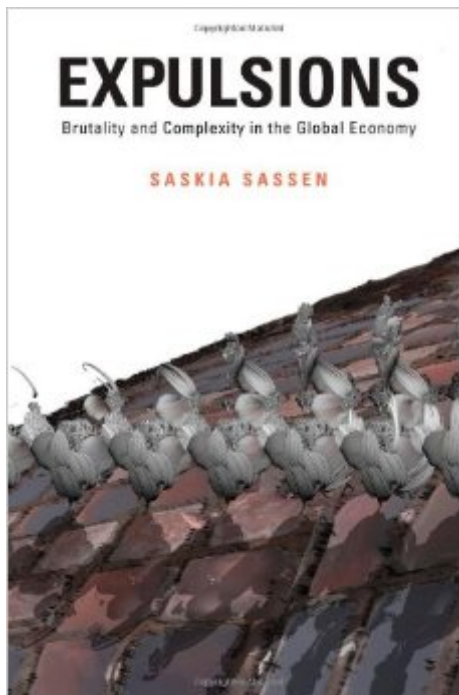


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Expulsions: Brutality And Complexity In The Global Economy



Synopsis

Soaring income inequality and unemployment, expanding populations of the displaced and imprisoned, accelerating destruction of land and water bodies: today's socioeconomic and environmental dislocations cannot be fully understood in the usual terms of poverty and injustice, according to Saskia Sassen. They are more accurately understood as a type of expulsion--from professional livelihood, from living space, even from the very biosphere that makes life possible. This hard-headed critique updates our understanding of economics for the twenty-first century, exposing a system with devastating consequences even for those who think they are not vulnerable. From finance to mining, the complex types of knowledge and technology we have come to admire are used too often in ways that produce elementary brutalities. These have evolved into predatory formations--assemblages of knowledge, interests, and outcomes that go beyond a firm's or an individual's or a government's project. Sassen draws surprising connections to illuminate the systemic logic of these expulsions. The sophisticated knowledge that created today's financial "instruments" is paralleled by the engineering expertise that enables exploitation of the environment, and by the legal expertise that allows the world's have-nations to acquire vast stretches of territory from the have-nots. Expulsions lays bare the extent to which the sheer complexity of the global economy makes it hard to trace lines of responsibility for the displacements, evictions, and eradications it produces--and equally hard for those who benefit from the system to feel responsible for its depredations.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book deserves a wider audience. The author (SS) proposes a very imaginative and unifying metaphor to describe a wide range of phenomena that cut across the economic, social and environmental spheres. Unfortunately, while it has a very original Big Idea, it's marred by some serious flaws of execution when it comes to details -- most of which, I hope, could be corrected in something like a paperback revised edition. It also could be even a little bolder in extending its thesis.¹ SS uses the title metaphor of "expulsions" to unify many things happening today and that have been happening during the past couple of decades:- the expulsion of men and women from the economy, "from life projects and livelihoods, from membership, from the social contract at the center of liberal democracy" (@29), through the elimination of jobs, the disappearing of the jobless from unemployment statistics, and growing inequality- the expulsion of people from their home countries, through the financially-mandated disintegration of social safety nets- mass displacements due to wars and natural disasters, which are becoming permanent- the expulsion of men and women from society through incarceration, particularly in for-profit jails that benefit from keeping cells occupied- the expulsion of farmers from their land, through state-mediated sales of fertile lands to foreign investors- the expulsion of poor people from their homes, after extending them subprime mortgages with which they cannot hope to stay current- the expulsion not only of humans but of the biosphere from land and water roiled and poisoned by extraction of minerals.

Recently, I have been trying to read books from the very last chapter first in order, this gives you the instant satisfaction of getting to know the points/theme/conclusions of the book. So this book gives me the instant image of Chris Hedges's inverted totalitarianism. Professor Sassen uses some interesting WHO, World Bank and IMF data to support her claim directly against the corporations. She stops short of "claiming" IMF, and World Bank are the culprits for the massive expulsions of the middle and low class from many countries. She stops short of "accusing" these so called public globalization policies are doing so much damage to many countries internal economies and the citizens' well being and social status. For example: speaking of water monopoly, she ONLY mentions Nestle as the evil company. Few of the interesting chapter are worth noted: such as global land grab by government and corporations: such as China and US are buying a lot of "lands" from other countries. And Philippines are selling a lot of their lands to foreign countries. Rare earth developments are also damaging the Earth environments. But again, the mindless consumerization are not well explained. Simply we should all know that we are killing the Earth the moment we buy or upgrade our electronic devices. Professor uses a lot of "sociological term" which seem sophisticated, but I find this technique hard to be understood by the readers. Simply, she uses fancy

words. The chapter on financial securitization is nothing new. There are too many books about it. Overall, I think her chapters combined to express the wealth/poor gap has been widen due to the liberalization of our land, our government, corporations. BUT each chapters are fragmented.

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