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2025 Annual Indices for Expatriates and Ordinary Residents on Cost of Living, Wages and Purchasing Power for the World's Major Cities

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2025 Annual Indices for Expatriates and Ordinary Residents on Cost of Living, Wages and Purchasing Power for the World's Major Cities

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Abstract: This working paper is part of ACI's Cost of Living Project, which has been ongoing since 2014. The project has been publishing indices and rankings at the city level since its inception. It analyses the differences in the cost of living between expatriates and ordinary residents, as well as the purchasing power of ordinary residents. The Cost of Living Project has relied on EIU's data ever since its inception, but the 2024 data is the last edition of the EIU data, as the EIU has discontinued its Cost of Living Survey for 2025 and beyond. This paper finds that the most expensive cities for expatriates are concentrated in North America and Western Europe, with Singapore and Hong Kong as exceptions. In contrast, the least expensive cities are more geographically diverse, spanning South America, Asia, and Eastern Europe. For ordinary residents, cities in developed regions tend to have a higher cost of living due to wage disparities and the pricing of non-traded goods and services. In contrast, the cost of living of expatriates is influenced more by exchange rate fluctuations and global trade factors, leading to no clear geographical pattern. Due to data limitations, the wages and purchasing power indices presented are based on 2023 data. Ordinary residents in more expensive cities have higher purchasing power because of their relatively higher wages. The introduction of purchasing power, therefore, facilitates a more comprehensive analysis of affordability in cities.

Keywords: Inflation, Cost of Living, Wages, Purchasing Power

Introduction

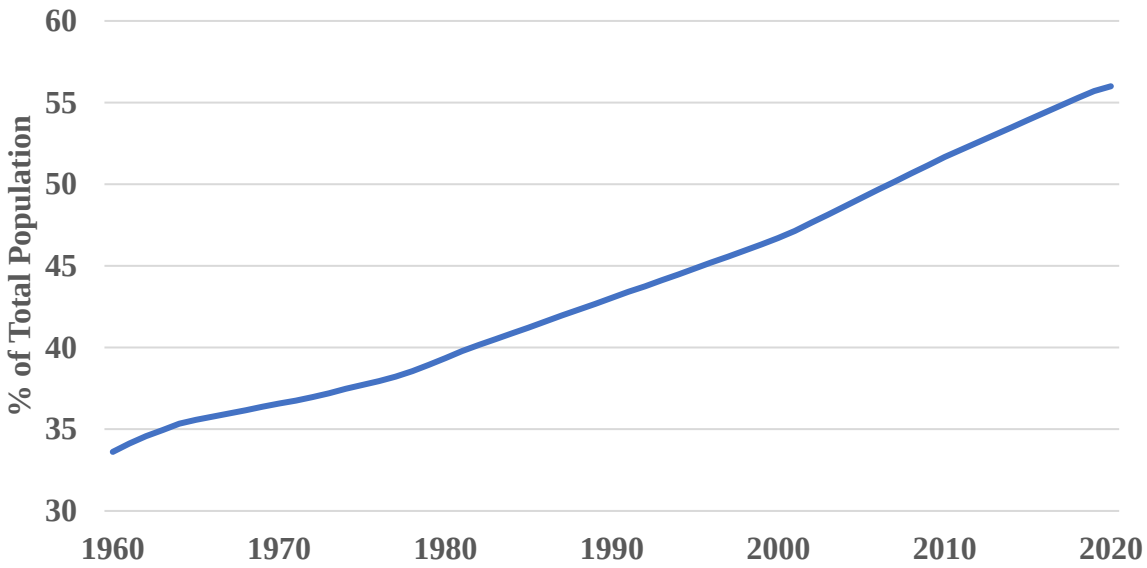
Urbanisation and globalisation are two defining forces that have profoundly transformed the world economy. Urbanisation is on the rise, as seen in Figure 1; there is an upward trend in the percentage of the world's urban population. Since 2007, more than half of the world's population has lived in urban areas. The World Bank predicts that by 2045, six billion people – nearly two billion more than today – will reside in cities. By 2050, the proportion of people living in cities will have increased to a staggering 68% of the world's population (World Bank 2018).

This trend implies that more and more economic activity is now being shifted towards the cities, which have become key drivers of growth. Some megacities now rival entire countries in economic performance. Cities serve as engines of innovation and productivity, concentrating human capital, infrastructure, and technology to enhance efficiency and competitiveness. The rural-to-urban shift has also expanded industries such as manufacturing, finance, and digital services, fostering economic dynamism. Cities now account for a significant share of global GDP. Estimates vary: Oxford Economics (2024) revealed that in 2023, the 1,000 largest cities in the world accounted for 60% of global GDP and over 30% of the world's population. World Bank (2023) estimates that cities produce around 80% of the global GDP with 56% of the world's population – an influence that is expected to persist.

While globalization has long been a defining force, recent technological advancements in communication and transportation have accelerated its impact. Enhanced mobility has deepened economic interconnectivity, enabling businesses to decentralize production through Global Value Chains (GVCs). This has allowed firms to optimize profits by distributing manufacturing across multiple locations, a historically unprecedented shift. International migration, another key aspect of enhanced mobility, continues to grow strong. The number of international migrants increased from 275.3 million in 2020 to 304 million in 2024, reflecting a 10.4% growth (United Nations 2024). Migration is a predominantly urban phenomenon with studies such Monras (2023) and Albert and Monras (2022) showing that most immigrants settle in cities due to better employment and earnings opportunities.

The expanding urban population presents opportunities for multinational corporations (MNCs) while intensifying competition among cities seeking to attract investment. Cities that integrate into GVCs stand to gain economic advantages. Competition among cities is expected to intensify due to rising protectionism (World Bank 2018), the shift towards remote work and hybrid workforce models (Brandes 2024; Switek 2024), and rapid advancement in artificial intelligence (Cowen 2023).

Figure 1: Share of the World's Urban Population With Respect to Total Population (1960 – 2020)



Source: World Bank

With increasing urbanization and globalization, studies on cities—particularly cost of living, wages, and purchasing power—have gained significance. Cost of living reflects the expenses needed to maintain a certain standard of living and is crucial for multinational corporations (MNCs) and expatriates when considering relocation. Beyond this, purchasing power, which balances wages and living costs, serves as an indicator of residents' well-being and economic stability. Cities with high costs and declining purchasing power, such as Hong Kong and parts of Western Europe, have faced social unrest (Tan 2020; Tan et al. 2020).

For policymakers, such studies offer insights into living conditions and economic challenges, helping assess whether wages keep pace with rising costs, particularly in housing, transport, education, and healthcare. Understanding these dynamics enables informed policy adjustments to improve residents' quality of life and enhance city competitiveness.

MNCs will benefit as such studies help them optimise their profits by forecasting the potential costs required to set up an operation in a particular city. In addition, the study of the cost of living for expatriates, together with the study on the cost of living, wages and purchasing power for ordinary residents in a particular city, will provide MNCs with the information required to allocate human resources effectively. Meanwhile, policymakers will also be able to observe their city's competitiveness relative to other cities and tailor their policies accordingly.

For academics, separate analyses of expatriates and ordinary residents broaden research opportunities. Unlike commercial cost-of-living surveys by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), Mercer, and UBS, which primarily inform expatriate compensation, this study takes a more rigorous approach, focusing on ordinary residents' economic conditions. Since expatriates and locals have different consumption patterns, relying solely on expatriate cost-of-living data for policy analysis would be misleading. Similarly, while the Consumer Price Index (CPI) tracks inflation nationally, no standardized index measures city-level cost of living.

This study addresses that gap by analysing the cost of living, wages, and purchasing power across 103 major cities worldwide, spanning Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe, and the Americas. The cities analysed align with previous urban economic studies and are similar to those analysed in Ng and Xie (2025). This working paper is part of ACI's Cost of Living Project, which has been ongoing since 2014 and has been publishing indices and rankings at the city level since its inception. The Cost of Living Project has relied on EIU's data ever since its inception, but the 2024 data is the last edition of the EIU data, as the EIU has discontinued its Cost of Living Survey for 2025 and beyond. The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews the literature, Section 3 outlines data and methodology, Section 4 presents the 2024 cost of living indices, Section 5 discusses findings, and Section 6 concludes.

Literature Review

The theoretical basis of the cost of living index dates back to Konus (1939), with further methodological insights provided by Pollak (1990); Diewert and Nakamura (1993) and Triplett (2001). Triplett (2001) defines the cost of living index as a price index that measures the change in consumption costs required to maintain a constant standard of living. The index may include the costs of all variables that affect the standard of living, or it may be conditional on some variables that are kept constant for the construction of the index. Economists may substitute "standard of living" in the above definition for other terms such as "constant utility", or as in Blackorby and Russell (1978), the same "indifference surface".

At the national level, national statistical agencies may construct the CPI as a cost of living index although interestingly, this is not always the case. Triplett (2001) notes that while some countries, such as the United States, view the CPI as a reflection of household living costs, others distinguish it from a true cost of living index. Hill (1997) supports this distinction, arguing that CPI, as an inflation measure, tracks changes in a fixed basket of goods and services with fixed weightings over time. In contrast, a cost of living index accounts for changes in the composition and weightings of necessary goods and services to maintain constant utility. Despite academic debates, the public, media, policymakers, and even some economists frequently use CPI as a national-level cost of living measure, blurring the conceptual distinction between the two indices.

Internationally, city-level cost of living and purchasing power indices are often published by commercial research houses. These surveys receive much public attention and often generate emotional reactions, especially in cities ranked among the most expensive. Major commercial studies include the following:

- **UBS Prices and Earnings Report**: Published every three years by the Wealth Management Department of UBS, this report provides price level indices for expatriates, gross hourly wages, and a purchasing power index. The price indices are based on a consumption basket reflecting the spending habits of a European family of three, applied uniformly across all cities.
- **EIU Worldwide Cost of Living Study**: Updated annually, this study offers cost of living indices and rankings for expatriates. It uses a single set of international weights for goods and services commonly consumed by international business professionals. with New York as the base city.

- **Mercer annual Cost of Living Survey**: Now in its 30th edition, Mercer's survey ranks cities by expatriate cost of living but does not publish index values.

Commercial cost of living reports are primarily designed to assist multinational corporations (MNCs) in structuring expatriate compensation packages. Consequently, they are not suitable for policy analysis concerning ordinary urban residents, as expatriates typically exhibit Western consumption preferences that prioritize high-end goods and lifestyle products—preferences that differ significantly from those of local residents.

While commercial studies assume a uniform consumption pattern for expatriates due to their professional and social environments, this assumption does not hold for ordinary residents. Local consumption habits are influenced by geographic, social, and cultural factors, making it inappropriate to generalize expatriate cost of living data for the broader population. Relying on commercial reports to assess the "general" cost of living risks significantly overstating actual living expenses for ordinary residents.

Commercial studies may also suffer from serious methodological weaknesses and data inaccuracies. Tan et al. (2016) highlighted substantial discrepancies in the data used in the 2009 UBS *Prices and Earnings* report which overstated the cost of living in Singapore, even for expatriates. The report claimed that the prices for home electronics and household appliances in Singapore were above that in Mumbai, which was counterintuitive, as Indian visitors tend to spend twice as much on electronics as the average tourist in Singapore (Singapore Tourism Board 2013). Regarding dining out, the 2009 UBS report put Singapore's price level slightly above that of many Western European cities, including Paris, even though the latter are known for their expensive restaurant meals.

More importantly, the same study made some simplistic assumptions in calculating its reported indices and rankings. It used a common occupation profile based on global averages to derive the average wage in each city. This occupation profile severely understated the percentage of Professionals, Managers, Executives and Technicians (PMETs) and overstated the share of Productions, Transportation Operators and General Labours (PTOGLs) and Clericals, Sales and Service Workers (CSRWs) in Singapore. The percentage of PMETs assumed by UBS in the 2009 report, which was made available upon request, was 9%. This was much lower than Singapore's actual percentage of 52% as reported by Singapore's Ministry of Manpower. Meanwhile, Singapore residents' share of PTOGLs and CSRWs in 2009 was both at 24%, lower than UBS' assumed figures of 58% and 33%, respectively. Due to these mismatches, the 2009 UBS report understated the average wage levels in Singapore.[1] The net result is that when divided by the UBS' cost of living index, which overstated the true cost of living in Singapore, purchasing power in the city-state was severely understated.[2]

The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) Worldwide Cost of Living survey is also problematic due to its sensitivity to the choice of the base city. Since EIU benchmarks cost of living indices against New York, the rankings may shift significantly if a different base city, such as Tokyo

[1] The UBS also appeared to have excluded contributions to the Central Provident Fund (CPF)– Singapore's defined contribution social security system – from their calculation of wages. This exacerbated the understatement of wages in Singapore because CPF contributions are also used extensively for housing, medical and educational expenses prior to retirement. Hence, they should be treated as part of wages. See Tan et al. (2016) for a detailed discussion.

[2] Tan and Vu (2011) revised the 2009 UBS estimates for Singapore using appropriate methodologies and data. They found significant differences from the original results.

or London, were used. This raises concerns about the consistency and robustness of the research findings.

These issues demonstrate that commercial research reports should not be used beyond their intended purpose of designing expatriate compensation packages. Even when used for expatriate-related decisions, their methodological limitations require scrutiny. At the same time, academic literature has not sufficiently addressed the measurement of the cost of living at the city level, leaving a significant research gap. The Asia Competitiveness Institute (ACI) aims to fill this gap by developing a more rigorous and comprehensive approach to analyzing the cost of living, wages, and purchasing power in cities worldwide.

Data & Methodology

Data

The construction of the cost of living and purchasing power indices relies on data from a variety of sources, including price data, exchange rates, and item weights. Price data are primarily obtained from the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) CityData database, which provides annual price data in local currency for the study period from 2005 to 2024. For the Miscellaneous Goods & Services Category, price data are sourced from the Services category in the UBS *Prices and Earnings* study. The UBS study reports data in US dollars and is conducted every three years, with data from 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018 used in the study. All local currency price data are converted to US dollars to enable international comparison. Exchange rates are required to convert price and wage data into a common currency. The annual average exchange rates, expressed as local currency units per dollar, are collected from the Bank for International Settlements (BIS). This approach smooths the effects of daily fluctuations in currency markets. Item weights for the indices are derived from the World Bank's International Comparison Program (ICP) survey, EIU CityData and household expenditure surveys from various countries. The ICP survey is conducted every six years, and data from the 2005, 2011, 2017, and 2021 editions are utilised. The weights range from zero to one and sum to unity, reflecting the relative importance of various items in the indices.

Data on the inflation rate, nominal expenditure per capita and real expenditure per capita are used to construct the Cost of Living Index for Ordinary Residents as part of the adjustment factors, which will be explained in detail in Xie, Lee, and Chua (2020). Inflation rates, calculated from the Consumer Price Index (CPI) of each country, are sourced primarily from the World Bank's World Development Indicators. Wages and working hours data are obtained from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which compiles its data from various sources, leading to differences in the availability and definition of data across countries. This study uses national-level data on both the gross average nominal monthly wages (reported in local currency) and mean weekly hours actually worked. The latest wage data from ILO is 2023, so only 2023 results for wages and purchasing power indices and rankings are published.

Methodology

This section details the Asia Competitiveness Institute's (ACI) framework for tracking expatriates and ordinary residents' cost of living across 103 major cities from 2005 to 2024. The framework for tracking the cost of living for expatriates is based on over 280 prices for

165 goods and services per city, forming the Cost of Living Index for Expatriates. It assumes expatriates prefer Western consumption patterns and high-end products. The cost of living is categorized into 10 Consumption Categories for a systematic analysis: (1) Food & Non-Alcoholic Beverages, (2) Alcohol & Tobacco, (3) Clothing, (4) Housing Rents & Utilities, (5) Household Supplies & Domestic Help, (6) Health, (7) Transport, (8) Recreation, (9) Education, and (10) Miscellaneous Goods & Services.

New York has been selected as the base city for this study, aligning with global standards in cost-of-living analyses. As a widely recognized benchmark, New York's index values are fixed at 100.00. The Cost of Living Index for Expatriates is a summary measure covering all 10 Consumption Categories. Higher index values indicate higher living costs for expatriates, while lower values reflect reduced expenses. Cities with an index above (or below) 100.00 signify higher (or lower) costs relative to New York. Cities are ranked in descending order of their Cost of Living Index, with the top-ranked cities being the most expensive. Additionally, category-specific indices and rankings offer detailed insights into living costs across various expenditure categories. The Cost of Living Index for Expatriates in city *m*, country *C* is computed according to Equation 1 as follows:

$$\text{Cost of Living Index for Expatriates in city } m = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} P_{C,m,i} \times W_i}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} P_{US,NY,i} \times W_i} \times 100 \quad (1)$$

where
m = city;
C = the country where city *m* is located in;
NY = New York;
US = United States;
i = item;
n = number of items in the consumption basket for expatriates;
$P_{C,m,i}$ = average price of item *i* in city *m* of country C;
W_i = weight of item *i* within Cost of Living Index for Expatriates.

The Cost of Living Index for Expatriates is constructed using two key inputs, the average prices, $P_{C,m,i}$, and the weights data, W_i. The weights, reflecting a fixed consumption pattern based on Western preferences for high-end products, are identical across all cities and sum to one ($\sum_{i=1}^{n} W_i = 1$).

The average price of an item *i* in city *m* of country *C*, denoted as $P_{C,m,i}$, is calculated by averaging multiple price points collected for the same item within the city from various establishments, including supermarkets, branded stores and chain outlets. All prices are converted into US dollars using the annual average exchange rate to enable cross-country comparisons with New York as the base city.

After calculating the average price of each item in each city m (denominated in US dollars), we can combine these $P_{C,m,i}$ with their respective weights, W_i, to obtain the Cost of Living Index for Expatriates in each city using Equation 1. The index measures the cost of the full

consumption basket for expatriates in city *m* relative to New York, where the index is fixed at 100.00. The Cost of Living Ranking for Expatriates is derived by arranging cities in descending order of their index values. Higher index values indicate greater living expenses and correspond to higher rankings, while lower values reflect lower expenses and rankings.

ACI's cost of living for ordinary residents framework provides a comprehensive and systematic approach to analyzing the cost of living across cities. Similar to the expatriate framework, it categorizes expenses into 10 Consumption Categories. New York serves as the base city, with other cities benchmarked against it. New York is chosen as the benchmark due to its global significance and its frequent use in similar cost-of-living studies. The index values of New York are always 100.00.

The Cost of Living Index for Ordinary Residents serves as a summary measure of the overall cost of living in each city, incorporating the 10 ACI Consumption Categories. A higher Cost of Living Index indicates that a city is more expensive for ordinary residents, while a lower index signifies a lower cost of living. Cities with a Cost of Living Index above 100.00 are more costly than New York, whereas those below 100.00 are more affordable in comparison. To provide a clearer perspective, a ranking of cities based on their Cost of Living Index is produced, arranging them in descending order. Cities at the top of the ranking are the most expensive, while those at the bottom have the lowest cost of living.

The Cost of Living Index for Ordinary Residents in city *m*, country *C* is computed according to Equation 2 as follows:

$$\text{Cost of Living Index for Ordinary Residents in city } m = \frac{\mathrm{CP}_{\mathrm{C,m}}^{\mathrm{EIU}} \times \frac{\mathrm{NP}_{\mathrm{C}}^{\mathrm{ICP}}}{\mathrm{NP}_{\mathrm{C}}^{\mathrm{EIU}}}}{\mathrm{CP}_{\mathrm{US,NY}}^{\mathrm{EIU}} \times \frac{\mathrm{NP}_{\mathrm{US}}^{\mathrm{ICP}}}{\mathrm{NP}_{\mathrm{US}}^{\mathrm{EIU}}}} \times 100 \quad (2)$$

where
m = city;
C = the country where city *m* is located in;
NY = New York;
US = United States;
$\mathrm{CP}_{\mathrm{C,m}}^{\mathrm{EIU}} = \sum_{\mathrm{i}=1}^{\mathrm{n}} \mathrm{P}_{\mathrm{C,m,i}} \times \mathrm{W}_{\mathrm{C,i}}$ (Equation 3);
i = item;
n = number of items in the consumption basket;
$\mathrm{P}_{\mathrm{C,m,i}}$ = average price of item *i* in city *m* of country *C*;
$\mathrm{W}_{\mathrm{C,i}}$ = weight of item *i* within Cost of Living Index for Ordinary Residents in country C;
$\mathrm{NP}_{\mathrm{C}}^{\mathrm{ICP}} = \frac{\text{index of nominal expenditure per capita for country C}}{\text{index of real expenditure per capita for country C}}$;
$\text{index of nominal expenditure per capita for country C} = \frac{\text{nominal expenditure per capita for country C}}{\text{nominal expenditure per capita of the world}}$;
$\text{index of real expenditure per capita for country C} = \frac{\text{real expenditure per capita for country C}}{\text{real expenditure per capita of the world}}$;
$\mathrm{NP}_{\mathrm{C}}^{\mathrm{EIU}}$ = mean $\mathrm{CP}_{\mathrm{C,m}}^{\mathrm{EIU}}$ from all cities within country *C*.

The Cost of Living Index for Ordinary Residents consists of three main components: $CP_{C,m}^{EIU}$, NP_C^{ICP} , and NP_C^{EIU}. Firstly, $CP_{C,m}^{EIU}$ is constructed using the average price of each item, $P_{C,m,i}$, and its respective weight. For ordinary residents, the weight of each item, $W_{C,i}$, are country-specific as they reflect the different consumption patterns of ordinary residents in each country. The weights of all items that together describe the total cost of living in each city sum to unity. In mathematical expression, $\sum_{i=1}^{n} W_{C,i} = 1$. As for prices, data treatment is similar, i.e. first, take an average of all prices collected from the various sales locations for the same item in each city. These average prices (denominated in local currency) are then converted to US dollars for international comparability. The prices and weights are then combined using Equation 3 to obtain $CP_{C,m}^{EIU}$:

$$CP_{C,m}^{EIU} = \sum_{i=1}^{n} P_{C,m,i} \times W_{C,i} \quad (3)$$

where
m = city;
C = the country where city *m* is located in;
i = item;
n = number of items in the consumption basket;
$P_{C,m,i}$ = average price of item *i* in city *m* of country *C*;
$W_{C,i}$ = weight of item *i* within Cost of Living Index for Ordinary Residents in country *C*.

$CP_{C,m}^{EIU}$ represents the cost of living index for ordinary residents who purchase goods and services consumed by expatriates but follow their own consumption patterns. As the EIU data reflects the prices and consumption behaviour of expatriates at the city level while World Bank International Comparison Programme (ICP) data represents ordinary residents at the national level, some adjustment factors need to be introduced to $CP_{C,m}^{EIU}$ in order to construct the Cost of Living Index for Ordinary Residents. We thus use two adjustment factors, namely NP_C^{ICP} and NP_C^{EIU}. Further details on these factors can be found in Xie, Lee, and Chua (2020). In sum, the Cost of Living Index for Ordinary Residents reflects the cost of consuming all goods and services in the consumption basket of ordinary residents living in the city m relative to those in New York. With New York chosen as the base city, the Cost of Living Index for Ordinary Residents in New York will always be 100.00.

Lastly, the Cost of Living Ranking for Ordinary Residents is generated by arranging the Cost of Living Index for Ordinary Residents in each city in descending order. A city which is more expensive (cheaper) for ordinary residents to live in will have a larger (smaller) Cost of Living Index and thus occupy a higher (lower) position in the Cost of Living Ranking for Ordinary Residents.

Computation of Wages and Purchasing Power Indices

Beyond the cost of living, the study also examines the wages earned by ordinary residents. Specifically, the gross average hourly wage for residents in 103 cities is computed and

converted into the Wages Index for Ordinary Residents. Cities where residents earn higher hourly wages are assigned a higher Wages Index, while those with lower wages receive a lower index. A Wages Index greater than 100.00 indicates that ordinary residents in those cities earn more than their counterparts in New York for an hour's work, while an index below 100.00 means they earn less. Similar to the Cost of Living Index, cities are ranked based on their Wages Index, with those at the top offering the highest wages on average and those at the bottom paying the least.

The Wages Index for Ordinary Residents is computed according to Equation 4 as follows:

$$\text{Wages Index for Ordinary Residents in city m} = \frac{\text{gross hourly wage}_{\text{C,m}}}{\text{gross hourly wage}_{\text{US,NY}}} \times 100 \quad (4)$$

where
m = city;
C = the country where city m is located in;
NY = New York;
US = United States;

$$\text{gross hourly wage}_{\text{C,m}} = \frac{\text{monthly wages}_{\text{C}} \times 12}{\text{mean weekly hours actually worked}_{\text{C}} \times 52} \quad (5);$$

$\text{monthly wages}_{\text{C}}$ = monthly wages in country C;
$\text{mean weekly hours actually worked}_{\text{C}}$ = mean weekly hours actually worked in country C.

The Wages Index for Ordinary Residents is constructed using two inputs: gross average nominal monthly wages and the mean weekly hours actually worked. Monthly wage data, sourced from the ILO database, are converted into US dollars using yearly average exchange rates obtained from the BIS. Mean weekly hours worked data are also from the ILO, specifically the series "mean weekly hours actually worked per employed person by sex and economic activity." As the ILO provides data only at the national level, cities within the same country are assumed to share the same values.

The monthly wages and mean weekly hours actually worked are combined using the following Equation 5 to compute the gross hourly wage in each city.

$$\text{gross hourly wage}_{C,m} = \frac{\text{monthly wages}_{\text{C}} \times 12}{\text{mean weekly hours actually worked}_{\text{C}} \times 52} \quad (5)$$

The gross hourly wage of each city is then divided by the gross hourly wage of New York to obtain the Wages Index for Ordinary Residents as shown in Equation 4. The Wages Index for Ordinary Residents compares the gross hourly wages of residents in a given city to those in New York, the base city, where the index is fixed at 100.00. The Wages Ranking for Ordinary Residents is derived by arranging cities in descending order of their Wages Index, with higher wages corresponding to higher rankings. Following the ILO's update of wage data for 2005 –

2023, the Wages Index and Rankings were re-estimated for all 103 cities, leading to differences from Chua and Xie (2022).

Having analysed both the cost of living and wage levels, it is useful to compare these figures to assess the purchasing power of ordinary residents across cities. The Purchasing Power Index for Ordinary Residents measures how many baskets of goods and services a resident in a given city can afford per hour of work, relative to those in New York. Cities where residents can afford more goods and services per hour have a higher Purchasing Power Index, while those with lower affordability have a smaller index. A Purchasing Power Index greater than 100.00 indicates higher purchasing power compared to New York, while an index below 100.00 reflects lower purchasing power. To further illustrate these differences, a ranking is generated, arranging cities in descending order based on their Purchasing Power Index, with the top-ranked cities offering the highest purchasing power and those at the bottom having the lowest.

The Purchasing Power Index for Ordinary Residents is constructed using two inputs, the Wages Index for Ordinary Residents as defined in Equation 4 and the Cost of Living Index for Ordinary Residents as defined in Equation 2. It can be obtained by simply dividing the Wages Index with the Cost of Living Index, as shown in Equation 6:

$$\text{Purchasing Power Index for Ordinary Residents in city } m = \frac{\text{Wages Index for Ordinary Residents}_{\text{C,m}}}{\text{Cost of Living Index for Ordinary Residents}_{\text{C,m}}} \times 100 \quad (6)$$

where
m = city;
C = the country where city *m* is located in;
$\text{Wages Index for Ordinary Residents}_{\text{C,m}}$ is as defined in Equation 4;
$\text{Cost of Living Index for Ordinary Residents}_{\text{C,m}}$ is as defined in Equation 2.

Purchasing power measures the quantity of goods and services that ordinary residents can obtain per hour of work. Higher purchasing power is desirable, as it enables residents to enjoy more goods and services per hour of work. The Purchasing Power Index for Ordinary Residents compares the purchasing power in a specific city to that in New York, the base city, where the index is set at 100.00. Cities are ranked in descending order based on their Purchasing Power Index. Higher purchasing power corresponds to a larger index and higher ranking, while lower purchasing power results in a smaller index and lower ranking.

Main Results

Table 1: Top-25 Cities in the Cost of Living Ranking for Expatriates

City	Country	Cost of Living Ranking for Expatriates in 2024^	Cost of Living Ranking for Expatriates in 2023	Ranking Movements over 2023-2024*
New York	United States	1st	1st	0
Los Angeles	United States	2nd	2nd	0
Zurich	Switzerland	3rd	3rd	0
Geneva	Switzerland	4th	4th	0
Singapore	Singapore	5th	5th	0
London	Great Britain	6th	9th	3
Chicago	United States	7th	6th	-1
San Francisco	United States	8th	8th	0
Washington DC	United States	9th	11th	2
Hong Kong	Hong Kong, China	10th	7th	-3
Seattle	United States	11th	10th	-1
Paris	France	12th	12th	0
Boston	United States	13th	15th	2
Frankfurt	Germany	14th	13th	-1
Minneapolis	United States	15th	16th	1
Atlanta	United States	16th	17th	1
Tel Aviv	Israel	17th	18th	1
Copenhagen	Denmark	18th	14th	-4
Sydney	Australia	19th	24th	5
Cleveland	United States	20th	19th	-1
Miami	United States	21st	20th	-1
Honolulu	United States	22nd	21st	-1
Houston	United States	23rd	23rd	0
Pittsburgh	United States	24th	25th	1
Milan	Italy	25th	26th	1

Note: ^ Cities are arranged in descending order of the latest ranking result which is based on 2024 data.
* Red denotes downward movement while green denotes upward movement in ranking over 2023-2024.
Source: Asia Competitiveness Institute

Tables 1 and 2 list the top-25 and bottom-25 cities, respectively, in the latest ACI's Cost of Living Ranking for Expatriates based on 2024 data as well as their rankings in the preceding year, i.e. 2023. As explained in the previous section, higher-ranked cities are more expensive

for expatriates to live in than cities lower in the ranking. Ranking movements over 2023-2024 are also highlighted. Positive numbers indicate that the city was ranked higher in 2024 as compared to 2023; negative numbers indicate that the city's ranking has declined while zeroes denote no change in the city's ranking. As shown in Table 1, the five most expensive cities for expatriates among the 103 cities in 2024 were, in descending order, New York, Los Angeles, Zurich, Geneva and Singapore. All five cities remained in the same ranking position. The list of cities featured in the top 25 in 2024 also differed slightly from 2023. Milan (from 26th to 25th) was the only new addition to the list.

Table 2: Bottom-25 Cities in the Cost of Living Ranking for Expatriates

City	Country	Cost of Living Ranking for Expatriates in 2024^	Cost of Living Ranking for Expatriates in 2023	Ranking Movements over 2023-2024*
Suzhou	China	79th	78th	-1
Tianjin	China	80th	79th	-1
Sao Paulo	Brazil	81st	81st	0
St Petersburg	Russia	82nd	77th	-5
Manila	Philippines	83rd	82nd	-1
Warsaw	Poland	84th	89th	5
Dalian	China	85th	83rd	-2
Baku	Azerbaijan	86th	87th	1
Athens	Greece	87th	88th	1
Rio De Janeiro	Brazil	88th	85th	-3
Quito	Ecuador	89th	84th	-5
Budapest	Hungary	90th	90th	0
Johannesburg	South Africa	91st	91st	0
Nairobi	Kenya	92nd	92nd	0
Pretoria	South Africa	93rd	94th	1
Bucharest	Romania	94th	95th	1
Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia	95th	93rd	-2
Colombo	Sri Lanka	96th	100th	4
Mumbai	India	97th	96th	-1
Sofia	Bulgaria	98th	97th	-1
Istanbul	Turkey	99th	102nd	3
Asuncion	Paraguay	100th	99th	-1
New Delhi	India	101st	101st	0
Buenos Aires	Argentina	102nd	98th	-4
Cairo	Egypt	103rd	103rd	0

Note: ^ Cities are arranged in descending order of the latest ranking result which is based on 2024 data.
* Red denotes downward movement while green denotes upward movement in ranking over 2023-2024.
Source: Asia Competitiveness Institute

Meanwhile, as Table 2 demonstrates, the five least expensive cities for expatriates in 2024 consisted of, in descending order, Istanbul, Asuncion, New Delhi, Buenos Aires and Cairo. Cairo was the cheapest city for expatriates in our sample, even after Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City were included. The list of cities featured in the bottom 25 in 2024 also differed slightly from 2023. Most cities did not see much change in ranking either, except for St Petersburg (from 77th to 82nd), Quito (from 84th to 89th) and Poland (from 89th to 84th).

Table 3: Top 25 Cities in Cost of Living Ranking for Ordinary Residents

City	Country	Cost of Living Ranking for Ordinary Residents in 2024^	Cost of Living Ranking for Ordinary Residents in 2023	Ranking Movements over 2023-2024*
New York	United States	1st	1st	0
Los Angeles	United States	2nd	2nd	0
Zurich	Switzerland	3rd	3rd	0
Reykjavik	Iceland	4th	5th	1
Geneva	Switzerland	5th	4th	-1
Sydney	Australia	6th	8th	2
Chicago	United States	7th	6th	-1
San Francisco	United States	8th	9th	1
Seattle	United States	9th	7th	-2
Washington DC	United States	10th	10th	0
Luxembourg	Luxembourg	11th	11th	0
Melbourne	Australia	12th	12th	0
Boston	United States	13th	16th	3
Dublin	Ireland	14th	14th	0
Minneapolis	United States	15th	15th	0
Toronto	Canada	16th	13th	-3
Tel Aviv	Israel	17th	17th	0
Copenhagen	Denmark	18th	18th	0
Atlanta	United States	19th	21st	2
Oslo	Norway	20th	20th	0
Miami	United States	21st	23rd	2
Perth	Australia	22nd	19th	-3
Honolulu	United States	23rd	22nd	-1

City	Country	Cost of Living Ranking for Ordinary Residents in 2024^	Cost of Living Ranking for Ordinary Residents in 2023	Ranking Movements over 2023-2024*
Houston	United States	24th	24th	0
Vancouver	Canada	25th	25th	0

Note: ^ Cities are arranged in descending order of the latest ranking result which is based on 2024 data.
* Red denotes downward movement while green denotes upward movement in ranking over 2023-2024.
Source: Asia Competitiveness Institute

As shown in Table 3, the three most expensive cities for ordinary residents among the 103 cities were the same in 2024 and 2023 and were, in descending order, New York, Los Angeles and Zurich. Reykjavik and Geneva switched their rankings to 4th and 5th, respectively. All cities which had been among the 25 top-ranked cities in terms of cost of living for ordinary residents in 2023 continued to feature in the top-25 in 2024. Moreover, there were only minor fluctuations, with most cities retaining their rankings. Boston's ranking shifted from 16th to 13th while Toronto and Perth moved down the rankings by three places each.

Table 4: Bottom-25 Cities in Cost of Living Ranking for Ordinary Residents

City	Country	Cost of Living Ranking for Ordinary Residents in 2024^	Cost of Living Ranking for Ordinary Residents in 2023	Ranking Movements over 2023-2024*
Amman	Jordan	79th	78h	-1
Suzhou	China	80th	79th	-1
Tianjin	China	81st	81st	0
Pretoria	South Africa	82nd	84th	2
Sofia	Bulgaria	83rd	85th	2
Taipei	Taiwan, China	84th	83rd	-1
Asuncion	Paraguay	85th	86th	1
Bucharest	Romania	86th	88th	2
Dalian	China	87th	82nd	-5
Manila	Philippines	88th	87th	-1
Bogota	Colombia	89th	92nd	3
Nairobi	Kenya	90th	91st	1
Moscow	Russia	91st	90th	-1
Jakarta	Indonesia	92nd	89th	-3
Istanbul	Turkey	93rd	101st	8
Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia	94th	93rd	-1

City	Country	Cost of Living Ranking for Ordinary Residents in 2024^	Cost of Living Ranking for Ordinary Residents in 2023	Ranking Movements over 2023-2024*
Baku	Azerbaijan	95th	94th	-1
St Petersburg	Russia	96th	96th	0
Colombo	Sri Lanka	97th	99th	2
Bangkok	Thailand	98th	95th	-3
Mumbai	India	99th	97th	-2
Hanoi	Vietnam	100th	100th	0
Ho Chi Minh	Vietnam	101st	98th	-3
New Delhi	India	102nd	102nd	0
Cairo	Egypt	103rd	103rd	0

Note: ^ Cities are arranged in descending order of the latest ranking result which is based on 2024 data.
* Red denotes downward movement while green denotes upward movement in ranking over 2023-2024.
Source: Asia Competitiveness Institute

Table 4 shows that the five least expensive cities for ordinary residents, out of the 103 cities ranked in 2024, were, in descending order of ranking, Mumbai, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh, New Delhi and Cairo. The list of cities featured in the bottom 25 of the Cost of Living Ranking for Ordinary Residents in 2024 was the same as that in 2023, barring the addition of one new city, namely Amman (from 78th to 79th). Of the cities that were previously listed in the bottom-25 rankings from 2023, Dalian and Istanbul experienced the largest shift in rankings, by five and eight places respectively.

Discussion

The top-25 and bottom-25 cities for cost of living among expatriates and ordinary residents in Tables 1 to 4 reveal distinct regional patterns where the most expensive cities for expatriates are predominantly located in North America and Western Europe, with Singapore and Hong Kong being notable exceptions. In contrast, the least expensive cities for expatriates are more geographically diverse, with representation from South America, Asia, and Eastern Europe. Our research indicates that cities in developed regions generally have a higher cost of living for ordinary residents compared to those in developing regions. However, no clear geographical pattern emerges when analysing the cost of living for expatriates, suggesting that factors beyond regional economic development—such as expatriate consumption patterns and local market structures—play a role. For instance, while ordinary residents in Seoul may experience a lower cost of living than those in Paris, it is difficult to predict how expatriate living costs compare between these two cities.

A broader view of the cost of living in cities beyond the top and bottom 25 rankings is illustrated in Tables 5 and 6. These tables illustrate the geographical distribution of the 103 cities in our study, categorizing them according to their cost of living for ordinary residents

and expatriates. These tables reflect the latest 2024 cost of living rankings and classify them into different quartiles at the regional level.

In 2024, cities in Western Europe, Australasia and North America were relatively expensive for ordinary residents, whereas cities in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and South America were cheaper for ordinary residents (see Table 5). However, there are exceptions: Tel Aviv's cost of living is more expensive than London's; Singapore is more expensive than Berlin, and Tokyo has a higher cost of living than Lyon.

Table 5: Distribution of Cost of Living Ranking for Ordinary Residents by Geographical Region

Region	Total Number of Cities	Quartile			
		1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Africa	4	0	0	1	3
Asia	30	1	3	10	16
Australasia	7	3	4	0	0
Eastern Europe	8	0	0	4	4
North America	21	14	6	1	0
South America	9	0	1	6	2
Western Europe	24	8	12	4	0

Source: Asia Competitiveness Institute

Cities in developed regions are more expensive for ordinary residents than cities in developing regions due to differences in the cost structure of non-traded goods and services among these cities. Locally provided services which are non-traded either form an integral part of ordinary residents' consumption baskets or go into the local production and provision of other goods consumed by ordinary residents. These services, by nature, are labour-intensive and labour costs in Western Europe, Australasia, and North America are significantly higher than in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and South America.

In contrast, Table 6 reveals no discernible pattern in the geographical distribution of cities according to the cost of living for expatriates. While cities in developed regions such as North America, Australasia and Western Europe predominantly occupy the first and second quartiles, Asia also stands out, with nine cities falling within these quartiles. This suggests an absence of a consistent geographical trend in expatriate living costs. The primary reason behind this finding is that expatriates everywhere are geared towards high-end imports and lifestyle products. As such, their cost of living is mainly affected by exchange rate fluctuations and other factors driving the costs of trade, rather than local economic conditions.

These findings again underscore the importance of distinguishing between expatriates and ordinary residents when analysing cost of living data. Conflating the two groups risks an overstatement of the cost of living for ordinary residents in developing countries, especially in Asia. In addition, the findings imply that Western expatriates posted to Asia and other regions

outside the Western world will benefit if they adopt the consumption patterns of ordinary residents in the cities.

Table 6: ACI's Cost of Living for Expatriates in 2024 by Geographical Regions

Region	Total Number of Cities	Quartile			
		1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Africa	4	0	0	0	4
Asia	30	4	5	11	10
Australasia	7	1	5	1	0
Eastern Europe	8	0	0	3	5
North America	21	14	5	2	0
South America	9	0	1	3	5
Western Europe	24	7	10	6	1

Source: Asia Competitiveness Institute

The wage disparities between regions significantly influence the cost of living for ordinary residents. In 2023, the average gross hourly wage in all Western European cities in our study was 28.70 USD as compared to 7.81 USD for Asian cities. Such wage differentials contribute to higher prices for products and services, which in turn result in a higher overall cost of living for ordinary residents in developed cities. The wage disparities are illustrated in Table 7, which shows that wage rankings in developing regions of Africa and Asia, Eastern Europe and South America are concentrated in the third and fourth quartiles, while the wage rankings of the developed regions of Australasia, North America and Western Europe are concentrated in the first and second quartiles. Due to data limitations, the results for 2024 Wage and Purchasing Power Rankings and Indices are unavailable and therefore, only 2023 results will be presented in this paper. The results for the top and bottom 25 cities in wages and purchasing power are presented in Table A.2 to A.5 of the Appendix section.

Table 7: Wages Ranking for Ordinary Residents in 2023 by Geographical Region

Region	Total Number of Cities	Quartile			
		1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Africa	4	0	0	2	2
Asia	30	0	5	13	12
Australasia	7	2	5	0	0
Eastern Europe	8	0	0	6	2
North America	21	16	4	0	1
South America	9	0	0	1	8
Western Europe	24	8	12	4	0

Source: Asia Competitiveness Institute

However, some cities in Asia deviate from this regional pattern. Tel Aviv, Tokyo, Osaka-Kobe, Seoul, Hong Kong, and Singapore are outliers in their respective regions, as their labour costs are more reflective of cities in more developed regions. The reason is that these cities are at a similar development stage as the developed cities and, therefore, have similar levels of labour productivity.

Table 8: Purchasing Power Ranking for Ordinary Residents in 2023 by Geographical Region

Region	Total Number of Cities	Quartile			
		1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Africa	4	0	0	2	2
Asia	30	2	3	12	13
Australasia	7	2	5	0	0
Eastern Europe	8	0	2	6	0
North America	21	10	9	1	1
South America	9	0	0	0	9
Western Europe	24	12	7	5	0

Source: Asia Competitiveness Institute

Table 8 shows that cities in developed regions of Australasia, North America and Western Europe occupy the first and second quartiles of purchasing power rankings. This shows that ordinary residents living in a country with a high cost of living may still be able to afford more goods and services compared to ordinary residents who live in a country with a low cost of living because of their relatively higher wages. The introduction of purchasing power, therefore, facilitates a more comprehensive analysis.

Conclusion

This study fills a critical gap in the literature, as city-level cost-of-living analyses are sparse and often dominated by commercial studies that present methodological challenges. The ACI Cost of Living Project addresses this issue by providing a rigorous examination of the cost of living, wages, and purchasing power across 103 major cities worldwide, spanning Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe, and the Americas. By incorporating both expatriate and ordinary resident perspectives, the study offers a more nuanced understanding of the factors shaping urban cost dynamics.

Our analysis of the top-25 and bottom-25 cities for cost of living among expatriates and ordinary residents highlights important regional distinctions and economic dynamics. The most expensive cities for expatriates are predominantly concentrated in North America and Western Europe, with Singapore and Hong Kong being notable exceptions. In contrast, the least expensive cities for expatriates are geographically diverse, reflecting the varied economic landscapes in South America, Asia, and Eastern Europe. However, the cost of living for

expatriates does not exhibit a clear regional pattern, suggesting that expatriate-specific factors, such as consumption preferences, exchange rate fluctuations, and trade-related costs, play a more decisive role than general economic development.

For ordinary residents, cities in developed regions consistently have a higher cost of living than those in developing regions due to structural differences in non-traded goods and labour-intensive services. Wage disparities between these regions significantly influence price levels, contributing to higher costs in cities across Western Europe, North America, and Australasia. However, these higher wages also result in greater purchasing power for residents in developed cities, mitigating the burden of higher costs.

The findings emphasize the importance of distinguishing between expatriate and local cost-of-living measures. Treating the two as equivalent risks overstating the financial burden on ordinary residents in developing regions, particularly in Asia. Additionally, expatriates stationed in these regions can significantly reduce their expenses by aligning their consumption habits more closely with those of the local population.

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of how wage structures, local economic conditions, and global market factors shape cost-of-living experiences across regions. Ultimately, these insights contribute to a more informed understanding of urban economic conditions, allowing policymakers, businesses, and individuals to make better economic and financial decisions in an increasingly interconnected world.

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Appendix

Table A.1: List of Cities Covered by the ACI Annual Indices on Cost of Living, Wages and Purchasing Power

No.	City	Country	Region
1	Adelaide	Australia	Australasia
2	Amman	Jordan	Asia
3	Amsterdam	Netherlands	Western Europe
4	Asuncion	Paraguay	South America
5	Athens	Greece	Western Europe
6	Atlanta	United States	North America
7	Auckland	New Zealand	Australasia
8	Baku	Azerbaijan	Asia
9	Bangkok	Thailand	Asia
10	Barcelona	Spain	Western Europe
11	Beijing	China	Asia
12	Berlin	Germany	Western Europe
13	Bogota	Colombia	South America
14	Boston	United States	North America
15	Bratislava	Slovakia	Eastern Europe
16	Brisbane	Australia	Australasia
17	Brussels	Belgium	Western Europe
18	Bucharest	Romania	Eastern Europe
19	Budapest	Hungary	Eastern Europe
20	Buenos Aires	Argentina	South America
21	Cairo	Egypt	Africa
22	Calgary	Canada	North America
23	Chicago	United States	North America
24	Cleveland	United States	North America
25	Colombo	Sri Lanka	Asia
26	Copenhagen	Denmark	Western Europe
27	Dalian	China	Asia
28	Detroit	United States	North America
29	Doha	Qatar	Asia
30	Dubai	United Arab Emirates	Asia
31	Dublin	Ireland	Western Europe
32	Frankfurt	Germany	Western Europe
33	Geneva	Switzerland	Western Europe
34	Guangzhou	China	Asia
35	Hanoi	Vietnam	Asia
36	Helsinki	Finland	Western Europe
37	Ho Chi Minh City	Vietnam	Asia
38	Hong Kong	Hong Kong, China	Asia
39	Honolulu	United States	North America

No.	City	Country	Region
40	Houston	United States	North America
41	Istanbul	Turkey	Asia
42	Jakarta	Indonesia	Asia
43	Johannesburg	South Africa	Africa
44	Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia	Asia
45	Kuwait City	Kuwait	Asia
46	Lexington	United States	North America
47	Lima	Peru	South America
48	Lisbon	Portugal	Western Europe
49	London	Great Britain	Western Europe
50	Los Angeles	United States	North America
51	Luxembourg	Luxembourg	Western Europe
52	Lyon	France	Western Europe
53	Madrid	Spain	Western Europe
54	Manila	Philippines	Asia
55	Melbourne	Australia	Australasia
56	Mexico City	Mexico	North America
57	Miami	United States	North America
58	Milan	Italy	Western Europe
59	Minneapolis	United States	North America
60	Montevideo	Uruguay	South America
61	Montreal	Canada	North America
62	Moscow	Russia	Eastern Europe
63	Mumbai	India	Asia
64	Munich	Germany	Western Europe
65	Nairobi	Kenya	Africa
66	New Delhi	India	Asia
67	New York	United States	North America
68	Osaka-Kobe	Japan	Asia
69	Oslo	Norway	Western Europe
70	Paris	France	Western Europe
71	Perth	Australia	Australasia
72	Pittsburgh	United States	North America
73	Prague	Czech Republic	Eastern Europe
74	Pretoria	South Africa	Africa
75	Qingdao	China	Asia
76	Quito	Ecuador	South America
77	Reykjavik	Iceland	Western Europe
78	Rio de Janeiro	Brazil	South America
79	Rome	Italy	Western Europe
80	San Francisco	United States	North America
81	Santiago	Chile	South America
82	Sao Paulo	Brazil	South America

No.	City	Country	Region
83	Seattle	United States	North America
84	Seoul	South Korea	Asia
85	Shanghai	China	Asia
86	Shenzhen	China	Asia
87	Singapore	Singapore	Asia
88	Sofia	Bulgaria	Eastern Europe
89	St Petersburg	Russia	Eastern Europe
90	Stockholm	Sweden	Western Europe
91	Suzhou	China	Asia
92	Sydney	Australia	Australasia
93	Taipei	Taiwan, China	Asia
94	Tel Aviv	Israel	Asia
95	Tianjin	China	Asia
96	Tokyo	Japan	Asia
97	Toronto	Canada	North America
98	Vancouver	Canada	North America
99	Vienna	Austria	Western Europe
100	Warsaw	Poland	Eastern Europe
101	Washington DC	United States	North America
102	Wellington	New Zealand	Australasia
103	Zurich	Switzerland	Western Europe

Source: Asia Competitiveness Institute

Table A.2: Top-25 Cities in the Latest ACI's Wages Ranking for Ordinary Residents

City	Country	Wages Ranking for Ordinary Residents in 2023^	Wages Ranking for Ordinary Residents in 2022	Ranking Movements over 2022-2023*
Geneva	Switzerland	1st	1st	0
Zurich	Switzerland	1st	1st	0
Copenhagen	Denmark	3rd	3rd	0
Reykjavik	Iceland	4th	4th	0
Vienna	Austria	5th	7th	2
Luxembourg	Luxembourg	6th	5th	-1
Oslo	Norway	7th	6th	-1
New York	United States	8th	8th	0
Atlanta	United States	8th	8th	0
Boston	United States	8th	8th	0
Chicago	United States	8th	8th	0
Cleveland	United States	8th	8th	0
Detroit	United States	8th	8th	0
Honolulu	United States	8th	8th	0
Houston	United States	8th	8th	0
Lexington	United States	8th	8th	0
Los Angeles	United States	8th	8th	0
Miami	United States	8th	8th	0
Minneapolis	United States	8th	8th	0
Pittsburgh	United States	8th	8th	0
San Francisco	United States	8th	8th	0
Seattle	United States	8th	8th	0
Washington DC	United States	8th	8th	0
Helsinki	Finland	24th	29th	5
Adelaide	Australia	25th	24th	-1

Note: ^ Cities are arranged in descending order of the latest ranking which is based on 2023 data.
* Red denotes downward movement while green denotes upward movement in ranking over 2022-2023.
Source: Asia Competitiveness Institute

Table A.3: Bottom-25 Cities in the Latest ACI's Wages Ranking for Ordinary Residents

City	Country	Wages Ranking for Ordinary Residents in 2023^	Wages Ranking for Ordinary Residents in 2022	Ranking Movements over 2022-2023*
Santiago	Chile	79th	81st	2
Moscow	Russia	80th	79th	-1
St Petersburg	Russia	80th	79th	-1
Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia	82nd	82nd	0
Amman	Jordan	83rd	83rd	0
Baku	Azerbaijan	84th	88th	4
Quito	Ecuador	85th	84th	-1
Rio De Janeiro	Brazil	86th	89th	3
Sao Paulo	Brazil	86th	89th	3
Mexico City	Mexico	88th	91st	3
Buenos Aires	Argentina	89th	85th	-4
Nairobi	Kenya	90th	87th	-3
Bogota	Colombia	91st	94th	3
Istanbul	Turkey	92nd	86th	-6
Lima	Peru	93rd	95th	2
Bangkok	Thailand	94th	92nd	-2
Asuncion	Paraguay	95th	93rd	-2
Manila	Philippines	96th	98th	2
Hanoi	Vietnam	97th	96th	-1
Ho Chi Minh	Vietnam	97th	96th	-1
Jakarta	Indonesia	99th	99th	0
Mumbai	India	100th	101st	1
New Delhi	India	100th	101st	1
Colobo	Sri Lanka	102nd	103rd	1
Cairo	Egypt	103rd	100th	-3

Note: ^ Cities are arranged in descending order of the latest ranking which is based on 2023 data.
* Red denotes downward movement while green denotes upward movement in ranking over 2022-2023.
Source: Asia Competitiveness Institute

Table A.4: Top-25 Cities in the Latest ACI's Purchasing Power Ranking for Ordinary Residents

City	Country	Purchasing Power Ranking for Ordinary Residents in 2023^	Purchasing Power Ranking for Ordinary Residents in 2022	Ranking Movements over 2022-2023*
Copenhagen	Denmark	1st	2nd	1
Vienna	Austria	2nd	1st	-1
Geneva	Switzerland	3rd	3rd	0
Zurich	Switzerland	4th	4th	0
Berlin	Germany	5th	5th	0
Luxembourg	Luxembourg	6th	6th	0
Oslo	Norway	7th	7th	0
Reykjavik	Iceland	8th	10th	2
Singapore	Singapore	9th	12th	3
Detroit	United States	10th	9th	-1
Munich	Germany	11th	11th	0
Lexington	United States	12th	13th	1
Lyon	France	13th	8th	-5
Cleveland	United States	14th	14th	0
Pittsburgh	United States	15th	17th	2
Houston	United States	16th	19th	3
Helsinki	Finland	17th	15th	-2
Miami	United States	18th	22nd	4
Honolulu	United States	19th	23rd	4
Seoul	South Korea	20th	16th	-4
Atlanta	United States	21st	21st	0
Adelaide	Australia	22nd	20th	-2
Brussels	Belgium	23rd	18th	-5
Montreal	Canada	24th	25th	1
Brisbane	Australia	25th	24th	-1

Note: ^ Cities are arranged in descending order of the latest ranking which is based on 2023 data.
* Red denotes downward movement while green denotes upward movement in ranking over 2022-2023.
Source: Asia Competitiveness Institute

Table A.5: Bottom-25 Cities in the Latest ACI's Purchasing Power Ranking for Ordinary Residents

City	Country	Purchasing Power Ranking for Ordinary Residents in 2023^	Purchasing Power Ranking for Ordinary Residents in 2022	Ranking Movements over 2022-2023*
Shenzhen	China	79th	81st	2
Baku	Azerbaijan	80th	80th	0
Shanghai	China	81st	82nd	1
Santiago	Chile	82nd	83rd	1
Montevideo	Uruguay	83rd	84th	1
Istanbul	Turkey	84th	73rd	-11
Amman	Jordan	85th	86th	1
Bogota	Colombia	86th	89th	3
Nairobi	Kenya	87th	85th	-2
Bangkok	Thailand	88th	88th	0
Quito	Ecuador	89th	90th	1
Rio De Janeiro	Brazil	90th	91st	1
Buenos Aires	Argentina	91st	87th	-4
Sao Paulo	Brazil	92nd	94th	2
Hanoi	Vietnam	93rd	93rd	0
Ho Chi Minh	Vietnam	94th	92nd	-2
Mexico City	Mexico	95th	97th	2
Asuncion	Paraguay	96th	96th	0
New Delhi	India	97th	98th	1
Lima	Peru	98th	99th	1
Mumbai	India	99th	101st	2
Manila	Philippines	100th	100th	0
Cairo	Egypt	101st	95th	-6
Jakarta	Indonesia	102nd	102nd	0
Colombo	Sri Lanka	103rd	103rd	0

Note: ^ Cities are arranged in descending order of the latest ranking which is based on 2023 data.
* Red denotes downward movement while green denotes upward movement in ranking over 2022-2023.
Source: Asia Competitiveness Institute