

# Samoa Gender Dynamics Monograph 2020

# GENDER POPULATION DYNAMICS

## – FACTS AND IMPLICATIONS

Policy Brief 1

The Samoa Gender Monograph (SGM) 2020 is a detailed analysis of the differences that exist between females and males based on national census data, administrative data and other existing available research and studies. This Policy Brief provides a snapshot of the key findings of the SGM highlighting the main differences between the lived experiences of men and women and persistent gender inequalities. The brief can be used to inform evidence-based policy, programmes and further research.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Males and females have different roles, needs and interests based on social ascribed norms, which inform gendered attitudes and behaviours; these can be measured in a variety of ways including by an analysis of census data. In order to achieve gender equality, it is critical to both understand these gendered social norms and to develop laws and policies that address the power imbalances that sustain and enforce disparities and inequalities. Sustainable Development Goal 5: “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” recognizes that realizing gender equality is a foundation for sustainable and inclusive development.

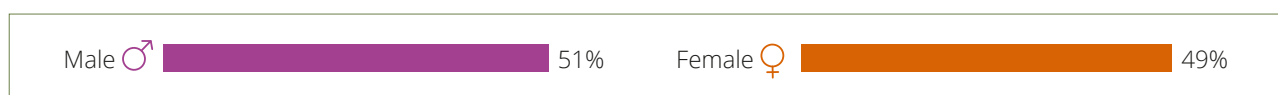


Samoa Bureau of Statistics  
Apia, Samoa



United Nations Population Fund  
Pacific Sub Regional Office  
Samoa and Fiji

**Figure 1: Samoa national population by sex, 2016**



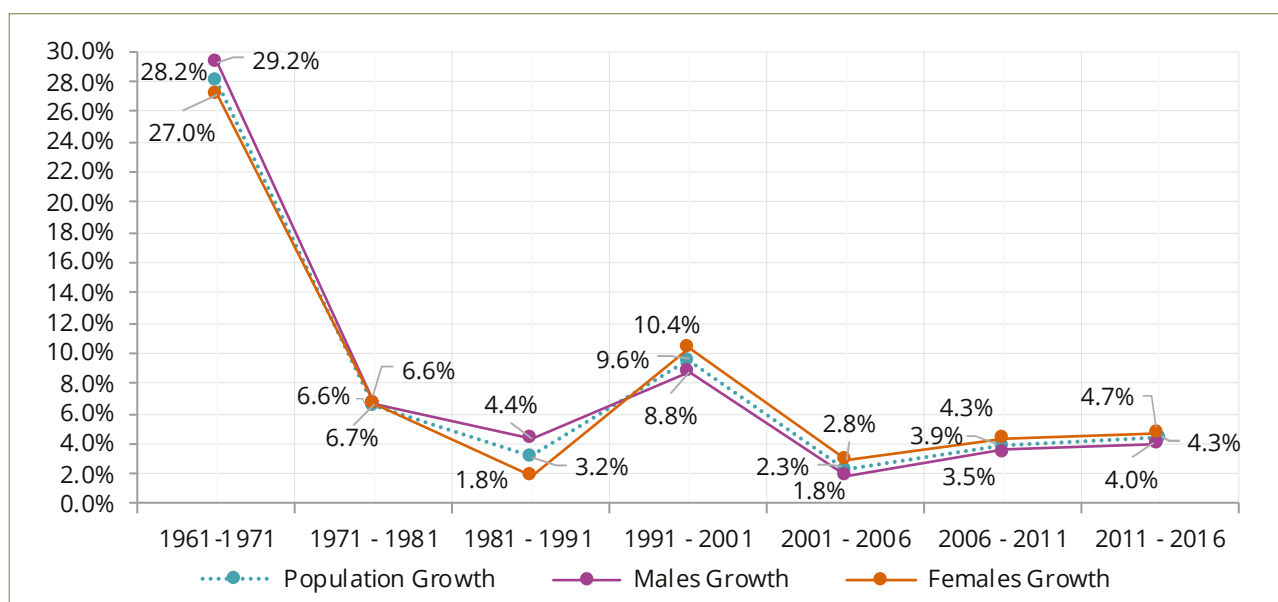
The Government of Samoa acknowledges the existence of gender inequality in Samoa and that equality can support in national development, as evidenced by the Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2016-2020, Outcome 8.1, which stipulates that the 'inclusion of vulnerable groups (women, youth, people with disabilities, children, elderly and disadvantaged people) in community planning and governance activities will be enhanced'.

## 2. POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS AND DYNAMICS

A country's development is shaped to a considerable extent by its population demographics and dynamics, which are, or should be, shaped by development policy and progress. Understanding the interplay between gender and population demographics and dynamics is essential for formulating and implementing policies and programmes that aim to change a country's environmental, social-political and economic demographics, dynamics and development prospects.

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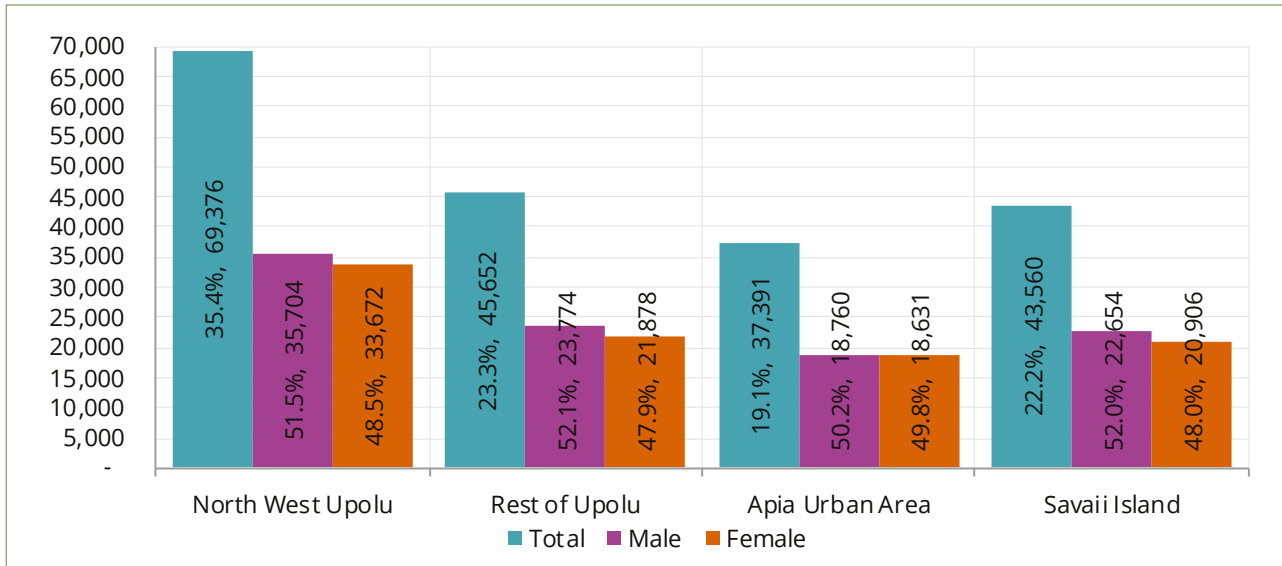
**Figure 2: Population growth by sex, 1961-2016**



### 2.1 National population by sex: Key differences

The breakdown of Samoa's population by sex is 51 per cent male and 49 per cent female (see Figure 1). The 'male-to-female' ratio has fluctuated between a difference of 2 per cent, 4 per cent and 6 per cent over the last eight censuses (1961 to 2016). The growth in the female population has been higher than the male population - by an average of 1 per cent - since 2001 (see Figure 3). A total of 43 per cent of Samoa's population are in the dependency ages (0 to 14 years and 65+ years) while 57 per cent are of working age (15 to 64 years). There are more females than males at the ages of 65+ years compared to all other age groups, where males outweigh females.

**Figure 3: Population by sex, by region, 2016**

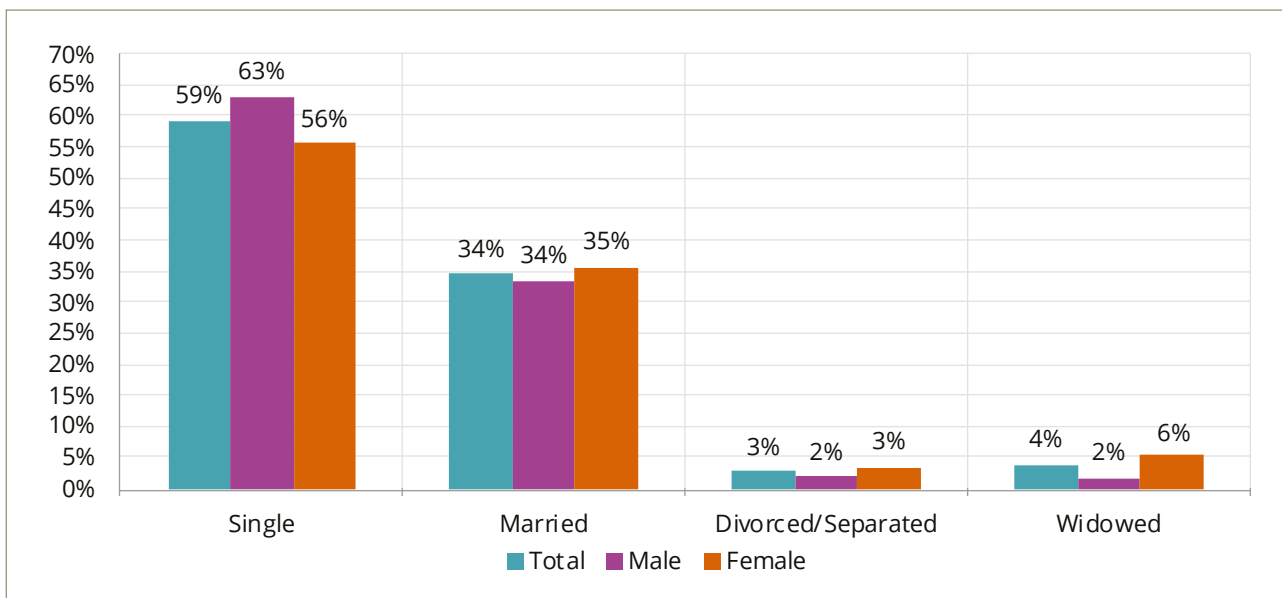


The difference between males and females living in the Apia Urban Area is much smaller compared to the rural regions of Upolu and Savaii (see Figure 3). With the exception of Gagaemauga II Savaii, there are more males than females in all districts in Samoa. Gagaemauga II (Savaii) is the only district where females outnumber males – by a difference of only eight females. Vaiee Fou has the higher number of female residents compared to all other residential areas and villages. Faleasiu, Vaiusu and Fasitoota villages have the highest number of male residents compared to females.

## 2.2 Marital and religious status by sex

Despite Samoa's male dominant population, there are more females than males who are either married, divorced/separated or widowed (see Figure 4). More females are also likely to get married compared to males, particularly in the younger-aged population – aged 15 to 29 years. The number of females who are divorced or separated is nearly double that of males.

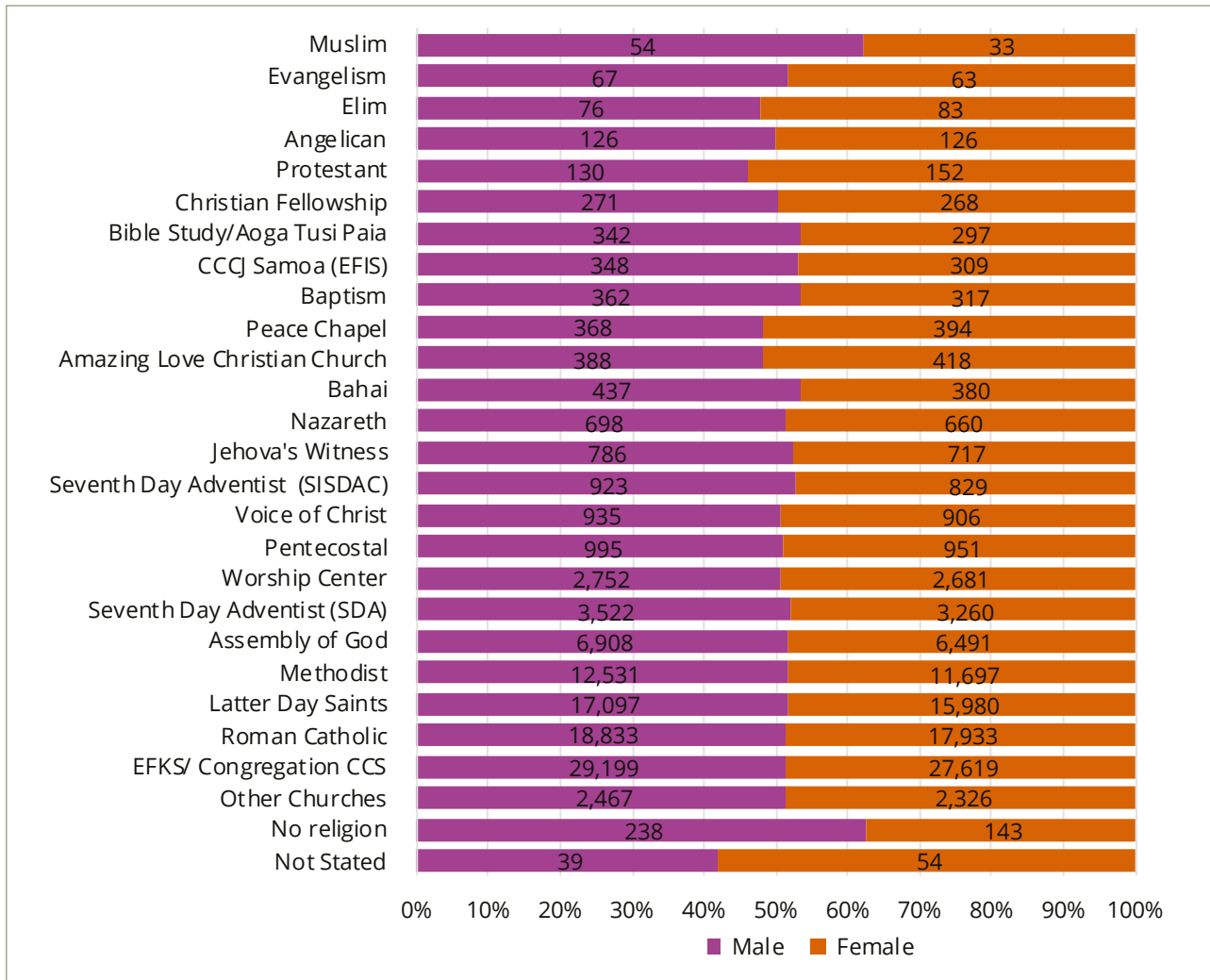
**Figure 4: Population by marital status, by sex 2016**



Males are more likely to remain married (or remarry) if their spouses pass away, particularly at older ages. The majority of the widowed population are older females.

For the four oldest religious dominations Ekalesia Faalapotopotoga Kerisiano o Samoa (EFKS), Catholic, Methodist and Latter Day Saints (LDS), there are no significant preferences among males and females about which religious church they attend.

**Figure 5: Population by religious status, by sex 2016**



For relatively recently-established churches, however, such as the Amazing Love Christian Church, Peace Chapel, Protestant and Elim, more females tend to affiliate with these religious churches compared to the four oldest mainstream religious dominations.

There are more males than females stating 'no religion,' which may signify that females more generally associate with a religious belief (of any kind) compared to males.

### 3. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 3.1 High dependency ratio

Samoa has a high dependency ratio – those people not in the labour force who are economically dependent on others – and a youthful population; 39 per cent of the population is aged 14 years and below. This young population demands the care of parents, especially mothers, and could be a contributing factor to the lower labour force participation by females (11.6 per cent) compared to males (28.8 per cent), and the high number of females engaged in domestic duties compared to males (see SGM Policy Brief 5). This prioritization of domestic roles (to care for young ones) coupled with limited flexible working arrangements (e.g. part-time work) for working mothers, means women have restricted opportunities (including time and space) to advance at work (e.g. developing a career or business) or improve their livelihoods in the formal and informal economic sectors.

To address these imbalances, there is a need to improve the employment and livelihood opportunities for women, including through an enabling learning and working environment.

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#### Interventions to address women's lower labour force participation could include:

- Increasing investments in women's livelihoods (e.g. home-based small businesses) to address gender inequalities that are created by a young dependent population where women shoulder the burden of household and care responsibilities.
- Developing flexible working arrangements to enable more females with young families and children to participate in the workforce.
- Encouraging and facilitating more females to undertake continuous education, with the education system and programmes providing an enabling and flexible learning environment for females with young families and children, including distance or extramural studies.

#### 3.2 Urbanization

There is a major urban drift in Samoa. More than half (54 per cent) of the population live in Apia Urban Area and North West Upolu. There is therefore a need to look at this development inequality through a gendered lens to determine the disparities that exist between men and women across regions of Samoa and in rural and urban areas, and to ensure effective planning.

For example if there are more women (including their children) than men living in urban areas,<sup>1</sup> social services, employment, education and other development opportunities will need to be available and there may also be a need for an increase in services such as voluntary family planning and sexual and reproductive health as well as additional street lightning and community police services. If there are more men in urban areas, the needs of women who are left behind in rural areas should be planned for, such as their access

<sup>1</sup> There are more females living in Gagaemauga II (Savaii) than in other district and more research is needed to understand the reason for this disparity.

to economic and social livelihoods, educational opportunities and other required services (e.g. health and social services).

**Development policies and initiatives should look at the impacts of urbanization through a gendered lens and could include:**

- Developing a rural development policy for Samoa, integrated as part of the government district planning process, which includes a gender component that addresses the gender inequalities/imbances identified in this Policy Brief, the SGN 2019 and other analyses.
- Providing incentives for people to move back to rural areas and for people in rural areas to remain in their communities, with a particular focus on the needs of women and their children, especially those who are vulnerable.
- Establishing a governing body for residential areas in urban areas – by policy or law – which is not under the *fa'amatai* system. This governing body should be gender-oriented and able to look at addressing the key gender inequality issues in residential areas, including the needs of women, especially those who are vulnerable (e.g. those living as squatters) and require additional social protection.

### 3.3 Marital status

The findings in section 2.2 above indicate that more females than males are either married, divorced/separated or widowed and that more females are likely to get married than males. A possible implication of this trend is that females faced with marital issues will need social support services, especially when children's care and protection are part of marital and separation/divorce matters or there are other issues such as gender-based violence, child abuse and neglect, children leaving home, children dropping out of school, and poverty. In addition, more females tend to become widowed at older ages than males, and with their increased life expectancy will need support at older ages, especially when care is not provided by family members.

**Females tend to become widowed at older ages than males, and with their increased life expectancy will need support at older age**

**These gendered difference in marital status require holistic considerations in policies and programmes, which specifically take into account:**

- The higher number of female who will require social support services, including to deal with marital and child issues, especially when these issues are also related to the rising incidence of domestic violence against women, girls and children in Samoa.
- More widowed women in Samoa will need support services with self-care at older ages if care services are not provided by family members.

### 3.4 Religious attendance

Data collected as part of the census indicates that there are gender differences in the religious status of females and males, including a trend for more females to attend recently-established churches (e.g. Amazing Love Christian Church, Peace Chapel, Protestant and Elim) compared to the four oldest church dominations (CCCS, Roman Catholic, LDS and Methodist) where there are more males.

**These disparities between males and female should be considered in policy and programme development including:**

- Targeting females at recently-established churches for advocacy and civil awareness programmes and activities to address gender, female and child issues.
- Promoting the role of religious leaders and the church in advancing gender equality and women empowerment interventions and programmes.

