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Urban Space Transformation and Social Change from the Perspective of Urban History: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Urban spatial transformation is not merely a physical process but a historically embedded phenomenon that reshapes social structures, economic relations, cultural identities, and access to urban resources. This study aimed to synthesize conceptual and empirical evidence concerning the relationship between urban spatial transformation and social change from an urban-historical perspective. A systematic literature review was conducted following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. Relevant studies published between 2016 and September 2026 were retrieved from Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, JSTOR, and Google Scholar. Of 238 initially identified records, 46 duplicates were removed, 192 titles and abstracts were screened, and 52 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility. Fifteen peer-reviewed articles were ultimately included in the qualitative and historical synthesis. Seven studies (46.7%) examined Indonesian cities. Land commodification, gentrification, and displacement constituted the dominant theme, identified in eight articles (53.3%), followed by governance and community participation in seven articles (46.7%). Peripheral urbanization and morphological restructuring each appeared in six studies (40.0%), while heritage, cultural memory, and environmental inequality were each represented in five studies (33.3%). Empirical evidence demonstrated that infrastructure development, land conversion, heritage revitalization, and environmental renewal could improve urban functionality while simultaneously generating displacement, segregation, livelihood disruption, and unequal environmental benefits. In Metro Tanjung Bunga, spatial and transportation changes explained 60.8% of environmental-quality degradation. The review concludes that equitable urban transformation requires historically informed planning, housing protection, participatory governance, cultural continuity, and distributive environmental justice.

Keywords : Urban Spatial Transformation; Social Change; Urban History; Gentrification; Historical Urban Landscape.

INTRODUCTION

Urban space is not merely a physical container in which social life occurs; it is historically produced through interactions among political authority, capital accumulation, technological change, demographic mobility, cultural practices, and everyday negotiations. Consequently, the transformation of streets, settlements, commercial districts, public spaces, waterfronts, and urban peripheries simultaneously reorganizes social relations. Contemporary urban history has therefore shifted from treating the city as a fixed territorial unit toward examining urbanization as a dynamic, contested, and historically situated process (Rodger & Rau, 2020). In this perspective, changes in spatial configuration can reveal broader transformations in class structure, political power, cultural identity, citizenship, and access to urban resources. Rapid urban development has intensified this relationship between spatial restructuring and social change. Infrastructure construction, land conversion, property

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development, heritage revitalization, environmental improvement, and digitalization may enhance connectivity and economic productivity, yet their social benefits are rarely distributed evenly. The concept of urban transformation itself remains heterogeneous, referring variously to physical redevelopment, socio-economic transition, environmental restructuring, cultural change, and institutional reform (Koch et al., 2018). This conceptual ambiguity creates difficulties in explaining whether spatial change merely accompanies social change or functions as a mechanism that produces new forms of inequality, adaptation, resistance, and collective identity.

The problem is particularly significant in cities of the Global South, where formal planning, informal settlement production, speculative investment, and community-based spatial practices operate simultaneously. Schindler (2017) argues that Southern urbanism requires analytical frameworks derived from the historical and institutional realities of Southern cities rather than the uncritical transfer of Euro-American models. Similarly, Caldeira's (2017) theory of peripheral urbanization explains that residents, governments, developers, and informal actors collectively produce urban space through unstable combinations of legality, self-construction, market exchange, and political negotiation. Spatial transformation is thus neither a linear consequence of modernization nor a neutral technical process; it is a socio-political arena in which competing actors determine whose histories, livelihoods, and identities are preserved or displaced.

Indonesian metropolitan development demonstrates these contradictions. Greater Jakarta's large-scale land transformation has been shaped by hybrid neoliberalization, informality, property speculation, and state–private collaboration (Herlambang et al., 2019). The conversion of kampungs into apartments, commercial complexes, and infrastructure corridors represents what Leitner and Sheppard (2018) conceptualize as "contested accumulations through displacement," in which urban commons are commodified while affected communities negotiate, resist, or adapt to redevelopment. Comparable processes have occurred in Bandung's peri-urban areas, where land-use conflict and cross-class coalitions mediate the spatial reorganization of social groups (Hudalah et al., 2016). These findings indicate that urban transformation must be studied historically because contemporary spatial inequality is embedded in accumulated decisions, institutional arrangements, and development trajectories.

Recent scholarship offers four principal perspectives on the relationship between urban space and social change. First, the spatial turn in urban history views the city as a multilayered socio-spatial formation. Historical Geographic Information Systems, spatial mapping, archival reconstruction, and morphological analysis have expanded the capacity of urban historians to identify changes in density, connectivity, segregation, land use, and social proximity over time (Rodger & Rau, 2020). Under this approach, space possesses analytical agency because its organization both reflects and structures social interaction. Second, the Historic Urban Landscape approach conceptualizes cities as accumulations of tangible and intangible historical layers. Ginzarly et al. (2019) maintain that heritage management should be incorporated into broader urban development rather than confined to monument preservation. Rey-Pérez and Pereira Roders' (2020) systematic review of 140 publications similarly shows that the HUL approach has developed a strong theoretical foundation, although practical implementation and community participation remain limited. More recent research emphasizes layered interpretation as a method for connecting morphological change with cultural meaning, economic restructuring, and stakeholder interests (Ma & Sun, 2024). Urban heritage is therefore not a static remnant of the past but a continuously reconstructed social resource. Third, urban political economy explains spatial transformation through land commodification, investment, governance, and class restructuring. Empirical research in Jakarta demonstrates that gentrification changes housing patterns, employment opportunities, lifestyles, and relations between newcomers and long-term Betawi residents (Dewi, 2017). In Kampung Paseban, the proliferation of exclusive boarding houses has created physical and social dualism, weakened interaction between residents and migrants, and intensified competition in the local economy (Kusumaningrum et al., 2020). Arkaraprasertkul (2018) further argues that gentrification must be interpreted through residents' everyday experiences because heritage, housing, and identity may be simultaneously preserved, commodified, and contested. Fourth, environmental and sustainability perspectives reveal that spatial improvement may generate new forms of exclusion. Green infrastructure and revitalized public spaces can increase land values and create environmental privilege for wealthier groups (Anguelovski et al., 2019). The location, scale, and function of parks influence whether greening produces inclusive improvement or green gentrification (Rigolon & Németh, 2020). Research in Istanbul likewise indicates that sustainability-oriented renewal can displace vulnerable residents when environmental programs are subordinated to real-estate growth (Yazar et al., 2020). Thus, environmentally desirable transformation does not automatically produce socially just outcomes.

Indonesian spatial studies reinforce this multidimensional interpretation. Satellite analysis documents extensive changes in Jakarta's urban land cover and metropolitan expansion between 1994 and 2017 (Wahyudi et al., 2019). In Metro Tanjung Bunga, Makassar, land conversion, commercial development, transport infrastructure,

and population mobility have produced urban sprawl, spatial segregation, multiple social formations, and environmental degradation (Surya et al., 2021). The study reported that land-use, activity, and transportation changes explained 60.8% of environmental-quality deterioration, illustrating a measurable connection between spatial restructuring and socio-environmental consequences.

Despite these advances, the literature remains theoretically and methodologically fragmented. Urban-history studies frequently reconstruct morphological change without adequately explaining its distributive social consequences. Conversely, studies of gentrification, displacement, and inequality often focus on contemporary conflicts while treating historical trajectories as contextual background rather than explanatory mechanisms. Remote-sensing research precisely measures land-cover change but rarely captures memory, identity, informal institutions, or residents' interpretations. Heritage research recognizes historical layering, yet its practical applications frequently prioritize physical conservation over livelihoods and community agency (Ginzarly et al., 2019; Rey-Pérez & Pereira Roders, 2020). A second gap concerns the weak integration of temporality and causality. Existing studies identify correlations among land conversion, infrastructure development, social differentiation, and environmental decline, but relatively few explain how earlier spatial regimes condition subsequent transformations. Colonial planning, postcolonial modernization, decentralization, neoliberal property development, and sustainability-oriented renewal are often examined separately, although they form interconnected historical sequences. Third, evidence remains dominated by isolated case studies. Indonesian research provides rich findings on Jakarta, Bandung, and Makassar, but systematic synthesis across cities, historical periods, spatial scales, and types of intervention is limited. The conceptual potential of social innovation and citizen participation is also insufficiently connected with historical analysis, even though collective action may redirect urban transformation toward more inclusive outcomes (Thompson, 2019). Recent work on the "deep city" underscores the need to combine material traces, social values, and relationships among past, present, and future, but this methodological integration is still emerging (Jones et al., 2024).

This literature review aims to critically synthesize reputable journal studies published during 2016–2026 concerning urban spatial transformation and social change from an urban-historical perspective. Specifically, it seeks to: (1) identify the political, economic, demographic, technological, cultural, and environmental drivers of spatial transformation; (2) analyze its effects on class composition, livelihoods, displacement, social interaction, identity, memory, and citizenship; and (3) formulate an integrative framework connecting historical trajectories with contemporary socio-spatial outcomes. The study's novelty lies in proposing a historical socio-spatial transformation framework comprising four interconnected dimensions: historical drivers, spatial mechanisms, temporal mediators, and social consequences. Unlike reviews that separate urban morphology, political economy, heritage, and sustainability, this framework treats them as mutually constitutive. It also places Indonesian and other Southern-city experiences within comparative urban theory without reducing them to deviations from Western urbanization.

Urban transformation is fundamentally a historical and social process expressed through material space. Buildings, infrastructure, settlements, public spaces, and urban landscapes embody accumulated relations of power, capital, culture, and community agency. Accordingly, a historically grounded literature review is required to explain not only how cities physically change, but also who benefits, who is marginalized, which memories survive, and how communities negotiate their place within changing urban environments. This integrated perspective provides a stronger conceptual basis for socially just, historically sensitive, and sustainable urban governance.

METHODS

This study employed a systematic literature review to examine the relationship between urban spatial transformation and social change from an urban-historical perspective. A systematic review was selected because it provides a transparent, structured, and reproducible procedure for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing fragmented knowledge across disciplines (Snyder, 2019; Xiao & Watson, 2019). The review protocol followed the three principal stages of planning, conducting, and reporting recommended by Sauer and Seuring (2023). The selection process was documented using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021). PRISMA 2020 provides a 27-item reporting framework and a flow diagram covering identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and study inclusion.

The literature search was conducted in September 2026 across Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, JSTOR, and Google Scholar. Multiple databases were used to increase disciplinary coverage and minimize database-selection bias, since individual academic search systems differ considerably in their indexing scope,

search functionality, and retrieval quality (Gusenbauer & Haddaway, 2020). The search strategy combined Boolean operators with the keywords: ("urban spatial transformation" OR "urban space change" OR "urban morphology" OR "urban redevelopment") AND ("social change" OR "social transformation" OR "gentrification" OR "displacement") AND ("urban history" OR "historical urban development" OR "historic urban landscape"). Search strings were adapted to the syntax of each database, following the systematic search principles proposed by Bramer et al. (2018) and the reporting recommendations of PRISMA-S (Rethlefsen et al., 2021).

Studies were eligible when they: (1) were peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2016 and September 2026; (2) were written in English or Indonesian; (3) were indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, or an accredited SINTA journal; (4) explicitly investigated transformations in urban form, land use, infrastructure, settlements, public space, or heritage landscapes; and (5) connected spatial transformation with social outcomes such as class restructuring, livelihood change, displacement, identity, cultural memory, social interaction, or citizenship. Conference papers, books, theses, editorials, non-peer-reviewed reports, and studies without a clear historical or social dimension were excluded.

The initial search identified 238 records: Scopus (72), Web of Science (55), ScienceDirect (44), JSTOR (32), and Google Scholar (35). After removing 46 duplicates, 192 records were screened by title and abstract. At this stage, 137 records were excluded because they did not correspond directly to the review questions. Of the 55 reports sought, three full texts could not be retrieved; therefore, 52 articles underwent full-text assessment. Thirty-seven studies were excluded because their topics were outside the review focus (n = 13), lacked explicit social outcomes (n = 9), lacked a historical dimension (n = 7), were not peer-reviewed (n = 5), or contained insufficient methodological information (n = 3). Consequently, 15 articles formed the final review corpus.

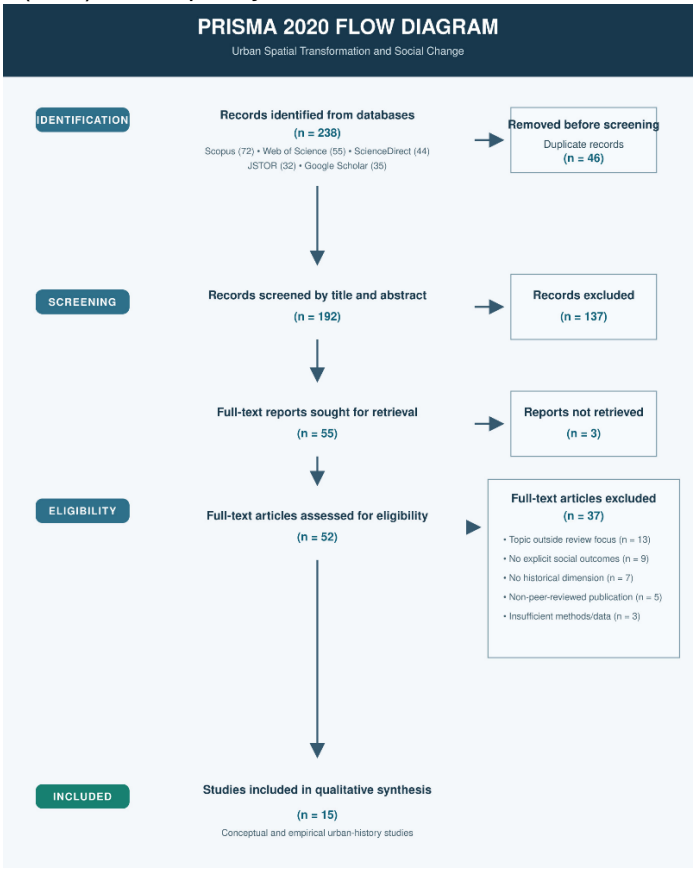


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow of Literature Selection

Data were extracted using a structured matrix containing authorship, publication year, study location, historical period, theoretical perspective, research design, spatial transformation, social consequences, and principal findings. Methodological quality was evaluated through five criteria: clarity of objectives, theoretical relevance, methodological transparency, empirical adequacy, and coherence between evidence and conclusions. This quality-oriented procedure was intended to prevent weak studies from disproportionately influencing the synthesis (Shaheen et al., 2023).

The selected articles were analyzed through thematic and historical synthesis. Thematic coding identified recurring patterns of land conversion, infrastructure development, gentrification, heritage regeneration,

displacement, socio-economic differentiation, and community adaptation. Following Nowell et al. (2017), themes were repeatedly reviewed to strengthen analytical credibility and consistency. A chronological comparison subsequently connected these themes with colonial legacies, postcolonial modernization, decentralization, neoliberal development, and sustainability-oriented urban renewal. Rather than merely calculating publication frequencies, the synthesis interpreted relationships among historical drivers, spatial mechanisms, temporal mediators, and social consequences, consistent with the principle that review methods should generate conceptual insight beyond descriptive bibliometric mapping (Donthu et al., 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Characteristics of the Selected Studies

The systematic selection process generated a final corpus of 15 peer-reviewed articles published between 2016 and 2024. Seven studies (46.7%) examined Indonesian cities, particularly Jakarta, Bandung, and Makassar; two studies (13.3%) focused on China; one study (6.7%) investigated Istanbul, Türkiye; and five studies (33.3%) presented comparative, international, or conceptual analyses. Methodologically, seven articles employed qualitative case-study or ethnographic designs, three applied spatial, historical, or mixed-method analysis, and five were conceptual or systematic reviews. The Indonesian studies predominantly addressed land conversion, peri-urban expansion, kampung transformation, gentrification, spatial segregation, and community displacement. International studies broadened the analysis by examining peripheral urbanization, historical landscape management, green gentrification, heritage commodification, and the spatial turn in urban history. Collectively, the corpus demonstrated that urban spatial transformation is not an isolated physical phenomenon but a historically embedded process involving state institutions, private capital, communities, planning systems, and environmental policies.

Table 1. Conceptual and Empirical Evidence from the 15 Selected Articles

Author (s) and year	Study context	Design and data	Form of spatial transformation	Principal social findings	Conceptual contribution
Hudalah et al. (2016)	Peri-urban Bandung, Indonesia	Qualitative case study of land-use conflict and institutional dynamics	Environmental revitalization and peri-urban land restructuring	Spatial reorganization generated competing coalitions among residents, developers, and government institutions	Peri-urban gentrification is produced by political negotiation and cross-class coalitions
Caldeira (2017)	Cities of the Global South	Comparative conceptual and historical analysis	Self-construction, settlement expansion, infrastructure upgrading, and land regularization	Residents became producers of urban space, political subjects, and rights-claiming citizens, although inequality remained	Peripheral urbanization is created through transversal relations among legality, informality, markets, and the state
Dewi (2017)	Inner-city kampungs, Jakarta	Community-based socio-economic case study	Residential succession and kampung gentrification	The arrival of higher-income migrants displaced sections of the Betawi population and changed education, women's employment, lifestyles, and community relations	Gentrification involves socio-economic and cultural restructuring, not merely residential change
Leitner and Sheppard (2018)	Jakarta, Indonesia	Critical historical and political-economic case analysis	Conversion of kampungs into apartments, commercial areas, and condominium complexes	Redevelopment enclosed urban commons, displaced residents, and generated community resistance and negotiation	Introduced "contested accumulations through displacement" for Southern cities
Arkarapras ertkul (2018)	Historic lilong neighbourhoo d, Shanghai	Ethnography conducted in 2013–2015	Heritage-led housing reinvestment and neighbourhood upgrading	Architectural uniqueness became cultural capital; residents and newcomers negotiated heritage, income, and belonging	Demonstrated negotiated or alternative gentrification beyond a simple displacement model
Ginzarly et al. (2019)	International HUL scholarship	Systematic review of Historic Urban Landscape literature	Integration of heritage into contemporary urban development	Heritage value was increasingly linked with identity and participation, but community-engagement tools remained underdeveloped	HUL connects tangible form, intangible values, governance, and sustainable urban development
Herlamban g et al. (2019)	Greater Jakarta	Spatio-temporal and political-economic analysis of large property projects	New towns, mega-projects, and large-scale private property development	Well-connected developers gained control over strategic land while formal and informal governance facilitated unequal development	Jakarta's transformation represents hybrid neoliberalization rather than a purely market-led process

Wahyudi et al. (2019)	Jakarta Metropolitan Area, 1994–2017	Landsat imagery and landscape metrics	Metropolitan land-cover expansion and fragmentation	Continuous built-up growth intensified development pressure and reconfigured metropolitan spatial structure	Remote sensing demonstrates the scale and temporal pattern of metropolitan expansion
Anguelovski et al. (2019)	International urban greening cases	Critical interdisciplinary review	Parks, green infrastructure, and environmental revitalization	Greening increased environmental quality but could also raise property values, create elite enclaves, and exclude vulnerable groups	Developed the environmental-justice perspective on green gentrification
Rodger and Rau (2020)	International urban-history scholarship	Conceptual and methodological review of HGIS and spatial history	Historical restructuring of neighbourhoods, streets, and social proximity	Spatial configurations revealed changing hierarchies, relationships, mobility, and access to the city	Shifted urban history from studying the city as an object to analyzing urbanization as a socio-spatial process
Rey-Pérez and Pereira Roders (2020)	Review of 140 HUL publications, 2008–2019	Systematic literature review	Heritage conservation integrated with urban planning and landscape management	Theoretical development was extensive, but practical implementation, stakeholder involvement, and monitoring were limited	Identified the implementation gap between HUL theory and urban-management practice
Kusumaningrum et al. (2020)	Kampung Paseban, Jakarta	Literature review, spatial mapping, interviews, and field observation	Growth of exclusive boarding houses within an established kampung	New middle-class residents produced physical and social dualism, reduced interaction, and intensified local economic competition	Explained how micro-scale property change generates gentrification within kampungs
Yazar et al. (2020)	Gaziosmanpaşa, Istanbul	Interviews, observation, and planning-document analysis	Sustainability-oriented urban renewal and green redevelopment	Vulnerable residents experienced displacement, while improved areas became increasingly affordable only to wealthier groups	Revealed contradictions between sustainability transformation and housing justice
Surya et al. (2021)	Metro Tanjung Bunga, Makassar	Sequential qualitative–quantitative design; 250 respondents	Agricultural conversion, transport development, commercial expansion, and large-scale housing	Transformation generated sprawl, segregation, hierarchical access, multiple social formations, and environmental decline	Empirically connected spatial transformation with socio-economic and environmental sustainability
Ma and Sun (2024)	Dongxi Ancient Town, China	Historical documents, GIS-based mapping, and layered landscape interpretation	Maintenance, expansion, overlay, juxtaposed layering, and decline	Changes in transport, economic activity, and stakeholder interests altered cultural connections and landscape meaning	Proposed historical layering as a framework for managing change in historic urban landscapes

The evidence confirms that recent urban research has moved beyond an exclusively morphological understanding of cities. For example, Jakarta's mega-projects were shaped by changing relationships between political authority, global capital, and well-connected domestic developers (Herlambang et al., 2019), while Shanghai's heritage neighbourhoods showed that architectural distinctiveness could be transformed into cultural and economic capital (Arkaraprasertkul, 2018).

Distribution of the Principal Findings

Six recurring themes were identified. Because one article could contribute to more than one theme, the frequencies in Table 2 are overlapping rather than mutually exclusive.

Table 2. Thematic Distribution of the Findings

Theme	Number of articles	Percentage	Empirical manifestations	Principal social consequences
Land commodification, gentrification, and displacement	8	53.3%	Kampung redevelopment, condominiums, exclusive boarding houses, private mega-projects, heritage investment, and green renewal	Displacement, increased housing costs, class replacement, livelihood insecurity, and weakened access to urban land
Governance, power, and community participation	7	46.7%	State–developer alliances, informal negotiations, planning regulation, land regularization, and heritage governance	Unequal decision-making, resistance, negotiated adaptation, and new rights-based claims
Peripheral or informal urbanization and community adaptation	6	40.0%	Self-built settlements, peri-urban expansion, informal land markets, and kampung transformation	New social formations, adaptive livelihoods, political mobilization, and continued socio-spatial inequality

Spatial expansion and morphological restructuring	6	40.0%	Built-up expansion, transport corridors, land conversion, settlement densification, and historical layering	Changes in mobility, accessibility, settlement hierarchy, and metropolitan fragmentation
Heritage, identity, and cultural memory	5	33.3%	Historic-neighbourhood renewal, cultural-landscape management, conservation, and heritage commodification	Reconstructed identity, contested memory, cultural capital, and changing sense of place
Environmental sustainability and green inequality	5	33.3%	Parks, green infrastructure, environmental revitalization, sustainable renewal, and coastal or metropolitan development	Environmental improvement combined with exclusion, green gentrification, and environmental-quality decline

Conceptual Findings

The conceptual synthesis produced four major propositions. First, urban space operates as both an outcome and an instrument of social change. Changes in land use, transport connectivity, housing form, and public-space accessibility reflected existing power relations while simultaneously creating new social hierarchies. Rodger and Rau (2020) therefore positioned spatial relations as a central analytical dimension in urban history: spatial arrangements reveal how proximity, separation, accessibility, and mobility structure social life. Second, historical path dependence mediates contemporary transformation. Present-day redevelopment did not begin from an institutionally neutral setting. Colonial land systems, postcolonial modernization, decentralized government, property regulation, and earlier infrastructure investment established development pathways that influenced subsequent land values and planning decisions. The Jakarta studies were especially important because they showed that neoliberal property development remained intertwined with informal political relationships and historically constructed land regimes (Herlambang et al., 2019; Leitner & Sheppard, 2018). Third**,** informality is a constitutive element of urban development rather than the opposite of formal planning. Caldeira (2017) found that peripheral urbanization combined self-construction, informal markets, state regulation, infrastructure provision, and eventual legalization. Informal communities were consequently not passive victims; they participated in producing settlements, negotiating public services, and constructing new political identities. Nevertheless, their agency operated within unequal systems of property ownership and institutional power. Fourth, heritage constitutes an active socio-economic process. The HUL literature rejected the treatment of historic districts as static architectural collections. Instead, heritage value emerged through relationships among buildings, community practices, memories, economic activities, and governance institutions (Ginzarly et al., 2019). Rey-Pérez and Pereira Roders (2020) found strong theoretical acceptance of this integrated approach across 140 publications, but relatively few studies implemented all HUL stages in practice.

Empirical Findings

The most consistent empirical pattern was the association between redevelopment and socio-spatial inequality. Eight of the 15 articles demonstrated that new investment increased the economic value of urban space but redistributed its benefits unequally. In Jakarta, the conversion of kampungs into condominiums and commercial areas displaced residents while enclosing land previously used as an urban commons (Leitner & Sheppard, 2018). At the neighbourhood scale, exclusive boarding houses in Kampung Paseban created a dual spatial structure between established residents and middle-class newcomers. Social interaction declined because the new housing form was physically and socially disconnected from the surrounding community (Kusumaningrum et al., 2020). A second pattern was the transformation of peri-urban areas into socially differentiated metropolitan zones. Hudalah et al. (2016) demonstrated that peri-urban gentrification in Bandung was mediated by conflicts and alliances among communities, environmental groups, developers, and state actors. In Makassar, Surya et al. (2021) found that commercial development, tourism, large-scale housing, and transportation infrastructure produced urban sprawl, segregation, and hierarchical access to services. Land-use, activity-system, and transportation changes accounted for 60.8% of the variation in environmental-quality degradation. The third empirical pattern concerned the contradictory effects of sustainability and conservation. Greening and urban renewal improved environmental and physical conditions, but these benefits were frequently accompanied by property-price increases and exclusion. Anguelovski et al. (2019) described this process as green gentrification, whereas Yazar et al. (2020) found that sustainability-oriented renewal in Istanbul displaced vulnerable residents and produced green districts affordable primarily to higher-income groups. These results show that physical improvement cannot be used as the sole indicator

of successful urban transformation. Finally, the historical-landscape evidence revealed that urban change did not uniformly eliminate earlier spatial structures. Ma and Sun (2024) identified four transformation patterns maintenance, expansion, layering, and decline in Dongxi Ancient Town. Older roads, cultural interactions, commercial activities, and built forms persisted selectively within newer spatial configurations. This finding demonstrates that cities operate as historical palimpsests in which earlier spatial layers may survive, be reinterpreted, or lose their original social functions.

Integrated Results of the Review

The evidence generated the following explanatory sequence:

Historical drivers	Spatial mechanisms	Mediating processes	Social outcomes
Colonial and postcolonial planning legacies	Land conversion and rezoning	State–capital relations	Class restructuring
Economic liberalization and property investment	Mega-projects and private development	Formal and informal governance	Displacement and exclusion
Population growth and metropolitan expansion	Peri-urbanization and settlement densification	Community adaptation and resistance	New livelihoods and social formations
Infrastructure modernization	Roads, transport corridors, and connectivity improvement	Unequal accessibility	Spatial segregation and mobility differentiation
Heritage and tourism policies	Conservation, revitalization, and adaptive reuse	Cultural valuation and commodification	Reconstructed identity and contested memory
Environmental and sustainability agendas	Parks, green infrastructure, and eco-renewal	Housing-market response	Environmental improvement and green gentrification

Overall, the review found that urban spatial transformation produced three simultaneous outcomes: material modernization, economic revalorization, and social differentiation. The direction of social change depended not only on the scale of physical intervention but also on historical land institutions, governance arrangements, community bargaining capacity, housing security, and the distribution of development benefits. Accordingly, urban space should be understood as a historically layered field of power in which modernization, inequality, identity, resistance, and adaptation evolve together.

Discussion

The principal finding of this review is that urban spatial transformation simultaneously produces material modernization, economic revalorization, and social differentiation. Physical changes in land use, infrastructure, housing, transport networks, heritage districts, and public spaces cannot be interpreted as neutral morphological developments because they redistribute accessibility, economic opportunity, political influence, and social recognition. Rodger and Rau (2020) describe this relationship as a shift in urban historiography from studying the city as a fixed physical entity toward understanding urbanization as a dynamic socio-spatial process. Thus, space functions not only as the location of social change but also as an active mechanism through which social hierarchies are reproduced, challenged, and reconstructed.

The evidence also confirms that contemporary spatial transformation is conditioned by historical path dependence. Present-day urban structures retain institutional and material traces of colonial administration, postcolonial modernization, land regulation, infrastructure investment, decentralization, and market liberalization. In Greater Jakarta, for example, mega-development did not emerge exclusively from recent market forces. It developed through historically changing relations among political elites, state institutions, global investment, and well-connected domestic developers. Herlambang et al. (2019) conceptualize this arrangement as hybrid neoliberalization because formal planning regulations coexist with informal political negotiations. Leitner and Sheppard (2018) similarly demonstrate that Jakarta's redevelopment transforms historically established kampungs and urban commons into commodified residential and commercial spaces. These findings establish urban history as an explanatory component rather than merely a chronological background. journals.

The role of informality represents another important conceptual finding. Conventional modernization theories frequently position formal planning and informal development as opposing systems. However, Caldeira (2017) shows that peripheral urbanization develops through transversal interactions among self-construction, informal markets, state regulation, infrastructure provision, and gradual legalization. Residents of urban peripheries consequently act as producers of settlements and political subjects who negotiate recognition and public services. Empirical evidence from Bandung supports this interpretation. Hudalah et al. (2016) found that peri-urban gentrification was mediated by competing cross-class coalitions involving local

residents, environmental groups, developers, and government institutions. Therefore, urban spatial outcomes are not determined entirely by capital or planning authorities; they emerge through unequal but contested relationships among multiple actors.

Nevertheless, the review indicates that community agency does not eliminate structural inequality. Eight of the 15 articles associated spatial revaluation with gentrification, displacement, or class restructuring. Dewi (2017) reported that the arrival of economically stronger migrants in Jakarta's inner-city kampungs displaced parts of the Betawi population and altered employment, education, lifestyles, and community relationships. At a finer spatial scale, Kusumaningrum et al. (2020) found that exclusive boarding houses in Kampung Paseban created physical and social dualism. Although new investment increased the economic value of the neighbourhood, the enclosed design of the boarding houses reduced interaction between newcomers and long-term residents. These results demonstrate that gentrification in Indonesian cities may occur through gradual changes in building use, tenancy, and everyday social relations rather than only through spectacular redevelopment or immediate mass eviction.

The relationship between heritage conservation and social transformation is equally complex. The Historic Urban Landscape perspective provides a more comprehensive framework than monument-based conservation because it integrates physical form, environmental context, cultural practices, memory, and community values. Ginzarly et al. (2019) emphasize that urban heritage should be embedded within wider development and governance systems. However, Rey-Pérez and Pereira Roders (2020), based on their review of 140 publications, found that theoretical engagement with the HUL approach was considerably stronger than its practical implementation. In particular, stakeholder participation, monitoring, and the consistent application of its six operational stages remained limited. This implementation gap implies that formally integrated conservation policies may still marginalize communities if cultural values are defined primarily by experts, investors, or tourism institutions.

Heritage can also become a resource for both community adaptation and capital accumulation. Arkaraprasertkul's (2018) ethnographic study in Shanghai demonstrated that the architectural distinctiveness of historic lilong housing became cultural capital for newcomers while enabling some established residents to obtain economic benefits from heritage-based demand. This negotiated outcome complicates the assumption that gentrification invariably follows a uniform sequence of middle-class arrival and working-class displacement. Ma and Sun (2024) provide a complementary historical explanation by identifying maintenance, expansion, layering, and decline as four forms of landscape transformation in Dongxi Ancient Town. Their findings suggest that older spatial structures are rarely erased completely; instead, they are selectively retained, reinterpreted, overlaid, or disconnected from their original social meanings. Cities therefore function as historical palimpsests whose material continuity may conceal significant changes in ownership, function, and cultural authority. The sustainability literature reveals a comparable contradiction between physical improvement and social justice. Anguelovski et al. (2019) argue that parks and green infrastructure can produce environmental privilege when their benefits are capitalized into property markets. Yazar et al. (2020) empirically demonstrated this process in Istanbul, where sustainability-oriented renewal improved physical and environmental conditions but displaced vulnerable residents and created districts increasingly accessible to higher-income groups. These results show that green transformation should not be evaluated solely through environmental indicators. Without housing protection, inclusive participation, and distributive safeguards, sustainability programs may transfer environmental benefits to privileged populations while relocating social and ecological vulnerability elsewhere.

The Indonesian evidence further demonstrates the value of combining spatial measurement with social interpretation. Wahyudi et al. (2019) documented extensive metropolitan expansion in Jakarta through Landsat imagery and landscape metrics, providing longitudinal evidence of built-up growth and spatial fragmentation. However, remote-sensing evidence alone cannot explain how such expansion affects identity, livelihoods, social interaction, or housing security. Surya et al. (2021) addressed this limitation through a sequential qualitative–quantitative design involving 250 respondents in Metro Tanjung Bunga. Their study connected agricultural conversion, commercial development, transport infrastructure, and large-scale housing with sprawl, segregation, multiple social formations, and declining environmental quality. The reported determination coefficient of 60.8% indicates a substantial empirical relationship between changes in land use, activity systems, transportation, and environmental degradation.

Overall, the synthesis supports a historical socio-spatial framework in which urban outcomes are generated through interactions among historical legacies, spatial interventions, governance arrangements, and

community responses. Effective urban governance must therefore move beyond project-based physical improvement toward historically informed and socially accountable transformation. Planning should combine spatial analysis with community histories, livelihood assessment, housing-security evaluation, and participatory monitoring. Such an approach recognizes that successful transformation is not demonstrated merely by new infrastructure, increased land value, or preserved architecture, but by the capacity of urban development to maintain social inclusion, cultural continuity, environmental justice, and residents' right to remain within the changing city.

CONCLUSION

This literature review concludes that urban spatial transformation is a historically embedded process that simultaneously generates physical modernization, economic revaluation, and social differentiation. The synthesis of 15 peer-reviewed articles seven of which examined Indonesian cities identified land commodification, gentrification, and displacement as the most prevalent theme, appearing in eight studies (53.3%). Governance and community participation appeared in seven studies (46.7%), while peripheral urbanization and morphological restructuring were each discussed in six studies (40.0%). Heritage, cultural memory, and environmental inequality were each represented in five studies (33.3%).

Conceptually, urban space functions not merely as a setting for social change but as an active mechanism through which power, identity, citizenship, and access to resources are reorganized. Historical legacies, state–capital relations, informal institutions, and community agency mediate the social consequences of redevelopment. Empirically, evidence from Jakarta, Bandung, Makassar, Shanghai, Istanbul, and Dongxi demonstrates that infrastructure, property development, heritage revitalization, and environmental renewal can improve spatial quality while simultaneously producing displacement, segregation, and cultural disruption. In Metro Tanjung Bunga, changes in land use, activity systems, and transportation explained 60.8% of environmental-quality degradation. Therefore, equitable urban transformation requires historically informed planning, housing protection, meaningful community participation, heritage continuity, and distributive environmental justice.

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