

that Polish migrants brought back from Britain were not that self-evidently superior and better. Indeed, for some Polish citizens they symbolised everything that is wrong with the urban or Western lifestyle’.

Second, the authors demonstrate the importance of investigating the specific transnational social spaces inhabited by their interviewees, of finding out about their particular social networks and the particular sites (especially workplaces) where migrants and stayers may pick up and transfer new ideas. The exact geographical locations are important, too, since different places have different migration traditions and cultures and this can make them more or less susceptible to migration-induced change. Since social remitting is all about connections between sending and receiving countries, it is particularly helpful to conduct research in both countries, even though this can be challenging methodologically. In many (I suspect most) cases, Polish towns do not have links predominantly to one particular location in the UK. The authors found that Sokółka migrants did mostly head for London, but that migrants from Trzebnica and Pszczyna were much more scattered. Migrants also have their own specific characteristics, and certain individuals have a greater propensity to succeed as agents of change, not just because of their personalities but also because, for example, they play a recognised socially useful role in the community, such as a nurse or pet-shop owner, and possess a network of local contacts.

Third (as also set out clearly in the *JEMS* article), it is important for the purpose of analysis to divide the social remitting process into stages. The authors turn their microscope on each stage of the process. Successful remitting depends on a migrant acquiring new ideas in the first place. In other words, upon coming into contact with ‘unfamiliarity and difference’, the migrant may imitate, or in some cases, creatively adapt the ideas they encounter. Upon returning to the country of origin, the migrant may be able to pass on this novelty to stayers. However, the transfer will only be successful if the stayers in their turn imitate or creatively adapt the foreign idea. In practice, the migrant is often shy about trying to diffuse new ideas for fear these will be rejected; in other

cases, the migrant makes the attempt, but fails. In cases where migrants have succeeded, their immediate associates should be putting their ideas into practice, and the project included interviews with ‘followers’ – stayers who had been impressed by the agents of change. One might assume that, in this day and age, face-to-face transmission of ideas had become less important, but the authors show convincingly that this is not the case. Hence ‘migrants may initiate bottom-up change processes’ (p. 215), although the authors are careful to point out that this is rarely conspicuous except on a very local level.

Overall, this is a very imaginative and scholarly book, which makes a substantial theoretical and empirical contribution to existing migration scholarship, and deserves to be widely read.

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**Anne J. Kershen (ed.) (2015). *London the Promised Land Revisited. The Changing Face of the London Migrant Landscape in the Early 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Oxford: Routledge, 237 pp.**

*London the Promised Land Revisited* (2015), edited by Anne Kershen, comes as a timely continuation of *London the Promised Land? The Migrant Experience in a Capital City* (1997), the first volume in the series on ‘Migration and Diaspora’, edited by the same author. This second edited collection continues to trace the impact of immigration on London by exploring a set of trends that construct the intensity and diversity of its contemporary landscape, this time relying on an almost completely new set of contributors. The prolific concept of ‘super-diversity’ (Vertovec 2007) forms the theoretical backbone of the collection, and its main themes – visibility and invisibility, integration and separation, transnationalism and location – provide the glue that attempts to link the thirteen chapters into a coherent whole. As Kershen notes (p. 3) super-diversity is not only the conceptual prism adopted here but also a characteristic that describes the diverse professional expertise of the contributors,

who include medical consultants, policy advisers, sociologists, anthropologists, geographers, political scientists and urban planners. The contribution of this collection to the field of migration studies lies in its clear demonstration of the dynamic nature of international population movements and its engagement with a wide variety of thematic perspectives and empirical evidence. By successfully building bridges across different fields this edited volume manages the difficult task of drawing a well-integrated and comprehensive picture of London's twenty-first century migrant landscape, a macro focus that, however, acknowledges the specificities and nuances of migrant experience.

The socio-economic and historical conjuncture at which this collection comes needs to be recognised as one marked by the increasing efforts of Western European governments to secure 'fortress Europe' and erect new ideological and material borders that divide populations. In hostile local and political responses, migrants coming from within and outside the continent are constructed as a threat to national security and welfare-state resources. The tightening of migration policies in the light of what has now become a permanent austerity regime has been undertaken with new zeal by the recently re-elected British Conservative government that came to power with the promise of making 'Great Britain greater' and 'free movement less free'. The breeding of nationalist rhetoric and anti-EU sentiments have resulted in the creation of a hostile environment in which discrimination against minority groups, and their social and economic marginalisation, are justified by cultural and religious differences and the unwillingness of these groups to integrate (Modood 2005). We need to be reminded that migrants' struggles remain part of global labour-capitalist relations and are dependent on the historical and heterogeneous specificities of class, gender, identity and religion and the tensions these produce (De Genova 2013). This collection, unfortunately, fails to embrace this critical and engaging spirit and instead employs the concept of 'super-diversity' while remaining blind to its pitfalls and ideological purposes.

The concept of 'super-diversity' has gained significant prominence in research focusing on urban diversity and developments in global cities where its salience is claimed to rest on the empirical reality of the high level of complexity brought about by post-colonial migration (Vertovec 2007). Meissner (2015) posits that the value of the concept lies in linking different debates in migration studies, ethnic and religious studies, diaspora identity studies and others. This collection takes on the task of exploring the impact of migration on London, focusing explicitly on the last two decades, which Kershen believes have been particularly exceptional as 'the coming together in time and space of so many variations of ethnic and national background, together with the gamut of legal/illegal statuses, an extensive range of employable skills, of not only different religions and an assortment of dialectics within an array of languages plus gender and the span of migrant ages, that make London a perfect template for super-diversity' (p. 3). Kershen attributes super-diversity to the changing demography of the migrant population which has turned the landscape of the capital from diverse to super-diverse, thus creating a 'symbiosis of the lens and the social context it is applied to' (Pavlenko, in press). The term is therefore used on one hand as a conceptual prism identifying certain variables and on the other to describe an empirical reality in which these variables form complex interconnections. Drawing on the original super-diversity variables outlined by Vertovec (2007) in his initial article, Anne Kershen considers place of origin, language, religion, economic activity and processes of integration/separation, while lamenting the social reality of the concept, in her exploration of the intensified diversity of London's immigrant population. In an effort to prove the contemporary exceptionalism of the super-diversity framework, much in contrast to her own historical overview of London's migration past, she bombards us with official data (including some from less reliable sources<sup>1</sup>) on the increase in the number of non-UK born residents and the arrival of new migrant groups, the wide range of languages and religious beliefs, and the economic profiles of these

groups' members. The novelty of the social phenomenon of super-diversity has been contested, however, by historians (De Bock 2015: 583) and decolonial critiques reminding us of the pre-modern traces of increased mobility and connectivity that characterised the pluralistic nature and cultural and linguistic bricolage of first-world cities in civilisations in the Global South as well as the Global North (Ndhlovu 2016; Pavlenko, in press). The superficial and uncritical engagement with the notion of 'super-diversity' that characterises this edited collection, together with unconvincing attempts to empirically back up this 'new' social phenomenon along the lines of 'London is super-diverse because it is more than diverse', render it nothing more than an empty slogan in an academic brand-establishing exercise. The failure of the contributors to analytically engage with the concept, and its intermittent conflation with multiculturalism, lead to the reproduction of many of the limitations and ideological traps that the two concepts bring with them.

By consistently evoking a juxtaposing rhetoric of 'them' and 'us', this collection sadly confirms Pavlenko's (in press) claim that the proponents of super-diversity sustain their hegemonic expertise on the construction of difference. Difference which rests on homogenising, culturally essentialist understandings of two entities: a British majority and an ethnic minority which allegedly subscribe to incommensurate values, identities, practices and religious beliefs. The tone is set in Chapter 2 when Kershen asks in a rather ill-conceived way if 'we' ask too much of minority groups when demanding that they become part of the mainstream and by doing so subjugate their cultural identity. Vaugh (Chapter 3) sustains these divisions in her optimistic conclusion that tensions between the host and ethnic cultures can be played out smoothly in the vibrant ethnic marketplace – a neutral arena in which different worlds come to mingle and interact in a mutually enriching manner. White (Chapter 11) highlights concerns with ethnicity, culture and religion in an exploration of health inequality, and by focusing on the utilisation of healthcare services by Bangladeshis in East London starts with the assumption that health preoccupations, stigma attached to

disease, and alternative health beliefs and practices are somehow more relevant for patients in ethnic groups – thus implying a cultural clash between 'traditional' minority cultures and the 'rational' and modern British healthcare workforce. Yet Walter's (Chapter 8) reliance on ethnographic studies demonstrates how putting individuals into cultural and ethnic boxes often contradicts the realities on the ground as well as people's own interpretations and self-identification. Thus 'identity alliance' between young people of Irish and Caribbean origin, he argues, can be seen as an expression of solidarity and cooperation in a common struggle for political equality that overcomes what some want us to believe are insurmountable cultural differences. Another contestation of the reification of cultural and ethnic divisions is the interesting finding that proves the diversity of the Irish immigrant community, among which a great number of second-generation Irish describe their ethnic identity with the hybrid term 'London Irish'; yet, at the same time they have remained outsiders to mainstream British society and the migrant community. The foregrounding of cultural identities, and ethnic and religious differences, in this volume shifts the focus and silences the real social divisions marked by political and economic conflicts. The uncritical engagement with multicultural policies aimed at managing migration and the role of local authorities in creating fragmented and disempowered social groups is, however, not reflected in Michael Keating's contribution (Chapter 4). He provides us with the rather self-evident conclusion that local governments that possess a more substantial understanding of their local communities are better able to deliver adequate public services. It is hard to take at face value his praise of the success of three London boroughs in 'tackling issues of difference and change' given his reliance on government reports and commissioned academic research that silences the voices of the recipients of the services. Eade (Chapter 7), on the other hand, demonstrates the multiplicity of often conflicting voices of community leaders and local inhabitants who clash over authenticity of representation. In an exploration of cultural representations of minority groups, Eade traces the colonialist traditions

that have informed multicultural policies in their efforts to sustain the myth of the ‘homogeneous’ community and to ‘appoint’ local leaders as the ‘true’ voices of such communities.

Perhaps symptomatic of the stance of the collection is the fact that London, not the migrants themselves, is its main focus. Migrants and the diversity they bring are ‘part of the landscape’ as Kershen argues (p. 30), a part that is welcomed and celebrated as long as it is properly managed and demonstrates efforts to integrate. The policy agenda that the book follows and its efforts to de-contextualise and de-politicise migration is at its most obvious when the editor’s attitude towards individuals and their movements is voiced in such labels as ‘outsiders’ (p. 29) producing ‘tsunami’ (p. 227) and ‘influx’ – a good demonstration of the right-wing tropes that seem to populate some parts of liberal (multicultural) thought. It is Michal Garapich (Chapter 9) who gives a face and voice to the homogeneous masses in his ethnographic exploration of Polish migrants as political subjects whose everyday strategies of resistance have managed to challenge hegemonic state regulations and contribute to the development of a migration system between Poland and the UK. Garapich also dispels some of the misconceptions surrounding Eastern European and Polish migration in particular. Thus, while Kershen’s introduction recognises the contribution of Eastern European migrants to the changing migration face of London but constructs these movements as stemming from the recent EU accession of ten Eastern European countries – and therefore a phenomenon of the twenty-first century – Garapich’s contribution emphasises the continuity of current migrations with pre-2004 movements, and therefore as embedded in a general Polish migration culture. Further, the title of the collection begs an explanation of who regards London as a ‘promised land’ and what the exact promises are that constitute the attractiveness of the city. The reader will be surprised to find that an exploration requiring engagement with migrants’ imaginaries and perceptions is largely missing from the collection – except for Garapich’s account of Polish migrants’ visions of London as a post-national individualistic paradise.

The broadly celebratory tone of the collection, one that is characteristic of the super-diversity prism’s effort to sustain a sense of social romanticism and an illusion of equality in its search for cultural homogenisation, is contested by the contributions of several chapters. Tendayi Bloom’s (Chapter 5) critical exploration of the policies of destitution that produce vulnerability and marginalisation among refused asylum-seekers; Nair’s (Chapter 6) claim that London’s global economic supremacy is largely sustained through the enslavement of different groups of ‘irregular’ migrants; Latin American migrants’ negotiations between different states of visibility and invisibility (Chapter 10); and Anderson’s (Chapter 12) concerns with the profound health inequality that migrants suffer and their higher risk of HIV-related vulnerabilities, all present us with a different face of London, which makes the volume editor’s description of London as a ‘tolerant’ safe heaven offering religious and economic freedoms at best inaccurate and at worst naïve. In their critical perspective and the sensibility of their engagement, these chapters stand out as ill-integrated in the general prism of the volume, where the salient perspectives they offer are not substantially recognised.

In the concluding remarks of this book, Anne Kershen sensibly predicts that ‘London’s migrant landscape will not remain static; immigrants will continue to come and stay and come and go, ensuring that the capital’s migrant population will remain super-diverse’ (p. 229). Future research that engages with the diversity of migrant populations should focus on voicing the political and economic struggles of marginalised groups instead of concealing these beneath a veil of cultural and religious divisions. This book is definitely a step in the right direction, with its interesting theme, interdisciplinary line-up of contributors and pointed timeliness, but it is also a reminder of the long way there is still to go in building critical scholarship that is sensitive to migrants and their sufferings.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The editor references data on migration numbers to such secondary sources as The Times, The Daily Mail, The Economist and BBC Radio Four.

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

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). Other major and still valid criticisms are also 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 groundbreaking synthesis of legal scholarship, qualitative empirical analysis and social theorising.

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 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 and 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 expands the scope of his interrogation to free movement rights guaranteed both by EU law and by the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This allows him to concentrate empirically on a variety of mechanisms that hinder freedom of movement in the national contexts of Spain, Italy, Croatia, Slovenia and Russia (which, 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-