

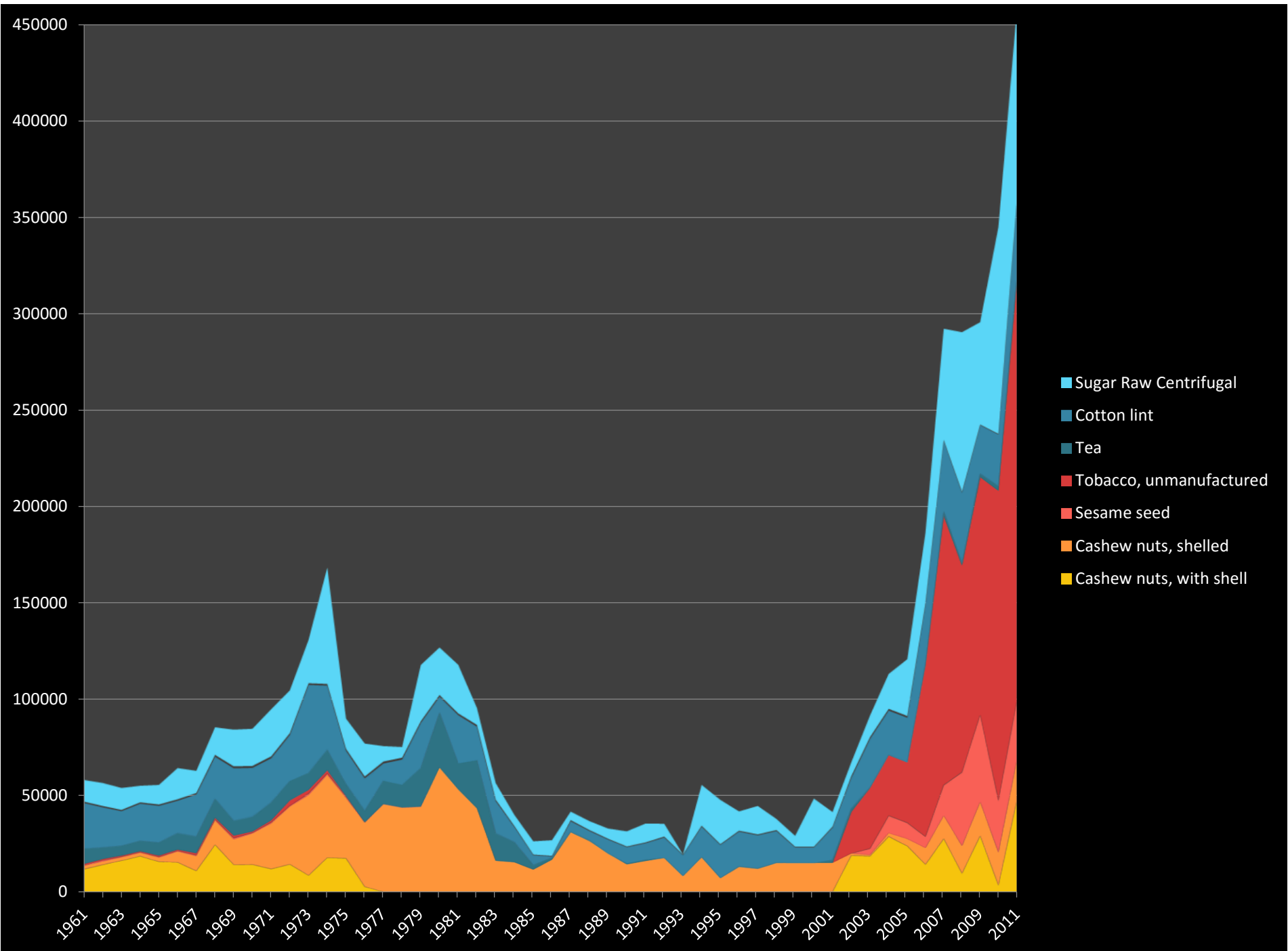
**Class formation across borders:
migrant workers in
international borderlands
Helena Pérez Niño, PLAAS**

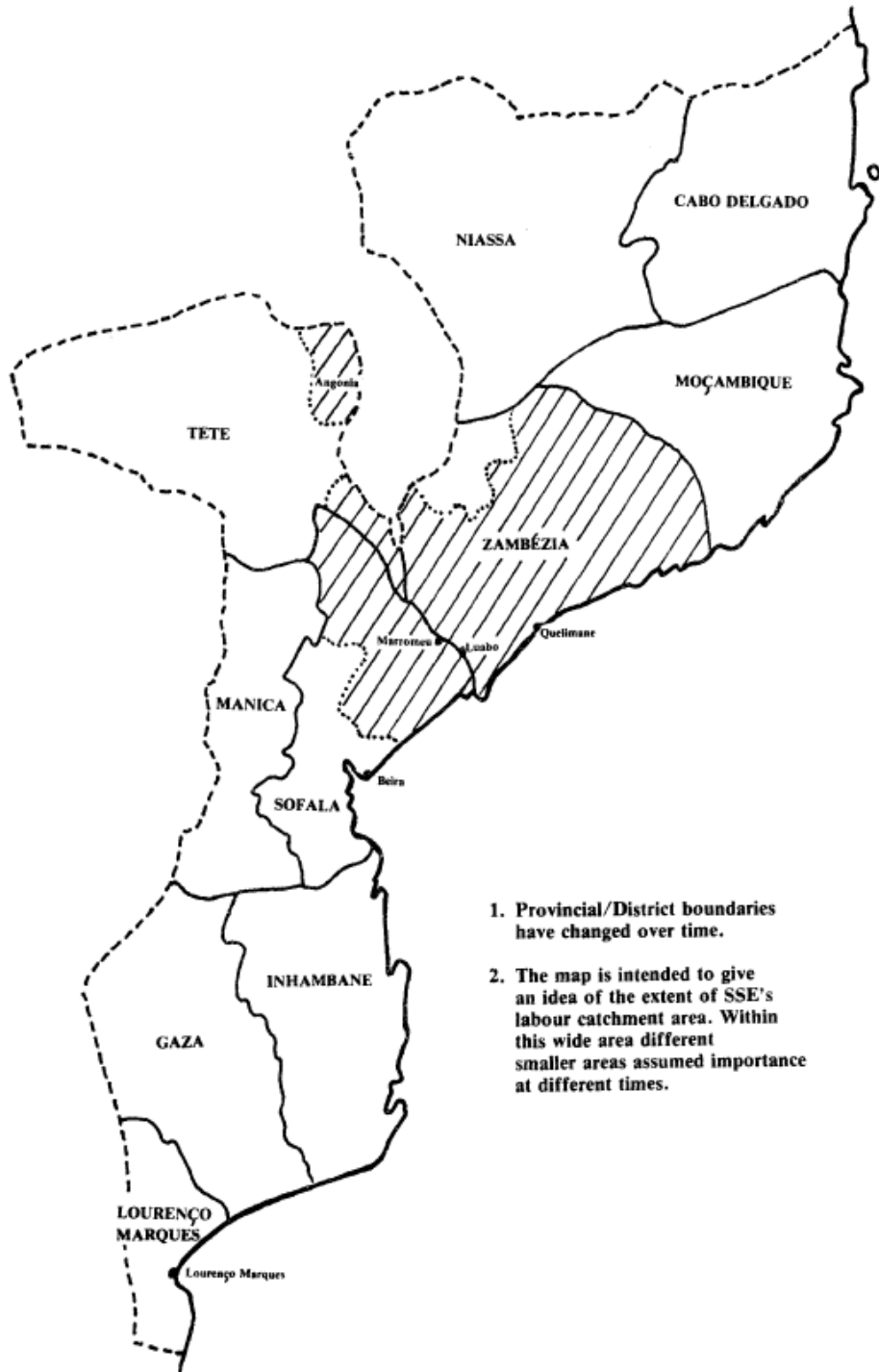
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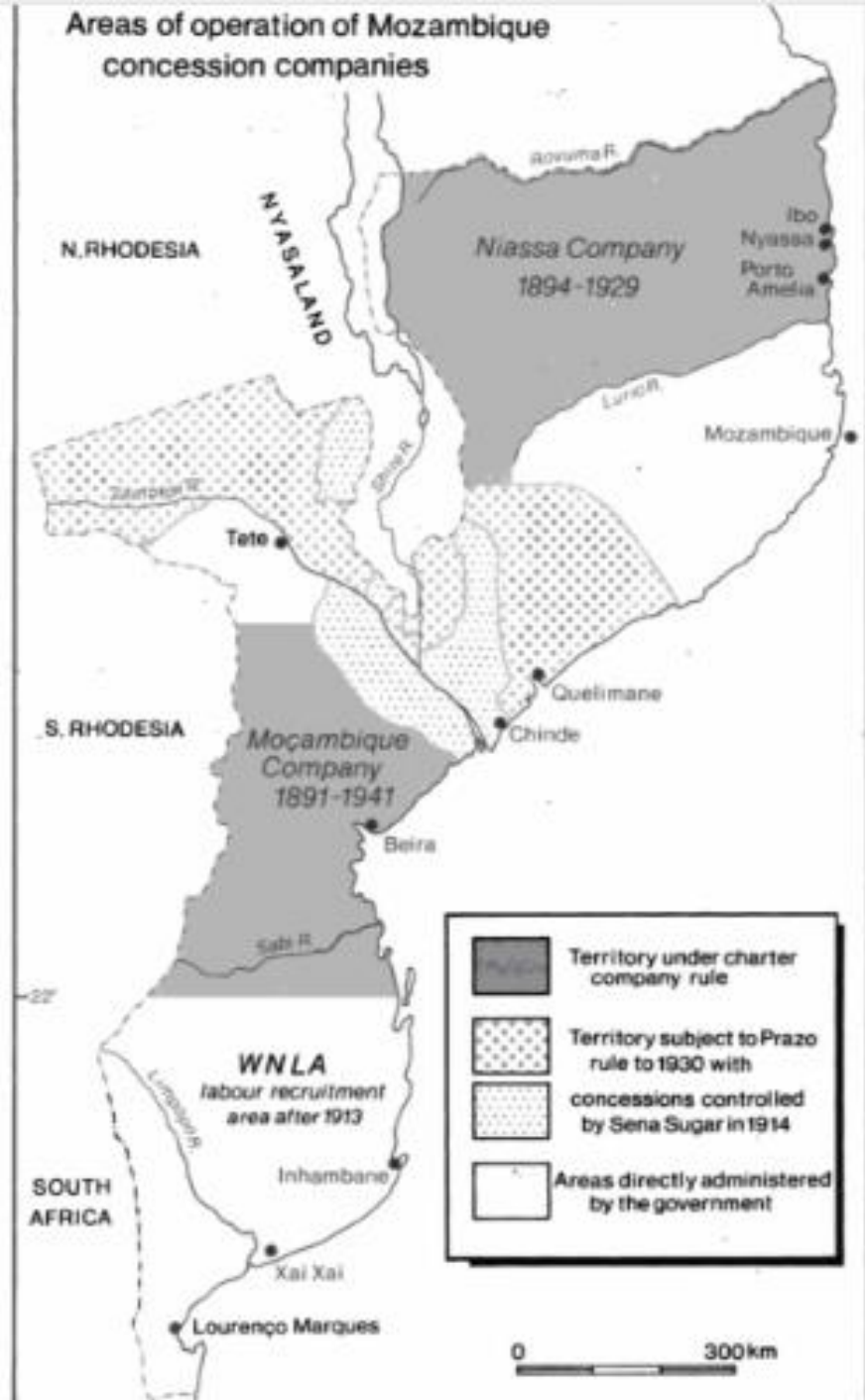
Case study

- Agricultural boom in tobacco: introduced commercially in 1994 (+699% 2000-2009)
- Labour intensive, use of HH labour and migrant wage labour (Seasonal L and sharecroppers, atypical)
- 130.000 small scale producers. 1:3 Households in main producing districts.
- All production under outgrower-schemes with no nuclear estate (CF involves 12% pop in Mozambique). Substantial productivity gains, use of modern inputs.
- Quality sensitive, complex grading.
- Geographical concessions, country monopsony, price set by the company. Advances of inputs against harvest. No obligation to clear market.
- Geographical and corporate concentration.
- Extreme asymmetry/ no bargaining power (but one of the few viable sources of income from agriculture available in the region)





1. Provincial/District boundaries have changed over time.
2. The map is intended to give an idea of the extent of SSE's labour catchment area. Within this wide area different smaller areas assumed importance at different times.



Labour relations

- Opportunistic combination of types of labour hired.
- All seasonal labour is migrant, unregulated (in a region with no labour shortage).
- Disciplining features in labour relations.
- Seasonal live-in workers (deferred payment, poor work conditions, border arbitrage).
- Sharecroppers (2/3 arrangement plus transfer of quality premium).

	<i>Poor farmers*</i>	<i>Small farmers</i>	<i>Middle farmers</i>	<i>Rich farmers</i>
<i>Ganyu</i>	0.8	2.3	4.3	1.9
Seasoni	0.0	0.0	2.3	4.4
Tenants	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.9

Labour mobilization in borderlands

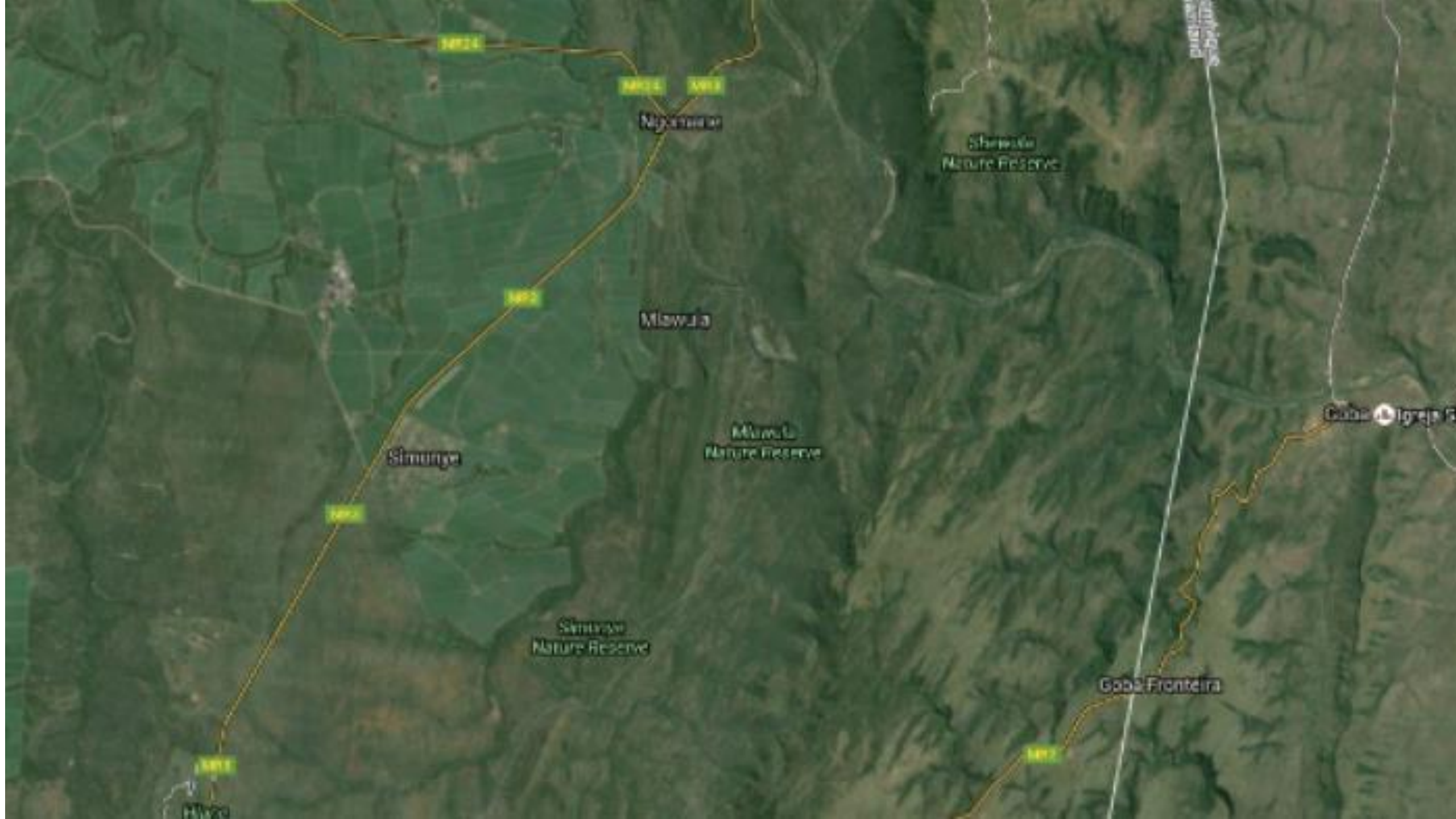
- Spatial dynamics contradictory and layered
- Calculated separation (no labour scarcity)
- Border arbitrage

Specificity of borderlands:

- Contrast → agrarian social formations
- Contrast → productive dynamism
- Contrast → State

A borderland workforce





14024

14023

14022

Nigantua

Shawu
Nature Reserve

14021

Mawu

Mawu
Nature Reserve

Simunze

14020

Simunze
Nature Reserve

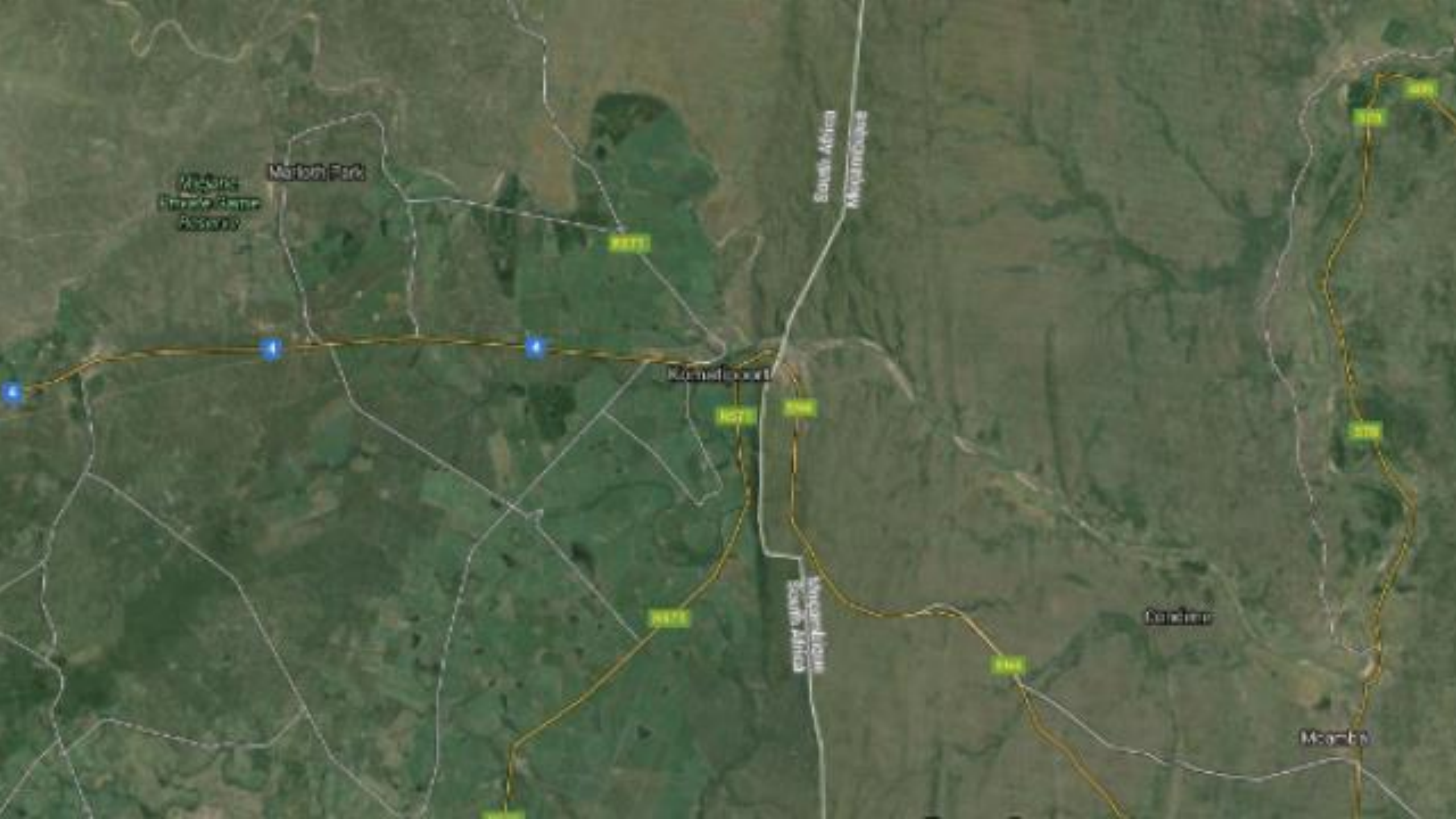
Goba Igreja

Goba Fronteira

14019

14018

14017



Worcester
Marloth Park
Assaie

Marloth Park

South Africa
Meyerton

Kromdorp

Worcester
South Africa

Cape Town

Mossel

A satellite map showing the border region between Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The Zimbabwean side is on the left, characterized by a grid of agricultural fields in various shades of green and brown. The Mozambican side is on the right, showing a more natural, forested landscape with a mix of green and brown patches. A white line represents the international border, which runs vertically through the center of the image. Two labels, 'Zimbabwe' and 'Mozambique', are placed on either side of this border line.

Zimbabwe

Mozambique





104

104

Malawi

Mozambique

Malawi

Mozambique

Malawi

Mozambique

403

400

403



*Calculated (functional) separation
(no labour scarcity)*

- Gendered mobilities
- Distance from village of origin is key
- Fragmentation of the workforce , separate work sites
- Concentration or labour recruitment



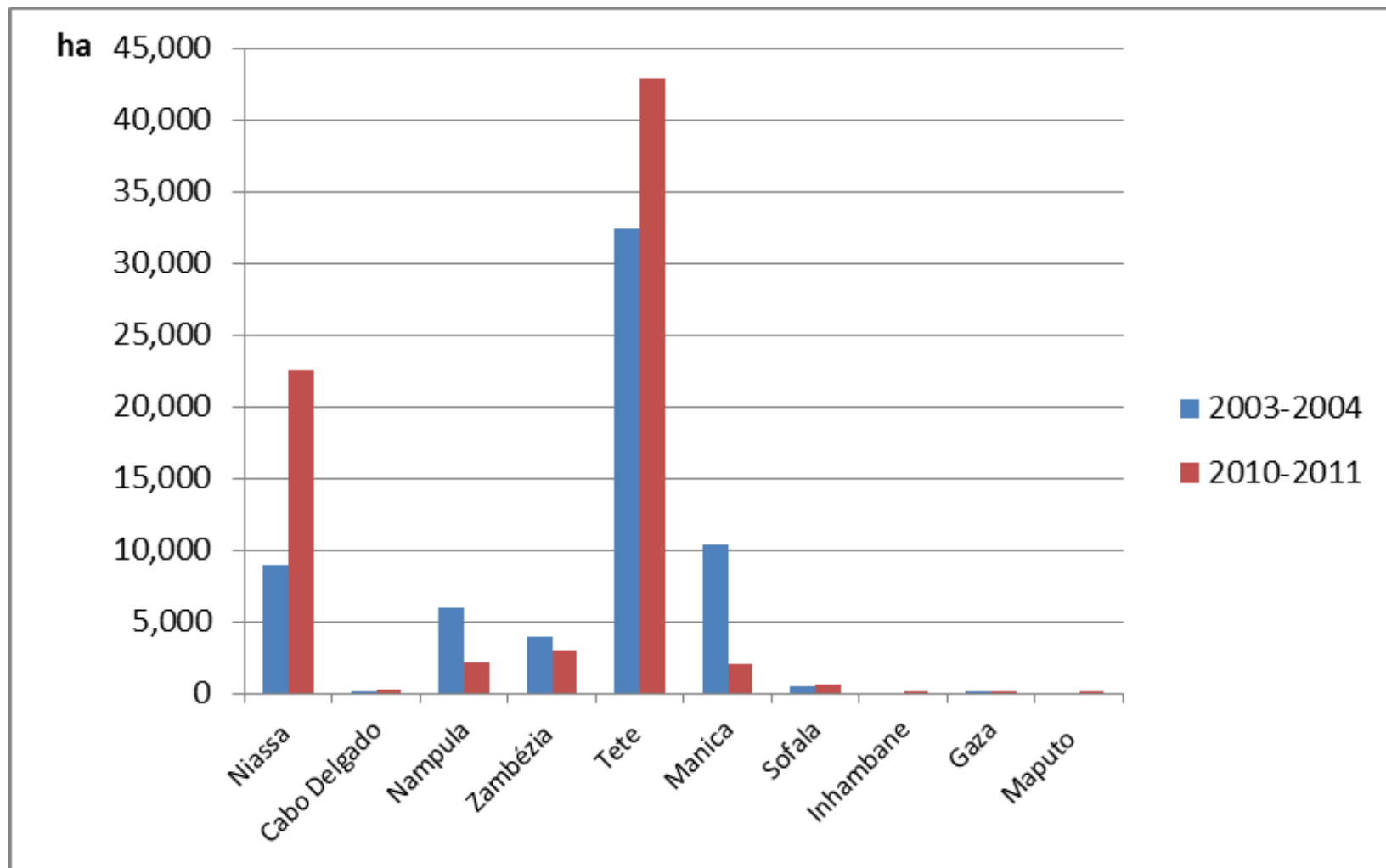
Border arbitrage

- Contrast of systems
- Agrarian structures, land tenure
- State, productive dynamism, GDP differentials
- Currency differentials costs of reproducing labouring HH
- Riding on transborder social networks



Spatial dynamics contradictory and layered

- Historical trajectory of transnational and borderland labour market participation
- Contrast between the relative position of migrant workers in the region of origin and their position in their labour destinations



- The historical sequencing and development of labour commodification is more advanced than the commodification of land ('irregularity').
- Concentration of GDP in agriculture in borderlands, higher concentration of employment (formal and informal)
- Class formation has not taken place historically within the frame of the nation state
- Borders have been historically instrumental for the mobilization of a labour force in a context in which direct producers remain in control of the means of production. Borders function: in combination with processes of commodification and arbitrage mechanisms → explains the mobilization of incoming migrant workers in contexts with no labour shortage

End