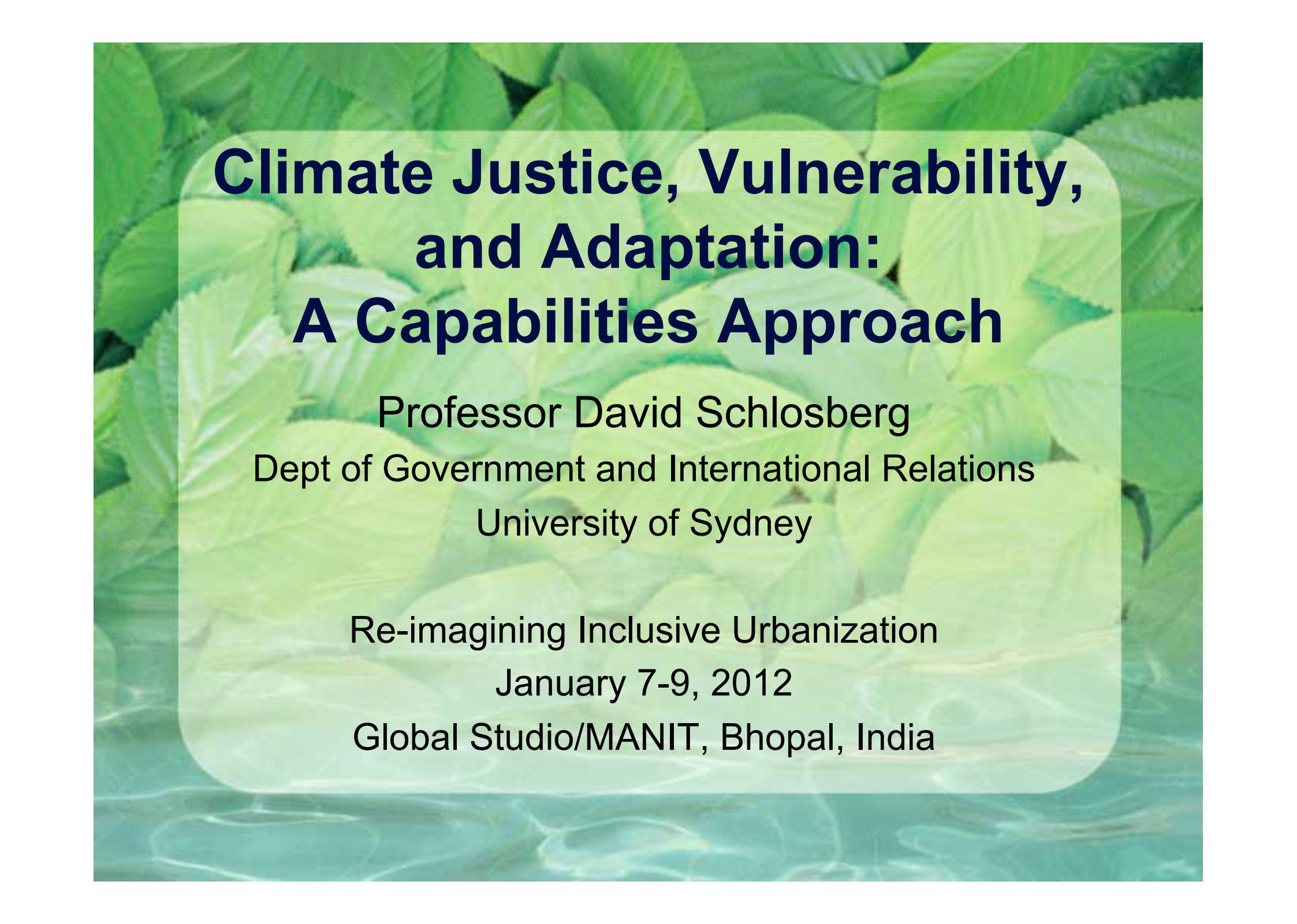




Re-Imagining Inclusive Urbanisation - People Building Better Cities

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Bhopal 2012



Climate Justice, Vulnerability, and Adaptation: A Capabilities Approach

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Re-imagining Inclusive Urbanization
January 7-9, 2012
Global Studio/MANIT, Bhopal, India



Two arguments

- ✿ First: there are two key weaknesses of current approaches to climate justice
 - ✿ Exclude important conceptions of justice, in particular recognition and capabilities
 - ✿ Primarily developed for, and applied to, prevention and mitigation strategies, rather than adaptation
- ✿ Second: a capabilities approach can address these weaknesses and offer a normative basis, and procedures for, climate justice in adaptation

Outline

- ✿ Approaches to climate justice and concerns about them
- ✿ Recognition and capabilities approaches
- ✿ Capabilities and climate justice
 - ✿ Human communities and non-human nature
- ✿ Using capabilities as a normative framework for adaptation policy
 - ✿ An Australian research project model



Recent Theories of Climate Justice – and limits

✿ The historical approach

- ✿ Polluters pay for the impacts of past development
- ✿ No ‘why’ explored, or relationship between being ‘developed’ and ‘not developed’
- ✿ Not helpful for explaining specific differential impacts
- ✿ Good on past responsibility, and possibly costs of transition, but not on a framework for future adaptation

✿ The per capita equity argument

- ✿ Equal slice of the emission pie/sink
- ✿ No account of place, and so differences in need or usage



Recent Theories: Rights

✿ Human/development/environmental rights

- ✿ Baer: Right to a dignified level of sustainable development
- ✿ Caney/Bell: A minimum threshold of basic human rights not to be undermined by climatic change
- ✿ Vanderheiden: Right to basic environment where flourishing is possible
- ✿ All based in acknowledgement of what is necessary for human beings to function in a threatened environment

✿ Weaknesses

- ✿ Not always tied to specific needs or functions, or to local differences
- ✿ Mostly focused on global prevention and mitigation, rather than adaptation strategies

What recognition adds

- ✿ Underlying causes of maldistribution
- ✿ Psychology and emotional harm
- ✿ Status-based injuries, and social critique:
 - ✿ Cultural domination, invisibility, disrespect





Recognition and climate justice

- ✿ Focus on the relationship between lack of social recognition and creation of climate vulnerability
- ✿ Adger et al. on lack of attention to cultural impacts of climate change
- ✿ Recognition of relationship between human needs of the vulnerable and the environmental conditions in which they are immersed

The Capability Approach

- ✿ Capacity and functioning: Sen, Nussbaum
 - ✿ How distribution affects our functioning
 - ✿ What “capabilities” are needed to convert goods into a functioning life
 - ✿ Develop deliberatively (S), or apply as constitutional rights (N)
 - ✿ Incorporates many notions of justice simultaneously, including recognition



Capabilities And Climate Justice

✿ Two ways to frame:

- ✿ Expand our understanding of human capabilities to include the environment and climate systems that support them
- ✿ Expand concern to the functioning of natural/ecological systems themselves





Climate, Environment, and Human Capabilities

- ✿ Acknowledge environmental bases of existing capabilities list/basic human needs
 - ✿ Life; bodily health; senses, imagination and thought; emotions; affiliation – all require environmental support
- ✿ Holland: ‘Meta-capability’ of sustainable ecological capacity, with a minimal ‘environmental justice’ threshold



Capabilities and Justice to Natural Systems

- ✿ Climate injustice as denial of capabilities necessary for natural systems to function
- ✿ Recognition of integrity of natural systems, and what they supply both human beings and non-human nature
- ✿ Address non- and misrecognition of natural world and capabilities necessary for it to function

Adaptation Policy Implications

- ✿ Adaptation frameworks should focus on capabilities necessary for human functioning, and the functioning of ecological systems that support them
- ✿ Climate Policy responses focused on threats to human and environmental needs.
- ✿ Use capabilities approach to map different vulnerabilities in different places
 - ✿ Both scientific expertise and other local discourses
- ✿ Capabilities as a normative framework for adaptation policy



Climate justice and local engagement

- ✿ Cannot map vulnerability free of local input
- ✿ Democratic and participatory process of defining vulnerabilities and priorities
- ✿ Allows for difference in priorities depending on locality
- ✿ Brings recognition and participatory agency
- ✿ Uses Sen's public reason model to develop priorities to be preserved along the lines of Nussbaum's rights model

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