CLASS AND SOCIAL ORIENTATIONS: KEY FINDINGS FROM THE SOCIAL STRATIFICATION SURVEY 2011

TAN ERN SER

IPS Exchange Series

The IPS Exchange Series is published by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS). It comprises final reports on primary research conducted by IPS researchers and the Institute's associates, as well as reports of study groups, conferences and seminars organised by the Institute. The objective of this publication series is to disseminate research findings as well as deliberations and policy suggestions that arise from the Institute's programmes.

When using material from this series, please cite the "IPS Exchange Series" and details of the issue you are referencing. The views expressed in the IPS Exchange Series should be attributed to the authors, or to the study groups and meetings where these views were generated, rather than to IPS.

About the Institute of Policy Studies

The Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) was established in 1988 as an independent think-tank to study and generate public policy ideas in Singapore. IPS became an autonomous research centre of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore in 2008.

Today, IPS continues to analyse public policy, build bridges between thought leaders, and communicate its findings to a wide audience. The Institute examines issues of critical national interest across a variety of fields, and studies the attitudes and aspirations of Singaporeans through surveys of public perception. It adopts a multi-disciplinary approach in its analysis and takes the long-term view in its strategic deliberation and research.

CLASS AND SOCIAL ORIENTATIONS: KEY FINDINGS FROM THE SOCIAL STRATIFICATION SURVEY 2011

TAN ERN SER

Chapter 1 — Introduction

Chapter 2: Methodology

Chapter 3: Class Structure

Chapter 4: Success Factors

Chapter 5: Social Mobility

Chapter 6: Sandwiched Generation

Chapter 7: Social Safety Nets

Chapter 8: Political Participation

Chapter 9: Satisfaction and Happiness

Chapter 10: Response to Migrants

Chapter 11: Family Values: Supporting Parents, Raising Children

Chapter 12: Conclusion

References

Appendix

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PREFACE

This report is based on my 2011 survey on social stratification in Singapore. It focuses on key aspects of the social and political orientations of Singaporeans: ingredients for success, social mobility, welfare, political participation, response to migrants, satisfaction and happiness, and family values relating to support for parents and to raising children. Where possible, it makes some comparison with the findings of a similar survey I conducted in 2001.

Its main premise is that, apart from age and ethnicity, social class is a critical independent variable which can explain differences in how Singaporeans perceive their future prospects, their family roles and relationships, and how much they can influence the decisions that affect their own lives and that of Singapore's destiny.

A Note

I have appended my questionnaire at the end of this report. Readers who are interested in exploring some kind of collaboration with me on any of the items in the questionnaire may write to me directly.

Chapter 1

Introduction

CHAPTER 1 — INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

When I conducted my first survey on social stratification in Singapore back in 2001, the term "class" had yet to appear regularly in public discourse. Its relative absence may perhaps be attributed to the preoccupation with race and religion as potential sources of social division and conflict that could hinder the nation-building process. It may well also be that giving the term "class" more prominence may engender a politics of envy. Nevertheless, considering the importance that the government places on achieving social equality, as reflected in the national pledge and economic and social policies, it is not surprising that various proxies or indicators of "class" have indeed been used frequently, for instance, "income", as in "low-income" households, or "middle-income" housing.

That "income", rather than "class", seems to be the more preferred term could be because it is perceived as a politically neutral concept and numerical variable in which the boundaries between categories are more permeable, and which can serve as a heuristic device amenable to mathematical calculations. In contrast, the concept of class, as defined in a Marxist sense, conveys the possibility of organised political groupings with opposing interests which are potentially divisive and destabilising, such as a revolutionary working class at odds with private ownership of capital and free enterprise. The concept, as understood in the Weberian sense of unequal "life chances" and impermeability of boundaries between "social classes", could also suggest the possibility of a socially unpalatable permanent presence, such as that of an underclass. The above images are, in my view, not compatible with a Singapore understood by some to be potentially a classless society, the perceived eventual outcome of the twin pillars of meritocratic practices and equality of opportunity.[1]

These twin pillars undeniably constitute part of Singapore's core values. However, they have also contributed to a mistaken notion that equality of

---

1. The late President Yusof bin Ishak in a speech reported in *The Straits Times* (18 September 1966) "stressed the importance of bringing about a classless society based on equal opportunity rather than the accident of status or possession of wealth and property." Peter Pang, former Director of the University Scholars Programme (USP), had also argued that Singapore is "still a relatively classless society (meaning there is no evident of class division)" with "more opportunities for various people to get ahead" (*The Graduate*, Mar-April 2007).

opportunity can produce an equal or egalitarian society, and that the practice of meritocracy means that class differences no longer significantly influence educational and occupational attainment.

Such assumptions are unnecessary, if not fallacious, given that Singapore is a capitalist society, where the use of unequal rewards is understood to legitimately serve as an incentive for achieving higher productivity or performance; and the institution of private property inheritance, which has little or nothing to do with the merits of beneficiaries, remains sacrosanct. Moreover, while it is possible to ensure that every child who qualifies for university entrance, regardless of class background, is not denied the opportunity for higher education on grounds of lack of funds, it is difficult to prevent the advantages accruing from differences in social and cultural capital from enhancing the odds of some classes doing better than those with less or no access to such resources.

"MIDDLE CLASS SOCIETY" AND SOCIAL POLICY

The above argument is not intended to paint a pessimistic scenario, that social policy, based on meritocracy, equality of opportunity, "levelling up", and "sharing success" (MITA, 1996), as opposed to redistribution, cannot produce a better society — one that is more equal, more motivated, more productive, and where social origin does not completely determine one's destiny.

However, while achieving an egalitarian society is a tall order, the same cannot be said of a "middle class society", which in my assessment is a realistic goal. It should also be noted that although the term "class" appears here, it is associated with a positive connotation in this formulation. Indeed, in the 1980s, then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew had declared that Singapore was a "middle class society" — in that some 80 per cent of Singaporeans owned the residential properties they lived in (*The Straits Times*, 14 August 1987) — which, in his view, rendered Singapore society largely free of the tension and conflict associated with a capitalist society.

Furthermore, what is plausible about "middle class society" as a goal is that it does not pretend to be an equal or classless society; neither does it deny that class influences chances of mobility. Additionally, with the twin pillars of meritocracy and equality of opportunity understood in a broad sense to include social and cultural capital in addition to economic capital, a "middle class society" can ensure that a large majority of Singaporeans and their children have access to quality living characterised by security and the potential for self-actualisation. It is also not marred by an intolerable degree of inequality. More importantly, with a higher and growing proportion of

school cohorts attaining either polytechnic diplomas or university degrees — and assuming that the Singapore economy is able to continue generating high value-added jobs — joining the ranks of the middle class can be a realistic aspiration or ambition for most Singaporeans, thereby granting a high degree of legitimacy to the emerging "middle class society", and contributing to social stability. Indeed, among employed residents, almost 50 per cent have attained at least a polytechnic diploma, and slightly more than half are in the higher-end PMET (professional, managerial, executive and technician) jobs (Ministry of Manpower, 2011: 4, 7).

THE MIDDLE CLASS AS THE FOCAL CATEGORY

If we accept that "middle class society" is our policy goal, it then makes sense to treat the middle class as the focal category, though always in comparison with the other major classes, including an upper class that is not expected to suffer downward social mobility and a working class that expects to achieve some upward mobility in their own lifetimes or, at least, in that of the next generation. And if the middle class were indeed the majority and expanding category in the population, as well as our policy goal, how it fares would then provide a good gauge of the state of social health in Singapore. This is reflected in one of Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's key 2011 General Election speeches where he quite succinctly vocalised his recognition of middle-class concerns (*The Straits Times*, April 30, 2011):

> Middle-income Singaporeans *"feel pressured because of their children's education. They worry about their careers. They worry about competition because of Employment Pass holders, foreigners here working. They're worried about taking care of their aged parents, the burden of looking after old folks at home... We understand these hopes and anxieties.*

OBJECTIVES AND OUTLINE OF THE REPORT

Having discussed our analytical approach, the report will proceed to use the 2011 social stratification survey data to capture the class structure in Singapore, before examining the relationship between class and social orientations relating to a broad range of issues of theoretical and policy importance: welfare, financial adequacy, inequality, success, social

mobility, national identity and social relations (local-foreigner, inter-ethnic and inter-class).

Where possible and relevant, the 2011 data will be compared with that from my 2001 survey to track changes in class structure, processes and orientations, if any, over the first decade of the new millennium.

The two time points may also be significant in themselves. I have previously argued that 2001 marked the deepening of an economic downturn, following the dramatic September 11 terrorist attack on the United States that year, and that there were "indications that the job and income security and aspirations normally associated with the middle class and hopeful working class may no longer be realistic (Tan, 2004: 4). In 2011, while the unemployment rate remained low at 2.1 per cent, the more significant affliction was inflation, which rose above 5 per cent, resulting in cost of living, including housing affordability, becoming a hot-button issue in the general election held that year. At the same time, a host of other concerns — namely, immigration, income inequality, income stagnation — were raised and amplified during the election season, and continued to influence post-election policy discussions, debates and decisions. The fact that all of these issues are, to different degree, related to class also reinforces the idea — and our main hypothesis — that class matters, perhaps more so than ethnicity or religion, in explaining social orientations in Singapore.

Before we move on to Chapter 2, which covers the methodological aspects and issues, it should be noted that while this research report does attempt to map the objective class structure — based on income, occupation and education as indicators[2] — using survey data, its real value-add lies in its capturing the subjective aspects of class structure and related values, orientations, attitudes and perceptions. The objective dimensions are best tracked, with greater precision and validity, via census data and other government or administrative statistics, based on, for instance, tax returns and CPF contributions. Data collection on subjective dimensions, on the other hand, usually falls within the purview of surveys with representative samples, which, when properly conducted, can be effective in capturing

---

2. These indicators are usually used to form a composite index called socioeconomic status (SES). The latter can in turn be treated as an indicator of class, understood in the Weberian sense of "life chances", or the probability of access to economic and cultural capital of a society. Each of the indicators could also be used on its own to "capture" differences in life chances.

meanings and worldviews underlying observable behaviours and outcomes.

Following Chapter 2, the report will deal with a range of topics in subsequent chapters to provide a sense of the impact of class on social orientations in Singapore.

Chapter 2

Methodology

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

FIELDWORK

After months of preparation, the survey fieldwork for this study was launched on 11 November 2010 and completed on 8 July 2011. It was briefly discontinued for one and a half months during the General Election season in May 2011 to minimise the probability of the nation-wide event influencing the responses of the people in the sample, and in turn generating bias in the findings. This precaution was made necessary by the fact that the survey included questions on political participation and alienation, and, as noted earlier, a large proportion of questionnaire items related to issues featured prominently in the election debates, such as welfare, financial adequacy and local-migrant relations.

While it is not possible to prove whether or not continuing the fieldwork during the election season would have any significant effects on the findings, we did detect that the post-General Election respondents possessed a higher propensity for political participation than those who responded to the survey before the election: specifically, scoring 2.19 as compared to 1.97 on a three-point scale. However, as the proportion of post-election respondents to overall sample is 15 per cent, I would argue that the impact of the post-election on the findings is minimal. Indeed, merging the post-election respondents with the pre-election ones led to only a 2 per cent increase with regard to political alienation.

INTERVIEW PROCESS

The fieldwork, involving face-to-face interviews, was conducted by a local survey research company. During the process, interviewers carried with them a participant information sheet, which contained basic details on the study as well as a consent form in which respondents indicated their willingness to take part in the survey. Participants aged 20 years or younger were also required to obtain parental consent — proof of which was via a signature on the consent form — for taking part in the survey. This procedure is a standard requirement prescribed by the National University of Singapore's research ethics board.

The fieldwork process achieved a response rate of 73 per cent, aided in large part by the easy flow and manageable length of the questionnaire, and correspondingly an average time commitment of about 30 minutes per interview session. The assurance of anonymity and the relevance of the

issues dealt with in the questionnaire may also have contributed to enhancing the response rate.

SAMPLE

The sample comprises 2,700 Singapore citizens aged 15 through 74. It can be described as a stratified, disproportionate, random national sample in that there was a deliberate under-sampling of the majority Chinese (42 per cent of the total sample), and oversampling of the minority ethnic groups (27 per cent Malays; 26 per cent Indians; and 5 per cent of other races), to ensure that there would be sufficient number of cases in each ethnic category for sub-group analysis. This also required that the final achieved sample be weighted by ethnicity.

Moreover, given the resulting unintended, uneven response rates along the different demographic dimensions, it was necessary to weigh the final achieved sample by more than just ethnicity. In the first instance, the final achieved sample was weighted by ethnicity and age to reflect the population profile along these demographic dimensions. Where appropriate, other weights were used.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The full questionnaire was 12 pages long, and comprised mainly close-ended questions, with some open-ended questions that required very brief answers, such as job titles.

The questions or statements were organised into six sections. Section A opened the interview session by asking screening questions and some demographic items. Section B focused on job history, class background and training plans. Section C enquired about present and expected future financial situation; orientations towards welfare arrangements; and sense of well-being, including life satisfaction and happiness. Section D dealt with social orientations towards a broad range of topics: Singapore as an economy and nation; inequality; welfare; unionism; financial support to parents, grandparents, spouse and children; career prospects; and inter-ethnic, inter-class and local-migrant relations. Section E looked at subjective class identification, while Section F solicited other demographic information not covered previously.

Prior to the survey proper, a pilot study was conducted to evaluate the question wordings and the flow and sequence of the questions as a whole. The feedback from this pilot study provided valuable inputs for improving

the questionnaire, making it visually appealing and operationally user-friendly.

The next chapter will report the findings on objective and subjective class structure.

Chapter 3

Class Structure

CHAPTER 3: CLASS STRUCTURE

LOCATING THE MIDDLE CLASS

As noted earlier, one of the main objectives of this study is to map the class structure in Singapore.

Table 3.1 indicates that, based on household income figures, slightly more than half the sample were from households with an income of less than $4,000. We may thereby estimate the median monthly household income to be about $4,000 and the proportion of the middle and higher classes combined to be 46 per cent (as can be seen in column 3 of Table 3.1). I have also divided the household income categories above the median into a lower-middle, middle-middle, upper-middle, and an upper class. This is merely a preliminary, intuitive classification, which calls for further fine-tunings based on wealth ownership figures and consumption patterns, if available, though I have also considered the subjective class identifications reported in Tables 3.3 and 3.5.

I would have liked to compare our survey findings on household income with that of the relevant population parameters. Unfortunately, the Department of Statistics' "Key Income Trends 2011" provides only the median monthly household income for residents with at least one working person, which was $7,041 in 2011, or $6,286 if the employer CPF contribution is excluded. These figures are, however, not comparable to our rough estimate, which refers to citizens and to all types of households, whether or not they have any working persons. Nonetheless, comparability issues aside, Table 3.1 does resonate with official statistics in showing an upward shift in household income levels in the citizen population between 2001 and 2011.

Table 3.1: Household Income and Class (%), 2011

Income Category ($)	%	%	Class Category (based on household income)
20,000 or >	1	1	Upper
15,000 – 19,999	3	4	Upper Middle
12,000 – 14,999	1		
10,000 - 11,999	5	11	Middle Middle
9,000 – 9,999	2		
8,000 – 8,999	4		
7,000 – 7,999	5	31	Lower Middle
6,000 – 6,999	7		
5,000 – 5,999	8		
4,000 – 4,999	11		
3,000 – 3,999	16	33	Upper Lower
2,000 – 2,999	17		
1,000 – 1,999	13	21	Lower Lower
0 - 999	8		

Table 3.2 reports the figures on subjective class identification for both the six-category and the four-category structure. The proportion placing themselves in the middle or higher class was 87 per cent in the six-category structure, while that for the four-category structure was 43 per cent. If we exclude those who identify themselves as "lower middle-class" in the six-category classification, we would then have 54 per cent in the middle or higher class.

Taking the above three estimates into consideration, the proportion of Singaporeans in the middle or higher class would be between 46 and 54 per cent. Another important observation is that the subjective class distribution has remained stable between the two time points (Table 3.2). This may be an indication that class identification involves primarily comparing oneself with others, rather than in absolute terms, or that there has not been any significant change in objective conditions to warrant an

expansion or contraction in the proportion of the self-identified middle class.

Table 3.2: Subjective Class Structure (%), 2001 and 2011 compared

Subjective Class	2001	2011
Upper	1	1
Upper Middle	6	5
Middle Middle	49	48
Lower Middle	32	33
Upper Lower	9	10
Lower Lower	3	4
Upper	2	1
Middle	41	42
Working	51	50
Lower	6	6

CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION IN THE MIDDLE CLASS

Besides demonstrating that there is, as we would expect, some correlation between the subjective and the objective class structure, Table 3.3 suggests that the household income category that constitutes a threshold at which Singaporeans would identify themselves as middle class is $6,000–$7,999. This is also the threshold category at which Singaporeans would consider themselves to be "above average" in terms of financial situation (Tables 3.4 and 3.5).

What may be inferred from these findings is that to regard oneself as middle class in Singapore, one would likely have a household income of at least $6,000, and "doing better" than the "average" Singaporean. The latter inference also suggests that to be "average" does not made one "middle class" in Singapore, which also means that "middle class" is not merely a middle category in a statistical sense, but a social location with some meanings attached to it, for instance, being in a job with some prestige, authority and autonomy, or having access to a higher standard of living.

3.3: Subjective Class by Income (%)

Subjective Class	Income Category ($)								
	0 – 1,999	2,000 – 3,999	4,000 – 5,999	6,000 – 7,999	8,000 – 9,999	10,000 – 11,999	12,000 – 14,999	15,000 or >	Overall
Upper	0	1	1	1	1	1	7	22	1
Middle	34	39	38	46	55	69	74	59	42
Working	48	55	60	49	43	30	19	20	51
Lower	18	5	2	4	1	0	0	0	6

Table 3.4: Subjective Class by Perceived Financial Situation (%)

Subjective Class	Perceived Financial Situation				
	Poor	**Average**	**Better than Average**	**Well-off**	**Overall**
Upper	0	1	1	33	1
Middle	11	39	54	54	42
Working	50	54	43	13	50
Lower	40	5	2	0	6

Table 3.5: Perceived Financial Situation by Income (%)

Perceived Financial Situation	Income Category ($)								Overall
	0 – 1,999	2,000 – 3,999	4,000 – 5,999	6,000 – 7,999	8,000 – 9,999	10,000 – 11,999	12,000 – 14,999	15,000 or >	
Well-off	1	1	2	1	5	6	22	30	2
Better than Average	11	23	34	54	59	58	52	47	27
Average	74	72	62	45	37	35	26	23	66
Poor	15	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	5

Chapter 4

Success Factors

CHAPTER 4: SUCCESS FACTORS

THE INGREDIENTS FOR ACHIEVING SUCCESS

Having mapped the class structure, we shall now examine how each of the classes evaluates the importance of various factors normally associated with achieving upward social mobility. A class system which allows for social mobility — or, more generally, social success — regardless of one's class origin, as in a meritocracy with equality of opportunity, would likely be more acceptable to those in less privileged class positions.

In a pure meritocracy, social mobility depends entirely on ability and diligence translated into some measure of merit, rather than social connections or ascribed characteristics. One may of course argue that ability and diligence, which may be understood as human capital, are themselves the product of socialisation, which differs in content and consistency across classes. In any case, the concept of pure meritocracy is an ideal type that does not exist in the real world, but it can serve as a benchmark by which to gauge the degree of permeability of boundaries between classes in a society.

RANKING OF SUCCESS FACTORS AMONG SINGAPOREANS

This chapter does not deal with actual mobility per se, but examines what Singaporeans perceive are the ingredients for social success in Singapore. Table 4.1 shows merit-related factors (education, diligence and ability) ranking higher than their non-merit based alternatives (social connections, family background and luck), and remain more or less so between 2001 and 2011. "Ability" has overtaken "diligence" somewhat during the decade, probably because there is a realisation that the correlation between diligence and merit may be weaker than that between ability and merit; or to put it another way, "working smart" matters more than working hard.

What is more significant, though not unexpected, is that Singaporeans possess a great deal of confidence in Singapore as a meritocracy, particularly the perception that education can enable one to achieve success, regardless of class background. Achieving success is also not seen as a random process of luck, but one where individuals have some degree of control.

Table 4.1: Success Factors (mean score)

Success Factor	2005 (5-pt scale)	Rank	2011 (6-pt scale)	Rank
Education	1.83	1	1.94	1
Hard work	2.53	2	2.86	3
Ability	2.60	3	2.71	2
Connection	3.71	4	3.81	4
Luck	4.33	5	4.73	5
Rich family background	-	-	4.94	6

1 = most important, 6 = least important

RATING OF SUCCESS FACTORS ACROSS CLASSES

Table 4.2 indicates that, in relative terms, Singaporeans from lower income households are somewhat more likely to emphasise diligence than their higher income counterparts, whereas the latter are more likely to rate ability higher than those from lower income households. This difference in emphasis could be due to the kinds of jobs they hold, whether mental or manual, which roughly correspond to brain and brawn, respectively.

It can also be observed that Singaporeans from higher income households are understandably somewhat more likely to point to the importance of ascribed factors, like social connections and family backgrounds. In contrast, those from lower income households are more likely to consider luck as an important success ingredient than their counterparts from higher income households. I suspect that, for the lower household income category, seeing success as due in part to luck makes it easier to account to themselves and to others their relative lack of success. Perhaps, the belief that luck may somehow intervene also keeps them hopeful that success is always a possibility, even if low in terms of probability.

Table 4.2: Success Factors by Household Income (mean score)

Success Factor	Income Category ($)					
	0 – 1,999	2,000 – 3,999	4,000 – 5,999	6,000 – 7,999	8,000 – 9,999	10,000 or >
Education	1.94	1.84	1.90	1.99	1.92	2.20
Hard work	2.78	2.78	2.64	2.78	2.46	2.45
Ability	2.62	2.75	2.82	3.15	3.17	3.03
Connection	3.99	3.89	3.85	3.66	3.70	3.50
Luck	4.51	4.73	4.87	4.70	4.74	4.95
Rich family background	5.09	5.00	4.92	4.69	5.02	4.82

1 = most important, 6 = least important

Chapter 5

Social Mobility

CHAPTER 5: SOCIAL MOBILITY

We have discussed the ingredients for social success, which would include social mobility. The latter is a critical social phenomenon and indicator by which to gauge the degree of permeability between class boundaries in a society. Most academic studies use one or more of the following dimensions to compare the extent of mobility between generations, or within one generation or career trajectory: occupation, income, wealth, type of housing and educational attainment.

COMPARING EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENTS ACROSS GENERATIONS

Focusing on the educational attainment of respondents aged 25 or older and that of their fathers, Table 5.1 shows that among fathers with primary or lower qualifications, 12 per cent have children who obtained a university degree. This indicates that a lower class background does not prevent one from moving up the social ladder. At the same time, it can also be observed that among fathers who are university graduates, 7 per cent have children who did not make it to secondary level. In short, there is a mix of upward and downward mobility, which is not unexpected in a meritocracy.

However, Table 5.1 also shows that university-educated fathers are far more likely to have similarly qualified children (63 per cent) than their counterparts with secondary-level qualifications (37 per cent) or primary or lower education (12 per cent). This indicates that mobility chances, while not equal to zero in any of the classes, differ across classes, implying that class origin does have some influence on class destination.

Table 5.1: Respondent's education by Father's education (%), (aged 25 or older)

Respondent's education	Father's education					
	Pri or <	Sec	Post-Sec	Dip	Deg	Overall
Deg	12	37	53	60	63	21
Dip	14	24	24	12	20	17
Post-Sec	7	12	14	16	5	8
Sec	37	22	9	4	5	31
Pri or <	31	5	1	8	7	23

COMPARING PERCEIVED PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE FINANCIAL SITUATION

Besides using educational mobility as a proxy for social mobility, we compare how respondents evaluate their past, present and future financial situation. Table 5.2 shows a positive correlation between income level and financial situation or outlook. It also reveals that all income categories experience some degree of upward social mobility in terms of their perceived financial situation across the three points in time, though the extent or range of mobility narrows from the highest income to the lowest income categories. This set of figures again demonstrates that while absolute mobility occurs across all classes, relative mobility has remained unequal.

What may be inferred from the analysis in this chapter is that although Singapore may be viewed as a land of opportunity, where it is possible to achieve upward social mobility, the probability of doing so declines as one moves down the class ladder. This calls for measures both to prevent mobility chances from sliding to zero, and to equalise opportunities across classes, even as absolute mobility is enhanced through the creation and inflow of high quality jobs.

Table 5.2: Perceived past and present financial situation, and future outlook by income (mean score)

Income Category ($)	Past (4-pt scale)	Present (4-pt scale)	Future (5-pt scale)
10,000 or >	2.02	2.80	3.67
8,000 – 9,999	2.13	2.60	3.53
6,000 – 7,999	1.92	2.46	3.45
4,000 – 5,999	1.89	2.29	3.52
2,000 – 3,999	1.81	2.14	3.39
$0 – 1,999	1.63	1.93	3.04

In the 4-point scale, 4 = Well-Off, 1 = Poor. In the 5-point scale, 5 = High, 1 = Low

Chapter 6

Sandwiched Generation

CHAPTER 6: SANDWICHED GENERATION

FAMILY: ASSET OR LIABILITY?

From examining what could be done to support upward social mobility, we move on to a demographic feature that may be experienced by some: specifically, the "sandwiched" generation.

As implied earlier, a family could be an asset or a liability, though most people would avoid thinking about the family in such terms. There are also strong cultural sanctions against holding such views. However, the fact remains that just as class background and family resources could contribute to individual social mobility, the absence of class advantages and lack of access to family resources, or worse, having to live with family dysfunctions, could turn out to be a dampener on one's mobility aspiration.

DEFINING THE "SANDWICHED" GENERATION

The "sandwiched" generation exemplifies a "family as liability" social arrangement in which a person from one generation is responsible for the financial well-being or obligations of two other generations of family members: that of parents (and parents-in-law in some cases) as well as of children. For the purpose of this analysis, a person is deemed to be a part of the "sandwiched" generation only if he or she indicates having "difficulty providing financial support" to parents and to children.

WHO BELONGS TO THE "SANDWICHED" GENERATION?

Our survey data estimate that in 2011, 20 per cent of those in our sample who have to support both parents and children can be classified as belonging to the "sandwiched" generation, compared to 25 per cent in 2001.[3] The decline in the proportion of Singaporeans identified as belonging to the "sandwiched" generation suggests that a rising proportion of elderly Singaporeans may now be less dependent on their adult children, and that more Singaporeans are having fewer children, thereby easing their financial burden.[4]

---

3. This figure may, however, underestimate the actual proportion, should some respondents be disinclined to admit that they encounter difficulties supporting their parents and children.
4. One may, however, argue that the cost of raising one child in 2011 may be higher than that of raising two in 2001, given rising aspirations and expectations.

In terms of demographic profile, it was found that the members of the "sandwiched" generation are likely to be aged 45 or older — many of whom are from the so-called "baby boomers" generation — living in public housing and mainly from the lower classes, though the higher classes are not completely spared either. Table 6.1 shows, for instance, that 8 per cent of those from households with monthly income in the $6,000–$7,999 category may be described as belonging to the "sandwiched" generation.

LIFE SATISFACTION BY "SANDWICHED" GENERATION

Being in the "sandwiched" generation does negatively impact one's feeling of well-being. Table 6.2 indicates that Singaporeans belonging to the "sandwiched" generation are more likely to express low satisfaction with life. For instance, while 8 per cent of the non-"sandwiched" express low life satisfaction, for the "sandwiched" it is 24 per cent.

By the same token, our ANOVA, using the SPSS General Linear Model procedures, indicates that those in the "sandwiched" generation have a mean score of 3.49 on a scale of 1 to 5, compared to 3.84 for those not in the same situation (Table 6.3a). The inverse relationship between "sandwiched" and satisfaction with life is statistically significant, even when household income level is held constant (see Table 6.3b). This finding is further confirmed by our regression analysis (see Table 6.4b).

Table 6.1: "Sandwiched" by Housing Income (%)

Sandwiched	Household Income Category ($)					
	0 – 1,999	2,000 – 3,999	4,000 – 5,999	6,000 – 7,999	8,000 – 9,999	10,000 or >
Yes	42	24	14	8	0	4
No	58	76	86	93	100	96

Chi-sq = 126.661, df = 5,sig.

Table 6.2: "Life Satisfaction" by "Sandwiched" (%)

Sandwiched	Strong Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Yes	3	21	6	67	3	100
No	1	7	8	77	8	100

Chi-sq = 55.044, df = 4,sig.

Table 6.3a: "Life Satisfaction" by "Sandwiched" (mean score)

SANDWICHED	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
No	3.835	0.027	3.783	3.887
Yes	3.492	0.081	3.332	3.651

Table 6.3b: ANOVA of "Life Satisfaction" by "Sandwiched" and Household Income

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	39.222	10	3.922	7.196	.000
Intercept	4053.69	1	4053.69	7436.95	.000
SANDWICHED	**9.283**	**1**	**9.283**	**17.031**	**.000**
HOUSEHOLD INCOME	5.461	5	1.092	2.004	0.076
SANDWICHED* HOUSEHOLD INCOME	1.803	4	0.451	0.827	0.508
Error	624.110	1145	0.545		
Total	17085.000	1156			
Corrected Total	663.331	1155			

Note: R Squared = .059 (Adjusted R Squared = .051)

Table 6.4a: Variation in "Life Satisfaction" explained by Regression Model with "Sandwiched" and "Household Income" as Predictors

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.247ᵃ	.061	.056	.749

Predictors: (Constant), CLASS2, SANDWR1, CLASS5, CLASS6, CLASS4, CLASS3

Note: Household Income was converted into a series of dummy variables (CLASS2 to CLASS6) with Income Category "$1999 or below "(CLASS1) as the reference category.

Table 6.4b: Regression Equation with "Sandwiched" and "Household Income" as Predictors

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	3.650	.057		63.507	.000
1	SANDWICHED	-.314	.059	-.161	-5.339	.000
	CLASS6	.376	.086	.157	4.391	.000
	CLASS5	.183	.109	.055	1.686	.092
	CLASS4	.271	.081	.121	3.339	.001
	CLASS3	.21	.075	.105	2.797	.005
	CLASS2	.133	.065	.081	2.034	.042

Note: Dependent Variable: Q45a I am satisfied with my life.

Chapter 7

Social Safety Nets

CHAPTER 7: SOCIAL SAFETY NETS

GREATER DEMAND FOR WELFARE SUPPORT

We have suggested in the earlier chapters that while it is unrealistic to aim for an egalitarian society, it does not mean that there is no expectation on the part of citizens that the state delivers greater opportunities to facilitate social mobility and provide adequate social safety nets to meet the economic needs of citizens and reduce overall income inequality. This entails instituting some form of sustainable welfare system.

As it is well known, the government is ideologically not in favour of the welfare state approach prevalent in Northern and Western Europe. Nevertheless, it does provide subsidies for education, housing and healthcare, and even some forms of cash hand-outs from time to time. It subscribes to the principle of co-payment by both state and citizens, together with self-reliance on the part of citizens.

In any case, when the economy is buoyant, and citizens feel a sense of material security, there is less pressure for greater and more comprehensive welfare provisions. However, with Singapore maturing as an economy, encountering increasing global competition, facing a rapidly ageing population as well as rising expectations of the citizenry, there is higher demand from citizens for government support to help them cope with rising costs of living, and keep the Singapore Dream[5] viable. In short, the expectation is not merely about welfare provisions for low-income citizens, but more importantly also about supporting middle-class aspirations, and reducing middle-class anxiety regarding their future, not least that of their children.

THE INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

This hypothesis receives some support in Table 7.1. It can be observed that 70 per cent of our respondents believe that middle-income people should qualify for subsidies, and slightly more than a third support the idea of granting middle-income people, together with those among the low-income, "more" cash transfers.

---

5. The Singapore Dream is somewhat equivalent to the American Dream. It involves upward social mobility and gaining access to the trappings of success, understood by most Singaporeans as the 5 Cs (cash, credit card, condominium apartment, car and country club membership).

Table 7.1: Social Safety Nets (who should qualify for subsidies?)(Who should get more cash transfers?) %

Income segment	Who should qualify?	Who should get more?
Low-income	30	64
Low to middle-income	55	35
Low to high-income	15	2

Table 7.2 provides further reinforcement that the middle class expects to qualify for subsidies. Indeed, among those in the $10,000 or higher household income categories, 51 per cent indicated that the middle-income, along with the low-income, should qualify for subsidies, and 32 per cent would even include high-income people. Table 7.3 conveys a somewhat similar picture in that among those who considered themselves upper class, two-thirds thought the middle-income ought to qualify for subsidies, and a quarter would even include the high-income. However, in regard to the quantum of cash transfers preferred, the middle and upper classes seemed to moderate their expectation: close to two-thirds indicated that low-income people should be given more cash transfers than those in the middle or high income categories. In an interesting way, the inclusive society that Singaporeans have in mind resonates with the government's "levelling up" philosophy.

Table 7.2: "Who should qualify for subsidies" by Income (%)

Who should qualify?	Income Category ($)					
	0 – 1,999	2,000 – 3,999	4,000 – 5,999	6,000 – 7,999	8,000 – 9,999	10,000 or >
Low to high income	8	10	14	22	25	32
Low to middle income	44	58	65	56	52	51
Only low income	49	32	21	21	23	17

Table 7.3: "Who should qualify for subsidies" by Subjective Class (%)

Who should qualify?	Subjective Class			
	Lower	**Working**	**Middle**	**Upper**
Low to high income	6	14	18	26
Low to middle income	42	57	55	37
Only low income	52	29	27	37

Table 7.4: "Who should get more cash transfers" by Income (%)

Who should get more?	Income Category ($)					
	0 – 1,999	**2,000 – 3,999**	**4,000 – 5,999**	**6,000 – 7,999**	**8,000 – 9,999**	**10,000 or >**
Low to high income	1	2	0	5	6	2
Low to middle income	27	34	41	31	33	36
Only low income	72	64	59	64	61	63

Table 7.5: "Who should get more cash transfers" by Subjective Class (%)

Who should get more?	Subjective Class			
	Lower	**Working**	**Middle**	**Upper**
All same amount	2	2	1	11
Low to middle income get more	23	34	39	28
Low income get more	75	64	60	61

WELFARE APPROACHES: MARKET-ORIENTED, WELFARE-ORIENTED, OR WELFARE-FOR-THE POOR?

If Singaporeans support an inclusive society in which all income categories receive some subsidies and cash transfers, how then do they propose to fund the welfare provisions?

Tables 7.6 and 7.7 show that some three-quarters of Singaporeans are either ambivalent or mostly supportive of the market-oriented, "low subsidies, low taxes" approach[6]; and that there is no statistically significant differences between income categories in their preference for this option. By logical extension, they would be less supportive of the welfare-oriented "more subsidies, high taxes" approach. This is consistent with the figures shown in Table 7.6: slightly more than half of the sample rejects the welfare-oriented approach. However, almost three-quarters of the

6. Since these welfare approaches are, to some extent, election issues, it would be interesting to determine if the pre-election respondents were different from the post-election ones. We found that the proportions supporting each of the approaches to be slightly higher among the post-election respondents. Our ANOVA also indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups in regard to their support for the welfare-oriented approach (i.e., more subsidies, more taxes). However, given that the post-election respondents comprise only 15 per cent of the total sample, their impact on the overall findings of this survey is minimal.

respondents support the "welfare-for-the-poor, financed by higher taxes" approach (Table 7.7). Nonetheless, a comparison of the different income categories shown in Table 7.7 indicate, not unexpectedly, that much of the support for the welfare-oriented and welfare-for-the-poor approaches are from those in the lower income categories.

THE WELFARE DILEMMA

What may be distilled from the earlier observations is that while most Singaporeans expect some welfare provisions, though to different extents, those in the middle and higher income categories are less prepared to pay more taxes in return for more subsidies, but they are somewhat more willing to support a redistributive approach involving paying higher taxes to subsidise the poor. Herein lies a contradiction and thereby a dilemma for social policy

Table 7.6: "Market-oriented, Welfare-oriented, and Welfare for the Poor" (%)

	Market-oriented (less subsidies, less taxes)	Welfare-oriented (more subsidies, more taxes)	Welfare for the poor, financed by higher taxes
Strongly Agree	6	3	13
Agree	50	24	60
Neutral	19	21	9
Disagree	24	48	17
Strongly Disagree	2	4	1

Table 7.7: "Market-oriented, Welfare-oriented, and Welfare for the Poor" by Income (mean score)

Income Category ($)	Market-oriented (less subsidies, less taxes)	Welfare-oriented (more subsidies, more taxes)	Welfare for the poor, financed by higher taxes
10,000 or >	3.33	2.77	3.51
8,000 – 9,999	3.36	2.50	3.43
6,000 – 7,999	3.47	2.64	3.57
4,000 – 5,999	3.32	2.74	3.66
2,000 – 3,999	3.36	2.76	3.69
0 – 1,999	3.27	2.81	3.80
Statistical significance	ns	Sig.	Sig.

Chapter 8

Political Participation

CHAPTER 8: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

DEMOCRACY AND PARTICIPATION

Given that there are critical decisions to be made on national issues, such as welfare, which impact on the well-being of citizens, it matters that the citizenry is represented and involved in the policy process, thereby facilitating their support for or even ownership of the decisions made.

Moreover, in a democracy, defined as "rule by the people", citizens would likely possess the desire and hopefully the competence to be involved in the policy process. Conversely, citizens who are prevented from participation or denied the opportunity to have a voice in the policy process by the state or some power groups may feel a sense of political alienation.

POLITICAL ALIENATION OPERATIONALISED

For the purpose of this study, the concept of political alienation is operationalised as the difference between participation propensity and perceived participation opportunity. Political alienation is said to be present where participation propensity exceeds perceived participation opportunity.

THE EXTENT OF POLITICAL ALIENATION

Table 8.1 provides some crude indication of the presence of political alienation among Singaporeans. While the proportion with high or medium participation propensity is 84 per cent, that of those with high or medium perceived participation opportunity is lower, at 44 per cent. Table 8.2 confirms that some political alienation is indeed present, with 48 per cent in the "alienated" category, 48 per cent with "zero" alienation, and 4 per cent "not alienated". The same pattern may be discerned in our 2001 findings (see Tables 8.1 and 8.2)

Table 8.1: Political Participation – propensity and perceived opportunity, 2001 and 2011 compared (%)

	Propensity		Perceived Opportunity	
	2001	**2011**	**2001**	**2011**
High	13	18	8	4
Medium	56	66	45	40
Low	32	17	47	56

Table 8.2: Political Alienation, 2001 and 2011 compared (%)

	Political Alienation	
	2001	**2011**
Alienated	23	48
Zero	73	48
Not Alienated	4	4

More significantly, Table 8.2 shows that participation propensity has increased between 2001 and 2011, while perceived participation opportunity has declined during the same period, resulting in the proportion alienated rising from 23 per cent to 48 per cent. These changes could perhaps be attributed to an increase in citizens' interest in politics and in their expectations of the political system over the last decade.[7]

POLITICAL ALIENATION BY CLASS AND BY AGE

In regard to class differences in political alienation, it can be observed in Table 8.3 that there is, not unexpectedly, a positive correlation between class (using monthly household income as a proxy measure) and alienation score. This is probably the result of the higher participation propensity characteristic of the middle or upper middle-class not being matched with perceived sufficient participation opportunity.

---

7. As noted in Chapter 2, while the post-election respondents registered a higher extent of political alienation, it is unlikely that this would have a significant impact on our findings, given that they constitute only 15 per cent of the total sample.

The finding on political alienation by age is unsurprising as well. As seen in Table 8.4, those in the younger categories, between ages 20 and 39 years, sometimes defined as youth, are likely to score higher on political alienation than their older counterparts. This could be attributed to young people growing up under post-materialist, more affluent economic conditions conducive to the inculcation of self-expression and pro-democratic values (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005).

Table 8.3: Political Alienation by Income (mean score)

Income Category ($)	Mean Score
10,000 or >	3.73
8,000 – 9,999	3.75
6,000 – 7,999	3.64
4,000 – 5,999	3.53
2,000 – 3,999	3.46
0 – 1,999	3.37

Scale 1-5, 5 = hi, 1 = lo alienation

Table 8.4: Political Alienation by Age (mean score)

Aged	Mean Score
60 or >	3.38
50 - 59	3.46
40 - 49	3.53
30 - 39	3.64
20 - 29	3.61
15 - 19	3.51

Scale 1-5, 5 = hi, 1 = lo alienation

Chapter 9

Satisfaction and Happiness

CHAPTER 9: SATISFACTION AND HAPPINESS

MONEY, PRESTIGE AND HAPPINESS: THE DEBATE

In recent years, when evaluating how successful a country is in relation to others, there has been a serious and continuing debate on whether or not happiness matters more than material things, as encapsulated in the concept of gross domestic product (GDP). The key implication in this debate is that, at the individual level, having the money or, to a lesser extent, the prestige accruing from employment or business can buy happiness.

However, critics of this perspective would argue that there are things that money cannot buy, such as good health and meaningful relationships, and that the unceasing struggle for material success may in fact produce ill mental or physical health and leave one with little or no time to invest in relationships, resulting in a paradoxical situation of having wealth but no happiness. Such a view suggests that the emphasis on GDP is misplaced, and that the better and more valid measure for quality of life and well-being for a country is gross national happiness (GNH), a concept strongly touted by Bhutan.

CLASS, SATISFACTION AND HAPPINESS IN SINGAPORE

This chapter provides some insights on the Singapore case. The two inter-related dependent variables are satisfaction — defined as a feeling of having arrived at a "good enough" position in life — and happiness, broadly understood as a positive emotional state.

Table 9.1 shows that life-satisfaction level is high in 2011, with 81 per cent of the sample agreeing with the statement "I am satisfied with my life". This figure, however, shows a slight drop compared to 2001, which had 86 per cent expressing satisfaction with their lives. The difference could be due to the introduction of a neutral option in 2011, which was selected by 8 per cent of the sample. On the happiness dimension, which was not "captured" in 2001, the proportion agreeing with the statement "I am happy with my current life condition and prospects" is almost 70 per cent, with 12 per cent choosing the neutral option.

Table 9.1: Life Satisfaction and Happiness (%)

	Satisfaction		Happiness
	2001	**2011**	**2011**
Strongly Agree	10	7	4
Agree	76	74	65
Neutral	-	8	12
Disagree	13	11	18
Strongly Disagree	1	1	1

While not aiming to demolish a current popular notion that happiness may have little or no connection to GDP, Tables 9.2 and 9.3 suggest quite clearly that there is a positive correlation between household income and both life satisfaction and happiness. People with higher income seem to be more satisfied and happier than their counterparts with lower income. This pattern is more or less replicated, but with somewhat sharper contrasts, in Tables 9.4 and 9.5: those in the subjective upper class are likely to claim that they are both more satisfied and happier than those in the lower class.

Perhaps, instead of seeing money and happiness as mutually exclusive, it would make more sense to consider money as a necessary, but not sufficient condition for happiness.

Table 9.2: Life Satisfaction by Income (mean score and percentage)

Income Category ($)	Satisfaction				
	mean	SD	%		
			Agree	Neither	Disagree
10,000 or >	4.03	0.665	90	5	5
8,000 – 9,999	3.90	0.674	88	4	8
6,000 – 7,999	3.83	0.670	86	7	7
4,000 – 5,999	3.81	0.729	83	8	9
2,000 – 3,999	3.72	0.757	80	9	11
0 – 1,999	3.53	0.886	72	8	10

Table 9.3: Happiness by Income (mean score and percentage)

Income Category ($)	Happiness				
	mean	SD	%		
			Agree	Neither	Disagree
10,000 or >	3.76	0.734	77	14	9
8,000 – 9,999	3.67	0.699	74	16	10
6,000 – 7,999	3.61	0.830	74	10	16
4,000 – 5,999	3.62	0.810	72	13	15
2,000 – 3,999	3.52	0.869	69	12	19
0 – 1,999	3.24	0.975	56	13	31

Table 9.4: Life Satisfaction by Subjective Class (mean score and percentage)

Subjective Class	Satisfaction				
	mean	SD	%		
			Agree	Neither	Disagree
Upper Class	4.38	0.543	97	3	0
Middle Class	3.90	0.651	89	4	7
Working Class	3.67	0.783	76	10	14
Lower Class	3.29	1.020	62	7	31

Table 9.5: Happiness by Subjective Class (mean score and percentage)

Subjective Class	Happiness				
	mean	SD	%		
			Agree	Neither	Disagree
Upper Class	4.08	0.825	86	6	8
Middle Class	3.72	0.731	79	10	11
Working Class	3.42	0.901	64	14	22
Lower Class	2.91	1.039	40	13	47

Chapter 10

Response to Migrants

CHAPTER 10: RESPONSE TO MIGRANTS

LOCAL-MIGRANT RELATIONS: VALUE SHIFT OR FEELING OF THREAT?

The last five years have witnessed a sharp increase in the number and proportion of foreigners coming to Singapore to work and, along with their dependents in some cases, living on a longer term basis, as permanent residents, or eventually taking up citizenship — standing at 1.93 million in 2011, as compared to 1.29 million in 2006. This has led to some adverse responses from Singaporeans, as manifested in everyday conversations or, more visibly, in "toxic" exchanges and snide remarks in the social media.

One may be inclined to simplistically attribute the negative reactions to the emergence or latent presence of xenophobia among some Singaporeans. However, the source of this apparent ugliness may originate less from a shift in values or change of national character, than in their unhappy encounters with migrants, which they experienced as coming in the form of competition for jobs, space, housing or public amenities, reinforced by prejudices, and thereby a threat to their sense of security and well-being. The resulting sense of insecurity may in turn have eroded to different extents, though not demolished, the spirit of generosity probably present among most Singaporeans towards foreigners or newcomers to the country.

AMBIVALENCE TOWARDS MIGRANTS

Indeed, Singaporeans' response to migrants may be best described as one of ambivalence, rather than hatred. Table 10.1 indicates that Singaporeans are, on balance, more receptive of the idea of migrants coming to work and living in Singapore, than seeing them as a threat that should be totally eradicated. They scored higher on, for instance, "support for having non-Singaporeans living in the same housing estate", and agreeing that the "government is right to increase the number of foreigners working in Singapore if the economy needs it", than on seeing migrants as a "threat to Singaporeans' job security".

FEELING OF THREAT AND NEGATIVE RESPONSE TO MIGRANTS

Further analysis shows that those in the higher income categories are relatively more receptive of migrants, and feel less threatened by them than their counterparts in the lower income categories (see Table 10.2). It could be that the questions posed in our questionnaire refer to skilled and unskilled foreign workers, who contribute to lowering the cost of services, rather than foreign professionals, who may compete with them directly for middle-class jobs.

The findings we have reported here may be construed as supporting our hypothesis that Singaporeans are not inherently anti-migrants, but they are quite understandably negatively disposed towards migrants whom they perceive as threatening their sense of security and well-being. As investors and consumers, they may actually benefit from and be quietly appreciative of the foreign workers and professionals in their midst, but as employees or job seekers, they are likely to be less welcoming or even hostile towards, migrants whom they view as competitors in their own backyards.

Table 10.1: Orientations towards migrants (mean score)

	Mean Score (strength of agreement with this statement)
Support having non-Singaporeans in same housing estate	3.98
Think foreign talent will not weaken Singapore identity	3.33
Government is right to increase foreigners working in Singapore if economy needs it	3.37
Foreign skilled workers are a threat to Singaporeans' job security	3.26
Foreign unskilled workers are a threat to Singaporeans' job security	3.01

1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree with the statement

Table 10.2: Orientations towards migrants by Income (mean score)

Income Category ($)	Support having non-Singaporeans in same housing estate	Government is right to increase foreigners working in Singapore if economy needs it	Foreign skilled workers are a threat to Singaporeans' job security	Foreign unskilled workers are a threat to Singaporeans' job security
10,000 or >	4.12 (most supportive)	3.47 (most supportive)	3.14 (least threatened)	2.57 (least threatened)
8,000 – 9,999	4.03	3.33	3.34	2.99
6,000 – 7,999	4.04	3.47	3.19	2.98
4,000 – 5,999	3.95	3.42	3.15	2.88
2,000 – 3,999	3.95	3.39	3.26	3.08
0 – 1,999	3.93	3.24	3.41	3.20

1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree with the statement

Chapter 11

Family Values: Supporting Parents, Raising Children

CHAPTER 11: FAMILY VALUES: SUPPORTING PARENTS, RAISING CHILDREN

FILIAL PIETY OR LOVE AS A BASIS OF INTERGENERATIONAL SUPPORT

To the extent that the family, as defined in the Singapore context, is critical for determining one's class position, mobility chances, and current and future material needs, it makes sense to examine the basis of inter-generational relations as a key source of social and financial support.

In most so-called Confucian societies, located mainly in East Asia, the basis of inter-generational support is filial piety, which prescribes that adult children have an obligation to support their parents if they are in need. This practice also corresponds to a rather parent-centric institution in which children are produced and raised as part of one's retirement planning.

Most Singaporeans have, however, internalised filial piety as a value through the process of socialisation. It is therefore often taken for granted as an indisputable practice. Should they fail to inculcate this value, there is the force of moral sanction —and legal sanction, such as the Maintenance of Parents Act in the case of Singapore — to enforce compliance. This is not to suggest that filial piety is necessarily experienced as a difficult obligation. Where parents are wealthy, being filial may actually be beneficial to their children. Where parents are financially independent or when their adult children have sufficient capacity to support their dependent parents, it is likely that compliance to the value of filial piety would be largely unproblematic. However, where adult children lack the capacity to support their dependent parents, there is a strong likelihood of non-compliance, notwithstanding the force of moral or legal sanctions. In short, filial piety is not a reliable basis for ensuring that adult children would take care of their dependent parents.

IS LOVE A MORE RELIABLE BASIS FOR SUPPORT OF PARENTS?

What then is a more reliable basis for the support of parents? I would argue that love is a more reliable basis than filial piety. Love is relationship-centric, as opposed to self-centric. Seen from this perspective, people choose to support their dependent parents not because they are part of the latter's retirement planning or they are morally obliged, even compelled by law, to repay a debt they owe their parents for having raised them, but

because they are motivated by love for their parents. By the same token, people choose to have children because they desire to have someone to whom they could give love. This is a child-centric orientation, which sees raising children in expressive, rather than instrumental terms.

INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSFERS: LOVE, REPAYMENT AND SOCIAL EXPECTATION

If love is indeed a more reliable basis for ensuring that parents in need are supported, then there are good justifications to find out the extent to which Singaporeans are driven more by love than by obligation.

Table 11.1 indicates that 56 per cent of the sample select "love for one's parents" as a reason for "providing financial support to parents in old age", compared with 17 per cent who see intergenerational transfers as a form of transaction ("repayment for raising one from young"), and another 27 per cent who view support for dependent parents as an obligation or social expectation.

Table 11.1: Reasons for providing financial support to aged parents (%)

Reason	Income ($)				
	Overall sample	1,999 or lower	2,000 – 4,999	5,000 – 7,999	8,000 or higher
Love for one's parents	56	45	54	61	68
A repayment for raising one from young	17	24	16	16	12
It is expected of children to support their parents financially	27	32	30	23	20

Correspondingly, 54 per cent of the sample view raising children as about "giving love", compared with 25 per cent who consider it as a part of retirement planning, and another 21 per cent who see it in terms of meeting social expectation (see Table 11.2).

Table 11.2: Reasons for raising children (%)

Reason	Income ($)				
	Overall sample	**1,999 or lower**	**2,000 – 4,999**	**5,000 – 7,999**	**8,000 or higher**
To have someone we could give love to	54	35	52	63	75
To have someone to take care of us in old age	25	39	27	16	9
It is expected of people to have and raise children	21	26	21	21	16

CLASS DIFFERENCES IN ORIENTATION TOWARDS LOVE AND FILIAL PIETY

It can also be observed that there is a rather clear-cut, positive correlation between class and the basis of inter-generational transfers. Table 11.1 shows that people with higher income (68 per cent) are more likely to see "love for one's parents" as a basis for providing financial support to dependent parents, than those in the lower income categories (45 per cent). Somewhat similarly, while 75 per cent of people with high income consider "love for children" as the main motivation for raising children, that of low-income people is 35 per cent.

EMPHASISE LOVE IN PUBLIC CAMPAIGNS

An important implication from the above observations is that as Singapore becomes more of a middle-class society, we may extrapolate that "love", rather than filial piety will predominate in the future. Moreover, because the social obligation associated with filial piety is not a reliable basis for inter-generational transfers, it makes sense to emphasise love in public campaigns to encourage intra-familial support, or even to promote fertility.

Chapter 12

Conclusion

CHAPTER 12: CONCLUSION

SUMMARY

1.   Class is a significant dimension in Singapore. There is no question that Singapore is a stratified society in terms of both objective criteria — income, education and occupation, which are understood as indicators of life chances, a key concept in the Weberian definition of class — and how Singaporeans perceive the class structure subjectively.

2.   Singapore's class boundaries are experienced as somewhat permeable, as evident in how Singaporeans compare their past and present financial situations, as well as evaluate their future outlook. However, while it manifests some degree of absolute mobility, both upwards and downwards, it can be observed that upward mobility chances decline when moving down the social ladder. For instance, while 60 per cent of fathers with a polytechnic diploma are likely to have children who obtained degree qualifications, the comparative figure for fathers with primary-level education is 12 per cent.

3.   The subjective class structure has remained stable over time. This may be an indication that class identification involves primarily comparing oneself with others, rather than in absolute terms, or that there has not been any significant change in objective conditions to produce an expansion or contraction in the proportion of the self-identified middle class.

4.   Merits trump social connections, luck and class background as success factors. This suggests that Singaporeans (aged 15 through 74) possess a great deal of confidence in Singapore as a meritocracy, particularly the perception that education can enable one to achieve success, regardless of class background. Achieving success is also not seen as a random process of luck, but one over which individuals have some degree of control. By and large, Singaporeans' orientation towards the success factors has remained somewhat stable between 2001 and 2011.

5.   Perhaps not unexpectedly, people with low income are more likely to believe in luck as an ingredient for success, while those in the higher income categories are more likely to believe in connections and family background as success factors.

6.	Of those Singaporeans who have to support their parents as well as children, one out of five can be classified as belonging to the "sandwiched" generation — defined here as a person who indicates facing "difficulty providing financial support" to parents and to children. The members of this generation are likely to be aged 45 or older — many of whom are from the so-called "baby boomers" generation — living in public housing, and mainly from the lower classes, though the higher classes are not completely spared either. Being in the "sandwiched" generation does negatively impact one's sense of well-being.

7.	There is, however, a decline from 25 per cent in 2001 to 20 per cent in 2011 in the proportion of Singaporeans identified as belonging to the "sandwiched" generation. This perhaps suggests that a rising proportion of elderly Singaporeans may now be somewhat less dependent on their adult children.

8.	While most Singaporeans expect some welfare provisions, though to different extents, those in the middle and higher income categories are less prepared to pay more taxes in return for more subsidies, but they are somewhat more willing to support a redistributive approach involving paying higher taxes to subsidise the poor.

9.	Some degree of political alienation — defined here as a subjective state in which the desire for political participation exceeds that of perceived participation opportunity — is present in Singapore, with 48 per cent in the "alienated" category, 48 per cent with "zero" alienation, and 4 per cent "not alienated". In relative terms, middle-class and younger Singapore aged 20 to 39 are more likely to be found in the "alienated" category. A comparison of our 2001 and 2011 data detect an increase in the extent of political alienation over the last decade. This may be attributed to a rise in interest in politics and in expectations of the political system amongst Singaporeans.

10.	In general, Singaporeans are happy people. While money cannot buy good health and meaningful relationships, it could be understood as a necessary, though insufficient, condition for happiness. Indeed, we found a positive correlation between class and happiness.

11.	Singaporeans are not inherently anti-migrants, but they are quite understandably negatively disposed towards migrants whom they perceive as threatening their sense of security and well-being. As investors and consumers, they may actually benefit from and be quietly appreciative of the foreign workers and professionals in their midst; but as employees or

job seekers, they are likely to be less welcoming or even hostile towards migrants whom they view as competitors in their own backyards.

12.   A slight majority of Singaporeans view love, as opposed to social expectation, as the main reason for supporting dependent parents and for having children. There is also a rather clear-cut, positive correlation between class and the basis of inter-generational transfers. People with higher income are more likely to see "love for one's parents" as a basis for providing financial support to dependent parents. They are also more likely to consider "love for children" as the main motivation for having children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.   While it is unrealistic to aim to be a classless or egalitarian society, it is essential to equalise opportunities within the context of a "middle class society". The key ingredients are not merely economic capital, but social and cultural capital as well.

2.   We should not lump "middle *class*" and "sandwiched *generation*" together. There is not such a thing as a *sandwiched class*. Mixing the two conceptually may render invisible the fact that some among the middle class need more help than their counterparts within the same class, or even in the lower classes.

3.   Middle- and high-income Singaporeans expect to qualify for subsidies and income transfers, but they are not in favour of higher taxes. There is a need to remind Singaporeans about the policy trade-offs involved.

4.   Middle-class and younger Singaporeans possess a high propensity for political participation. It is important to provide them more and meaningful opportunities for political participation.

5.   Even as we encourage greater local-migrant interaction and integration, there is a need to pay attention to strengthening Singaporeans' sense of security by managing the inflow of foreign workers and professionals, upgrading skill levels, and expanding and enhancing infrastructures and amenities.

6.   Perhaps, it is time to emphasise "love for parents", as opposed to filial piety, in public campaigns dealing with the issue of intergenerational support within the family; and "love for children" as the main reason for having children.

References

REFERENCES

Inglehart, R., and C. Welzel. (2005). Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ministry of Information and the Arts (1996). Sharing Success. Singapore: MITA.

Ministry of Manpower. (2011), Singapore Workforce 2011. Singapore: MOM.

Tan, E. S. (2004), Does Class Matter? Social Stratification and Orientations in Singapore. Singapore: World Scientific.

The Graduate, (2007, March/April). "Special Report: Care to be an Elite?".

The Straits Times, (1966, September 18). "A classless society — the goal".

The Straits Times. (1987, August 14). "PM: 80% now middle class".

The Straits Times. (2011, April 30). "PM Lee: We understand your hopes and anxieties".

Appendix

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Survey on Social Stratification 2011

CASE NO.: _____   RESPONDENT NAME: _____

RESPONDENT TEL: _____   DATE OF VISIT: _____

TIME STARTED: _____   TIME ENDED: _____   TOTAL TIME TAKEN FOR INTERVIEW: _____   MINUTES

(Please include time used by the subject to attend to personal affairs or to rest.)

INTERVIEWER NAME: _____

NUMBER OF VISITS: 1st VISIT   /   2nd VISIT   /   3rd VISIT   /   4th VISIT   /   5th VISIT

Survey Conducted in [MA]: 1. English / 2. Mandarin / 3. Malay / 4. Tamil / 5. Others, *pls specify*: _____

INTRODUCTION

XXX

This survey focuses on work life, employment, and retirement in Singapore. You may take part in this survey if you are 15 years old or above. **We would like to hear your views, so as to have a better understanding of Singaporeans. Do note that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions.**

In case you are wondering how you have been selected, I would like to explain that **every individual has an equal chance of being included in this study** and yours has been selected by chance. **Your participation is voluntary.** You may choose not to answer certain questions or stop participating at any time. **Please be assured that your views would be kept confidential and that no respondent would ever be identified.** Only aggregate findings will be reported.

At the end of this interview, we will be asking you if you could volunteer your phone number for the purpose of allowing the supervisor of the interviewer to check if this survey was done properly. You may agree or decline to do this. None of your personal identification details will be revealed to the researchers. All personal identification information will be deleted upon the conclusion of the study.

This interview will take about 30 minutes. Upon the successful completion of this questionnaire, we have a **XXX gift voucher intended to be a token of appreciation for your kind cooperation and assistance.** If you have any questions about the survey, you may call the phone numbers stated in the letter. Your support is much appreciated. **Could we begin, please?**

For Official Use	
Serial No:	Case No :

SECTION A: SCREENING QUESTIONS / DEMOGRAPHICS

S1   As of this year, how old would you be?

0	Below 15 years old **[THANK & TERMINATE]**			
1	15-19 years old	8	45-49 years old
2	20 years old	9	50-54 years old
3	21-24 years old	10	55-59 years old
4	25-29 years old	11	60-64 years old
5	30-34 years old	12	65-69 years old
6	35-39 years old	13	70-74 years old
7	40-44 years old	14	75 years & over **[THANK & TERMINATE]**

S2.1   What is your citizenship?

1   Singapore Citizen

2   Singapore PR/ Employment Pass Holder/ Work Permit Holder/ Others **[THANK & TERMINATE]**

S2.2   What is your country of birth?

1	Singapore	4	India
2	Malaysia	5	China
3	Indonesia	6	Others, *please specify*: _____

S2.3   When did you become a Singapore citizen?

1   At birth   2   Since the year: _____

S3   Record: Gender

1   Male   2   Female

S4   May I know what ethnic group do you belong to? [Interviewer: If respondent is unable to say what it is, then ask for what is stated on the respondent's IC.]

1   Chinese   2   Malay   3   Indian   4   Others, *please specify*: _____

S5   What is your housing-type?

1	HDB 1-room	6	HDB Executive/ Marionette
2	HDB 2-room	7	Private Condominium/Apartment
3	HDB 3-room	8	Landed property
4	HDB 4-room	9	Others, *please specify*: _____
5	HDB 5-room		

SECTION B: JOB HISTORY AND TRAINING

[*Interviewer: Read Out*: Definition of Work and Job: For the purpose of this survey, when I ask you a question about **WORK or JOB**, I'd like you to think of it as being in paid employment, business, or self-employment **WITHOUT** being at the same time a **FULL-TIME** student, NSF personnel, homemaker, volunteer, and/or retiree.]

Q1   Are you now …?

1   a part-time student, and not working

2   a full-time student

3   serving National Service

4   a full-time homemaker   **[GO TO Q9]**

5   a volunteer, and not working

6   a retiree, and not working

7   currently not working

8   currently working

1

Box A	CURRENT JOB			

Q2.1 What is your MAIN job title? _____

For Internal Use:
| Category | |

Q2.2 Are you an/a…?

1 Employer   2 Employee   3 Own-Account Worker   4 Contributing Family Worker

Q3 What is your MAIN job function? _____

Q4 What is the minimum educational qualification for this job? _____

Q5 Is your job_____? [Read out options]

1 Permanent   2 Contract   3 Temporary

Q6 Is it full-time or part-time?

1 Full-time   2 Part-time

Q7 If in BUSINESS or SELF-EMPLOYMENT, how would you rate the prospects of your business over the next 5 years?

If in PAID EMPLOYMENT, how would you rate your prospects for advancement in your MAIN job over the next 5 years?

Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good
1	2	3	4	5

Q8 Is this job also your FIRST main job in terms of job scope/ function?

[*Interviewer: Read Out*: Definition of First Main Job: First main job means your first full-time job after leaving school. Change in job scope/ function means a change in job even if you are still working in same organization. If you are still performing the same job scope/ function but in a different organization, there is no change in job.]

1 Yes [GO TO Q17]   2 No [GO TO Box B, Q10.1]

Q9 Have you worked before? [Please note definition of work and job]

1 Yes   2 No [GO TO Q18]

Box B	PREVIOUS JOB

Q10.1 What was your last MAIN job title? [If more than one, then mention only what the respondent considers to be his/her main job title]

_____

For Internal Use:
| Category | |

Q10.2 Were you an/a…?

1 Employer   2 Employee   3 Own-Account Worker   4 Contributing Family Worker

Q11 What was your last MAIN job function? _____

Q12 What was the minimum educational qualification for this job? _____

Q13 Was this job also your FIRST main job?

1 Yes [GO TO Q17]   2 No

2

71

BOX C   FIRST JOB

Q14.1   What was your first MAIN job title? _____

For Internal Use:
Category _____

Q14.2   Were you an/a...?

1   Employer   2   Employee   3   Own-Account Worker   4   Contributing Family Worker

Q15   What was your first MAIN job function? _____

Q16   What was the minimum educational qualification for this job? _____

Q17   How many years have you been working?
[*Interviewer:* Please exclude years respondent was out of the job market] _____ years

Q18   [ASK ALL] [SHOWCARD 1] What is the HIGHEST level of education attained by you, your spouse, and your parents?

		i. YOU	ii. YOUR SPOUSE	iii. YOUR FATHER	iv. YOUR MOTHER
1	No formal educational / Lower Primary	1	1	1	1
2	Primary	2	2	2	2
3	Lower Secondary	3	3	3	3
4	Secondary	4	4	4	4
5	Post-Secondary (Non-tertiary): General & Vocational	5	5	5	5
6	Polytechnic Diploma	6	6	6	6
7	Professional Qualification & Other Diploma	7	7	7	7
8	University First Degree	8	8	8	8
9	University Postgraduate Diploma / Degree	9	9	9	9
10	Other Education (Non-Award Courses/ Miscellaneous)	10	10	10	10
88	NA/ DK	—	88	88	88

Q19   If your spouse and/or parents are working, what are their main jobs? [If not working, or deceased, then mention PREVIOUS main job.]

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3"></th><th>i. YOUR SPOUSE
[indicate NA if never married]

88 – never married
Divorce/ Widow/ Separate</th><th>ii. YOUR FATHER

–</th><th>iii. YOUR MOTHER

–</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">a</td><td rowspan="4">Working/
ever working</td><td>1 Employer</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td>2 Employee</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr>
<tr><td>3 Own-Account Worker</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>3</td></tr>
<tr><td>4 Contributing Family Worker</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>8</td><td>Never worked</td><td>8 [GO TO Q19ii]</td><td>8 [GO TO Q19iii]</td><td>8 [GO TO Q20]</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>9</td><td>Don't know</td><td>9 [GO TO Q19ii]</td><td>9 [GO TO Q19iii]</td><td>9 [GO TO Q20]</td></tr>
<tr><td>b</td><td colspan="2">Job title</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>c</td><td colspan="2">Main job function</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>d</td><td colspan="2">Minimum educational qualification for this job</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

3

Q20   What was your first language in primary and secondary school?

		i. Primary school	ii. Secondary school
1	English only as first language	1	1
2	Chinese only as first language	2	2
3	Malay only as first language	3	3
4	Tamil as first language	4	4
5	Both English and Chinese as first languages	5	5
6	Both English and Malay as first languages	6	6
7	Both English and Tamil as first languages	7	7
8	Others, *please specify:*	8_____	8_____
88	NA (i.e. did not attend respective level of education)	88	88

Q21   Are you currently enrolled in any vocational/ academic/ professional courses (refer to courses that have a bearing on current/future job/career options/opportunities)?

    1   Yes   2   No **[GO TO Q23]**

Q22   [SHOWCARD 1] If YES, which level of courses are you currently enrolled in? [MA]

_____

Q23   Are you planning to enroll in any vocational/ academic/ professional courses over the next 5 years (refer to courses that have a bearing on current /future job /career options /opportunities)?

    1   Yes   2   No **[GO TO Q25]**

Q24   [SHOWCARD 1] If YES, which level of courses are you enrolled in/ planning to enroll in? [MA]

_____

Q25   Have you ever considered going into business/ self-employment?

    1   Yes

    2   Already in business/ self-employment **[GO TO Q27]**

    3   No **[GO TO Q27]**

Q26   If YES, what are the chances that you would go into business/ self-employment over the next 5 years? [*Interviewer:* Please do not read out the option 'Neither High or Low'.]

1	2	3	4	5
Very Low	Low	Neither High or Low	High	Very High

SECTION C: FINANCIAL & PERSONAL WELL-BEING

Q27   Generally speaking, what was/ is the financial situation of your family when you were growing up, that is, when you were/ are about 15 years old? Would you say your family was poor, or average, or better than average, or well-off?

    1 Poor   2 Average   3 Better than average   4 Well-off

Q28   How would you describe your present financial situation?

    1 Poor   2 Average   3 Better than Average   4 Well-off

4

Q29   What are your major financial sources? [MA]

1   Employment / business income

2   Allowances from family members

3   Rental income

4   Welfare assistance e.g. from charities, government agencies etc.

5   Others, *please specify* _____

Q30   Are these sources sufficient to cover your monthly expenses?

1	2	3	4
More than Sufficient	Sufficient	Less than Sufficient	Not at all Sufficient

Q31   [SHOWCARD 2]

[If Q30=1 or 2, more than sufficient or sufficient, please ask:] If you encounter such situations, in which these sources are insufficient to cover your monthly expenses, what are your sources of funds to meet shortfalls? [MA]

[If Q30=3 or 4, less than sufficient or not at all sufficient, please ask:] What are your sources of funds to meet shortfalls? [MA]

[*Interviewer:* **Lease buyback scheme** allows Singaporeans aged 62 and above living in 3-room of smaller HDB flats to sell part of the remaining leases in return for a monthly pay-out. A **reverse mortgage** is a type of home loan that allows home owners to convert some of the value in their home into cash while they retain home ownership.]

Q32   What do you think your financial situation would be like over the next 5 years?

1   Worse than now   2   About the same as now   3   Better than now

Q33   [*Interviewer:* For retirees (as stated in Q1, Q1=6), use Version A. For non-retirees, use Version B]
[*Interviewer:* Please do not read out the option 'Neutral'.]

Version A (Retirees): To what extent do you agree with this statement – 'I believe I have adequate savings and income for retirement'?

Version B (Non-retirees): To what extent do you agree with this statement – 'I believe I will have adequate savings and income for retirement'?

1   Strongly Agree

2   Agree   [GO TO Q35]

3   Neutral

4   Disagree

5   Strongly Disagree

Q34   To what extent do you agree with this statement – 'I believe there are opportunities for me to secure a comfortable retirement.' [*Interviewer:* Please do not read out the option 'Neutral'.]

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5

74

Q35   How many persons are there in your household (including the respondent)?

_____

[*Interviewer: Read Out:* **Definition of Household:** If not a one-person household, the term "household" refers to two or more persons living in the same house and sharing common food or other arrangements for essential living, but excluding live-in maids.]

Q36.1 i. How many people are there in your family (including those not in your household) who are dependent on you for financial and/or social support?

ii. [SHOWCARD 3] Who are they?

	i. No. of people	ii. Who are they? (State relationship to respondent) [SHOWCARD 3]
a Financial Support		
b Social Support e.g. the provision of care and emotional support		

Q36.2 i. What about the people whom you depend on for financial and/or social support?

ii. [SHOWCARD 3] Who are they?

	i. No. of people	ii. Who are they? (State relationship to respondent) [SHOWCARD 3]
a Financial Support		
b Social Support e.g. the provision of care and emotional support		

Q37   Looking back at your household incomes and expenditures for the last three months, would you say that your household incomes were more than, equal to, or less than your household expenditures?

　　1   More than　　　　　2   Equal to　　　　　3   Less than

Q38   Is your household receiving financial support from outside the household? (Read out definition of household at Q35)

　　1   Yes

　　2   No

Q39   Who should the government provide subsidized goods and services like medical care, public transport, housing and education to?

　　1   Only people with low income

　　2   People from low income to middle income levels

　　3   People from low income to high income levels

Q40   As a general principle, should the subsidy be the same amount to all who receive it?

　　1   Yes

　　2   No

6

Q41 Please tell me whether you Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree with the following statements:

[*Interviewer:* Please do not read out the option 'Neutral'.]

	STATEMENTS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a	Given the choice, I would prefer a system which provides less government subsidies, and with citizens paying less taxes.	1	2	3	4	5
b	Given the choice, I would prefer a system which provides more government subsidies, and with citizens paying more taxes.	1	2	3	4	5

Q42 Should the government provide financial assistance in the form of direct cash transfers to citizens?

    1   Yes   2   No **[GO TO Q45]**

Q43 As a general principle, should the amount of financial assistance in the form of direct cash transfers be the same to all citizens who are eligible to receive it?

    1   Yes **[GO TO Q45]**   2   No

Q44 In your view, who should receive more financial assistance in the form of direct cash transfers?

    1   Low income people should receive more than middle and high income people

    2   Both low income and middle income people should receive the same amount but more than high income people

    3   All income groups should receive the same amount

Q45 **[SHOWCARD 4]** Please tell me whether you Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree with the following statements.
[*Interviewer*: Please do not read out Option 3: Neutral]

	STATEMENTS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a	I am satisfied with my life.	1	2	3	4	5
b	In most ways, my life is close to my ideal.	1	2	3	4	5
c	I am satisfied with the standard of living in Singapore.	1	2	3	4	5
d	I am satisfied with the cost of living in Singapore.	1	2	3	4	5
e	So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.	1	2	3	4	5
f	The conditions of my life are excellent.	1	2	3	4	5
g	IF I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.	1	2	3	4	5
h	I am happy with my current life condition and prospects	1	2	3	4	5

7

Q46 [SHOWCARD 5] Do you or any member of your household (abbreviation: HHM) need the services of one or more of the following social agencies or programmes?
[If YES, Please proceed to columns 2, 3 & 4]

	Social Agencies or programmes	1. Do you or any HHM need this service?		2. Have you or any HHM made use of this service during the past year?		3. Do you or any HHM (find it/ think it is) convenient to use this service?		4. Do you or any HHM (find it/ think it is) affordable, i.e., within your means?	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
a	Crisis shelters	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
b	Home shelters for the aged	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
c	Homes for the disabled	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
d	Vocational assessment programmes (for adults with disabilities to determine their vocational suitability)	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
e	Day activity centers for the disabled	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
f	Counseling centers and hotlines	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
g	Family service centers	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
h	Student care centers	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
i	Child care centers	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
j	Seniors activity centers	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
k	Social day centers for the aged	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
l	Befriender service (volunteer programme for the lonely elderly)	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2

(If YES, need services — spanning columns 2, 3 & 4)

SECTION D: ORIENTATIONS

Q47 [SHOWCARD 6] Rank the importance of the following for achieving success in Singapore where 1=most important and 6=least important. [As best as possible one rank per attribute]

	Attributes	Rank
a	Ability	
b	Education	
c	Hard work	
d	Knowing the right people	
e	Luck	
f	Rich family background	

Q48 How much influence do you think you as a citizen should have on national issues?
1   A great deal   2   Some Influence   3   Little or No influence

Q49 How much influence do you think citizens like yourself actually have on national issues?
1   A great deal   2   Some Influence   3   Little or No influence

8

Q50 [SHOWCARD 7] Please tell me whether you Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree with the following statements [If not applicable, please circle NA]:

[*Interviewer:* Please <u>do not read out</u> Option 3: <u>Neutral</u>]

	STATEMENTS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	NA
1	Everyone in Singapore has a good chance to achieve a high standard of living.	1	2	3	4	5	99
2	People who are more successful have a responsibility to help the less successful ones.	1	2	3	4	5	99
3	All things considered, Singapore has more good points than bad points.	1	2	3	4	5	99
4	I am proud to be a Singaporean.	1	2	3	4	5	99
5	Successful people in Singapore tend to look down on the less successful ones.	1	2	3	4	5	99
6	It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune anyway.	1	2	3	4	5	99
7	We can try our best, but finally, it is the powerful people who decide whether we succeed or not.	1	2	3	4	5	99
8	I believe most Singaporeans are trustworthy.	1	2	3	4	5	99
9	I believe most Singaporeans are fair.	1	2	3	4	5	99
10	I believe most Singaporeans are helpful.	1	2	3	4	5	99
11	Corporations in Singapore care more about their shareholders than their employees.	1	2	3	4	5	99
12	Differences in income between the rich and poor in Singapore are too large.	1	2	3	4	5	99
13	Some jobs deserve to be paid much higher than others.	1	2	3	4	5	99
14	The government should spend more money on benefits (household, healthcare, education, workfare) for the poor, even if it leads to higher taxes for everyone else.	1	2	3	4	5	99
15	Working people in Singapore should join unions.	1	2	3	4	5	99
16	Singapore unions ensure that their members are treated fairly.	1	2	3	4	5	99
17	I would take up or remain in a paid job, only if I needed the money.	1	2	3	4	5	99
18	I am quite comfortable with using the computer.	1	2	3	4	5	99
19	My lack of ability in using the computer will hinder my finding a job or hinder my career advancement.	1	2	3	4	5	99
20	One has a responsibility to provide some financial support to one's parents if they are in need.	1	2	3	4	5	99
21	One has a responsibility to provide some financial support to one's grandparents if they are in need.	1	2	3	4	5	99
22	I find it difficult to provide financial support to my parents.	1	2	3	4	5	99

9

	STATEMENTS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	NA
23	I find it difficult to provide financial support to my grandparents.	1	2	3	4	5	99
24	I find it difficult to provide financial support to my siblings.	1	2	3	4	5	99
25	I find it difficult to provide financial support to my spouse.	1	2	3	4	5	99
26	I find it difficult to provide financial support to my children.	1	2	3	4	5	99
27	Singapore is a good place to make a living.	1	2	3	4	5	99
28	Singapore is a good place to raise one's children.	1	2	3	4	5	99
29	I am confident that my financial situation will improve in the next 5 years.	1	2	3	4	5	99
30	I am satisfied with my job.	1	2	3	4	5	99
31	I believe my prospect for career advancement in the next 5 years is good.	1	2	3	4	5	99
32	I support the idea of having people of different income groups living in the same housing estate.	1	2	3	4	5	99
33	I support the idea of having people of different races living in the same housing estate.	1	2	3	4	5	99
34	I support the idea of having people of different nationalities – Singaporeans and non-Singaporeans – living in the same housing estate.	1	2	3	4	5	99
35	I believe the generation after mine will have a brighter future than my generation.	1	2	3	4	5	99
36	The policy to attract more foreign talent will weaken Singaporeans' feeling as one people, one nation.	1	2	3	4	5	99
37	The government is right to increase the number of foreigners working in Singapore if our economy needs it.	1	2	3	4	5	99
38	I feel that foreign *skilled* workers are a threat to Singaporeans' job security.	1	2	3	4	5	99
39	I feel that foreign *unskilled* workers are a threat to Singaporeans' job security.	1	2	3	4	5	99
40	I feel the rich have more opportunities to get richer in Singapore.	1	2	3	4	5	99
41	I feel the poor are likely to get poorer in Singapore.	1	2	3	4	5	99
42	I am satisfied with my health condition	1	2	3	4	5	99
43	I have close friends who are of a different race (either agree or disagree only).	—	2	—	4	—	—
44	I have close friends who are from lower income groups (either agree or disagree only).	—	2	—	4	—	—
45	I have close friends who are from higher income groups (either agree or disagree only).	—	2	—	4	—	—

Q51 People have different reasons for providing financial support to their parents in old age. Which of the following would you consider to be your most important reason, if you were asked to choose only one?

1 Love for one's parents

2 A repayment for raising one from young

3 It is expected of children to support their parents financially.

Q52 People have different reasons for raising children. Which of the following would you consider to be your most important reason, if you were asked to choose only one?

1 To have someone we could give love to

2 To have someone to take care of us in old age

3 It is expected of people to have and raise children.

SECTION E: SELF-IDENTIFICATION

Q53 [SHOWCARD 8] Suppose we classify Singaporeans into the following six classes. In which class would you put yourself in? [If unable to decide, then choose the class that comes closest to the one you feel you belong in.]

1 Upper class

2 Upper middle class

3 Middle middle class

4 Lower middle class

5 Upper lower class

6 Lower lower class

Q54 [SHOWCARD 9] Suppose we instead classify Singaporeans into the following four classes. In which class would you put yourself? [If unable to decide, then choose the class that comes closest to the one you feel you belong in.]

1 Upper Class

2 Middle Class

3 Working Class

4 Lower Class

SECTION F: OTHER DEMOGRAPHICS

D1 What is your marital status?

1 Single, never married

2 Married

3 Divorced/Separated

4 Widowed

D2 Do you have any children (including those adopted)?

1 No

2 Yes. Please specify the number of children and their age range:

a Number of children: _____ (if 1 child, provide age in Eldest)

b Age range: **Youngest** _____ years old **Eldest** _____ years old

D3 Have you spent time living overseas (for 1 year or more)?

1 Yes

2 No [GO TO D7]

D4 In all, how long were you abroad? _____ years

D5 When did you spend this time overseas (refer to the last stint)?

1 Less than 3 years ago

2 3 to 5 years ago

3 More than 5 years ago

D6 Why were you overseas? [MA]

1 To study

2 To work

3 To accompany spouse/child

4 Others, *please specify*: _____

11

D7   **[SHOWCARD 10] What is your religion?**

1	Buddhism	6	Sikhism
2	Taoism	7	Christianity - Protestant
3	Traditional Chinese Religion (Shenism)	8	Roman Catholicism
4	Islam	9	Other Religion, *please specify:* _____
5	Hinduism	10	No Religion

D8   **[SHOWCARD 11] What is your gross monthly personal income (including salary, rent, pension/ annuity etc)?**

1	No income	10	7000-7999
2	Below $500	11	$8000-8999
3	$500-999	12	$9000-9999
4	$1000-1999	13	$10,000-10,999
5	$2000-2999	14	$11,000-11,999
6	$3000-3999	15	$12,000-12,999
7	$4000-4999	16	$13,000-13,999
8	$5000-5999	17	$14,000-14,999
9	$6000-6999	18	$15,000 & above

D9   **[SHOWCARD 11] What is your gross monthly <u>household</u> income?**

1	No income	10	7000-7999
2	Below $500	11	$8000-8999
3	$500-999	12	$9000-9999
4	$1000-1999	13	$10,000-10,999
5	$2000-2999	14	$11,000-11,999
6	$3000-3999	15	$12,000-12,999
7	$4000-4999	16	$13,000-13,999
8	$5000-5999	17	$14,000-14,999
9	$6000-6999	18	$15,000 & above

Interviewer Remarks/ Comments :

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you very much for your time today. We appreciate hearing your opinions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Tan Ern Ser is Associate Professor of Sociology, and Head, Institute of Policy Studies Social Lab, National University of Singapore. He received his PhD in Sociology from Cornell University, USA. He is author of "Does Class Matter?" (2004) and "Class and Social Orientations" (2015, this publication). He is also co-investigator of Asian Barometer-Singapore, World Values Survey-Singapore, and the Singapore Panel Study on Social Dynamics. Dr Tan has served as research consultant to government ministries. He is also Research Adviser, MSF, and Chairman, Research Advisory Panel, HDB. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 2013.