**Concept Intro:**

**Gentrification:** the process whereby the character of a poor urban area is changed by wealthier people moving in, improving housing, and attracting new businesses, typically displacing current inhabitants in the process.

**Urban planning/urban development:** the conscious design of city environments, which will largely determine how people will live, work, and spend leisure time there.

**Eminent domain:** the right of a government or its agent to expropriate private property for public use, with payment of compensation. (A Western legal concept perhaps also relevant elsewhere.)

**Controversy over gentrification:**

It is a transformation of a city neighborhood from “low value” to “high value”: literally, the value of real estate (land, buildings) goes up, and the area may also produce more money through business.

Many argue it is part of the process of urban renewal, contributing to the greater good.

Others see it as ruthless or exploitive because people are forced to move, and poorer people may no longer be able to afford to live in the gentrified area.

Because the process of gentrification is often stark (clearly visible, obvious), it can demonstrate:

1) the rapid change in an environment or whole society

2) the differences in values or lifestyle between different economic classes, ethnic/religious groups, or generations

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**Vocab:**

In your groups, make a list of at least 10 words or phrases from your assigned article. Create a document defining them that can be shared with the class.

If you look some up but still don’t understand their meaning, please feel free to ask me.

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**Comprehension & Reflection:**

Read the articles from *The Global Times*, *The New York Times*, and *Sixth Tone*.

Each article deals in some way with the process of residents needing to move from traditional Shikumen in Shanghai to make room for new uses for that land.

1. What is something that is distinctive or special about the Shikumen architecture or design, or the lifestyle within Shanghai’s Shikumen?

The whole life of people in Old Shanghai areas like Shikumen are completely different from new Shanghai areas. The buildings are closely packed together, the scarcity of living space leads to sharing of a lot of things such as basin and shower. The neighborhood is tightly combined and people around the neighborhood are closer with each other and have better relationship.

1. What is something you can guess about the intended readership/audience of each article?

Six tone article: young people that are interested in Chinese culture

Global article: foreigners that are interested in Chinese culture or curious about development and social processes in China.

New York Times: grown-ups who are interested in ancient archeology and the history of Shikumen.

1. Which article portrays this process most positively? Explain why, and quote directly from the article to support your answer. Why do you think this particular publication (as opposed to the other two) takes such a perspective?

Six tone. This article was talking about how life was crowded and bad before government had restructured the building and how the reconstruction improved our life qualities. In the text, “Forked Bag Corner, stinky ditch, garbage like city walls. Flies and mosquitoes darken the sky, rats running through the streets, bedbugs and cockroaches all lined up.” “chaotic era” are used to describe how life was like when residents living in traditional shikumen. And the article also pointed out that ppl’s lives became neat, fashion after the land of shikumen put into use to make room for new buildings.

In the other 2 articles. For New York times, the author is simply fair or might has an inclination of remaining those traditional buildings, and in global article, reporter also mentioned that the construction of Shikumen might has a bad influence on culture. While in six tone’s article, it mostly talking about how this process improve people’s life quality.

1. What is one thing the *New York Times* article suggests will be “lost” when the Shikumen are torn down or repurposed? Try to explain in your own words. What is something this might reflect about that newspaper’s values or political views?

The local culture, the unique characteristic that formed with the contribution of living circumstances which highly influence people’s mind and habit. As the article has mentioned: Man builds architecture and architecture builds the man. The demolition and relocation of traditional shikumen will destroy the root of the Shanghainese character.

1. If your childhood home was torn down to make room for new construction, would you feel it as a great personal loss, or would it not matter all that much to you?

I will feel it as a great personal loss because I used to feel the linkage between each other but now I cannot. One of the deepest happiness are cutting off and might be forgotten in a long period of time.

On the other hand, people who live in apartment and other buildings hardly connect with each other. I would like a cozier atmosphere in my neighborhood rather than a neighborhood consists of strangers.

1. Which is more appealing to you personally about downtown Shanghai (and similar areas): the ability to observe and visit heritage sites such as traditional Shikumen, or the ability to visit trendy or unique cafes and restaurants (such as Blue Bottle Coffee)?

I am new to Shanghai, but on the weekend I went to take an exam at a meeting place located in an old street next to Sun Zhongshan’s home, it’s a cozy and lovely old street where I can rest myself.

1. If you had to argue that one of these articles was biased or didn’t give a full and accurate picture of the situation, which would it be? Explain why.

Six tone. Because Six tone only talks about one side of residents moving from traditional Shikumen in Shanghai to provide space for new uses of the land. It is written by individuals who is beneficial from this process, thus, it’s not objective which means it does not reflect the shortage and bad consequence caused by the choice.

1. Did reading any of these articles persuade you to think in a new way or form an opinion on a topic you had not considered before? (Since it’s unlikely you’ve thought about these topics much before, there must be some opinion you’ve formed, even if you don’t feel fully persuaded by any particular article.)

It is not surprising that movement of residents cause a lot of consequences including both good and bad side. Every coin has two sides and the tendency of the day might lead society to process through a distinct road while something must occur which might hinder the trend.

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**Research Component:**

A.

Each of these articles focuses on Shanghai.

Find an article that deals with the topic of gentrification or urban development in an Anglophone country. (New York City in the US would be a good example.)

1. Post a link to the article and briefly summarize its content, including its main point.
2. Based on this article or other research, what is a controversial aspect of gentrification in an Anglophone city? What is something an Anglophone city is doing to help deal with some of the negative consequences of gentrification

OR

B.

The Sixth Tone article describes “Forked Bag Corner” and details some aspects of its history, including some ways it has reflected the changes in the city and country.

1. Look up one particular building, neighborhood, or club/restaurant/business/institution that has been in Shanghai for a long time (e.g. since before the 1950s). Read about its history and how it may have changed over time. Prepare a link, some notes, and some images to share with the class to help familiarize them with this. Prepare to help explain it to the class (can be done from your desk; doesn’t need to be a formal presentation).