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A multitude of tenure forms in South East Asia

It is a delicate task to try and characterise housing in south East Asia. As for many other characteristics on the state of things, images of housing become stereotype and antiquated. If you visited Beijing ten years ago, you probably will feel lost if you return today. Housing construction is booming in most mega cities in South East Asia, and they all seem to compete with Manhattan. Urbanisation is rapid; sons and daughters of farmers leave their homes for an expected better life in the cities. Not all, but most of them end up renting poor accommodation or squeeze in with others. And millions end up in squatter settlements, on dumps, under expressways and along railroad tracks.

But there is also a growing well educated middle class, which attracts American, Australian and European manufacturers of especially high-tech goods. And, as elsewhere,

these people prefer homeownership. But on the other hand, in cities where land is very limited, as in Tokyo, Singapore and Hong Kong, the public and rental housing sector is substantial – nevertheless with very different designs. Over one third of the households in Tokyo rent their flats, mainly from private landlords. Also, housing provided by the employer still contributes to the multiplicity of tenure forms.

Hong Kong may perhaps be the only city in the region that has a housing policy that resembles those in Europe, the US and Australia – which of course is a legacy from the 100 years of British rule.

Housing and population censuses have been carried out quite recently in most countries. The figures are there, which can to some extent serve as material for comparison. But unfortunately there is no column for “homeless”.

Tenure forms, and distribution (per cent of total stock), in South East Asia.

Country	Owner occupied	Rental, total	Public/municipal rental	Private rental	Employer provided	Others	Year
Taiwan ¹	9	12	3	9	6	3	2000
Singapore ²	20					80 ³	2003
Hong Kong ⁴	56 ⁵	44	31	13			2002
Philippines ⁶	41 ⁷	4				4 ⁸	1990
Malaysia ⁹	85	13	7	6		2	1998
Vietnam, Hanoi ¹⁰	78	22	15	7			2001
Thailand ¹¹	82	18				5	2000
Bangkok ¹²	54	41					1998
China, Peoples Rep. ¹³	47	46				7 ¹⁴	1996
Japan ¹⁵	60	34	7	27	4	2	1998
Macau ¹⁶	76,5	18,9			4,6		2001
Korea, rep of Seoul ¹⁷	41	16				41 ¹⁸	2000

¹ Census 2000

² HDB, Singapore

³ 80 % referred to as public/municipal housing, of which 94 % is owner occupied and 6 % is rental housing.

⁴ Hong Kong yearbook 2002

⁵ of which 28 % (2000) was private rental.

⁶ 1990 Census. 51 % is referred to as countryside housing

⁷ being amortized

⁸ being occupied for free, with consent of owner

⁹ UN Human Settlements Indicators.

¹⁰ Asian Dev. Bank 2001

¹¹ Census 2000

¹² Statistics Norway, 2002

¹³ Source: 1996 Survey

¹⁴ 4,1 % free housing, 3,5 others

¹⁵ Housing and land Survey of Japan, 1998

¹⁶ Census 2001, DSEC, gov.

¹⁷ Korean National Statistics Office, Census 2000

¹⁸ so called *jonsei* housing (rented housing on deposit basis)