

# Reassessing 'Gentrification' from Asian Context



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## Decentering Gentrification: Toward a Theory of Neighborhood Change from Bangkok

This talk rethinks gentrification theory through the empirical and conceptual challenges posed by Bangkok. Classic accounts, centered on rent gaps, class succession, and market-led displacement, struggle to explain urban change in contexts marked by informality, fragmented property regimes, and state intervention. Drawing on cases from canal communities, heritage districts, and rail-oriented redevelopment, I argue that gentrification in Bangkok is less about linear class replacement than about the redistribution of precarity across uneven tenure regimes. Processes of upzoning, infrastructure investment, and heritage-making actively assemble "gentrifiability", often without full commodification or clear displacement. These dynamics produce coexisting temporalities, moral economies of legitimacy, and fragmented trajectories of change. Rather than treating Bangkok as a variant of a universal model, the paper advances a conceptual reframing: toward an understanding of "informalized gentrification" as a messy, negotiated, and deeply contingent urban process.

## Kujira-jaku or a Universal Yardstick? Applying the Concept of Gentrification in Asian Urban Studies

Drawing on six Asian cities, it asks whether gentrification is an appropriate concept for understanding urban transformation beyond its Western origins. The seminar examines how the contributors use, question, and localize the concept in diverse political, social, and economic contexts. Rather than treating gentrification as a universal framework, the special issue shows how Asian urban experiences can challenge and extend existing theories of urban change.



**Zhe Ren**

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Commentator

**Hyun Bang Shin**

Professor, Department of Geography and Environment, London School of Economics

Moderator : Professor Tamaki Endo, GSAPS, Waseda University

Co-organizer: Research Project on "Reassessing the spatial restructuring of Asian mega-cities from the perspective of sustainable and equitable communities: A Study on Gentrification in Tokyo and Bangkok" funded by Asahi Glass Foundation

June 17th, 2026, Wednesday

18:00 - 19:30 (JST)

Online event

Free and Open to the Public

(Online Only).

Please Register from Here.

