



Book review of Ther, Philipp 2019. *The Outsiders: Refugees in Europe since 1492*. Princeton and Oxford. Princeton University Press, 342 pp

BOOK REVIEW

DIXIE BREA LARIOS

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The Outsiders: Refugees in Europe since 1492 provides a historical perspective on integration, which contextualizes, questions, and refines international and modern refugee narratives about integration. Such narratives often overlook the complexity of how migration and integration have evolved and persisted over time. Looking at the histories of refugees and migrants in Europe over the past five centuries allows us to see how different societies have dealt with the influx of refugees and migrants. Philipp Ther approaches this book with past and present research that draws on the sociological history of the integration of refugees and every refugee movement in Europe since 1492.

In his contribution, Ther distinguishes flight from other forms of migration to address integration and explores refugee movements using historical, positive, and negative examples. In this exploration, he distinguishes flight from other forms of migration by identifying two variants: victims of direct coercion (e.g., armed force or physical attack) and victims of indirect coercion (fear of violence and threatened living conditions), in contrast to well-organized journeys such as economic migration (p. 13). Ther also demonstrates how certain politics and policies both enabled and hindered refugees' movement across time, and how these movements have affected different European regimes. The historical examples shed light on a complex issue and emphasize the importance of understanding the implications of refugee movements.

Ther also highlights how different countries have responded to the influx of refugees by developing policies to either welcome or discourage them. The author provides a comparative analysis of the reception of refugees in Europe, outlining the different strategies employed to integrate them into society. He also elucidates the distinct challenges faced by refugees in the pursuit of integration and the varying approaches that can be taken to promote successful incorporation into a new society. These challenges could relate to some of Schierup, Hansen, and Castles (2006) new examinations on the migration dilemmas of the European welfare states.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Dixie Brea Larios, PhD

Department of
Psychosocial Sciences,
Faculty of Psychology,
University of Bergen,
Bergen, Norway

dixie.brea@uib.no

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The author explores integration history as a field of research emphasizing one of the book's central elements: integration is not a linear and irreversible process (p. 5). Certain factors can play a significant role in determining whether favorable or unfavorable conditions prevail for refugees. An introductory chapter reflects on the specific periods of mass flight, such as the interwar (1918–1939) and postwar years (1945–1980) (pp. 7–21), which are discussed in greater detail in the fourth chapter. Ther explores the previous literature on specific European migration regimes, focusing on refugees as the primary research topic and inviting the reader to view refugees as subjects and independent actors of history (p. 6). Throughout Chapter 1, Ther describes the narratives of the Sephardic Jews' flight from the Muslim-governed kingdom on the Iberian Peninsula during the Spanish Reconquista (from its culmination in 1492) (pp. 22–28). The author also considers the Huguenot wars in France (1562–1598), derived from competition between the nobility and centralized power and between different groups of religion, which over more than 30 years inflicted religious conflict, persecution, and fatal consequences of Absolutist power. With the historical narrative on the refuge of the Huguenots, Ther reminds us of the origin of the word refugee (pp. 28–37). In addition to the impact of a mass flight, Ther discusses the influence of multilingualism, intolerance, perpetration, and victimization of refugees. As a result, this chapter paints an often overlooked but powerful picture of the lives of those affected by religious persecution and displacement during this period.

In Chapter 2, Ther addresses the historical perspectives of the integration process, which nuances sociological reasons for flight, such as religious intolerance, modern nationalism, and political and ideological flight. Furthermore, the author explores the consequences of integration and how it has shaped the modern world, particularly with the effects of flight during the First World War and population removal during the Second World War. Ther also looks at how integration has led to sharing ideas, cultures, and resources and how it has been used to create economic and political stability with positive and negative impacts. A few examples include the effects on global markets, the refusal to integrate certain groups (e.g., Palestinians) (pp. 102–109), collective approaches between communities, and how people understand identity and belonging. Consequently, Ther outlines labor market activities as another form of professional integration and social mobility in historical environments. Throughout history, similar indicators have been reflected upon, such as in the World Migration Report (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou 2021), which provides a global and modern overview of the benefits of human mobility, for example, as a means of adaptation to environmental change.

A broad range of fleeing motives and flight cases is explored in Chapter 3. The author discusses modern and political refugees from the 19th century, including the ideals of solidarity from the Grande Émigration of 1831 after the Polish uprising against Russia, the Forty-Eighters supporting the 1848 Revolutions and the unification of Germany, and the difficulties of fleeing fascism. Specific measures, such as open-ended resident permits, protection against deportation, and compensations for lost property and land were granted to refugees seeking asylum (e.g., in France, Belgium, and the British Empire) (pp. 140–147). As a result of passport inspections at the border and the suppression of an anti-nationalist thrust, many refugee groups were constantly at risk of being deported. Ther addresses how these events led to a turn against refugees, political polarization, and a rise in international refugee policies.

For example, with no exceptions given to refugees, the Immigration Act of 1924, a United States federal law, prevented immigration from Asia and established national quotas for migrants influenced by certain ideologies (e.g., anticommunism, nationalism, and antisemitism) (p. 225). In countries hostile to refugees' presence, the restrictive policies often led to an increase in hospitality, solidarity, and resistance among refugees, raising debate about refugee rights that persists to this day.

In Chapter 4, the author provides a systematic and historical overview of population displacement in Europe, including the mobility incited by recession and the burdens of welfare states after the Cold War (1979–1985) (pp. 232–238). In addition, the chapter discusses the Syrian civil war and the refugee crisis of 2015, emphasizing the economic instability, social unrest, and political gridlock that have resulted from these events. The author also discusses the efforts of the international community to address the crisis, the role of the European Union in pressing governments to act, and how governments have responded to mass flight. Several factors are at play, including the question of how much aid will be provided to Syria, its neighbors, and the UNHCR. Furthermore, the author delves into the lasting impacts of the war and the refugee crisis, examining the effects on those displaced, their communities, and their countries. Ther emphasizes that the Syrians could have used the capital they lost in hazardous travel in other ways (p. 272). In spite of this, European states have managed to cope with one of the most significant refugee movements in history.

A number of historical narratives of flight experiences and biographical examples of individuals involved in flight are provided in this book. To name a few: Robillard de Champagne (1687), the Dublon family (1940), and the UN agency (1950). Through these narratives, readers are offered a deeper understanding of the history of integration and refugee settlement in different periods. The author concludes the narratives by describing four types of flight experiences: existential, predetermined, proactive, and optional (p. 284). Throughout history, all these experiences have been reflected in the historical overview of refugee mobility, which shows how integration has changed and evolved. The author encourages individuals and governments to be more proactive by using lessons from the past to address the current global refugee crisis (pp. 278–279).

This book provides a historical exploration and narrative of the refugee experience that will enable readers to gain a deeper understanding of the historical aspects of flight. Readers will be able to reflect on the challenges refugees face in terms of integration, acknowledge past policies to be able to develop new ones, and gain insight into the historical aspect of refugee research. The book is therefore interesting to both historians or scholars interested in the history of refuge and displacement as well as to officers planning strategies to manage and integrate refugees.

NOTES

The book was also published in German in 2017 with the name *Die Außenseiter: Flucht, Flüchtlinge und Integration im modernen Europa*.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

AUTHOR AFFILIATION

Dixie Brea Larios, PhD  orcid.org/0000-0002-8795-6253

Department of Psychosocial Sciences, Faculty of Psychology, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

Brea Larios

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