

Globalization: Theoretical Perspectives
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Lecture 29


The city: localizations of the global: Saskia Sassen

Welcome back to the class, we are continuing our discussion on Saskia Sassen and in the previous class, we had a look at a summary of Sassen's basic arguments in her work with the global city as given in Andrew Jones's work, 'Globalization, Key Thinkers'. So, as I mentioned in the previous class, it is a summary by Andrew Jones, so that you get an idea about her overall arguments, because this work 'Global Cities' in multiple editions and then she has reframed and revised her arguments substantially.

So, we decided to look at the summary so that you get a clarity on that and in today's class, we will go ahead with her own original article title, 'The Global City: Localizations of the Global by Saskia Sassen'. It is a lecture offered there and it is localizations of global, so this is the details, this essay is available in JSTOR or other sites, so that you can read the original essay.

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So, this is how it appears. So, it is not a very lengthy one, I think it is six or seven pages. So, let us look at this essay more closely.

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THE CITY: LOCALIZATIONS OF THE GLOBAL

SASKIA SASSEN

Also note — though not the focus of this article — is the growing use of digital networks by urban poor neighborhood organizations to pursue a variety of both intra- and inter-urban political initiatives. All of this has raised the number of cities that are part of cross-border networks operating at other vast geographic scales.

Over the centuries cities have been at the intersection of processes with supra-urban and even intercontinental scales. What is different today is the intensity, complexity and global span of these networks, and the extent to which significant portions of economies are now dematerialized and digitized and hence can travel at great speeds through these networks where before they were fixed in place.

As cities and urban regions are increasingly traversed by non-local circuits, much of what we experience as the local is also global because the local is actually a transformed condition, a localization of global processes. One way of thinking about this is in terms of urban access and emergence in cities. These might be economic, political, cultural, or imaginary. This produces a specific set of interactions in a city's relation to its topography. The topographic representation of the city can capture only some of this, and further, even if captured, will tend to represent it as contained within the city when it might in fact be a spatialization of a trans-urban process.

The new urban spatiality thus produced is partial in a double sense: it accounts for only part of what happens in cities and what cities are about, and it enables only part of what we might think of as the space of the city, whether this be understood in terms as diverse as those of a city's administrative boundaries or in the sense of the multiple public imaginaries that may be present in different sectors of a city's people.



So, 'The city: Localization of The Global'. Now, over the centuries, the cities have been at the intersections of processes with Supra urban and even interconnected scales. What is different today is the intensity, complexity and global span of these networks and the extent to which significant portions of economies are now be materialized and digitized and hence can travel at great speeds through these networks where before they existed in fixed place and I do not think that we require any more elaboration on that because we mentioned in the previous class that she is talking about informationalism, she is talking about the emergence of service sector as a major drive for economic activity.

If earlier the manufacturer was the central driving force of economy, it is no longer the case, what we are seeing is a kind of a dematerialized and digitized, all our services are, can be brought under this situation, whether it is software or advertisement or accounting or tourism or anything of that sort comes under that. So, as cities and urban regions are increasingly traversed by non-local circuits, much of what we experienced as the local is also global, because the local is actually a transformed condition, a localization of global processes.

So, we I hope you remember our discussion on this term global and local in the arguments of Arjuna Appadurai and even that the terms like Robertson use the term glocalization. So, what we understand as local is no longer disconnected from the global. So, the local is only a manifestation of the global in a different sense. So, one way of thinking about them is terms of urban processes and entities in the cities and since Sassen is an urban sociologist, she gives example from urban same whereas Appadurai gives you examples from a host of other cultural repertoire.

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they were fixed in place. As cities and urban regions are increasingly traversed by non-local circuits, much of what we experience as the local is also global because the local is actually a transformed condition, a localization of global processes. One way of thinking about this is in terms of urban processes and centers in cities. These might be economic, political, cultural, or imaginary. This produces a specific set of interactions in a city's relation to its topography. The topographic representation of the city can capture only some of this, and further, even if captured, will tend to represent it as contained within the city when it might in fact be a spatialization of a trans-urban process.

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This raises a number of questions. Let me address two in this short essay. One is the question of place: what is urban place in this context? The other concerns the resulting repositioning of architecture, planning, and urbanism generally, as forms of knowledge and forms of practice.

Sited materialities and global span

I want to address the question of place in today's cities through the lens of the digital global economy. It seems to me that the difficulty analysts and commentators have had



“The new urban Spatialities thus produced, is partial in the double sense, it accounts for only part of what happens in the cities and what cities are about, and it inhabits are only part of what we might think as the space of the city, whether this be understood in terms as diverse as those of the city’s administrative boundaries...”. So, now the whole question is what is an urban place in this context?

So, she is basically asking this question, how do we make sense of an urban space in the context of a globalization, because our conventional understanding of an urban space in the traditional sense is that you define a space as urban space on the basis of the population density, that is why you had this distinction between the urban and rural and of course, later you distinguish it on the basis of economic activity, in the rural areas it will be mostly agrarian based activities, whereas here it will be industry based. But these conventional traditional arguments are losing its significance because the population density no longer defines whether a particular city is an urban space.

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Sited materialities and global span

I want to address the question of place in today's cities through the lens of the digital global economy.

It seems to me that the difficulty analysts and commentators have had specifying/understanding the impact of digitization on cities – indeed, on multiple configurations – essentially results from two analytic flaws. One of these (especially evident in the U.S.) confines interpretation to a technological reading of the technical capabilities of digital technology. This is fine for engineers. But such a reading becomes problematic when we want to understand how these technologies interact with social conditions, notably place. A purely technological reading of technical capabilities of digital technology inevitably leads one to a place that is a non-place, where we can announce with certainty the neutralizing of many of the configurations marked by physically and place-boundedness, such as the urban.

The second flaw, I would argue, is a continuing reliance on analytical categories that were developed under other spatial and historical conditions, that is, conditions preceding the current digital era. Thus the tendency is to

Another consequence of this type of reading is to assume that a new technology will just displace all older technologies that are less efficient, or slower.



So, now she brings in this idea of cited materialities and global. I want to address the question of place in today's cities through the lens of digital global economy. So, we mentioned in the

previous class again that Sassen is a sociologist who really emphasizes on the centrality of place.

She is somebody who is very strongly, very vehemently argues to consider, take into account the still continuing importance of the physical aspect or the spatial aspect or the geographical aspect of that, of course the discussion has gone much beyond that. So, it seems to me that the difficulty analysts and commentators have had specifying understanding the impact of digitalization on cities indeed on multiple configurations essentially results from two analytical flows.

One of these especially evident in US can confine to interpretation of a technological reading of the technical capabilities of digital economy, this is a fine for engineers, but for reading it becomes, but such reading becomes problematic, when we want to understand how these technologies interact with social conditions notably place, a purely technological reading of a technical capabilities of digital technology inevitably leads one to place that is a known place where we can announce with certainty, the neutralizing of many of these configurations marked by physicality and plays boundedness such as urban.

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It seems to me that the difficulty analysts and commentators have had specifying/understanding the impact of digitization on cities – indeed, on multiple configurations – essentially results from two analytic flaws. One of these (especially evident in the U.S.) confines interpretation to a technological reading of the technical capabilities of digital technology. This is fine for engineers. But such a reading becomes problematic when we want to understand how these technologies interact with social conditions, notably place. A purely technological reading of technical capabilities of digital technology inevitably leads one to a place that is a non-place, where we can announce with certainty the neutralizing of many of the configurations marked by physicality and place-boundedness, such as the urban.²

The second flaw, I would argue, is a continuing reliance on analytical categories that were developed under other spatial and historical conditions; that is, conditions preceding the current digital era. Thus the tendency is to conceive of the digital as simply and exclusively digital and the non-digital (whether represented in terms of the physical/material or the actual, all problematic though common conceptions) as simply and exclusively that, non-digital. These either/or categorizations filter out the possibility of mediating conditions, thereby precluding a more complex reading of the impact of digitization on material and place-bound conditions.

An alternative categorization would capture imbrications between the digital and the non-digital. Let me illustrate this using the case of finance. Finance is certainly a highly digitized activity; yet it cannot be thought of as exclusively digital. To have electronic financial markets and digitized financial

Another consequence of this type of reading is to assume that a new technology will just totally replace all older technologies that are less efficient, or slower, or less accurate. We know that technology is best at what it does. For a variety of critical examinations of the tendency toward technological determinism in much of the social sciences today, see the special issue of *Current Sociology* on "The Social World in the 21st Century: Ambient Legacies and Rising Challenges of Technologies," ed. Judy Whitman, vol. 61, no. 1, March 2013.

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So, the first issue is to if you look only at the kind of technological implications of a technology then without looking into the other social or cultural aspects, then you do not get a kind of an important insight into that. The second flow, she argues is the continuing reliance on an analytical category that were developed under the spatial. So, for example, she talks about how to look at digital is only as digital and non-digital, without really understanding that any correspondence between these two things.

For example, in the previous scheme of things, you will not really try to understand how for example your identity or subjectivity is being transformed through the platform of digitization. In the contemporary times, such arguments are extremely important.

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announce with certainty the neutralizing of many of the configurations marked by physicality and place-boundedness, such as the urban.²

The second flaw, I would argue, is a continuing reliance on analytical categories that were developed under other spatial and historical conditions, that is, conditions preceding the current digital era. Thus the tendency is to conceive of the digital as simply and exclusively digital and the non-digital (whether represented in terms of the physical/material or the actual, all problematic though common conceptions) as simply and exclusively that, non-digital. These either/or categorizations filter out the possibility of mediating conditions, thereby precluding a more complex reading of the impact of digitization on material and place-bound conditions.

An alternative categorization would capture the imbrications between the digital and the non-digital. Let me illustrate this using the case of finance. Finance is certainly a highly digitized activity; yet it cannot be thought of as exclusively digital. To have electronic financial markets and digitized financial instruments involves enormous amounts of material, not to mention human talent (which has its own type of physicality). This material includes conventional infrastructure, buildings, airports, and so on. Much of this material is, then, inflected by the digital. Conversely, much of what takes place in cyberspace is deeply inflected by the cultures, the material practices, the imaginaries, that take place outside cyberspace. Much, though not all, of what we think of when it comes to cyberspace would lack any meaning or referents if we were to exclude the world outside cyberspace. In brief, digital space and digitization are not exclusive conditions that stand outside the non-digital. Digital space is embedded in the larger societal, cultural, subjective, economic, imaginary structures of lived experience and the systems within which we exist and operate.³

Please see "Digital Networks and Power," M. Featherstone and

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Another consequence of this type of reasoning is to assume that a new technology will go on to replace all older technologies that are less efficient, or slower, at executing the tasks the new technology is best at. We know that historically this is not the case. For a variety of critical examinations of the tendency towards technological determinism in much of the social sciences today, see the special issue of *Current Sociology* on "The Social World in the 21st Century: Ambivalent Legacies and Rising Challenges of Technology," ed. Juss Wijnhoven, vol. 55, no. 3 (May 2007).



Now, an alternative categorization would capture, so now, she puts forward her argument that how to make sense of the city in the context of globalization, is to would capture the implications between the digital and the non-digital, let me illustrate this using the case of finance. So, finance is certainly highly digitized activity, yet it cannot be thought of as exclusively digital, because to a large extent you require the financial aspect or to have a kind of a material effect because when a company decides to construct its headquarter or to buy real estate property or buy equipment you see that this finance actually gets a kind of a concrete form.

So, finance while we say that it is all everything is online transaction and with a click, you will be able to control the flow of money, which runs into billions of dollars or euros, but still, it has this kind of a material aspect. Obversely, much of what takes place in cyberspace is deeply inflected by cultures, material practices, the imaginaries that take place outside cyberspace.

So, basically, she being a social scientist is arguing or she is very strongly urging you to look at the influence and reciprocity, that is why she is using the term implications, a mutual influence between the digital and non-digital world.

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with the loss of key components of the national state's formal authority over the national scale, other scales gain strategic importance. Most especially among these are sub-national scales such as the global city, and supra-national scales such as global markets or regional trading zones. Older hierarchies of scale (emerging in the historical context of the ascendancy of the nation-state), which continue to operate, are typically organized in terms of institutional size from the international, down to the national, the regional, the urban, down to the local. Today's re-scaling cuts across institutional size and, through policies such as deregulation and privatization, cuts across the institutional encasements of territory produced by the formation of national states. This does not mean that the old hierarchies disappear, but rather that re-scalings emerge alongside the old ones, and that they can often trump the latter.

These transformations which continue to entail complex imbrications of the digital and non-digital and between the global and the non-global, can be captured in a variety of instances. For example, much of what we might still experience as the "local" (an office building or a house or an institution right there in our neighborhood or downtown) actually is something I would rather think of as a "microenvironment with global span" insofar as it is deeply inter-networked. Such a microenvironment is in many senses a localized entity, something that can be experienced as local, immediate, proximate and hence captured in topographic representations. It is a sited materiality. But it is also part of global digital networks which give it immediate far-flung span. To continue to think of this as simply local is neither useful nor adequate. More importantly, the juxtaposition of a sited materiality and a global span,



The complex implications between digital as soon as the global and the non-digital brings with the destabilizing of the older hierarchies of scale and often dramatic rescaling. So, your understanding about your conventional understanding of scales you have a you have the locality, then you have the regional then you have sub regional and at the lower level, then you have the national one, then you have the international. So, these kind of conventional scales of geographies are now can now significantly altered or significantly disturbed.

With the loss of key components of the Nationals, states formal authority over the national scale, other scales gain strategic importance and this is again, a point that we discussed, to what extent nation-states have the kind of a conventional authority over its territory, we discussed it several times and we are also going to discuss it when we bring up a discussion by Ulrich Beck, the kind of conventional authority that nation-states had exerted on its own its geography on its soil is significantly altered.

We have free economic zones, the boundaries are porous and you want more and more foreign investment to come and invest in your place, your legal system has been tweaked, your policies have been tweaked significantly, so that whole idea is significantly changed. Especially among these are sub national scales, such as the global city, the supranational scales, such as global markets and regional trading zones.

So, she is talking about the necessity to have a completely new imagination about the scales. Today's rescalings are cut across institutional size and through policies such as deregulation, privatization, cut across the institutional encasements of territory produced by formation of national states. This does not mean that the old hierarchies disappear, but rather, that rescaling emerges alongside old ones and that they can often trump the latter.

So, I hope you remember that the very first lecture on this chapter on spatiality, we discussed Swapna Banerjee's argument about how this new kind of connection between global capital and geography it raises quite a lot of very important questions about the role of the state government and how new spatialities becomes important. Now, these transformations which continue to entail complex imbrications of the digital and non-digital and between the global and the non-global can be captured in a variety of instances.

For example, much of what we might still experience as the local and official office building or a house or an institution right there in our neighbourhood or downtown, actually it is something I would rather think as a micro environment with global span, it is very important maybe a term that you need to keep it in mind. It is a micro environment with a global span, you can think of an educational institution, you can think of a restaurant, you can think of a shop.

Now, this shop could be a local shop in your immediate neighbourhood, but the shop also is representative or resource, it is a site through which the global flows actually take place. It is a sited materiality. So, such a micro environment is in many senses a localized entity, something that can be experienced as local, immediate, proximate and hence, captured in topographic representation. It is a sited materiality. But it is also a part of a global digital networks, which gives immediate far-flung span and to continue to think of this as simply local is neither useful nor adequate.

So, I think we know that, that a shop in front of you, a shop in your neighbourhood, a boutique in your neighbourhood, or a showroom that sells you a lot of new electronic gadgets, these are all part of both the sited materiality as well as the digitized world.

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part of global digital networks which give it immediate far-flung span. To continue to think of this as simply local is neither useful nor adequate. More importantly, the juxtaposition of a sited materiality and a global span, captures the imbrication of the digital in the non-digital and illustrates the inadequacy of a purely technological reading of the technical capacities of digitization. It also illustrates the inadequacy of a purely topographical reading.

A second example is the bundle of conditions and dynamics that marks the model of the global city. Just to single out one key dynamic: the more globalized and digitized the operations of firms and markets, the more their central management and coordination functions (and the requisite material structures) become strategic. It is precisely because of digitization that simultaneous worldwide dispersal of operations (whether factories, offices, or service outlets) and system integration can be achieved. And it is precisely this combination which raises the importance of central functions. Global cities are strategic sites for the combination of resources necessary for the production of these central functions.⁴

Much of what is liquefied and circulates in digital networks and is marked by hyper-mobility, remains physical in some of its components. Take, for example, real estate. Financial services firms have invented instruments that liquefy real estate, thereby facilitating investment and circulation of these instruments in global markets. Yet, part of what constitutes real estate remains very physical. At the same time, however, that which remains physical has been transformed by the fact that it is represented by highly liquid instruments that can circulate in global markets. It may look the same, it may involve the same bricks and mortar, it may be new or old, but it is a transformed entity.

We have difficulty capturing this multi-valence through our conventional

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These economic global city functions are to be distinguished from political global city functions, which might include the politics of contestation by formal and informal political actors enabled by these economic functions. This particular form of political global city functions is, then, in a dialectical relation (both enabled and in opposition) to the economic functions. See S. Sassen, 'New Frontiers Facing Urban Sociology', *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 51, no. 1 (January/March 2000), pp. 149-168.



A second example is a bundle of conditions and dynamics that marks the model of global city. Just to single out one key dynamic, the more globalized and digitized operations of firms and markets, the more their central management and coordination functions and their requisite material structures becoming strategic. This is exactly something that we discussed in the previous class when she revised her argument in the second verse, second edition of her book 'The Global City'.

It is precisely because of digitization that simultaneous worldwide dispersal of operations, whether factories, offices or service outage and systems integration can be achieved. And this is precisely this combination which raises the importance of central functions, global cities are strategic sites for the combination of resources necessary for the production of these central functions, we discussed that how many of these companies or firms are now you have this Herculean task of coordinating the central functions and which many of them outsource. So, this global city becomes the material site in which these processes actually take place.

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cities are strategic sites for the combination of resources necessary for the production of these central functions.⁴

Much of what is liquefied and circulates in digital networks and is marked by hyper-mobility, remains physical in some of its components. Take, for example, real estate. Financial services firms have invented instruments that liquefy real estate, thereby facilitating investment and circulation of these instruments in global markets. Yet, part of what constitutes real estate remains very physical. At the same time, however, that which remains physical has been transformed by the fact that it is represented by highly liquid instruments that can circulate in global markets. It may look the same, it may involve the same bricks and mortar, it may be new or old, but it is a transformed entity.

We have difficulty capturing this multi-valence through our conventional categories: if it is physical, it is physical; and if it is digital, it is digital. In fact, the partial representation of real estate through liquid financial instruments produces a complex imbrication of the material and the de-materialized moments of that which we continue to call real estate. And it is precisely because of the digital capabilities of the economic sectors represented in global cities that the massive concentrations of material resources in these cities exist and keep expanding.

Hyper-mobility and de-materialization are usually seen as mere functions of the new technologies. This understanding erases the fact that it takes multiple material conditions to achieve this outcome and that it takes social networks not only digital ones.⁵

Once we recognize that the hyper-mobility of the instrument, or the de-materialization of the actual piece of real estate, had to be produced, we introduce the imbrication of the material and the non-material. It takes capital

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See e.g. Linda Garcia, 'The Architecture of Global Networking Technologies', in S. Sassen (ed.), *Global Networks, Global Cities* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 149-168.



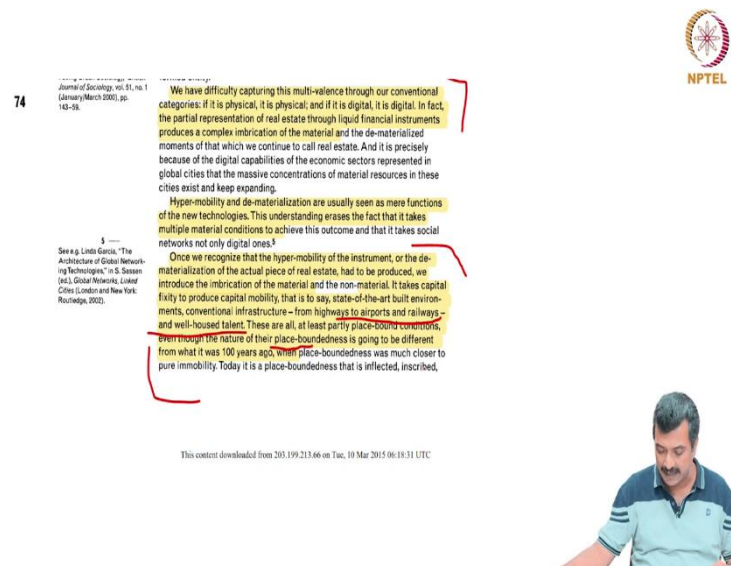
Now, much of what is liquefied and circulated in digital network and is marked by hypermobility remain physical in some of its components. Take for example, I think

we, you can easily understand that real estate is about physicality, it is about land, it is about physical structures, it is about how these physical structures are important. Yet, part of what constitutes real estate remains very physical, while quite a lot of other things are about investment, money and legal title and other things.

Now, we have difficulty capturing this multi valence through our conventional categories. If it is physical, it is physical and if it is digital, it is digital. So, she says that this conventional approach of looking at these two things as compartments or looking at these two things as binaries that the physical and digital are completely different, that perspective or that framework no longer works, that is an emphatic point.

In fact, the partial representation of real estate through liquid financial instruments produces a complex simplification of the material and the de-materialized moments in which we continue to call real estate.

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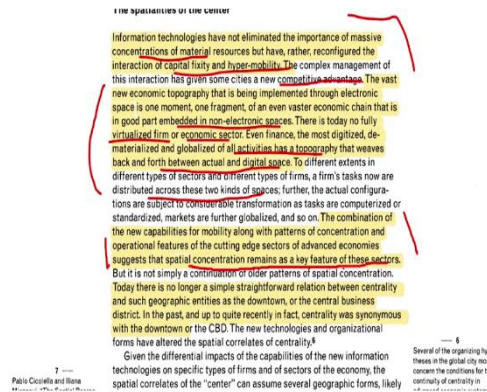


Now, hypermobility and the materialization are usually seen as mere functions of the new technologies. This understanding erases the fact that it takes multiple material conditions to achieve this outcome and it takes social networks not only digital ones. So, once we recognize that hypermobility of an instrument, of the instrument or de-materialization of the actual piece of real estate, had to be produced, we introduce the imbrication of the material and the nonmaterial.

It takes capital fixity to produce capital mobility, that is to say state of the art-built environment conventional infrastructure from the highways to the airports and railways and well-housed talent, these are all at least partly placed around place bound conditions, even though the nature of their place boundedness is going to be different from what it was 100 years ago.

So, again, the same argument that the physicality of that even when you talk about networks, you talk about spaces of flows, you talk about financial transactions in digitized form, but at the end, they need to adopt certain kinds of a material character. So, conventional infrastructure should be there, highway should be there, office spaces must be there, meeting places must be there, high end living spaces must be there, entertainment facilities there. So, these material conditions are important.

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Today, it is a place boundedness that is inflicted, inscribed by the hypermobility of some of its components/products/outcomes. So, she is repeatedly asking you to look at implication between the digital and non-digital. ‘The spatialities of the Centre’ another section. “Information technologies has not eliminated the importance of massive concentrations of material resources, but have rather reconfigured the interaction of capital fixity and hypermobility. The complex management of this interaction has given some clarity some city's new competitive advantage”.

So, the very peculiar connection between capital fixity and hypermobility, how that this particular combination has given rise to novel forms of economic activities and novel forms of relevance to the very idea of city, that is what she is looking at. The vast new economic topography that is being implemented through electronic spaces, one moment, one fragment and even vaster economic chain that is in good part embedded in non-electronic spaces.

There is today no fully virtualized firm or economic sector obviously, even when we say that everything is virtual, but still you simply do not run anything completely virtual, absolutely virtually, because you require human beings, human beings are real people and real people require real spaces to occupy. So, that argument has to be tempered.

Even finance the most digitized, de-materialized and globalized of all activities as a topography that weaves back and forth between the actual and digital space. The different extent in different types of sectors and different types of firms, firms’ tasks now are distributed across these two kinds of spaces. The combination of the new capabilities of mobility along with patterns of concentration and operational features of the cutting-edge sectors of advanced economies suggests that the spatial concentration remains a key feature of these sectors.

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this interaction has given some cities a new competitive advantage. The vast new economic topography that is being implemented through electronic space is one moment, one fragment, of an even vaster economic chain that is in good part embedded in non-electronic spaces. There is today no fully virtualized firm or economic sector. Even finance, the most digitized, dematerialized and globalized of all activities has a topography that weaves back and forth between actual and digital space. To different extents in different types of sectors and different types of firms, a firm's tasks now are distributed across these two kinds of spaces; further, the actual configurations are subject to considerable transformation as tasks are computerized or standardized, markets are further globalized, and so on. The combination of the new capabilities for mobility along with patterns of concentration and operational features of the cutting edge sectors of advanced economies suggests that spatial concentration remains as a key feature of these sectors. But it is not simply a continuation or older patterns of spatial concentration. Today there is no longer a simple straightforward relation between centrality and such geographic entities as the downtown, or the central business district. In the past, and up to quite recently in fact, centrality was synonymous with the downtown or the CBD. The new technologies and organizational forms have altered the spatial correlates of centrality.⁷

Given the differential impacts and capabilities of the new information technologies on specific types of firms and of sectors of the economy, the spatial correlates of the "center" can assume several geographic forms, likely to be operating simultaneously at the macro level. Thus the center can be the CBD, as it still is largely for some of the leading sectors, notably finance, or an alternative form of CBD, such as Silicon Valley. Yet even as the CBD in major international business centers remains a strategic site for the leading

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Pablo Ciccioli and Hans Migonzi, "The Spatial Reorganization of Buenos Aires," in *Global Networks, Linked Cities*, Susan S. Fairhead, The City Builders (Lawrence, Kansas: Kansas University Press, 2001); David Harvey, *Revolutions and*

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Several of the organizing hypotheses in the global city model concern the conditions for the centrality of centrality in advanced economic systems in the face of major new organizational forms and technologies that maximize the possibility for geographic dispersal. See new "Introduction" in the updated edition of *The Global City* (2001). For a variety of perspectives see, e.g., J. Landrew, R. May, T. Spector and P. Zeitlin (eds.), *Le Monde Global* (Paris: La Librairie de la Tour d'Argent, Editions de l'Aube, 1998); Jan Solomon, "Telecommunications, Cities and Technological Opportunities," *The Annals of Regional Science*, vol. 30, no. 1 (1996), pp. 75-90.

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E.g. Peter Marcuse and Ronald van Kempen, *Globalizing Cities: A New Spatial Order?* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).



But it is not simply a continuation of older patterns of spatial concentration. So, this is the key point that even while the spatial concentration remains important, why is that a city like London or Tokyo or Hong Kong or Mumbai is important? It is not because traditionally they have been important, but also because or more importantly, they have been able to successfully integrate into the new global processes.

Today, there is no longer a simple straightforward relation between centrality and such geographic entities such as downtown or the central business district. What she calls it as CBD. In the past and after quite recently, in fact, centrality was synonymous with the downtown or the CBD. So, new technologies and organizational forms have altered the spatial correlates of centrality, every huge city has this central business district where all the important firms are located.

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operational features of the cutting edge sectors of advanced economies suggests that spatial concentration remains as a key feature of these sectors. But it is not simply a continuation or older patterns of spatial concentration. Today there is no longer a simple straightforward relation between centrality and such geographic entities as the downtown, or the central business district. In the past, and up to quite recently in fact, centrality was synonymous with the downtown or the CBD. The new technologies and organizational forms have altered the spatial correlates of centrality.⁷

Given the differential impacts and capabilities of the new information technologies on specific types of firms and of sectors of the economy, the spatial correlates of the "center" can assume several geographic forms, likely to be operating simultaneously at the macro level. Thus the center can be the CBD, as it still is largely for some of the leading sectors, notably finance, or an alternative form of CBD, such as Silicon Valley. Yet even as the CBD in major international business centers remains a strategic site for the leading industries, it is one profoundly reconfigured by technological and economic change.⁸ Further, there are often sharp differences in the patterns assumed by this reconfiguring of the central city in different parts of the world.⁹

Second, the center can extend into a metropolitan area in the form of a grid of nodes of intense business activity. One might ask whether a spatial organization characterized by dense strategic nodes spread over a broader region does in fact constitute a new form of organizing the territory of the "center," rather than, as in the more conventional view, an instance of suburbanization or geographic dispersal. Insofar as these various nodes are articulated through digital networks, they represent a new geographic correlate of the most advanced type of "center." This is a partly de-territorialized space of centrality.¹⁰

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This view was outlined in the formation of a transnational "transnational" model.

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Pablo Ciccioli and Hans Migonzi, "The Spatial Reorganization of Buenos Aires," in *Global Networks, Linked Cities*, Susan S. Fairhead, The City Builders (Lawrence, Kansas: Kansas University Press, 2001); David Harvey, *Revolutions and*

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This regional grid of nodes represents, in my analysis, a reconstruction of the concept of region. Further, it should not be confused with the suburbanization of economic activity. I conceive of it as a space of centrality partly located in older socio-economic geographies, such as that of the subject or the larger metropolitan region, yet as distinct precisely because it is a



So, this the centre can be the CBD, as is still in largely if for some of the leading sectors, not only finance or an alternative forms CBD such as Silicon Valley. Even as the CBD in major international business centres remain a strategic site for the leading industries, it is only profoundly reconfigured by the technological and economic change. Further, there are often

sharp differences in the patterns assumed by this reconfiguration of the central city in different parts of the world.

Second, the centre can extend to the metropolitan area in a form of a grid of nodes of intense business activity, one might ask whether a spatial organization characterized by dense strategic nodes, spread over a broader region does in fact, constitute the new forms of organizing the territory of the centre rather than has in the more conventional view, an instance of suburbanization or geographic dispersal.

In so far as these various nodes are articulated through digital networks, they represent the new geographic correlates of the most advanced type of the centre, this is partially de-territorialized space of centrality. So, she is asking us to look at the new relevance of the whole idea of central business district as it has been usually understood and what is its relevance with respect to the rest of the city and the rest of the world.

So, they retain its relevance with respect to the rest of the city, but also more importantly, these central business districts are also becoming more than important with respect to the larger global economic processes as well.

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Third, we are seeing the formation of trans-territorial "centre" constituting intense economic transactions of the network of global cities, these transactions take place partially in digital space and partially through conditional transport and travel. The result is a multiplication of often highly specialized circuits connecting sets of cities.

So, we know that different cities as we mentioned in the previous class, different cities are connected, Sassen's herself argues that they need to be seen as networked urban areas, urban centres, urban spaces, rather than looking at them as individual cities. So, she elaborates that.

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industry operates in such spaces. The tension between digital and actual space is complex and varies among different types of economic sectors.



What does contextuality mean in this setting?

These networked sub-economies operating partly in actual space and partly in globe-spanning digital space cannot easily be contextualized in terms of their surroundings. Nor can the individual firms and markets. The orientation of this type of sub-economy simultaneously towards itself and towards the global. The intensity of internal transactions in such a sub-economy (whether global finance or cutting edge high-tech sectors) is such that it overrides all considerations of the broader locality or urban area within which it exists.

On another, larger scale, in my research on global cities I found rather clearly that these sub-economies develop a stronger orientation towards the global markets than to their hinterlands. Thereby they override a key proposition in the urban systems literature, to wit, that cities and urban systems integrate and articulate national territory. This may have been the case during the period when mass manufacturing and mass consumption were the dominant growth machines in developed economies and thrived on national economic processes. Today, the ascendance of digitized, globalized, dematerialized sectors such as finance, has diluted that articulation with the larger national economy and the immediate hinterland.

The articulation of these sub-economies with other zones and sectors in their immediate socio-spatial surroundings are of a special sort. There are the various highly priced services that cater to the workforce, from up-scale restaurants and hotels to luxury shops and cultural institutions, typically part of the socio-spatial order of these new sub-economies. But there are also



So, what does contextuality means in this setting? These networks, sub economies operating partly in active space and partly in global spanning digital space cannot easily be contextualized in terms of their surroundings. So, what do we mean by context in this whole thing, because usually you talk about context in the conventional sense as its immediate, geographic, historical, social, political surroundings, you try to situate a place in the conventional social sense.

Now, this contextualization, which was part of our social science training now requires a completely different type of skill, complete different kind of imagination, how do you contextualize it, because for example, a religious institution, you usually try to understand, you try to contextualize that particular institution looking at the history, looking into the economy looking into the social profile of the people who attempt to that. So, that is how you make sense of that particular religious institution. But now, that is no longer the case.

So, the context of a particular religious institution, you will not understand its complete sense only by looking it is its immediate context, because that could be a part of a transnational religious group, which is immersed somewhere else and this could be just a part of that, this could be just a branch of that. So, you see that the context assumes completely different meaning when you talk about globalization. So, the network sub economies operating partly in actual spaces and partly global spanning digital spaces cannot easily be contextualized in terms of their surroundings, nor can the individual firms and markets.


The orientation of this type of sub economy simultaneously towards itself and towards the global, the intensity of internal transactions in such sub economy. She is talking about that. On another larger scale, in my research on global cities, I found rather clearly that these sub economies develop a stronger orientation towards the global market than to their hinterlands. Thereby, they override a key proposition in the urban system literature, to which those cities and urban systems integrate and articulate national territory is very, very important point, because to what extent a particular part of the urban city is integrated to the rest of the country or is it more integrated to the rest of the country or is it more integrated to places outside the nation state.

It again goes against the conventional wisdom when you understand the rural and urban as a part of a continuum and it all constituting to a larger national geography, national economy, national imagination and that sense of integration is being called into question. So, this may

have been the case during the period when mass manufacturing and mass consumption were the dominant growth machines in developed economies and thrived in national economies.

Today, the ascendance of a digitized globalized de-materialized sector, such as finance has diluted that articulation with the larger national economy and immediate hinterland. So, many of these cities or part of the cities have very little to do to the hinterlands of that particular society, but we may have much stronger connections with the larger the world outside.

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various low-priced services that cater to the firms and to the households of the workers and which rarely "look" like they are part of the advanced corporate economy. The demand by firms and households for these services actually links two worlds that we think of as radically distinct. It is particularly a third instance that concerns me here, the large portions of the urban surrounding that have little connection to these world-market oriented sub-economies, even though physically proximate. It is these that engender a question about context and its meaning when it comes to these sub-economies.

What then is the "context," the local, here? The new networked sub-economy occupies a strategic geography, partly de-territorialized, that cuts across borders and connects a variety of points on the globe. It occupies only a fraction of its "local" setting, its boundaries are not those of the city where it is partly located, nor those of the neighbourhood. This sub-economy interfaces the intensity of the vast concentration of every material resources it needs when it hits the ground and the fact of its global span or cross-border geography. Its interlocutor is not the surrounding, the context, but the fact of the global.

I am not sure what this tearing away of the context and its replacement with the fact of the global could mean for urban practice and theory. The strategic operation is not the search for a connection with the "surroundings," the context. It is, rather, installation in a strategic cross-border geography constituted through multiple "locals." In the case of the economy I see a rescaling: old hierarchies - local, regional, national, global - do not hold. Going



So, what then is the context the local here, the new network sub economy occupies a strategic geography, partly de-territorialized that cuts across borders and connects a variety of points on the globe, so it is no longer contained within the boundaries of the nation-state, it occupies only a fraction of its local setting, its boundaries are not those of the city where it is partially located nor those of the neighbourhood.

This sub economy interferes in the intensity of the vast concentrations of every material resources it needs, when it hits the ground and the fact of its global span or global cross border geography, its interlocutor is not the surrounding the context but the fact of the global. So, to what extent a particular local is conversing or interacting or transacting with its immediate context or its immediate neighbours is very, very problematic.

Because many a times if you have much thicker, much stronger connections with the globe, with the global networks outside. I am not sure what is tearing away of the context and its replacement with the fact of the global could mean for the urban practice and theory. The strategic operation is not the search for a connection with the surroundings in the context, it is rather installation in a strategic cross border geography constituting through the multiple locals.

So, this multiple local. You are you are dealing with these locals in completely different sense, because your local, your immediate context does not give you any assured set of ideas unlike what we premised in the previous times. In case of the economy, I see rescaling all hierarchies that is local regional, national, global, do not hold.

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to the next scale in terms of size is no longer how integration is achieved. The local now transects directly with the global, the global instills itself in the local and the global is itself constituted through a multiplicity of local situations.

In conclusion

The meanings and roles of architecture and planning centered in older traditions of permanence are irrevocably destabilized in today's complex cities—that is, cities marked by digital networks, acceleration, massive infrastructures for connectivity and growing estrangement. Those older meanings do not disappear, they remain important. But they cannot address comfortably these newer meanings.

There are, clearly, multiple ways of positing the challenges facing architecture and planning as practice and as theorization today. In emphasizing the crucial place of cities for architecture, I construct a problematic that is not only positioned but also, perhaps inevitably, partial. It is different from that of neo-traditionalist architects who are also concerned about the current urban condition. And it is different from a problematic focused on how current conditions are changing the profession and its opportunities, or, if critical, one which centers its critical stance in questions of the growing distance between the winners and the losers in the profession.

Architecture and urbanism: further, used to confront the messiness of



So, to going to the next scale in terms of the size is no longer how integration is achieved. he local now transects directly with the global and the global instance itself in the local and the global is itself constituted through a multiplicity of local situations. I think you maybe need to underline this particular section and then read more carefully. The local now transects directly with the global, the global instils itself in the local and the global is itself constituted through the multiplicity of local situation.

So, the whole taken for granted ideas about what is local and what is global is completely disturbed, is it is completely disoriented, the global without the local you simply do not have a global, because a global maybe you can say as she says, it is a multiplicity of local situations and you cannot have a local which is disconnected from the global.

So, that you can see it in consumption, you can see it in identities, for example, you look at how an idea like feminism and an educated woman's idea about her own freedom, her own right over her own body, her own right over her own sexuality, her own reproduction, these ideas are not simply that the person gets only from her own surrounding it is a part of a much larger discourse or even religiosity for that matter or new ideas. So, nothing is coming and getting contained only within a limited geographic area.

So, that is why I keep repeatedly saying that globalization is happening through us, we are a party to that, we are not merely witnessing globalization, but we are actively facilitating globalization, we are party to that, we are a part of that, we contribute equally into that, because even when we say something about local, we are looking at the whole idea of local exchange, even starting from the material conditions, starting from the consumption pattern, starting from the kind of ideas that we subscribe to, starting from the idea of your own identity, who you are, what kind of possibilities that you have, what kind of options that you have, what kind of possibilities for your individual experiences, all these things are no longer disconnected from the global discourses.

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meanings do not disappear, they remain important. But they cannot assure comfortably these newer meanings.

There are, clearly, multiple ways of posing the challenges facing architecture and planning as practice and as theorization today. In emphasizing the crucial place of cities for architecture, I construct a problematic that is not only positioned but also, perhaps inevitably, partial. It is different from that of neo-traditionalist architects who are also concerned about the current urban condition. And it is different from a problematic focused on how current conditions are changing the profession and its opportunities, or, if critical, one which centers its critical stance in questions of the growing distance between the winners and the losers in the profession.

Architecture and planning, further, need to confront the massiveness of the urban experience, the overwhelming presence of massive architectures and massive infrastructures in today's cities, and the overwhelming logic of utility that organizes much of the investments in cities. At the same time, these cities are full of underused spaces, often characterized more by past, gone, meanings than current meaning. These spaces are part of the interiority of a city yet lie outside its organizing utility-driven logics and spatial frames. This opens up a critical problematic about the current urban condition in ways that take it beyond the notions of high-tech architecture, virtual spaces, **simulacra**, theme parks. All of the latter are too easy.

This calls for urbanists able to navigate multiple forms of knowledge and introduce the possibility of an architectural practice located in spaces – such as intersections of multiple transport and communication networks – where the naked eye or the engineer's imagination sees no shape, no possibility of a form, pure infrastructure and utility. Further, how do we detect the possible architectures of spaces that are construed as empty silences, non-existences, for architectural practices centered in permanence.



So, she also gives the kind of a conclusion which is an overall argument. So, for example, she says this calls for the urbanists to navigate multiple forms of knowledge and introduce the possibility of an architectural practice located in space such as intersection, so multiple transport and communication network where the naked eye of the engineer's imagination sees no shape, no possibility. Read that, the central argument is the need to go beyond these binaries of digital and physical.

And the argument about that the global city and especially the part of the global city is assuming very different functions. Cities have been so important, so prominent from the time being, but the role played by the cities or things that defined the salience or importance of the cities are undergoing significant transformations and they are becoming relevant.

Again, not the whole city but part of that city is redefining itself because they are increasingly becoming a part of a larger global network. So, this is the major argument of Saskia Sassen. Now, let us stop here and we will start with the Manual Castells from tomorrow onwards. So, see you then. Thank you.