

## Hong Kong's New Territories: Around 3,300 ft<sup>2</sup> of Land Per Person

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Hong Kong is known for its high density, i.e. the population per land area type. Overall, the average density is **roughly 16,000 people per square mile** and the total land area is just a bit more than 400 square miles. Nonetheless, this is **somewhat misleading as the distribution is not even**. Based on published sources, your author has come across some revealing figures:

- a) **Geographical groupings** = essentially 3, namely 1) **Hong Kong Island** including districts such as Central, Wanchai, Midlevels etc; 2) **Kowloon** including districts such as Mong Kok, Tsimshatsui, Wong Tai Sin etc; and 3) **The New Territories** spanning from north from Shatin to Sheung Shui, running east from Tsuen Wan to Sai Kung, and including all the outlying islands.
- b) **Close to 90% of the total land area is in the New Territories** = 1) Hong Kong Island has around 31 square miles, or 7.40% of the total; 2) Kowloon has 22 square miles, 5.20%; and 3) The New Territories has the remainder i.e. 370 square miles, or 87.40%.
- c) **Around 50% of the population live in the New Territories** = 1) Hong Kong Island has around 1,400,000 people, or roughly 20% of total; 2) Kowloon contains 2,000,000 or 30%, and 3) The New Territories has the remaining 3,300,000, or 50%.
- d) **The New Territories' density is only 60% of the overall average** = 1) Hong Kong Island has around 45,000 people per square mile; 2) Kowloon has 91,000 per square mile; and 3) The New Territories has less than 9,000 people per square mile, i.e. 1/6 of Hong Kong Island or 1/10 of Kowloon.
- e) **The New Territories has a younger population** = 1) Hong Kong Island: the typical median age for most districts ranges from 36 to 39, 2) Kowloon: the median age ranges from 37 to 39, while 3) New Territories: it is only 34 to 36.
- f) **The New Territories' families earn more than those in Kowloon** = 1) Hong Kong Island: the average monthly family income is around HK\$25,000; 2) Kowloon: is around HK\$16,000; and 3) The New Territories: each family earns roughly HK\$18,000 per month. Thus, in terms of aggregate family income, Hong Kong Island and Kowloon occupies 25% each, while the New Territories has 50% of total.

Based on the above, **a few observations** can be made:

- 1) While families on Hong Kong Island still earn more on average, those in the New Territories are catching up, with a few districts nearing those on Hong Kong Island.
- 2) Except for built up districts in the New Territories such as Shatin and Kwai Chung, Tsing Yi etc, population density in the New Territories is not exceedingly

dense. Furthermore, outlying islands such as Lantau has only 1/7 of the average density of New Territories.

- 3) It seems the younger families tend to reside in the new Territories, possibly due to more affordable housing, better living environments and improved transportation and amenities.
- 4) Based on prospects of family income, it would not be surprising if real estate (home) prices in parts of the New Territories to surpass those found in Kowloon. Nonetheless, this has not taken into account the new residential developments taking place in (the relatively new) West Kowloon.

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