

SASKIA SASSEN'S CV



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Bio

Saskia Sassen is the Robert S. Lynd Professor of Sociology and Co-Chairs The Committee on Global Thought, Columbia University. Her recent books are "Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy" (Harvard University Press 2014), "Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages" (Princeton University Press 2008), "A Sociology of Globalization" (W.W. Norton 2007), and the 4th fully updated edition of Cities in a World Economy (Sage 2011). The Global City came out in a new fully updated edition in 2001. Her books are translated into twenty-one languages. She is currently working on When Territory Exits Existing Frameworks (Under contract with Harvard University Press). She contributes regularly to OpenDemocracy and The Huffington Post.



OVERVIEW OF WORK

Saskia Sassen's research and writing focuses on globalization (including social, economic and political dimensions), immigration, global cities (including cities and terrorism), the new networked technologies, and changes within the liberal state that result from current transnational conditions. In her research she has focused on the unexpected and the counterintuitive as a way to cut through established "truths." Her three major books have each sought to demolish a key established "truth". Thus in her first book, **"The Mobility of Labor and Capital"** (Cambridge University Press 1988), she showed how foreign investment in less developed countries can actually raise the likelihood of emigration; this went against established notions that such investment would retain potential emigrants.

In her second book **"The Global City"** (Princeton University Press 1991; 2nd ed 2002) she showed how the global economy far from being placeless, has and needs very specific territorial insertions, and that this need is sharpest in the case of highly globalized and electronic sectors such as finance; this went against established notions at the time that the global economy transcended territory and its associated regulatory umbrellas. In her most recent book, **"Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages"** (Princeton University Press 2006; 2nd ed. 2008), she shows that the foundational transformations afoot today take place largely inside core and thick national environments; this allows her to explain that some of the changes inside liberal states, most evident in the USA -- but also increasingly in other countries -- are not distortions or anomalies, but are the result of these foundational transformations inside the state apparatus. She shows how this foundational transformation hence consists not only of globalizing dynamics but also of denationalizing dynamics: we are seeing the formation of multiple often highly specialized assemblages of bits of territory, authority and rights that were once ensconced in national framings. Today these assemblages traverse global and national settings, thereby denationalizing what was historically constructed as national.

In addition to the three works described above, Saskia Sassen recently published **"A Sociology of Globalization"** (Norton 2007). She has also just completed a five-year project for UNESCO on sustainable human settlement, for which she set up a network of researchers and activists in over 30 countries. The results of this study are published as one of the volumes of the **"Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems"** (Oxford, UK: EOLSS Publishers). She recently edited **"Deciphering the Global: Its Spaces, Scales, and Subjects"** (Routledge 2006), a collection of her doctoral students' work, and co-edited **"Digital Formations: New Architectures for Global Order"** (Princeton University Press 2005). The latter is based on a multi-year project sponsored by the Social Science Research Council, through its Information Technology and International Cooperation Committee, which she chaired. Among other projects, she was involved with the 2006 Venice Biennale of Architecture, which for the first time in its history focused on cities; she wrote a lead essay for the Catalogue. There are new fully updated editions of two of her older books, **"Cities in a World Economy"** (3rd ed. Sage/Pine



Forge 2006), and **“The Global City”** (2nd. ed. Princeton University Press 2001). Her books have been translated into sixteen languages.

CAREER SUMMARY

Saskia Sassen is the Robert S. Lynd Professor of Sociology at Columbia University and a Member of its Committee on Global Thought, which she chaired from 2009 till 2015. 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. She is the author of eight books and the editor or co-editor of three books. Together, her authored books are translated in over twenty languages. She has received many awards and honors, among them twelve doctor honoris causa, multiple named lectures, the 2013 Principe de Asturias Prize in the Social Sciences, election as a Foreign Member of the Royal Academy of the Sciences of the Netherlands, and made a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres by the French government.

In each of the four major completed projects that comprise her 30 years of research, Sassen starts with a thesis that posits the unexpected and the counterintuitive in order to cut through established “truths.” These projects engendered four major books. There are also a few smaller books and about 40 academic articles in peer-reviewed journals.

Her first book was *The Mobility of Labor and Capital* (Cambridge University Press 1988), her thesis is that foreign investment in less developed countries can actually raise the likelihood of emigration if that investment goes to labor-intensive sectors and/or devastates the traditional economy. Her thesis went against established notions that such investment would retain potential emigrants.

In *The Global City* (Princeton University Press 1991; 2nd ed 2001) her thesis is that the global economy needs very specific territorial insertions, and that this need is at its sharpest with highly globalized and digitized sectors such as finance. This went against established notions at the time that the global economy transcended territory and its associated regulatory umbrellas, and that the most advanced sectors would leave cities. The tightest proposition running through the book is that the global city is shaped/fed by the rise of intermediation functions at scales and in ways that go well beyond prior phases of capitalism.

In *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Princeton University Press 2006), her thesis is that today’s partial but foundational transformations, from economic to cultural and subjective, take place largely inside thick national settings and institutions, but do so in ways that denationalize the national. She conceptualizes denationalizing dynamics as operating in the shadows of the more familiar globalizing dynamics. This denationalizing of what was historically constructed as national is more significant than much of the self-evidently global. A guiding question running through this book is how complex systems change. One key finding is that in complex systems such change is not necessarily highly visible: it often consists



of existing systemic capabilities shifting to a new set of organizing logics -- in ways that make those capabilities look as more of the same.

Her most recent project is developed in two smaller books: *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy* (Harvard University Press/Belknap 2014), and the forthcoming *Ungoverned Territories?* (Harvard University Press 2018) The organizing thesis in *Expulsions* 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 admirable types of talents and knowledge, which are facilitating brutal, often elementary, expulsions. This book also calls for a rethinking of the knowledge silos we have produced: the need to de-theorize in order to re-theorize. *Ungoverned Territories* examines the making of ambiguous jurisdictions that escape the grip of existing national and international institutions. This volume will include The 2012 Storrs Lectures in Jurisprudence and Philosophy she delivered at the Yale University Law School.

She has completed *Cities at War: Global Insecurity and Urban Resistance*, a book co-edited with Mary Kaldor (London School of Economics), forthcoming with Columbia University Press in 2018. It is based on fieldwork a team of researchers in 8 major cities with high levels of conflict, ranging from Ciudad Juarez to Baghdad. It is funded by a large grant from the European Union Research Council.

Sassen has now started a new project on what an “Ethics of the City” would actually consist of. She posits that it will inevitably be quite different from our much-admired classic texts on ethics, which hover safely above the inequities of daily life in a large city. An ethics of the city is perhaps inevitably a bit of an ugly-duckling ethics, an imperfect ethics. The working thesis is that it is an ethics where social justice, rather than a purer and more elevated notion of ethics, becomes as strong as all the forces aligned against it. Cities are sites of inequality and indifference, and therein lies the challenge but also the necessity to understand when do inequality and indifference become profoundly unjust and destructive of people, their efforts, and the city itself. Her first three sites for research will be New York City, London, and Beijing. Support for the research comes from the Kaifeng Foundation (Beijing and Oxford).

She also continues her work in a large collective project, *The Urban Age*, focused on extreme urbanisms. The main funder over ten years has been the Herrhausen Foundation (Berlin). She is also currently completing a two-year project on *Mobilities*, supported by a research gift from AUDI.

Besides the already mentioned books, she is the author of *A Sociology of Globalization* (Norton 2007; *Losing Control? Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization* (The Schoff Lectures of Columbia University, published by Columbia University Press in 1996, with a new edition in 2016); *Globalization and its Discontents. Essays on the Mobility of People and Money* (New Press 1998); *Guests and Aliens* (New Press, 1999), *Cities in a World Economy* (Pine Forge/Sage, 1994; coming out in its 5th updated edition in 2018. Her edited books are *Deciphering the Global: Its Scales, Spaces and Subjects* (Routledge 2007), *Human Settlement and the Environmental Challenge* (Oxford: EOLS



2006), *Global Networks/Linked Cities* (Routledge 2002), and the co-edited *Digital Formations* (Princeton University Press 2005).

All her edited books are based on larger collective research projects, sponsored by funding entities. *Global Networks, Linked Cities* (London and New York: Routledge 2002) is based on a large multi-year UNU based and sponsored project with researchers in six countries. A second edited book recently completed is *Human Settlement and the Environmental Challenge* (Oxford: EOLS 2006), one of the 14 volumes in the UNESCO Encyclopedia on the Environment; this involved setting up a network of researchers and activists in over 30 countries. The co-edited *Digital Formations: Information Technologies and New Architectures in the Global Realm* (Princeton University Press 2005) is based on a four year project she chaired for the Social Science Research Council, with support from the Ford Foundation. Finally, *Deciphering the Global: Its Scales, Spaces and Subjects* (Routledge 2007) is based on the Transnationalism Project set up and run by Sassen at the University of Chicago, 1998-2007.

Scientific and technological activities

Selected scientific articles and book chapters

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- Lecture in Sheik Zayed Theter, London School of Economics, May 13, 2013.

- "The Foreigner? Saskia Sassen Unravels What It Now Means To Be 'Other'", *Arrival City Film*, May 11, 2013.

- "Ciudad y frontera", *Arquine*, April 18, 2013.

- "Les penseurs de la société", *Grand Dossier, Sciences Humaines (France)*, February 28, 2013.

- "The merits of an unfinished city", *Opinion*, February, 19, 2013.

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- "Zawia volume00: CHANGE", *issuu*, 2012.

- "The smart city is all about people", *The Networked Society Blog*, December 13, 2012.

- "Our Top 10 Female Theoriticians of Spatial Theory", *Die Architektin*, November 11, 2012.

- "A breath of fresh air for public spaces", *Financial Times*, October 26, 2012.

- "American sociologist Saskia Sassen on expulsion and democracy", *Literair Nederland*, October 24, 2012.

- "Les villes globales en état de guerre", *Société*, September 20, 2012.

- Video: "The Global Street: Making the Political", Subversive festival, May, 2012.

- Sassen part of the jury: "Young Colombian social scientist wins 1st UNESCO/Juan Bosch Prize for research on youth violence", *UNESCOPRESS*, March 12, 2012.

- "Live Blog: Saskia Sassen, 'Immigrants and Citizens in the Global City'", *Architect Blogs*, March 2, 2012.

2011

- "Ciudad y Globalizacion", *Quito, Ecuador: FLACSO*, 2011.

- "Autour des métropoles africaines", *Le Soir*, November 2, 2011

- "The State of Things: Saskia Sassen", *Abitare*, October 17, 2011

- "9/11 in the Arts: An Anniversary Guide", *The New York Times*, August 25, 2011.



- "Maria, Of The Garbage Pickers: Cartonera-in-Chief", *Forbes*, April 19, 2011.**
- "Curfew in the Favela", *Forbes*, April 8, 2011.**
- "The Berlusconi in Us All: Bunga Bunga's Real Meaning", *The Atlantic*, April 6, 2011.**
- "Long Live the Industrial City", *The Wilson Quarterly*, Spring, 2011.**
- "La Salada: The Largest Informal Market In South America", *Forbes*, March 28, 2011.**
- "The Global City and the Global Slum", *Forbes*, March 22, 2011.**
- "Talking Back to Your Intelligent City", *McKinsey*, February 1, 2011.**

2010

- Speaker, "Intro: Bridging the Ecologies of Cities and of the Biosphere", Cities And Eco-Crises Conference, Columbia University, October 1, 2010. *Schedule, Speaker Bios***
- "Cities are at the center of our environmental future", *S.A.P.I.EN.S*, Vol 2, Issue 3, 2010.**
- "Die Slums Der Megastadte", *The European*, July 11, 2010.**
- "Thinking Globally: Sassen Named to Co-Chair Committee on Global Thought", *The Record*, September 27, 2010.**

2009

- "Obama and Volcker: Economic Solutions, Good; Summers and Geithner: Financial Solutions, Not Good." *Huffington Post*, January 27th, 2009.**
- "Beyond Party Politics: The New President and the Growth of Executive Power". *Dissent Magazine*, Winter 2009.**
- Speaker, Cities and the New Wars event, The Committee on Global Thought, September 25, 2009. *Schedule, Poster***

2008

- "Cities and New Wars: After Mumbai". *Open Democracy News Analysis*, November 29, 2008.**
- "A Bad Idea: Using a Financial Solution to the Financial Crisis". *Huffington Post*, November 24, 2008.**



- "When local housing crisis becomes a global disaster", *Business and Economy*, October 2, 2008.

- "The new new deal". *Open Democracy News Analysis*, September 23, 2008.

- "Sharp-Elbowed Cities: Why Europe and Asia are overtaking American in the Race to Create New Hubs of World Commerce". *Newsweek*, September 6, 2008.

- "Nurturing Asia's World Cities", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, vol. 171(4), 2008.

- "Inhabited Infrastructure: Recoding Homogenized Built Environments as Infrastructure". *luav*, vol. 49, April 2008.

2007

- "Pakistan's two worlds: Pervez Musharraf's crackdown on lawyers has oddly left little trace on Lahore, where residents continue to travel, shop and party". *The Guardian*, November 7, 2007.

- [with Richard Sennett] "The war on shapeless terror: There seems to be no rational basis for the arrest of a group of German sociologists, and the case highlights the fragility of our civil liberties." *The Guardian*, August 20, 2007.

- [with Richard Sennett] "Guantánamo in Germany: In the name of the war on terror, our colleagues are being persecuted - for the crime of sociology." *The Guardian*, August 21, 2007.

- "Globalisation, the state and the democratic deficit". *Open Democracy News Analysis*, July 18, 2007.

2006

- "Cities at the Intersection of New Histories", in *Urban Age*, November 2006.

- "Migration policy: from control to governance". *Open Democracy News Analysis*, July 12, 2006.

- "How Population Lies: True, big cities no longer draw big numbers. But that doesn't mean their power is slipping too." *Newsweek*, July 3, 2006.

- "Global Investor Saskia Sassen: Why Hong Kong is Happening". *Newsweek*, July 31, 2006.

2005

- "A different take on the female public intellectual "problem"", Daniel W. Drezner, *Foreign Policy*, February 22, 2005.



- "The U.S. in a time of global conflict: challenges we face beyond war." *Contexts*, vol.4(2), 2005.

2004

- "The Migration Fallacy". *The Financial Times*, December 26, 2004.

- "We seem to have forgotten history." *The Guardian*, February 26, 2004.

2003

- "New lords of Africa: Global protests did help poor countries over drugs and AIDS. But the counterattack has begun." *The Guardian*, July 9, 2003.

- "Iraq War Blowback", *The Nation*, February 3, 2003.

- "How Downtown Can Stand Tall and Step Lively Again", *New York Times*, January 26, 2003.

2002

- "Is this the way to go?: Handling immigration in a global era." *Eurozine*, Sept. 17, 2002.

2001

- "How Should the Left Respond to Globalization??", *Dissent*, vol.48(1): 13-14.

Awards and honors

The only woman to appear among the top ten social scientists in the world, as ranked by the Social Science Citation Index of the last decade, which also include Anthony Giddens, Jürgen Habermas, Zygmunt Bauman and Alain Touraine

Main awards

- Twelve doctor honoris causa
- The 2013 Principe de Asturias Prize in the Social Sciences



- **Election as a Foreign Member of the Royal Academy of the Sciences of the Netherlands**
- **Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres by the French government**
- **Multiple named lectures at universities worldwide.**

Academic and scientific awards

- The 2020 Edgar de Picciotto International Prize
- Advisor to a number of international bodies and for several United Nations projects. Member of the National Academy of Sciences Panel on Cities, of the independent organisation Council on Foreign Relations and of the Information Technology and International Cooperation Committee of the Social Science Research Council (USA). In 2007, she won the Distinguished Graduate School Alumnus Award from the University of Notre Dame (USA) and the Future Mentor Award from the University of Chicago.
- Her books have been translated into 21 languages. She has likewise published articles in newspapers such as The Guardian, The New York Times, Le Monde Diplomatique, International Herald Tribune, The Financial Times and Clarín, among others. She has just completed for UNESCO a 5-year project on sustainable human settlement whose conclusions have been published as one of the volumes of the Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (UK).
- Member of the Board of Directors, IBA; Member, International Advisory Board; Member of the Panel on Urban Population Dynamics, Committee on Population of the National Academy of Sciences; Chair, Information Technology and International Cooperation Committee of the Social Science Research Council; Director, Transnationalism Project of the University of Chicago; and co-Chair of the economy section of the Global Chicago Project.
- She was one of eight experts on the Mastercard Worldwide Centers of Commerce Index, a vast project involving 60 variables, from economic to social, covering 75 major and minor global cities around the world.
- In the past, she has directed and been a member of several research projects. She directed a two-year Volkswagen funded project on cities and global governance, and a five-year multi-country project on global cities and cross-border networks for the Institute of Advanced Studies, United Nations University (Tokyo). In the 1980s and 1990s she co-directed the Hispanic Women in the Garments and Electronics Industries in New York and California, supported by the Tinker and Ford Foundations, was a member of the Japan-based project on Economic Restructuring in the U.S. and Japan, sponsored by the United Nations Center on Regional Development and MIT (1988-1990); the SSRC (Social Science



Research Council) Working Group on New York City, sponsored by the Russell Sage Foundation (1985-1990); the SSRC Committee on Hispanic Public Policy, sponsored by the Ford Foundation (1987-1991); the New York-London Comparative Study sponsored by the Economic Social Research Council of the United Kingdom (1990-1995). She also was a member of the Ford Foundation Task Force for Research on Hispanics; the Research Working Group on the Informal Sector, supported by the Ford, Tinker, and Rockefeller Foundations; the Stanford University Project on Mexico-U.S. Relations; the Immigration and Economic Sociology Project sponsored by the Russell Sage Foundation (1992-1995); the Comparative Urban Studies project at the Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington DC (1992-1993); The Group of Lisbon sponsored by the Science Program of the European Union and the Gulbenkian Foundation (Portugal 1993-1998).

- She has served on several scientific juries for, among others, the French Government's Ministry of Urban Affairs and the Belgian Government's Agency on Science and Technology in the Office of the Prime Minister. She has often served as an advisor, including to Queens Borough President Claire Shulman's Blue Ribbon Panel on Government; the New York State Industrial Corporation Council; Global Chicago; the LSE Mayors Project of the Cities Programme; and the World Economic Forum's Club of Mayors. Over the years she has served on the board of diverse professional journals and organizations. She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Sociological Research Association, the European Academy of Sciences, The Royal Academy of Sciences of the Netherlands, and the Atheneum (UK).
- She has received multiple research grants and awards. Besides the already mentioned grantors, they include the Ford Foundation, Tinker Foundation, The Mellon Foundation, The Revson Foundation, Chicago Institute for Architecture and Urbanism, Twentieth Century Fund, American Academy in Berlin. A studio she co-directed won the national prize of the American Institute of Certified Planners. She was a Fellow at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin, Germany; Distinguished Lecturer at the Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna, Austria; Distinguished Visiting Professor at the Law School of the University of Toronto; Visiting Fellow of the American Bar Foundation. She has been a Visiting Scholar at the Russell Sage Foundation, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (Palo Alto). She has served as visiting professor in large number of institutions; most recently she was named the 2012 Luhmann Visiting Professor at the University of Bielefeld, Germany.
- Other honors and prizes from bodies representing diverse disciplines in the social sciences, include most recently Honorary Geographer (2011) by the American Geographers Association, Eminent Development Scholar (2012) by the International Studies Association, Eminent Scholar in Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Migration Studies (2014) by the International Studies Association. She has delivered many named lectures, among them the 1994



Henry Luce Lecture at Clark University, the 1995 Memorial Schoff Lectures at Columbia University, the 1997 LeFrak Lecture at the University of Maryland, the 1999 Georg Simmel Lectures at Humboldt University (Berlin), the 2000 Theodore Hesburgh Lectures on Politics and Ethics at the University of Notre Dame, the 2005 Sherril Lecture at the Yale University Law School, the 2010 Coulson lecture at Oxford University, The Luhman Lecture at Bielefeld University, The Storrs Lectures in Jurisprudence and Philosophy at the Yale University Law School.

Language skills

Besides English, she is fluent in Spanish, Italian and French, and good in Dutch and German. She also studied Russian and Japanese.

