



# Arrival City: The Final Migration and Our Next World

*Doug Saunders*

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## **Arrival City: The Final Migration and Our Next World** Doug Saunders

From one of Canada's leading journalists comes a major book about how the movement of populations from rural to urban areas on the margins is reshaping our world. These transitional spaces are where the next great economic and cultural boom will be born, or where the great explosion of violence will occur. The difference depends on our ability to notice.

The twenty-first century is going to be remembered for the great, and final, shift of human populations out of rural, agricultural life into cities. The movement engages an unprecedented number of people, perhaps a third of the world's population, and will affect almost everyone in tangible ways. The last human movement of this size and scope, and the changes it will bring to family life, from large agrarian families to small urban ones, will put an end to the major theme of human history: continuous population growth.

**Arrival City** offers a detailed tour of the key places of the "final migration" and explores the possibilities and pitfalls inherent in the developing new world order. From villages in China, India, Bangladesh and Poland to the international cities of the world, Doug Saunders portrays a diverse group of people as they struggle to make the transition, and in telling the story of their journeys — and the history of their often multi-generational families enmeshed in the struggle of transition — gives an often surprising sense of what factors aid in the creation of a stable, productive community.

## **Arrival City: The Final Migration and Our Next World Details**

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## **From Reader Review Arrival City: The Final Migration and Our Next World for online ebook**

### **Nancy says**

Arrival City is an interesting thought provoking book about flexible urban planning for the poorest inhabitants of today's mega-cities. Really, it is very interesting and remarkably hopeful.

The world has seen a huge migration from rural to urban, creating what many think of as squatter slums. Doug Saunders brings these areas alive through stories about the lives of specific inhabitants. Saunders describes the arc of a number of arrival cities in Africa, the Middle East, South America, Asia, Europe and North America. European and North American arrival cities take a different physical form from those in Asia and Africa but the same issues need to be addressed. Saunders offers examples of arrival cities that work well at integrating new arrivals into the metropolitan area and ones that do not.

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### **Sarah Logan says**

Such an excellent book. Arrival cities really are so key to moving people out of poverty and transforming lives and nations, but if their development is badly managed, they become the seeds of the religious extremism we see in many European countries today. Really insightful case studies throughout the book that explain the social issues we see in different cities. Fascinating.

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### **Humza Hussain says**

This book tells the story of social movements across the globe by using individuals in each region and following their rural-to-urban migration. In doing this, the author is able to make a very strong case as to why certain cities fail to incorporate migrants into their economic and cultural fabrics, meanwhile others are able to achieve this quite easily. What was most interesting about this book is just how convincingly it shows how the integration of migrants explains such phenomena and radical religious extremism, effects of economic collapses and even political revolutions. This book makes it clear that although we tend to make facile arguments such as religion being the primary driver in individuals who become violent, or ruthless dictators as the reason that there is political uproar, in reality it is the manner in which society treats its poorest members. Above all else, it is the lack of capacity and the the lack of opportunity that manifests that causes just extreme responses, and this plays itself out regardless of religion, region or era.

"What comes from this work, and from the experiences of families like the Magalhães in Brazil and the Parabas in India, is a conclusion that is unlikely to please ideologues on the socialist left or the free-market right: to achieve social mobility and a way into the middle class for the rural-migrant poor, you need to have both a free market in widely held private property and a strong and assertive government willing to spend heavily on this transition. When both are present, change will happen."

"It was the economist Amartya Sen who first recognized that poverty is, fundamentally, not the dearth of money or a lack of possessions or a shortage of talent or ambition, but the absence of capacities- the lack of tools of opportunities needed to function as a full citizen. This concept has become widely used in the field of development, but it finds its most pointed and obvious truth in the arrival city. For it is here, where the

most will to reach out for betterment, that people are most dangerously deprived of capacities, those knobby handholds in the otherwise smooth vertical face of the economy."

"Parla, Spain - In an ambitious program designed to deter dangerous illegal sea crossings by migrants, and end illegal immigration to Spain. While amnesties offering regularization of "illegal" immigrants have been used throughout the Western world in the post war decades. Spain's program was part of a new approach designed to make regularization an option in advance, incorporating rural-to-urban transition into the employment system. Under this program, tens of thousands of Africans each year were granted work permit, allowing them to enter the county legally and work for a year; if their employment contracts were extended, they were allowed to bring over their families and so embark on a path toward citizenship- an effort to prevent the fragmented families and underground lives of the European arrival city, and to allow Spain to add half a million immigrants to its economy each year without creating a marginalized class on the outskirts. Suddenly the occupants of arrival cities could buy their apartments, lease shop spaces, start small businesses and form families that weren't hampered by ambiguous national status. Children of migrants attended school as Spaniards. Moroccan neighbourhoods could become, in practice, Spanish neighbourhoods with polyglot cultures. It meant that the boom created active citizens rather than rootless foreigners scrambling for money- and it meant that the subsequent Spanish economic collapse and unemployment crises would be faced in a sensible and humane way, without turning the outskirts into disaster zones."

"In montgomery County, something different happened. Citizens and officials, realizing that the immigrants were their main source of wealth creation, banded together to find ways to help them stay. In Gaithersburg, Maryland, a suburban town on the northern end of the county the county with an immigrant mix similar to Wheaton's, a coalition of officials, citizens and activists developed a "door-knocking" campaign to save village-born immigrants from eviction. The idea, one official explained, was to "go to immigrants' homes, engage them through friendly door-knocking campaigns, speak their language, check on problems they face, let them know about neighbourhood gatherings, help them tap available government and non-profit services, ask immigrants families about skills they might possess that may help their neighbours." The campaign was backed with a network of financial and business support services that, while not inexpensive to the taxpayers of this prosperous town, was seen as a wise investment.

Montgomery County represents one of two paths that the arrival city can follow into the urban outskirts. Everywhere in the world, it is a choice between building a community's future or seeing the stage for its demise. Without an investment now, before the next wave arrives, that choice will be made by circumstances. Without attention to their new populations, the suburbs will turn into the cruel and violent places of our irrational fears."

"Something happens to villagers when they arrive in the French urban outskirts. The culture of transition, that fertile amalgam of village and urban life, is frozen in its early stages, prevented from advancing into permanency, from growing into something that contributes to the country's economy and culture. The parents often manage the first stage adequately, keeping one foot in the village and one in the city, holding down rudimentary jobs and supporting their villages through remittances. But they are prevented from moving to the usual next stage, from launching any kind of small business, from owning their own house, from meshing themselves with the larger urban community - they remain isolated. And their children, fully acculturated, find themselves stuck - in part by well-documented racism that denies them jobs or post codes. But behind that "post-code racism" is the reality of those locations: because of the physical nature of banlieues and the organization of its institutions, the villagers have no means to move to the next stage. This is often characterized as a clash of civilizations or a failure of assimilation; it is better understood as an arrested rural-urban transition. ' the problem is that these kids are made to see themselves as immigrants, France wants them, it needs people who can do this kind of cleaning and building work. And they end up stuck in les Pyramides, because it's the place where they're made to go. And their kids have nothing. They were born here, they speak the language perfectly, they can work. But they don't have work. They didn't build les pyramids with Africans in mind. There are not enough rooms, no place for markets, nothing that people from

villages can use to make a start."

"Gateway cities like Thorncliffe Park: the more successful they are, the higher their apparent poverty rate. If people are able to leave within a generation for more prosperous middle-class homeowner districts, the neighbourhood will be constantly refilled with new migrants from poor rural regions. It appears unchangingly poor and segregated only if you fail to observe trajectory of each resident."

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## **Blair says**

### **Why Slums are a Good Thing**

To understand what could be positive about something that appears to be so ugly, Doug Saunders seeks to first break the spell that country life has over some of us in the affluent West. He is talking instead about subsistence farming in developing countries:

*"There is no romance in village life. Rural living is the largest single killer of humans today, the greatest source of malnutrition, infant mortality and reduced lifespans. The rural village is also the predominant source of excessive population growth, with its need for large families to provide labour... Thatched roofs may be picturesque, but life beneath them is short, hard, disease-ridden and prone to bouts of starvation."*

But beyond all that, there is no future. The goal of almost every rural villager, if we are to believe Saunders, is to escape. For centuries rural people in the West have been seeking a better life in the cities, and now a similar "final migration" is happening in the developing world. This process releases land so that commercial agriculture can produce more food, and allows people in the cities to produce more wealth.

Saunders is a journalist, and this book is mainly in the form of stories. These have the advantage of revealing the real life struggles of individuals rather than give abstract generalities. The disadvantage is the possibility of selection bias. For example, I suspect he finds his rural villages through the people who have left them. Fewer people may leave successful villages.

### **Think of an "Arrival City" Instead**

The migrants settle in what outsiders call slums, seen as horrible, crowded places with no future. In this book we are led inside to see them from the point of view of the people who inhabit them, with case studies in cities from both the developing world and the West. Slums provide an inexpensive place to live, and an informal environment that allows small businesses to form easily and the population density need for them to succeed.

There is no illusion given that life is easy for the new arrival from the countryside. *"All are engaged in a daily calculation that involves the unbearable burden of rural deprivation, the impossible expense of full-fledged urban life and the broken pathway to opportunities that might someday form a bridge between the two."*

The many stories about rural migrants stress their determination to succeed, to become a part of the larger city, in spite of the obstacles placed in their way. All they need is an opportunity to work, start a small business, and accumulate capital.

Even where the slum does not appear to improve, the people move in, learn skills, save money, and then move somewhere better. What appears to be a physically static dead end is actually a socially dynamic and

positive ladder to success. The message is: watch the people, not just the buildings. The “arrival city” is a gateway to a better life.

### **Is the Ethnic Ghetto is also a Good Thing?**

When I volunteered to teach math in a grade three classroom, while almost all of the children were immigrants, it seemed each one came from a different country. The only language they had in common was English, and they learned it quickly. I never heard a word in a foreign language. My thought was that here “diversity” was working in favour of integration.

This arrangement may actually put their parents at a disadvantage. A community of people who speak the same language and share the same culture creates a mutual support network that helps the residents navigate their way to success in their strange new environment. Thus ethnic clustering does not necessarily lead to “flypaper neighborhoods”, or failed arrival cities.

Saunders seems to suggest that all cultures are equivalent when it comes to achieving material success, and any problems are due to the bad policies of the host population. He makes a good case, but I then look at the difference in success between different groups migrating to the same city and think that culture also matters.

### **Two-Way Migration and our Immigration One Way Street**

Saunders does not draw much distinction between migration within a country and external immigration, stressing the rural to urban nature of the migration. He observes, “Nations do not migrate. Villages within nations do.” He tells us that the arrival city is linked in a lasting and intensive way to its originating villages, constantly sending people and money and knowledge back and forth, making possible the next wave of migrations from the village. This chain migration and the back and forth flow of people to and from the village allows experimental moves and a large backflow to the place of origin. We get a hybrid culture, with selection of the best. Those who stay are the toughest and smartest ones, and they can take a lot of change.

That may be how it ideally works in developing countries. When people immigrate to the West this linkage is made more difficult. Here, immigration is forever. Few choose to return to the village. The host country thus has a policy choice of either being stuck with a number of losers, or restricting immigration to avoid those costs.

Saunders points out that it is critical that there is a clear path to citizenship for migrants. It is those with no stake in their new country who turn to crime. I agree, but it would help if there was also a path to non-citizenship and leaving the country for the few who do not succeed.

### **Have We Already Lost Control of our Country?**

I wonder if Saunders realizes how alarming the following sounds from a different perspective than his own:

*"The reason why village-origin migration will continue is political. Immigrants, and their children and grandchildren, become citizens and voters and politicians and cabinet ministers and leaders, united across parties and ideologies by the overweening issue of having access to their families and fellow villagers."*

*"Almost all policy efforts to restrict or end immigration have failed because the subjects of those laws were already citizens, using the arrival city as a platform for its own self-preservation."*

Here is the anti-immigration worst-case scenario: immigrants only want to pump up the numbers in their own ethnic group, and do not care about the country as a whole. And it is too late to stop it.

That view does not take into account the fact that immigrants also have a stake in the success of their new country. And, at least in countries like Canada with a diversity (that word again) of immigration sources, most future immigrants will be coming from ethnic groups other than one's own. Only the most successful immigrants will be in a decision making position. Self-interest may serve to prevent fully open immigration.

### **Lessons from Turkey and Iran**

The connection drawn between internal migration in Istanbul and Tehran and the resulting political changes that occurred was enlightening. The migrants struggled to become a part of the urban economy in spite of the efforts of the authorities to stop them by bulldozing their homes. But in the end the new arrivals came to outnumber the original inhabitants, and began to achieve political dominance. He points out that both Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad were children of migrants. For example, in Turkey,

*"The unexpected New Istanbul, which emerged within the space of one generation, caught the locals by surprise. 'A catastrophe of such a scale has only happened to us.' This wasn't historically correct as it was similar to the transformations that the cities of Europe and North America in the nineteenth century. But it would become a political catastrophe for the Istanbul elite, who were suddenly outnumbered by a new, arriviste middle class whose women often wore headscarves and were already adopting their own seemingly alien forms of political power."*

Although individual migrants were only trying to improve their lives, their arrival led to significant political and cultural changes. I can't help noticing that in both countries we now have authoritarian governments with a religious agenda. Large scale immigration could also eventually lead to unintended consequences in the West.

The irony is that liberals such as Saunders seem to welcome a leap into an unknown future that may put an end to our liberal culture. Conservatives instinctively resist the intrusion of the visibly different "others", who actually share many of their values.

### **A Valuable Perspective**

As a Canadian I am interested in how to make immigration successful.. While it is the right and the duty of any nation to decide who may live there, we also have the duty to make the immigration we choose to allow work as well as possible. A book written from the perspective of the migrants provides a lot of valuable information on what does and does not work to help migrants successfully integrate. It has changed my mind on a number of issues. For that I give it a top rating.

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### **Jaime says**

"Arrival City" discusses the implications of mass migration from rural to urban areas and how it is affecting, for better or worse, cities around the world. The focus of the book is on the "arrival city", which is not necessarily the urban area that absorbs the migrants. Instead, it is typically the surrounding areas where the migrants first begin to enter urban society – in the suburbs, the slums, or the outskirts of town. The arrival city serves basic functions and needs of the residents, but most importantly, it is the location where the transition from poverty to the middle class is made. There are in-depth studies of a range of cities from Los Angeles and Washington DC to Bangladesh and Rio de Janeiro.

Arrival cities, a term coined by Saunders, are the essential entry mechanism from rural village life to urban area survival. Newcomers use arrival cities to establish new lives and to integrate themselves socially and

economically. Slums, housing projects, and low-cost suburbs provide cheap housing for the migrants, and entry level jobs in the area provide money for family back in the village. In so many countries around the world (especially in India, China, and most African countries), parents and children are separated for years to ensure the survival of their families and a better life for their children by working (or sending them to work) in the city. Eventually, if they are successful at transitioning out of the slums and into the city, their families are reunited.

Saunders states that the arrival cities are the places where the next great economic and cultural booms will be born or where the next great explosions of violence will occur. The difference depends on how societies and governments react to mass migration. In a 2009 World Bank study, the conclusion was that the most effective route to poverty reduction and economic growth is to encourage the highest possible urban population density and the growth of migration, as long as the government provides migrants with intensive investment opportunities and infrastructure development. Unfortunately, instead of being given tools of ownership, education, business creation, and connection to the wider economy, arrival cities are too often treated as destitute places that need social workers, public housing, and urban redevelopment.

This book started off as a very interesting read about modern cities and the current state of urban migration, but quickly became difficult to read, as the author decided to make a 180 and flashed back to migration in the 1700s. This went on for several chapters and seemed irrelevant to be discussed in the depth that it was. The discussion did not return to current migration until the last two chapters, which was disappointing. But if you are looking for an interesting read, the first half of the book definitely raises a lot of questions and provides a relevant, unromanticized view of life in the modern village and gives you an appreciation of the lengths that people go to to improve their lives and the lives of their families.

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### **Brenda B says**

A great accompaniment to contemporary news. I read Doug Saunders fairly faithfully, and his topics and writing always impress me.

A quote from the book that resonate with me: "...poverty is, fundamentally, not the dearth of money or a lack of possessions or a shortage of talent or ambition but the absence of capacities - the lack of tools or opportunities needed to function as a full citizen." (Idea attributed to Amartya Sen)

After examining arrival cities in China, Brazil, Egypt, Turkey, India, Canada, and others, Saunders summarizes it beautifully: "To achieve social mobility and a way into the middle class for the rural-migrant poor, you need to have both a free market in widely held private property and a strong and assertive government willing to spend heavily on this transition."

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### **Shonna Froebel says**

Doug Saunders is the European Bureau Chief for the Globe and Mail. He has put together this book to show how the move from rural to urban living is in its last phase. The ways in which we treat those areas, arrival cities, that immigrants first come to greatly affects how the cities themselves prosper. He uses examples from all over the world, primarily Europe, North and South America, China, India, and Bangladesh to show how

this phenomenon is common to all cultures. He also uses history to show how this phenomenon is not a new one, but is only in its latest stage. He shows successes and failures and those still undetermined. This book is a call to those in power to recognize this truth and make policies that ensure success.

I found the stories of the individuals very interesting and they brought alive the reality of why these people move, how the process works, and what we can do to make sure it works well.

The failures really show how stereotypes and prejudice can make or break these arrival communities. Urban planners are beginning to learn, but not all of them have yet. This is a book that every mayor of a growing city should read, along with others in all levels of government. To follow the recommendations here will bring us all a better future.

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## Don says

Doug Saunders's Arrival City – How the largest migration in history is reshaping our world was listed by a few people as one of the more interesting books published in 2010 and it is easy to see why. Challenging conventional wisdom every inch of the way, Saunders has a good news story to tell about migration, and he is on a mission to make sure that everyone understands its ramifications every inch of the way.

The elements in his tale are that the things so often seen as repellent, dysfunctional, chaotic slums in cities across the world ought really to be understood as social structures striving for a coherent existence as 'arrival cities', aiding one of the most important revolutions now underway across the face of the planet. That revolution concerns the profound transformation of the majority of people from a state of existence mired in generations-old rural poverty into city dwellers, participating in the multifarious rhythms of modernity, with all its hopes and its risks.

The arrival city takes different forms in different parts of the world. Sometimes the shantytown, favela or gecekondu of the megacities of the developing world, other times the Lower East Sides, Bethnal Greens, the Kreuzbergs and the Slotervaarts of North America and Europe, they all have the same function as the point at which migrants come into first contact with the social and economic entity into which they are seeking integration.

It is often a precarious existence, but Saunders argues that the historic direction for migration from rural to urban areas is a degree of upward social mobility which allows migrants to overcome dangerous levels of poverty and insecurity within the space of a generation. In most of the many examples of arrival cities which he presents in this book, the children of migrants have a future which puts them a lot closer to the common life of the natives than it does to their parents.

But not in every case. The notion of a 'failed arrival city' is present in this study. Failure takes its grip on an arrival community when the gradient between the lives of the newcomers and the established population is just too steep, and where the structure of property-ownership, enterprise, the labour market and the education system offers no hand-holds to allow a process of gradual ascent to take place.

In Saunders's scheme, failed arrival cities occur principally in two sets of circumstances. The first of these is when the housing tenure system provides no security for the newly-arrived, generating little or no equity in the overall rising value of property which they can draw upon as capital for their own life projects. The second cause of failure is seen when the urban space is over-planned in accordance with utopian schemes of the good life, which in its mid-20th century variant required Corbusian vistas of radically separated residence, recreation, and commercial zones a central component of its plans for the city.

For initially marginalised groups like migrants to advance towards equality there seems to be a need for the

compression of all these spheres into local neighbourhoods. When homes are close to shops, and shops are just a stepping stone away from businesses and employment, the costs of life are reduced for those living on restricted budgets and more opportunities exist to build networks providing solidarity and mutual aid.

Pessimists will say that this is just rationalises the 'need' for slums and that, once established they are with us ever. But the real life record often confounds this claim. Successful arrival cities, like the Lower East Side of New York, Bethnal Green in East London, many of the gecekondu of Istanbul, or Liu Gong Li, China, are themselves re-absorbed into the mainstream life of the city as immigrant enterprise constructs the convivial multicultural diversity which cosmopolitan middle class life seems to crave.

Saunders's arguments have many compelling features which make them attractive to people, like those of us around MRN, who want the discussion about migration to be cast in more positive ways, recognising the role that it plays in overcoming poverty and generating greater equality of opportunity. They also allow us to see how that old bogeyman integration could also be best understood as more than the process of acculturation in the direction of a supposed traditional mainstream which it is increasingly presented as by leading politicians. The integration which migrants strive for – and they do indeed strive hard – is for a place in the social and economic life of the wider community which they are frequently denied even when they have learnt the dominant language and assimilated the cultural norms of the dominant groups in society to a perfect degree.

But there are things in the arrival city perspective which require deeper questioning. Saunders omits any discussion about the role which economic growth in general plays in supporting the growth of living standards of migrants. To what extent can the success of his arrival city examples in countries like China, India, Brazil, Turkey or the UK be attributed to the famous rising tide of greater prosperity which is supposed to lift all boats, whether the sleek yachts of the wealthy or the humble barges of the poor? Will the networks which are supposed to flourish in the crowded tenements and street markets of the immigrant quarters still play such an important role in providing the first leg-up, which Saunders tells us is the great achievement of the arrival city?

But these are questions which occur only after absorption in the arguments and viewpoints set out in this richly-themed study of migrant districts across the world. Arrival City is a good way to start thinking about some very old problems.

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### **Hans-Peter Merz says**

Excellent written. Most important topic. We are witnessing the last great migration of people in history - billions of humans are moving from rural to urban settling, changing size and structure of traditional cities as well as political structures of whole nations. No one should dream about keeping all those people at their places of birth-they will move and they will go to where they hope to have a future at least for their children. Western politics would be well advised to prepare in a constructive way for the need to integrate a third of mankind in modern urban structures.

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### **Caroline says**

Later add: 9.9.2015. I have come back to up the rating of this book to 5 stars. This is because I find it keeps cropping up in conversations with my friends, and I keep going back and looking at the notes I took. It is

turning out to have been a really invaluable read. Review below....

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This is an interesting book, with a whole new take on immigration. The author is Doug Saunders, a foreign correspondent for *The Globe and Mail*, a Canadian newspaper. He is five times winner of *The National Newspaper Award*, a Canadian equivalent to the Pulitzer Prize.

Herewith some bullet points of what I picked up from the book....

\* Due to falling populations in the West, Saunders believes we will not only welcome immigrants in the near future, but will be bending over backwards to encourage them to enter our countries. As time goes on we are likely to experience severe labour shortages, both in skilled and unskilled areas of work, and we will need immigrants to fill the gap.

\* All over the world there is currently a huge exodus from rural societies into cities. We are all becoming urbanized. Saunders believes this is a positive step forward, as it is usually accompanied by greater prosperity for everyone. Nearly all poverty in the world is rural poverty. There are many farms all over the world that are too small for optimum yields, plus their owners cannot afford the machinery and techniques needed to make the most of their land. The result is frequently subsistence farmers in dire poverty.

\* There are gateways for rural people to enter the cities. Saunders calls these gateways "arrival cities". They may be slums, or poor areas in the centre of cities, or they may be suburbs or satellite towns on the periphery of cities. The defining factor about them is that they attract immigrants.

\* There are lines of cooperation, communication and financial remittance between these arrival cities....and the rural communities the immigrants come from. These networks ensure that more immigrants will follow in the footsteps of earlier immigrants. There is a continual flow from specific rural communities to specific arrival cities. For example the borough Tower Hamlets in London has a large community of Bangladeshi immigrants. They all come from a small agricultural area in north-east Bangladesh called Sylhet. You don't just get a whoosh of immigrants from everywhere. Instead there are well travelled paths between each rural community and city.

\* Arrival cities often appear to be perpetually poor, often terribly poor, but when they work well, they are in fact great processing institutions. Within a generation or so they create educated and financially stable citizens, who then leave the arrival city to settle elsewhere in the country. Meanwhile the next crop of new poor immigrants has arrived. So, on the outside, these arrival cities always look poor, but the reality is they are often powerhouses for turning people's lives around.

\* Arrival cities don't always work though. This book is full of good and bad examples of arrival cities. Basically the book is a huge plea to governments around the world to apply themselves to the well-being of their arrival cities. Issues that need to be thought of include:

- Basic access to water, sewage disposal, street lighting and other facilities.
- And in wealthier places, architecture which allows for the establishment of an organic community, and space for shops and businesses.
- Laws which enable people to apply for citizenship and feel part of the country they are so keen to join.
- Laws which enable people to practice business easily, rather than excluding them from commerce.
- Transport which allows people to travel from their arrival city to areas in the wider city where they will find work.
- Opportunities for the children of immigrants to receive education.
- Opportunities for immigrants to learn the language of their new country.

- A community centre where there is help and advice.

\*A worst case scenario might be a bunch of tower blocks in a suburban outpost, cut off from the rest of the city, and with little opportunity for immigrants to mingle easily with one another, or create businesses for themselves. Another issue would be little opportunity for citizenship or education. This type of arrival city is just a carbuncle on the face of the city proper, and in the end will generate despondency and alienation amongst its inhabitants. Eventually it can result in all sorts of hostility and rioting against the host city. It is the opposite of a welcoming effort to integrate new immigrants.

The above is a very brief and generalized description of a book that is actually both specific and detailed, not only in the twenty arrival cities from around the world that it describes, but also in detailing the lives and experiences of specific immigrant families. It opened my eyes to all sorts situations and issues that I had little idea of before. Issues that are of huge importance to all of us. I thought it was excellent.

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A link to a 25 minute talk given by Doug Saunders on "Global migration and arrival cities"

<http://onpoint.wbur.org/2011/03/23/gl...>

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## **Murtaza says**

This is a compellingly argued, highly entertaining book - part travelogue, part sociological study - which offers an optimistic new perspective on the 'slums' surrounding many urban centers around the world today.

Such slums are the products of the great rural-to-urban migration which has occurred across much of the world over the past few decades. The massive shantytowns surrounding places like Karachi, Mumbai and Lagos - and urban slums in Europe - have often been viewed by outsiders as place of hopeless failure and destitution; warehouses of victims. However the reality is often quite different. These are places of strivers, who have made the decision to leave (an often falsely-romanticized) rural poverty for a chance to eventually achieve a middle-class foothold in the city, even if it takes a generation. Hence the formation of cities outside the city; enclaves for newly arrived former denizens of the countryside.

Statistics show that these 'arrival cities', when managed correctly, are actually the greatest engines of personal empowerment and economic advancement available to billions of people around the world. These slums are not warehouses of victims but of ambitious people, working to improve their prospects and those of their children and often succeeding. Such arrivals, in their hundreds of millions, are changing the planet - generating wealth and perhaps leading to an environmentally manageable world.

The author exhibits a rare and admirable ability to see the world for more than what it superficially appears to be. While slums are often believed to be zones of permanent poverty, the most successful ones are places of transient residence. Meaning, people move in from the countryside, stay until they get a foothold in the middle class, then leave to make room for a new batch of arrivals. In my own experience I have seen many such neighborhoods and the transience he describes rings true. The neighborhood stays poor but in fact it is often an engine for pulling people out of poverty.

This is a rare book that made me look at the world differently at the end (we all read with the hope of encountering such books). I picked it up while in Karachi and was stunned by how true it rang. Furthermore, its a page-turner - engagingly written throughout and evincing great understanding and empathy towards its subjects. The author does a very effective job of humanizing the people of the slums and, most valuably, gives an active voice to the people who are often falsely depicted as passive victims or worse. Highly recommended.

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### **Evelyn Swift (Featherbrained Books) says**

The twenty-first century is entering an epoch that is reshaping our cities and economies by the appearance of Arrival Cities, a term coined by Saunders, which explains the final migration from the rural village to urban areas. This isn't a localized event focused on the developing world, it is a global phenomenon that is effecting everyone worldwide. These arrival cities establish new lives, where immigrants integrate themselves into a new world socially and economically, to set up life for themselves and their family. Saunders explores slums, gecekondu, favlas, barriadas and various other arrival city enclaves, which provide low-cost housing usually on the outskirts of major cities for individuals to gain entry level jobs and to generally provide money for their family back in the village until they can make the full transition to urban and middle-class life.

Arrival City is a richly-themed study of migration across the world, looking at a very old problem in a new way. Saunders casts arrival cities in a positive light, especially the slums which were previously thought as dysfunctional but as he explains, are very organized and an integral part of our society. He explains clearly the role that is needed for producing functional arrival cities and more of the process of acculturation than total immersion. I personally enjoyed this book and how he provided an unromanticized view of village life which is still a big hindrance for governments resisting arrival cities as they have a warped sense of village struggles and culture. I also enjoyed how he humanized the phenomenon by introducing us to real individuals and their personal stories. From this I could make the connection from my own families immigrant history to Canada, and the migrants presented in the story, and perhaps our lives aren't so different even thousands of miles away.

I noticed that Saunders omitted any discussion about the role of economic growth in playing a part of raising the living standards of migrants. In places like China and Brazil, countries he wrote about, their economies are growing at an alarming rate and at what point does the wealth trickle down to the poor? Following the 'trickle-down theory' which essentially gives tax breaks to business which in turn creates more jobs for lower and middle class individuals and leads to goods at lower prices, these seem like all things that would be very beneficial to migrants who are in need of jobs and cheaper goods but Saunders doesn't speak much about the effect economics play into arrival cities.

Saunders raises many issues not just about what is happening right now but for the future of our cities. After I read the book, I wonder what the consequences of mass migration to cities with non-functioning enclaves in the future will be, especially if governments continue to ignore communities that feel complete isolation and then diverge into more extremist ways of living.

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### **Matthew says**

I really enjoyed this exploration of arrival cities. The work encouraged me to reflect on cities I have visited around the world as well as Canadian immigration policies. I didn't like the narratives as much as his

analysis of arrival cities.

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### **Emmkay says**

Really stimulating! Saunders explores the concept of the 'arrival city,' an urban space transformed by rural-to-urban migration. He argues that rural-to-urban migration is going to be a hallmark of the coming century, and he seeks to identify the characteristics of successful arrival cities, which assist arrivals in propelling themselves upward, versus failed arrival cities, in which arrivals may stall, fall backwards, or turn to violence and instability. He surveys a variety of examples of arrival cities globally and historically, from eighteenth century Paris to twenty-first century Thorncliffe Park in Toronto.

I expected something a bit more 'journalistic,' along the lines of Katherine Boo's *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity*, given that Saunders is a journalist for *The Globe and Mail*. He does include journalistic explorations of the lives of individual inhabitants of arrival cities, but this is a quite in-depth and analytical book. I expect that it will prompt me to look at my own city, other cities, and global developments through a different lens. This is a book that decision-makers and politicians would do well to read and think about.

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### **Steffi says**

'Arrival City' (2012). So yeah, the rural-urban migration which is in full swing and will mean like 2-3 fucking billion people packing up and leave over the next 30 years or so is MASSIVE. Forget international migration, the actual largest ever scale human movement takes place within countries: from the shitty villages to the cities. This insane movement is also expected to put an end to population growth by around 2050, once we're like 9 billion urbanites with less than 2.1 children. If you're living in Asia or Africa this is old news (or very old news if you live in Latin America where the great migration already took place). If you don't, you may not be aware of how like a third of the world is leaving behind centuries old farming lifestyles to make it in the city. 'Arrival city' are these kind of 'dynamic slums' where people - still a generation or so away from being able to actually afford the city - arrive and eek out a living in order to western union back plenty of cash to the village while trying to bring over the rest of the family to enjoy modern urban life. The kind of peeps sewing our sneakers. Obviously not all will make it and often the rural-urban migration is a back and forth process. Etc. So, in a way a great read and obviously super relevant to understand population dynamics in the developing world although these processes also take place big time in places like L.A., London and within the EU.

I dunno, man. I was hoping for some kind of political economy analysis, how this is driven by inequality and global financial capitalism etc but this sounds a bit World Bankish super positive about how magically these dynamic slum entrepreneurs drive economic growth and in 2050 we're all enjoying life with our fucking iphones and flat screen TVs.

So it's kind of bizarre looking at global poverty without naming the elephant in the room: capitalism. Then again, this is a journalist account, with plenty of interviews and 'reporting from the slum' rather than an explicit theoretical framework. Suck it up.

On the other hand, the more historic parts of the book draw interesting lines between 'arrival cities' and rural migrants and revolutions and uprisings, eg Paris in the 18th and 19th century, and Istanbul, Tehran, Caracas in the 20th and the cities of the Arab Spring ('the Arab revolutions were born of the arrival city and its frustrated ambition').

