

Title: Contemplating post-industrial urban change in Japan: Based on the gentrification literature from the Global North and South

1. Question

Where could Japanese post-industrial urban change be located in urban theory?

2. Background of post-industrial urban change

- ❖ Capitalist societies: agricultural economy -> ... -> “new economy”
- ❖ Their cities: Town -> industrial city -> “post-industrial” city -> neoliberal city
- ❖ Inner-city decline=f(deindustrialization, suburbanization) -> urban change (1970s+)

3. Forms of post-industrial urban change

- ❖ Types: Words with “re-” prefix / Spatial dimension of change / Social class dimension / Environmental / Technological
- ❖ The literature regarding the forms of post-industrial urban change:
 - Supportive arguments: urban growth, conviviality
 - Criticisms: social inequality, polarization, social control, false universalism
 - Choice of words = taking a side

4. Gentrification of the Global North and South

Characteristics	Global North	Global South
1. Places	Australia, the US, Britain, Canada	Poorer EU cities, Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, and South and East Asia
2. Definitions	Class making via residence, creative destruction of the built environment and social classes, a significant housing problem	Class polarization, investment in urban regeneration, displacement in a wide sense
3. Initiators	Capital via changes in the housing market (and the state as a facilitator)	State-led gentrification
4. Gentrifiers	The bourgeois (white, young, singles/couples, professional & managerial occupations, high-incomes)	The global, super-rich, neoliberal elites and visitors
5. The disadvantaged	Blue-collar workers with lower-middle income levels	Immigrant workers
6. Areas	Abandoned, central areas	Informal settlements
7. Time	1970s onwards	1990s onwards
8. Aggressiveness	Low/medium	Medium/high

A Comparison of the Gentrification of the Global North and South (Prep. by the author)

5. Thinking about Japan in this picture

- ❖ Area redevelopment; renovation of wooden houses; revitalization of shopping streets, new-build gentrification, commercial gentrification (Tokyo for 2020)
- ❖ Cases of (public) displacement in the past; current effects limited to the area's historical-cultural identity and further, "vertical densification" (Lees, Shin and Lopez-Morales, p. 207) of the city centre
- ❖ Neighbourhood change based on consensus with area inhabitants
- ❖ Perspective of different actors, including: local community; local political discourse; Osaka's businessmen and architects¹; researchers (human geographers, urban sociologists); the Japanese state

6. Conclusion

The supporters of urban revitalization showed physical upgrading, recovery from deprivation, social balance or mix, class mobility, and local tax income as its benefits. On the other hand, the negative outcomes made a lengthy list, including: price inflation; displacement; socio-spatial polarization; dispossession (homes and jobs); social tension (intolerance); privatization (enclosures); alienation, and surveillance.

Theorists and practitioners have searched for better alternatives. The conceptual suggestions contained right-to-the-city, just city, commons, resilient city, and resourcefulness. The basic difference lies in how radical or reformist their offer is.

Some References

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¹Kaga, Atsuko. Community Development Innovation. Osaka University. Summer, 2014. Intensive course.