

Figure 11: Trade at the KwaMshudu border market, 2003



Photograph by Hannie du Plessis

CHAPTER SEVEN

SHOPPING THE BORDER:

THE TRANSFER OF GOODS AT AND ACROSS THE BORDER

Borders – however imperfectly – are significant in the exercise of power relations (especially by the state) over particular areas. They constitute the meeting place of competing territorial systems, and territoriality fundamentally mediates trans-border economic relationships. Borders, as strong barriers to trade, may disadvantage border regions but, if they are permeable, and there are strong complementarities with adjoining territories, they can open up new markets, firm linkages and other positive economic relationships.

Williams, Balaz and Bodnarova (2001:831)

In this chapter I investigate the kinds of economic opportunities created by the existence of the international border. Social interaction necessitated by economic opportunities fosters cultural relations across the international border, as people on one side of the border make their behaviour understood by people on the other side. Similar to the larger forces of globalisation, economic interaction across the southern Mozambique/ South Africa border contributes to the creation of a common lifestyle and common cultural meanings. The economic opportunities created by the international border are one of the major forces creating unity in the borderland in the post-war and post-Apartheid era. Although some cross-border trade is organised along old ties of kinship, new social ties are being created, based on shared interests that unite the inhabitants of the borderlandscape.

Borders: blockades and bridges

Borders are usually defined as obstacles. This is not only true in the case of international borders, but also for many other physical and symbolic borders and boundaries. Borders do not only delineate space, setting apart one area from another, they also regulate the flow of people, goods and ideas into and out of a particular space. Borders create boundaries of belonging and exclusion. The primary function of geopolitical or state borders is to demarcate the territory of the state and to serve as a line along which the movement of people and goods into and out of that territory is controlled. Since states determine access rights across international borders, people with transnational social and economic ties and objectives usually perceive international borders as barriers.

However, because of the nature of international borders as obstacles, or barriers, they are also, simultaneously, creators of economic opportunities. As Donnan and Wilson (1999:90) remark ‘the existence of a border is the very basis of smuggling’. International borders create official economic opportunities, such as jobs for customs officials and border police and income tax for governments, but also many unofficial economic opportunities. These opportunities include the smuggling of weapons, drugs and illegal immigrants as well as a wide range of other contraband articles and services across international borders. Such activities are often referred to as components of the ‘black’, ‘hidden’, ‘shadow’, ‘second’, ‘informal’ or ‘subversive’ economy, because they ignore, contest and subvert the ability of state institutions to control their self-interested domain (Donnan & Wilson 1999:78).

People who make a living from selling goods and services on this ‘black market’ are directly dependent on the very existence of the international border, and

also on the police and military who regulate the border, to make a living. Their ‘battle’ with the international border can be compared with the struggle between the police and criminals within a state. Crime guarantees employment for the police, as it does for many members of the justice system. If the police were to succeed in erasing crime from society, there would be no reason for the existence of a police force. In the same way that the police constantly battle to eradicate crime, the lifeblood of their existence, people who make money from the subversive economy of the international border constantly fight against the very thing that ensures their livelihoods. For these people the international border is not so much an obstacle as it is an economic opportunity or resource.

This is what makes the economy of a borderlandscape different from economic activity elsewhere. Borderlanders live along a potential resource, which they are able to exploit. In the same way that the economic activities of people who live next to rivers differ from those who live in deserts, so too does the economic organisation of the borderland differ from economic organisation of the centre of the state. People living next to rivers can tap that resource for food, power and transport in ways not possible to people who live further away from rivers. Similarly, people living close to international borders can utilise the border as an economic resource. MacGaffey (1991:119) shows that in the case of the Congo, recourse to cross-border trade is an essential strategy for survival in an otherwise ‘disastrous’ economy.

The most obvious examples of the use of the international border as a resource is cross-border smuggling of goods, like the smuggling of drugs across the Nigeria/Benin border (Fadahunsi & Rosa 2002:414-415), and the smuggling of people across the US/ Mexico border (Anzaldua 1999:33 and Andreas 1999:591). Prostitutes and sex workers living on the margins of states also use the border as an economic

resource, attracting, sometimes much wealthier, customers from the other side. Hann and Beller-Hann (1998) describe how prostitution has flourished along the border between north-eastern Turkey and Georgia since the fall of the Soviet Union. Along this border ‘some highly conspicuous foreign women, often exaggerating their distinctiveness through their clothes, hair styles and the use of make-up, took advantage of the opening of this part of Turkey to cash in on opportunities to provide services for which men previously had to travel as far a field as Ankara (p.250).’

However, cross-border smuggling and prostitution are rather extreme examples of the use of the international border as an economic resource. A much more common use of the border as an economic resource is apparent in cross-border trade, in which borderlanders evade taxes and levies. This is especially visible along borders where states with strong economies meet states with weak economies, as along the Republic of Ireland’s border with Northern Ireland¹, the internal German border² and along the United States/ Mexico border³.

¹ In the 1980s thousands of consumers from the Irish Republic flocked to Northern Ireland where, because of lower value added tax on a variety of products, prices were up to a third cheaper than on the Republican side. By the mid-1980s the Irish Republic was experiencing such a severe loss of revenue that it put in plans to limit cross-border shopping. In order to stop the loss of income the Irish government instituted the so-called forty-eight hour rule, whereby people leaving the Republic for less than forty-eight hours could no longer claim tax-free allowances for goods bought across the border. Despite this rule, shoppers continued to cross the border, lured by the huge difference in prices between goods sold in the Republic and goods sold in Northern Ireland. In the late 1980s the forty-eight hour rule was modified, but due to the weakening of the Irish pound, cross-border shopping has been much more modest than in the mid-1980s. On-and-off Irish Republican Army cease-fires and a continuation of war by splinter republican and loyalist groups has further hampered cross-border shopping (Donnan & Wilson 1999:110; Wilson 1995).

² Daphne Berdahl (1999:132-139) illustrates how, shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, borderlanders from East Germany flocked to the Federal Republic to purchase ‘superior’ Western commodities across the border.

³ Along the U.S.-Mexico border Mexicans cross daily to frequent shops in the United States where the goods are of a better quality and much cheaper than in Mexico (Lenderking 1996:191). A plan has even been put forward to construct a footbridge across the international border, linking a shopping mall in the United States with the town of Tijuana in Mexico (Time 2001:17).

Unlike at the centre of states, very different resources exist in the economies of borderlands. Despite the continual trends of globalisation and the making of the 'global village', the state remains an important authority and decision-maker in economic organisation. State mechanisms control taxation, imports and exports, interest rates, currency devaluations and the like. Even the most powerful Multi-National Corporations have to obey the decisions of governments. Borderlandscapes are places where systems of government meet and merge. People living in the borderlandscape have a unique ability, due to their location, of moving from one country to the other, utilising the resources of each to their own benefit. In so doing they come into conflict with the attempts of states to

control the behaviour of its citizens and subjects, to impose morality, to regulate the movement of people and the flow of commodities, and to define what are and what are not marketable goods (Donnan & Wilson 1999:79).

Thus, in the sphere of economic organisation borderlands are also sites of power and struggle. The cross-border movement of trade-goods and commodities challenges the authority and regulatory power of the state in a similar manner as the cross-border movement of people does.

Along the eighty kilometre stretch of international border between Mozambique and South Africa, where the Matutue district meets the KwaZulu-Natal province, two different types of subversive economic trans-border activities can be distinguished, namely the smuggling of goods and the trading in goods at the border markets. This distinction is not only based on the location of trade-networks, but also on the legality of the trade and the dangers associated with it. The SAPS and SANDF view smuggling of goods across the border, predominantly from Mozambique for sale in South Africa in an extremely serious light, especially so in the case of weapons, stolen vehicles and drugs. The first section of this chapter

examines these smuggling activities. I discuss the cross-border smuggling of weapons and drugs at the hand of SANDF statistics, and also the smuggling of clothes, crafts and fish.

Although trade in goods at the border fence is just as illegal as trade in goods ten kilometres away, the latter is more likely to propel the police and soldiers to action as it poses a greater challenge to state control. The border markets have become institutionalised and accepted. Although some activities at border markets are illegal, South African police officers and soldiers allow trading to proceed and maintain a presence at the markets. This sanctioning of the border markets has led them to become important sites in the social life of the borderlandscape. Not only are they meeting places for friends and relatives, they are also legal crossing points for borderlanders since the police and soldiers allow people to move across the border freely on market days. The second section of this chapter analyses the economic and social significance of the border markets, especially in the breakdown of social boundaries.

Cross-border smuggling

According to Fadahunsi and Rosa (2002:398) illegal trade exists in three basic forms: (i) trading in goods and services that are normally forbidden by law (for example, narcotic drugs, prostitution, stolen vehicles, illegal firearms and rare wildlife); (ii), trading in legal goods and services in an illegal manner by avoiding duties and taxes; and (iii), using illegal, unfair practises to attain an unfair advantage (for example, insider trading and black market currency exchange). Based on the goods traded across the Mozambique/ South Africa border, two forms of illegal trade can be

identified, namely, the cross-border smuggling of illegal items (weapons, ammunition, stolen vehicles, narcotic drugs and second-hand clothes) and the illegal trade in legal items (crafts, bush meat, cigarettes and alcohol).

1. Weapons, drugs, stolen vehicles and the ‘Edgars’ trade. Since 1994 international crime syndicates have increasingly viewed South Africa as an easy target for their activities. This has led to a tremendous increase in cross-border drug smuggling, money laundering and prostitution. Nigerian drug syndicates and the Russian and Chinese mafias have all set up bases in South Africa. It is estimated that the illegal importation of goods bypassing the payment of import duties costs South Africa as much as R17 billion per year (Kruys 2002:164).

According to Hennop and McLean (2001:71), the northern KwaZulu-Natal area, bordering Swaziland and Mozambique has been one of the most significant transit routes for illicit firearms entering South Africa. This stretch of border contains many of the main routes formerly used by the liberation movements for smuggling weapons into the country. The former South African government also supplied RENAMO with weapons along transit routes at this border. In the late 1980s and in the run-up to the 1994 South African elections, members of the Inkhata Freedom Party (IFP) and the ANC used these transit routes to procure weapons from Mozambique to use in their struggle. In April 1993 three members of the IFP from KwaNgwanase (Manguzi) were sentenced to twelve years’ imprisonment for the illegal possession and smuggling of arms and ammunition from Mozambique into South Africa (South African Institute of Race Relations, SAIRR 1993/1994: 301). One of the men, who were imprisoned in 1993, told me that chiefs and headmen in the

Manguzi area were involved in the weapons trade and that the same people would run weapons for the ANC and the IFP for commercial profit.

The large quantities of weapons not recovered after the war in Mozambique, much of it buried in caches, creates an abundant source of supply to the criminal markets of southern Africa. According to the police the terrain of this area ‘could almost have been designed for illicit trafficking.’

It is impossible to obtain accurate information on the quantities of illegal firearms crossing into South Africa. According to Hennop and McLean (2001), the quantities seem to have dropped since the peak at the height of political violence in the run-up to the 1994-election in South Africa. Weapons and ammunition are, however, still entering the country at points along border (p.74).

At present, the SANDF still defines the KwaZulu-Natal borders with Mozambique and Swaziland (especially Muzi and the Sambana pass) as major points for the smuggling of weapons into South Africa. The SANDF have no recorded cases of weapons or ammunition leaving South Africa in the past five years. Due to security reasons the SANDF cannot release detailed information on weapons and ammunition smuggled into South Africa from Mozambique and Swaziland. The only information made available is of weapons and ammunitions found entering KwaZulu-Natal from Swaziland and Mozambique during 2002. Table 6 and 7 show the amounts and types of weapons and ammunition confiscated by the SANDF in that year.

Table 6: Weapons confiscated by the SANDF smuggled into South Africa along the southern Mozambique and eastern Swaziland border, 2002.

Description	Number of weapons
Handmade weapon	6
9 mm shotgun	37
38Spec	5
R1 Rifle	1
AK47 Rifle	5
G3 Rifle	1
Shotgun	9
0.22 Rifle	2
Total	66

Source: South African National Defence Force, Jozini

Table 7: Ammunition confiscated by the SANDF smuggled into South Africa along the southern Mozambique and eastern Swaziland border, 2002

Description	Number of rounds
9mm shotgun rounds	229
38Spec rounds	15
R1 Rifle rounds	21
AK47 Rifle rounds	35
12Bore rounds	12
0.22 Rifle rounds	6
G3 Rifle rounds	4
Total	333

Source: South African National Defence Force, Jozini

Apart from weapons and ammunition, contraband, drugs and stolen vehicles are the main items in cross-border smuggling. Soldiers I interviewed along the border state that the smuggling of illegal firearms is not really a large problem. They rarely seize illegal firearms coming across the border. According to the soldiers, stolen vehicles and contraband are the main smuggled items. All major smuggling points for weapons and migrants have also been identified as smuggling points for drugs. According to Major Nxumalo of the SANDF at Jozini, drugs crossing the international borders of Swaziland and Mozambique are of great concern to the SANDF. Between 1993 and 2002 the SANDF confiscated 151, 654 kg of cannabis (*dagga*) along this stretch of border.

Table 8: Cannabis confiscated by kilogram by the SANDF along the KwaZulu-Natal border with Swaziland and Mozambique, 1993-2002.

Year	Total
1993	24 kg
1994	102 kg
1995	356 kg
1996	354 kg
1997	7, 864 kg
1998	2, 462 kg
1999	12, 713 kg
2000	1, 419 kg
2001	6, 837 kg
2002	38, 643 kg
Total	70, 774 kg

Source: South African National Defence Force, Jozini

Drugs flow from both sides of the border. Whilst cannabis flows from Mozambique to South Africa, mandrax flows from South Africa to Swaziland and Mozambique. However, this is not always the rule, since cannabis also flows from

South Africa into neighbouring countries. According to informants, residents of the South African borderland plant cannabis in between cassava to disguise it. When the SANDF or the SAPS discover the cannabis, people blame Mozambican farmers who cross the border to cultivate fields in South Africa. At present the SANDF focuses all its attention on cannabis. They argue that their personnel are not trained to find other narcotic drugs like heroine, cocaine and LSD, although they are certain that these drugs do enter South Africa through Swaziland and Mozambique. Table 8, above, provides some indication of the extensiveness of this trade.

In the same period, from 1993 to 2002, the SANDF recovered 874 vehicles along the border that were hijacked and stolen in South Africa. In many places, there are tyre tracks on both sides of the border where stolen vehicles have transited recently. Certain paths are used particularly for stolen vehicles and others mainly for smuggling contraband (Hennop & McLean 2001:73).

Table 9: Stolen vehicles found along the KwaZulu-Natal border with Swaziland and Mozambique, 1993-2002.

Year	Total
1993	40
1994	29
1995	87
1996	61
1997	29
1998	103
1999	66
2000	148
2001	117
2002	194
Total	874

Source: South African National Defence Force, Jozini

According to police officers I interviewed, most vehicles smuggled across the border are stolen in Durban. Syndicates that operate from as far a field as Malawi, put in orders for stolen vehicles with organisations in Maputo. Partnerships, comprising Mozambicans and South Africans, orchestrate the actual theft of the vehicles. South Africans, based in Durban, usually steal the cars and then hand them over to Mozambicans to drive to Maputo. Police officers also say that there has been a dramatic increase in vehicles hi-jacked in the Manguzi area, especially during the holiday-season. Table 9, above, shows the annual breakdown of stolen vehicles found by the SANDF between 1993 and 2002.

As can be seen in Table 8 and Table 9 there has been an enormous increase in the amounts of narcotic drugs and number of stolen vehicles smuggled across the international border. There are various reasons for this. In the first place the end of the war in Mozambique has opened this area to the free movement of people. This was made easier with the United Nations Operation in Mozambique's (UNOMOZ) successes in de-mining southern Mozambique. People who have flocked into southern Mozambique from various parts of Mozambique and from neighbouring countries have entered an extremely profitable business transferring goods across this border, which is far less protected than South Africa's other international borders. There is no effective policing by the Mozambican government in the area, the result being that the South African Police often cross the border to pursue criminals on the other side. During 2001, while I conducted fieldwork in the area, South African police pursued a group of criminals with stolen vehicles as deep into Mozambique as Salamanga, which is just south of the district capital of Matutuine in Mozambique. The terrain, with the only police officers stationed at Bela Vista, is thus ideally suited for smuggling activities

Another illegal article that is smuggled across the international border is second-hand clothes. This is not a unique phenomenon in Southern Africa. Hansen (2000:61) illustrates vividly that imported second-hand garments played an active part in the growing African preoccupation with clothes from the early decades of the twentieth century. Although clothes are not ‘dangerous’ articles like weapons and drugs, it is illegal to trade in second-hand clothes in South Africa and the smuggling of second-hand clothes across the border is taken very seriously by the South African Police.

Figure 12: Bundles of second-hand clothes ready to be carried across the border, 2002



Photograph by author

Manguzi’s residents refer to the illegal clothes trade in the back streets of the village as ‘Edgars’. However, in contrast with the Edgars of the city, which sells top quality brand name clothing, the Edgars of Manguzi sells second-hand clothing brought to Mozambique from the United States, Canada and other countries to aid the

poor. The clothes are transported from Maputo to Manguzi in huge bundles (see Figure 12). Only women are involved in the trade. Some of them are South African citizens, but the majority are from Mozambique. This corresponds with the trans-border trade via Ressano Garcia, which is dominated by Mozambican women (Peberdy & Crush 2001:116).

In order to buy, transport and sell the clothes, the traders rely on a network of kinship and friendship ties. These ties enable them to survive the journey to Maputo with large amounts of cash in their possession, stay safely in Maputo, and travel back to South Africa and cross the border safely. I conducted interviews with many of these women who stay together in small cottages in Manguzi. The story of one of these women, Catharina Antonio, who was the first person willing to share information on this topic with me, illustrates how the business of smuggling second-hand clothes from Mozambique to South Africa works.

Case 7.1: Catharina Antonio's trade

Catharina came to South Africa in May 2000 after floods destroyed her house in Mahlangeni, close to Maputo. She was pregnant at the time when she travelled to South Africa and delivered her baby shortly after she settled in Manguzi. The daughter was aptly called Flood. Catherina had no family in South Africa with whom she could stay. She found accommodation in a cottage complex constructed of reeds and mud close to the main road in Manguzi village. There were many women who, like herself, had come from Mozambique. One of the women, Susana, told her about the possibility of making money by 'importing' clothes from Maputo. Needing to pay

her rent and unable to find any alternative employment, Catharina decided to join the trade.

Susana introduced Catharina to a group of eight women who were planning a trip to Maputo. They decided to lend Catharina money for transport and to buy a bundle of clothes to enable her to get started. Transport to Maputo and back again costs R100. Women usually walk from Manguzi to Puza, from where they can get transport to Maputo in a pick-up truck. Apart from the R100 per person, the women pay an additional R50 per bale of clothes. Sometimes, the groups of women pool their money and hire a truck to get them to Maputo. This can cost as much as R1, 000 and makes little sense unless each of the women plans to buy two or more bales.

Although they usually pay for their transport individually, the ‘Edgars’ women always travel in groups. It is too dangerous to travel alone. Taxi drivers and others whom they meet along the way know they carry money and would not hesitate to rob them if they were alone. The solidarity of the group ends there. Every woman buys her own bale of clothes and keeps the profit to herself. Travelling together for safety also seems to be a feature of cross-border women traders from Botswana and Zimbabwe (see Cheater 1998 and Muzvidziwa 2001).

The first time she arrived in Maputo Catharina stayed with her mother’s sister. Since many of the women in the ‘Edgars’ trade originally came from Mozambique they can easily find accommodation with relatives or friends in the city. Some, like Catharina, incorporate social visits with their trade. Catharina usually travels to Maputo once a month and stays there for three to four days. During that time she visits her relatives and friends. ‘Edgars’ women who do not have friends or relatives in Maputo usually stay with the people they have travelled with from South Africa. Catharina relates, ‘there is always a place for them to stay with one of us.’ There is an

immense amount of economic support and social solidarity amongst the groups of women who travel together to Maputo. The same women always travel together. Such support is absent amongst the women traders who travel to Durban to buy clothes for re-sale in Mozambique. These women often sleep in taxi ranks or on the streets if they do not have relatives or friends in Durban.

Some of the other 'Edgars' women prefer to travel to and from Maputo in a single day. They described Maputo as expensive and unsafe. From the border it takes between four and five hours to get to Maputo with a van that is usually overloaded. Once in Maputo women walk to the informal shops and stalls located in and around the *Mercado Municipal* (Municipal Market), to purchase bales of clothes, the same size as 300 litre petrol containers. Some bales have huge red crosses on them. Some are plain white and others are marked with American and Japanese flags. The women can tell where the clothes are from since they usually find loose change in the garment pockets. Catharina has found clothes from Taiwan, Germany, Canada and the USA.

The bales of clothes cost anything from R700 to R1, 200. The bales are closed when the women buy them, which make the whole process a bit chancy. Catharina relates, 'you never know what you are getting.' The bales are filled with a particular article of clothing, either shirts or trousers or shoes, never mixed. One time when she arrived back in Manguzi, Catharina discovered that there were holes in all the clothes she bought from insects eating it. At other times the women are very lucky to open up bales with Levi jeans, Addidas sweaters or Nike sneakers.

Once they've concluded their business in Maputo, the women travel back to South Africa. Those who make a one-day return trip usually arrive at the South African border at dusk. Sometimes there are police officers in the area patrolling the border. The women then hang around and wait for them to leave or for nightfall to

cross the border. On one occasion I met two women on the Mozambican side of the border who had waited from Sunday to Wednesday for the border market to take place, so that the soldiers would allow them to cross (see Figure 12). They stayed along the borderline in a temporary shelter made from *ilala* palm leaves.

Apart from their usual problems with the soldiers and police when crossing the border, the ‘Edgars’ women sometimes run into trouble when they try to sell their clothes in Manguzi. In September 2002 police raided the women’s informal stalls and confiscated all their clothes. In protest the women marched to the Traditional Authority (‘tribal’) and municipal offices. They alleged that the owner of PEP Stores had tipped off the police since no one bought clothes from them anymore. At the meeting with chief Tembe and all ‘Edgars’ women, police officers explained that they heard rumours that the women were smuggling weapons and drugs in their bales.⁴ This was the second time the police had confiscated Catharina’s clothes. On the previous occasion the police told her that she had been selling stolen goods from Maputo. The police took all her clothes and said that she must pay ‘tax’ to get it. She gave the officer R200 to retrieve the bale.

2. Crafts and fish. The major ‘legal articles’ smuggled from Mozambique and sold in South Africa are crafts and fish. Most of the craftwork sold in Manguzi comes from Mozambique. Some hats and cups sold in Manguzi even say Ponta Malongane or Ponta do Ouro on them. Young men purchase these crafts and also paintings on the streets of Maputo and sell them at two petrol stations in Manguzi and elsewhere in South Africa (see Figure 13). Joa Fakude, one of the men I spent some time with, could not speak a word of Zulu and forever looked over his shoulder to see whether

⁴ Shortly after this incidence the police found five leopard skins in a bale of second-hand clothes smuggled from Mozambique. An investigation revealed that the skins were brought from Kenya and were ordered by a man in Jozini for use in a traditional ceremony.

the police were following him. He has a house and a wife and kids in Maputo and buys his curios at the Xipamanine market. The arts and crafts come from Beira, Quelimane and even from as far as Cameroon and Rwanda. On a regular visit to South Africa, which last about three weeks, Joa says that he makes as much as R500, especially if he goes there during the school holidays when most tourists visit the area. The craft trade in Manguzi is extremely miniscule compared with that of Hluhluwe and Sodwana, further south. Throughout the village there are probably never more than five places where one can buy arts and crafts. Of these, all but one is run by Mozambicans.

Figure 13: Crafts smuggled from Mozambique for sale in South Africa, 2003



Photograph by Wayne Matthews

Fish is the most important source of protein in the borderland.⁵ The two most popular sources of fish in the area are the Indian Ocean and the Pongola (Maputo) River. Most fish sold at the borderland markets comes from Mozambique, rather than from the renowned fish kraals at Kosi Bay (De Clercq 1971).

Male Mozambican fishermen and female South African vendors dominate the cross-border trade. These trade-networks between fishing camps in Mozambique and fish-markets in Maputo and South Africa predate the Mozambican war (McGregor 1997:15). Mbangweni and KwaMshudu are the two major points along the border where fish are 'smuggled' into South Africa. At KwaMshudu fish is only brought across the border on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Fishermen from Mozambique transport the fish to the border. Women then purchase it and transport it to Manguzi for re-sale. The fish bought at KwaMshudu comes from as far as Lake Piti and Lake Chingute in the Maputo Elephant Reserve (see Map 3). There are no regulations for the trade in fish at KwaMshudu. Any person can purchase the fish at the border-market and transport it for re-sale in Manguzi.

At Mbangweni, where fish is brought across the border each day, there is a more regulated system in place. Most of the fish bought at the international border is caught at Lake Mandejene. Fishermen there employ South African women, to collect the fish in Mozambique and then to transport it and to re-sell it at KwaSkimelela, a trading centre along the tar road leading to Manguzi. A small group of women are also involved in transporting the fish to Ndumu. The system is not regulated through kinship ties or friendship ties. If a woman wishes to join, she approaches a fisherman

⁵ Maputaland was historically disease ridden and unsuitable for keeping cattle. Furthermore, due to nutrient-poor soils the area has a low agriculture potential (Harries 1994:10-11). These factors have led local people to develop a reliance on the natural environment for food. Local people utilise a range of wild fruits and vegetables and used to hunt all sorts of small buck for food. The depletion of fauna in the area due to the Nagana Campaign and hunting has increased local people's reliance on fish as a food source (Minaar 1989:1-3).

at Lake Mandejene and asks him for work. All the woman needs is her own bucket to carry the fish. The fisherman gives her R20 for transport to KwaSkimelela. The woman has to take back all money she makes from her sales to the fisherman and earns a daily amount of between R15 and R25, depending on her sales (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Women traders bringing fish across the border for sale in South Africa, 2002



Photograph by author

Since the end of the Mozambican war, control over fishing resources has become a problem in Matutuine. Demobilised soldiers, immigrants from Maputo and South Africa, returnees and locals all compete for control over this valuable resource. McGregor (1997:15) documented a case in Catuane, close to Lake Mandejene, where local leaders tried to banish independent foreign fishermen from their area. Local

headmen also alleged that the bachelor fishermen demanded sex from the women vendors who came to purchase fish from them. Fishermen explained to McGregor (1997:15) that ‘women traders from South Africa or elsewhere in Mozambique often walked long distances to purchase fish. The women would arrive in the evening, and ask the fishermen for a place to stay: “So where are they to stay? We have only one-room shacks,” the fishermen argued.’

Border markets

There are three informal markets along the border of KwaZulu-Natal with Mozambique: Puza, Muzi and Mbangweni (see Map 4). The border markets are both economically and socially significant. They are places where people meet to trade fish, palm wine, beer, bread, clothes and a range of other articles. They are also places where one can obtain a range of services, from making a phone call to getting a haircut to consulting a doctor. Relatives living in different countries cross the border ‘legally’ under SANDF and SAPS supervision to meet at the border markets.

1. Puza: The Drinking Place. As stated in the previous chapter, Puza or KwaPuza literally means the place of drinking and local people say it is the birthplace of palm wine. Due to the sandy roads one has to traverse, it takes almost thirty-five minutes to drive from Manguzi to Puza. This market has been operational since 1992. At first it was held next to the border post at Farazela. But, in 1995 the local people moved the border to KwaPuza. Although it is a bit more difficult to travel to Puza, informants feel it is better to be further from the border police.

Figure 15: Puza market, 2002



Photograph by Hannie du Plessis

The stalls operated by the women vendors all sell the same articles, neatly displayed in and around a cooler box (see Figure 15). Some even hang small packets of chips on the border fence using it as a display for their goods. With few exceptions, vendors buy all goods in shops at Manguzi and re-package it for sale at

the market. For instance, vendors would buy a 30kg bag of maize meal and then re-package it into smaller bags that are sold for R2 each.

The market at Puza takes place on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The first people start to arrive at around eight o'clock in the morning and the market only closes down at around six o'clock at night. The vendors at the market coming from South Africa are predominantly women. In general these vendors sell processed goods, while vendors from Mozambique, both male and female, sell unprocessed goods. The South African vendors set up their little stalls inside no-man's land along the Mozambican side of the border fence (see Figure 16). There are no stalls on the South African side of the border. Here all the space is taken up by transport vehicles, parked in a straight line all along the border fence.

In twenty-five visits to Puza market I have drawn up the following inventory of articles sold by this group of vendors. These goods are: fruit (apples, mangoes, peanuts), vegetables (beans, coconuts, potatoes, sweet potatoes), bottled beer (Castle and Black Label), bread, clothes (new and second-hand), cooking oil, cold drinks (mostly Coca Cola, Fanta and Schweppes), jewellery (earrings, bracelets, necklaces), ladies cosmetics (face cream, soap, make-up), home brewed *amahewu* (a flavoured drink made with maize), maize meal, sugar, potato chips, candy, rice, salt, soup, tea, cell phone air-time and starter packs, 'fats' (similar to *vetkoek*, a ball of dough deep-fried in cooking-oil), coffee, washing powder and Drostyhof wine by the glass.

The South African vendors live in the areas immediately surrounding the border. Although at first sight it would appear that they sell their processed goods to people from Mozambique who do not have access to shops, their customers are predominantly South African. As in Mozambique, there are no shops in KwaMshudu or in its vicinity. The border market brings the shops to the people of the borderland

on both sides of the spatial divide. A survey I conducted on both sides of the international border shows that eighty-seven of 100 interviewees in KwaMshudu regularly attend the market, as do all of the 100 interviewees on the Mozambican side.

Figure 16: Traders at Puza market, 2002



Photograph by Hannie du Plessis

The use of public telephones at the market shows how the market caters for consumers. The phone is run from a car battery and cost much less than normal cell phone rates – only sixty-five cents per unit that lasts about three minutes. People from both sides of the border make use of the phone, although the majority of the clients are from South Africa. The public phone links into the MTN network and makes communication across the border much easier. One can get a signal from South African cell phone networks as far north as Zitundo. The Mozambican network only covers Maputo and its immediate vicinity. People in the Mozambican part of the borderland who own cell phones locked onto the South African networks can buy ‘starter-packs’ and ‘air-time’ at Puza. Most people, however, do not have the money and make use of the public phone that comes to the area twice a week.

The market offers many other services. On the South African side of the border is a barber and a mechanic, while on the Mozambican side of the border there is a doctor, a traditional healer, a church and two ‘restaurants’.

Recently, a mechanic opened shop at the border market. He makes money from servicing cars, panel beating and selling petrol to Mozambican transport drivers. (While I conducted research petrol at Ponta do Ouro cost almost R2 more per litre than in South Africa). The barber only visits the border on Saturdays. During the rest of the week he has a small stall in Manguzi where he can make more money. A regular haircut costs R10, while his speciality, the Afghanistan, costs R13.

Many people of KwaMshudu told me that they visited the border-market specifically to consult ‘the doctor’. I expected him to be a traditional healer or diviner since people told me about his special healing powers, especially when it comes to backaches and pains. I was thus surprised to discover that the doctor was a *mulatto* who had qualified as a physician in Mozambique. The doctor works from a small

reed consultation office on the Mozambican side of the border. At any one time there is usually a queue of at least fifteen people waiting to see him. The doctor uses no special divination techniques or any occult powers. He simply examines his patients, diagnoses them and gives them their medication. A consultation with medication costs R10. This is one of the reasons why the doctor is so popular. There is a clinic in KwaMshudu that serves people on both sides of the border, but treatment seldom costs only R10. It is also more expensive to travel to the clinic than to the border-market, and for that reason informants preferred to consult the doctor at the border.

South African women run the two 'restaurants' at the border, yet they are supplied by products coming from Mozambique, namely bush meat and fish. The women buy fish and bush meat from the Mozambican fishermen and hunters, cook it and sell it to people who have visited the market.

The bush meat sold at the restaurant is cooked with onions and potatoes and served with rice or maize meal. There is no shortage of bush meat at the market of Puza. The 'butchery' is out of sight from the South African side of the border. It is located behind palm trees across the border. Informants explained that although there are no police or soldiers on the Mozambican side, there are conservation officers at the border market and they therefore hide the meat from the public eye. Conservation officers are aware of the restaurants, but prefer it if the meat is kept where they can't see it. The majority of the game sold is small antelope like duiker, suni and impala, while warthog, cane rat and monkey are also occasionally sold. Although the meat is sold in pieces of varying sizes, one can purchase an entire suni carcass for R50. Most of the animals are caught in the areas surrounding the Maputo Elephant Reserve, while some of it is caught in forest areas around the market.

The fish arrives at the market in ‘truckloads’ from Lake Piti and from other estuaries and rivers in the area. Women eagerly await the trucks and rush with huge twenty-five litre buckets to purchase the best fish (see Figure 17). The fishermen can hardly keep up with the demands of the shouting women crowding the trucks.

Figure 17: Dried fish for sale hanging on the international border fence, 2002



Photograph by Hannie du Plessis

Women dry and sell the fish at the market, though some fish is also sold at Manguzi. Women coat the fish and deep-fry it. Locals refer to this as 'Kentucky' Fried Fish. The fish is very oily and is usually served with peri-peri (chilli) sauce and *pao* (Portuguese bread). The peri-peri sauce and *pao* are the only truly Portuguese products that I have ever seen at the market. It is very difficult to get hold of *pao* since most of it is usually sold the moment it reaches the market. One informant, an old man whom had fled the war in Mozambique and settled in South Africa, told me that, although he likes 'SPAR bread' (store bought white bread), he always prefers *pao*. Michael, my translator who grew up in Maputo, told me that *pao* reminds him of home. After every visit of ours to the market he would take back as much *pao* as he could find on the market. Peberdy and Crush (2001:118) also found that Mozambican bread was a major trade article carried by cross-border traders from Maputo via Ressano Garcia to South Africa. Peberdy (2000:7) writes that the traders carry other Mozambican products like *capulanas* (a traditional cloth), vegetables that are unavailable in South Africa and nuts, such as cashews.

One of the major products of the Puza market is undiluted palm wine or *injemane*, a hallmark of this area (see Cunningham 1985:108 and Tyburski and Van Aarde 2004). Palm wine tappers sell the wine for resale to those who frequent the market. The palm wine is then transported to Manguzi and other areas outside of the palm-belt zone. Those who sell the palm wine are from both sides of the border. Palm wine not transported to Manguzi from Puza is drunk locally under the trees, especially later in the afternoon when many people have gathered at the market.

Apart from the easily observable economic opportunities the border market creates for borderland residents, there are a range of other spin-offs associated with the border market. These include opportunities for taxi drivers who transport people

to and from the market, and also for sex workers who befriend and live with the soldiers who patrol the market.

Transport to and from the market is a lucrative business. On both the Mozambican and South African side people and their goods are transported to the market. Between five and fifteen vans (called *bakkies*) are usually parked in a long row on the South African side of the border, and another eight vans with South African number plates on the Mozambican side. In Mozambique it costs 20,000M (R20) to get from Zitundo to the border (about fifteen kilometres). Prices are comparable on the South African side of the border. A single trip by van from Puza to Manguzi costs R13 for a local (borderlander) and R30 for an outsider (a person from northern Mozambique or another country trying to enter South Africa illegally). The rules of the transportation business are quite simple. The moment there are two people in front of the pick-up and four people on the back the truck has to leave so that the next one can be loaded.

The border and the border markets also create opportunities for the oldest profession in the world. As Donnan and Wilson (1999:82) state ‘border zones have been widely reported as providing opportunities for illicit sex.’ At any place in the world where sailors or soldiers are stationed for a considerable length of time prostitution seems to thrive. ‘Vice’, Martinez (1988:11) remarks, ‘is usually found in large doses in border areas and ports throughout the world.’ Because of the border market at Puza and the crossings taking place there, permanent army bases have been instituted there on both sides of the border. On the South African side each battalion stays in the area for three months at a time. The Mozambican soldier I met there had been stationed there for three years.

Whilst none of the women in the borderland can be described as ‘prostitutes’, many women engage in ‘survival sex’. The women say they do not practise prostitution because they don’t just offer a sexual service in exchange for money. Instead they allow soldiers to ‘fall in love’ with them for the period that the soldiers are stationed there. They nonetheless receive goods of food, clothes and money. The women see the relationships as real loving relationships, although they understand that these are only temporarily. There is also an aura of monogamy. Should a woman accept the proposal of a particular soldier, she will be off limits to other men for as long as she ‘dates’ the soldier. Once the soldier leaves the area, the woman will be eligible for another ‘relationship’. Sometimes soldiers who arrive at the borderland have already learnt from other workers employed in the area which women make ‘good girlfriends’. Women who are willing to become ‘girlfriends’ for the soldiers are usually widows with families to support. Lyttleton and Amarapibal (2002:50) describe a similar situation along the Tai/Lao border where sexual interaction no longer takes the form of prostitution or brothel-type sex.

Girlfriends do not just perform sexual favours, but also provide soldiers with the ‘comforts of home’ (Standing 1992:477), such as cooking for them and cleaning their quarters. Grace Tembe is from KwaMshudu, but works for soldiers on the Mozambican side of the border. She says she acts as a domestic worker for the men and is paid with food and gifts. Her proximity to the border affords her a job opportunity, which is different from that of the ‘girlfriends’ who play the complete roles of ‘wives’ to the soldiers while they are there. The women say that many of the soldiers are married men and that they are merely looking after them while they are stationed in the area. Similar practises occur all along the borderline. In 1999 in Mbangweni a soldier returned after a year to find that the girl he had been with the

previous year had become pregnant by a soldier from another battalion. Unable to accept it, he shot the girl, jumped the border without his army clothes and was never seen again.

2. Mbangweni. The market at Mbangweni is situated about two kilometres from the border fence on the South African side (see Map 4). The market is much smaller than the one at Puza and takes place everyday. The marketplace is much more like a large taxi rank (see Figure 18). The owners of the taxi rank control all access to the market for outsiders. I had to gain their permission to talk to people at the market and to take photographs there. Because of the sandy roads in Mbangweni the taxis are mainly four wheel-drive vans. This market at the rank has operated since 1988. Drivers remember that during that time people fled the war in Mozambique and used the taxis to get to the main tar road leading to the N2 highway. In those days transport from Mbangweni to the tar road cost only R2, 50. Today it costs R20.

Goods usually sold at tuck-shops are sold at this market. These include small packets of peanuts, maize meal, pens, plastic bags, potato chips, sugar, hair clips, petroleum jelly, tinned food, candles and bread. There are also a few stalls that sell second hand clothes ‘imported’ from Mozambique, and new clothes from Durban. A significant difference between the goods sold at Mbangweni and Puza is the absence of beverages at Mbangweni. A drinking house at the taxi rank apparently has the monopoly over the sell of all alcohol. Sometimes palm wine is sold, but it is palm wine brought to the market from areas in the palmbelt zone, since there are no *ilala* palms in Mbangweni.

The border markets at Muzi and Manhoca are connected, yet some six kilometres apart from each other. Like the market at Puza, the Muzi market takes

place on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The market is held at the old border gate between South Africa and Mozambique on the eastern corner of the Tembe Elephant Park (see Map 3). The goods sold at Muzi are similar to those sold at Puza. South African vendors, predominantly women, sell processed goods to Mozambicans who in turn sell bush meat, palm wine and fish.

Figure 18: Border crossing at Mbangweni market, 2003



Photograph by author

3. **Muzi/ Manhoca.**⁶ The market at Manhoca is located precisely where the Mozambican border post with South Africa used to be (see Figure 19). The market takes place on Mondays. South African vendors gather there from about eight o'clock in the morning. The goods they sell are similar to the goods sold at Puza: sugar, tea, maize, maize meal, bottled beer, cold drink etc. Even though the market takes place in Mozambique all transactions are in South African currency. As is the case with the

⁶ Manhoca has traditionally been a trading place. During the colonial era there were four shops in this small village, three of them owned by Indian immigrants (Rutherford 1995:69).

vendors at Puza these women usually all have cooler boxes around which they display their goods. The difference between this market and Puza is that all these women have to cross the border and walk the six kilometres to the market. The market services all the small villages south of Salamanga, where the closest shops are located. People from Salamanga visit the markets because it offers superior goods to what is locally available.

Figure 19: Manhoca market on a Tuesday afternoon, 2003



Photograph by Wayne Matthews

Vans transport people from central points at Gebeza, Hucu and elsewhere to the market at Manhoca. Like elsewhere, large quantities of fish are sold or bartered for consumer products at Manhoca. Vendors at the market also import and sell palm wine and bush meat. On the occasions I visited the market I could only see the

carcasses of smaller game like suni and red duiker. My research assistant once bought a cane rat.

There is nothing spectacular about the market at Manhoca. The market is too far removed from the border to double as a crossing point for entering South Africa. The only taxis are the ones taking people from areas in Mozambique to the market. South Africans usually walk to the market. The market appears to fulfil a more limited economic need, with people from South Africa selling consumer goods to people in Mozambique or trading them consumer goods for fish, palm wine and bush meat.

4. Border Markets and the Breakdown of Social Boundaries. The markets on the border between KwaZulu-Natal and Mozambique do not merely serve economic needs. They also provide entertainment to the people in the borderland, serve as legal crossing points and are meeting places for relatives and friends from both sides of the border. Through the establishment of contact between people on both sides of the border, and through the flow of goods, people and ideas across the border, the markets contribute to the breakdown of social boundaries within the borderland.

A survey conducted at Puza and KwaMshudu clearly illustrates the diverse functions of the market. Out of one hundred respondents on the South African side of the border twenty-nine said that they visit the market to sell goods, twenty-four to purchase goods, eighteen to visit relatives, and seventeen to ‘see what things people are trading.’ Seven South African respondents merely went to the market to enjoy the day, three to visit friends and two to consult the doctor. On the Mozambican side of the border, eighty-seven interviewees said that they go to the market to sell

something, six to visit relatives, three to buy things and two go there merely to enjoy the day.

Although engaging in trade is clearly the predominant reason for visiting the market, people also visit the market for other reasons. A different question in the survey asked interviewees how they communicate with their relatives across the border. To this question twenty-six per cent of interviewees in KwaMshudu with relatives in Mozambique and thirteen per cent of interviewees in Puza with relatives in South Africa answered that they meet at the border market.

Market days are major social events in the borderland. Not only do people get to meet with friends and family, the market also gives them a place to go to. There are very few other forms of social entertainment in the borderland. People usually plough their fields, collect water and firewood, gather wild fruit, hunt animals or tap palm wine. All these are subsistence activities that take up most of their time. The border market provides an escape. It affords women the opportunity of sitting next to each other and to converse while they sell their products. As in the case of pension markets and markets selling curios to tourists, women do not compete with each other in terms of the prices and variety of the articles they sell. The absence of competition between them gives them the opportunity to sit and chat freely under the shade trees at the market. Similarly, the border markets give men a chance to drink beer and eat bush meat (*inyama*) while they sit in a round circle on wooden benches under the trees. It is not only people with relatives across the border that congregate at the border markets to enjoy the day. Others also get together and converse. Hann and Beller-Hann (1998:249) also show how the informal markets that developed along the Turkish/Georgian border after the break-up of the Soviet Union serve as sources of entertainment. These cross-border markets ‘provided an occasion to go out and

socialise (*gezmeke*)... For all concerned the “Russian market” (*Rus pazari*)... was a source of fun and entertainment (Hann & Beller-Hann 1998:249).

The border markets of Mbangweni and Puza are also important crossing points for locals. It usually costs a great deal of money and takes more than a day for a resident of Mbangweni to cross the border at the official border post and visit relatives in Mozambique. As stated in the previous chapter, prior to 1994 there used to be a border post at Mbangweni. There were no official facilities for customs and immigration. Soldiers manned the post to investigate peoples’ passports and allow those with legal papers to pass through. After 1994 Mbangweni residents were compelled to cross at the official border post at Farazela. The impracticality of this arrangement for borderlanders is astounding. As activity at the border market at Mbangweni increased so too did the numbers of soldiers in the area. Through time the soldiers who patrol the markets have allowed borderlanders to move freely across the border on market days.

Similarly, people are allowed to cross the KwaMshudu/ Puza border on market days. On other days border crossing is illegal and transgressors are liable to be arrested by the police. Five or six soldiers usually patrol the border market on motorbikes. Sometimes they abuse their power and demand money from the locals who want to cross, but most of the times they allow them to go freely. In this way the very existence of the border market enables local people to cross the border at other points than the official border post. The border market is thus, in a sense, also a temporary border post.

The border markets enable people from both sides of the international borderland to trade and also to communicate with one another. This movement of people, goods and ideas across the border encourages the development of a common

borderland culture and identity. In order to engage in trade people need to understand one another. For this reason Zulu is the *lingua franca* of the borderland. There is a long history of using a foreign language for purposes of trade. In fact, Tembe-Thonga people first learnt isiZulu to trade with their more numerous Zulu-speaking neighbours. According to Felgate (1982:10) and Webster (1991) the Tembe-Thonga have subsequently also embraced a Zulu identity to facilitate their employment as migrant labourers to South Africa's industrial cities. Because of the contacts the border markets allow and because of the exchange of goods across the border, divisions between the people on either sides of the border become blurred.

Border markets also contribute to the breakdown of social boundaries by supplying goods to shops in Mozambique. Tuck-shop and informal stall owners in southern Mozambique use the border market at Puza as the main source for obtaining their stock. The resulting situation is that one can only find South African products in this far southern part of Mozambique. Apart from the Portuguese shop owner at Ponta do Ouro and the tourist resorts along the beach, no small shops close to the border stock Mozambican products. In the small shops along the border in Mozambique it's all Castle Lager, Sasko bread, Omo Washing powder, Klipdrift brandy, Lucky Star Pilchards and Iwisa maize meal.

The disappearance of the Mozambican beer, Dois M (Two M) – that was named after the French President, Marshall MacMahon (Martin 1999:14) – is symbolic of the South Africanisation of the borderland. Although he did not have the most recognised French surname, he was glorified by the Portuguese because of the 1875 MacMahon Award.⁷ In the late 1800s when Britain, Portugal and the Transvaal Republican Government competed for control of the area, President MacMahon laid

⁷ The Portuguese also named a square close to the station in Maputo after President MacMahon.

down the line separating the British and Portuguese spheres of influence. Although the exact position of the line was later amended, it became the approximate position of the current border between South Africa and Mozambique. Cervejas de Mocambique advertises Dois M as a symbol of the Mozambican nation. The advertising slogan for the beer reads, *A Nossa Maneira, A Nossa Cerveja* (To our culture/ heritage (way), to our beer) (see Figure 20).

Figure 20: Dois M beer, 2004



Photograph by Wayne Matthews

In the borderland Dois M can only be bought at the tourist destinations of Ponta do Ouro, Ponta Malongane and Ponta Mamoli. Even in these places it is impossible to find Dois M in drinking houses and pubs frequented by local people. The local shops in the tourists' destinations are stocked directly from Manguzi. Pinto, owner of Pinto's Place, the main local hangout in Ponta do Ouro, travels to Manguzi weekly to buy alcohol at the Metro Cash and Carry. Other small shop owners in the

borderland rely on transport drivers at the border markets to obtain their supplies. They usually rent an entire van for R100 to Manguzi and back. They predominantly buy the 'Great South African Beer', Castle Lager, sold in 750ml bottles or quarts. The existence of the border markets have in this way led to the disappearance of the beer that symbolised and glorified the division between South Africa and Mozambique.

This example does not only illustrate the disappearance of the divisions that exists in the borderland, but also the domination and hegemony of South Africa in the borderland. The 'Great South African Beer' has replaced the salutations to Mozambican culture. It is symbolic of local people's perceptions about themselves and the people across the border. All the people in the borderland do not share the unity in identity and culture that the border markets foster. Informants on the Mozambican side complain consistently about the arrogance of South Africans. When asked about people on the Mozambican side of the border informants in South Africa explain that they are poor, uneducated, dirty and full of diseases. These sentiments are not shared by everyone in the borderland, but are widespread.

The border market is a place where the traditional (*chintu*) meets the modern (*chilungu*) and where both flow, with their attached values across the spatial divide. Although most of the products found at the border markets are South African, many of the products are also foreign and new to people on the South African side of the borderland. The processed foods and bottled beers did not originate in northern KwaZulu-Natal. Even the neatly packaged maize meal and sugar are products from South Africa's cities. People from Mozambique go to the border markets to purchase modern (*chilungu*) products, like tinned pilchards, corned beef and bottled beer. In a similar way, people from South Africa go to the border markets to get fresh fish, bush

meat and palm wine. For Maputaland's residents fish, bush meat and palm wine are markers of 'tradition' and 'culture' (Webster 1991). These products have become extremely scarce in South Africa. The border markets are places where people can procure these 'cultural' products.

Rodgers (2002) concurs that Mozambique is perceived to be more traditional and South Africa more modern. He writes that,

'the historical construction of the Mozambique-South Africa border landscape reveals "Mozambique" as a place of origins of the "Machangana people" (including both South Africans and Mozambicans) and as place of "home" (*kaya*), "tradition" (*xintu*), "nature" (*ntumbuluku*) and socially productive labour (*tirha*). South Africa on the other hand emerges in the historical narratives as a "place of whites" (*xilungu*) and wage labour (*tirha*) and was experienced as eroding or contaminating of the core values associated with Mozambique' (p.104).

Because Mozambique is a more 'traditional' place it is perceived to be symbolically purer and culturally superior to South Africa (Rodgers 2002:169, 260).

The border markets on the southern Mozambique/ South Africa border fulfil a similar function to the cross-border traders described by MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000:61-63) who sell African products to Congolese in Paris. Their products include manioc, maize meal and other types of food and drink, beauty products, clothes, compact disks and videos. As is discussed above, the supply of traditional products, like bread, cashews and cloths from Mozambique to South Africa was also noted by Peberdy and Crush (2001:118).

These products, or commodities, are important markers of identity in the borderland. Commodities, as Kopytoff has remarked 'must be not only produced materially as things, but also culturally marked as being a certain kind of thing (1986:64).' Commodities are endowed with culturally specific meanings. Consumers buy goods within a specific cultural framework (MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga

2000:59). Goods are used to ‘create cultural categories and principles, cultivate ideas, create and sustain lifestyles, construct notions of self, and create (and survive) social change. Consumption is thoroughly cultural in character (McCracken 1988:xi).

Mozambican bread is not only popular at the market because it tastes better than bread available in stores in South Africa, but because when people eat the bread they reassert their identity as Mozambicans, as people with ties across the border.

Similarly, palm wine reasserts a Thonga identity in the face of Zulu ethnic domination in northern KwaZulu-Natal. Drinking palm wine and eating fish, the cultural practises of Maputaland before Zulu domination, ties the people of the borderland in unity and marks the differences between them and the other people living in KwaZulu-Natal. At the border market people can celebrate this shared identity, which has long been fragmented and suppressed. In this way the border markets play a role in breaking down social boundaries between people on opposite sides of the border.

Conclusion

When the international border between Mozambique and South Africa was drawn in 1875 it separated a unified social and political community and at the same time cut across old trade routes linking Delagoa Bay (Maputo) with KwaZulu-Natal and Swaziland. Although trade continued along these routes throughout the Mozambican war and the political upheavals in KwaZulu-Natal before the 1994 elections in South Africa, the importance and dynamics of economic interaction across the border dwindled as the border became a far greater obstacle. At present it is precisely because of its nature as an obstacle that the border is contributing to the creation of unity in the borderland. The border, due to its very existence, creates opportunities

for people to make money by smuggling goods across it or by trading along it with people on the other side who do not have access to the same resources. In the process international cross-border smuggling and trading networks are established. As with globalisation on a larger scale, increased economic interaction leads to increased social interaction and the disappearance of the symbolic boundaries between people on opposite sides of the divide. In this manner the international border is thus, ironically, a major contributor in the creation of social and cultural union in the borderland and the disappearance of social boundaries drawn along it.