



District Council Elections

Figure 1 — Seat composition of 18 District Councils by type in election years since 1999

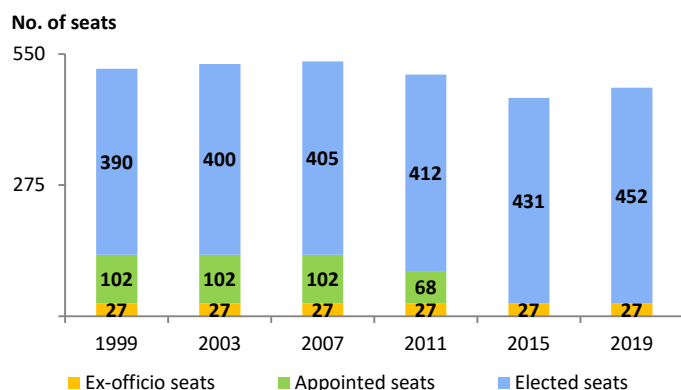


Figure 2 — Number of uncontested seats, 1999-2015

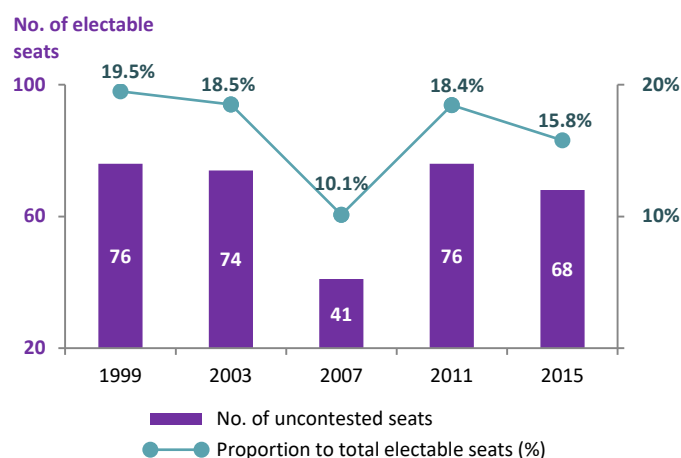
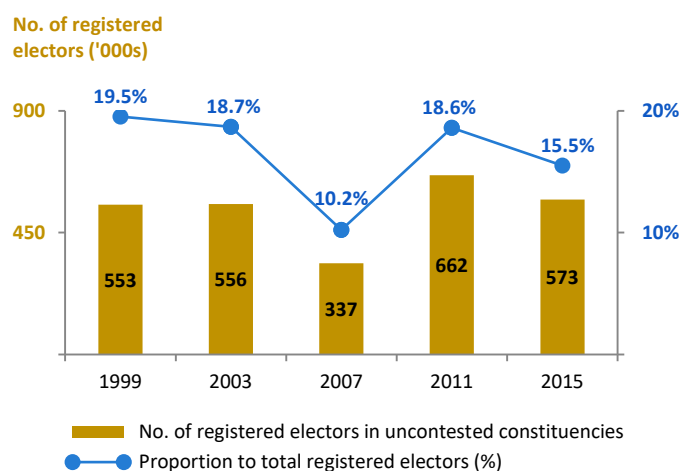


Figure 3 — Registered electors in uncontested constituencies, 1999-2015



Highlights

- Almost all seats of the 18 District Councils ("DC") have been returned through election since abolition of appointed seats in 2015, except those 27 ex-officio seats (who are the Chairmen of Rural Committees in the New Territories). As such, the number of elected seats has increased steadily by a total of 10.5% from 390 in 1999 to 431 in 2015, while the respective number of appointed seats plummeted from 102 to zero (**Figure 1**).
- For the sixth DC election scheduled to be held on 24 November 2019, the number of elected members will rise further by 4.9% to 452, upon continued growth in overall population in Hong Kong. To tie in with this demographic growth, the Electoral Affairs Commission ("EAC") reviews regularly the boundaries of DC constituencies to ensure that the size of each constituency is evenly distributed, based on a pre-defined population quota.
- In spite of a steady growth in elected seats, no polling is held for those constituencies with only one qualified candidate. The number of such uncontested constituencies ranged from a low of 41 in 2007 to a high of 76 in both 1999 and 2011, representing 10%-20% of electable seats (**Figure 2**). On average, 67 candidates or 16% of electable seats were returned without polling in each election. (For the Sixth DC election to be held in November 2019, so far there are at least two nominations in each constituency. The full list of the validly nominated candidates will be gazetted by end-October 2019.)
- For those uncontested constituencies, there are some concerns that the respective electors could not exercise their voting rights. During 1999-2015, the number of affected electors ranged from a low of 337 000 in 2007 to a high of 662 000 in 2011, taking up 10%-20% of overall electorates (**Figure 3**). On average, 536 000 or 17% of registered electors need not vote in each election.

District Council Elections (cont'd)

Figure 4 — Average number of candidates in contested DC constituencies and overall voter turnout rates

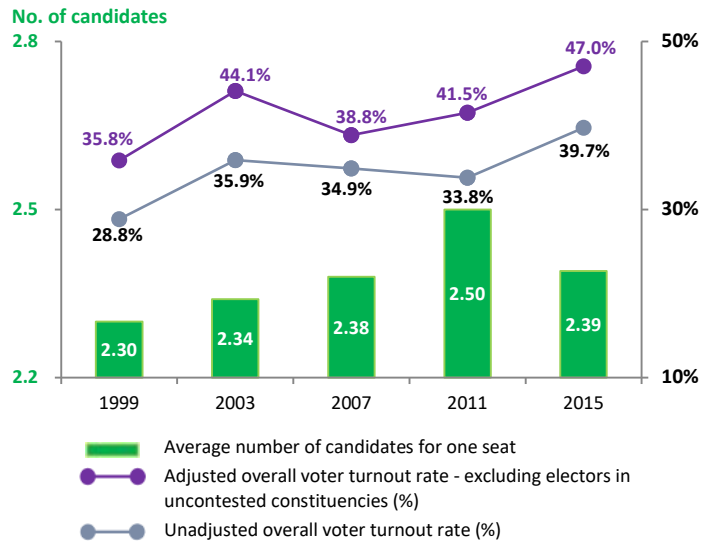
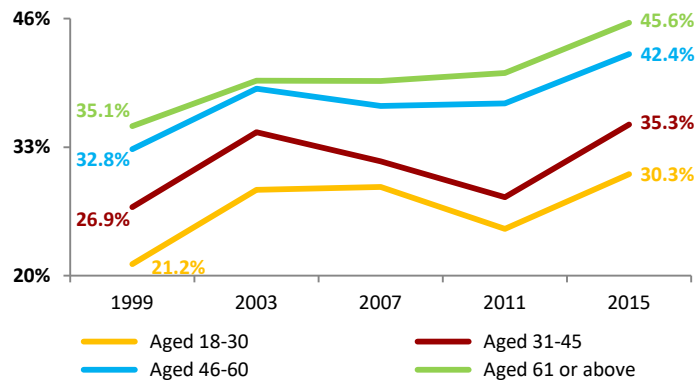
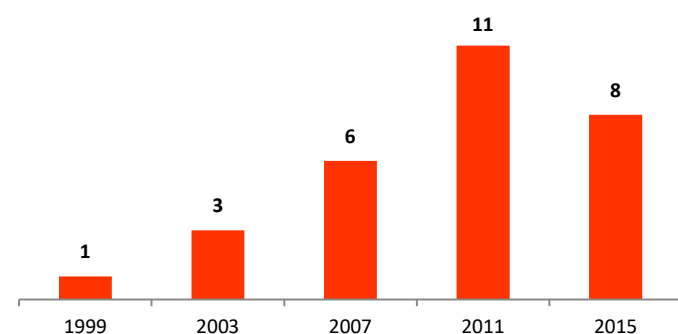


Figure 5 — Voter turnout rates (unadjusted)* by major age group, 1999-2015



Note: (*) Registered electors in uncontested constituencies are included.

Figure 6 — Number of invalid candidacy in DC elections, 1999-2015



Research Office
Information Services Division
Legislative Council Secretariat
25 October 2019
Tel: 2871 2145

Highlights

- Turning to contested constituencies, on average 2.4 candidates competed for a seat over the past five DC elections held during 1999-2015 (Figure 4). The keenest competition was seen in the Tsim Sha Tsui East Constituency in 2007, with as many as seven candidates competing for one seat. (For the Sixth DC election to be held in November 2019, there are so far 1 090 valid nominations, with an average 2.4 candidates per constituency.)
- As regards adjusted voter turnout rate (i.e. netting out electors in uncontested constituencies), it went up noticeably from 35.8% in 1999 to a record high of 47.0% in 2015, on the back of enhanced civic awareness in the community (Figure 4). The respective unadjusted figures likewise surged, from 28.8% to 39.7%.
- Analysed by major age group, voter turnout rate appears to bear a positive relationship with age, although it increases across the board over time. Taking the 2015 election as an illustration, the unadjusted turnout rate for the youngest voters aged 18-30 was only 30.3%, visibly below that of 35.3% for those aged 31-45, 42.4% for those aged 46-60 and 45.6% for elderly aged 61 and above (Figure 5). In order to draw young voters' attention, some candidates are reported to use more social media platforms in their campaigns.
- According to District Councils Ordinance (Cap. 547), persons running for a DC election need to submit nomination forms for the confirmation of validity by a Returning Officer ("RO"). During 1999-2015, a total of 29 nominations were ruled invalid, for reasons such as failing to secure the minimum number of eligible subscribers or making false statements. These invalid candidacies accounted for about 1% of overall nominations (Figure 6). For the upcoming Sixth DC election, the EAC has just announced an additional requirement that each nominated candidate needs to make a statutory declaration of upholding the Basic Law and pledging allegiance to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the nomination form. RO will also examine the validity of such declarations.

Data sources: Latest figures from Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, Registration and Electoral Office and Electoral Affairs Commission.