

Report

Conference Report: EARCAG 2025, Fukuoka

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The 11th East Asian Regional Conference in Alternative Geography (EARCAG 2025) took place at Fukuoka and Osaka, Japan, from February 11 to 15, 2025. Centered on the theme **“Territorial Justice in Times of Polycrisis: Perspectives from East Asia and Beyond,”** the event gathered about 150 participants from East Asia, Europe, and North America.

The term *polycrisis* framed the conference’s discussions of overlapping global challenges—climate change, geopolitical tension, digital transformation, and social inequality—and their spatial consequences. “Territorial justice” served as the unifying theme: how current power relations power are distributed across (urban) spaces, infrastructures, and communities.

The program began with a field trip in Fukuoka’s Tenjin and Hakata CBD areas to witness the ongoing urban redevelopment projects that are to maintain the city’s extraordinary population growth tract (Figure 1). We also visited the inner-city-like spaces in between, such as the newly emerging popular spaces in and around Haruyoshi and the night economy scene in Sumiyoshi. We ended with a post-conference excursion to Osaka, including the Expo 2025 redevelopment sites and newly emerging ethnic spaces in Nishinari and Ikuno Ward (Figure 2).



Figure 1: Group photo in front of Hakata Station



Figure 2: Excursion venue in Osaka (Ikuno Park)

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Between these excursions, three days of presentations addressed themes such as **care and everyday life, migration and precarity, infrastructure and mobility, new concepts for urban redevelopment, the translation of geographical knowledge, and digital and cyber geographies**, all with a strong focus on the East Asian context. A unifying current across sessions was the emphasis on local resilience, people's ingenuity, and spatial transformation. Case studies of grassroots activism, participatory mapping, and alternative urbanism showcased the creative strategies communities employ in times of crisis. This focus on praxis reflected EARCAG's broader commitment not only to radical critique but also to imagining alternative forms of place-making. The conference was hosted by Kyushu University's Graduate School of Integrated Sciences for Global Society, with support from the Human Geography section of the Japanese Geographical Society and *Kakenhi* projects (#22K01047, #23K20548).

At the start of each conference day, we had keynote speakers who shared their expertise perspectives on the overall theme:

Takashi Yamazaki (Osaka Metropolitan University) explored the concept of *territorial justice*, tracing its philosophical roots and development within critical and political geography. Using Okinawa as a case study, he argued that political narratives often legitimize territorial injustice and called for stronger theoretical foundations to link spatial justice with the lived realities of post-colonial territories.

Christian Schmid (ETH Zürich) discussed *planetary urbanization* and the need for new vocabularies to understand contemporary space. He argued that urbanization now extends far beyond city boundaries, producing hybrid and

uneven territories. Schmid urged to rethink what counts as "urban" and to study the spatial characteristics emerging in these expanded, crisis-ridden landscapes without merely depending on established concepts such as gentrification.

Takashi Nakazawa (Meiji University) examined *population decline as a crisis of capitalism*, focusing on Japan's regional revitalization policies. He contended that demographic shrinkage exposes capitalism's dependence on reproductive labor, which neither the state nor the market can easily control. Nakazawa warned that extreme capitalist attempts to commodify the human reproduction for renewed rounds of growth risk deepening inequality and diminishing free will.

Despite its breadth, the conference maintained a coherent focus on how various territorial forms and scales—material, digital, and social—are being renegotiated amid overlapping emergencies. In overall, EARCAG 2025 succeeded in maintaining a shared commitment to critical, situated, and just geographies informed by East Asian and other regions (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Group photo in the conference room

Further details about the conference are available at <https://sites.google.com/view/earcag-2025-fukuoka>

