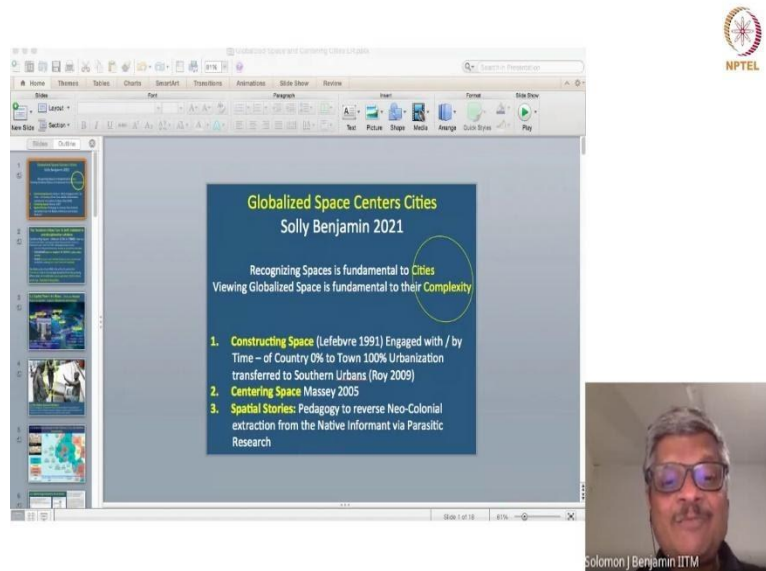


Globalization: Theoretical Perspectives
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Lecture 34
Globalized Space Centers Cities - Solly Benjamin

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So, welcome everyone. Today we are going to talk about how if we think about globalization, what has that done to the way we think about space and through both those terms, the main argument is that they sort of bring cities to maybe the center stage, or at least on the table for discussion. The two kinds of parts of this argument, and I will not get too much into the rhetoric or the literature.

But hopefully, the basic concepts will be clear, one is that once we recognize space then that becomes a fundamental kind of step to thinking about cities. The opposite of this is that cities, yes, they are always there, but they are not taken seriously and treated as a very passive kind of site, stage to be acted upon.

The second point is that when we think about globalized space, that becomes fundamental to understand the complexities of cities. And the complexity is not just in terms of cities having more complicated factors and in a kind of econometric way, but rather talking about political agency and as I show in some of the slides that trying to simplify things is often one of the important reasons why you start to have a whole set of interventions with very violent kind of outcomes. So, there is a kind of a danger in simplicity, although one thinks that that is going to kind of reveal what the problem is.

Now, I am going to do this in three ways, and we will do it in two sessions. So, the first part, which I am going to go through some basic concepts in urban studies, which have become very important

recently, the idea of how space gets constructed and especially with regard to giving it the kind of substance over what you would have already talked about in earlier sessions, with regard to time. So, and how this kind of emphasis on space, the construction of space, starts getting worked into what is called thinking about cities in the south, which came to prominence by a scholar in one of her major works Ananya Roy in 2009. This kind of centering of space, however, has an earlier history in critical geography. By critical geography, I am talking about human geography, which centers power at the center of analysis.

So, it looks at the way power is differentiated, and therefore has to be taken in terms of not just a meta level construction, and that is also possible and often done, but really in terms of what happens to people in the kind of agencies they have, do they get fractured? Are they able to develop counter? Do they have their own lives? So, those kinds of issues, that when we start to center space.

The third part is both the kind of way to think about how we research cities, and also a way of theory building. And you would see that I have put it in the context of not just as a kind of a neutral methodology, but rather to address an issue which has come up in the last, I would say, decade especially and in urban studies over the last 5 years, where there is a crisis of how knowledge is produced, where usually the assumption is that you have western theory entering the south or the northern theory entering the south, to then have southern actors and researchers becoming and reduced to being native informants. So, this kind of parasitic research is not just, there is an ethical issue about it, but also it leads to very poor understanding of cities and, as I wanted to mention, a kind of simplicity, which also then justifies very well, very violent outcomes. So, I will give you examples of these.

Now, the first thing, first set of ideas and this is just to give you a sense, one of the main people who talked about constructing space is the French geographer, researcher, sociologist, it is difficult to put him in a particular box, was Lefebvre. And he developed this very famous triad where space is constituted out of its physical dimensions, its perceived quality, these are something that you can measure, it has got a definitive edge and therefore has a kind of obvious kind of rationality, you can say this room is 10 feet by 10 feet, or it is a very small room, or it is a big room if you know, 100 feet by 100 feet. It has got a particular kind of characteristics of so many windows. So, there is a kind of physical dimensioning about it, which people can agree and measure, cart out. The second one is how that same space gets conceived and we are really concerned about these two other points, conceived space and lived space. In this particular way, we think about how space becomes important for cities and especially globalised spaces.

So, on ~conceived space, that same room is portrayed by people who think, people who are seen to be as experts, these can be people who can be planners, they can be doing policy, economic policies, they can be people who define what is to be surveyed, what is not to be surveyed. So that same room, whether it is 10 feet by 10 feet or 100 feet by 100 feet, is defined whether it is adequate or not for a particular function, which is again defined by experts.

So, in a sense, imagine that if you are in a room that you have been living in, and that is the third part of the triad, where you are living in a particular place, you use it in a particular way based on the climate, based on what you are, if you are having a small shop, if you are having a place to rent out. It is the second part, the conceived place, where experts who define whether that it is

legitimate or illegitimate. It can also they can say that, well this is actually a room which is meant to be a living room, whereas as a lived space, it might be invested with the whole range of meanings and symbolisms and what people have come to inhabit that space as.

So, in a sense, what Lefebvre is doing, and this came about in the 1960s, especially towards the end of the 60s, where there were huge uprisings in Paris and other places, as well as a history of urban renewal, very violent, urban, rural people were being evicted, what he wanted to do was to give people a framework, especially students, in the way they could think about the politics of planning.

So, when planning was given by experts on a way that it was good for life, it was good for everyone, he wanted to show that no, the space that is thought about a frame by the planning is actually constituted around these three parts and especially conceived and lived other ones that one has to take sort of seriously in trying to understand what kind of a process is being played out and who is at the receiving end, who is dominating. So what Lefebvre was doing through this was really trying to unpack power structures. And he felt that the kind of politics of cities, as a Marxist, was, it had to move beyond just factories and shop flows and industrial production, to look at the city itself, where capitalism was being played out and how it was constructing space to extract surpluses.

One of the things in thinking about cities, I have mentioned in the lower part of the slide is where he saw the process of cities. Here, he had a very definitive idea that there was a kind of linear trajectory, there was earlier life in the country which was centered around the commons. But that was increasingly detached from all its kind of complex meanings, values to be commodified under the process of capitalism.

So, one of the key points in this kind of way of thinking was that as a place became urban, it moved from a situation of 0 percent urbanization from the country to the town, where it was 100 percent urbanized. And with this form of urban movement was also linked to special inequities in various forms. The way you can imagine this is that some parts of the city have very little infrastructure, almost no basic infrastructure, and then 100 meters away, you have another part under the neighbourhood, walled off, where you have everything.

So how, that is just one aspect of special inequities, but space can be also interpreted as we will talk later, is about political power, some people having the space to shape the administrative machinery on their behalf, at the cost of another group who do not have the space to shape a particular political and administrative machinery to act on their behalf.

So, in a sense, spatial inequities are not just the physical space, but it can be institutional, it can be a whole range of spaces, economic spaces. Now, why this is important is because, and I am particularly talking about Lefebvre's move of capital from, if you remember from the country to the town, is how he started to view, he initially and then scholars who built on his work, to think about modernity, and globalization and this is where we enter the first realm of globalization is to think about how capital moved from centres in New York, London, Paris, Tokyo, to other parts of the world.

And this kind of movement of capital was seen to be initially, and this is the literature coming from Saskia Sassen's famous work in 1991, *The Global City*. But later on, by 15 years later, a much larger exploration by people who are following her by 2005, thinking about the world city system, to be able to understand where surpluses were created, how they were extracted, how they were put into financial markets, and how London, New York, Singapore, Paris were in different parts of this global financial hierarchy.

The emphasis was, as you can see, in the middle of the slide, kind of, it seems like a downtown area, there is a multi-storey building and this is in Tunis, in Tunisia. The idea was that all cities will sort of have some sort of characteristics of looking like New York or London as they became entangled in this expansion of capital. So, capital is kind of moving from the north, north Europe, north America, going to various sites in what used to be called the second and the third world or the developing countries, they various kinds of ways that these are being described.

But you can imagine this that everywhere, there was kind of a homogenization of flows. And it is also seen that as infrastructures put in, you have this smooth flow of people, they all look the same. They ethnically might look different, but they all are wearing suits, they all got an iPhone of various types and they are moving between Tunisia, Paris, Milan involved in that circuits of capital, which obviously surpluses are going to the major centres.

This idea of obviously had some kind of problems, people started to question it. But it again comes back, around 2015, 10 years later from 2005, when there are ideas of planetary urbanization, and these set off a kind of debate, very simply put planetary urbanization is a concept, it is still very much in debate, where they say that using Lefebvre, the entire world, whether it is Antarctica, whether it is any other place, including Uttarakhand, which has now had the dam burst.

The fact that the dam is there, which burst because of the glaciers, and it releases its waters because it was generating electrical power, and therefore, quote unquote, what seems like pristine nature is actually no longer nature, it has already been capitalized. And the consequences are paid by the people who are in that path of the dam being broken. It is not really people who are getting the electricity from that thing. So, I am just giving you this as an example, because this is an example, but that is the idea. Now what is happening here is this kind of movement of capital is seemed to have all these consequences everywhere. And in a sense, turning these cities into centers, where if they have to survive, they have to really compete and go up the hierarchy.

So, the key idea in Saskia Sassen's and other people's work was this kind of sense of measuring to what extent do cities become more and more like New York and London. But that also means that if you are a city manager, as in many of these cases, people who are given that role, how do you restructure the city, so that you start looking like New York and London? So that you can capture a bit of the economic growth, which is floating above you at 35,000 feet, and hopefully, that plane is going to land, bringing in investors and therefore, being part of the leading flow of developing the country.

In 1995, the World Bank had a big report which talked about urban productivity, and it was particularly about this, how to what extent can you be connected to these global flows of capital and how do you restructure your city? Especially if you want to restructure it away from earlier

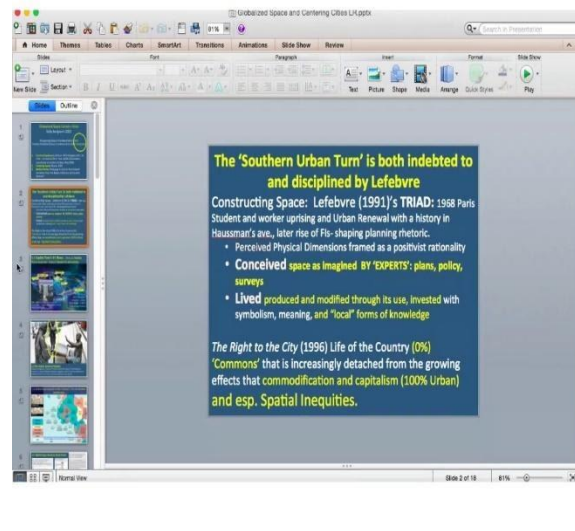
kind of ideas about basic needs. So, this is sort of one sort of framing of capital flows and globalization. There was a huge counter to this kind of an idea, because this kind of an idea gave a sense that you had earlier forms of commerce, here you can see a very interesting set of sculptures in Singapore which shows a Chettiar businessperson talking to a Chinese trader, and you can see he is counting the kind of business deals they have. And then, offset at the backdrop almost in a metaphorical way that there is this woman who is obviously suited in a more corporate contemporary way. So, this is almost kind of bringing in a kind of a sense of a movement of time, that reflects this kind of capital. So, it is very much centered around the modernity of capital which treats the cities as really recipients of this meta level change that is happening throughout the world.

Now, there were huge counters to this, and one of the major counters that started to happen was a book that got very popular called *Ordinary Cities*, by Jennifer Robinson. And she started to say that why should we follow this idea that everyone has to emulate the global cities for growth? Have not cities got their own set of ideas? Have not they got their own sort of set of histories?

And here, you can see a very interesting map which shows, and they have done this, you can go to the link, they have done this for different parts of the world, where they sort of play around with names like where did the names come from? So, Dakar is tamarind tree land of refuge. But this is not necessarily quote unquote, traditional, they tried to break that also. So, they said, Monrovia is Liberia named after US President James Monroe. So, you kind of get a sense of the political economy of how that might have happened. And the idea is this that the way countries and cities have come up, have a complex set of histories and geologies and it is not necessarily coming from global capital. So, Bangalore does not become renamed into Singapore, although there is a politics of renaming.

Now, so I am just giving you this as a kind of an idea, but what they were also trying to say that in this kind of desire to show the kind of complexities of cities, and this is a very important point here, Lefebvre and his concepts of remember that Zero percent urbanization and 100 percent urbanization, that movement of capital was still underpinning these forms. So, what they were still thinking about, this idea of ordinary cities, is in the sense of diversity, so you are still having, you can see the image on the left-hand side, bottom.

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Here in this slide, what you can see is, this is a slide providing the overall argument. And what I am trying to do is to show how does the city come into the center table, and in this one, the main thing I want to sort of emphasize is how much of thinking about cities in the south come from ideas by Lefebvre in two parts. One part, which is the more famous of his part, is the production of space. And particularly in terms of how it is conceived by experts, which has to do with plans and policies and surveys. And also, then in terms of how it is lived by people on the ground. The reason why I have put, conceive and lived in a bolder font, than perceived, which is the cartographic physical dimension is because, as we will see later, it is these two parts, which are seem to be conflictual, where you have different kinds of contestations of space and therefore, it is framed in a binary, which is premised then about the importance of social movements, as the main, if not only, form of politics.

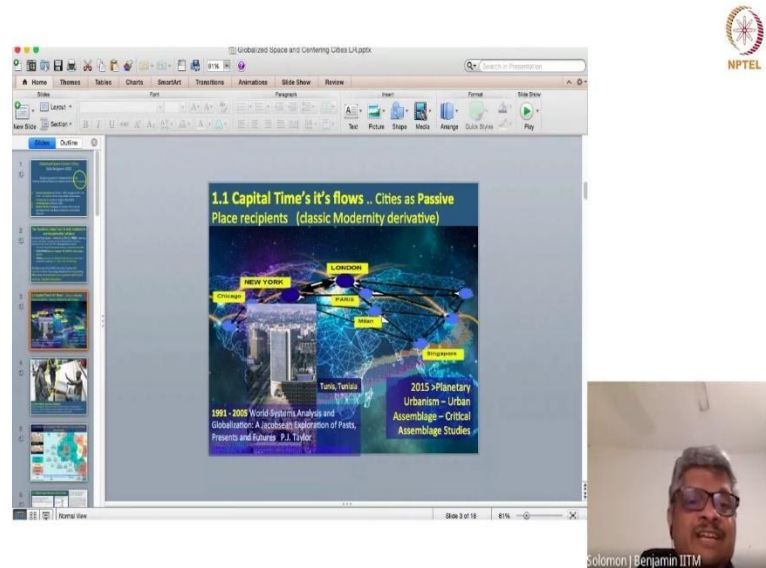
I am emphasizing this because we will see that this is not necessary. This is important, but it is not necessarily the only way. So, in a sense, Lefebvre was both the inspiration, and you know, as an urbanist, we are all indebted to his work but also, he has been very disciplining in the way he framed a lot of concepts.

The second part of it becomes very important, from the perspective of thinking about how cities get globalized, and how space gets globalized comes from his idea about, from his work, The Right to the City. And where, the main idea was to look at the process of urbanization, where he posed the kind of teleological process where the country was to be zero percent urbanized and as it becomes 100 percent urbanized, if I am not mistaken, he actually uses those terms, it seems very hard, you get totally commodification and capitalism, both of these processes go together, and these create certain range of spatial inequities.

So, it is this kind of movement from country to the town that then gets translated not just on a regional level, which is where it earlier started off, but rather at an international level. So, globalization starts getting seen, as we will see soon, from this framing, and spatial inequities in cities across the world start getting linked to Lefebvre's idea about how capital is moving. So, in a sense, it becomes very foundational to the way the globalization of space into cities is thought about.

Now, this has come about also not in many different ways. It is not a straightforward, and I will try to give you a sense of how this has, what have been the major kind of shifts in thinking about this.

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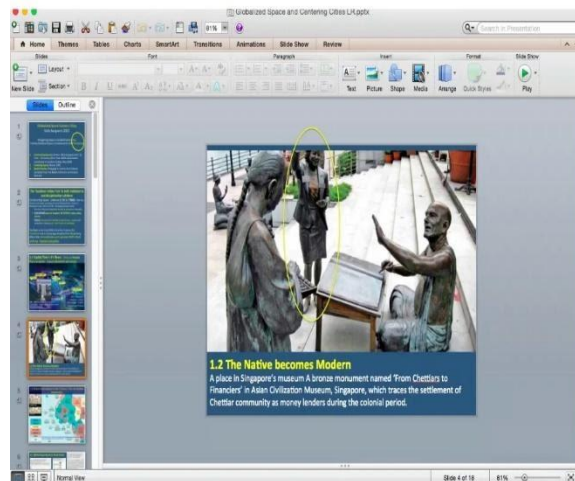


So, the earliest form and the most classic series of works on this comes from Saskia Sassen, in 1991, her classic work, which was on the global cities, focusing really on New York and London, and trying to look at how these centers, and as you can see in the image, become cores in a wider network of how finance capital starts to move to different parts of the world, to create settings, whereby it can be financialized, extracted, surplus extracted, and then moved electronically and otherwise, into the global centres. So, this network of capitalism starts to then locate different cities with different capabilities to be in this financial hierarchy. So, on the top are the alpha cities, which is New York, London, Paris, Tokyo, there may be some contestation among them, and then lower, lower round, then you get Chicago, you get Singapore, you get other centers.

Dubai comes at some point, Bombay, Shanghai. But the main idea is this that the world is being hierarchically stratified and in each of these cities, especially the top ones, you can research out and characterize why and how, what represents that kind of financialization, the number of people who are working in the finance sector, the new kind of laws that are allowing that financial architecture, the legal architecture, all of this comes together and is a kind of a researchable domain to show are you globalized enough or not.

The same logic is used both by Marxist economic geographers, sociologists like Saskia Sassen and David Harvey, but also people who want to promote it. So, if you are part of MasterCard or Visa or Citibank, you want to know about how these works, because that is where your market is. So, I am just trying to say that you need logics of how globalization is happening, starts to homogenize, in a sense that narrative. And also give it a kind of teleological perspective where some places are going to be globalized after others. And therefore, it sets off a kind of a management thing that unless two city managers really move their system, they are going to lose out in this race.

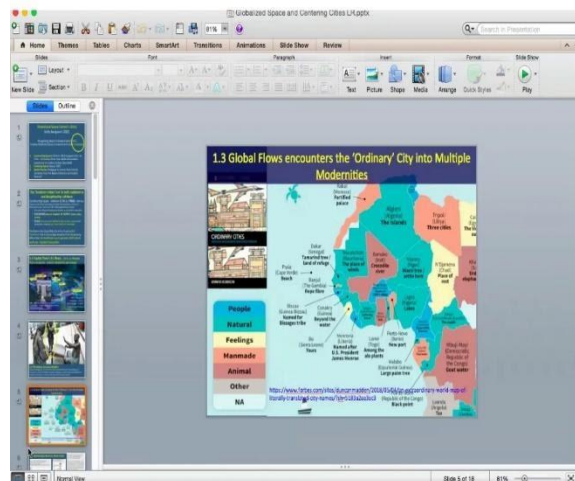
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This next slide just shows you this kind of a binary where you have Chettiar business accountant talking to his Chinese contemporary, this is set in an exhibition in Singapore. And in the background, you have this woman who is representing the corporate world. So, you kind of see this movement, both in terms of gender, but also in terms of where they are in this trajectory of modernity.

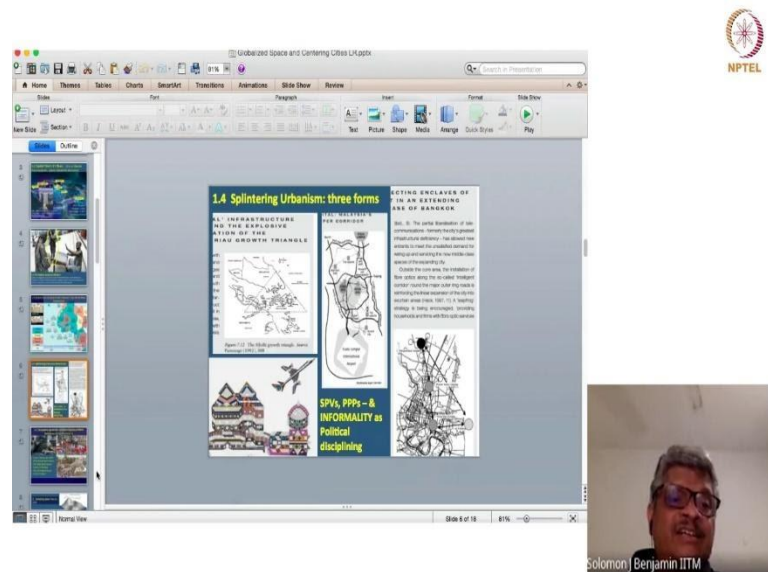
And I think this kind of gives a sense of the kind of linearity and almost predictability about what was global financial moves doing, flows doing to where cities were headed.

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This came up with a kind of a reaction to the global cities from several people, but particularly, this book called, Ordinary Cities by Jenny Robinson, who tried to emphasize that cities had more to them than just be counted in the hierarchy of whether you are alpha, beta or gamma, they had histories, they had different kind of complex cultures they had come about from different trading routes.

Those were kind of complexities which Jenny Robinson wanted to emphasize to say that there were other narratives, and you did not always have to have this kind of globalized flows. (Refer Slide Time: 29:35)



But it was important to also recognize that it was not that these ideas of the ordinary city were discounting globalization. They were still premise as you can see, in this image on the lower left-hand side, this aeroplane taking off, but the way the art form is written represents a kind of indigenous shaping of a global phenomenon.

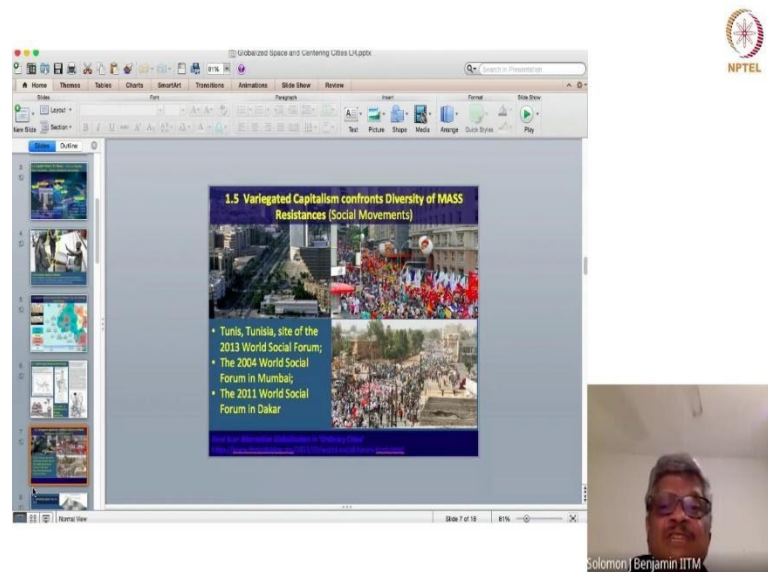
And in her the book cover she has a similar art form where you have an air traffic control tower kind of symbol of the most ultimate global flows of people then people being moved in these planes being portrayed in this kind of, quote unquote, indigenous form.

So, the idea here was that this had a criticality because what it was saying is that, as global capital comes to these various places, it starts to fracture the city in a particular way, not all the places become downtowns, not everyone gets transformed into modernity, like that exhibition in Singapore, where you have the woman overlooking these other two exhibits, it is almost as if she is herself as an exhibit and she is looking at these other two people.

But they are saying that the kind of urbanism that results from this kind of global capital is splintering. But also, it works through various kind of sets of diversities. Now, this becomes important, that the senses that you are still having global capital flows moving across the world. But when they land, in particular sides, they encounter local kind of situations, which get politicized into particular kind of local politics, and political economies.

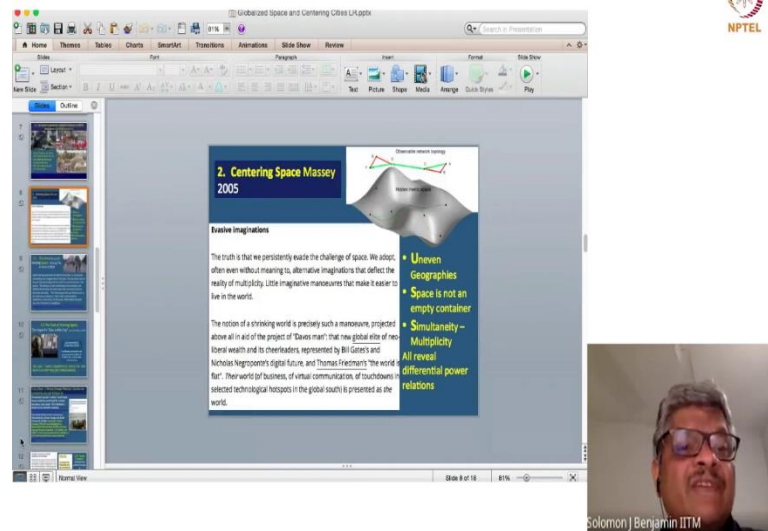
So, in a sense, you are having meta level global capital and as its landing, it is creating these political economies, where you have different manifestations of that global capital. So, if you see the middle diagram, that is from Kuala Lumpur, a new kind of high-tech zone, a kind of hyper corridor, high tech corridor, the one on the right shows Bangkok, where you have particular enclaves of very high-end infrastructure, while other parts of the city is congested, it has stuck in traffic literally.

And almost on the left-hand side, it is a kind of a region between Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia, it is not just even within the city, but it is a larger transnational growth corridor.
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The idea in these three images is to basically make a point that, yes, there is the ordinary city having its own characteristics, but you are having variegated forms of capitalism that confronts the diversity of sort of differences, which spur on counter movements or movements of in the form of social movements, which are from mass resistance. So, this is an image from various sites of the world social movement, the World Social Forum.

And here you can see in an article that talks about this, the authors particularly show Tunisia, they show Bombay, Mumbai, and this will show Dakar. And what they are trying to show is, that as in a sense, as these areas are confronting capitalism, they are taking their own forms of mass gathering. The important point here is that you are having groups of people. So, the imagination of the politics is, as capitalism as capital is also big, you need a larger grouping of people to address it, it is almost as a binary of a one-to-one situation.
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This kind of an idea about movement of capital gets complicated by a set of ideas that come around 2005. Obviously, earlier writing of a person, of a critical geographer, Doreen Massey, where she really talks about how you have a space that is structured, is typological in nature. And actually, you cannot take the smooth flow of capital in a literal way. When it is moving across, it is encountering different kinds of things on the ground and then same sense of fact that you can have a person moving, sitting in a plane and moving across from one place to another. But that does not mean that at that same time, these two places are being constructed in exactly the same way. So, you can have in a sense multiplicity of forms of resistance of politics, which are being connected in different ways.

And the map I have shown you is to show, it comes more from typological geometry, that you have one logic which you can see overhead, those points of A B C D connected, but on the ground, some places are closer to another. So, basically it is making a point about uneven geographies. And it brings in more sophistication, as we will see, to this idea of splintering urbanism, which was there in the earliest slide.

Why is that sophistication required? Because what Massey is saying is that the complexity of space, even when it is globalized, and there is no definite point when the world was not globalized. So, she is kind of historicizing it, also in a nonlinear way, is that space starts to develop agency. And people, it is not just an empty container, where you can bring in these larger flows of capital and fill it in. It has a history, and it has its own kind of differential power.

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2.1 The Value (a Cost) of missing Space: Sontag Trip to Hanoi (1968)

What Sontag witnessed in Hanoi forced her to reconsider everything she imagined about Vietnam "An American has no way of incorporating Vietnam into his consciousness," she wrote. "The virtues of the Vietnamese are certainly not directly emulatable by Americans; they are even hard to describe plausibly... The Vietnamese situate themselves in an historical continuum. That continuum contains repetitions. Americans, if they ever think about the past, are not interested in repetition..."

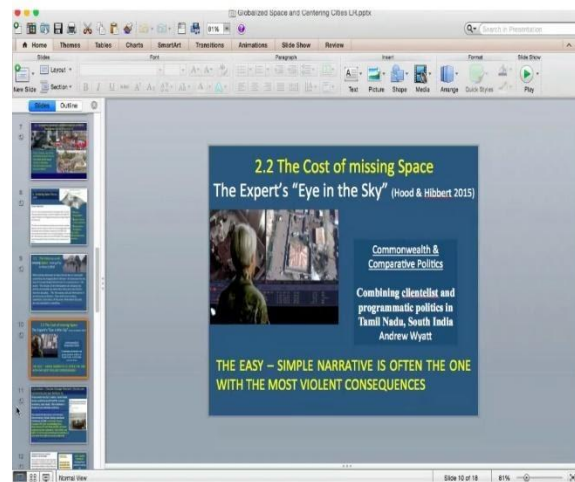
<http://www.boston.com/news/asia/1998/11/13/sontag-hanoi/>

Solomon Benjamin (DTM)

Now, one of the ways in which she makes this argument is through the eyes of this reporter, Sontag, who goes to Hanoi, in 1968 and Massey picks this up, because what she wants to show that when people travel, and they realize and encounter other spaces, what is actually happening is that they start to see other values and rationales of how people are organizing themselves, rather than this movement of capital which is supposed to wipe out everything on the ground.

And the point she makes in this very famous essay, which came out in 68, and this is available online, is to show completely different rationales happening on the ground. And therefore, there is a kind of a point that she is making that when you take space seriously, you start to kind of visualize the world in very different ways. People have mobilized this to also kind of say that it is not enough to just treat ordinary cities as being in a spectrum of very diverse situation where capital is landing. But do they have their own forms of, own generations of capital flows, which have multiple and different kind of logics.

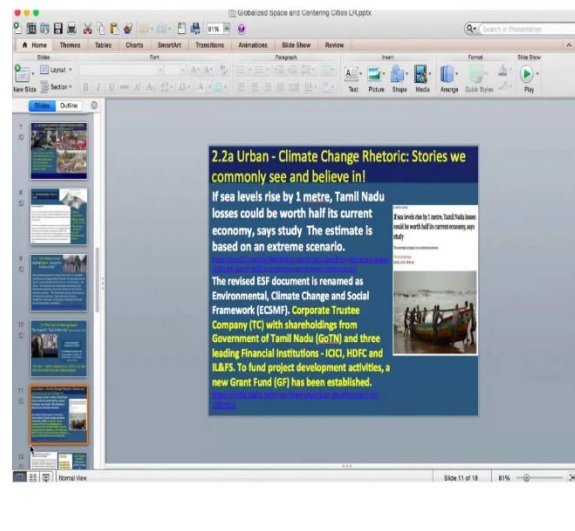
So, we will come to that and then if that is the case, then that is what would be the third realm or third way of thinking about globalization and space, where it is not necessarily dependent on uni-world of capital moving in from the north, north Europe, North America, New York, London and then moving to the south, there are other logics at play.
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Now there is a huge issue connected to this photograph, is the cost of not recognizing this complexity. And this comes out, if some of you might be familiar with a very famous movie now called Eye in the Sky, which is about the management of a drone attack on this compound in if I remember correctly, in Tunisia and the politics of the whole process of decision making, but what you can see, implicitly, is this questioning of the experts Eye in the Sky kind of an approach.

And the reason why I put this is that it kind of amplifies Doreen Massey's warning that if you miss out space, the cost can be huge. And you will see also, in box over there an article a relatively recent article in Commonwealth and comparative politics, which talks about combining clientelism program politics in Tamil Nadu, South India.

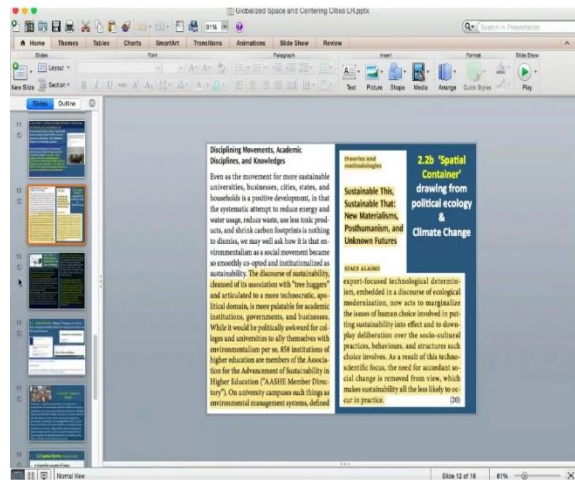
Now, the reason why I put it is that because this is a very classic case of taking up these broad categories almost like those global flows kind of ideas I started off with, the modernist one, and then imposes it on a kind of understanding on what is happening on the ground. And we have seen time and again, when you have these kinds of simple ideas, they are very seductive at one end.
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So, you also have other meta level, and it normally proceeds with the kind of a technical rationale. So, for example, on climate change, which is the other big thing, you have a simple narrative that says that sea levels will rise by so much and therefore a particular territory is going to lose so much in economic value.

Now, this immediately gets into the press, but important point is that this then starts becoming connected to whole lot of investment capital to say that we better now fund very high-end infrastructure walls which is going to save your coastline because you are going to have otherwise so much economic loss.

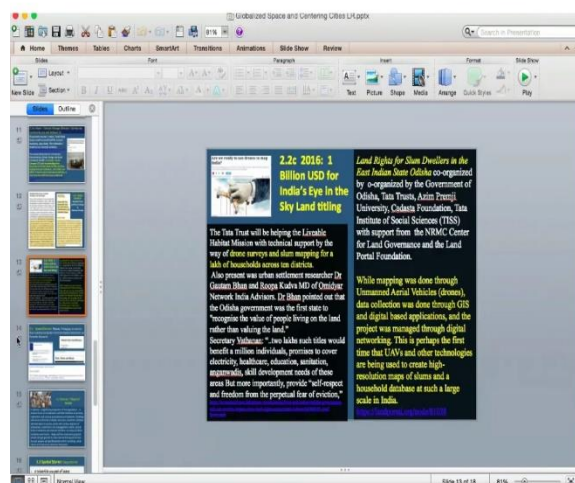
And therefore, instead of putting money into drinking water and basic needs, you have to fund this because of the fear of climate change. I am not Donald Trump and saying that there is no climate change, all I am saying that the rhetoric start to get used in a particular way and mobilize as you can see in this slide, by fairly important financial institutions.
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There has been work on this in critical geography and where they start to look carefully on this kind of rhetoric grounds, sustainability this, sustainability that also talk about politics of knowledge generation. Who is it that generates this kind of knowledge? What does this bring you? Does it bring you funds to set up a new lab? What happens when we say that this kind of research is towards policy orientation?

How is that whole policy transformation because of these kind of broaden narratives, who starts paying the cost on this? Indonesia, for example, one of the worlds, or maybe the world's largest infrastructure project made precisely on this ground, funded by the Dutch, on a huge sea wall which has again resulted in a whole lot of eviction. So, there are kind of real consequences which are coming out of these simple narratives.

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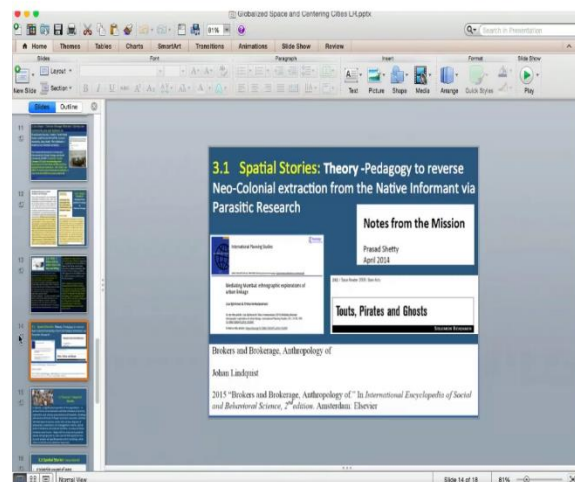
So, while Indonesia has that, we in India have had early 2000 particularly 2014 or 16, where we have a billion US dollars set aside by government of India on advice of US aid and other donors

for land titling. And in the case of Orrisa, if you remember the Eye in the Sky kind of thing where it is about a drone attack which has come into a lot of controversy if you are familiar with the US politics starting off from Obama. But here, we have drones being used for land titling.

Now, why has it that drones are being used? Because people are so suspicious of their land being surveyed, the idea is that the technical rationale is only kind of one layer of this machine that is flying 30-40 feet high to be able to then use special cameras to mark out your boundaries. The complexity is that the same boundaries, if you go back in Doreen Massey kind of way, are used for multiple things than used by multiple people, at multiple times.

And what gets mapped out, is in a cadastral way is a very narrow single spectrum and removes all those other claims to space into one particular ones. So, that is one issue, the second is if you see the agents who are promoting this who are coming in with bigger capital, many of these are linked to particular global markets also in terms of where they are investing so, here you start to get another realm of capital connections which create a kind of a differentiated impact in terms of the power structures.

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So, maybe we will take a break now to think about how we can think in slightly different way to what we have seen right now. So, thank you very much.