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. One major trend is the repositioning of what had been framed as sovereign territory, a complex conditions, 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 paper is based on the author’s forthcoming book Expulsions.

Saskia Sassen is the Robert S. Lynd Professor of Sociology and Co-Chair, The Committee on Global Thought, Columbia University (www.saskiasassen.com). Her recent books are Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages (Princeton University Press 2008), A Sociology of Globalization (W.W.Norton 2007), both translated into Spanish by Editorial Katz (Madrid y Buenos Aires), and the 4th fully updated edition of Cities in a World Economy (Sage 2012). Among older books is The Global City (Princeton University Press 1991/2001). Her books are translated into over 20 languages. She is the recipient of diverse awards and mentions, ranging from multiple doctor honoris causa to named lectures and being selected as one of the 100 Top Global Thinkers of 2011 by Foreign Policy Magazine.