



# Trapped:

## The unfortunate reality of subdivided housing in Hong Kong



Although Hong Kong is a global center of wealth, the reality for many residents in this city is juxtaposed to the region's image of prosperity. While the lifestyles of some affluent Hong Kong residents are lavish, life for millions is filled with struggle and financial insecurity. In fact, the struggle to find housing impacts nearly half of the population (Hong Kong Housing Authority, 2017). The lack of affordable and adequate housing in Hong Kong coupled with the increasing demand for living spaces has led to the growth of a phenomenon known as subdivided housing. Traditional subdivided housing refers to the division of a standard apartment into multiple dwellings in order to maximize the number of people who can occupy a small space. Another form of less common subdivided housing, known as "bedspace apartments" or "cage homes," are bed sized rental spaces resembling animal cages that are often found in dilapidated factories and abandoned buildings. With astronomical rental rates in the private market and a lack of supply in the public market, hundreds of thousands of people in Hong Kong are left with no other option than to live in these types of inadequate housing arrangements (Ng, 2017).

Subdivided housing offers an opportunity for those with no other viable shelter option, but general livelihood is severely affected by the state of these residences. Makeshift wiring, lack of proper ventilation, and insect infestation are a just a few of the repercussions that arise when these facilities are constructed with no regard for building codes (Buildings Department, 2017).

The cramped living spaces pose a hazard to all residents, yet the health and safety for tens of thousands subdivided housing residents is not accounted for. While government programs, such as Public Rental Housing (PRH), have provided affordable housing for some low-income individuals, the system has not been sufficient to solve the housing crisis. In Hong Kong, many are denied the service or are forced to wait up to ten years to acquire public housing (Zhao, 2016). Furthermore, the government has been largely criticized for their inaction on the issue. Their lack of rent control and failure to enforce landlord-tenant agreements in the past decade has not held people who are perpetuating

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SHORT

**ACADEMIC DIVISION:**

this problem accountable, allowing for the growth of subdivided housing (Ngo, 2013). Due to the negative reception of current government policy and the need for adequate housing across Hong Kong, non-governmental organizations have emerged and are currently at the forefront of developing methods to address this issue. My research explores the different initiatives by non-governmental organizations and how they have collaborated with one another in recent years. In order to rectify the crisis of subdivided housing, it is imperative to understand how different stakeholders can come together to address this matter.

Taken from:

# Vocabulary:

**Trapped:**

The unfortunate reality of subdivided housing in Hong Kong

**Trapped:** Atrapado

**Stakeholders:** Partes interesadas

**Wealth:** Riqueza

**Lavish:** Lujoso

**Struggle:** Lucha

**Lack of:** Falta de

**Growth:** Crecimiento

**Dwellings:** Viviendas

**Dilapidated:** Ruinas

**Supply:** Oferta