apparently devised cunning tactics to prevent suspicion in the community. It was alleged that stolen cattle were driven off and kept illegally in the Mozambican game reserves before being released for the market.¹⁴⁹ It was argued that, unlike the situation in Zimbabwe, where police are involved in the selling of cattle between parties, such contingent measures against cattle theft are not enforced in the remote Mozambican part of the borderland.¹⁵⁰ Crucially, cattle rustlers, apart from exploiting borderlessness, capitalise on the international border, which bars Zimbabwean police from crossing into Mozambique in pursuit of stolen animals. As the Mozambican part of the borderland is largely unpoliced, it has become a safe haven for cattle rustlers, who at times sell dried meat from stolen cattle to unsuspecting Zimbabwean families in the borderland.¹⁵¹ Indeed, Ndau communities have lost their cattle largely to Mozambican Ndaus operating illegally.

Conclusion

This article draws attention to the historic 'borderlessness' of the Ndau communities on both sides of the Zimbabwean–Mozambican border since the colonial border demarcation in 1891. Initially, the reason for engaging in a borderless way was that these formal demarcations not only created economic challenges for the Ndau to survive in the border region but also divided the Ndau people socio-culturally into two countries. The colonial governments on both sides paid limited attention to the relatively remote border areas for decades, until political turmoil in Mozambique and broader country challenges, especially in Zimbabwe since the mid 20th century, required governments to implement policy in the

143 PC–JH, W. Mututu (cross-border farmer), Nyakufera, Mossurize, Mozambique, 11 December 2016.

144 PC–JH, T. Mazayamba (cross-border farmer), Makuu, Mossurize Mozambique, 15 December 2016; B. Mutondoro (border region settler), Mugondi, Chipinge, Zimbabwe, 5 December 2018.

145 PC–JH, E. Zako (border region settler), Gwenzi, Chipinge, Zimbabwe, 24 December 2018; W. Mututu (cross-border farmer), Nyakufera, Mossurize, Mozambique, 11 December 2016.

146 R. Mapepa, 'Cattle Theft in the Borderland', *Manica Post*, 23–29 May 2014, p. 1.

147 V. Masikati, 'Zimbabwe: Mozambique Border Crisis Escalates', *iHarare*, Harare, 12 February 2017.

148 T. Chitagu, 'Cross-Border Cattle Rustlers Cause Havoc', *Southern Eye*, Bulawayo, 10 April 2014, p. 1.

149 PC–JH, T. Mazayamba (cross-border farmer), Makuu, Mossurize Mozambique, 15 December 2016.

150 PC–JH, W. Mututu (cross-border farmer), Nyakufera, Mossurize, Mozambique, 11 December 2016.

151 See MacGonagle, *Crafting Identity in Zimbabwe*.

Ndau border area. Yet these remained mainly obstacles for the Ndau to overcome in their cross-border activities in order to sustain themselves economically. Whereas illegal cross-border practices decades ago had been acknowledged by governments because of their strong colonially created roots, the recent illegal economic upsurge of borderless practices by Ndau on both sides of the border seems to be thriving well in situations in which any form of governance other than chieftaincies is not accepted and thus breached when occasions arise. The porous border has become a conduit through which to smuggle generally unacceptable commodities. What emerges from the discussion is that the borderland has become, to some, a useful economic illegal zone in which both the police and locals benefit from the location's remoteness and neglect.

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