

## **First Long-term Study on Social Dynamics Launched**

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A group of researchers on Sunday (Nov 2) launched Singapore's first long-term study to track family resilience and social mobility.

The project, called the “Singapore Panel Study on Social Dynamics”, is spearheaded by the Institute of Policy Studies' Social Lab and will track some 5,000 households for at least three years to see how they evolve over the years.

A key focus is in the area of family resilience and social mobility, where respondents will be asked about their aspirations and years later, tracked if they have achieved their goals.

"We look at their aspirations. We also look at their family relations and at the aspirations of their parents," said the Institute of Policy Studies' Social Lab head Tan Ern Ser. "We track them over time and see what they are actually doing about how their kids are performing for instance, and maybe how family conditions can affect outcome in terms of social mobility."

The first phase of data collection is underway and will last about six to nine months. Researchers say the same families will interviewed every year, for at least three years. They add that economies like the US, UK and Taiwan conduct similar studies which have contributed to more informed policies that deal with issues such as welfare reform and healthcare expenditure.

"There is no perfect family or perfect household," said Dr Tan. "I think every family or household have their own challenges. Sometimes they cope pretty well, sometimes they don't. So there's always this up and down fluctuation. So being able to find out what are the challenges, what are the threats, what are the enabling points that families face, that will tell us what kind of policies will be needed and what will be effective, what will be needful."

The study comes amid evolving social norms, changing demography and family structures in Singapore. Researchers say the cooperation of respondents is key to the success of the entire project. Selected participants will receive letters of invite. Surveys will be conducted face-to-face and will take about an hour to complete."