

those cities. This mild deficiency is understandable given the authors' hypothesis, and their success in making the case given the disparate impacts of the programme in Baltimore and Atlanta. However, the work could have been enhanced with a closer analysis of the middle-ground cities, perhaps including a micro-level analysis of the precise factors that led to the more subtle disparities in outcome. Another potential area of expansion is the role that multi-state jurisdictional relationships played in determining governance structures demonstrated in EZ cities. These drawbacks are perhaps indicative of the breadth of the topic area the authors sought to study. Several aspects of their analysis of EZ cities – public participation, quasi-governmental agencies and strategic planning processes – could easily provide enough fodder for their own volumes, making the task of condensing such factors within the confines of EZ programme outcome analyses even more difficult.

In a single piece, the authors link a long-standing challenge confronting urban spaces in the USA (the need to revitalise distressed areas and combat the ever-present issues of poverty and neighbourhood decay) and a tenet of public policy scholarship (the importance of governance and the engagement of the private and voluntary sectors, as well as the public, in the provision of public services) through the lens of a large-scale federal measure that attempted both to tackle the former and encourage the latter. This connection is made while the book simultaneously details the implementation strategies employed in each of the six cities, processes that varied widely. While such a substantial federal policy investment is unlikely in the near future, states and localities with similarly structured programmes could also benefit from analysing outcomes from the larger EZ programme. Cities of nearly any size could derive some value from understanding

the power of governance structures in the broader context of revitalisation efforts. *Collaborative Governance* is thus a must-read for students and scholars of urban policy, as the conclusions drawn and lessons derived from the Empowerment Zone initiative have the potential to enhance the viability of future efforts towards urban revitalisation in American cities.

Saskia Sassen, *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 2014; 298 pp.: 978 0 6745 9922 2, £22.95/US\$29.95/€27.00 (hbk)

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'If there are connections everywhere, why do we persist in turning dynamic, interconnected phenomena into static, disconnected things? Some of this is owing, perhaps, to the way we have learned our own history' (Wolf, 2010 [1982]: 4–5). Eric Wolf's claim in *Europe and the People Without History* makes direct appeal to Saskia Sassen's last book. The reason is simple – the sociologist detects socio-economic transformations by distancing herself from compartmentalised approaches, which typically view finance, the environment and forced displacement as distinct and only partially connected phenomena. Instead, by detecting 'new logics of expulsions [...] from life projects and livelihoods, from membership, from the social contract' (pp. 1, 29), Sassen gives us a holistic picture of global processes that may question the way we have so far approached and learned 'our own history'. Rather than persisting in using the categories of poverty and deprivation to describe current socio-economic processes, Sassen argues, we should use a different language, the language of *expulsions*. 'New dynamics may well get filtered through familiar thick

realities – poverty, inequality, economy, politics – and thereby take on familiar forms when in fact they are signalling accelerations or ruptures that generate new meanings’ (p. 6). This requires a change of approach, and the aim of the book is to contribute to such an important change.

The importance, and – as we learn – the urgency of changing approach is clearly outlined in the first part of the book that focuses on the rise of post-2008 socio-economic inequalities globally, particularly in the USA and Southern Europe. What the scale and the dynamics of inequalities and poverty suggests, especially in rich countries, is that the continuous worsening of economic conditions at the bottom of the class structure, and the concomitant rise of super-rich wealth, rather than signalling a mere radicalisation of what was before, account for a *systemic change*. The main point is that from a Keynesian idea of incorporation into the economy to this global era of acute privatisation and deregulation, filtered human mobility and disregard of nature’s essential needs, we arrived to a point in which the entire system of regulating society is changing. Looking at the systemic edge, as the author does, allows seeing ‘larger trends that are less extreme and hence more difficult to capture’ (p. 211). These include the core of the book – *expulsions* from economic, social and biospheric domains. The change is systemic not only because it is not a simple effect of single decisions and/or individuals – ‘concentration at the top is nothing new’ (p. 13), – but because the expulsions the author talks about cut across several different domains, from financial rationality to poverty, and from displacement to environmental problems.

Expulsions are primarily caused by what the author calls ‘predatory “formations”’, a mix of elites and systemic capacities with finance a key enabler, that push toward acute concentration’ (p. 13). Three forms of expulsions are the following: a steep rise of

poverty rates, growing forced displacement, and massive expansion of the penal state. In 2012 ‘24.2 percent of European citizens were at risk of poverty, severely deprived or living in households with very low work intensity’ (p. 51); 2011 was ‘the fifth year when the number of forcibly displaced persons worldwide exceeded 42 million’ (p. 55), and that in 2011 the Global South hosted 80% of the world’s refugees. Finally, the massive expansion of penal apparatuses across the Global North and South – for instance, at present one in 31 US citizens is detained, on probation or on parole (p. 65). These phenomena are strictly related to one another, accounting for an unprecedentedly radical exacerbation of forced removal from social gains. It is unprecedented not only because of its geographical width, but also because it cuts across apparently disconnected different social, economic and environmental issues.

The nature and functioning of ‘predatory formations’ is progressively clarified along with the increasing variety and details of the data presented and analysed. State and private companies’ large-scale land acquisitions, particularly for biofuels, that escalated after 2008, shed light on important aspects of these new logics of expulsion. Although land grabbing is as old as colonial domination, today it is causing two major conceptual changes, which should make us change our overall approach. First, the World Bank, IMF and WTO’s unprecedented power of weakening national economies by facilitating land acquisition; and second, the questioning of the very idea of sovereignty, to the point that ‘we may ask what citizenship is worth when national territory is downgraded to foreign-owned land for plantations, leading to the eviction of everything else – flora, fauna, villages, smallholders, and the traditional rules that organized land ownership of use’ (p. 115).

The analysis of financial predatory processes adds another, fundamental card to the

mosaic of 'predatory formations': expert knowledge. The 'complexity' of the book's subtitle resides, other than in the nature of predatory assemblages, in the expert knowledge behind the contemporary astounding growth of financial profit – 'Goldman Sachs' backroom is well stocked with physicists. The mathematics of the backroom is mostly well beyond the understanding of the highly paid executives of the boardroom' (p. 119). The housing market is one of the financial sectors which has recently been hit by some of the most brutal consequences of the working of 'predatory formations' that were mostly paid by already disadvantaged households across different latitudes. This is well documented, for example discussing data on the lower rate of subprime lending among white US citizens as opposed to Black, Hispanic and Asian citizens.

Yet 'predatory formations' do not only operate in social and economic domains, but they also operate on the environment. It is enough to have a look at mechanisms of ecological disasters, including industrial waste, lead contamination, mining, water grabs and global warming, positing the presence of a 'global systematicity, no matter its thick localized instantiations [...]' (p. 209). This 'global systematicity' is well documented by cases as dispersed as Siberia, Missouri, Baku, Santo Domingo, La Oroya (Peru), Vellore city and many others.

The detailed and exhaustive empirical discussion is however coupled with only a general reflection about where the main responsibilities lie for these unprecedented and preoccupying phenomena. A more detailed reflection on agencies and responsibilities would have probably allowed the reader to better understand how to stop or reverse 'trends' which 'do not promise much' (p. 116). Additionally, while a strong accent is placed on expulsions at the bottom of the class structure, an open question remains as to what extent expulsions at the

top, i.e. retreatment from participation and social responsibility, are considered as important and how they exactly operate. Notwithstanding these partial limitations, the great variety and amount of empirical material, the impressive range of sociological fields covered, and the acknowledgement that the 'systemic change' is 'a development not yet fully visible and recognizable' (p. 29), provide a particularly heuristic perspective on generally overlooked global connections of what could be understood as the imposition of a different social order.

In sum, Sassen offers a clear and rather heuristic argument that we could hardly ignore in trying to make sense of dynamics of in/exclusion under global financial capitalism, their mutual connections, and their locally diverse configurations. The author has been talking insightfully about these connections and configurations over the last two decades, but what she is doing here is as unprecedented as the very *expulsions* she describes, admitting that 'much of this sharp shift I am seeking to capture is still invisible to the statistician' (p. 29). This point shows that this work has the potential to generate not only insightful reflections on large-scale hyper-concentrations of capital and related global dynamics of people and places' expulsions, but also to engage inquiries into urban social dynamics that are invisible to macro analyses. While the book does not directly investigate the spatial dimension of global financial capitalism, it may well inspire local-level analyses of 'predatory formations' and 'expulsions'. With all due differences between a large-scale sociological analysis of macro-processes and studies on local dynamics of power asymmetries and systemic forces, outstanding examples of analyses of local expulsions could be Teresa Caldeira's (2000) ethnography of crime, segregation and citizenship in Sao Paulo, and Michel Agier's (2014) edited volume on the unprecedented proliferation of durable camp

formations worldwide – Sassen herself refers to camp inhabitants as ‘the expelled who are probably never going back to a normal life’ (p. 56). Sassen’s book captures fundamental and urgent phenomena and provides an analytical lens through which capturing the underpinning logic of apparently disconnected forms of expulsions, hence allowing, following Wacquant (2004: 101), ‘to understand [the world’s] mechanisms, and thus to reappropriate it intellectually and materially’.

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Dorceta E Taylor, *Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution, and Residential Mobility*, New York University Press: New York and London, 2014; 352 pp.: 978 1 4798 6178 1, £16.99/US\$25.00 (pbk)

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Dorceta Taylor, a distinguished scholar in the field of environmental sociology, has just published a book that contributes to research on environmental racism in the USA. In *Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution, and Residential Mobility*, Taylor surveys long-standing debates in the field of environmental justice (EJ) and identifies new theoretical and methodological directions for EJ researchers. Yet, perhaps given the wide scope of the

book and its aims, Taylor misses several important contributions to EJ research and activism in the USA. Notably absent in *Toxic Communities* are the experiences of Latino farmworkers and rural communities living with pesticide exposure, as well as the theoretical contributions to EJ research by geographers, who have demonstrated how racism works through the production of space.

Most broadly, *Toxic Communities* offers a review of scholarly literature and case studies, outlining seven different theories or approaches to environmental racism: (1) the thesis of racial discrimination in the location of hazardous industries; (2) the notion of internal colonialism (and the experiences of Native Americans with resource extractive industries and toxic waste disposal); (3) market dynamics – and the assumption of rational economic behaviour – as an explanatory framework for unequal toxic exposure; (4) an examination of the legal, administrative and regulatory contexts for EJ claims; (5) cases of manipulation and the idea of environmental blackmail; (6) the idea that unique biophysical characteristics of a place explains the geography of hazardous industries (a claim which Taylor debunks); and (7) an examination of the history of city zoning laws and residential segregation in explaining unequal toxic exposures in cities.

This last – historical and geographical – approach to understanding environmental racism is developed over three chapters and constitutes, along with a final chapter on contemporary housing discrimination (including mortgage financing and gentrification), arguably the most important theoretical contribution of *Toxic Communities*. In focusing on historical and socio-spatial processes that have contributed to racialised patterns of toxic exposure, Taylor moves away from the notion of racism as an intentional act by rational individuals – a notion which had defined early debates on environmental