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Invitation  
to the 8th IRS International Lecture  
on Society and Space

## Expulsions: A Category for our Age

Saskia Sassen, Columbia University

### Abstract

In the last two decades there has been a sharp growth in the numbers of people that have been "expelled", numbers far larger than the newly "incorporated" middle classes of countries such as India and China. I use the term "expulsion" to describe a diversity of conditions: the growing numbers of the abjectly poor, of the displaced in poor countries who are warehoused in formal and informal refugee camps, of the minoritized and persecuted in rich countries who are warehoused in prisons, of workers whose bodies are destroyed on the job and rendered useless at far too young an age, able-bodied surplus populations warehoused in ghettos and slums.

Another such major trend is the repositioning of what had been framed as sovereign territory, a complex condition, into land for sale on the global market – land in Sub-Saharan Africa, in Central Asia and in Latin America to be bought by rich investors and rich governments to grow food, to access underground water tables, and to access minerals and metals.

My argument is that these diverse and many other kindred developments amount to a logic of expulsion, signaling a deeper systemic transformation in advanced capitalism, one documented in bits and pieces but not quite narrated as an overarching dynamic that is taking us into a new phase of global capitalism.

The lecture is based on the author's book *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press/Belknap . German translation with S. Fischer 2015.

Margit Mayer, associated Prof at CMS (TU Berlin) will comment on Prof Sassen's lecture.



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## Saskia Sassen, Columbia University

### Vita

Saskia Sassen is the Robert S. Lynd Professor of Sociology, and chairs The Committee on Global Thought at Columbia University. She is a student of cities, immigration, and states in the world economy, with inequality, gendering and digitization three key variables running through her work. Born in the Netherlands, she grew up in Argentina and Italy, studied in France, was raised in five languages, and began her professional life in the United States.

Currently, she is completing a two-year research project on Mobilities, supported by a research gift from AUDI. She also continues her work in a large collective project, The Urban Age, whose focus is on extreme urbanism. It is funded by the Herrhausen Foundation, and the multi-year grant was renewed in January 2013 for a second three-year cycle. A new collective project is on Conventional Governance Systems and Human Security, supported by a large grant from the European Union Research Council.

Her new book is *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy* (Harvard University Press 2014; German translation with S. Fischer 2015). The organizing thesis is that our global modernity is marked by systemic expulsions of all sorts: we are beyond simply more inequality, more poverty, more refugees in the global south, and so on. And it is often our complex intermediary processes, requiring talent and knowledge, which are facilitating such expulsions. Other recent books are *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Princeton University Press 2008; German with Suhrkamp 2008), *A Sociology of Globalization* (W.W.Norton 2007) and the *The Global City* (Princeton University Press 1991/2001; German with Campus 1996).

Her books are translated into over 20 languages. She has been selected as a top global thinker for various lists and received many awards and honors, among them multiple doctor honoris causa, the 2013 Principe de Asturias Prize in the Social Sciences, election to the Royal Academy of the Sciences of the Netherlands, and made a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres by the French government.

► [www.saskiasassen.com](http://www.saskiasassen.com)

We kindly ask all participants to register ► [here](#). Thank you very much.