

About Civic Exchange

Civic Exchange is a Hong Kong-based non-profit public policy think tank that was established in October 2000. It is an independent organisation that has access to policy makers, officials, businesses, media and NGOs—reaching across sectors and borders. Civic Exchange has solid research experience in areas such as air quality, energy, urban planning, climate change, conservation, water, governance, political development, equal opportunities, poverty and gender. For more information about Civic Exchange, visit www.civic-exchange.org.

About The Women's Foundation

The Women's Foundation is a non-profit organisation established in 2004 dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls in Hong Kong through ground-breaking research, impactful and innovative community programmes, and education, media engagement and advocacy. Our three key focus areas are challenging gender stereotypes, increasing the number of women in decision-making and leadership positions, and empowering women in poverty to achieve a better quality of life for themselves and their families. For more information, please visit www.thewomensfoundationhk.org.

About the author

Louisa Mitchell is a freelance social policy researcher and writer based in Hong Kong. She used to be a research director at leading UK think tank, Policy Exchange. She has written for the South China Morning Post and the Financial Times. Previously she was Director of The Whitley Fund for Nature, an international environmental award programme based in London and was the first Director of ASrIA, the Association for Sustainable and Responsible Investment in Asia based in Hong Kong. Her first career was in investment banking. She has a BA Hons from Cambridge University and MSc from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Foreword

The issues facing Hong Kong women are numerous and complex. Some of these issues are particular to gender, most relate to pressing social issues—from rising incidents of teen pregnancies to integration challenges faced by the constant tide of New Arrival women from the Mainland to Hong Kong’s rapidly ageing population. Resolving these issues requires concerted efforts and collaboration across the public and private sectors. At The Women’s Foundation, we believe these efforts can only be effective if they are grounded on objective and reliable data and an understanding of the fundamental root causes.

The Women’s Foundation has been a leading voice in filling the critical gap in objective and incisive gender research in Hong Kong. In 2006, The Women’s Foundation published our ground-breaking study on *The Status of Women and Girls in Hong Kong* to review the status of women in Hong Kong. Building on this study, starting in 2008, we launched an 18-month long stakeholder engagement process comprising focus groups, individual interviews and public symposia to better understand the barriers faced by women and girls.

In 2010, to raise greater awareness of gender issues, we launched a monthly column in *The South China Morning Post* and the Hong Kong Economic Journal website. The column features pieces from leading local and international voices on a diverse range of topics relating to women and gender issues in Hong Kong.

Since our first study in 2006, we have seen an improvement in some areas, some not at all, and in some the situation has further deteriorated. Hong Kong’s Gini coefficient has worsened with more people living at the poverty line; Hong Kong’s rapidly ageing population (with women significantly outliving men) is straining welfare programmes and housing and health services; while at the other end of the spectrum, the needle has not moved for women in political office or on corporate boards and in senior executive positions. At the time of writing, the new Hong Kong Administration is showing signs that it is serious about tackling these issues which is encouraging. The growing number of CSR-minded businesses which are engaging with and supporting the NGO sector in their work to help the disadvantaged is another optimistic note. We hope our research can help identify challenges and gaps in current social welfare and education policies and programmes to inform and influence strategy and resource allocation by all stakeholders seeking positive change. We also hope our research will be a useful resource for shadow reports submitted by international and local Human Rights watchdogs and other groups as part of the United Nation’s next hearing on Hong Kong’s compliance with the UN’s Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 2014.

Building on our earlier research in 2006 and 2008, The Women’s Foundation launched a new series of quantitative and qualitative research studies in 2010, working in collaboration with The Chinese University’s Gender Research Centre, the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and Civic Exchange.

This publication is the outcome of our collaboration with Civic Exchange. We are very grateful to Civic Exchange for their excellent work and in particular, to Michael DeGolyer, Yan-yan Yip, Carine Lai, Louisa Mitchell, Yao Yuan, and Tsang Kam-lun. We are also grateful to Christine Loh, former CEO of Civic Exchange and current Under-Secretary for the Environment in the HKSAR government, for sharing her time and expertise in producing this report.

The Women's Foundation would like to thank the many people at Goldman Sachs who so generously gave their time, advice and financial support to this project through *Goldman Sachs Gives*.

In addition, we humbly acknowledge the following individuals who provided us with invaluable counsel, encouragement and expertise: Adele Rossi Brunner, Rachel Cartland, Fanny Cheung, Susanne Choi, Marissa Dean, Christine Fang, Staci Ford, Jackie Kim, Estella Huang Lung, Melissa Petros, Samantha Thompson, Anthony Wong, Anna Wu, and Mike Yao. Many thanks also to The Women's Foundation's Research Associate, Lisa Moore.

In closing, we know that words alone cannot meet the needs of Hong Kong's most vulnerable populations. Our greatest hope is that this research will serve as a catalyst for long-term systemic change by spurring efforts to pursue the changes needed to achieve the full participation of women in Hong Kong society.

Kay McArdle
Board Chair, The Women's Foundation

Su-Mei Thompson
CEO, The Women's Foundation

A note on this series

Civic Exchange's collaboration with The Women's Foundation on this research attempts to track the changing status of women over the past 20 years through looking into historical data. The methodology adopted in this research is ground-breaking—both objective and subjective data are used to provide a fuller picture. Objective data come from official government data, published academic research and grey literature while subjective data come from public opinion survey data collected by Hong Kong Transition Project.

This research has generated a total of three reports: One covering objective data, one covering subjective data, and a user-friendly summary report capturing the essence of the two other reports.

- *The Changing Faces of Hong Kong: A Cohort Analysis of Women, 1991-2011*—Civic Exchange engaged Louisa Mitchell, a social policy researcher, to look through statistics published by the HKSAR Government, academic studies, and grey literature. Forming the objective portion of this research, Louisa Mitchell's findings and analysis are compiled into a 250-page report, entitled *The Changing Faces of Hong Kong: A Cohort Analysis of Women, 1991-2011*. Her report constructs profiles of typical women of different ages today, including, 15-, 20-, 30-, 40-, and over 60-year-olds. It also highlights the alternative life trajectories of atypical groups of women. Comparisons are made in areas such as education, earnings, marital status, and occupation, between women today and men or between women today and women 20 years ago.

It should be noted that this research had been completed before news broke about HKSAR Government's falsified census data (especially relating to unemployment). The HKSAR Government is, at the time of publishing, still investigating the problem. Readers are recommended to read the relevant data and analysis with this in mind.

- *The Changing Faces of Hong Kong: Women in the Community and National Context, 1994-2010*—The subjective portion comes from analysis of the public opinion survey data collected by the Hong Kong Transition Project. Civic Exchange worked with Professor Michael DeGolyer and Ms. Cheung Pui-ki of Hong Kong Transition Project based at Hong Kong Baptist University, as well as two postgraduate students of statistics from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology to go through Hong Kong Transition Project's public opinion survey data since 1994. In the 131-page report, entitled *The Changing Faces of Hong Kong: Women in the Community and National Context, 1994-2010*, regression of survey data and time cohorts (1994-2000, 2000-2005, and 2006-2010) are used to reveal the changing attitudes and behaviours of Hong Kong people in areas such as feelings towards national day, areas of personal concern, and political and civic participation.
- *The Changing Faces of Hong Kong: A Graphical Summary of Women's Status, 1991-2011*—A graphical summary report produced by Carine Lai of Civic Exchange captures the major points from Louisa Mitchell's report (Part 1) and the key points related to gender from Professor Michael DeGolyer's report (Part 2). A list of recommendations is attached to the end of the summary report. Chinese version of this summary report is also available.

It is hoped that this research project will offer better understanding of the changing faces of the Hong Kong society, and thereby policy makers could formulate policies that gear towards meeting the needs of Hong Kong people, which may include some gender-specific policies and/or measures. Readers who are interested in more detailed analysis of changes in people's attitudes and behaviours in general (ie. not gender-related) are encouraged to read the full report of *The Changing Faces of Hong Kong: Women in the Community and National Context, 1994-2010*. The summary report only captures gender-related data and analysis.

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Section 1: Snapshots and discussion of the socio-economic status of women in Hong Kong by age band

Section 2: Women today aged ≥60 years

Section 3: Women today aged 40-59 years

Section 4: Women today aged 30-39 years

Section 5: Women today aged 20-29 years

→ Section 6: Women and girls today aged 15-19 years

Other reports in this series

The changing faces of Hong Kong: Women in the community and national context, 1994-2010

The changing faces of Hong Kong: A graphical summary of women's status, 1991-2011

Other sections of this report and other reports in this series can be downloaded from www.civic-exchange.org/wp/201302gender_en



Section 6:
Women and girls today aged
15-19 years

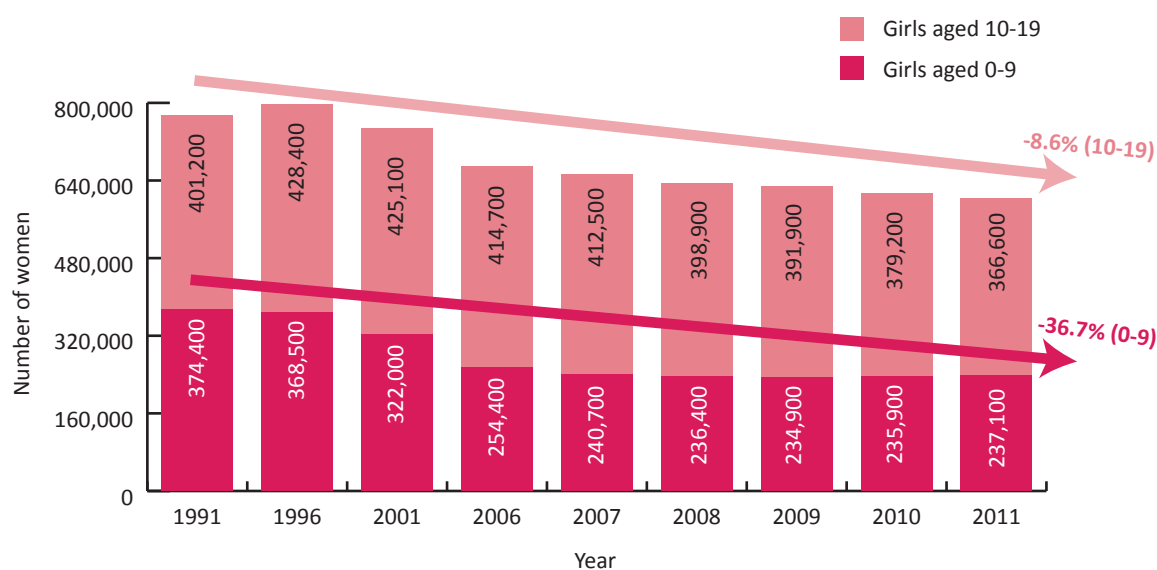
6 Women and girls today aged 15-19 years

Note: Information for this age band was available in different age groups for different topics. The age groups are stated throughout.

Demographics

The 0-9 and 10-19 years age groups included the only groups of females to decline in numbers over the 20 years from 1991 to 2011. For men and boys, the age groups 0-9 years, 10-19 years, 20-29 years and 30-39 years all posted declines, whereas the female age groups 20-29 years and 30-39 years did not post declines, largely because of the inflows of domestic helpers and women from Mainland China on one-way permits. The number of 0-9-year-old girls has stabilised somewhat over the last five years, as birth rates have started to pick up as described in previous sections. Despite the fact that the decline in numbers of young girls has stemmed, they still constitute a significantly smaller part of the total female population in 2011 compared to 1991 because of the overall population increase and the greying trend. In 1991, 0-9-year-olds constituted 13.3 per cent of the female population, but in 2011, they only represented 6.3 per cent. In 1991, 10-19-year-olds represented 14.3 per cent of the female population and in 2011 they constituted 9.7 per cent. There was a total of 603,700 women and girls aged 0-19 years in 2011 and a total of 643,500 men and boys. For women and girls, this represented a 22.2 per cent decline since 1991, for men and boys, it represented a 23.5 per cent decline.

Chart 6.1 Population of women and girls aged 0-9 and 10-19 years, 1991 to 2011



* 1991 figures for domestic helpers unavailable

Source: Census and Statistics Department of the HKSAR Government (2010, 2012), *Women and Men in Hong Kong, Key Statistics*, Hong Kong: HKSAR Government

Table 6.1: Deaths by quinquennial age group, men and boys, women and girls aged 1-19 years, 1991-2010

	F/M	1991	1996	2001	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1-4	F	42	29	20	14	15	23	18	20
	M	40	40	31	22	12	17	20	27
5-9	F	27	22	13	12	13	15	9	4
	M	27	25	27	20	15	22	10	7
10-14	F	38	35	24	21	14	17	16	16
	M	44	32	26	25	23	19	16	24
15-19	F	48	53	33	26	21	31	37	24
	M	80	99	61	42	46	43	42	53

Source: Census and Statistics Department of the HKSAR Government (2010, 2012), *Women and Men in Hong Kong, Key Statistics*, Hong Kong: HKSAR Government

Death rates amongst teenagers and children continue to be low and have declined further over the last two decades as shown in Table 6.1. Mortality rates were low at 0.1-0.3 per cent for all quinquennial age groups in the 1-19 years age bracket in 2010.

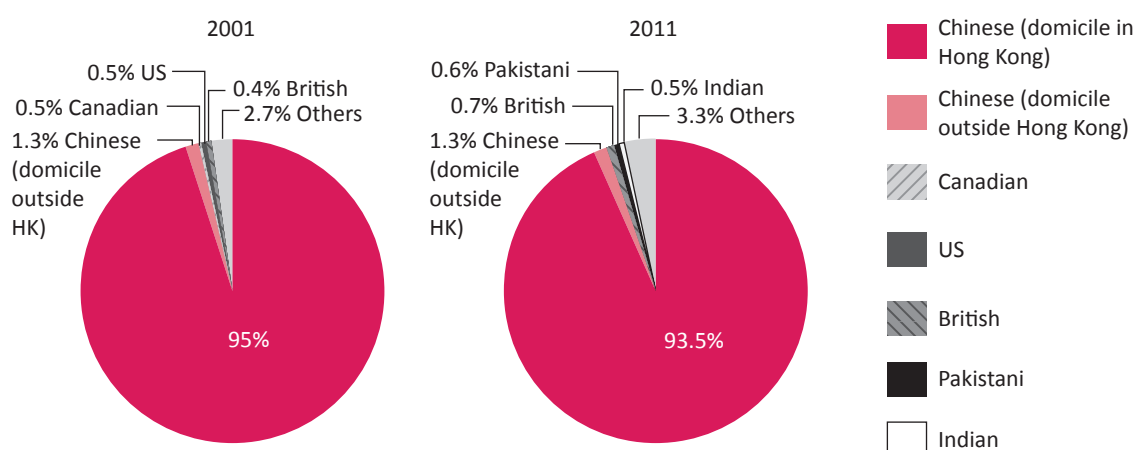
Most notable, the number of infant deaths has declined dramatically over the last 30 years. The infant mortality rates (deaths of children under one year of age for 1,000 live births) are significantly lower today at 2.6 per 1,000 for girls and 3.6 for boys in 2010 than in 1991 when they were 6.8 per 1,000 for girls and 6.2 for boys. In 1981, those figures were 9.2 per 1,000 for girls and 10.7 for boys. This is now in line with other developed countries and has been since the turn of the century.¹

Nationality

The proportion of Chinese nationality is high among young women and girls. It is not as high as in women aged ≥60 years old but is higher than all other age bands. A total of 94.8 per cent of women and girls under 20 years old are Chinese (93.5 per cent domiciled in Hong Kong, 1.3 per cent domiciled outside Hong Kong) as shown in Chart 6.3. Similar to other age bands, there was a slight decline in the proportion of Chinese women and girls over the last 20 years. In 1991, 97.7 per cent of women and girls aged 0-19 years were Chinese (88.9 per cent from Hong Kong, 8.4 per cent from China and 0.4 per cent from Macau) and in 2001, as shown in Chart 6.2, a total of 96.3 per cent of women and girls were Chinese (95.0 per cent domiciled in Hong Kong, 1.3 per cent domiciled outside Hong Kong). For men and boys of the same age group, the proportions are similar today with 95.2 per cent Chinese (94.0 per cent domiciled in Hong Kong and 1.2 per cent domiciled outside Hong Kong).

Unlike the older age groups, the largest number of women and girls who are non-Chinese today are British, Pakistani and Indian. In 2001 they were Canadian, American and British; and in 1991 there were a very small proportion of women and girls from “Other Asian and Oceanian Countries” at only 1.0 per cent, whilst the proportion of women and girls who were from European and American countries was relatively

Charts 6.2 (left) and 6.3 (right): Nationalities of women and girls aged 0-19 years, 2001 and 2011



Source: Census and Statistics Department of the HKSAR Government (2001, 2011), *Population Census Main Tables*, Hong Kong: HKSAR Government

Table 6.2: Numbers of non-Chinese women and girls aged 0-19 years, 2001 and 2011

Nationalities/ numbers of girls	2001	2011
British	3,364	4,447
Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan	1,748	3,807
Indian	1,884	3,206
Nepalese	780	2,229
Australian	-	2,849
American	3,471	2,780
Filipina	1,918	2,178
Japanese	1,862	1,559
Canadian	4,066	-
Thai	327	489
Indonesian	2,024	367
Others	6,160	7,546
Total	27,604	31,457

Source: Census and Statistics Department of the HKSAR Government (2001, 2011), *Population Census Main Tables*, Hong Kong: HKSAR Government

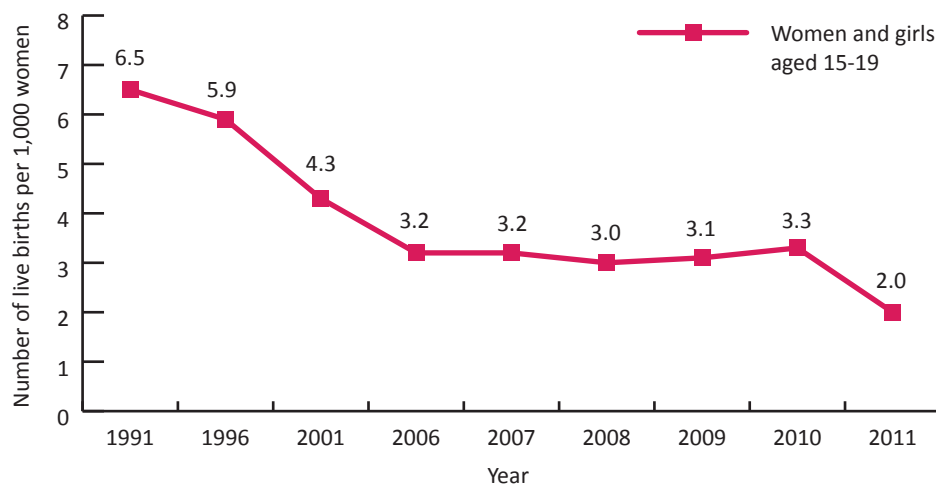
high compared to those in other age groups. This is because the older age groups are heavily populated with domestic helpers who are predominantly Indonesian and Filipina. For men and boys, the highest non-Chinese contingent was British, closely followed by Pakistani, then Indian and American. The proportions and numbers are similar for non-Chinese men and boys, women and girls at this age.

Family

The vast majority of 15-19-year-old women and girls are unmarried. In 2011, 205,600 women and girls aged 15-19 years were recorded as never married, 476 as now married and widowed/separated/divorced was unknown. There was no significant change over the years, although data provided for now married women and girls aged 15-19 years showed a declining trend from 1,400 women and girls in 1991 to 476 in 2011.

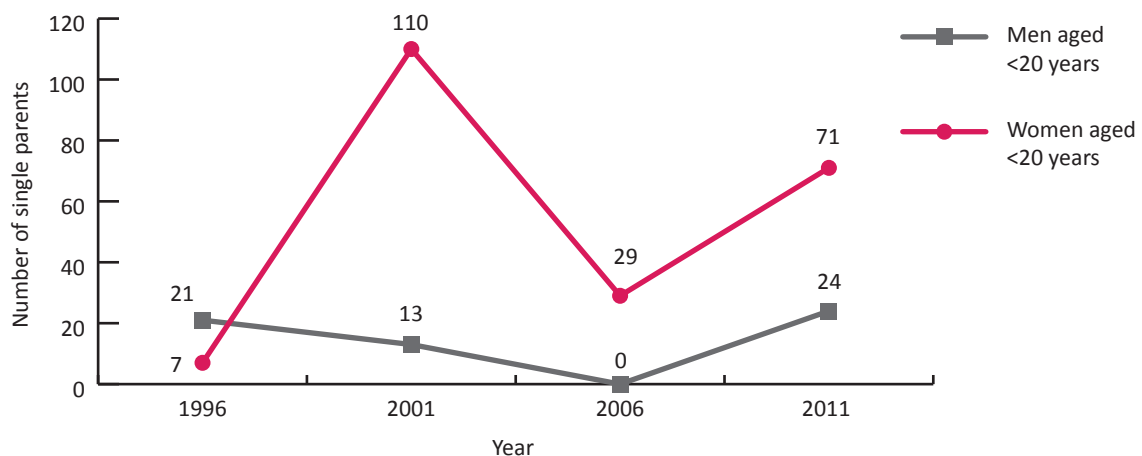
In line with the decline of the very small number of now married women and girls, there was a decline in the official age-specific fertility rate of girls of this age, again of a very small number as can be seen in Chart 6.4. However, it has been reported that a study carried out for NGO Mother's Choice in 2011, which counsels pregnant young women and girls, found that around 7,000 girls face "crisis pregnancies" each year and that estimate may be conservative.²

Chart 6.4: Age-specific fertility rates for women and girls aged 15-19 years, 1991-2011



Source: Census and Statistics Department of the HKSAR Government (2010, 2012), *Women and Men in Hong Kong, Key Statistics*, Hong Kong: HKSAR Government

Chart 6.5: Single parents aged <20 years, 1996-2011



Source: Census and Statistics Department of the HKSAR Government (2012), *Women and Men in Hong Kong, Key Statistics*, Hong Kong: HKSAR Government

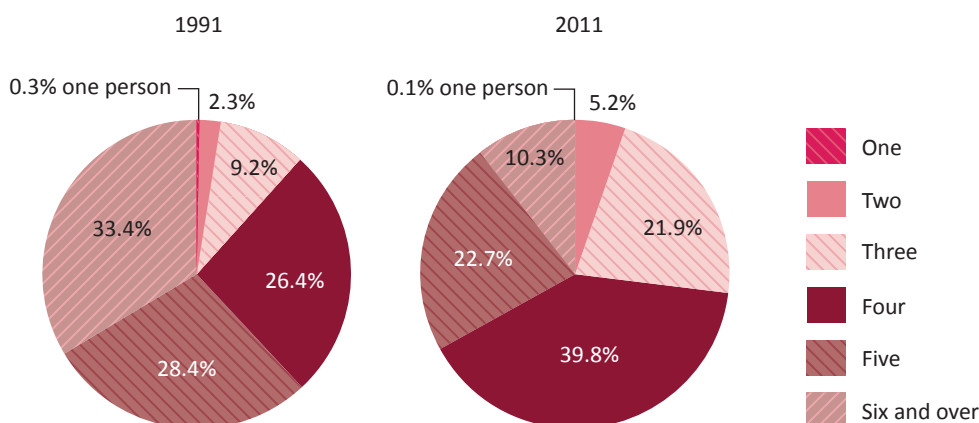
In 2011 there were 71 single female parents <20 years old and 24 male single parents. Generally, 15-19-year-olds are mixed in the data provided for persons in their 20s when tracking for single parent households. Chart 6.5 shows a very small number of single parents but a rising trend over the 15 years from 1991 to 2006, which stabilised and declined a little in the last five years.

Household size and structure

A significant majority of young women and teenage girls were living in four person households in 2011, a total of 39.8 per cent of all girls of this age. This was most similar to women aged 20-29 years who had a clear 33.1 per cent majority in four person households. The proportion then dropped to 22.7 per cent in five person households, 21.9 per cent in three person households and then notably 10.3 per cent in six or more person households. Again, these proportions were most similar to those for 20-29-year-olds. The proportion of six and over person households has declined significantly since 1991, from 33.4 per cent to 10.3 per cent in 2011. Whilst the proportion of five person households has also declined a little, the proportion of three and four person households has increased significantly over the 20 years as the average family size has declined. The proportions of women and girls living in single person households remains low, but the proportion in two person households has increased from 2.3 per cent to 5.2 per cent, representing the increase in single parent households. The proportions were similar for young men and boys except that they were slightly more concentrated in the three and four person households, with lower proportions in the bigger five and six or more person households.

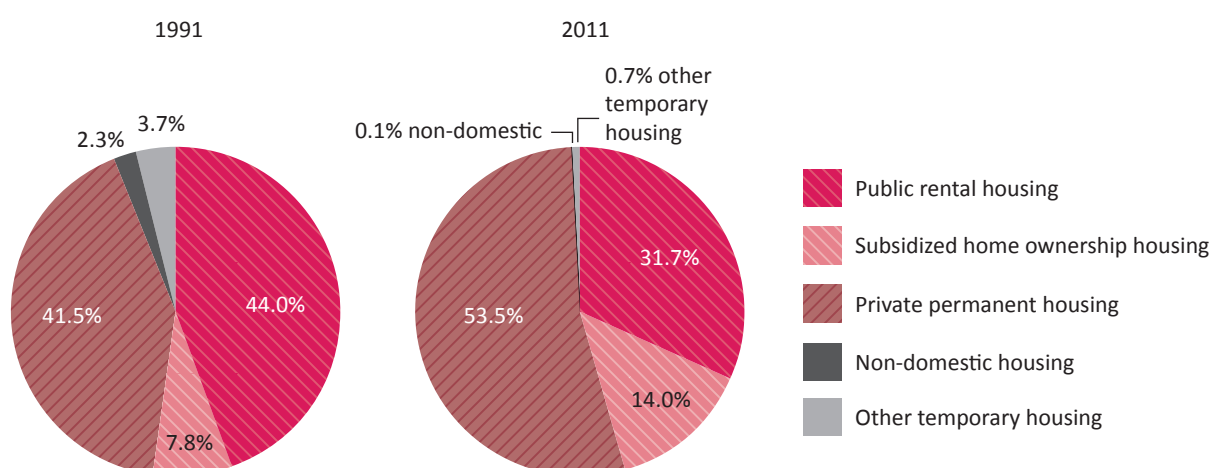
Unsurprisingly, the vast majority, 93.6 per cent, of <25-year-old women and girls were living with their parents in 2011. That number was higher for <25-year-old men and boys at 96.4 per cent. More women and girls in this age fell into the “other” category at 4.8 per cent, than men and boys at 2.7 per cent.

Charts 6.6 (left) and 6.7 (right): Household size of women and girls aged 10-19 years, 1991 and 2011



Source: Census and Statistics Department of the HKSAR Government (1991, 2012), *Population Census Main Tables*, Hong Kong: HKSAR Government

Charts 6.8 (left) and 6.9 (right): Type of housing of women and girls aged 0-19 years, 1991 and 2011



Source: Census and Statistics Department of the HKSAR Government (1991, 2012), *Population Census Main Tables*, Hong Kong: HKSAR Government

Type of housing

Young women and girls today had the lowest proportion of all of the age groups analysed in this report in subsidised home ownership housing at 14.0 per cent in 2011, together with women aged 30-39 years who had 14.1 per cent in this category. The proportion in private permanent housing was similar to women aged 20-29 years and 40-59 years at 53.5 per cent, whereas women in their 30s had 63.5 per cent in this category. However, the dramatic increase in private permanent housing from 41.5 per cent to 53.5 per cent was more in line with the increase in that category for women aged 30-39 years, a leap from 50.5 per cent to 63.5 per cent. The difference between women in their 30s and women and girls in the 0-19 years age band in 2011 was reflected in public rental housing. Women and girls aged 0-19 years had 31.7 per cent in public rental housing, ten percentage points more than women aged 30-39 years, who had 21.6 per cent and more in line with women in their 20s who had 29.0 per cent and 40-59 years who had 28.6 per cent. Only women ≥60 years have a higher proportion in public rental housing at 36.0 per cent. Declines in temporary and non-domestic housing were significant and similar to all other age groups. Men and boys aged 0-19 years had almost identical proportions to women and girls aged 0-19 years in all housing categories for both 1991 and 2011 since children predominantly live with their parents, so the differences are between their parents/families, not between them as individuals at their age.

Geography

In 2011, 54.7 per cent of women girls aged 0-19 years were living in the New Territories, 29.1 per cent in Kowloon and 16.2 per cent on Hong Kong Island. Young girls had the lowest proportion on Hong Kong Island of all age groups. This was likely due to the high number of families with children seeking more space in Kowloon and the New Territories. The proportions in Kowloon and the New Territories were closest to women aged 30-39 years and 40-59 years, probably reflecting family set-ups, but notably higher in

Table 6.3: District of residence of women and girls aged 0-19 years, 1991 and 2011

Numbers of girls	District	1991	% of total	2011	% of total	1991-2011 change
Hong Kong Island	Central and Western	27,771	3.7%	19,404	3.2%	-30.1%
	Wan Chai	17,535	2.3%	10,466	1.7%	-40.3%
	Eastern	67,258	9.0%	45,550	7.5%	-32.3%
	Southern	33,980	4.5%	22,240	3.7%	-34.5%
Sub-total		146,544	19.6%	97,660	16.2%	
Kowloon	Yau Tsim Mong	29,307	3.9%	25,584	4.2%	-12.7%
	Sham Shui Po	41,290	5.5%	31,737	5.3%	-23.1%
	Kowloon City	45,997	6.2%	31,001	5.1%	-32.6%
	Wong Tai Sin	43,363	5.8%	33,713	5.6%	-22.3%
	Kwun Tong	72,683	9.7%	53,925	8.9%	-25.8%
Sub-total		232,640	31.1%	175,960	29.1%	
New Territories	Kwai Tsing	62,149	8.3%	43,053	7.1%	-30.7%
	Tsuen Wan	34,539	4.6%	27,258	4.5%	-21.1%
	Tuen Mun	69,478	9.3%	41,577	6.9%	-40.2%
	Yuen Long	35,761	4.8%	59,269	9.8%	65.7%
	North	27,763	3.7%	28,500	4.7%	2.7%
	Tai Po	33,519	4.5%	23,802	3.9%	-29.0%
	Sha Tin	78,851	10.6%	51,391	8.5%	-34.8%
	Sai Kung	19,791	2.6%	40,597	6.7%	105.1%
	Islands	6,144	0.8%	14,589	2.4%	137.5%
Sub-total		367,995	49.3%	330,036	54.7%	
Total		747,179		603,656		-19.2%

Source: Census and Statistics Department of the HKSAR Government (1991, 2012), *Population Census Main Tables*, Hong Kong: HKSAR Government

the New Territories at 54.7 per cent (53.0 per cent for women aged 40-59 years and 30-39 years) and slightly higher in Kowloon at 29.1 per cent (28.8 per cent for women aged 30-39 years and 40-59 years). For women in their 20s the proportions were 55.0 per cent in the New Territories and 27.5 per cent in Kowloon, so close to girls aged 0-19 years in the New Territories but 1.4 per cent lower in Kowloon. The changes in proportions were less significant than other age groups over the 20-year period with the proportion on Hong Kong Island falling from 19.6 per cent to 16.2 per cent, on Kowloon from 31.1 per cent to 29.1 per cent, and rising in the New Territories from 49.3 per cent to 54.7 per cent. There were declines in absolute numbers in most districts in this age group as the overall population of young people declined overall during the last 20 years. The biggest decline was in Wan Chai (as with all other age groups), Tuen Mun, Sha Tin and Southern. Again, as with all other age groups, Sai Kung, the Islands and Yuen Long reflected the largest increases.

In 2011, 54.7 per cent of 0-19 years men and boys lived in the New Territories, 29.2 per cent in Kowloon and 16.2 per cent on Hong Kong Island. These proportions were identical to the girls of the same age and again, reflect family set-ups.

Educational attainment

Today's teenage girls and young women are benefiting from recent educational reform, taking universal, free, compulsory education for nine years, as was introduced in the 1970s, up to 12 years. This was introduced in the 2008/9 school year as a measure to offer senior secondary education more widely. The curriculum shifted to what is termed "3+3+4", meaning that teenagers now spend three years in lower secondary, three years in upper secondary and four years at university or other tertiary education establishments. The 3+3 are compulsory and free, on top of six years of compulsory primary school education. Form three school-leavers who choose to enrol in full-time subsidised courses provided by the Vocational Training Council instead of pursuing senior secondary education are also fully subsidised to provide an alternative free avenue for senior secondary students to further their studies other than in mainstream education.

Therefore the vast majority of women and girls are now in school until they are 18 years of age. A total of 89.6 per cent of 15-19-year-old women and girls were in education in 2011. As presented in earlier sections, more women than men now complete postsecondary degrees in Hong Kong's universities. Sampling errors in recent data mean that it is not possible to ascertain how many of today's young women and girls have primary only or no education and beyond that level, it is difficult to ascertain the change since 1991 or the numbers since these girls are still in the various stages of education.

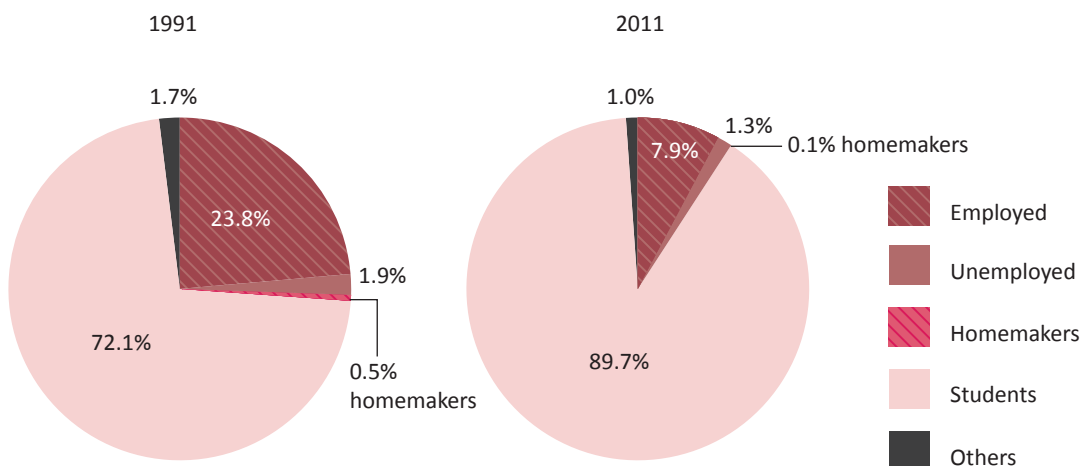
Some girls may be sent overseas to boarding school and to university, particularly to the US and the UK. Many of those then start their careers overseas in high-level jobs at banks for example. Little is known about the number and educational experience of these young girls and women but as they return, they bring their new "global" experience and values back into Hong Kong society.

Employment

Employment statistics are provided for the 15-19 years age group, but differ substantially from other age groups as would be expected since the vast majority of women and girls at this age are still in school or higher education. The labour force participation rate in this age group is substantially lower than for other age groups, at only 7.9 per cent in 2011 compared to 62.1 per cent for the next age group up, 20-24 years, in 2011. It has been on a steady decline since 1991 when it was 23.8. The majority of girls/women were economically inactive and were students in 2011 as shown in Chart 6.11. This has changed a little over time as education reforms mean more children stay in school for longer and transition into higher education, so small proportions of women and girls of this age are in employment and more are in education. The numbers and the trend are similar for boys/men of this age.

Although few women and girls of this age group are employed, those that have left the education system and are employed are predominantly in import/export trade and wholesale, retail, accommodation and food services sector and public administration, social and personal services, meaning they are probably working predominantly as service and shop sales workers or as carers. This was also the case in 1991 and although there were more girls in the manufacturing sector in 1991 at this age than there are now, generally the proportions of women and girls in each industry in this age bracket have not changed significantly over the time period. Again, women and girls and

Charts 6.10 (left) and 6.11 (right): Economically active and inactive status of women and girls aged 15-19 years, 1991 and 2011



Source: Census and Statistics Department of the HKSAR Government (2012), *Women and Men in Hong Kong, Key Statistics*, Hong Kong: HKSAR Government

boys and men do not differ in terms of industry of employment at this age except that there are noticeably more women and girls than men and boys in public administration, social and personal services and that has been the case since 1991 when the sector was categorised slightly differently.

Of those few women and girls in employment, the proportions in different occupations in 2011 were similar to boys and men and both had their largest (similar) numbers in the service workers and shop sales workers category. There were twice as many female clerks as male clerks, but still a small number for both. There were several times more men and boys in elementary occupations than women and girls, but again both were small amounts. So on balance, women and girls seem to fare better in terms of occupational status than men and boys at this young age.

For those who have left the education system, this age group had a very high official unemployment rate of 13.6 per cent for women and girls aged 15-19 years in 2011 and 17.9 per cent for men and boys. Both of these rates were a substantial increase on 1991 when the rate for women and girls was 7.5 per cent and for men and boys was 8.6 per cent. The median duration of unemployment was low, however, only 71 days in 2011, albeit higher than 59 days for those women in their 20s. This seems to suggest that some teenagers in the workforce have little job stability, probably characterised by casual and part-time work. There was no data available on casual employees in this age group due to sampling errors.

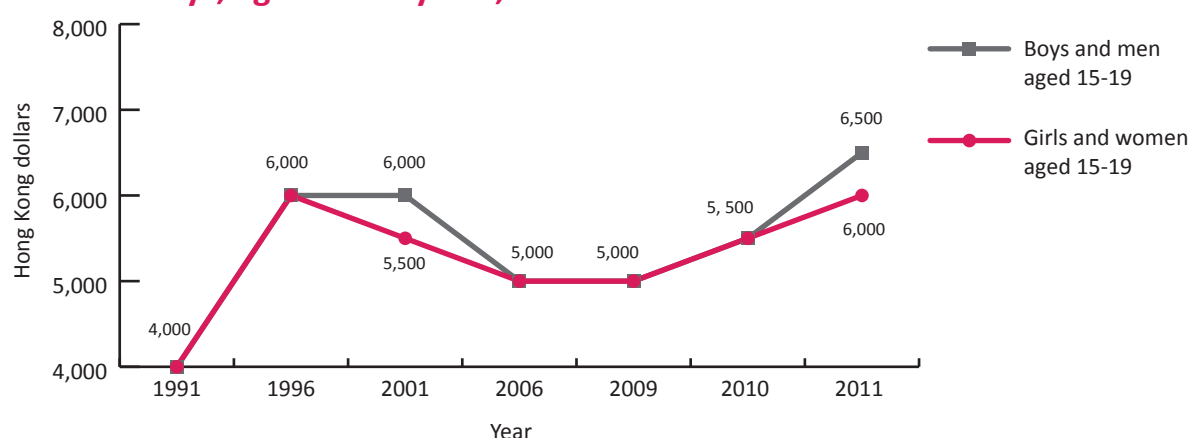
Employment earnings

Earnings are similar for the few male and female workers in this age group as would be expected since educational attainment and skills differentials are narrow. Data in this age group is difficult to analyse of sampling errors, so there is not enough data available to calculate the proportions of women and girls in all of the different earnings brackets. However, analysis of the four lowest nominal earnings brackets in 1991 and 2011 shows that in 1991, 90.3 per

cent of women and girls aged 15-19 years were earning <HK\$6,000, 7.0 per cent were earning HK\$6,000-HK\$7,999, 1.7 per cent were earning HK\$8,000-HK\$9,999 and 0.8 per cent were earning HK\$10,000-14,999. Proportions in the bottom four categories were similar for boys. However, in 2011, the proportions of girls in these three earnings categories were 45.4 per cent in the <HK\$6,000 category, 28.8 per cent in the HK\$6,000-HK\$7,999 category, 23.3 per cent in the HK\$8,000-HK\$9,999 category and 2.5 per cent in the HK\$10,000-14,999 category. So women and girls aged 15-19 years have reduced their proportion by half in the lowest earnings category of <HK\$6,000 from 90.3 per cent in 1991 to 45.4 per cent in 2011 and increased their proportions in the next two earnings brackets up. Again, the proportions were similar for boys, although they had a slightly lower proportion in the lowest earnings category and slightly higher proportions in other higher categories.

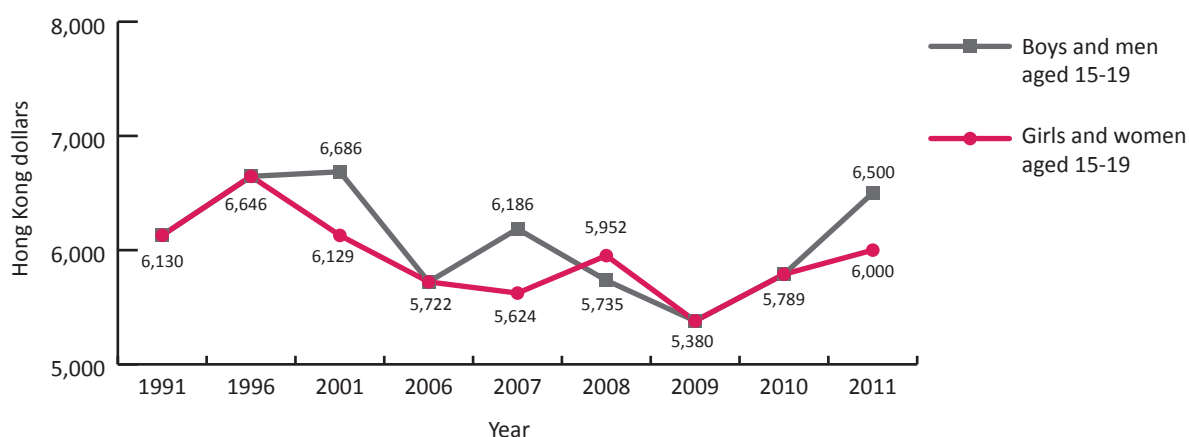
The nominal median monthly earnings for these few women and girls and men and boys is the lowest for any age group, but very close to that of the ≥60 year-old women. In 2011 it was HK\$6,000 for women and girls

Chart 6.12: Median nominal monthly earnings for employed women and girls, men and boys, aged 15-19 years, 1991-2011



Source: Census and Statistics Department of the HKSAR Government (2012), *Women and Men in Hong Kong, Key Statistics*, Hong Kong: HKSAR Government

Chart 6.13: Median monthly earnings, inflation adjusted, for employed men and boys, and women and girls, aged 15-19 years, 1991 to 2011



Note: inflation adjustment calculated using Composite CPI Index to adjust nominal earnings reported in *Women and Men in Hong Kong, Key Statistics 2012*

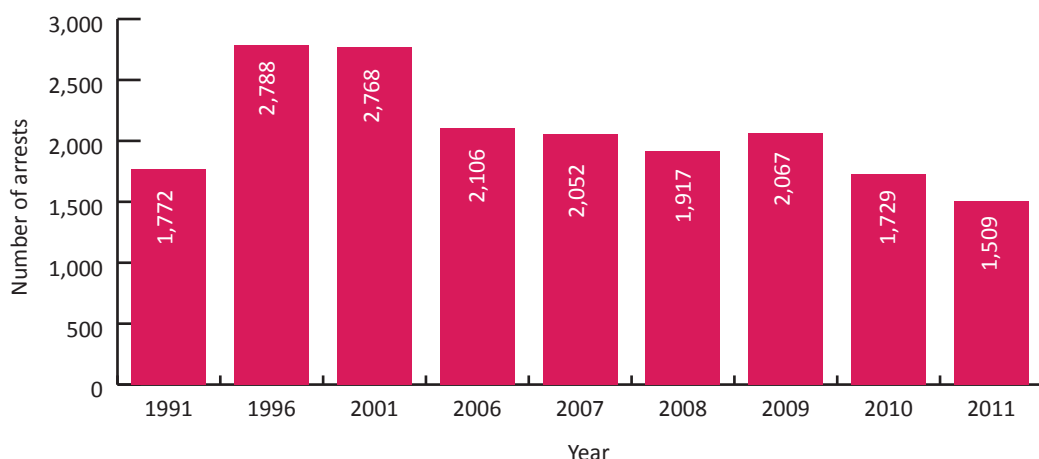
and HK\$6,500 for men and boys. Over the two decades, it has remained mostly the same for men and boys and women and girls as shown in Chart 6.12. The median monthly earnings for this age group do not change with the exclusion of domestic helpers since there are so few in this age category.

However, when the median monthly earnings are adjusted for inflation, earnings have been on a declining to flat trend over the last two decades as shown in Chart 6.13. Essentially, young people's real earnings have been frozen over the last two decades (analysis has not been conducted excluding foreign domestic helpers because there is no change to the median monthly employment earnings of males and females aged 20-29 years when they are excluded).

Crime

This age group is the only one to have a decline in the official number of persons arrested since 1991, albeit a small one and in line with the population decline. Whilst the number of male arrests had declined up to age 40 years since 1991, female arrests had increased in every age group except for the aged 20 years and under. The number of arrests for men and boys had also declined in the ≤ 20 years age group and more significantly than for the women and girls. In 1991, there was a total of 1,772 women and girls aged ≤ 20 years who were arrested and in 2011, there were 1,509 such women and girls, reflecting a decline of 14.8 per cent. In 1991, there was a total of 13,437 men and boys aged ≤ 20 years arrested and this decreased significantly to 6,184 men and boys by 2011. As a proportion of the ≤ 20 years age group (aged 10-20 years inclusive since the minimum age of criminal liability was raised from seven to ten years in 2003), the number of women and girls arrested represented 0.37 per cent of the age group in 2011, whereas the number of men and boys represented 1.42 per cent. There was a peak in the late 1990s and early 2000s, as shown in Chart 6.14.

Chart 6.14: Women and girls aged ≤ 20 years arrested, 1991-2011



Source: Census and Statistics Department of the HKSAR Government (2010, 2012), *Women and Men in Hong Kong, Key Statistics*, Hong Kong: HKSAR Government

The numbers of sentenced women and girls and men and boys admitted into penal institutions were low and declining. As with the women in their 20s, 30s and 40s, the numbers rose in the early 2000s and then declined again in recent years. In 1991, there were 84 girls aged 14-17 years admitted to penal institutions; this rose to a high of 260 girls in 2001 and then declined to 52 girls by 2011, reflecting a 38.1 per cent decrease over the 20 years. For women and girls aged 18-20 years, there were 204 admitted to penal institutions in 1991, rising to a peak of 1,148 in 2001 and declining over recent years to 146 in 2011, a decline of 28.3 per cent over the two decades. For men and boys, the decline in numbers had been fairly consistent over the 20 years. There were 768 boys aged 14-17 years admitted in 1991 and that was down to 286 boys by 2011. For the older 18-20-year-old men and boys, there were 1,279 admitted in 1991 and that had declined to 545 in 2011.

Whilst these young women and girls had significant declines in arrests and small increases in sentencing, they had a large increase in official numbers of instances of drug abuse. Men and boys of this age were the only male age group to show increases in drug abuse. In 1991, there were 318 women and girls ≤20 years who were reported drug abusers and by 2011 there were 601 such cases, an increase of 89.0 per cent, but a steady decrease over the last two years since 2009. The number of men and boys ≤20 years was at 1,087 in 1991 and had increased by 29.3 per cent to 1,405 in 2011, but the number was often up above 2,000 in the years in between. The majority of reported drug abuse cases for both men and boys and women and girls are in the 16-20 age group, rather than <16 years age group. A 2006 report by the Women's Foundation cited research showing one in five young people admitting to depressive symptoms, and drug and alcohol problems were rapidly rising amongst young people. The report also found girls to be excessively concerned about body image and weight.³

Political Participation

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, women aged 18-20 years looked as if they bucked the trend when it came to participation in District Council elections, showing a significant increase in the proportion of voter turnout to registered electors between 1999 and 2007, but then the proportion fell significantly in 2011. And the proportion of voters to total age specific population has been consistently low, substantially lower than the overall in each year, although mostly not as low as for women aged 21-30 years. Nonetheless, different to women aged 21-30 years, women aged 18-20 years have had higher proportions of voters to registered electors and total age specific population than men, with the exception in 2011 when men had a higher proportion of voters to total population. A Women's Foundation report in 2006 found that existing research showed that there were generally positive attitudes about volunteering in the community by young people and more young girls than boys volunteer.⁴

In the Legislative Council elections, women of this age have had the highest proportion of voters to registered electors of all age groups of women analysed in this paper in all four years of data presented here, except for 2000, and are significantly higher in their proportion of voters to registered electors than overall across all age groups. They have also been more

Table 6.4: Participation of women and men aged 18-20 years and overall in District Council elections

Age	M/F	1999 Voters as a proportion of registered electors	1999 Voters as a proportion of total population	2003 Voters as a proportion of registered electors	2003 Voters as a proportion of total population	2007 Voters as a proportion of registered electors	2007 Voters as a proportion of total population	2011 Voters as a proportion of registered electors	2011 Voters as a proportion of total population
18-20	F	28.5%	9.4%	44.9%	10.9%	51.6%	13.9%	25.1%	13.2%
	M	27.6%	8.7%	43.9%	9.3%	47.1%	12.4%	23.5%	13.9%
Overall	F	29.2%	15.0%	36.1%	18.4%	35.3%	18.6%	33.8%	21.9%
	M	28.5%	16.6%	35.7%	20.9%	34.4%	21.5%	33.7%	18.5%

Source: Census and Statistics Department of the HKSAR Government (2001-2012), *Women and Men in Hong Kong, Key Statistics*, Hong Kong: HKSAR Government; Demographics Statistics Section, Census and Statistics Department of the HKSAR Government

politically engaged than men of the same age each year. The proportion of voters to total age specific population, however, is lower than overall figures, but generally not as low as for women in their 20s who have the lowest such proportions. It has, however, been higher for women than men each year in this age band.

Table 6.5: Participation of women and men aged 18-20 years and overall in Legislative Council elections

Age	M/F	1998 Voters as a proportion of registered electors	1998 Voters as a proportion of total population	2000 Voters as a proportion of registered electors	2000 Voters as a proportion of total population	2004 Voters as a proportion of registered electors	2004 Voters as a proportion of total population	2008 Voters as a proportion of registered electors	2008 Voters as a proportion of total population
21-30	F	65.4%	19.4%	45.9%	19.0%	61.1%	22.7%	53.9%	20.8%
	M	61.6%	19.0%	44.0%	17.2%	60.5%	20.1%	52.3%	19.2%
Overall	F	53.7%	27.6%	43.6%	23.7%	55.4%	29.9%	44.5%	24.0%
	M	52.9%	30.9%	43.6%	26.9%	55.9%	35.0%	45.9%	28.9%

Source: Census and Statistics Department of the HKSAR Government (2001-2012), *Women and Men in Hong Kong, Key Statistics*, Hong Kong: HKSAR Government; Demographics Statistics Section, Census and Statistics Department of the HKSAR Government

Endnotes

1. Census and Statistics Department of the HKSAR Government (2008), *Hong Kong Monthly Digest of Statistics*, January 2008, Feature Article: Trends of Infant Mortality in Hong Kong, 1946-2006, Hong Kong: HKSAR Government, http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/products_and_services/products/publications/statistical_report/feature_articles/population/index_cd_B70801FC_dt_latest.jsp (accessed 19 March 2012).
2. Choi, C. (2012), "A much-needed lifeline for pregnant teens", in *South China Morning Post*, 3 December 2012.
3. The Women's Foundation (2006), *The Status of Women and Girls in Hong Kong 2006*. http://www.thewomensfoundationhk.org/pdf/summary_e.pdf (accessed 5 February 2012).
4. The Women's Foundation (2006), *The Status of Women and Girls in Hong Kong 2006*. http://www.thewomensfoundationhk.org/pdf/summary_e.pdf (accessed 5 February 2012).

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