

BOOK REVIEW

Francis Musoni. *Border Jumping and Migration Control in Southern Africa.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020. xvii + 201 pp. List of Acronyms and Abbreviations. Bibliography. Index. \$85.00. Cloth. ISBN: 978-0253047144.

Francis Musoni's book *Border Jumping and Migration Control in Southern Africa* is an interesting and compelling read, mapping out the history of border jumping or "illegal migration" in Southern Africa. The five focused chapters, arranged chronologically, communicate how historical migration controls contributed to the historical evolution of border jumping across the Zimbabwe-South Africa border between 1890 and 2010.


This book provides new insights into "illegal migration," building on the growing body of scholarship on Africa's migration and border controls. Musoni problematizes and historicizes the terms "border jumping" and "illegal migration." He calls for a change in how we perceive and understand individuals who cross borders by avoiding designated channels, outlining the complex history of cross-border migration and examining how socio-economic and political forces have shaped and defined the Zimbabwe-South Africa border. Border jumpers were not necessarily lawbreakers, but rather individuals who weighed their options carefully before deciding to cross the border using unofficial channels. Moreover, border jumping was not a linear process; it was system aided and abetted collectively by labor recruiters, human smugglers, transport operators, and corrupt state officials.

The book addresses two significant issues. The first issue is the conflict between policymakers and employers for unskilled laborers in Zimbabwe and South Africa. These individuals had their own and varied understandings of border control and enforcement. The second issue concerns the migrant workers, cross border shoppers, and traders who defied state controls of mobility by entering South Africa through unofficial channels. Musoni weaves this migration control narrative succinctly, arguing that while migration is an age-old story, there were deeper complex issues that caused travelers to cross the border.

One weakness of the book is the absence of gender voices. While it is understood that male-centered migration dominated much of the period under review, in the 1990s there was a gradual inflow of women immigrants. It

would be interesting to discover the experiences and other factors that shaped and defined women's decisions to cross borders illegally. While oral evidence has been integrated into the chapters, the book could have been enriched by weaving in the voices of women, thereby highlighting the gendered nuances of border jumping.

Overall this book is a good, effective read and a must for scholars of migration. It adds to a growing body of scholarship on Africa and global discourses on borders and borderlands. It will make a timely contribution across the social sciences and humanities, providing new theoretical perspectives while challenging traditional notions of legality and illegality in cross border movements in Africa. Therein lies the originality and significance of this relevant book.

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For additional reading on this subject, the ASR recommends:

- Fisiy, Cyprian F. 1998. "Of Journeys and Border Crossings: Return of Refugees, Identity, and Reconstruction in Rwanda." *African Studies Review* 41 (1): 17–28. doi:10.2307/524679.
- Miles, William FS. 2015. "Postcolonial Borderland Legacies of Anglo – French Partition in West Africa." *African Studies Review* 58 (3): 191–213. doi:10.1017/asr.2015.71.
- Schultheis, Michael J. 1989. "Refugees in Africa: The Geopolitics of Forced Displacement." *African Studies Review* 32 (1): 3–30. doi:10.2307/524491.