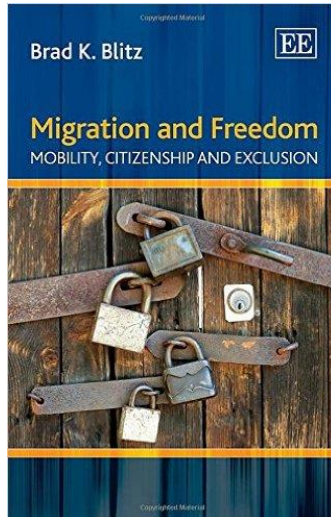


Brad K. Blitz (2014), *Migration and Freedom. Mobility, Citizenship and Exclusion*, Cheltenham (UK), Northampton, MA (USA): Edward Elgar, 256 pp.

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It has been a long-standing criticism of migration scholarship that despite the increasing interest in the topic, the phenomenon of international migration remains under-theorised (Davis 1988; Schmitter-Heisler 1992), while other major and still valid criticisms are regularly raised in connection to such customarily adopted essentialising and unquestioned distinctions as those between internal and international, or skilled and unskilled migration (Smith, Favell 2006). Brad K. Blitz's *Migration and Freedom: mobility, citizenship and exclusion* is a much-needed contribution to the scholarly literature addressing these deficiencies, providing a ground-breaking synthesis of legal scholarship, qualitative empirical analysis and social theorizing.

At the core of the book lies the insight that one of the most promising approaches to migration theory today is via the concept of 'freedom' – and more specifically that of 'freedom of movement' – which can help overcome often unfruitful distinctions between types of migration, including that between 'migration' and 'mobility' as it is construed within the framework of the European Union (see Boswell, Geddes 2011). To briefly summarise the two fundamental distinctions: first, movements *across* international borders are conceptually and analytically distinguished from movements *within* national borders, the latter being *far more common* and *subject to few or no restrictions* in most countries (Boswell, Geddes 2011: 2); second, *international migration refers to movement from outside the EU by people who are not nationals of a member state*, while *EU mobility refers to nationals of EU member states – exercising their rights of free movement as EU citizens* (Boswell, Geddes 2011: 3). In order to overcome the empirical limitations imposed by such distinctions, Blitz chooses to maintain the focus on *contemporary Europe*, as the region that has most strongly *committed itself to the principle of the free movement of people* (p. 15), but at the same time expand the scope of his interrogation to free movement rights guaranteed both by EU law and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This allows the author to focus empirically on a variety of mechanisms that hinder freedom of movement in the national contexts of Spain, Italy, Croatia, Slovenia and Russia (the latter, while not an EU member state, has ratified Protocol 4 of the ECHR, Article 2 of which deals with 'freedom of movement'), highlighting not only the ways in which some EU citizens see their rights curtailed, but how *the idea of free movement within states is also contested by the number of state-sanctioned controls that apply in varying degrees to immigrants and domestic migrants, formal citizens and non-citizens and many categories in between* (p. 8–9).

The book is organised into ten chapters, the first three offering historical, theoretical and legal overviews, followed by five case studies adapted from previously published journal articles, and closing with a thematic analysis of the selected cases and a brief conclusion. Following an introductory chapter in which the author presents a historical overview of the rights of foreigners, the changing idea of sovereignty, and the *frontiers of inequality* associated to internal migration, Chapter 2 outlines the conceptual framework of the book. Blitz builds mainly on the theoretical arguments for free movement proposed by Hannah Arendt, John Rawls, Amartya Sen, Joseph Carens and Adam Hosein, alongside John Torpey's now classic examination of the historical development of state surveillance and control through the passport regime. A review of this vast literature leads the author to identify *five central themes* that will inform his empirical examinations: first, the idea of freedom of

movement as a foundational right and a condition for action; second, motivations for migration, considering that *while migration is a decision, it is not necessarily a choice* (p. 35); third, the relationship between open borders and freedom of movement; fourth, the relationship between freedom of movement and democracy; and fifth, the role of the state in promoting free movement. These themes will not only run through the discussion of case studies in the empirical chapters, but are also the building blocks of the ensuing *Analysis* chapter, where each case is briefly discussed anew in respect to all five themes.

Before turning to the case studies, Chapter 3 details the normative framework of free movement in the European Union. Here, Blitz does great service to social scientists less versed in the legal scholarship by guiding the reader through the relevant treaties and case-law developments, showing how the right to free movement has expanded since the 1956 'Spaak Report'. While in such an evolving legal environment a definitive account is hardly achievable, the chapter offers safe pointers for anyone wishing to normatively ground their investigations on the subject.

The following chapters analyse the empirical material, which is the result of a decade long research in five different countries, and amounts to over 160 qualitative interviews and focus groups. First, the author turns to the case of *Spanish doctors in the United Kingdom* (Chapter 4), discussing how medical professionals from Spain were recruited and relocated to a specific region in the North-East of England. As he finds, there was no single factor determining this seemingly successful case of free movement, but a combination of special directives, bilateral agreements, the direct involvement and support provided by the UK Department of Health, and not negligibly, the personal commitment of a few doctors who had previously arrived in the region. The greatest empirical challenge to the idea of freedom of movement raised by this study derives from the finding that behind the surface impression of a case involving free-moving professionals, the interviews speak of different forms of structural coercion behind migration decisions, and the difficulties doctors face in returning to their country and reincorporating into the Spanish medical system.

Chapter 5 retains the focus on professionals, looking at the experiences of non-Italian foreign language teachers in Italy – the *lettori* – who have been exposed to one of the most startling case of institutionalised nationality-based discrimination in one of the founding member states of the EU. In describing the plight of the *lettori*, the author navigates us through the regulation of foreign language teaching at Italian universities since the early 1980s, court cases that have repeatedly identified serious shortcomings on the part of university employers, and the personal narratives of affected teachers. The main point emerging from the chapter is that freedom of movement within the EU means rather little if not in conjunction with the associated rights to equal treatment and protection from discrimination based on nationality.

The following three chapters further complicate the empirical reality of freedom of movement. The case of displaced Serbs in Croatia (Chapter 6) highlights the limitations of citizenship in the face of ethnic discrimination, contrasting the successful integration of Bosnian Croats with the exclusion of ethnic Serb post-war returnees to the now newest EU member state. In Chapter 7 Blitz explores how residency policies have created barriers for internal movers in Russia to successfully and safely establish themselves in the capital city. This case is probably the clearest example of how freedom of movement can become effectively restricted even without any nationality or ethnic factors, and despite international law and constitutional provisions. The author also reminds the reader that outside the European legal space such and similar limitations to internal mobility are less extraordinary than it is often presumed in the migration literature.

The final empirical chapter discusses what Blitz describes as *possibly the most disturbing* case of limiting freedom of movement, in the context of post-communist Slovenia. There, a great number of non-ethnic Slovenian previous residents have seen their citizenship revoked, being practically *erased* from the State Register, a measure leading to serious violations of civil, political, economic and social

rights. Similarly to the Croatian case, the chapter presents how ethno-nationalist considerations can curtail the right to freedom of movement for groups of people who had been previously protected by citizenship, and how this process can take place against the backdrop of EU integration.

The seemingly eclectic cases analysed by Blitz fuse remarkably well in addressing the five theoretically derived themes proposed by the author, and the *Analysis* chapter is meant to highlight these connection points. On the flip-side, this approach can feel repetitive at times, and since the contribution of each case study to the different themes is less balanced, a more integrative discussion could have benefited the chapter.

Readers of *Central and Eastern European Migration Review* will further notice how the cases they are most familiar with, while escaping the geographical focus of the book, raise very similar issues and could be read along similar lines of inquiry. The main contribution of the book is therefore theoretical and conceptual, above all in directing our attention to the connection between migration and freedom, and setting up an analytical framework which is worth pursuing further both empirically and through a richer conceptualisation of freedom of movement. In this respect, one of the most valuable insights of the book is that there is (or rather should be) a distinction between ‘freedom of movement’ and ‘open border’ arguments, the latter following too strictly the logic of classical push-pull migration models, and disregarding the social factors that influence mobility. As Blitz concludes, *if the concept of freedom of movement is to have any meaning, then the idea should be reconnected to the logic of personal freedom and the connection made between the rights to migration, settlement and establishment* (p. 191).

Overall, *Migration and Freedom* opens up new avenues not only for further research, but also for the reinterpretation of the already amassed empirical material on human mobility, and as such it is an important read for migration researchers in any discipline, especially those focusing on the European Union. For scholars preoccupied with migration in Central and Eastern Europe, taking inspiration from the book and relating their observations to the concept of freedom of movement is not so much a challenge than a necessity.

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