

Statelessness and Citizenship

A Comparative Study on the Benefits of Nationality

Edited by Brad K. Blitz, Professor of International Politics and Policy, University College London, UK and Maureen Lynch, Washington-based Affiliate, International Observatory on Statelessness

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that there are more than 12 million stateless people in the world. The existence of stateless populations challenges some central tenets of international law and contemporary human rights discourses, yet only a very small number of states have made measurable progress in helping individuals acquire or regain citizenship. This fascinating study examines positive developments in eight countries and pinpoints the benefits of citizenship now enjoyed by formerly stateless persons.

'In our supposedly borderless world, having a nationality, and thus access to documents which permit travel and proof of identity, has become increasingly important. In many parts of the world, including the cases in Europe, Africa and Asia covered in this collection, large groups of people struggle with forms of de facto or de jure statelessness. In addition to providing a conceptual framework derived from international human rights norms for understanding better the phenomenon of statelessness, this collection presents important empirical research material helping us to understand, from the ground up, how statelessness is experienced.'

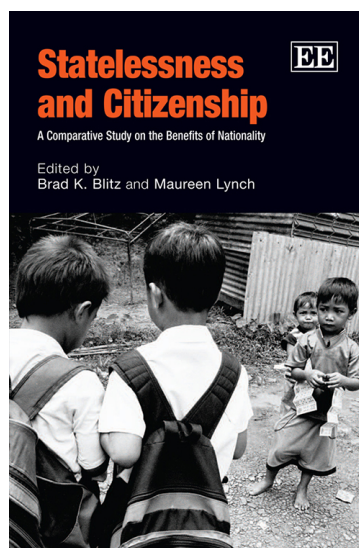
– Jo Shaw, University of Edinburgh, UK

'What difference does citizenship make? The vulnerability of stateless persons clearly demonstrates the benefits of having a nationality. But so far nobody has examined how much the situation of stateless persons improves when they finally get documents and citizenship status. This exploratory study analyses practical difficulties and real progress in overcoming statelessness. It gives voice to the victims and sets a political agenda. Academic researchers, non-governmental organizations and policy-makers should read this book.'

– Rainer Bauböck, European University Institute, Florence, Italy

'Embracing a subject that is generally treated abstractly, as a matter of human rights law, the authors of this pathbreaking book root statelessness deep into historical context and lived experience. They emerge with conclusions that are both dismaying (the expansive scope of the problem) and hopeful (the measurable progress some states have made in expanding the boundaries of citizenship). Alas, this eloquent book could hardly be more timely.'

– Linda K. Kerber, University of Iowa, US



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