
A Massive Loss of Habitat

New Drivers for Migration

ABSTRACT The paper examines three emergent migration flows, each with specific features that can be described as extreme. The effort organizing the paper is to understand conditions at places of origin that lead people to risk their lives in dangerous trips to escape those places of origin. As is by now known, these migrants are not the poorest of the poor in their places of origins. The rapid surge in these flows combined with the conditions they leave behind raise a question that organizes much of the analysis: Are the categories we use to understand and describe migrations—that is, the notion of people in search of a better life, who leave behind a family and home that they want to support from afar and possibly return to—enough to capture the specificity of these emergent flows. My answer is: not quite. One big difference from the past is that part of the story is a massive loss of habitat due to a variety of extreme patterns, from massive land-grabs to poisoning of land and water due to mining. The paper examines how the development models implemented over the last 30 and more years have enabled some of these negative conditions. Further, another major factor reducing the habitat of these migrants is a proliferation of asymmetric wars. Both sets of factors reduce the habitat for more people. One outcome of this combination of elements is these new migrations. **KEYWORDS** migration, development, globalization

INTRODUCTION

A key assumption organizing this paper is that the larger context within which migration flows emerge matters. Most major migrations of the last two centuries, and often even earlier, can be shown to start at some point—they have beginnings, they are not simply there from the start. My focus here is on a particular set of new migrations that have emerged over the last one or two years; such new migrations are often far smaller than ongoing older migrations. New migrations have long been of interest to me in that they help us understand why a given flow starts and hence tell us something about a larger context. This is the migrant as indicator of a change in the area where they come from. Once a flow is marked by chain migration, it takes far less to explain that flow. Most of my work on migration has long focused on that larger context within which a new flow takes off, rather than on routinized flows that have become chain migrations (e.g., Sassen 1988, 1999, 2014).

Here I examine three flows that have emerged very recently. One of these is the sharp increase in the migration of unaccompanied minors from Central America—specifically, Honduras, Salvador, and Guatemala. The second is the surge in Rohingyas fleeing from Myanmar. The third is the migration toward Europe originating mostly in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and several African countries, notably Eritrea and Somalia. These are three very different types of

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flows, and the third one contains enormously diverse flows. Yet each points to a larger context marked by mostly extreme conditions that can be outlined, or at least made visible, because it is not simply part of a chain migration where households may play the crucial role in producing an economic calculus that allocates particular members to the migration option.

One can argue that the three flows I focus on here emerge, even though only partially, from situations larger than the internal logics of households and the vagaries of national or local economies. These sharply delineated conditions are operating, at the city level, at the regional level, and at a global geopolitical level. Let me add promptly that the city and regional levels are frequently embedded in a larger set of dynamics, but in the cases focused on here there is also an immediate direct effect at these subnational levels.

Extreme violence is one key factor explaining these migrations. But it is not the only one. I add a second key factor: thirty years of international development policies have left much land dead (because of mining, land grabs, plantation agriculture) and have expelled whole communities from their habitats. Moving to the slums of large cities, or, for those who can afford it, migration, has increasingly become the last option. This multidecade history of destructions and expulsions has reached extreme levels made visible in vast stretches of land and water bodies that are now dead. At least some of the localized wars and conflicts arise from these destructions, in a sort of fight for habitat. And climate change further reduces livable ground.

On the basis of these destructions and on the characteristics of the three emergent migration flows, I argue that this mix of conditions—wars, dead land, expulsions—has produced a vast loss of habitat for a growing number of people. These, then, are not the migrants in search of a better life who hope to send money and perhaps return to the family left behind. These are people in search of bare life, with no home to return to.

In the first section I discuss some of the key international development policies deployed as of the 1980s. My aim here is not a full review of the good and the bad development programs—I have done that elsewhere. It is rather a somewhat relentless tracing of how a rapidly growing share of the less developed areas of the world wound up with destroyed habitats. Out-migrations are partly a response to those destroyed habitats and the wars that may also have arisen.

In the second section I examine the three extreme migration flows mentioned above. These are not representative of the larger world of migrations. They serve as indicators about how bad it can get. War and violence are dominant factors in shaping these migrations. But they are not the only factors; to some extent violence and wars are also consequences of the loss of habitat for rising numbers of people. I present these three flows as indicators of a condition that is becoming acute in more and more places: the loss of habitat. War easily dominates explanation, given its immediacy and visibility. I want to emphasize the slow-moving destructions and expulsions that have resulted partly from deeply misguided development policies. These destructions should not be overshadowed by the destructions generated by wars.

FEEDING THE LOSS OF HABITAT: A NEW PHASE OF ADVANCED CAPITALISM

The geographic expansion and systemic deepening of capitalist relations of production in the global South is, in many ways, an old history (Frank 1969; IMF 2006; Oxfam

International 1999; Quijano 2000; Robinson 2008). Here I will focus especially on the last 20 years, which are marked by a whole new phase in the loss of habitat due to land and water grabs, massive expansion of mining, large-scale occupation of land to build modern high-rise environments for the upper middle classes, and more. In some sense, none of this is new. Since its origins and across its diverse phases, capitalism has been marked by violence, destruction, and appropriation.¹ But it has also been partly shaped by the making of the regulatory state, a victory for the struggling working classes and the expanding middle classes. That more benevolent phase is today in decline and marked by losses.

When it comes to the global South, much attention has gone to the destruction of precapitalist economies via their incorporation into capitalist relations of production. But the post-1980s period makes visible yet another variant of this capacity to appropriate—the appropriation or destruction of traditional capitalisms to further the deepening of a type of *advanced* capitalism dominated by a financial logic.² And this is critical because high finance is radically different from traditional banking.

The traditional bank sells something it has: money, for an interest. Finance sells something it does not have, so it needs to develop complex instruments that enable it to invade other sectors in order to financialize whatever value can be extracted and then insert it into financial circuits. It is this feature that leads me to posit that finance is an extractive sector and that once it has extracted what is there to be extracted, it moves on, leaving behind destruction (Sassen 2008a: chs. 4 and 5; 2013a; 2014: ch. 3).³ In comparison, the post-World War II Western economy, though far from perfect, thrived on the expansion of consumer power; this meant that the actual income of households mattered to the corporate economy much more than it does today.

These diverse types of capitalism signal the possibility that in today's global phase the extension of capitalist relations has its own distinct mechanisms and that these need to be distinguished from the mechanisms of older national and imperial phases.⁴ One key mechanism is the capacity of today's financial system to financialize more and more components of economies, including what is mined, what is cultivated, and what is built.

This has led to an appropriation of (by now traditional) advanced capitalist economic sectors into yet another, even more "advanced" form of capitalism. In my analysis one feature of this phase is the presence of new forms of primitive accumulation inside advanced capitalism itself, a thesis I develop at length elsewhere (Sassen 2008a, 2014).⁵ Thus grabbing land, grabbing water, burning down native vegetation to plant palm, expelling smallholder growers to develop mines and build offices—these actions can all be seen as akin to primitive accumulation, even though they use some of the most complex legal, financial, and insurance instruments to that end. Further, and insufficiently recognized, in standard measures of economic growth these grabs register as growth in the Gross Domestic Product, compared to the smallholder economies they replaced.

In short, today's phase is marked by the expulsion of growing numbers of people and the destruction of key components of the "advanced" capitalisms of the mid-twentieth century in order to feed an advanced capitalism shaped by extraction and financialization.

The structural adjustment projects implemented by global regulatory institutions, notably the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank starting in the

1980s, joined by the World Trade Organization in the 1990s, illustrate this trend. Beyond the much-noted extraction of billions of dollars from global South countries in the form of debt servicing, the key logic at work is the systemic conditioning that took place and shaped the evolution of much of the global South in the past two or three decades. Debt servicing was the instrument for this disciplining; it weakened the governments of those countries by forcing them to pay growing shares of national revenue for interest on their debts rather than for economic development (IMF 2009a, 2015a, 2016). Further, it made them susceptible to signing unfavorable deals with global firms in extractive industries rather than furthering mass manufacturing by national firms and drawing foreign investment to this sector—one that can generate a modest but effective middle class.

Central to my analysis is that inside capitalism itself we can characterize the relation of advanced to traditional capitalism as one marked by predatory dynamics rather than merely evolution, development, or progress.⁶ At its most extreme this can mean immiseration and expulsion of growing numbers of people who cease to be of value as workers and consumers. But it also means that traditional petty bourgeoisies and traditional national bourgeoisies cease to be of value. I see these destructions as part of the current systemic deepening of capitalist relations (Sassen 2014, 2013b). One brutal way of putting it is to say that the natural resources of much of Africa and good parts of Latin America and Asia count more than the people on those lands count as consumers and as workers. This is part of the systemic deepening of advanced capitalist relations of production—not a regression or something that went wrong. We have left behind the varieties of Keynesianism that thrived on the accelerated expansion of prosperous working and middle classes—albeit with a high input of racisms of all sorts. Keynesianism’s “valuing” of people as workers and consumers was critical for the deepening of capitalism, including, for example, China’s factories.

In what follows, the emphasis is on the *making* of capitalist relations of production, whether those of early or of advanced capitalism. In this paper, and in the larger projects on which these cases are based, I focus on two instances that could be easily described as familiar resource extraction. But while extraction is indeed a major feature, which I describe, it is critical to go deeper and investigate a systemic transformation in which older forms of “advanced” capitalist economies are being destroyed or incorporated into the operational space of a new type of advanced capitalism. In brief, besides extraction, the two cases I describe are system-changing practices and projects.

DEBT AS A LOGIC OF EXTRACTION

The extraction of value from the global South and the implementation of restructuring programs at the hands of the IMF and the World Bank have had the effect of “reconditioning” the terrain represented by these countries for an expansion of new forms of advanced capitalism. This includes its explicitly criminal forms.

Many of the poor countries subjected to this regime now have richer and larger elites than they used to have, along with larger shares of their populations in desperate poverty and less likely to enter the capitalist circuit via consumption than they did even 20 years ago (see, generally, IDA and IMF 2009; IMF 2015c; for detailed country-level data, see UN

Statistics Division 2015; IMF 2009b; Jubilee Debt Campaign 2012; Robinson 2014). Many of the sub-Saharan countries used to have functioning health and education systems and economies and less destitution than today. Systemically governments have been weakened and corrupted; even resource-rich countries have had expanded shares of their people become destitute, with Nigeria the most noted case. The role of rich donor countries has also shifted: overall they give less in foreign aid for development than 30 years ago. As a result, the remittances sent by low-income immigrants are larger than foreign aid. Philanthropies now enter the realm once almost exclusive to governments.

These systemic shifts contribute to explain a complex difference that can be captured in a set of simple numbers. For much of the 1980s and onwards indebted poor countries were asked to pay a share of their export earnings toward debt service. This share tended to hover around 20 percent, which is far higher than that asked in other instances of country indebtedness. For instance, in 1953, the Allies cancelled 80 percent of Germany's war debt and insisted on only 3 to 5 percent of export earnings for debt service. And they asked only 8 percent from Central European countries in the 1990s. But the debt service burdens on today's poor countries have wound up being extreme, as I discuss below. It does suggest that the aim regarding Germany was reincorporation into the capitalist world economy of the time, and regarding Central Europe was incorporation into today's advanced capitalism.

In contrast, the aim vis-à-vis the global South countries in the 1980s and 1990s was more akin to a disciplining regime, starting with forced acceptance of restructuring programs and of loans from the international system—measures that helped large extractive firms enter these economies on favorable terms. After 20 years of this regime, it became clear that it did not deliver on the basic components for healthy development. The discipline of debt service payments was given strong priority over infrastructure, hospitals, schools, and other people-oriented development goals. The primacy of this extractive logic became a mechanism for systemic transformation that went well beyond debt service payment—the devastation of large sectors of traditional economies, including small-scale manufacturing, the destruction of a good part of the national bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, the sharp impoverishment of the population, and, in many cases, the impoverishment and thereby corruptibility of the state.

Debt and debt servicing problems have long been a systemic feature of the developing world.⁷ But what concerns me here are the particular features of IMF-negotiated debt rather than the fact of debt per se. The second feature that concerns me is how this gradual destruction of traditional economies prepared the ground, literally, for some of the new needs of advanced capitalism, among which are the acquisitions of vast stretches of land—for agriculture, for underground water tables, and for mining (Sassen 2014: chs. 1 and 2). Precisely at a time of extreme financialization and systemic crisis, we see the growing demand for those material resources. The third feature that concerns me is the new survival economies of the poor and the impoverished middle classes. While each one of these three components is familiar and has been present before, my argument is that they are now part of a new organizing logic that changes their valence and their interaction.

Even before the economic crises of the mid-1990s, the debt of poor countries in the South had grown from US\$567 billion in 1980 to US\$1.4 trillion in 1992. Debt service payments alone had increased to \$1.6 trillion, more than the actual debt. According to some estimates,

from 1982 to 1998, indebted countries paid four times their original debts, and at the same time, their debt stocks went up by four times (Toussaint 1999). These countries had to use a significant share of their total revenues to service these debts. Of the 41 highly indebted poor countries (HIPCs), 33 paid \$3 in debt service payments to the North for every \$1 in development assistance (Amen and Gills 2010). For years, many of these countries paid 20 to 25 percent of their export earnings for interest on their debt (Ambrogi 1999).⁸

The IMF, the World Bank, and other such institutions established the criteria and processed these debts, thereby functioning as a global disciplining regime. Global South countries had to use a significant share of their total revenues to service these debts (Amen and Gills 2010; Bello 2004; IMF 2015b, 2008). For instance, Africa's payments reached \$5 billion in 1998: for every \$1 in aid, African countries paid \$1.40 in debt service in 1998. Debt to Gross National Product ratios were especially high in Africa in the late 1990s: 123 percent, compared with 42 percent in Latin America and 28 percent in Asia. By 2003, debt service as a share of exports (not overall government revenue) ranged from extremely high levels for Zambia (29.6 percent) and Mauritania (27.7 percent) to significantly lowered levels compared to the 1990s for Uganda (down from 19.8 percent in 1995 to 7.1 percent in 2003) and Mozambique (down from 34.5 percent in 1995 to 6.9 percent in 2003). As of 2006, the poorest 49 countries (i.e., "low-income countries" with less than \$935 per capita annual income) had debts of \$375 billion. If to these 49 we add the "developing countries," together these 144 countries had a debt surpassing \$2.9 trillion, and \$573 billion paid for debt servicing (Jubilee Debt Campaign 2013a, 2013b).

The Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative, set up in 1996 by the World Bank and IMF, is a recognition that those restructuring programs did not work. It assists countries with debts equivalent to more than one and a half times their annual export earnings.⁹ As far back as July 1, 2009, 26 countries had completed the HIPC process, and 9 had passed the decision point (IMF 2009b). Finally, the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) went into full force in July 2006. It was intended to address many of the critiques of the HIPC initiative. MDRI promised cancellation of debts to the World Bank (incurred before 2003), to the IMF (incurred before 2004), and to the African Development Fund (incurred before 2004) for the countries that completed the HIPC initiative. According to one estimate, the major cancellation schemes (including HIPC and MDRI initiatives and the Paris Club) have written off \$88 billion so far (Jubilee Debt Campaign 2007, 2013a, 2013b).

From a social development angle, the IMF and World Bank restructuring programs have been highly problematic. The debt burden that built up in the 1980s and especially the 1990s has had substantial repercussions on state spending composition. Zambia, Ghana, and Uganda, three countries that global regulators (e.g., World Bank and the IMF) saw as cooperative, responsible, and successful at implementing Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), illustrate some of the issues even for countries held in high esteem by global regulators. Thus, at the height of these programs in the early to mid-1990s, Zambia's government paid \$1.3 billion in debt but only \$37 million for primary education; Ghana's social expenses, at \$75 million, represented 20 percent of its debt service; and Uganda paid \$9 per capita on its debt and only \$1 for health care. In 1994 alone, these three countries remitted \$2.7 billion to bankers in the North. When the new programs became an option, these three

countries benefited from HIPC and MDRI programs and accepted Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper requirements.¹⁰

Generally, IMF debt management policies from the 1980s onwards can be shown to have worsened the situation for the unemployed and poor (UNDP 2005, 2008). Much research on poor countries documents the link between hyperindebted governments and cuts in social programs. These tend to affect particularly women and children through cuts in education and health care (for data overviews, see UNDP 2005, 2008, 2015; World Bank 2005, 2006, 2015a, 2015b). There is by now a large literature in many languages on this subject, including a vast number of limited-circulation items produced by various activist and support organizations. An older literature on women and debt broke new ground by documenting the disproportionate burden these programs put on women during the first generation of SAPs in the 1980s in several developing countries (Acosta-Belen and Bose 1995; Beneria and Feldman 1992; Bradshaw et al. 1993; Tinker 1990). Unemployment of women but also of the men in their households added to the pressure on women to find ways to ensure household survival (Buechler 2007; Koslowski and Kyle 2001; Lucas 2005; Rahman 1999; Safa 1995). Subsistence food production, informal work, emigration, and prostitution have all become survival options for women and, by extension, for their households (Jubilee Debt Campaign 2007; UNDP 2014).

The above is part of a larger history in the making. In my reading it includes as one key element a repositioning of much of Africa and major parts of Latin America and Asia in a new massively restructured global economy. Weakened governments and the destruction of traditional economies have launched a new phase of extraction by powerful states and firms and a new phase of survival economies by the impoverished middle classes and the long-term poor. (For a more detailed analysis, see Sassen 2008a, 2008b, 2014).

THE RISE OF FOREIGN LAND ACQUISITIONS: EXPANDING THE OPERATIONAL SPACE OF ADVANCED CAPITALISM

The weakening and corrupting of global South governments described above has enabled the rapid and sharp increase in foreign land acquisitions that took off in 2006. While this can be seen merely as a continuation of an old practice, the available evidence shows expansion of overall acquisitions.¹¹ From 2006 to 2011 over 200 million hectares of land in Africa, Latin America, and particular regions of Asia were acquired by foreign governments and foreign firms; this figure includes only acquisitions of a minimum 200 hectares. What concerns me here is this sharp rise in acquisitions: it signals a new phase rather than the continuation of a centuries-old practice going back to diverse imperial phases. One difference today is the fact that most territory in the world is part of *formally* sovereign countries. Today's massive land acquisitions might indicate a structural transformation of an old practice.¹²

It is a well-known and generally accepted fact that the key reason for these land acquisitions is rapid development in some parts of the world generating a demand for industrial crops, food crops, wood, water, metals, and more (see, e.g., Barney et al. 2011; Borras et al. 2011a, 2011b; Land Matrix 2016a, 2016b; Putzel et al. 2011; von Braun and Meinzen-Dick 2009). Such a demand is also coming from already developed countries. The larger context

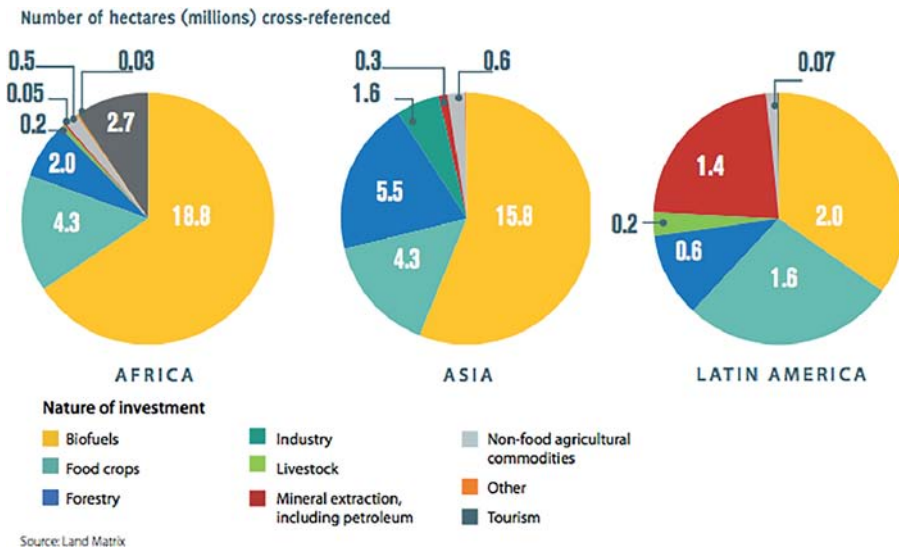


FIGURE 1. Investment by Sector and Continent, 2012 (minimum size 200 hectares).
Source: Anseeuw et al. (2012).

includes changes in the global economy and in financial markets, and changes in the interstate system, still the basic frame for cross-border transactions. Further, the financializing of commodities has brought new potentials for profit making to the primary sector, from food to minerals and metals, thus stimulating speculative investments in land.

The issue is not one of nationalism versus globalism but one of complexity: where once there was a prospect of democratic decision making, now we see an expansion of opaque transnational networks that control the land and a global governance system geared to enabling corporations. With this expansion of acquired land, what was once “national sovereign territory” becomes merely a commodity on sale in the global market. In other words, we see a weakening of a complex category that *at its best* can uphold the state’s authority and inhabitants’ rights to make the state accountable (Sassen 2008a).¹³

While the much-reported explosion in global food demand and in its prices has certainly been a key factor in this new phase of land acquisitions, it is biofuels that account for most of the acquisitions.¹⁴ Cross-referenced data from the Land Matrix show that biofuel production accounts for 40 percent of land acquired. In comparison, food crops account for 25 percent of cross-referenced deals, followed by 3 percent for livestock production and 5 percent for other nonfood crops. Farming broadly understood accounts for 73 percent of cross-referenced acquisitions. The remaining 27 percent of land acquired is for forestry and carbon sequestration, mineral extraction, industry, and tourism (see figure 1).

A second major pattern is the massive concentration of foreign acquisitions in Africa. Of the publicly reported deals, 948 land acquisitions totaling 134 million hectares are located in Africa; 34 million of these hectares have been cross-referenced. This compares with 43 million hectares reported for Asia (of which 29 million hectares have been cross-referenced) and 19 million hectares in Latin America (of which 6 million hectares

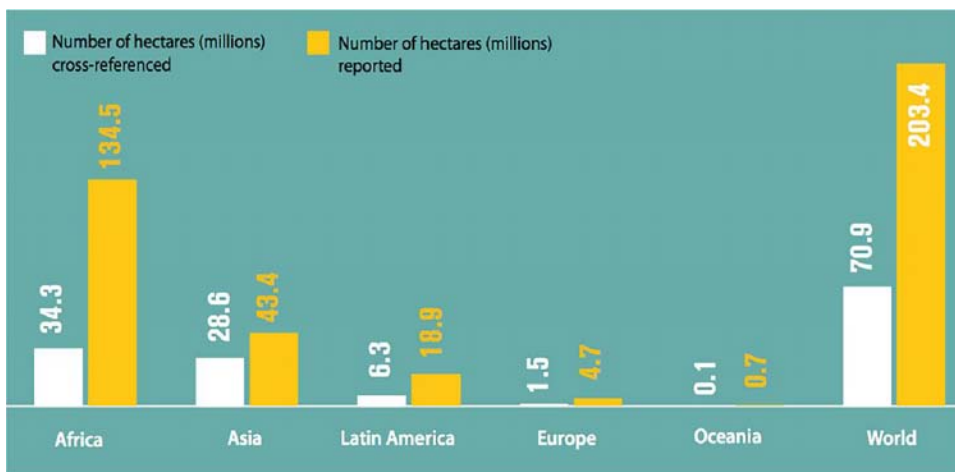


FIGURE 2. Land Acquired by Firms and Foreign Governments, 2012 (minimum size 200 hectares). Firms include both national and foreign.

Source: Anseeuw et al. (2012).

have been cross-referenced). The remainder (5.4 million hectares reported and 1.6 million hectares cross-referenced) is in other regions, particularly Eastern Europe and Oceania (see figure 2).

In an analysis of 180 large land acquisitions in Africa, Friis and Reenberg (2010) categorize major investors into four main groups: (1) oil-rich Gulf States (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, and Jordan); (2) populous and capital-rich Asian countries such as China, South Korea, Japan, and India; (3) Europe and the United States; (4) private companies from around the world. Investors are mostly energy companies, agricultural investment companies, utility companies, finance and investment firms, and technology companies. Just considering investment capital, the three major buyers come from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Saudi Arabia; together they account for 25 percent of all investments in these six countries, and each has investments in four countries.

These investments in land have crowded out investments in mass manufacturing and other sectors that can generate good jobs and feed the growth of a middle class. The rise in such investments happened at a time when several countries of the global South were beginning to experience significant growth in mass manufacturing, and much foreign direct investment (FDI) was in this sector (Sassen 2014: ch. 2). Manufacturing can contribute to the growth of a middle class and a strong working class. If we just consider Africa, for instance, the data show a sharp decline in foreign direct investment in manufacturing. South Africa and Nigeria, Africa's top two FDI recipients, accounting for 37 percent of FDI stock in Africa by 2006, have both had a sharp rise in FDI in the primary sector and a sharp fall in the manufacturing sector.¹⁵ This is also the case in Nigeria, where foreign investment in oil has long been a major factor: the share of the primary sector in inward FDI stock stood at 75 percent in 2005, up from 43 percent in 1990. Other African countries have seen similar shifts. Even in Madagascar, one of the few (mostly small) countries where manufacturing

FDI inflows began to increase as recently as the 1990s, this increase was below that of the primary sector.¹⁶ Overall, the current phase of land acquisitions dwarfs investments in manufacturing.

MIGRANTS IN SEARCH OF BARE LIFE: THREE EXTREME CASES

In what follows I focus on key features of a variety of emergent flows, each marked by extreme conditions. These are brief sketches of flows that have only recently started or, if older, have only recently taken on their present sharp features. They point to larger histories and geographies in the making. Further, they tell us about the gravity of conditions in their places of origin. Finally, while emergent, they could eventually become overwhelming—to existing immigration and refugee policy systems, to receiving areas, and to the men, women, and children who constitute these flows.

Central America: Unaccompanied Minors

Central America is one of the key regions for the flight of unaccompanied minors that took off over the last two years. Other major emigration flows, notably from Southeast Asia and from Africa and Asia via the Mediterranean region, consist largely of men, albeit with growing shares of women and children. Central America has long been an emigration region—for both political and economic reasons. What is new is this flow of unaccompanied children driven out from their homelands mostly by the extreme urban violence that has erupted over the last few years. The sharp rise in urban violence is partly generated by the expulsions of rural workers from their land due to the expansion of plantations growing food for the United States market, and the dying of the land itself, due to excess pesticides and fertilizers (see generally Sassen 2014: ch. 4). Cities increasingly are the only places where these displaced men and women can go.

The available data show that an estimated 63,000 unaccompanied minors, most from Central America, crossed the United States' southern border between October 1, 2013 and July 31, 2014, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (2016b). This is nearly twice the number of child migrants who came during the same period the previous year. The estimate is that by the end of 2014, up to 90,000 unaccompanied children had crossed the border with the United States. What we do not know is how many died or were kidnapped in the process. Gang and police violence are the main factors pushing youth out, according to statements by the children themselves, by researchers, social workers and other professionals in this field, and by government experts (see, e.g., Ackerman et al. 2016; Hiskey, Malone, and Orces 2014; Sladkova 2013; Wiener Bravo 2011; Yearwood 2014). In 2014, "Ninety-eight percent of unaccompanied minors arriving at the United States border were from Honduras (28 percent), Mexico (25 percent), Guatemala (24 percent), and El Salvador (21 percent). This breakdown represents a significant shift: prior to 2012, more than 75 percent of UACs were from Mexico" (Chishti and Hipsman 2014). In 2015, 35 percent of unaccompanied minors arriving at the border were from Guatemala, 28 percent from Mexico, 24 percent from El Salvador, and 14 percent from Honduras (based on the numbers given in the table "Unaccompanied Alien Children Encountered by Fiscal Year," U.S. Customs and Border Protection 2016a) (see figure 3).

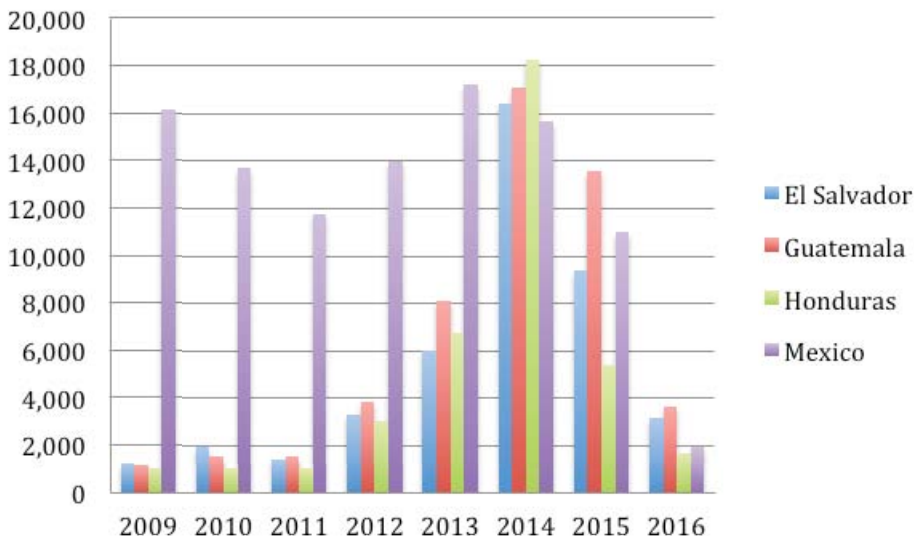


FIGURE 3. Apprehensions of Unaccompanied Minors by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, FY 2009–16.

Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection (2016a).

Salvadoran and Honduran children come from some of the most violent places in the world. They fear that violence more than the well-known risks of moving across Mexico and the U.S. border deserts, and doing so alone. According to data collected by the Pew Research Center, San Pedro Sula in Honduras is the world’s murder capital, with a homicide rate of 187 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2013, driven by a surge in gang and drug trafficking violence (UNODC 2013). For the entire country Honduras’s murder rate was 90 per 100,000 in 2012, the highest in the world (World Bank 2015c). In 2011, El Salvador was not far behind, at 70, ranking second in terms of homicides in Latin America (World Bank 2015c). Even with a significant drop in the murder rate from 70 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2011 to 41 in 2012, El Salvador is surpassed only by Honduras, Venezuela, and Belize in the entire world. Further, Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador are among the poorest nations in Latin America, respectively, with 30 percent, 26 percent, and 17 percent of their people living on less than \$2 a day, according to the World Bank (2015d).

This combination of elements contributes to explain high emigration among both children and adults. Most extreme is El Salvador, with up to 18 percent of the population leaving, a percentage twice as high as in Honduras and Guatemala. Except for very small countries such as Trinidad and Tobago, so-called “emigration countries” rarely reach these levels. Central American migrations are rather well documented by researchers and the press, partly because south of the U.S. border migrations have existed for a very long time.

“Leaving” is a major decision because crossing Mexico is dangerous—losing limbs and even death is often the price. The number of undocumented children—mostly teens, but some as young as five—apprehended crossing the border without parents or guardians has more than doubled in the past two years (though overall, the number of Mexican nationals caught

at the border has decreased, declining by 18 percent from 2014 to 2015 (U.S. Department of Homeland Security). Further, U.S. Customs and Border Protection finds that the number of unaccompanied children crossing the southern border doubled in the first four months of FY 2016 (compared to the same time frame in 2015) (U.S. House Committee on Appropriations 2016).

Niurka Pineiro from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) describes a case that captures the horrors of this crossing even if one comes out alive. It concerns the infamous freight train (Huffpost Miami 2012), *La Bestia*, as Central American migrants call it. This train leaves the southern Mexican city of Arriaga and travels north to Reynosa, just across the border from McAllen, Texas. Many migrants ride it despite the risks: falling off while sleeping; thieves who go car to car with machetes or guns stealing from passengers; the night raids from Mexican law enforcement, and more. “José Luis Hernandez was just 19 years old when he lost a leg, an arm and four fingers of the other hand after falling off *La Bestia*. . . . Today, José Luis lives with his mother and two brothers in a tiny house in the city of El Progreso, Honduras. ‘I don’t want to be a beggar; I don’t want handouts,’ sighs José Luis. ‘I started learning English, but had to drop out because I didn’t have money to pay for the lessons. If I had a computer I could do some work with my finger.’” Yes, he has only one finger left.

Smugglers prey on potential migrants, young and old. They are after business, and the proliferation of smuggling gangs has raised competition for the trade, so they paint a far rosier picture than Obama’s immigration policy offers. They often tell minors that once they are there, as minors they will be processed to become citizens or legal immigrants, which is incorrect. Their misrepresentations have evidently contributed to the surge in emigration of minors—and even adults. This is new. Mostly in the past smugglers (“coyotes”) doing their trade crossing the U.S. border were not quite so businesslike: they were hired for a given function at a given price and that was that. We now see in Central America’s unaccompanied child migrants a syndrome similar to what we are seeing in the Mediterranean: smugglers in the business of expanding their markets by reassuring their potential clients, “It all will turn out well.”

The arrival of tens of thousands of minors in the United States created distinctive challenges. Many have been housed in detention centers that have been described as unacceptable for the housing of minors. It is becoming a sort of crisis for some local governments now hosting thousands of them. But interesting initiatives or proposals for how to handle this inflow have also emerged. Thus Syracuse mayor Stephanie Miner wrote to President Obama to offer Syracuse as a shelter city for border children escaping violence in Central America. New York City has also discussed this possibility. National politicians have suggested their own solutions: Senator John McCain’s (R-AZ) urged the United States to transfer children back by “plane loads” (Lehrer 2014) to their countries of origin.

The sudden high numbers, the lack of facilities to accommodate minors in a system geared to adults, and strong anti-immigration sentiment may have contributed to a major change in U.S. policy. “Under pressure from the United States, Mexico has begun arresting and deporting tens of thousands of Central Americans long before they reach the U.S. border” (Kahn 2014). This led to a drastic fall of 60 percent in the numbers of

apprehended unaccompanied minors in September 2014 compared to a year earlier. But in fact the number of departures from Central America may not have fallen much, if at all. When we just examine departures, as distinct from entries into the United States, the partial evidence signals that departures may still be high, though they may eventually decline. What has changed is the treatment they are getting at Mexico's southern border: even more brutal than before.

Between October 2014 and April 2015, Mexico detained 92,889 Central American migrants (WOLA 2015). During the same period, the United States detained 70,226 non-Mexican migrants, mostly from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. But it had detained 159,103 non-Mexican migrants in the same period a year earlier, which was more than triple the number detained by Mexico before the new policy (Pascaud 2015). Data from Mexico's National Immigration Institute (Tuckman 2015) show that 51,565 "migrants" from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador were deported between January and April 2015 from Mexico's southern border back home, up from 28,736, during that period in 2014; deportation of Guatemalans rose 124 percent, followed by Salvadorans at 79 percent and Hondurans at 40 percent (AP 2015a).

Active detention efforts by Mexico's guards at its southern frontier can be brutal. According to migrant advocates, this strong persecution by federal authorities has resulted in accidents where migrants have died and been injured in clashes between human smugglers and police. It has also led to imprisonment, deaths, and disappearances of unaccompanied children (see, e.g., Archibold 2014; Movimiento Migrante Mesoamericano 2016). Some wind up in reasonable places such as church shelters or are taken in by generous households; others languish as street kids, and still others disappear without a trace. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has recently expressed its "concern over stepped-up actions reportedly being taken against migrant persons" that were put in place after Mexico initiated its Southern Border Plan in 2014 under pressure from the U.S. Organization of American States (2015).

The southern border of Mexico has become a terrifying place for these Central American unaccompanied children (and also adults). They wind up in jail, they get beaten, they lose limbs, they die. But some, as seems to be the case in all migrations, get through. U.S. data show that in the first few months of 2016 unaccompanied children keep arriving in growing numbers compared to 2015. It all suggests that the violence back home keeps being a reason to leave and that not even La Bestia or the Mexican police are a full deterrent.

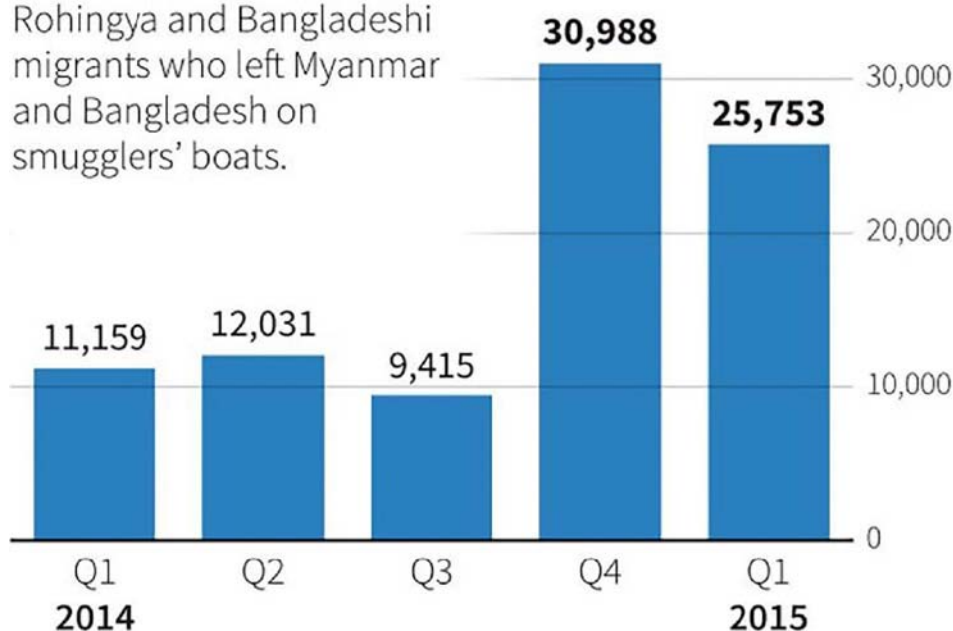
South East Asia's Refuge Seekers: The Andaman Sea

We are witnessing the shaping of a new extreme phase in South East Asia, a region that has long seen slavery and the smuggling of desperate refugees. The massive post-Vietnam War refugee flows have mostly sorted themselves out—in good and bad ways. This new emergent crisis arises out of a different mix of conditions; it is not a continuation of the earlier crisis.

Two very recent facts signal alarming developments. One concerns several small Muslim communities escaping evictions from their land and persecution for being Muslim. Most visible is the case of the Rohingya. While up to 50,000 Rohingya have escaped from Myanmar using Bangladeshi passports, they are an old Muslim minority that has been part

Migrant movements

Estimated number of Rohingya and Bangladeshi migrants who left Myanmar and Bangladesh on smugglers' boats.



Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

W. Foo, 18/05/2015



FIGURE 4. Rohingya and Bangladeshi Migrants, 2014–15 (estimates).

Source: Albert (2015), based on data from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

of Myanmar for centuries. Unlike the Rohingya, the Bangladeshis living in Myanmar have economic reasons for being there, and it is the search for employment that brings them to Myanmar (Albert 2015; Borwick et al. 2013), even if they may also be persecuted for being Muslims.

Here I focus mostly on the Rohingya. There are about 1.1 million living in Myanmar; they are not recognized as citizens. There is scattered evidence of active persecution of the Rohingya. The U.S. Department of State (2016) finds that at least 160,000 have been evacuated to neighboring countries since 2012, a year when direct attacks on Rohingya took place. According to Rohingya activists more than 500,000 Rohingyas have disappeared from voter registration (figure 4). This active persecution coincides with Myanmar's opening and reincorporation into the community of states.¹⁷ In some limited sense it is becoming a more open society, as has been widely reported in the media. But the long-term mistrust of the Rohingya, an old Muslim minority that has been part of Myanmar for centuries, has turned brutal. In my reading of the facts, this somewhat sudden open anger at the Rohingya

is at least in part connected to the massive land grabs for mining and agriculture. The country's opening and its enabling of foreign investors coincides with a somewhat sudden vicious persecution of the Rohingya by particular groups of Buddhist monks. That it is these particular Buddhist monks who have led this assault and, further, led them to rewrite some parts of the doctrine so as to justify the expulsion of the Rohingyas from their land, and even the killing of Muslims, does point to larger vested economic interests that are likely to go well beyond these monks.

Could this signal a deeper unsettlement? That Buddhists should become brutal persecutors of a small, peaceful Muslim minority may be only one of several other indicators pointing to a struggle for land. Could this violence signal something about the loss of habitat?

There is considerable evidence in various areas of Southeast Asia about significant evictions of small farmers from their land to make way for mining, plantations, and office buildings (see generally the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center's website, <http://www.internal-displacement.org>, as well as AFP 2015b; Gorra and Ravanera 2011). Foreign firms have been among the major investors since Myanmar opened its economy to foreign investment. Indeed, freed opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi has lost considerable support among the rural population precisely because she has not contested these land grabs (at least publicly) or openly supported the local movements against land grabs.

One key first public reckoning came through press reports in the summer of 2015 that about an estimated 7,000 people in dozens of overloaded vessels had been floating aimlessly for up to two months in the vast Andaman Sea (figures 5 and 6). This sea is bordered on the east by Myanmar and Thailand and on the south by Malaysia and Indonesia. These, and perhaps other, regional governments were aware of this surge in fleeing people but had made it clear they were going to push them back to sea if they dared to land. It was the press that sounded the alert about some of these ships, where people were piled up over each other with no water or food left. When the facts went public, Indonesia, mostly, took in about half of that estimated population, forced by the global uproar as the horrifying details went viral. The struggle to get countries to accept them was not easy. Their rescue added even more information about the horrific conditions. And that rescue still left an estimated 3,000 floating in that vast ocean in precarious vessels.

These 7,000 are but one component of a larger desperate search for bare life on the part of a rapidly growing number of men, women, and children. Even as those ships were brought to land, other ships crammed with Rohingya and Bangladeshis were found off Malaysia's coast and turned away, including one in May of 2015 that was loaded with 500 people, and thousands of migrants were still believed to be stranded at sea (Tribune Wire Reports 2015).

Under pressure from international bodies, Southeast Asian nations agreed on May 29, 2015, at a meeting in Bangkok, to set up an antitrafficking task force and to intensify search-and-rescue efforts to help vulnerable "boat people" stranded in the region's seas.¹⁸ This was a first. In the meantime, according to another news report, "More than 4,000 migrants have landed in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar and Bangladesh since Thailand launched a crackdown on people-smuggling gangs this month" (Kanupriya and Sawitta Lefevre 2015). The director general of the IOM was quoted as saying, "That the

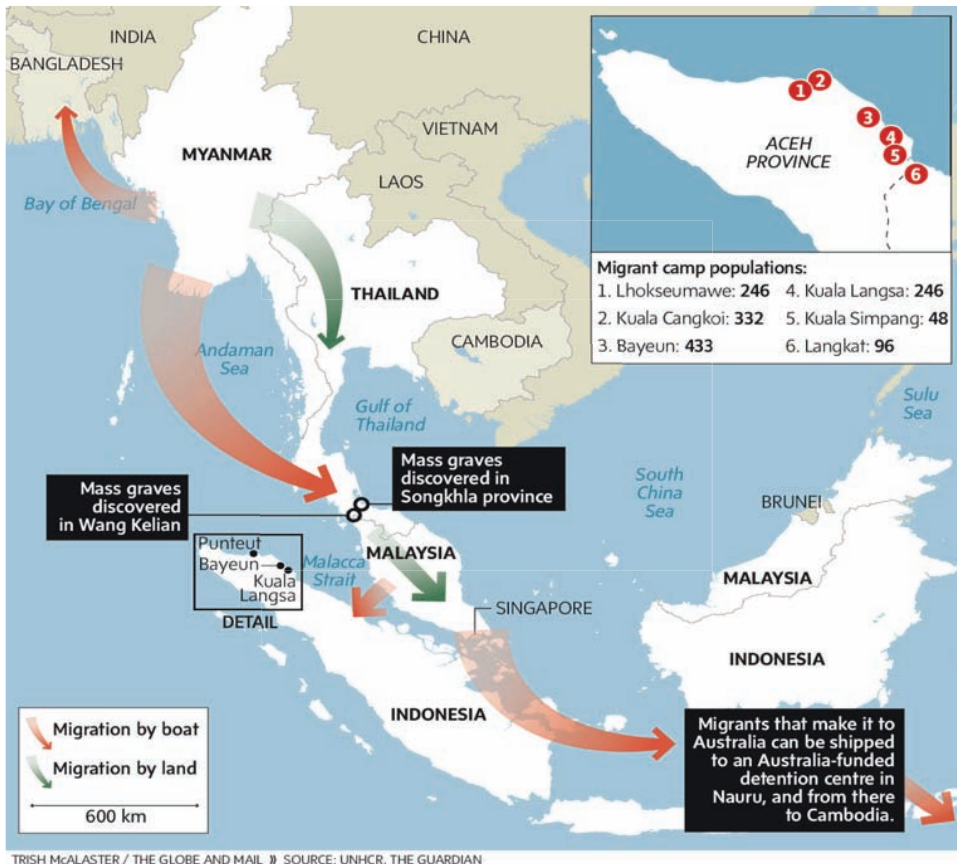


FIGURE 5. Leaving Myanmar: Escape Routes (2015).

Source: Gecker (2015).

summit took place at all with this wide participation is itself a good result,” given the conflictive position of Myanmar.

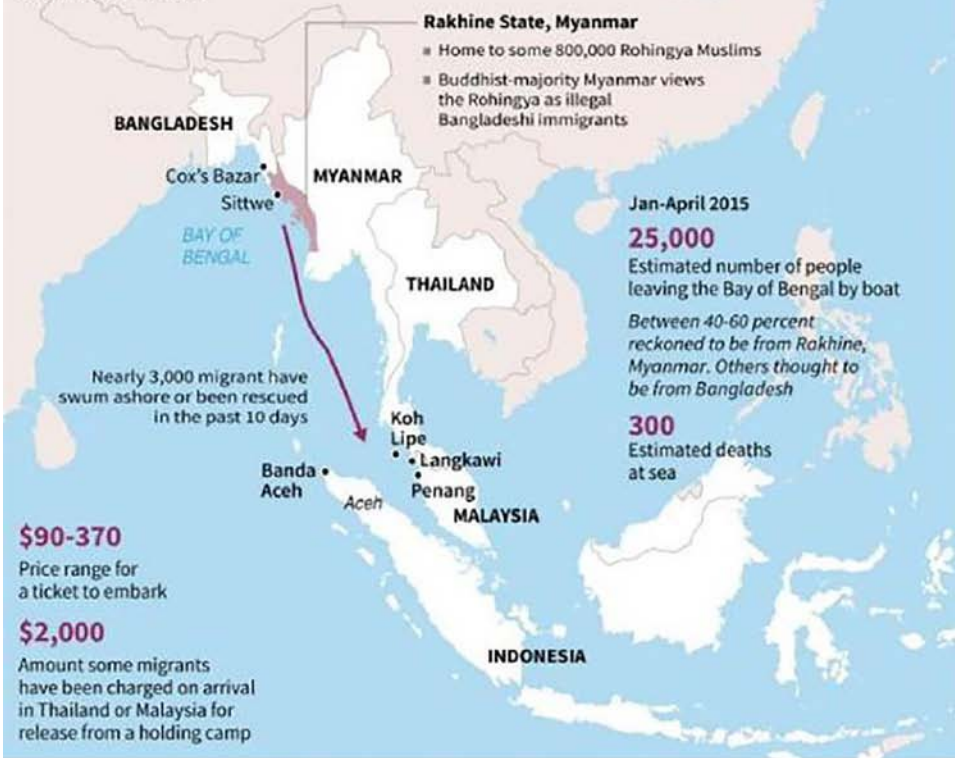
We are witnessing the beginnings of flows of people that might escalate, rather than diminish (see, e.g., “Adrift at Sea” 2015; Foo and Scarr 2015). How far it will all go is not clear. Nor is it clear how long it will all last, including the willingness of governments to take in desperate people. These governments have already turned back overloaded boats that are ready to sink. The current reversal of position is, to some extent, a willingness enforced by the glare of the media. And the flows are not about to end anytime soon.

The second alarming development concerns the enslavement of poor Thai men from the isolated mountain areas. It has long been known that the huge Thai and Malaysian fishing industries use Thai workers; it has also been known that they have often been de facto slaves. And rumors have circulated about slave camps and mass graves. But the findings of up to a hundred mass graves in the summer of 2015 on the border zone between Thailand and Malaysia went beyond much that had been suspected or rumored. So did the finding of over 25 secret “migrant camps” run by armed smugglers like detention centers, furnished with

Southeast Asia migrant crisis

Malaysia and Indonesia said Wednesday they would no longer turn away migrants

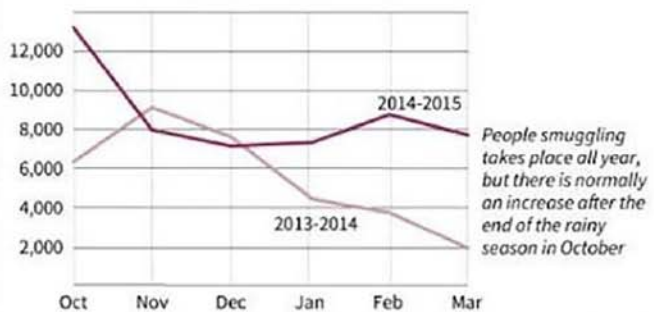
About 7,000 people may be adrift, according to Malaysian intelligence estimates



Life on board

- Passengers at risk of starvation and disease
- More than 60 percent of people interviewed by UNHCR say one passenger died on their boat on board, 13 percent believed 10 or more had died
- Rape reported by women, mostly in smugglers' camps in Thailand. Men beaten for attempting to protect women from abuse

Estimated boat people departures from the Bangladesh-Myanmar border region



Source: UNHCR/Arakan Project

AFP

FIGURE 6. Southeast Asia Migrant Crisis, 2015.

Source: AFP (2015b).

watchtowers, guns, and cages for holding the migrants. These extreme conditions are indicative of a larger and disturbing dynamic. There is considerable evidence confirming that the Malay military control that region: it is one of their operational spaces. It is difficult to

believe that none of this was known to at least some of the local authorities. Local residents have told journalists that sometimes a skeletal escapee from one of those camps would appear in one or another village, often also wounded, seeking to escape death. It seems that those migrants who had become too weak to work in local plantations or in fishing boats were simply killed and buried in mass graves.

The trafficking of workers is a major practice in the region. We do not know at this point, but it is possible that some of the traffickers taking the Rohingya out of Myanmar have passed some of the Rohingya to other trafficking circuits. And sometimes they have abandoned the loaded ships in the Andaman Sea, leaving the refugees to their own devices.

A key trafficking sector of Thai women and children is the sex industry. This is a whole world unto itself, with its own specific business capabilities and a global operational space. While much of the effectiveness of the traffickers in luring their victims is linked to the larger question of loss of habitat, the sex sector cannot simply be summarized here. It deserves its own specific treatment.

Mediterranean Migrations toward Europe

The Destination of a Vast Range of Expulsions Europe has emerged as the destination of a broad range of new refugee flows. The Mediterranean has long been and continues to be a key route for long-established migrant and refugee flows. Here I focus only on a set of new flows that began in 2014 and need to be distinguished from the ongoing older flows of mostly migrants. The Mediterranean, especially on its eastern side, is now the site where refugees, smugglers, and the European Union each deploy their own specific logics and together have produced a massive multifaceted crisis. Late 2014 saw a sudden surge in the numbers of refugees, a possibility not foreseen by the pertinent EU authorities given that the wars they were escaping had been going on for several years. This crisis became a business opportunity for smugglers that would expand over the ensuing year to bring in an estimated \$2 billion in income; since the smugglers benefited from keeping the flows going, they persuaded their potential clients/victims that everything would be fine once they reached Europe. To compound the problem, receiving these refugees was a major crisis in Italy and, especially, Greece, two countries already burdened by their struggling economies; by early 2016 Greece was the destination for over a million refuge seekers who had to be sheltered, fed, and processed.¹⁹

Yet the facts on the ground in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Eritrea, and other countries were all familiar. If anything, the surprise should have been that the surge in refugees did not happen sooner. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR 2015a), among others, had been recording the escalating numbers of the internally displaced and of refugees. The conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria were not going to end anytime soon. Nor would those in Somalia or in South Sudan. The brutality of these conflicts, with their full disregard for international humanitarian law, indicated that sooner or later people would start fleeing the violence (see, generally the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center's website, <http://www.internal-displacement.org>, as well as, e.g., Hampshire 2015; Sirkeci, Utku, and Yazgan 2015; see generally Alund, Likic-Brboric, and Schierup 2015 and

Amin 2012). As Cockburn (2015) has summed up, “It is an era of violence in the Middle East and North Africa, with nine civil wars now going on in Islamic countries between Pakistan and Nigeria. This is why there are so many refugees fleeing for their lives. Half of the 23 million population of Syria have been forced from their homes, with four million becoming refugees in other countries.”

Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan: Major Sites for the Making of Desperate Refugees For three decades Afghanistan has produced the greatest number of refugees, according to the UNHCR (2015a): it has 2.7 million refugees under the UNHCR’s mandate.²⁰ This changed in 2015, when one new refugee in four worldwide was a Syrian. Syria is an extreme case. According to the UNHCR, 7.7 million Syrians had left the country by September 2015, but those numbers keep growing.²¹ Iraq has 3.4 million recognized refugees (see, e.g., Kingsley 2015b). Its situation deteriorated further when quite a bit of its territory, including its second city, Mosul, was conquered by ISIS, adding to the disastrous effects and religious divisions that had become extreme with the West’s invasion of the country in 2003 (Cockburn 2015). More than 1.2 million Pakistanis have been displaced by insurgencies in northwest Pakistan, according to the UN (UNHCR 2015b); further, Pakistan has seen acute terrorist violence for many years and it is continuing (see South Asia Terrorism Portal 2016). Somalia remains the third-largest refugee-producing country at 1.1 million refugees (UNHCR 2015a).

The humanitarian crisis is escalating and spreading. According to Human Rights Watch, over the last two years about 25 million people were driven from their homes, including almost 12 million Syrians, 4.2 million Iraqis, 3.6 million Afghans, 2.2 million Somalis, and almost half a million Eritreans.²² Further, the UNHCR has found that there are also far more unaccompanied children in the recent flows into Europe than were expected. To these flows we need to add the half million waiting in northern Libya, at any given time in the last two years, for ships to take them across the Mediterranean. According to the UNHCR (2015d), the number of global refugees in 2014 was over 60 million, and the fact of ongoing departures from conflict zones signals that this number will be higher for 2016 (see, e.g., Sisci 2015). The current number is the largest ever since the humanitarian system was put into place. Left out of the count are many of the internally displaced and the growing number of undeclared or not yet counted refugees, such as some of those crossing the Mediterranean.

To the diverse cases described above we can add the following. Somalia (excluding Punt Somalia), with its state collapsing in 1991 and never rebuilt, is now home to warlords, extreme jihadis, rival parties, and foreign soldiers controlling different parts of the country. Much of this started after 2001, and a whole new phase set in after 2011. Then there is the civil war in Yemen that started in 2015, the resumption of the Turkish-Kurdish civil war in July 2015 (a war that has killed 40,000 people since 1984), and the rise of Boko Haram, the Islamist extremist group fighting a brutal war in northern Nigeria and Chad (AFP 2015a; Mark 2015). Significant is also the collapse of the political and economic order in Libya, which has produced a massive security vacuum. In addition there are a variety of other new militarized aggressions across Africa. Land grabbing in sub-Saharan Africa is generating a

whole new politics of food (see, e.g., Hall 2011; Sassen 2014: ch. 2), with the numbers of the disadvantaged growing rapidly.

In my reading there is a history that weaves itself across these diverse countries, even if each country has its own specific sources and conditions. When all of them are seen together, a distinct logic emerges: these people are expelled and there is often no home to return to. These trends are enormous challenges to the international system, with Europe the destination of most of these flows. One of the few somewhat reasonable proposals, given the vast numbers of refuge seekers, is tradable refugee admission quotas (Moraga and Rapoport 2015). But given the scale of these displacements, it is doubtful such quotas can help much, though I wish they could.

An effect of this expanded geography of instability and economic destruction is a massive loss of habitat. Further, I would argue that besides war, the failed development policies I examine in the first half of this paper contribute to the incapacity of the governments involved to prevent the current collapse of whole segments of their society and economy. The current fragility did not start in the last few years. It started in the 1980s.

CONCLUSION: IN SEARCH OF BARE LIFE

The histories and geographies shaping these three sets of flows are varied and complex. There are no easy solutions. These refugees are not usually the poorest in their countries, even if departing from their home countries leaves them without any resources; many have advanced educations and started out with resources. These are not emigrants; they are refuge seekers. “Sending them back from where they came” is often not an option. What was once home is now a war zone, a new private gated community, a corporate complex, a plantation, a mining development, a desert, a flooded plain, a space of oppression and abuse.

The flows I described are to be distinguished from the 250 million-plus regular immigrants in the world today, who are mostly modest middle class, increasingly joined by professionals functioning in the global economy. Immigrants enter through formal channels or become formalized eventually in their new home countries. Today’s immigrants are not the poorest in their countries of origin. Nor are they generated by the extreme push factors feeding the three sets of flows described in this article.

The particular flows I have focused on are emergent and extreme. They are subsets of larger flows of displaced people whose numbers are approaching 80 million. But they stand out by their sudden surging numbers and by the extreme conditions in the areas where they originate. In being extreme and in telling us something about the areas they are escaping, they bring to the fore larger histories and geographies than whatever might be the immediate and most visible causes for flight; thus war is not always the main cause. They often point to longer histories of oppression and exploitation of a country’s population and the destruction of local economies. Much of it is indirectly or directly enabled by predatory local elites and often severely misguided “development programs.” In short, many of the longer-term dynamics in place are themselves destructive. These dynamics do not indicate a lack of order. They *are* the new order. And this suggests that the departures will continue.

Also East Asia is seeing a surge of refuge seekers that is not connected to wars. The renewed persecution of Myanmar's Rohingya people is happening in a context of sharp increases in land grabs for plantations and mining. This development mode is affecting more and more communities, including other minorities. The situation suggests that the Rohingya have been singled out because they are Muslims, a fact that has led a radical wing of Buddhist monks to justify even their killing. The larger dynamic at work indicates that land grabs and mining are the key disruptive factors for a growing number of localities. This in turn signals the possibility of further refugee flows. Similarly, it is not war that is pushing Thailand's desperate poor out of their communities but extreme poverty, the loss of their land, and the aggressive capture of men to work in Thai fisheries and in Malaysia's plantations. These enslavements and persecutions are part of a larger set of expulsions from land and livelihood in East Asia that are not connected to war.

The three extreme flows of refuge seekers I examined here are a sort of first indication of a process that is likely to escalate. They may be the most visible and extreme case of a much larger history in the making.

As I concluded in the first half of this article, the devastation and the impoverishment of many of the sending areas often started decades ago. This includes the often extreme appropriation of funds meant for social and economic development by corrupt local elites in regions as diverse as Africa and Central America. And it includes war zones in Iraq and Afghanistan where much of the funding by foreign governments never made it to the intended projects—the building of schools and hospitals, the redevelopment of water and electricity sources and supply chains, and other critical work. As one prominent case that made the news shows, some of the funds left Kabul for one of the emirates in a large plane loaded with U.S. dollars in cash. The current extreme situation for many average people cannot simply be explained in terms of the Taliban or ISIS. It goes far deeper into the past and into insiders' dealings.

Today's refuge seekers do not have many options. The proliferation of war zones across much of the world is not going to have a clear ending soon. Unlike World Wars I and II these are wars with no ending, with no possibility of an armistice led by major powers. And first steps in remaking one's life—access to a plot of land for farming or a cheap house in a city—are becoming difficult. Both rural and urban land are increasingly in demand by international corporations from across the world. The result is that a rapidly growing share of land in Africa, Latin America, and parts of Asia is now owned by corporations of one sort or another or controlled by foreign governments. Finally, climate change has escalated partly because of what might be described as development malpractice—notably some of the policies developed by the IMF and World Bank in the 1980s and 1990s that had disastrous consequences for so many of the local economies and societies in the global South.

In this type of context even a somewhat minor crisis can make life unsustainable and flight the only way to survive. This is the search for bare life. ■

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NOTES

1. There is a vast and very diverse critical scholarship on this (e.g., Frank 1969, 1998; Galeano 1997; Harvey 2003; Maldonado-Torres 2007; Mignolo 2007; Robinson 2014; van der Pijl, 2015).

2. Marx (1992) posits that precapitalist modes of production were incorporated into capitalist relations, a process marked by violence, destruction, and appropriation. Here I posit another specific type of shift: the destruction of traditional capitalisms in the process of extracting what can be extracted for the further deepening of advanced capitalism (Sassen 2008a: chs. 4 and 5; 2014: ch. 3). This is a phase dominated by a financial logic, a condition that recurs and historically signals a decaying phase (Arrighi 1994; Robinson 2004). Built into this proposition is the fact of diverse phases of capitalist development and, hence, the possibility that in today's global phase the extension of capitalist relations has its own distinct mechanisms and that these need to be distinguished from earlier phases of capitalism.

3. This is one of the major differences between high finance and traditional banking. Because finance sells something it does not have, it needs to invade other sectors, and for this it needs to develop mostly very complex instruments. This leaves us with a view of finance as extremely complex and as a sector belonging to the stratosphere of human knowledge. I prefer to see it in terms of its core logic: extraction (Sassen 2014: ch. 3).

4. The Marxist category "primitive accumulation" points not only to a logic of extraction that can expropriate and impoverish but also, and perhaps more importantly, to a mode of incorporating noncapitalist economies into capitalist relations of production. In this regard "primitive

accumulation” is part of the historic expansion of capitalist relations. This would suggest *prima facie* that the category is not applicable today, since most of the world has basically been incorporated into capitalist relations of production. Yet I find that today we see a new phase of primitive accumulation: global capital destroys much of current capitalism modes, and in this regard it can be seen as yet another phase of primitive accumulation.

5. In *Territory, Authority, Rights* (Sassen 2008a: chs. 1, 8, 9) I develop a theory of change that has as one core dynamic the fact that condition *x* or capability *y* can shift organizing logics and thereby actually change valence even if it may look the same: thus, for instance, the massive expulsion of people due to the current phase of land grabs that I will describe briefly in this chapter is not necessarily simply more of the same—more poor, more displaced, more downward mobility. It may be part of a new organizing logic that alters the valence and systemic character of poverty and downward mobility.

6. Elsewhere (Sassen 2013b; Sassen-Koob 1982) I examine to what extent Marx’s analysis of primitive accumulation to explain the relationship between capitalism and precapitalist economies might illuminate this relationship between traditional and diverse new types of advanced capitalism (see also Sassen 2014).

7. The research literature on this subject is vast. For understanding how the international community addressed the matter, which is just one approach, see, e.g., IMF (2015a, 2015b, 2105c, 2016). For a critical approach, see the multiple reports produced by the Jubilee Debt Campaign (e.g., 2013a, 2013b). I argue (Sassen 2014: ch. 1) that today’s “austerity programs” for the global North are a kind of equivalent of these older restructuring programs.

8. See, e.g., for detailed country data in that earlier phase, IDA and IMF (2009).

9. To be eligible, countries have to have been compliant with the IMF for at least three years. The HIPC process begins with a “decision point” document. This sets out eligibility requirements. Among these is the development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) that replaces the earlier Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). PRSPs describe “the macroeconomic, structural, and social policies and programs” that a country is required to pursue in order to be eligible for debt relief (IMF 2009a, 2009b, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2015d).

10. Zambia’s debt service in 1997 was 18.3 percent of income on exports but 1.3 percent by 2007 (IAEG 2009). For Ghana these figures were 27.1 percent and 3.1 percent respectively, and for Uganda 19.7 percent and 1.2 percent (IAEG 2009).

11. See especially Anseeuw et al. (2012); Borrás et al. (2011a, 2011b); Byerlee et al. (2011); Cotula (2011); De Schutter (2011:257); Land Matrix (2015, 2016a, 2016b); UNCTAD (2009). See also chapter 2 in my *Expulsions* (Sassen 2014) for fuller theorizing of this new phase.

12. From a substantive historical perspective, this long history matters from many different angles, an issue I address at length elsewhere (Sassen 2008a: chs. 3 and 4).

13. In *Expulsions* (Sassen 2014: ch. 2) I focus on the assemblage of practices, norms, technologies, and shifting jurisdictions within which both the financial crisis and the rise in land acquisitions take place. It points to a deep disjuncture: the simultaneous privatizing and globalizing of market economies tears massive structural holes in the tissue of national sovereign territory (see also Brautigam and Xiaoyang 2011; Colchester 2011; Sassen 2013b).

14. Food commodification and the further financializing of these commodities is a major growth sector. “Between the start of 2007 and the middle of 2008 the Economist index of food prices rose 78%; soya beans and rice both soared more than 130%. Meanwhile, food reserves slumped. In the five largest grain exporters, the ratio of stocks to consumption-plus-exports fell to 11% in 2009, below its ten-year average of over 15%” (“Buying Farmland Abroad”). Beyond price, trade bans and crises pose a risk even to rich countries that rely on food imports.

15. The share of the primary sector (prominently mining and plantation agriculture) in inward FDI stock increased to 41 percent in 2006, up from 5 percent in 1996. In contrast, the share of the manufacturing sector fell to 27 percent from 40 percent over that period (UNCTAD 2008).

16. For comprehensive data, see UNCTAD (2008, 2015).

17. Myanmar's Rohingya Muslim minority live in apartheid-like conditions in the country's Rakhine state. The government does not consider the Rohingya citizens, so they are de facto stateless, but it denies discrimination and persecution. It does not call them Rohingya but refers to them as Bengalis, indicating they are from Bangladesh (see, e.g., Vanderklippe 2015).

18. Called the Special Meeting on Irregular Migration in the Indian Ocean, it brought together 17 countries from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and elsewhere in Asia, along with the United States, Switzerland, and international bodies such as the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the IOM.

19. I have examined how these three vectors came together to produce an almost unmanageable situation in "Anatomy of a Disaster: Europe and Its Persistent Underestimates of the Refugee Crisis" (under review).

20. According to the Afghan government, 80 percent of the country is not safe. That is because extremist groups such as the Taliban and Islamic State's local affiliate are waging insurgencies in many provinces.

21. According to a report by the Washington Post (Alhamad, Mironova, and Whitt 2015), among those who left, 57 percent of ordinary civilians say they did so because it was simply too dangerous to stay. Others gave more elaborate versions of the same reason. Some left because the Assad government occupied their towns (43 percent) or had destroyed their homes (32 percent) or because they were threatened with violence if they did not leave (35 percent). Many left at the urging of family (48 percent) and friends (38 percent) or following the lead from their neighbors (32 percent). Others pointed to the increasingly high costs of finding even basic access to food and other necessities (32 percent) and left once they finally ran out of money (16 percent).

22. Eritrea is somewhat different (e.g., AP 2015b; Kingsley 2015a; Longhi 2014). The 1998–2000 war with Ethiopia remains an issue even though the war ended with the Algiers Accord in 2001. Ethiopia does not recognize the border demarcated under the agreement, and Eritrea considers some territory that remains under Ethiopian control as illegally occupied. The state has used this disagreement with Ethiopia to justify the mass conscription of its citizens, often lasting a lifetime. This has pushed almost a million Eritreans to leave the country (see, e.g., Laub 2015 and more generally UNHCR 2015c).