OUR SINGAPOREAN VALUES: KEY FINDINGS FROM THE WORLD VALUES SURVEY

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IPS Exchange Series

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CONTENTS

Preface

PREFACE

Singapore's reputation as a prosperous city-state has been built on its ability to thrive amidst differences. With a multi-ethnic, multi-religious resident population, our embrace of multiculturalism inevitably extends to the values we hold dear, which underpins our beliefs and how we live our lives. Against this backdrop, Our Singaporean Values is the first of a three-part series presenting the salient findings from the latest instalment of the World Values Survey (WVS). WVS is the largest non-commercial, cross-national, and time-series survey of public attitudes and values globally. Spanning 80 countries and currently in its seventh iteration, WVS seeks to study individuals' changing values across polities and their impact on social and political life.

In this most recent wave, WVS continues to monitor cultural values, attitudes and beliefs towards gender, family, and religion; attitudes and experience of poverty; education, health, and security; social tolerance and trust; attitudes towards multilateral institutions; cultural differences and similarities between regions and societies. It aims to investigate public attitudes to a range of issues, including family, work, culture, diversity, the environment, subjective well-being, politics, religion, and the impact of globalisation. In addition, new topics such as issues of justice, moral principles, corruption, accountability and risk, migration, national security, and global governance are included in the survey questionnaire.

For ease of understanding, we have organised the WVS findings and analyses into three main themes: 1) personal values; 2) perceptions of institutions, politics, and policies; and 3) well-being and social trust. This first report explicates the first theme; as its title, *Our Singaporean Values* suggests. Where appropriate, the analyses presented across the three reports consider results from previous and current iterations in tandem to illustrate shifts in individual and societal values. Across all sections in the reports, we use open-source data weighted to the national populations of each polity from the WVS website to make cross-country comparisons (Haerpfer et al., 2020). The reports present and discuss findings only pertaining to notable variables with significant results, due to space exigencies.

The Singapore component of the WVS survey was carried out by the Institute of Policy Studies' (IPS) Social Lab. IPS is a think-tank in the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYSPP) at the National University of Singapore. The survey implementation received additional support from LKYSPP faculty members, particularly Associate Professor Alfred Wu. Other faculty members who collaborated with funding arrangements were Dr Tan Poh Lin, Dr Joelle Fong, Dr Mehmet Akif Demircioglu, and Dr Xi Lu.

A general population sampling frame comprising randomly generated household addresses and contact details was obtained from the Singapore Department of Statistics (DOS). Surveyors subsequently visited these addresses to recruit Singaporeans and Permanent Residents (PRs) aged 21 years and above. Fieldwork in Singapore for WVS was conducted from November 2019 to March 2020, with 2,012 respondents completing the survey. The findings from this overall dataset are representative of the Singapore resident population. There was relatively low refusal rate for the study – only 24.5 per cent of households refused to participate in the study or indicated that they were too busy to complete the survey and did not subsequently agree to participate.

The duration the survey was in the field cut through two periods – prior to the middle of January 2020, when there was relatively little concern about the Covid-19 pandemic; and after this period where concerns were steadily increasing with the first local transmissions being reported on 4 February 2020. Expectedly, the concerns over Covid-19 could have resulted in some changes in sentiments, ranging from trust in institutions to perceptions of foreigners. As such, the research team carefully examined whether there were any sentiment shifts between these two periods. In general, the changes were small with some exceptions for specific issues, which are documented in our reports. As such, we have confidence that the overall values of Singaporeans on most issues remain fairly similar today as they were prior to the emergence of Covid-19.

We begin in Chapter 2 with a perusal of respondents' individual priorities. Family was still the most crucial facet of life for most; in contrast, the perceived importance of work has declined from 2002 to 2020. Respondents who felt their friends were important were more likely to indicate leisure time as important; while the importance of work, wealth and politics were also correlated. Less affluent respondents were also more likely to prioritise wealth over leisure, with the converse holding true for their more privileged counterparts.

With regards to work ethics, we find that most agree to varying extents that work will stave off laziness. In addition, the proportion of those in Singapore who agree work is a duty to society is amongst the highest in comparison with other polities. Nonetheless, the nuanced viewpoints of Singapore respondents vis-à-vis work are apparent, given how overall agreement with work coming first at the expense of free time is lower than most other Asian countries.

When it came to broader issues and their defensibility, the majority of Singapore respondents indicated they felt the death penalty, divorce, premarital sex, and euthanasia were at least sometimes justifiable. However, they were more likely to hold conservative views on other family and sexuality issues such as homosexuality, parents beating children, abortion, casual sex, and paid sex. In line with the rule of law prevailing in Singapore, nearly all respondents indicated that actions injurious to others (terrorism, violence) and felonies (theft, bribery, tax evasion) were never or seldom justified. These responses on what is justified are more conservative relative to 2012, but still more liberal than 2002. Chapter 3 explores the above findings in-depth.

While a large majority still acknowledge the importance of God in their lives, overall religiosity has waned over two decades. Age, religion, education and housing are the four main variables influencing views. In general, most indicated belief in the concepts of God, life after death, hell, and heaven; though this group mainly comprises religious adherents. Most felt religion entailed doing good to others as opposed to merely following norms and ceremonies, and entailed making sense of life in this world as opposed to life after death. These and other contentious issues such as science versus religion, and religious exclusivism are discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 proceeds to discuss respondents' desired traits in children, thoughts of having children, gender and sexuality issues in the family, and gender equality. Good manners, responsibility, and respect for others were top qualities identified as important for children in 2020. Meanwhile, proportions picking hard work, thrift and obedience suffered a decline over the years. Just under half of Singapore respondents felt having children was a societal duty; this proportion places Singapore in the middle of the pack relative to other Asian societies.

Values of filial piety continued to hold steadfast, with four-fifths of Singapore respondents agreeing that it was the duty of adult children to care for their parents over the long-term. This proportion was among the highest in Asia. On issues of gender, the majority of respondents disagreed that men were better leaders in politics or business; but agreed being a housewife was just as fulfilling as salaried work.

In Chapter 6, we find that respondents' values and opinions vis-à-vis the economy indicated continued support for free market ideals though with caveats. Overall, respondents were more likely to feel that competition is good and that hard work would result in a better life; however, they were undecided whether private or public ownership of businesses was desirable. However, the majority also felt that protecting the environment should be prioritised over economic growth, with younger, more educated, and more affluent respondents more likely to think this way. Similarly, respondents were more likely to prefer incentivising individual efforts; although more felt that it was the government's responsibility to ensure all were taken care of.

National priorities, issues of law and justice, perspectives on freedom, equality and security, as well as social change and revolution are explored in Chapter 7. Respondents were most likely to feel that pursuing high economic growth and ensuring strong national defence forces are top priorities, relative to encouraging more citizen participation and beautifying the environment. Maintaining order also emerged as the clear priority for most, while giving people more say in policymaking and the fighting rising prices featured as the next line of priorities. Additionally, Singapore respondents preferred a more compassionate administration of justice which provided for exceptions in mitigating circumstances. Meanwhile, a larger proportion indicated a preference for security and equality as opposed to freedom; and for incremental reforms to society as opposed to maintaining the status quo or pursuing revolutionary change.

Chapter 8 rounds up the substantive portions of this report by perusing respondents' political orientations, preferences for democracy, views on democratic rights, democratic socialism, and bases of power, as well as alternative modes of governance. Juxtaposed against other political systems such as technocracies and autocracies, an overwhelming majority of respondents had positive perceptions of democracy. Characteristics identified by respondents as essential to democracy included women having the same rights as men, and being able to choose leaders in free elections. Views on whether wealth transfers through taxation was essential to democracy were positively correlated with age. Significantly higher proportions of respondents were ambivalent or felt that obedience to rulers was not vital to democracy.

To conclude, this report presents regression models and cluster analyses in Chapter 9 based on the in-depth findings explicated. Four salient groupings in which significant proportions of the population are posited to belong are constructed: 1) Conservative Democrats; 2) Secular Liberals; 3) Conservative Autocrats; and 4) Middle-Grounders. These value groupings were primarily driven by views across three broad dimensions: politics, economy, and society.

The primary intent of this series of reports is to present the findings of the WVS survey factually, with minimal value judgments attached to the statistical analyses presented. We leave it to our readers to draw more in-depth conclusions as to what these findings represent in terms of whether, or how our values shape the way we lead our lives; interact with society-at-large; and influence policymaking.

Chapter 1

Introduction

CHAPTER 1 | INTRODUCTION

Values are a central concept in the social sciences. They exist at multiple levels, guiding and defining what is considered desirable for individuals, societies, institutions, and polities. At an individual level, values are abstract beliefs about what is important for a person (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987). The theoretical model introduced by Schwartz (1992) and later refined by Schwartz et al. (2012) continues to dominate the field of values research. In 1992, Schwartz listed ten fundamental human values: universalism, self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, and benevolence values. These values are organised along a circular motivational continuum such that adjacent values (or values closer together in the circle) are conceptually more closely related.

Schwartz et al. (2012) subsequently expanded the number of values and found a near-universal structure of human values at an individual level. At the societal level, Schwartz proposed a set of seven cultural value constructs and a system of relations between them. To analyse societal values, individual scores were aggregated for each society. At the societal or polity-level, Hofstede's four-dimensional model of cultural values identifies power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity as key attributes derived from aggregating individual scores (1980).

The rich scholarship of competing value frameworks notwithstanding, it is essential for us to continually seek a better understanding of values. Mainly, the utility of studying values lies in its ability for explaining and predicting meaningful decisions and behaviour; they are essentially, what drives us. While many factors influence everyday behaviour, values are a significant variable with a smorgasbord of studies illustrating the causal influence of values. For instance, Butenko and Schwartz (2014) explore value-behaviour in Russia and find that substantial evidence revealed a positive correlation of value with a set of behaviours. In other research, values have predicted diverse behaviours such as alcohol consumption, corruption, worrying, religiosity, career paths, political attitudes and voting behaviour.

Against this backdrop, the responses to a sizeable number of questions in this WVS survey iteration provide a broad understanding of what Singapore residents value. In general, there appears to be a high degree of importance ascribed to security and economic stability by the population. Additionally, the concept of family seems to be robust across different segments of the population, with high levels of importance ascribed to family and strong levels of support for filial piety and having children. Correspondingly, there were generally lower levels of support for homosexuality, cohabitation, and casual sex. While younger respondents or those with higher socio-economic status were relatively more open to these arrangements, those who professed support for liberal norms of sexuality were still in the minority within their respective demographic groups. Overall, these findings suggest that Singapore's societal values remained predominantly conservative.

In the following sections, we will briefly discuss the survey methodology employed and respondents' demographic profiles, before venturing into the survey results and analyses. We begin in Chapter 2 by perusing the individual priorities of Singapore residents, whereby respondents' answers regarding what they deem important in their lives are explored. In Chapter 3, we confront ethical considerations including work ethics, beliefs of right and wrong,

as well as thoughts on sexuality, marriage, and death. Chapters 4 to 8 subsequently address in sequence the values of our populace in relation to five issue-spheres: religion, family, economy, society, and politics. Chapter 9 concludes with linear regressions and a succinct cluster analysis illustrating the correlations between specific value dimensions, as well as identifying significant population segments with similar values. While the report provides broad-brush implications of these value systems, we defer to the reader to draw more in-depth conclusions of what these prevailing value systems portend for our society-at-large.

1.1   METHODOLOGY

Data for this report is primarily derived from the latest 2020 Singapore instalment of the WVS survey. The survey instrument is developed in concert with the overall global WVS survey framework used across other polities to facilitate cross-country comparisons. Data collection for this instalment took place from November 2019 to March 2020, and was conducted by IPS Social Lab. In total, 2,012 Singaporean residents participated in the survey.

At the outset, a sampling frame comprising a list of 3,000 randomly generated household addresses and associated contact details was obtained from the Singapore Department of Statistics (DoS). There was a reasonable response rate for this iteration of the WVS survey, with approximately two-thirds of those eligible to complete the study doing so. As such, the findings are representative of the Singapore adult resident population, as the next section expounds in greater detail.

IPS Social Lab surveyors approached the pre-determined prospective households to recruit Singaporeans and Permanent Residents (PRs) aged 21 years and above. They identified eligible respondents using a set of criteria (including gender and age) to ensure demographic proportionality, briefed the respondent about the RRL study, and invited the respondent to participate in the survey. If they agreed, the survey was administered in a face-to-face interview format in either of the four official languages – English, Mandarin Chinese, Malay, or Tamil. Respondents who completed the survey were given a $15 grocery shopping voucher.

Interviewer training stressed the importance of presenting questions and receiving responses without expressing any judgment. Nevertheless, given that this is a face-to-face survey where respondents provided their answers to the interviewer verbally, we cannot exclude the role of social desirability. Such bias might be accentuated when respondents provided their answers about morality, given the predominant conservative culture in Singapore. This is, unfortunately, a bias inherent in the design of the face-to-face survey methodology.

Cross-country comparisons are collated with open-source data weighted to the national populations of each polity from the official WVS website (Haerpfer et al., 2020). Malaysia, Thailand, Japan, South Korea, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Australia, US, UK, Switzerland, Sweden were the dozen chosen for comparison; *in toto,* they reflect a well-rounded range of polities with diverse attributes. Malaysia and Thailand are chosen for their geographical proximity to Singapore. China, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan are included in comparisons as a well-documented cluster representing Asian values and East Asia; the latter four are also the Asian tigers with comparative levels of economic development. Australia, the

US, the UK, Switzerland and Sweden round up the dozen as comparative Anglo-centric or Euro-centric democratic societies.

1.2   DEMOGRAPHICS AND REPRESENTATION

The overall responses for each question reported in the ensuing chapters are weighted to ensure that demographic proportions of the WVS sample closely approximate those of the national population in terms of age cohort, gender, and race. This enables us to effectively compare results across different iterations of the survey, and provide a general gauge of the overall population's value systems. However, further two-level breakdowns of the results are not weighted in order to provide a more accurate representation of separate demographic groups. The "Others" race category across all analyses are also omitted due to 1) low sample sizes which impact the representativeness of the findings, and 2) significant socio-cultural differences of individuals racially classified as "Others".

It is important to note the slight discrepancies between cross-wave comparisons presented in this report vis-à-vis the official data presented by the World Values Survey online. This is due to variations in weighting methodologies across the two previous waves (2002 and 2012) to reflect Singapore's demographic proportions in the original WVS data. We have re-weighted this in line with updated methodologies to achieve better consistency in our comparisons, although this is not a panacea for the prevailing data collation limitations.

In the next two subsections, we explore some key demographic breakdowns of the sample both in relation to the general Singapore resident population, as well as each other.

1.2.1   Sample demographics largely mirror the Singapore resident population

The table below provides an overview of the profile of respondents compared with the national average, which was based on the report published by DOS in June 2019 (Department of Statistics, 2019). The WVS 2020 Singapore sample largely mirrored the national resident population in terms of age, gender, and citizenship status (see Table 1). A slightly higher proportion of PRs was surveyed in the WVS sample for ease of comparisons to be made across groups, considering the smaller sample size.

Table 1: Profile of respondents compared with national average

	National resident population* (as of **June 2019**)	WVS 2020 Singapore sample
Median age	41.1 years	47.0 years
Proportion of males	48.9%	45.9%
Proportion of citizens	87.0%	80.3%

National resident population includes Singapore citizens and Permanent Residents (PRs).

The ethnic and gender make-up of the WVS sample were mostly similar to the national resident population, with less than a 4 per cent variance across the different groups (see Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1: Breakdown of sample and national resident population, by ethnicity
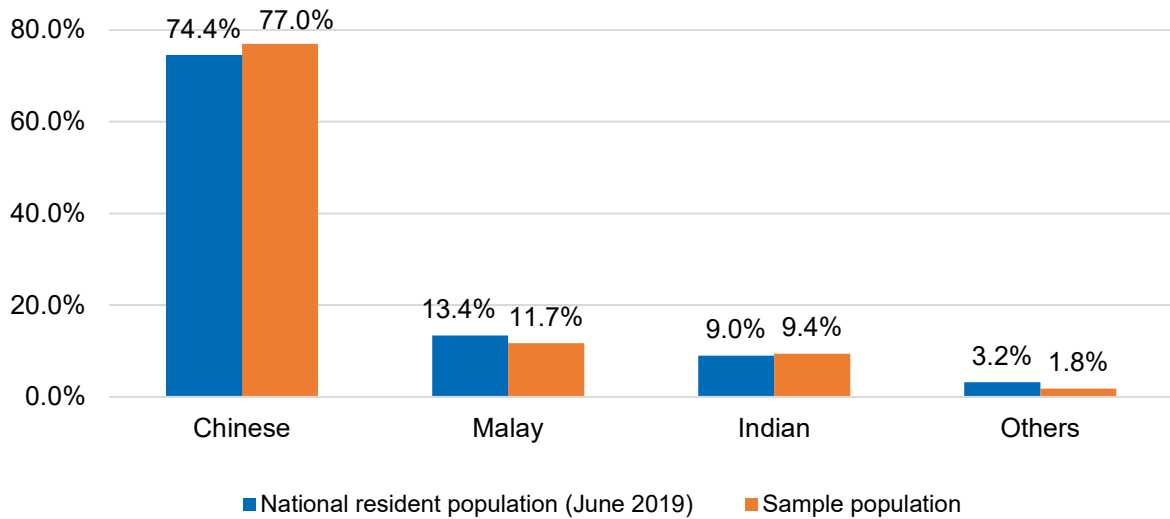
Figure 2: Breakdown of sample and national resident population, by ethnicity and gender
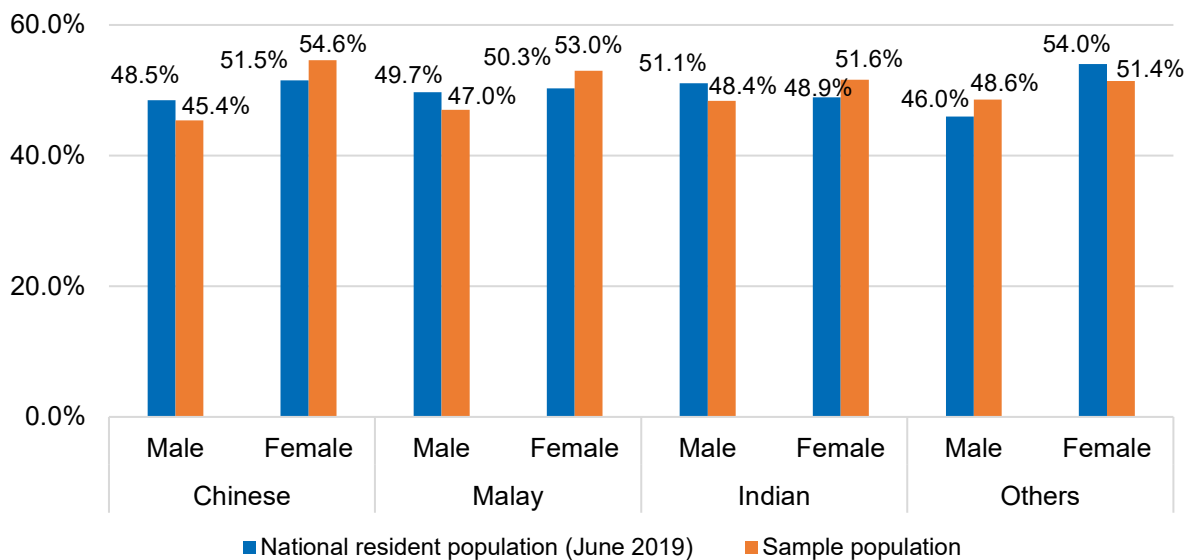
There was a larger degree of variance in the religion distribution of the WVS sample relative to the national population. Given that the latest available demographic data on religion is the

2015 General Household Survey (DoS Singapore, 2016), there is a possibility that slight shifts may have taken place in the past half-decade. Regardless, all group variations were under 7 per cent, with only three of the groups — those with no religion, Christian Protestants, and Buddhists — deviating 5 per cent or larger from the national population (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Breakdown of sample and national resident population, by religion
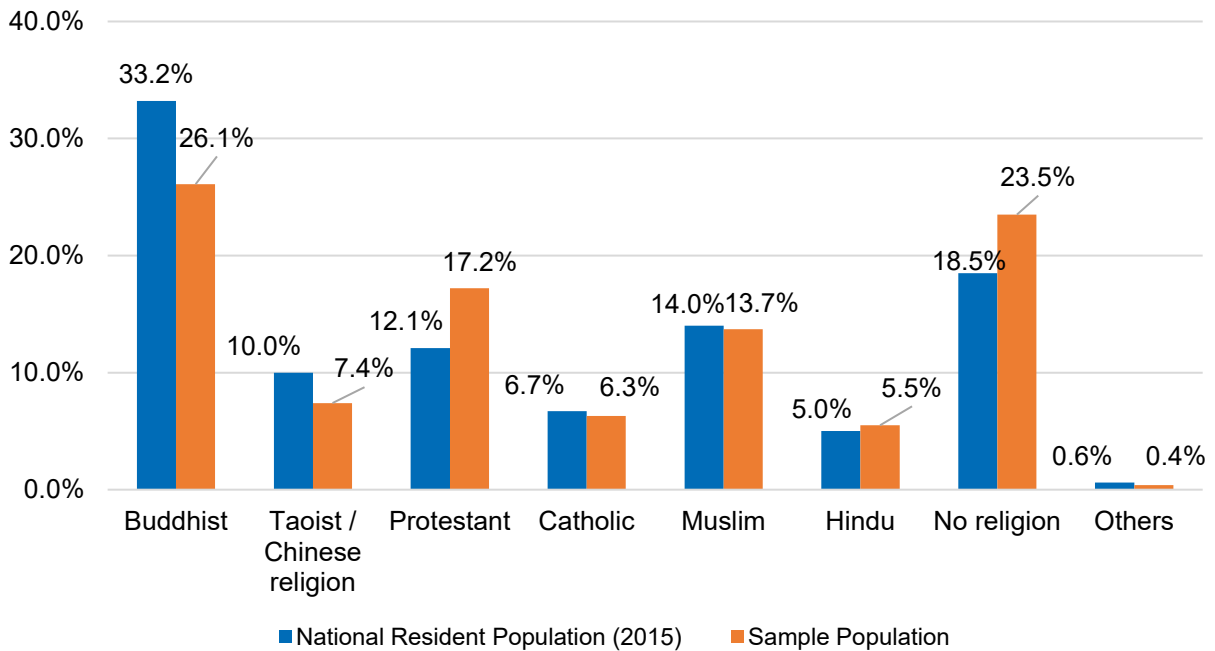
The following figures provide further breakdowns of the WVS sample by age cohort, housing type and education levels. The age profile of the sample population was relatively evenly spread; when broken down in 15-year blocks, there were similar proportions of the sample aged between 21-35, 36-50, and 51-65 years old; with a slightly smaller proportion aged above 65 years old (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Breakdown of sample, by age cohort

Age cohort	Percentage
21-35 years old	27.4%
36-50 years old	28.1%
51-65 years old	27.9%
Above 65	16.6%
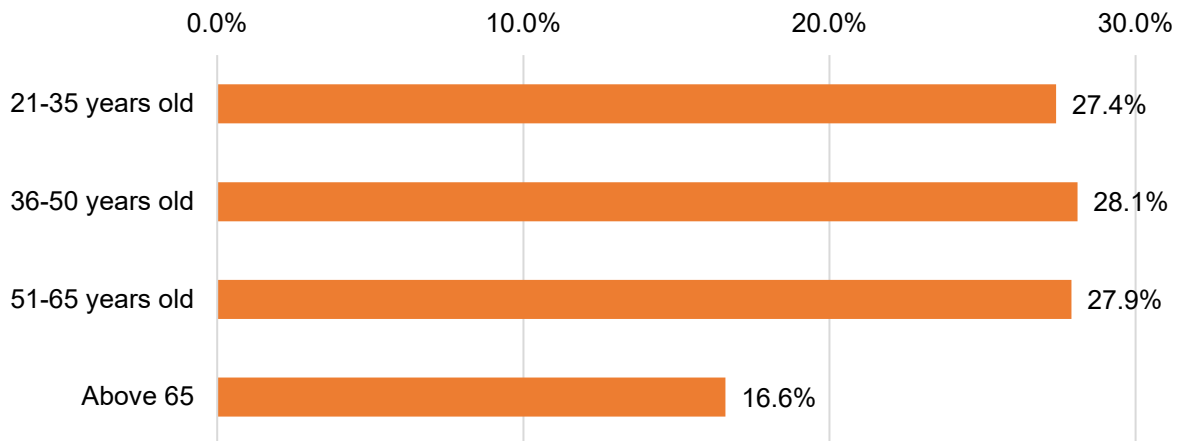
The sample had a good distribution of respondents residing across the various housing types, as well as with differing education levels. The majority of respondents lived in public housing, with 16.7 per cent staying in private apartments or landed properties. For concision, we will refer to these housing types as "private property". Within public housing flats, 29.5 per cent stayed in 1 to 3-room flats; 32.3 per cent stayed in 4-room flats; while 21.5 per cent stayed in 5-room or larger flats (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Breakdown of sample, by housing type (%)

Housing type	Percentage
1- to 3-room flat	29.5%
4-room flat	32.3%
5+ room flat	21.5%
Private property	16.7%
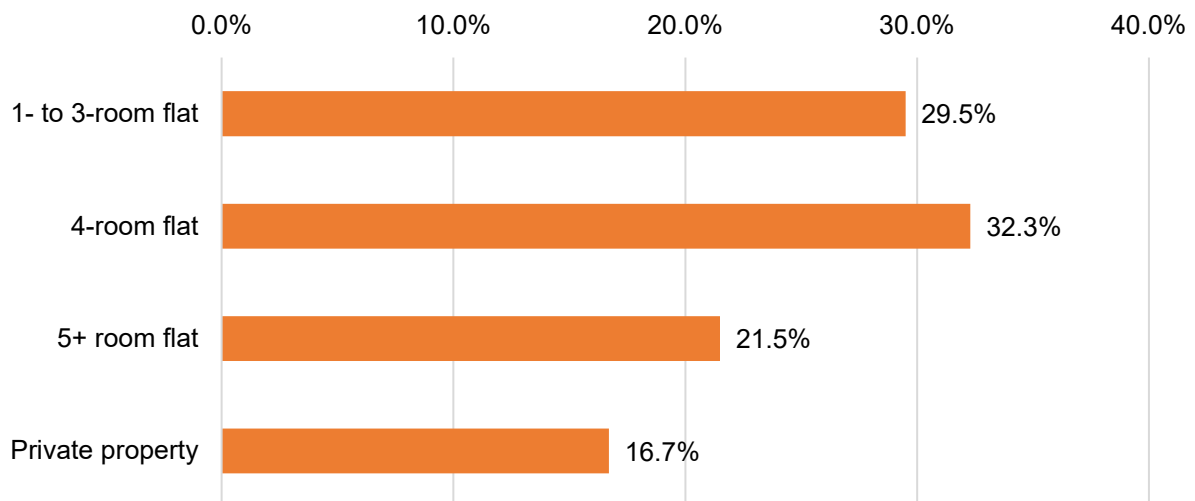
Meanwhile, 18.6 per cent of the sample population had below secondary school level education; 28.1 per cent graduated from either secondary school or the Institute of Technical Education (ITE); and slightly over half of the respondents had tertiary education — a fifth obtained diplomas or professional qualifications, while a third indicated possessing a degree (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Breakdown of sample, by education level (%)
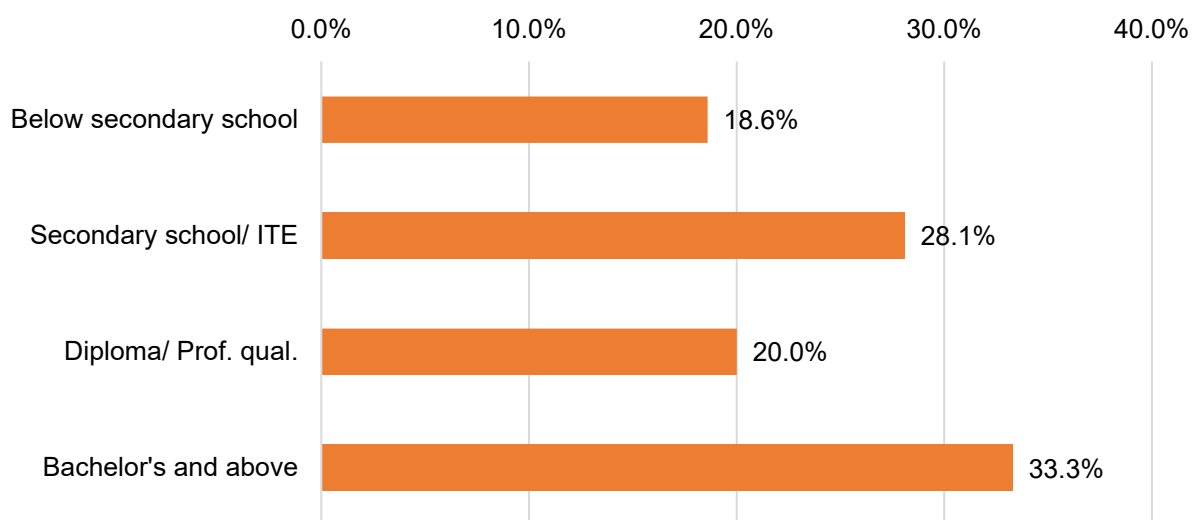
There were some age differences in educational qualifications obtained by respondents. As Singapore post-independence mandates compulsory education for citizens, a large majority of the younger population have at least completed secondary school or possess ITE qualifications. In contrast, nearly half of the respondents aged above 65 years old have below secondary education (see Table 2).

Table 2: Breakdown of sample, by age cohort and education level

Age Cohort	Education Level			
	Below secondary	**Secondary / ITE**	**Diploma / Prof. qual.**	**Bachelor's and above**
21-35 years old	1.8	23.2	34.6	40.4
36-50 years old	6.9	21.6	21.0	50.5
51-65 years old	28.8	33.3	14.0	24.0
Above 65 years old	49.2	39.0	4.2	7.6

In terms of demographics split by citizenship status, comparisons across age and housing types were made. Respondents aged 21 to 35 years old formed the largest group of local-born citizens with 30.1 per cent. In addition, 24.1 per cent were 36 to 50 years old, 29.7 per cent were 51 to 65 years old, and 16 per cent were above 65 years old. Meanwhile, respondents aged between 36 and 50 years old made up the largest group of naturalised citizens and Permanent Residents (PRs), while the smallest group was aged between 21 and 35 (see Table 3). Meanwhile, in terms of comparisons across housing types and citizenship status, there were slightly larger proportions of naturalised citizens and PRs staying in 1 to 4-room flats (see Table 4).

Table 3: Breakdown of sample, by citizenship status and age cohort

Citizenship Status	Age Cohort			
	21-35 years old	**36-50 years old**	**51-65 years old**	**> 65 years old**
Born citizen	30.1	24.1	29.7	16.0
Naturalised citizen / Permanent Resident	16.6	44.3	20.4	18.6

Table 4: Breakdown of sample, by citizenship status and housing type

Citizenship Status	Housing Type			
	1 to 3-room HDB	**4-room HDB**	**5+-room HDB**	**Private property**
Born citizen	29.4	31.4	22.2	17.0
Naturalised citizen / Permanent Resident	30.0	35.8	18.4	15.9

A further breakdown of the sample by reported monthly income is presented below. This, together with breakdowns by housing type, provides a general sense of representation by socio-economic status. While the majority of respondents gave an answer when asked about their monthly incomes, 788 of them chose to omit responses, resulting in missing data points. For respondents who opted to provide income information, the largest group was made up of individuals who earned between $3,000 and $4,999 monthly; the second largest group was made up of those who earned between $1,500 and $2,999 monthly (see Table 5). This is broadly in line with prevailing median income levels of the Singapore resident population.

Table 5: Breakdown of sample, by income level

Income Level	N	Percentage of sample	Percentage excl. refused (N = 1,224)
Below $1,500	217	10.8	17.7
$1,500 - $2,999	311	25.4	25.4
$3,000 - $4,999	372	18.5	30.4
$5,000 - $6,999	165	13.5	13.5
Above $6,999	159	13.0	13.0
Refused to answer	788	39.2	N/A

When perusing the WVS sample by religion and housing types, we note that there were generally larger proportions of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists residing in smaller flats. Catholics, Taoists, and adherents of traditional Chinese beliefs, as well as respondents with no religion were more likely to live in larger public housing (5+-room HDB flats) compared with the overall sample. Christian Protestants were more likely to reside in private property compared with the general sample (see Table 6).

Table 6: Breakdown of sample, by religion and housing type

Religion	Housing Type			
	1 to 3-room HDB	4-room HDB	5+-room HDB	Private property
Buddhist	29.1	37.9	21.3	11.6
Taoist / Chinese religion	27.7	38.5	25.0	8.8
Protestant	23.9	23.3	17.9	34.9
Catholic	21.4	29.4	30.2	19.0
Muslim	45.8	36.4	16.7	1.1
Hindu	39.6	35.1	20.7	4.5
No religion	25.0	28.6	23.5	22.9
Others	25.0	12.5	37.5	25.0

Finally, when considering the marital status of respondents, we find that the majority of respondents were married or had a live-in partner. As both arrangements exhibit significant similarities in terms of family life and daily interactions, we will refer to this group in general as "married respondents" purely for analytical concision in this section; this by no means reflects a preference for a particular value or moral stance vis-à-vis these arrangements. Meanwhile, 10 per cent of the sample were divorced, separated, or widowed; while 29.9 per cent indicated they were single (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Breakdown of sample, by marital status
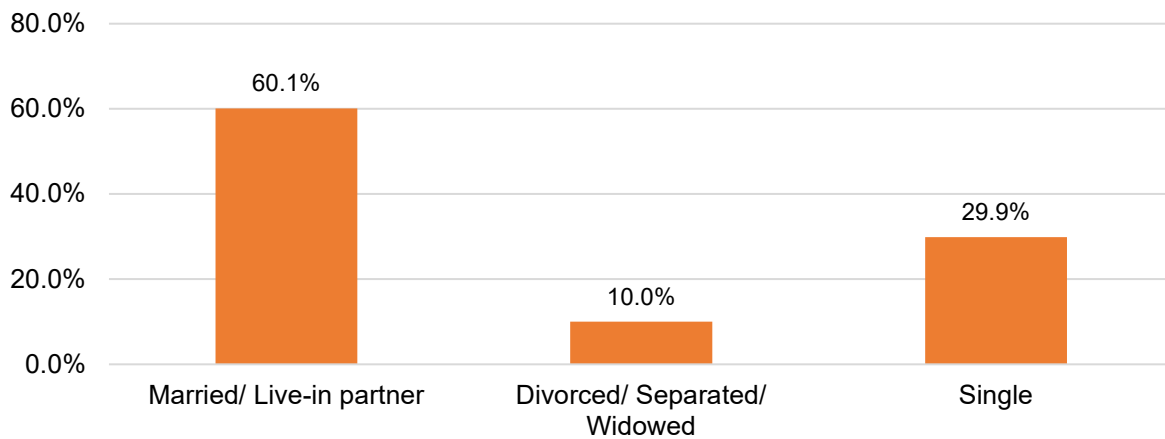
There were clear differences when considering age in tandem with marital status. Given that the average age of first marriage in Singapore in 2018 was 30.2 for males and 28.5 for females (Government Technology Agency, 2020a), it is unsurprising that over two-thirds of the youngest age cohort in the sample were unmarried. In contrast, the majority of respondents in the other age cohorts were either married or had a long-term live-in partner (see Figure 8). As respondents who have live-in partners account for just 1.0 per cent of the sample, they are combined with the married respondents for reporting purposes.

Figure 8: Breakdown of sample, by age and marital status
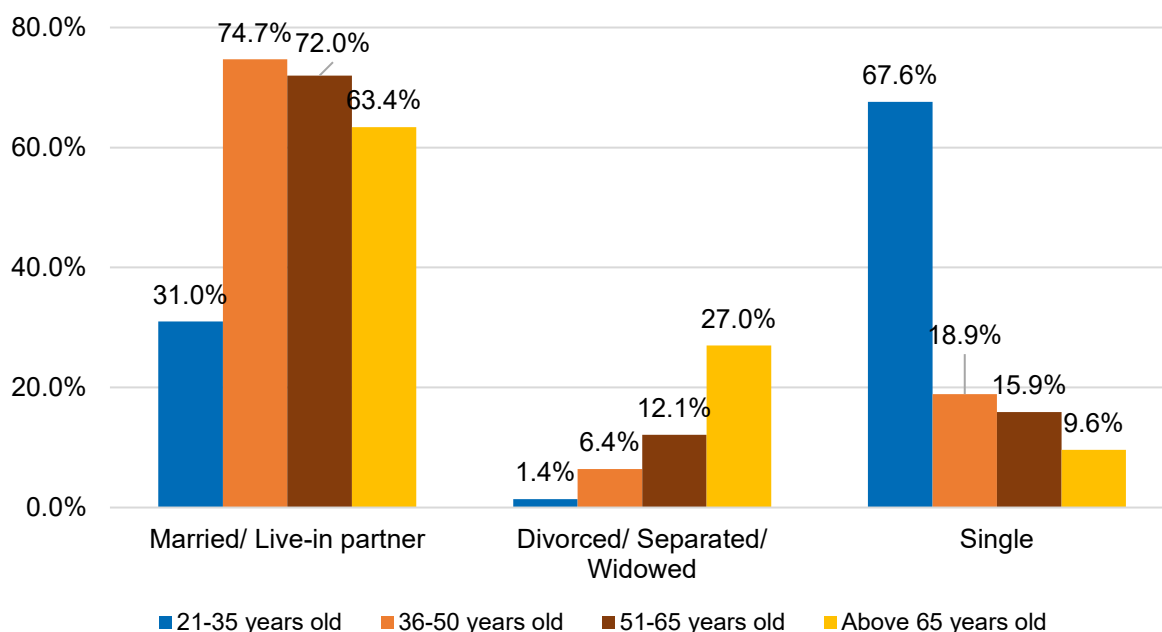
1.2.2 Sample demographics by race are also broadly reflective of the national population

The distribution of the races in the WVS sample across age groups as well as socio-economic factors including income, education, and housing types was also examined in relation to each other. The "Others" category is excluded in discussions as it comprises a large variety of ethnic profiles. In general, Malay and Indian respondents were younger on average compared to their Chinese counterparts. In particular, there were larger proportions of Indian respondents aged between 21 and 50 compared with the sample population. Meanwhile, the proportions of Chinese respondents above 50 years old were slightly higher than that of the overall sample (see Table 7).

Table 7: Breakdown of sample, by age cohort and race

Race	Age Cohort			
	21-35 years old	**36-50 years old**	**51-65 years old**	**> 65 years old**
Chinese	25.2	27.6	29.0	18.2
Malay	38.6	22.0	28.0	11.4
Indian	33.7	36.8	19.5	10.0
Others	16.2	45.9	24.3	13.5
Overall	**27.4**	**28.1**	**27.9**	**16.6**

There are varied religious affiliations across the three major races. Compared with the overall sample, there was a larger proportion of non-religious respondents amongst Chinese respondents. The most popular religion amongst the Chinese respondents was Buddhism, followed by Protestantism. For Malays, an overwhelming majority of 96.2 per cent identified with Islam, while 3 per cent said they had no religion. Meanwhile, over half of Indian respondents were Hindus, while a large minority (18.9 per cent) indicated they were Muslim (see Table 8).

Table 8: Breakdown of sample, by religion and race

Race	Religion							
	Buddhist	**Taoist / TCB**	**Protestant**	**Catholic**	**Muslim**	**Hindu**	**No religion**	**Others**
Chinese	33.4	9.6	21.2	6.1	0.5	0.1	29.1	0.1
Malay	0.4	0	0	0	96.2	0.4	3.0	0
Indian	0.5	0	7.9	7.4	18.9	57.4	5.3	2.6
Others	16.2	0	10.8	45.9	10.8	0	10.8	5.4
Overall	**26.1**	**7.4**	**17.2**	**6.3**	**13.7**	**5.5**	**23.5**	**0.4**

When considering socio-economic characteristics in tandem with race, Chinese respondents in the sample were the most well-off; they were more likely to reside in larger housing types, earn above $5,000 monthly, and have degree qualifications relative to their minority-race counterparts. While larger proportions of Malay and Indian respondents resided in 1- to 4-room flats compared to the overall sample, a larger proportion of Chinese respondents lived in private housing relative to the overall sample. There was also a much higher proportion of Indian respondents with university education compared with the overall sample. In contrast, there were lower proportions of Malay respondents living in private properties, earning $7,000 or more, and having a degree qualification (see Tables 9-11).

Table 9: Breakdown of sample, by housing type and race

Race	Housing Type			
	1- to 3-room HDB	**4-room HDB**	**5+-room HDB**	**Private property**
Chinese	24.5	31.6	22.2	20.8
Malay	47.9	34.7	16.5	0.8
Indian	39.5	35.8	21.6	3.2
Others	35.1	24.3	21.6	18.9
Overall	**29.5**	**32.3**	**21.5**	**18.9**

Table 10: Breakdown of sample, by income level and race

Race	Income Level				
	Below $1,500	**$1,500 - $2,999**	**$3,000 - $4,999**	**$5,000 - $6,999**	**Above $6,999**
Chinese	16.9	21.2	32.8	14.7	14.4
Malay	26.3	47.4	19.9	2.6	3.8
Indian	13.4	30.3	26.1	18.5	11.8
Others	14.3	21.4	28.6	14.3	21.4
Overall	**17.7**	**25.4**	**30.4**	**13.5**	**13.0**

Table 11: Breakdown of sample, by education level and race

Race	Education Level			
	Below secondary	**Secondary / ITE**	**Diploma / Prof. qual.**	**Bachelor's and above**
Chinese	18.4	26.2	19.7	35.6
Malay	26.3	47.0	20.8	5.9
Indian	12.6	23.7	22.1	41.6
Others	5.4	10.8	16.2	67.6
Overall	**18.6**	**28.1**	**20.0**	**33.3**

Chapter 2

Individual Priorities

CHAPTER 2 | INDIVIDUAL PRIORITIES

The "resources and activities that people consider important in helping them to live a satisfying life" are regarded as priorities in life (Tambyah, Tan and Kau, 2009a: p.349). Looking at the aggregated results of such priorities provides a picture of the priorities and norms that shape society. Since top-value priorities at the individual level are those the individual appreciates most and will compromise the least, the top-value priority of a society is one that is shared by most of its members. Thus, at both individual and aggregate levels, the most prioritised values are necessarily part of the core values of individuals. Furthermore, an examination of personal priorities provides insights vis-à-vis the types of issues that individuals might be affected by.

There have been several studies done on the values of Singaporeans. The first values and lifestyles study was conducted by Kau and Yang (1991) in 1989. Over 2000 Singaporeans were surveyed and grouped into six categories based on two dimensions: their value perception and psychological motivation. These six groups were 1. Traditional Achievers, 2. Searching Singles, 3. Contemporary Motivators, 4. Middle-of-the-Roaders, 5. Individualists, and 6. Laggards. In 1996, Kau, Tan, and Wirtz (1998) did a second values and lifestyles survey with a sample of 1600 Singaporeans. In this study, seven groups of Singaporeans were identified: 1. Traditional Family Oriented, 2. New Age Family Oriented, 3. Entrepreneurs, 4. Aspirers, 5. Materialists, 6. Pragmatists, 7. Independents.

In 2001, a third study was done on the values of Singaporeans by Jung et al. (2004) as a continuation of the earlier studies conducted in 1989 and 1996. Using data from a sample of 1,500 Singapore residents, the study sought to explore values, attitudes, aspirations in life, life satisfaction, media habits, social and leisure activities, and Internet use. What was different from the earlier studies was the usage of semi-structured interviews to further enhance understanding of the values and lifestyles of Singaporeans. The survey found that Singaporeans identity with the family values promoted by the State and are highly family-oriented. Among their younger respondents, Singaporeans have quite a high societal consciousness. It also found that Singaporeans are generally high on materialism.

The three studies above acted as the launchpad for more varied studies on the values of Singapore. For instance, in their article, Tambyah and Tan (2017) examine whether personal values, generalised trust, and religiosity impact levels of civic engagement in Singapore. They find that values such as fun, enjoyment, sense of belonging have a significant positive impact on civic engagement. Scholars who study Singaporean values are also interested in how values affect quality of life. Tambyah, Tan, and Kau (2009a) give an overview of the well-being and the quality of life of Singaporeans using the 2006 Asia Barometer Survey. More specifically, they examine how the priority that Singaporeans place on different values, such as health, employment, family, influence the degree of their happiness, enjoyment, and achievement.

The findings of the above study indicate Singaporeans are very much concerned about their economic well-being, even though Singapore has maintained decades of financial stability and economic growth. Economic concerns notwithstanding, Singaporeans appear to be satisfied with their standard of living. In addition, the top five priorities of Singaporeans are "being healthy, having a comfortable home, having a job, spending time with family and having

enough to eat. The sixth priority of having access to good medical care is closely related to the top priority of health" (Tambyah, Tan, and Kau (2009a, p.372). In their book, Tambyah, Tan, and Kau (2009b) proffer insights on other Singaporean attitudes towards national identity, democracy, and political rights. In the same vein, Tan and Tambyah (2016) similarly explore how the values Singaporeans hold influence their life satisfaction using data from two sequential cross-sectional studies of Singaporeans conducted in 2001 and 2011. They find that values like security and sense of belonging have increased in importance, whereas being well-respected has become less important over the decade.

Similarly, in a narrower-scope empirical study, Chang explores the values of Singapore's youth and their parents. Chang finds that for most Singaporeans, their top value priority is "neither wealth accumulation nor self-expression nor quality of life. It is a preference for being moral" (2009, p. 166). His hypothesis as to why most people in Singapore prioritise moral or ethical values is that such "values perform an important functional role for the family and society as well as for the individual under their present life conditions" (2009, p. 167).

With the aforementioned scholarship in mind, the WVS 2020 survey serves as a timely update and addition to the extant literature on Singapore's value systems. Respondents were asked to rate various items based on how important they were in their lives. The subsequent sections in this chapter present the overall findings, before elaborating on responses pertaining to 1) family; 2) friends; 3) wealth; 4) leisure time; 5) work; 6) religion; and 7) politics. The analyses on attributing importance in this chapter provide a salient backdrop with which to consider more in-depth findings on workplace ethics in Chapter 3; religiosity in Chapter 4; family values in Chapter 5; economic values in Chapter 6; and political values in Chapter 8.

2.1   OVERALL FINDINGS

2.1.1 Respondents were most likely to consider family as "very important" compared to all other facets of life; perceived importance of work has declined from 2002 to 2020

Findings from the 2020 WVS survey suggest that family is by far the most important aspect of Singapore respondents' lives. Over 90 per cent chose the "very important" option to describe this priority. The consensus around other items was substantially lower. While the importance of friends was well acknowledged by survey respondents, those who choose the "very important" option was just under 40 per cent. On the other end of the spectrum, politics was deemed least important, with over 50 per cent saying that it was either not very important or not at all important in their lives. There was a relationship between socio-economic variables and the level of importance ascribed to most items, with the exception of religion and politics (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: How important is this in your life?
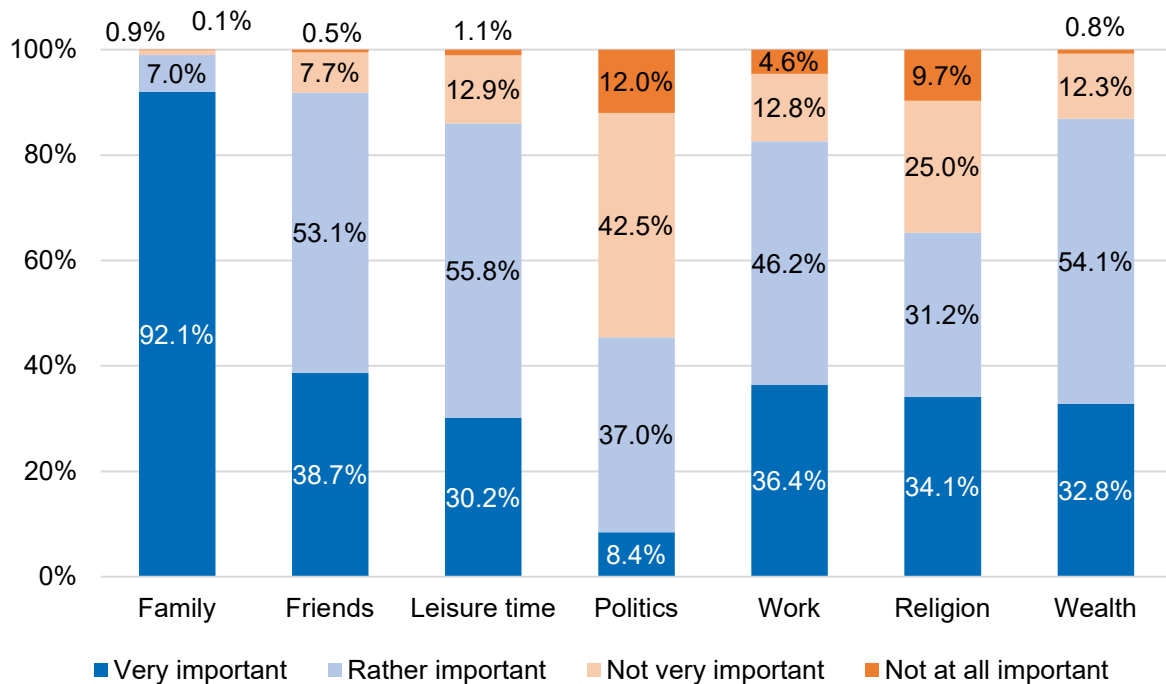
There were marked similarities in respondents' priorities across all societies-of-comparison. Family and friends were identified as one of the top three priorities across all polities, while religion and politics weighed in the bottom-three priorities. Work, however, was prioritised differently across various countries. Malaysians, Thais, Taiwanese and Chinese were much more likely to prioritise work as more important compared to others (see Table 12).

Table 12: Ranking of priorities by importance for WVS 2020, by polity

Rank	"Rather important" and "Very important" responses aggregated for each polity										
	SG	MY	TH	JP	KR	CN	HK	TW	AU	US	UK
1	Family (99.1)	Family (99.7)	Family (97.7)	Family (99.1)	Family (99.7)	Family (99.4)	Family (98.2)	Family (99.4)	Family (98)	Family (98.2)	Family (98.7)
2	Friends (91.8)	Work (94.6)	Work (90.1)	Friends (92.2)	Friends (97.8)	Friends (91.7)	Friends (92.1)	Work (92.6)	Friends (94.5)	Friends (89.5)	Friends (94.8)
3	Wealth* (86.7)	Friends (94.4)	Friends (85.6)	Leisure (91.6)	Leisure (91.6)	Work (88.8)	Leisure (85)	Friends (92)	Leisure (93.5)	Leisure (89)	Leisure (91.9)
4	Leisure (86)	Leisure (92.9)	Religion (83.8)	Work (83)	Work (86.4)	Leisure (70.8)	Work (79.9)	Leisure (87.2)	Work (83.1)	Work (80.2)	Work (79.3)
5	Work (82.6)	Religion (91.1)	Leisure (76)	Politics (67.4)	Politics (60.1)	Politics (54.2)	Politics (44.9)	Religion (51.4)	Politics (50.8)	Religion (61.2)	Politics (53.9)
6	Religion (65.3)	Politics (51.2)	Politics (59.1)	Religion (16.1)	Religion (35.9)	Religion (13.1)	Religion (30.6)	Politics (37.7)	Religion (29.5)	Politics (57.1)	Religion (37.2)
7	Politics (43.4)										

Only asked in Singapore wave.

When compared across waves, very similar priorities were found for the 2020 responses vis-à-vis 2012 responses. With the exception of wealth, a new addition in 2020, rankings of the other items were the same for both waves. However, while work was deemed second most important in 2002, it dropped to a lower rank in 2012 and 2020. Meanwhile, religion and politics were consistently named as the two lowest priorities across all three waves. The proportion choosing religion as "very important" or "rather important" dropped from approximately 76 per cent in 2002 and 2012 to 65.3 per cent in 2020. In contrast, a higher proportion of respondents in 2012 felt that politics was very or rather important compared to those in 2002 and 2020 (see Table 13).

Table 13: Ranking of priorities by importance, across WVS iterations (2002-2020)

Rank	2002	2012	2020
1	Family (99.2%)	Family (99.1%)	Family (99.1%)
2	Work (90.8%)	Friends (93.9%)	Friends (91.8%)
3	Friends (90.4%)	Leisure time (88.5%)	Wealth* (86.7%)
4	Leisure time (79.9%)	Work (84.9%)	Leisure time (86.0%)
5	Religion (76.0%)	Religion (76.1%)	Work (82.6%)
6	Politics (43.0%)	Politics (53.9%)	Religion (65.3%)
7			Politics (43.4%)

New item asked in WVS 2020.

2.1.2 Respondents who felt their friends were important were more likely to indicate leisure time as important; while the importance of work, wealth and politics were also correlated with each other

We then tried to examine the relationships between each of these priorities and whether there were certain pairings or groupings of aspects that people tended to prioritise together. Interestingly, most of the pairs returned statistically significant and positive correlation coefficients, for which the full table is reproduced in Appendix 2. The only two pairs that did not have statistically significant results were family-politics and friends-religion. Meanwhile, the only two pairs with correlation coefficients of over 0.3 were friends-leisure and work-wealth, indicating a stronger correlation relative to other pairs.

Respondents who prioritised friends were more likely to prioritise their leisure time, which is intuitive given that people meet up with friends usually when they are free from other commitments. The results also indicate that people who prioritise work also prioritise wealth. Given that the way most people accumulate wealth is through paid work, this finding is also not surprising.

To augment the veracity of these findings, we conducted a factor analysis of these seven aspects to see which of them were more likely to be linked to each other. Overall, these results indicate that there are certain priorities that are more related to each other. The first

component consisted of friends and leisure time; the second included politics, work, and wealth; and the third group included family and religion.

These results correspond with the correlation analysis to a sizeable extent, given that they also indicate the close relationship between the friends-leisure time and work-wealth pairs. They also reveal more information about the aspects of life that Singaporeans are likely to prioritise together. Group 1 reveals the desire to have sufficient time for oneself and being with friends, and to focus on these aspects of life. Group 2, which includes politics, work, and wealth, appears to concentrate more on pursuits related to career, ambition, and society. Meanwhile, Group 3 priorities indicate a preference to devote more energy towards spiritual and social well-being via religion and family (see Table 14).

Table 14: Factor analysis of priorities using responses on importance

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Friends	Politics	Family
Leisure time	Work	Religion
	Wealth	

We next examined the rankings of importance vis-à-vis these facets of life across age, education, and housing types. While there were different priorities articulated by the various demographic groups, family consistently remained at the top of the list, while politics was consistently ranked the least important relative to all other facets of life.

2.1.3 Younger respondents were most likely to indicate that their friends were important to them; middle-aged respondents were more likely than their younger and older counterparts to deem work and wealth as important

Respondents across all age groups were most likely to view family as "very important" or "rather important"; they were also most likely to indicate politics as "not very important" or "not at all important". Meanwhile, friends were the second most important facet of life across all age groups. However, a larger proportion of the youngest age cohort indicated that their friends were important in their lives. For the youngest age cohort (21 to 35 years old), the proportions viewing the top four options as important were all above 90 per cent, with very slight differences between them. In particular, the difference between the proportions choosing leisure time and work as very or rather important was less than 0.5 per cent (see Table 15).

It is also interesting to note that the youngest and oldest groups saw leisure time as more important compared to the other two groups, which viewed work and wealth as more important. In addition, religion was chosen by a larger proportion of those aged above 65 compared to the other groups, resulting in a higher rank for this aspect. A likely reason for this difference might be because a large proportion of this group has retired from full-time work.

Table 15: Ranking of priorities ("very important" + "rather important"), by age cohort

Rank	Overall	21-35	36-50	51-65	Above 65
1	Family (99.1%)	Family (99.1%)	Family (99.7%)	Family (99.3%)	Family (97.3%)
2	Friends (91.8%)	Friends (95.3%)	Friends (91.5%)	Friends (91.5%)	Friends (91.0%)
3	Wealth (86.7%)	Leisure time (92.1%)	Work (89.6%)	Wealth (87.3%)	Leisure time (84.4%)
4	Leisure time (86.0%)	Work (91.9%)	Wealth (89.3%)	Work (84.8%)	Wealth (80.5%)
5	Work (82.6%)	Wealth (88.3%)	Leisure time (84.8%)	Leisure time (83.3%)	Religion (72.9%)
6	Religion (65.3%)	Religion (56.8%)	Religion (62.6%)	Religion (73.3%)	Work (51.7%)
7	Politics (43.4%)	Politics (42.8%)	Politics (49.7%)	Politics (46.5%)	Politics (41.7%)

2.1.4 Respondents with below-secondary level qualifications were more likely to view religion and wealth as more important, but work as less important relative to their better-educated peers

With the exception of those possessing below secondary level qualifications, respondents were most likely to indicate religion as unimportant relative to other facets of life. This is also likely due to the function of age, as the oldest age group was more likely to indicate work as less important compared to religion. Friends were considered important for most respondents with over 9 in 10 respondents indicating they were important on average; however, less than 9 in 10 of those with below secondary level qualifications indicated likewise. Meanwhile, a smaller proportion of respondents with below secondary education (below 80 per cent) said that work and leisure time were important, compared to the other groups (over 80 per cent).

While respondents across education levels were most likely to indicate politics as unimportant relative to other facets, greater proportions of higher-educated respondents indicated otherwise. While over 43 per cent of respondents felt politics was "very important" or "rather important", only a third of their counterparts with below secondary qualifications indicated likewise (see Table 16).

**Table 16: Ranking of priorities ("very important" + "rather important"),
by education level**

Rank	Overall	Below secondary	Secondary school / ITE	Diploma / Prof. qual.	Bachelor's and above
1	Family (99.1%)	Family (98.3%)	Family (99.4%)	Family (99.2%)	Family (99.4%)
2	Friends (91.8%)	Wealth (87.1%)	Leisure time (96.2%)	Friends (93.5%)	Friends (95.2%)
3	Wealth (86.7%)	Friends (86.9%)	Friends (91.0%)	Work (88.6%)	Leisure time (90.1%)
4	Leisure time (86.0%)	Leisure time (78.0%)	Wealth (87.9%)	Leisure time (87.5%)	Wealth (86.2%)
5	Work (82.6%)	Religion (72.9%)	Work (81.3%)	Wealth (86.8%)	Work (85.3%)
6	Religion (65.3%)	Work (71.1%)	Religion (70.2%)	Religion (63.1%)	Religion (59.6%)
7	Politics (43.4%)	Politics (33.4%)	Politics (43.6%)	Politics (43.7%)	Politics (49.6%)

2.1.5 Perceptions of the importance of wealth and leisure time are correlated with socio-economic status, with those residing in smaller housing units more likely to indicate wealth as more important to them

When perusing results by housing type, a rough indication of socio-economic status, it appears that different socio-economic classes had predominantly similar priorities. However, one notable difference stems from the perceived importance of wealth and leisure time. Respondents residing in smaller housing types (1-4 room HDB flats) were more likely to view wealth as more important than leisure time, while it was the reverse for those living in 5-room or larger HDB flats and private housing. This likely reflects the differences in existing financial resources available to individuals (see Table 17).

Similar to findings by education level, lower-SES respondents were more likely to indicate religion as important to them relative to their more affluent counterparts. As for politics, respondents residing in 5-room or larger public housing units, i.e., the 'sandwiched' class, were most likely to indicate its importance (over 50 per cent) as compared to their less or more affluent counterparts.

Table 17: Ranking of priorities ("very important" + "rather important"), by housing type

Rank	Overall	1- to 3-room HDB	4-room HDB	5+-room HDB	Private property
1	Family (99.1%)	Family (97.9%)	Family (99.7%)	Family (99.3%)	Family (99.1%)
2	Friends (91.8%)	Friends (88.1%)	Friends (93.2%)	Friends (93.2%)	Friends (95.6%)
3	Wealth (86.7%)	Wealth (87.3%)	Wealth (88.4%)	Leisure time (88.2%)	Leisure time (91.8%)
4	Leisure time (86.0%)	Leisure time (81.8%)	Leisure time (86.7%)	Wealth (86.0%)	Wealth (84.8%)
5	Work (82.6%)	Work (81.2%)	Work (85.5%)	Work (82.6%)	Work (76.4%)
6	Religion (65.3%)	Religion (70.0%)	Religion (66.3%)	Religion (63.4%)	Religion (59.8%)
7	Politics (43.4%)	Politics (44.7%)	Politics (43.4%)	Politics (50.8%)	Politics (44.3%)

With the key trends by demographics delineated, the next few sections delve into findings grouped by the various facets of life, in descending order of respondents' perceived importance.

2.2   OF KITH AND KIN

2.2.1 Married respondents were more likely to consider family as "very important" compared to singles or divorcees; older respondents were less likely to indicate likewise compared to their younger peers

Family was rated by 92.1 per cent of respondents as very important to their lives, while another 7 per cent said it was rather important. In effect, only 1 per cent said that family was either not very important or not at all important (see Figure 9). Despite the high levels of consensus about this life priority, there was some variation between demographic groups. When comparing across the age groups, respondents aged between 36 and 50 years old had the largest proportion choosing the "very important" option (94.9 per cent).

This group also had the lowest proportion (0.4 per cent) saying that family was "not very important", and had no respondents indicating family was "not at all important". In comparison, there was a slightly lower proportion of those above 65 years old saying that family was "very important" (88.6 per cent). This group also had the highest proportion of respondents (2.7 per cent) saying that family was "not very important" (see Table 18).

Table 18: Importance of family, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 2,010	Importance of Family			
	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important
21-35	90.0	9.1	0.7	0.2
36-50	94.9	4.8	0.4	0
51-65	92.5	6.8	0.5	0.2
Above 65	88.6	8.7	2.7	0

There were clear differences in the priority given to family among those who were married, with 96.2 per cent of this group reporting that family was very important. This was in contrast with 84.1 per cent of divorced, separated, or widowed respondents and 85.7 per cent of single respondents who indicated that family was very important (see Table 19).

Table 19: Importance of family, by marital status

Marital Status N = 2,010	Importance of Family			
	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important
Married	96.2	3.6	0.2	0
Divorced/ Separated/ Widowed	84.1	12.9	3.0	0
Single	85.7	12.5	1.5	0.3

While causal relationships cannot be established through cross-sectional studies such as this WVS survey iteration, it is probable that a large majority of married respondents had already embraced the value of family prior to marriage. Adopting such a mindset would likely propel them into marriage where they could begin their own families. Nonetheless, even among those who were single and divorced, a great majority felt family was "very important"; though this may not always be linked to marrying or forming their own families.

When age groups were further divided by marital status, it was found that there was a large difference between those who were married and those were not. Compared to 94.3 per cent of married respondents who said that family is very important, 79.8 per cent of those where were divorced, separated, or widowed and 75 per cent of those who were single gave the same answer. The differences between marital statuses for the other age groups, in contrast, were not that pronounced, as shown in the table below. Therefore, there is reason to believe that the absence of a traditional family nucleus makes a difference in older respondents' perceptions of family (see Table 20).

Table 20: Importance of family, by age cohort and marital status

Age Cohort and Marital Status N = 2,010		Importance of Family			
		Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
21-35	**Married**	97.7	2.3	0	0
	Divorced/ Separated/ Widowed*	87.5	12.5	0	0
	Single	86.6	12.1	1.1	0.3
36-50	**Married**	97.4	2.4	0.2	0
	Divorced/ Separated/ Widowed	88.9	11.1	0	0
	Single	86.9	12.1	0.9	0
51-65	**Married**	95.3	4.7	0	0
	Divorced/ Separated/ Widowed	86.8	10.3	2.9	0
	Single	84.1	13.6	1.1	1.1
Above 65	**Married**	94.3	4.7	0.9	0
	Divorced/ Separated/ Widowed	79.8	15.7	4.5	0
	Single	75	15.6	9.4	0

* The number of respondents in this category is less than 30

2.2.2 Muslims and more affluent individuals are more likely to perceive family as important

When considering other social demographics, survey responses reveal that Muslim respondents were the most likely to indicate that family was very important in their lives compared to adherents of other religions and those with no religion. 97.1 per cent of Muslims indicated as such, followed by Roman Catholics and Hindus. Meanwhile, 87 per cent of those without a religion gave the same answer, the smallest proportion amongst the specified categories. This might indicate the close relationship religious traditions have to the ideology of family, whether through situating individuals' spiritual well-being within the context of familial relationships, or reinforcing the importance of blood-ties through ritual and celebrations (see Table 21).

Table 21: Importance of family, by religion

Religion* *N = 2,010*	Importance of Family			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
Buddhist	92.6	6.5	0.8	0.2
Taoist / Chinese religion	91.2	8.1	0.7	0
Protestant	91.0	7.8	1.2	0
Catholic	96.0	4.0	0	0
Muslim	97.1	2.5	0.4	0
Hindu	95.5	3.6	0.9	0
No religion	87.0	11.3	1.5	0.2

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

When considering socio-economic status, we note that respondents with higher income levels were more likely to indicate family was "very important". Compared with 88.4 per cent of those earning below $1,500, 96.9 per cent of those earning above $6,999 said that family was "very important" (see Table 22). This socio-economic relationship between higher wealth and stronger endorsement of family as a life priority is evident in an examination of priorities by housing type. Respondents living in 1 to 3-room flats held family in slightly lower regard compared with the rest of the sample population. While over 92 per cent of the other groups said that family was very important in their lives, 88.3 per cent of those who lived in 1- to 3-room flats indicated likewise (see Table 23).

Table 22: Importance of family, by income level

Income Level *N = 2,010*	Importance of Family			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
Below $1,500	88.4	9.7	1.9	0
$1,500 - $2,999	91.0	7.4	1.6	0
$3,000 - $4,999	94.6	5.1	0.3	0
$5,000 - $6,999	92.7	7.3	0	0
Above $6,999	96.9	3.1	0	0

Table 23: Importance of family, by housing type

Housing Type N = 2,010	Importance of Family			
	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important
1 to 3-room HDB	88.3	9.6	1.9	0.2
4-room HDB	93.4	6.3	0.2	0.2
5+-room HDB	94.0	5.3	0.7	0
Private property	92.3	6.8	0.9	0

When we delve further into the correlation between socio-economic status and perceived importance of family, we note that respondents residing in 1 to 2-room flats (a subset of the 1 to 3-room HDB dwellers category presented above) were even less likely to prioritise family relative to more affluent respondents. For this particular segment, only 84.5 per cent indicated that family is very important in their lives.

It is well-documented (and also clear from the WVS respondent demographics) that a comparatively larger proportion of individuals reside alone in these smallest public housing units; and/or are single, divorced, separated, or widowed. For respondents living in 1- to 2-room flats, 28.6 per cent were divorced, separated, or widowed. In comparison, 15.7 per cent of those living in 3-room flats, 7.4 per cent of those living in 4-room flats, 6.1 per cent of those living in 5-room flats, and 6.6 per cent of those living in private housing declared the same marital statuses. Consequently, it is more likely that family experiences may not have been as positive for this group relative to the rest of the population. It is thus unsurprising that the results reflect a marginally less positive perception of family amongst 1 to 2-room flat dwellers.

2.2.3 Most in Singapore "agree" or "strongly agree" that one of their main goals in life was to make their parents proud; these levels of agreement are amongst the highest globally, reflecting strong values of filial piety

In addition to asking respondents to indicate their perceptions of importance vis-à-vis family, the 2020 WVS survey also queried respondents whether making their parents proud was one of their main goals in life. To this regard, a large proportion of Singapore respondents indicated agreement to varying degrees; 28.6 per cent strongly agreed, and 57.6 per cent agreed with this statement (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: One of my main goals in life has been to make my parents proud
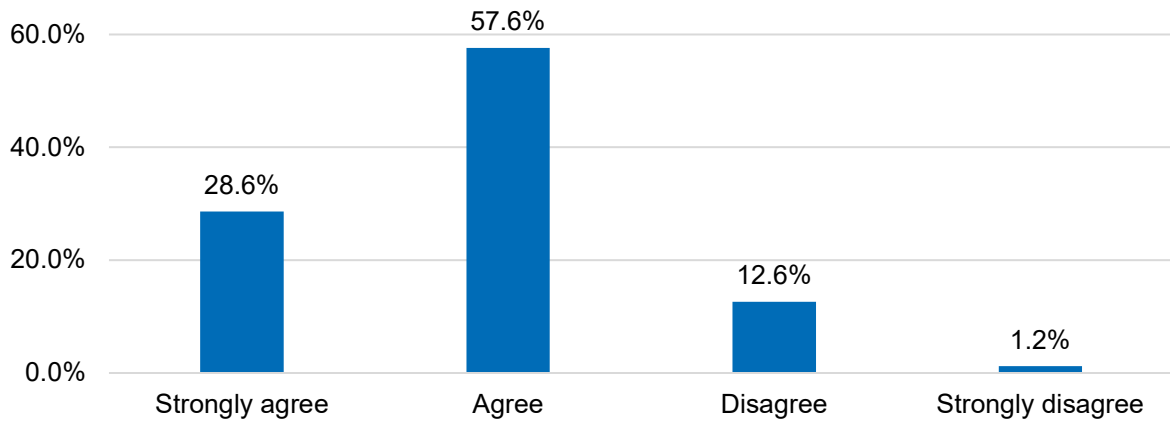
When compared against other societies, Singaporean respondents had similar attitudes vis-à-vis making their parents proud as those in Mainland China, Taiwan, Australia, and the United States. Globally, respondents from Malaysia and Thailand were most likely to prioritise making their parents proud, over 95 per cent and over 85 per cent respectively indicated agreement to varying extents with the statement. On the other end of the spectrum, over 40 per cent of respondents in Hong Kong, Sweden, and Switzerland disagreed to varying extents with the statement. Results from the Singapore tranche suggest values of filial piety continue to prevail; relative to other country contexts (see Figure 11).

Figure 11: One of my main goal in life is to make my parents proud
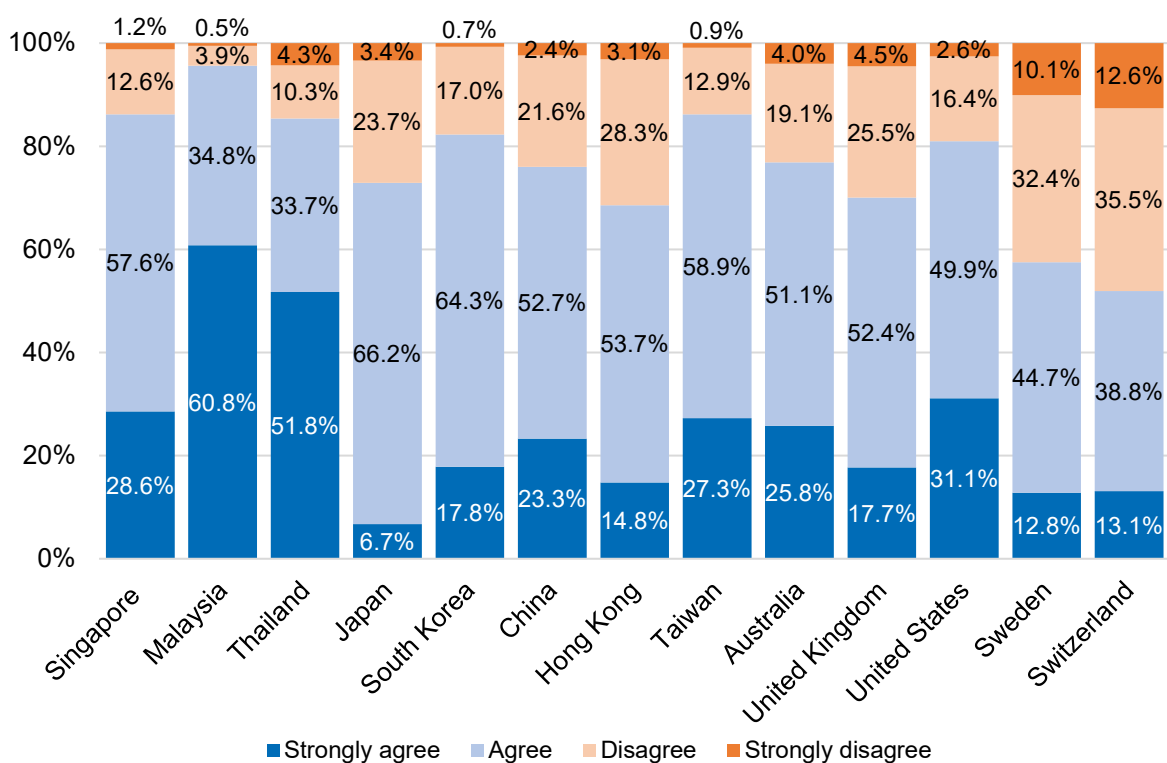
2.2.4 Age and affluence are key variables impacting notions of filial piety; younger and less affluent individuals are more likely to "strongly agree" that one of their main goals in life is to make their parents proud

A larger proportion of respondents aged between 21 and 35 either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement on making their parents proud as a priority in life. In particular, 37.7 per cent of this youngest age cohort strongly agreed with the statement, compared with less than 27 per cent for the rest of the population (see Table 24).

These results are in tandem with the outsized importance of parental presence and involvement in individuals' younger years; with the role of parents diminishing as their children grow older. Parental aspirations have the potential to impact some of the early decisions that young adults make, such as career choices, life partners, and starting a family. With the passage of adulthood, parental interaction diminishes in general; and the impetus to make one's parents proud may somewhat dilute, though not disappear.

Table 24: Agreement with making parents proud as main goal in life, by age cohort

Age Cohort *N = 2,001*	One of my main goals in life has been to make my parents proud			
	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
21-35	37.7	52.1	9.1	1.1
36-50	25.5	58.5	13.7	2.3
51-65	26.8	58.3	14.4	0.5
Above 65	23.0	62.5	14.2	0.3

The results further reflect the marked impact affluence has on the priorities of individuals vis-à-vis making their parents proud. While response rates for agreement across extents were fairly similar for all housing types, there were statistically significant differences noted for "strongly agree". In general, respondents living in smaller housing types were more likely to indicate strong agreement that one of their main goals in life was to make their parents proud. Compared with 23.3 per cent of those residing in private property and 28 per cent of those living in 4-room or larger public housing, 33 per cent of respondents living in 1 to 3-room flats chose the "strongly agree" option. In tandem with these proportions, 18 per cent of those living in private properties disagreed with the statement; a higher proportion relative to their less affluent counterparts (see Table 25).

Perhaps among those of higher socio-economic status, the impetus to make their parents proud is less pertinent due to varying levels of parental presence, or differences in parenting styles, such as the prioritisation of greater independence and less conformity with parental wishes.

Table 25: Agreement with making parents proud as main goal in life, by housing type

Housing Type *N = 2,001*	One of my main goals in life has been to make my parents proud			
	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
1- to 3-room HDB	33.0	55.3	11.2	0.5
4-room HDB	28.2	58.6	11.9	1.2
5+-room HDB	28.1	57.1	13.7	1.2
Private property	23.3	58.9	15.7	2.1

2.2.5 Age and marital status are key factors impacting perceived importance of friends; younger and single respondents were significantly more likely to indicate that friends were a "very important" aspect of their lives

Moving the spotlight from kin to kith, overall findings from the survey indicate that respondents generally viewed friends as important to varying extents in their lives. Only 38.7 per cent indicated that friends were "very important", while 53.1 per cent stated that they were "rather important" (see Figure 9). However, significant differences are discerned among age cohorts and individuals with differing marital status.

Compared with the rest of the sample population, respondents aged between 21 and 35 years old, the youngest age cohort, held friends in the highest regard. Over half of this age cohort compared with just over a third for the rest of the sample, indicated that friends were "very important" in their lives. Given how priorities change over one's lifetime, younger respondents, who typically have fewer responsibilities in terms of work and family, are more likely to spend much more time with friends; consequently, ascribing higher levels of importance to this aspect of their lives (see Table 26).

Table 26: Importance of friends, by age cohort

Age Cohort *N = 2,012*	Importance of Friends			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
21-35	51.1	44.2	4.5	0.2
36-50	36.7	54.8	8.1	0.4
51-65	31.2	59.2	9.1	0.5
Above 65	35.7	55.3	8.1	0.9

In the same vein, there were significant differences in prioritising friends across respondents with varying marital statuses. Just under half of single respondents compared to over a third for other respondents indicated that friends were "very important" in their lives. When we consider these results in tandem with responses regarding the importance of family, these

indicate differing priorities for those who were married compared with those who were single (see Table 27).

One potential reason could be that importance is related at least to some extent with the amount of time spent with different people. Since those who had families of their own might have less time to spare for interactions with friends, and might spend more effort taking care of their own households, the proportion of married respondents indicating friends as "very important" parts of their lives would be lower compared to their single counterparts.

It is also possible that more of the younger respondents prioritised friends in their lives because they were not yet married. This conjecture is proven to a certain extent; when the respondents of different marital statuses were further divided according to age, it was found that very similar proportions of married respondents – ranging from 31 to 37 per cent – viewed friends as very important across all age cohorts. This suggests that marriage exerts some independent impact on perceptions of importance vis-à-vis friends. However, younger singles were also much more likely to see friends as "very important". While less than 38 per cent of those aged above 35 years old indicated as such, 57.4 per cent of single respondents aged between 21 and 35 held the same opinion. These suggest that the prioritisation of friends is likely both a function of age and one's current stage of life.

Table 27: Importance of friends, by marital status

Marital Status *N = 2,012*	Importance of Friends			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
Married	35.2	57.2	7.4	0.2
Divorced/ Separated/ Widowed	36.6	48.0	13.9	1.5
Single	47.3	46.9	5.2	0.7

2.2.6 Higher-SES respondents were significantly more likely to indicate that their friends were "very important" in their lives, relative to their less well-off counterparts

When comparing across socio-economic factors like education, income, and housing type, there were similar patterns found. In general, respondents with higher socio-economic backgrounds were more likely to rate their friends as "very important" in their lives. This pattern was clearest for education; compared with 27.9 per cent of those with below secondary school education, 45.5 per cent of those with university degrees reported friends as "very important". Similarly, over 44 per cent of respondents who lived in 5-room or larger public housing or private property chose "very important", while less than 37 per cent of those in the smaller flats did the same. The results arising from this trinity of variables validate the hypothesised impact socio-economic status has on perceptions of friends (see Tables 28 to 30).

A possible explanation for the above phenomenon could be as follows: since less well-off individuals are in general more likely to focus on augmenting their financial circumstances through working and amassing wealth, this could impact their perceptions of importance for, and time spent on other facets of life (such as friendships). Nonetheless, those aged between 21 and 35 still prioritised friends more compared to their older counterparts, regardless of affluence; suggesting that youth is a more salient factor impacting perceived importance of friends. However, the significant positive relationship between socio-economic background and perceiving friends as "very important" still holds for the rest of the age groups.

Table 28: Importance of friends, by education level

Education Level *N = 2,008*	Importance of Friends			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
Below secondary	27.9	59.0	12.3	0.8
Secondary/ ITE	37.0	54.0	8.3	0.7
Dip. / Prof. qual.	41.5	52.0	6.2	0.2
Bachelor's and above	45.5	49.7	4.6	0.1

Table 29: Importance of friends, by income level

Income Level *N = 1,224*	Importance of Friends			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
Below $1,500	36.4	54.4	7.8	1.4
$1,500 - $2,999	34.7	53.7	11.6	0
$3,000 - $4,999	45.7	48.7	5.6	0
$5,000 - $6,999	40.0	56.4	3.6	0
Above $6,999	42.8	51.6	5.0	0.6

Table 30: Importance of friends, by housing type

Housing Type *N = 2,012*	Importance of Friends			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
1- to 3-room HDB	33.7	54.4	11.3	0.7
4-room HDB	36.7	56.5	6.3	0.5
5+-room HDB	44.2	49.3	6.5	0
Private property	46.0	49.6	3.9	0.6

2.3   OF SILVER AND SLOG

2.3.1   Silvers were much more likely to indicate that wealth was not important to them; middle-aged respondents were most likely to think otherwise

While kith and kin were identified by most as important in their lives, wealth appears to be quite important for many survey respondents too. Overall, 32.8 per cent indicated that it was "very important", while another 54.1 per cent stated that it was rather important in their lives (see Figure 9). When perusing this finding by age cohort, we note that the oldest group seemed to place it at a lower priority. Less than 13 per cent of the respondents aged between 21 and 65 said that wealth was either not very important or not at all important; in contrast, a fifth of those above 65 years old indicated likewise. This finding, along with that detailing the decreased importance of work among older respondents presented in the ensuing sections, validates intuitive notions that wealth concerns typically carry less weight post-retirement.

In comparison, middle-aged respondents aged 36-50 years old were the most likely to feel that wealth was "very important" or "rather important" to them. Eighty-nine per cent of this age cohort indicated as such, compared to marginally lower proportions for those 21-35 years old and 51-65 years old (see Table 31).

Table 31: Importance of wealth, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 2,008	Importance of Wealth			
	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important
21-35	32.1	56.2	11.4	0.4
36-50	35.6	53.7	9.9	0.7
51-65	33.1	54.2	11.4	1.3
Above 65	30.3	50.2	18.6	0.9

2.3.2   In tandem with findings on friends, leisure and work, higher-SES respondents were far less likely to feel that wealth was important to them relative to their less well-off peers

When perusing the relationship of socio-economic status variables with wealth as a life priority, it is notable that among those who are better-off and educated, fewer chose to rate wealth as "very important". Respondents with the lowest educational qualifications, incomes and smallest housing types were considerably more likely to say that wealth was "very important" compared to their better-off counterparts. In tandem with the findings on work and leisure as a life priority, these trends support the intuition that those who hail from more affluent backgrounds are typically less concerned about wealth in light of their resource-sufficient and comfortable circumstances. This is in contrast to less well-off individuals who may be more

compelled to prioritise the amassing of what they lack in relative terms – in this case, wealth (see Tables 32 to 34).

Table 32: Importance of wealth, by education level

Education Level N = 2,004	Importance of Wealth			
	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important
Below secondary school	43.4	43.7	12.3	0.5
Secondary school/ ITE	35.8	52.1	11.3	0.7
Diploma/ Professional qualifications	34.6	52.2	12.4	0.7
Bachelor's and above	24.1	62.1	12.8	1.1

Table 33: Importance of wealth, by income level

Income Level N = 1,224	Importance of Wealth			
	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important
Below $1,500	41.2	50.5	8.3	0
$1,500 - $2,999	37.3	51.1	10.3	1.3
$3,000 - $4,999	34.4	55.6	9.4	0.5
$5,000 - $6,999	26.1	63.0	9.7	1.2
Above $6,999	27.0	56.6	14.5	1.9

Table 34: Importance of wealth, by housing type

Housing Type N = 2,012	Importance of Wealth			
	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important
1- to 3-room HDB	38.4	48.9	11.6	1.0
4-room HDB	34.2	54.2	11.2	0.3
5+-room HDB	33.6	52.4	12.8	1.2
Private property	20.6	64.2	14.3	0.9

2.3.3 Meanwhile, gender and employment status were the key factors impacting perceptions of work as important; males and those employed were significantly more likely to indicate work as "very important"

Similar to wealth, work was also seen as important by a sizeable proportion of the overall population. 36.4 per cent of survey respondents indicated that it was "very important" in their lives, while 46.2 per cent said that it was "rather important". However, age-old notions of gender still mitigate these views. 41.5 per cent of male respondents saw their work as "very important", compared with 31.7 per cent of their female counterparts. This finding holds even when 1) aggregating "rather important" answers, 2) considering counterfactuals, and 3) controlling for employment status due to proportions of female homemakers. These illustrate the role of gender and employment in impacting views on work (see Tables 35 and 36).

Table 35: Importance of work, by gender

Gender N = 2,006	Importance of Work			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
Male	41.5	44.0	11.2	3.4
Female	31.7	47.6	14.6	6.2

Table 36: Importance of work, by gender (only employed* respondents)

Gender N = 1,292	Importance of Work			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
Male	46.5	46.0	6.0	1.5
Female	36.7	52.7	9.2	1.4

*Includes full-time employees, part-time employees, and self-employed individuals.

Respondents with some form of employment were most likely to find work very important; 45.2 per cent of the self-employed and 42.5 per cent of full-time employees responded so. It is likely that they feel a need to attend to their work responsibilities adequately. Meanwhile, 41.4 per cent of the unemployed also said that work was very important, a very similar proportion to the first two groups mentioned. For them, gainful employment and work are likely to be important because it is something they currently lack, but require or aspire towards in order to earn a living. Meanwhile, 70.8 per cent of students also stated that work was "rather important", possibly since gainful employment in a few years is the typical goal of tertiary educational pursuits in Singapore (see Table 37).

Table 37: Importance of work, by employment status

Employment Status N = 2,006	Importance of Work			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
Full-time employee	42.5	50.4	6.0	1.1
Part-time employee	34.4	46.8	17.2	1.6
Self-employed	45.2	45.2	5.9	3.7
Retired/pensioned	23.8	29.8	29.8	16.6
Housewife	22.7	38.9	25.0	13.4
Student	20.2	70.8	9.0	0
Unemployed	41.4	39.8	14.1	4.7

2.3.4 In concert with findings on wealth, silvers were most likely to deem work as unimportant; middle-aged respondents were most likely to indicate otherwise

Younger respondents were more likely to view work as important compared with older respondents. In particular, respondents aged between 36 and 50 years old placed work as a higher priority amongst all the age groups, with 42.6 per cent saying that it was very important and 47.0 per cent saying that it was rather important. This could be due to the greater propensity for this age group to be gainfully contributing to the workforce relative to others and be saddled with family responsibilities (hence requiring work to fulfil financial needs). Younger respondents aged 21-35 years old also saw work as important, with 52.2 per cent choosing "rather important". In contrast, the most senior group were least concerned about work, with a total of 51.7 per cent indicating that it was important to some extent. Given that individuals between 21 and 50 years old were in their most economically active years, it is not surprising to see them ascribe more importance to work when compared with those who were nearing or already past retirement age (see Table 38).

Table 38: Importance of work, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 2,006	Importance of Work			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
21-35	39.7	52.2	7.6	0.5
36-50	42.6	47.0	8.7	1.8
51-65	34.9	47.9	13.2	3.9
Above 65	21.6	30.1	29.2	19.1

2.3.5 There is a curvilinear relationship between SES and perceptions of work; while more educated, affluent respondents are likelier to feel that work is important, this trend tapers off with the most educated and most affluent

When survey respondents were next categorised by academic qualifications, we note that respondents with diploma or professional qualifications placed the highest priority on work. 88.6 per cent of this group said work was either very or rather important, compared with 85.3 per cent of university graduates, 81.3 per cent of those with secondary education, and 71.1 per cent of those with below secondary education. This suggests an inverse U-shaped relationship between education and perceptions of work (see Table 39).

Table 39: Importance of work, by education level

Education Level *N = 2,002*	Importance of Work			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
Below secondary school	37.0	34.1	19.5	9.5
Secondary school/ ITE	39.1	42.2	13.3	5.3
Diploma/ Professional qualifications	38.1	50.5	8.7	2.7
Bachelor's and above	32.3	53.0	11.7	3.0

This relationship is further validated when perusing the income and housing levels of respondents. While 86.1 per cent of respondents in the lowest income bracket and 81.2 per cent of respondents residing in the smallest public housing units (HDB 1-3 room) felt that work was important in their lives to varying extents, these proportions climb to approximately 93 per cent and 83 per cent for those in the middle-income brackets and residing in larger public housing units. However, the proportion who felt work was important dipped for the highest income bracket ($7,000 and above) and for private property dwellers (see Tables 40 and 41).

We posit that this relationship could be explicated as follows: while the pursuit of education, alongside the experience of a middle-class lifestyle engenders an understanding of the benefits of gainful employment (such as increasing wealth and potentially fulfilment), this tapers off as individuals in the highest income brackets and residing in private property have enough economic resources on hand to redirect their priorities elsewhere (such as friendships). Perhaps, the most-educated individuals would also have gleaned a sense of how work and employment may well be symptoms of the proverbial "rat-race" in life, and consequently attribute less importance to such endeavours.

Table 40: Importance of work, by income level

Income Level *N = 1,224*	Importance of Work			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
Below $1,500	41.9	44.2	11.5	2.3
$1,500 - $2,999	43.4	46.3	9.0	1.3
$3,000 - $4,999	42.7	50.5	5.6	1.1
$5,000 - $6,999	38.8	54.5	6.1	0.6
Above $6,999	37.7	54.1	6.9	1.3

Table 41: Importance of work, by housing type

Housing Type *N = 2,006*	Importance of Work			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
1- to 3-room HDB	43.2	38.0	13.7	5.1
4-room HDB	37.2	48.3	11.6	2.9
5+-room HDB	34.6	48.0	11.6	5.8
Private property	23.9	52.5	16.4	7.2

2.4   OF REST AND RECREATION

2.4.1 Youth and single respondents are most likely to perceive leisure time as "very important" in their lives; these perceptions erode substantially with marriage and ageing

A large majority of respondents felt that leisure time was of some importance. Overall, 30.2 per cent said that it was very important in their lives, while 55.8 per cent said that it was rather important. Meanwhile, 12.9 per cent felt that it was not very important, and 1.1 per cent felt that it was not at all important (see Figure 9).

When interrogating the above results with age considerations, we note that younger respondents were far more likely to view leisure time as "very important" compared to their older peers. In particular, respondents aged between 21 and 35 prioritised leisure time the most, with 40.8 per cent of this group saying it was "very important". In comparison, 31.6 per cent of those aged between 36 and 50, 25.7 per cent of those aged between 51 and 65, and 21 per cent of those aged above 65 said the same (see Table 42).

This depicted a marginal shift of youth priorities away from leisure time from 2012 to 2020; while 44.2 per cent of respondents aged between 21 and 35 in the 2012 wave felt that leisure time was "very important", less than 40 per cent of the older age groups in that wave felt the same. Meanwhile, the pattern was less pronounced in 2002, but younger respondents were overall still more likely to view leisure time as important compared to older respondents.

Table 42: Importance of leisure time, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 2,012	Importance of Leisure Time			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
21-35	40.8	51.3	7.4	0.5
36-50	31.6	53.2	14.0	1.2
51-65	25.7	57.6	15.2	1.6
Above 65	21.0	63.4	14.7	0.9

While similar proportions of respondents with different marital statuses said that leisure time was rather important, there were some differences when looking at the "very important" category. Compared with 38.1 per cent of single respondents, less than 28 per cent of the rest of the sample said that leisure time was very important. This is in tandem with the findings in 2.2.1, whereby married respondents were more likely to view their families as "very important", and potentially have lower priorities for other facets of life such as leisure time (see Table 43).

Table 43: Importance of leisure time, by marital status

Marital Status N = 2,012	Importance of Leisure Time			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
Married	27.7	57.7	13.5	1.2
Divorced/ Separated/ Widowed	26.7	53.0	18.3	2.0
Single	38.1	52.2	9.0	0.7

When a breakdown of the overall responses based on marital status and age was examined, it was found that overall, the younger respondents in each marital category were significantly more likely to prioritise leisure time. In addition, single respondents were also more likely to prioritise leisure time compared to their same-aged counterparts with other marital statuses. Hence, it seems like there is both an age-related effect, in which single respondents were on the whole younger compared with the other two groups; as well as a time-related effect, in which older age cohorts have less time or energies to dedicate to leisure activities compared to younger respondents, therefore perceiving leisure as a less important aspect of their lives (see Table 44).

Table 44: Importance of leisure time, by age cohort and marital status

Age Cohort and Marital Status *N = 2,012*		Importance of Leisure Time	
		Very / Rather important	Not very / Not at all important
21-35	Married	88.9	11.1
	Divorced/ Separated/ Widowed*	87.5	12.5
	Single	93.6	6.4
36-50	Married	84.1	14.8
	Divorced/ Separated/ Widowed	83.3	16.7
	Single	87.8	12.1
51-65	Married	85.2	14.9
	Divorced/ Separated/ Widowed	75.0	25.0
	Single	80.9	19.1
Above 65	Married	85.3	14.7
	Divorced/ Separated/ Widowed	81.2	18.9
	Single	87.5	12.5

* The number of respondents in this category is less than 30

2.4.2 In line with perceived importance of friends, higher-SES respondents were also markedly more likely to indicate that leisure time was "very important" in their lives relative to their less well-off peers

Replicating the analyses presented in 2.2.6 with perceptions of leisure time, we find similar patterns when comparing the three different socioeconomic factors of education, income, and housing. Generally, respondents with higher education, higher income, and who lived in larger housing types were more likely to say that leisure time was "very important" relative to their less well-off peers. While this trend was not that strong across various income levels, there was a sizeable distinction between the response rates of "very important" for those earning below $1,500 versus the rest of the sample (see Table 45).

On the other hand, differences between those of different educational and housing type backgrounds were clearer. While 19.8 per cent of those with below secondary school education and 26.6 per cent of those living in 1- to 3-room flats said that leisure time was very important, 35.3 per cent of those with university degrees and 36.5 per cent of those who lived in private properties gave the same answer. Similar to the findings in 2.2.6, these results *in toto* seem to indicate a correlation between better socioeconomic backgrounds and prioritisation of leisure time, possibly because such individuals are more likely to be in more privileged positions, where they are able to set aside time for leisure and recreation as

opposed to devoted greater amounts of time and energies to scale the socioeconomic ladder (see Tables 46 and 47).

Table 45: Importance of leisure time, by income level

Income Level N = 1,224	Importance of Leisure Time			
	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important
Below $1,500	24.9	59.9	13.8	1.4
$1,500 - $2,999	32.3	52.1	15.4	0.3
$3,000 - $4,999	36.3	54.3	8.3	1.1
$5,000 - $6,999	29.1	55.8	13.9	1.2
Above $6,999	32.1	60.4	6.9	0.6

Table 46: Importance of leisure time, by education level

Education Level N = 2,008	Importance of Leisure Time			
	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important
Below secondary	19.8	58.2	19.8	2.1
Secondary/ ITE	29.7	56.5	12.9	0.9
Dip. / Prof. qual.	34.8	52.7	11.2	1.2
Bachelor's and above	35.3	54.8	9.3	0.6

Table 47: Importance of leisure time, by housing type

Housing Type N = 2,012	Importance of Leisure Time			
	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important
1- to 3-room HDB	26.6	55.2	17.0	1.2
4-room HDB	31.1	55.6	11.9	1.4
5+-room HDB	31.3	56.9	11.3	0.5
Private property	36.5	54.3	8.0	1.2

2.5   OF GODS AND GOVERNMENTS

2.5.1 Females and older respondents were generally more likely to indicate religion as "very important" or "rather important" in their lives

This final section details respondents' perceptions of importance vis-à-vis religion and politics – the two facets of life that were least likely to be considered important in Singapore. While 34.1 per cent felt that religion was "very important" in their lives and 31.2 per cent said that it was "rather important", 34.7 per cent felt that religion was "not very important" or "not at all important". It therefore seems that a majority saw religion as a personal priority to some extent while a third did not view religion in the same light (see Figure 9).

An in-depth analysis of the above results suggests that gender and age are important demographic factors impacting perceptions of religion. Female respondents saw religion as a higher priority in their lives when compared with male respondents. While 30.5 per cent of male respondents said that religion was very important and another 30.5 per cent said that religion was rather important, 37 per cent of female respondents felt that religion was very important, and 32.6 per cent said it was rather important (see Table 48).

Table 48: Importance of religion, by gender

Gender *N = 2,005*	Importance of Religion			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
Male	30.5	30.5	28.0	10.9
Female	37.0	32.6	21.9	8.5

Older respondents also saw religion as more important as compared to their younger counterparts. In particular, the youngest age cohort had the lowest proportion choosing either "very important" or "rather important". In contrast, the two oldest groups attributed greater importance to religion. Compared with 56.8 per cent of those aged between 21 and 35, over 72 per cent of those above 50 years old said that religion was either "very important" or "rather important" in life. This reflects generational differences in religious beliefs (see Table 49).

Table 49: Importance of religion, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 2,005	Importance of Religion			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
21-35	29.8	27.0	27.2	16.0
36-50	31.2	31.4	27.0	10.5
51-65	39.9	33.4	21.2	5.6
Above 65	36.0	36.9	22.8	4.2

2.5.2 Muslims and Christians were most likely to indicate that religion was important in their lives

When comparing results by religion, Muslim respondents were most likely to indicate religion as "very important" in their lives. 77.8 per cent of this group indicated as such; followed by Christian Protestants (62 per cent) and Catholics (50 per cent). In contrast, only 9.5 per cent of Taoists or adherents of traditional Chinese beliefs felt the same way; a proportion that was just slightly higher than the 4.7 per cent reported by respondents with no religion. These findings hold when aggregating responses for "very important" and "rather important". To this regard, believers of monotheistic religions seem to regard their faiths with augmented importance, relative to believers of dharmic religions. Potentially, this may be attributed to religious obligations and expectations too, including the frequency of religious activities such as praying, attending services, and the like. (see Table 50).

Table 50: Importance of religion, by religious affiliation

Religion* N = 2,005	Importance of Religion			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
Buddhist	19.3	48.5	27.5	4.8
Taoist / Chinese religion	9.5	52.4	33.3	4.8
Protestant	62.0	26.2	11.2	0.6
Catholic	50.0	35.7	12.7	1.6
Muslim	77.8	17.8	3.3	1.1
Hindu	45.9	28.8	18.0	7.2
No religion	4.7	17.9	46.8	30.6

"Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

2.5.3 Middle-aged respondents were more likely than their younger or older counterparts to ascribe importance to politics; nonetheless, overall proportions who felt politics was important dipped from 2012 levels

In general, politics was not viewed as an important priority by many respondents. Only 8.4 per cent said that it was very important, while 37 per cent said that it was rather important. In contrast, 42.5 per cent felt that it was not very important, and 12 per cent said that it was not at all important (see Figure 9).

As we explore the above findings in-depth, we find that respondents aged between 36 and 50 seemed to be the most concerned about politics. It was the only group where nearly half, or 49.7 per cent, said that politics was very or rather important to their lives. Respondents aged between 51 and 65 were also quite concerned, with 46.5 per cent indicating that politics was very or rather important. In contrast, the oldest and youngest age groups were less concerned, with less than 43 per cent of either group reporting that it was very or rather important (see Table 51).

Table 51: Importance of politics, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 1,996	Importance of Politics			
	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important
21-35	7.3	35.5	47.8	9.5
36-50	9.5	40.2	39.5	10.9
51-65	9.7	36.8	40.7	12.8
Above 65	7.6	34.1	42.6	15.7

These results were somewhat different compared to previous waves. In 2002, around 46.3 per cent of respondents aged 21 to 35 and 45.1 per cent of those aged 35 to 50 felt that politics was very or rather important, while 36.8 per cent of those aged between 51 and 65 and 34.2 per cent of those aged above 65 said the same. In contrast, over 53 per cent of those aged between 21 and 65 reflected such sentiments in 2012. The oldest age group was the least concerned for that wave, with 48.7 per cent saying politics was very or rather important.

The aforementioned differences across the 2002, 2012, and 2020 survey responses could have been due to events in the immediate vicinity of these time period. Elections in Singapore had concluded a year before the administration of the survey in 2002; the 2001 General Elections was characterised by a "flight to safety" by the electorate in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 terror attacks. To this regard, the reliability and efficacy of the incumbent administration in keeping terror attacks at bay, coupled with an outsized focus on the threat of terrorism could have diminished perceptions of politics as an important facet of life then.

In contrast, the 2012 survey was administrated a year after the watershed 2011 General Elections, which saw the incumbent People's Action Party lose a Group Representation Constituency to the opposition Worker's Party for the first time in history. This, alongside

considerable resentment surrounding immigration policy, could have contributed to the augmented numbers (over half) of respondents perceiving politics as important. The subsequent decrease in 2020 could have been potentially due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in Singapore, during which a portion of the survey was administered (from January to March 2020). This could have redirected the populace's focus away from politics.

It should be noted that while greater political interest and coverage are typically prevalent on social media during election seasons, the results across the WVS waves reflect that politics as life priority (and preoccupation) still does not feature for many. This may not mean that respondents were not interested in politics. Instead, the results suggest that many do not see it as a priority, perhaps in light of the prevailing, relatively docile political climate relative to other polities.

2.5.4 There is a U-shaped relationship between SES and perceptions of politics: the least-educated, least-affluent were most likely to indicate politics was "very important", while the most educated, most wealthy are most likely to view politics as important to varying extents

When considering responses to the importance of politics by SES indicators, we observe a rough U-shaped relationship. At the outset, respondents with below secondary level qualifications (12.2 per cent), and earning under $1,500 monthly (13.9 per cent) were more likely to view politics as "very important", compared to the rest of the respondents (approximately 7-8 per cent). While overall levels of perceived importance for politics (aggregating "very important" and "rather important" responses) hold steady across the first three education groups (43 per cent), the perceived importance of politics rises to 49.6 per cent for degree holders (see Tables 52 and 53).

Similarly, respondents earning above $6,999 had over 50 per cent indicating that politics was important to varying extents – the highest of all income groups. When compared across housing types, the group that saw politics as most important were those who lived in 5-room HDB flats. While around 44 per cent of the rest of the sample said that politics was either "very important" or "rather important" in their lives, 50.8 per cent of those living in 5-room flats said the same (see Table 54).

Table 52: Importance of politics, by education level

Education Level *N = 1,992*	Importance of Politics			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
Below secondary	12.2	31.2	40.4	16.3
Secondary/ ITE	7.9	35.7	43.6	12.9
Dip. / Prof. qual.	6.8	36.9	45.0	11.3
Bachelor's and above	8.4	41.2	41.5	8.9

Table 53: Importance of politics, by income level

Income Level *N = 1,216*	Importance of Politics			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
Below $1,500	13.9	37.5	39.4	9.3
$1,500 - $2,999	9.7	29.4	44.2	16.8
$3,000 - $4,999	6.8	39.1	45.7	8.4
$5,000 - $6,999	6.1	40.2	44.5	9.1
Above $6,999	8.2	43.7	39.2	8.9

Table 54: Importance of politics, by housing type

Housing Type *N = 2,012*	Importance of Politics			
	Very important	**Rather important**	**Not very important**	**Not at all important**
1- to 3-room HDB	10.0	34.7	41.0	14.3
4-room HDB	7.1	36.3	45.3	11.3
5+-room HDB	10.7	40.1	38.7	10.5
Private property	6.3	38.0	45.5	10.2

Chapter 3

Personal Ethics

CHAPTER 3 | PERSONAL ETHICS

At its core, ethics is a system of moral principles which impact the decisions we make, and how we lead our lives. It refers to the attainment of systematic, precise knowledge of "what ought to be", and the moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct (Fieser, 2018). This may involve expressing the good habits we should acquire, acts and duties that we should follow, or the consequences of our behaviour on the people around us. Contemporary philosophers generally cognise the field of ethics across three broad themes: 1) metaethics, which interrogates the origins of our present-day ethical principles, 2) normative ethics, which is the study of moral standards governing perceived right or wrong conduct; and 3) applied ethics, which involves the examination of stances vis-à-vis specific controversial issues such as homosexuality or suicide.

The WVS survey questions and accompanying analyses in this report focus primarily on the latter two aspects of ethics; they seek to illuminate the stances of Singaporeans on what is right and wrong, or good and bad in their daily lives including their workplace; and how their ethics drives beliefs on specific controversial issues. The following two sections spotlight responses to questions on work ethics and justifiable acts in sequence.

3.1   WORK ETHICS

With over 80 per cent saying that work is important to some degree in their lives, what kind of work ethics do respondents embrace? An examination of work ethics provides an understanding of whether society perceives work positively or negatively — more specifically, whether it is viewed simply as a means to earn a living, or whether there is further meaning ascribed to work. Three questions were asked in the survey to ascertain work ethics amongst the population – 1) whether not working will result in people becoming lazy, 2) whether work is a duty towards society, and 3) whether work should take priority over spare time. The overall results are presented in Figure 12.

3.1.1   Most in Singapore agree to varying extents that work will stave off laziness, and that work is a duty to society; however, a much lower proportion agreed that work should always take first priority

In general, a majority of respondents agreed that people who do not work turn lazy and that work is a duty to society. However, they were muted in their agreement to the statement that work always comes first. The results seem to indicate that while work was viewed positively, most respondents did not want work to consume their lives. They wanted to leave time for other pursuits.

When further analysing responses to these three questions, we note that male respondents were more likely to indicate work as a life priority. Male respondents were also more likely to indicate that work should come first. The three statements on work also seem to find more

resonance amongst those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Respondents who were older and those who had lower levels of education were the two groups that had higher agreement rates to all three statements, when compared with the rest of the population.

Figure 12: How do you feel about the following statements?
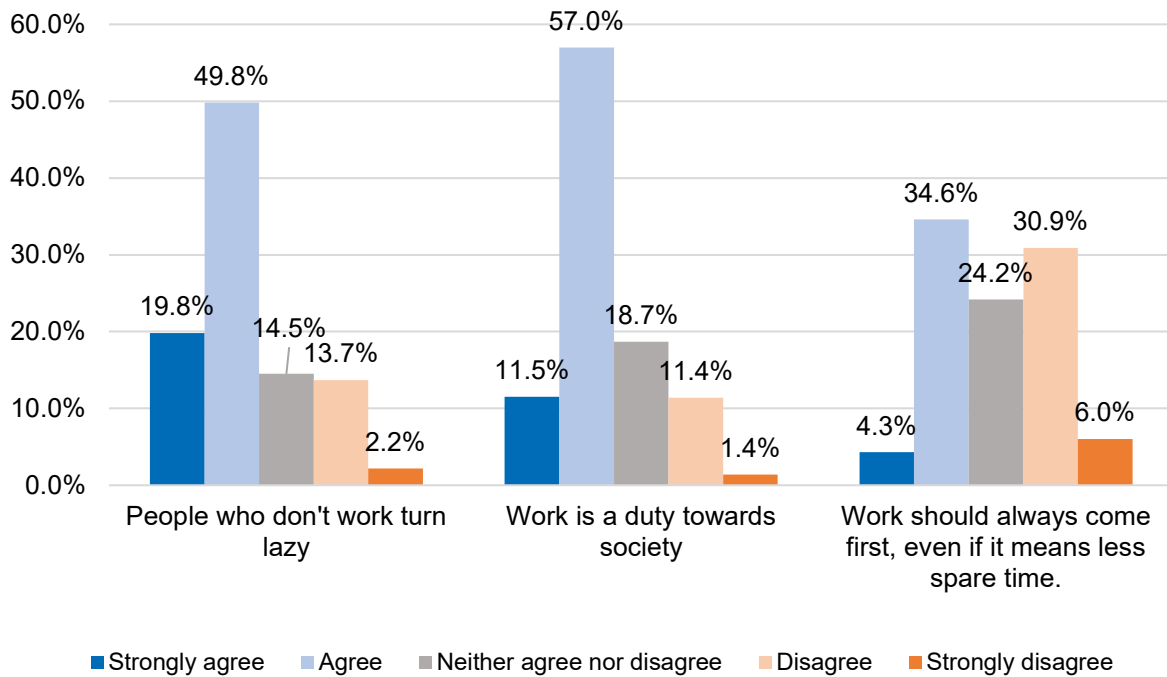
3.1.2 While most Singapore respondents felt work was important, this line of reasoning did not stem from the dangers of being idle or dereliction of duty to society

We then examined how respondents who saw work as very or rather important responded to these questions compared to those who did not prioritise work. There was a clear difference in responses when it came to the question of whether people who do not work turn lazy. Respondents who prioritised work were more likely to agree with the statement. Meanwhile, there was no correlation found between whether one prioritised work and viewing work as a duty towards society. It was also interesting to note that respondents who prioritised work were less likely to agree that work should trump spare time (37.8 per cent) compared to those who indicated they felt work was not important (42.6 per cent). This seems to indicate that despite the importance work plays in some respondents' lives, they do not want it to consume all their time as they may deem other facets of life as even more important (see Tables 55 to 57).

These findings suggest some nuance in Singapore respondents' views of work as important in their lives. Given the correlation between findings of importance for work and wealth presented in 2.3, respondents who indicated that work was "rather important" or "very important" to them could have felt as such due to the link between gainful employment and wealth. Nonetheless, the results suggest that most still valued some form of work-life balance.

Table 55: People who don't work turn lazy, compared against importance of work

Importance of Work *N = 2,005*	People who don't work turn lazy		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree / Disagree
Work is very or rather important	71.1	14.8	14.2
Work is not very or not at all important	64.7	11.7	23.6

Table 56: Work is a duty towards society, compared against importance of work

Importance of Work *N = 2,004*	Work is a duty towards society		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree / Disagree
Work is very or rather important	68.6	19.5	11.9
Work is not very or not at all important	67.2	16.2	16.7

Table 57: Work should always come first, compared against importance of work

Importance of Work *N = 2,005*	Work should always come first		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree / Disagree
Work is very or rather important	37.8	25.5	36.8
Work is not very or not at all important	42.6	19.2	38.1

3.1.3 Agreement with how work prevents laziness is lower in Singapore compared to most other Asian societies

A majority of survey respondents agreed to some extent that people who did not work turned lazy. Amongst the overall population, 19.8 per cent of respondents strongly agreed with the statement, while another 49.8 per cent agreed with the statement. There was also 14.5 per cent who were neutral. However, when compared across selected societies, proportions of Singapore respondents in agreement with the statement were lower than other Asian societies such as Taiwan, Mainland China, Malaysia, and Hong Kong. However, Asian societies in general expressed high levels of agreement with the statement; while non-Asian societies like Australia, the UK, the US, Sweden, and Switzerland all had significantly lower proportions expressing agreement and higher proportions expressing neutrality (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: People who don't work turn lazy
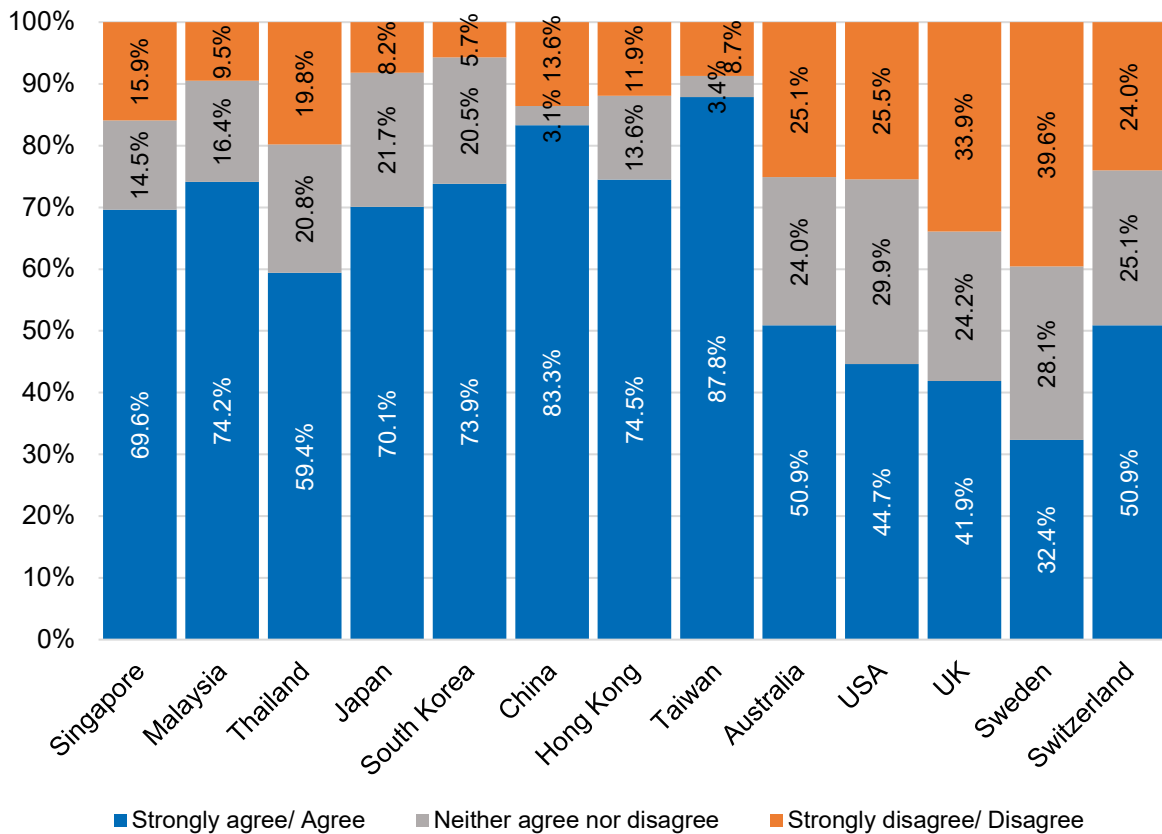
3.1.4 Younger, better-educated, and affluent respondents were less likely to agree that people who do not work turn lazy

When perusing responses by demographic groups, we find that older respondents were more likely to agree with the statement. While 64.1 per cent of those aged between 21 and 35 said they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 78.4 per cent of those aged above 65 gave the same responses. In addition, a much smaller proportion of the oldest group expressed neutrality about this statement. There thus seems to be a slightly stronger correlation between augmented levels of moral conservatism grounded upon work and diligence and age (see Table 58).

Table 58: People who don't work turn lazy, by age cohort

Age Cohort *N = 2,011*	People who don't work turn lazy		
	Strongly agree / Agree	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Strongly disagree / Disagree**
21-35	64.1	18.3	17.6
36-50	69.7	15.6	14.7
51-65	70.8	13.5	15.7
Above 65	78.4	6	15.6

Meanwhile, respondents with secondary school or ITE education were most likely to agree with this statement, with 90.6 per cent saying they either strongly agreed or agreed that people who do not work turn lazy. Less than 70 per cent of those who had at least diploma education gave the same answers. Furthermore, university graduates were more likely than the other education groups to state that they were neutral about the statement. When comparing responses across income levels, respondents who earned below $1,500 were least likely to strongly agree or agree with the statement, while those earning between $3,000 and $4,999 were most likely to express some level of agreement (see Tables 59 and 60).

The aforesaid trends could be possibly explicated as follows: more education may enable individuals to be increasingly cognizant that the absence of work may well not result in laziness; due to the potential for individuals to pursue a host of other endeavours in life. These could include dedicating their lives to their family, studies, or other wellness pursuits which do not entail laziness. As for the seemingly curvilinear relationship observed across income levels, the experience of a middle-class income may entail strong buy-in or beliefs into a disciplined work ethic.

Table 59: People who don't work turn lazy, by education level

Education Level N = 2,007	People who don't work turn lazy		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree / Disagree
Below secondary	78.6	6.4	15
Secondary/ ITE	70.6	13.5	15.9
Dip. / Prof. qual.	69.6	14.7	15.6
Bachelor's and above	64.6	18.7	16.6

Table 60: People who don't work turn lazy, by income level

Income Level N = 1,224	People who don't work turn lazy		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree / Disagree
Below $1,500	71	12	17.1
$1,500 - $2,999	74.9	14.8	10.3
$3,000 - $4,999	75.8	12.4	11.9
$5,000 - $6,999	72.1	18.2	9.7
Above $6,999	64.2	14.5	21.4

3.1.5 The proportion of those in Singapore who agree that work is a duty to society is amongst the highest in comparison with other polities

Over two-thirds of Singapore respondents agreed that work was a duty towards society. Specifically, 57 per cent of the respondents chose "agree". Meanwhile, a much smaller proportion, or 11.5 per cent, said that they strongly agreed with the statement while 18.7 per cent were neutral. These levels of agreement were among the highest globally, with only Mainland Chinese, Malaysians, Taiwanese, Swedes, and Swiss indicating higher levels of agreement. Mainland China in particular had over four-fifths of its respondents agreeing with the statement, the highest proportion globally; only 5 per cent expressed neutrality. Meanwhile, the US had relatively lower levels of respondents who agreed that work was a duty to society, with less than 60 per cent indicating as such. In concert, these results suggest that Singapore's residents feel a strong sense of fulfilling their duties to society with gainful employment, relative to other countries (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Work is a duty towards society
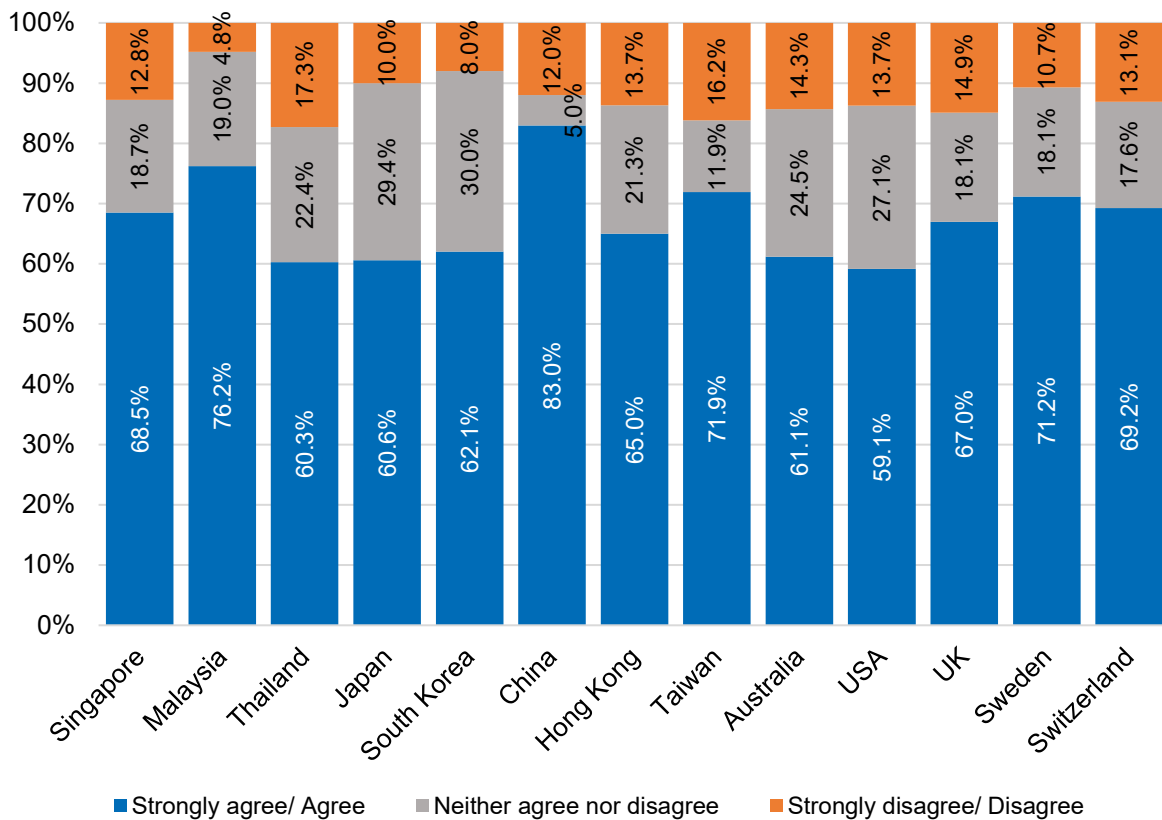
3.1.6 Older, less affluent, and lower-educated individuals were in general more likely to agree that work is a duty to society

When dissecting the above results for Singapore respondents by demographics, we note that those who were older, had lower income, lower levels of education, or lived in smaller housing

types were more likely to agree that work is a duty to society. The youngest group of respondents was the least likely to agree with the statement when compared with the rest of the population. In fact, there was a positive correlation between agreement rates and age. Overall, these results indicate that there was a lower commitment on the part of younger respondents, particularly those aged between 21 and 35, towards working in order to contribute to society (see Table 61).

Table 61: Work is a duty towards society, by age cohort

Age Cohort *N = 2,010*	Work is a duty towards society		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree / Disagree
21-35	55.6	27.9	16.5
36-50	65.8	21.8	12.4
51-65	72.4	13.9	13.7
Above 65	87.4	6.9	5.7

When response rates for "strongly agree" and "agree" were combined, it is notable that respondents earning lower income were in general more likely to say they agreed to varying extents that work was a duty towards society, relative to their better-off counterparts. In the same vein, respondents with lower education levels or residing in smaller housing types were more likely to agree with the statement. In addition, they were less likely to remain neutral or disagree with the statement. Compared with 81.5 per cent of respondents with below secondary school education and 72.9 per cent of respondents who lived in 1- to 3-room flats who agreed that work is duty to society, only 59.9 per cent of university-educated respondents and 57.4 per cent of respondents who lived in private property indicated likewise (see Tables 62 to 64).

Table 62: Work is a duty towards society, by income level

Income Level *N = 1,224*	Work is a duty towards society		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree / Disagree
Below $1,500	71	16.1	12.9
$1,500 - $2,999	73	17.4	9.6
$3,000 - $4,999	65.6	21.5	12.9
$5,000 - $6,999	60.7	29.7	9.7
Above $6,999	62.3	19.5	18.2

Table 63: Work is a duty towards society, by education level

Education Level *N = 2,006*	Work is a duty towards society		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree / Disagree
Below secondary	81.5	9.4	9.1
Secondary/ ITE	72.4	15.9	11.7
Dip. / Prof. qual.	64.4	21.6	13.9
Bachelor's and above	59.9	24.9	15.1

Table 64: Work is a duty towards society, by housing type

Housing Type *N = 2,010*	Work is a duty towards society		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree / Disagree
1- to 3-room HDB	72.9	16.5	10.6
4-room HDB	70	17.7	12.3
5+-room HDB	68.5	19.2	12.2
Private property	57.4	24.4	18.2

3.1.7 Agreement with work coming first at the expense of free time is lower in Singapore compared to most other Asian countries

Compared with the responses to the first two questions, there was less endorsement for the statement, "Work should always come first, even if it means less spare time". Only 4.3 per cent strongly agreed that work should always come first, even at the expense of spare time, while an additional 34.6 per cent said they agreed. In contrast, 24.2 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed, and 30.9 per cent disagreed with the statement. It therefore appears that the importance and meaning of work did not override the need for spare time for most.

Different societies had varying responses to this question. The sentiments expressed by Singapore respondents to this regard weighed in at the middle of the pack; while a greater proportion would prioritise work at the expense of free time compared to the US, UK, Sweden, and Switzerland, this proportion was still lower than most other Asian countries with the exception of Japan. An overwhelming four-fifths of Mainland Chinese agreed that work should be prioritised at the expense of free time; on the other end of the spectrum, only a tenth of Japanese indicated likewise (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: Work should always come first, even if it means less free time

Legend: ■ Strongly agree/ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Strongly disagree/ Disagree

Data by country:

Country	Strongly agree/ Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree/ Disagree
Singapore	38.9%	24.2%	36.9%
Malaysia	53.0%	26.5%	20.5%
Thailand	55.6%	24.0%	20.3%
Japan	10.4%	29.2%	60.4%
South Korea	47.4%	39.0%	13.7%
China	81.6%	4.8%	13.7%
Hong Kong	54.7%	22.6%	22.6%
Taiwan	48.6%	12.2%	39.1%
Australia	21.5%	20.8%	57.7%
USA	27.8%	27.7%	44.4%
UK	27.7%	19.8%	52.5%
Sweden	33.3%	23.7%	43.1%
Switzerland	29.6%	25.9%	44.5%

3.1.8 Males, silvers, lower-educated, and less-affluent respondents were significantly more likely to hold the view that work should be prioritised even at the cost of free time

When considering demographic factors in the analysis, we find that gender, education level, and affluence were the key factors impacting individuals' prioritisation of work over other facets of life. At the outset, lower proportions of female respondents chose "strongly agree", "agree", or "neither agree nor disagree" compared with male respondents. Instead, they were more likely to say they disagreed with the statement. Compared with 32.3 per cent of male respondents, 41 per cent of female respondents disagreed that work should always come first. Additional analyses accounting for employment status also further verified that this trend was salient independent of whether one was employed or otherwise (see Table 65).

Table 65: Work should always come first, by gender

Gender *N = 2,011*	Work should always come first		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree / Disagree
Male	41.9	25.9	32.3
Female	36.1	22.9	41

There were also stark differences across age cohorts. A quarter of respondents in the youngest age bracket indicated agreement or strong agreement that work should always come first; just under two-thirds of respondents in the oldest age bracket indicated likewise. Younger respondents were also more likely to disagree with the statement as with older respondents. It thus appears that there is stronger prioritisation of work-life balance amongst the younger respondents, regardless of how important work may seem to them (see Table 66).

Table 66: Work should always come first, by age cohort

Age Cohort *N = 2,011*	Work should always come first		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree / Disagree
21-35	24.6	28.1	47.3
36-50	36.5	26.5	36.9
51-65	40.4	25.9	33.7
Above 65	63.1	11.4	25.5

Socioeconomic status was similarly correlated to agreement with work always coming first; respondents from higher socioeconomic groups were far less likely to agree with this prioritisation of work relative to their less well-off counterparts. When interrogating responses by income brackets, approximately 40 per cent of those earning below $3,000 monthly strongly agreed or agreed that work should always come first; perhaps a corollary of their need to ensure adequate financial security stemming from gainful employment. This proportion dipped to a third for those earning between $3,000 to $6,999. Only over a quarter of respondents in the highest income bracket agreed that work should always come first (see Table 67).

These results are complemented by findings grouped by housing type; while approximately 40 per cent of those residing in public housing agreed with the statement, only a quarter of those residing in private property indicated likewise. Meanwhile, though 61.9 per cent of respondents with below secondary level qualifications agreed that work should always come first, this proportion dropped precipitously to just 25 per cent for degree holders (see Table 68 and 69).

Table 67: Work should always come first, by income level

Income Level *N = 1,224*	Work should always come first		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree / Disagree
Below $1,500	38.2	22.1	39.7
$1,500 - $2,999	44.7	22.5	32.8
$3,000 - $4,999	32.8	28.5	38.7
$5,000 - $6,999	33.3	27.9	38.8
Above $6,999	27.7	27	45.3

Table 68: Work should always come first, by housing type

Housing Type *N = 2,011*	Work should always come first		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree / Disagree
1- to 3-room HDB	45.3	20.2	34.5
4-room HDB	40.7	24.7	34.7
5+-room HDB	37.6	25.1	37.4
Private property	25	29.7	45.4

Table 69: Work should always come first, by education level

Education Level *N = 2,007*	Work should always come first		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree / Disagree
Below secondary	61.9	15.8	22.2
Secondary/ ITE	43.5	22.8	33.7
Dip. / Prof. qual.	33.4	30.1	36.6
Bachelor's and above	25	26.5	48.4

3.2   MUDDLING MORALITIES

Ethical attitudes "involve people's cognitive, affective, and behavioural predispositions to respond to issues and activities involving social standards for what is morally proper and virtuous" (Franke & Nadler, 2008, p. 255). Myriad factors, including national culture, personal religious beliefs, and economic pressures will influence the moral judgements individuals make. The next set of questions presented across the following sections in this chapter examines the types of ethical values respondents prefer. While these questions prompt

respondents to provide an answer using a 10-point scale, the analyses presented report both means scores and a three-category condensed version of the responses for ease of reference and comparison.

3.2.1 In general, Singapore respondents were divided in terms of perceiving frequent dilemmas grappling with morality; just under two-thirds indicated lukewarm agreement or disagreement

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement that "nowadays, one often has trouble deciding which moral rules are the right ones to follow", over a scale of 1 to 10. For this question, ratings of 1 to 3 indicate agreement; 4 to 7 indicate that respondents somewhat agree or somewhat disagree; while ratings of 8 to 10 indicate disagreement. About a quarter expressed agreement while nearly two-thirds said they somewhat agreed with the statement. In addition, the mean for this question was 5.10. Given these results, it seems that Singapore respondents were somewhat indecisive about the morals they thought they should abide by (see Figure 16).

Figure 16: How much do you agree or disagree with the statement that nowadays one often has trouble deciding which moral rules are the right ones to follow?
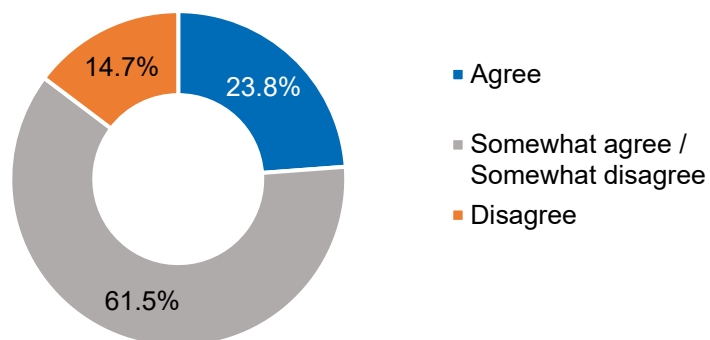
However, similar sentiments were found when the results for other societies were examined. The mean scores found for China and Hong Kong were 5.15 and 5.19 respectively; very close to Singapore's mean score. Closer geographical neighbours like Malaysia and Thailand had mean scores of 4.76 and 4.96 respectively; indicating slightly stronger agreement on average that they frequently grappled with morality. Meanwhile, the mean scores for Australia and the US were 5.84 and 5.45 respectively; suggesting that these societies had a marginally stronger sense of what they felt was right or wrong.

3.2.2 While religion is often viewed as a basis for morality, religious adherents were in general more likely to acknowledge frequently facing moral dilemmas relative to non-religious respondents

As religion is often cited in the extant literature as the provider of guiding frameworks for morality, the responses were next analysed according to respondents' religious affiliation. Interestingly, different religions seemed to exert varying impact on their adherents in Singapore. At the outset, just over a fifth of respondents without a religion (21.8 per cent) indicated frequently encountering issues deciding which moral rules were the right ones to follow. Meanwhile, Protestants (33.7 per cent), Catholics (29.6 per cent) and Taoists along with adherents of traditional Chinese beliefs (26.9 per cent) indicated likewise.

Lower proportions of religious adherents with the exception of Protestants also disagreed that they often encountered troubles (10-12 per cent), compared to non-religious respondents (18.8 per cent). These twin trends suggest that relative to the non-religious "baseline", religion exerted an "awareness" impact on their adherents in terms of enabling them to be more cognizant of moral issues in life, and hence they were better able to identify instances of dilemmas.

Meanwhile, adherents of the other religions (Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims) were actually marginally less likely (1-2 percentage points) to agree with the statement compared to non-religious respondents. This may indicate that relative to the non-religious "baseline", these religions exert a slight "resolution" impact on their adherents too, in terms of the provision of solutions to perceived moral dilemmas (see Table 70).

Table 70: Difficulty deciding on moral rules to follow, by religious affiliation

Religion* *N = 1,992*	Nowadays one often has trouble deciding which moral rules are the right ones to follow		
	Agree	**Somewhat agree / Somewhat disagree**	**Disagree**
Buddhist	20.3	66.9	12.8
Taoist / Chinese religion	26.9	61.4	11.7
Protestant	33.7	47.8	18.5
Catholic	29.6	57.6	12.8
Muslim	19.0	70.3	10.6
Hindu	20.0	66.4	13.6
No religion	21.8	59.4	18.8

"Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

3.2.3 Higher-educated and affluent respondents were more likely to indicate stronger stances on whether they often encountered moral issues, relative to their less privileged peers

Meanwhile, education and affluence exerted a reinforcing impact on the views of respondents on their encounters with moral dilemmas. When respondents' answers were analysed across education levels, it was found that more educated respondents were more likely to express strong agreement (26.8 per cent) or disagreement (19.8 per cent) with the statement; while their less-educated counterparts were more likely to indicate a lukewarm response (19.2 per cent and 14.2 per cent respectively). Meanwhile, the distribution of responses across income groups was fairly similar too; those in the top income bracket were much more likely than the rest of the sample to express strong agreement or disagreement with the statement (see Tables 71 and 72).

Table 71: Difficulty deciding on moral rules to follow, by education level

Education Level *N = 1,988*	Nowadays one often has trouble deciding which moral rules are the right ones to follow		
	Agree	**Somewhat agree / Somewhat disagree**	**Disagree**
Below secondary	19.2	66.6	14.2
Secondary/ ITE	22.5	65.6	11.9
Dip. / Prof. qual.	25.3	63.4	11.3
Bachelor's and above	26.8	53.4	19.8

Table 72: Difficulty deciding on moral rules to follow, by income level

Income Level *N = 1,218*	Nowadays one often has trouble deciding which moral rules are the right ones to follow		
	Agree	**Somewhat agree / Somewhat disagree**	**Disagree**
Below $1,500	24.7	61.9	13.5
$1,500 - $2,999	23.0	66.7	10.4
$3,000 - $4,999	24.3	63.1	12.7
$5,000 - $6,999	21.8	60.6	17.6
Above $6,999	29.7	46.8	23.4

3.3   DEBATING THE DEFENSIBLE

The next set of questions included 20 actions or practices, for which respondents had to indicate whether they were ever justifiable. For conciseness, analyses pertaining to these questions utilise a condensed three-category version of the responses. Ratings of 1 to 3 suggest respondents feel the actions are never or seldom justifiable; ratings of 4 to 7 imply that the actions are sometimes justifiable to the respondents; while ratings of 8 to 10 indicate respondents feel the actions are mostly or always justifiable.

The following sub-section presents and analyses the proportions of responses using the three aggregated categories delineated above. As the responses were given along a 10-point scale, we examined the mean and median scores to glean a more nuanced understanding of the results at the outset in Table 73. The list of actions is ordered from highest to lowest mean score. None of the items had median scores above 5, while over half of the items had median scores of 1. In addition, the highest mean score was 4.80, which was nearer to the "never justifiable" end of the response scale. Figure 17 follows with the proportions of respondents falling into each of the three categories for each action.

Table 73: To what extent are these actions justifiable, by mean and median responses

Action *N = 2,005*	Statistical Indicator (range from 1 to 10)	
	Mean	**Median**
Death penalty	4.80	5
Divorce	4.23	5
Euthanasia	4.19	4
Sex before marriage	4.09	4
Homosexuality	3.48	2
Parents beating children	3.36	3
Abortion	3.32	2
Having casual sex	2.92	1
Prostitution	2.82	1
Claiming government benefits to which you are not entitled	2.53	1
Suicide	2.49	1
Avoiding a fare on public transport	1.82	1
Violence against other people	1.60	1
Political violence	1.56	1
Cheating on taxes if you have the chance	1.54	1
Someone accepting a bribe in the course of their duties	1.41	1
Stealing property	1.35	1
For a man to beat his wife	1.33	1
Terrorism as a political, ideological, or religious mean	1.31	1

Figure 17: To what extent are these actions justifiable?

Action	Never / seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly / always justifiable
Terrorism	95.6%	3.6%	0.7%
For a man to beat his wife	95.9%	3.3%	0.8%
Stealing property	94.8%	4.7%	0.6%
Accepting a bribe	94.0%	5.5%	0.5%
Cheating on taxes	92.2%	7.1%	0.7%
Political violence	92.7%	6.4%	0.9%
Violence against others	91.6%	7.6%	0.8%
Avoiding public transport fares	86.9%	11.6%	1.5%
Suicide	75.1%	20.4%	4.5%
Claiming govt benefits	73.9%	22.0%	4.1%
Prostitution	68.3%	26.2%	5.6%
Having casual sex	67.3%	25.2%	7.5%
Abortion	60.3%	30.3%	9.4%
Parents beating children	57.2%	35.4%	7.4%
Homosexuality	59.3%	27.5%	13.2%
Sex before marriage	45.9%	38.8%	15.3%
Euthanasia	49.4%	31.3%	19.3%
Divorce	42.8%	41.8%	15.3%
Death penalty	36.5%	41.7%	21.8%

All of the actions stated above involve moral judgements to varying extents. A great variety of scales have been used to measure moral reasoning; and though these scales vary, they all share the common assumption that the moral domain is concerned about individuals harming or unfairly treating other individuals (Graham et al., 2011). Thus, moral judgements are essentially "prescriptive judgements of justice, rights, and welfare pertaining to how people

ought to relate to each other" (p. 366). While a majority of the population may believe certain acts are not justifiable, smaller segments of the population will hold differing perspectives. These trends also provide more clarity for the responses provided in the first question on ethics. With a proportion of the population presenting a different view on aspects like euthanasia, casual sex, and suicide, it is not surprising to see people being undecided about the moral rules that they should follow.

However, religion appears to play a role in guiding respondents' stances, with those who professed to hold religious views being more likely to say that many of these acts were not justifiable. There also appears to be a higher level of acceptability of these acts amongst respondents who were younger or who came from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. In particular, differences across age were quite large for homosexuality, abortion, divorce, sex before marriage, euthanasia, and casual sex.

In 3.3.1 to 3.3.5, we proceed to outline general trends, before explicating selected significant effects of specific demographic factors on participants' responses across key issues from 3.3.6 to 3.3.9.

3.3.1 The majority of Singapore respondents indicated they felt the death penalty, divorce, sex before marriage, and euthanasia were at least sometimes justifiable

The item with the highest mean score was the death penalty; it also had the highest proportions of respondents (63.5 per cent) indicating it was sometimes, mostly, or always justifiable. Along with euthanasia, about a fifth of respondents indicated the death penalty to be mostly or always justifiable; which suggests that a strong core of supporters believe in the pursuit of death as 1) a justified punishment for select transgressions; and 2) justified to relieve pain and suffering. However, while over a third of respondents felt the death penalty was never or seldom justifiable; nearly half indicated likewise for euthanasia. This reflects greater opposition to euthanasia relative to the death penalty. Further juxtaposed with how three-quarters of respondents felt suicide was never or seldom justifiable, these findings suggest that respondents seem to have relatively nuanced opinions on issues of death and dying.

Meanwhile in the family arena, over half of Singapore respondents indicated that divorce and sex before marriage were at least sometimes justifiable to them. These two items, along with euthanasia and the death penalty, were the only items with medians scores above 4, signalling that in general, Singapore respondents were more likely to support these acts to varying extents, relative to other items on the list (see Table 73 and Figure 17).

3.3.2 Singapore respondents meanwhile were more likely to hold conservative views on other family and sexuality issues such as homosexuality, parents beating children, abortion, casual sex, and prostitution

Meanwhile, homosexuality, parents beating children, and abortion all had mean scores above 3. However, while homosexuality had the highest mean score of the trio, the act of parents

beating their children had a higher median score. This implies that respondents were, on average, more likely to hold stronger views on homosexuality and abortion (that they were never, or seldom justifiable) relative to parenting styles. The association these stances have with more conservative ideologies may be one reason for the more deep-set views expressed.

This strand of conservative views congeals as we approach issues of casual sex and paid sex. The average Singapore respondent is strongly opposed to these acts, with both items having a mean score of under 3, and a median of 1 – the lowest possible response indicating the majority felt these were not justified under any circumstances. However, a significant minority (one-third) indicated they felt casual sex and prostitution were justified sometimes, mostly, or always (see Table 73 and Figure 17).

3.3.3 In line with the rule of law prevailing in Singapore, nearly all respondents indicated that actions injurious to others (terrorism, violence) and felonies (theft, bribery, tax evasion) were never or seldom justified

In contrast with the above, the survey responses indicated that respondents had in mind a tranche of actions that were not defensible regardless of any circumstance (the proverbial societal O.B. markers). These actions which were considered never or seldom justifiable by over 90 per cent of the population include violence against others, political violence, cheating on taxes, accepting a bribe, stealing a property, a man beating his wife, and terrorism.

Only 0.6 per cent felt that stealing property was always or mostly justifiable. With respect to cheating on taxes when given the chance, only 0.7 per cent of the population reflected that it was always or mostly justifiable. Meanwhile, 0.5 per cent believed that accepting a bribe in the course of one's duties was always or mostly justifiable. Violence against other people was also something that was taboo; only 8.4 per cent said that it was justifiable sometimes, often, or always. There was least support for terrorism and husbands beating wives of the 20 items on the list; with just 4 per cent indicating these acts were sometimes, often, or always justified (see Table 73 and Figure 17).

3.3.4 Respondents in 2020 are more conservative on what is justified relative to 2012, but still more liberal relative to 2002; suggesting swings in the population's moral stances over two decades

When comparing responses to questions on which acts were justified across the different WVS waves, we find a statistically significant swing towards more conservative stances from 2012 to 2020. The mean scores for responses across nearly all controversial acts or practices fell, denoting that respondents in 2020 were more likely to indicate that these acts were never or seldom justifiable, relative to their counterparts answering the 2012 WVS survey. However, most of these mean scores were still higher relative to responses in 2002, suggesting that respondents in 2020 were still marginally more liberal compared to the 2002 cohort.

There are some notable exceptions. For one, mean scores for 2020 responses on whether avoiding fares on public transport, bribery, and tax evasion was justifiable were even lower

than those in 2002. This suggests that they were conversely more resolute on the need to abide by the rule of law in Singapore, even though they were slightly more open to or accepting of issues such as divorce, euthanasia, abortion, prostitution, and suicide. However, on the whole, there were still no actions for which the mean score was larger than 5 across all iterations, which indicates low levels of acceptance for these actions (see Table 74).

Table 74: To what extent are these actions justifiable, by mean and median responses

Action* N = 2,005	Mean Statistical Indicator (range from 1 to 10)^		
	WVS 2002	WVS 2012	WVS 2020
Divorce	3.49	4.40	4.23
Euthanasia	3.91	N/A	4.19
Sex before marriage	N/A	3.85	4.09
Homosexuality	2.37	3.49	3.48
Parents beating children	N/A	4.40	3.36
Abortion	2.83	3.75	3.32
Prostitution	2.38	3.50	2.82
Claiming government benefits to which you are not entitled	2.46	3.10	2.53
Suicide	1.86	3.07	2.49
Avoiding a fare on public transport	2.22	2.93	1.82
Violence against other people	N/A	2.89	1.60
Cheating on taxes if you have the chance	1.79	2.49	1.54
Someone accepting a bribe in the course of their duties	1.55	2.44	1.41
Stealing property	N/A	2.39	1.35
For a man to beat his wife	N/A	2.47	1.33

Actions excluded if they only featured in one iteration; ^N/A denotes item did not feature in that WVS wave.

3.3.5 Singapore respondents were among the most likely globally to indicate acts antithetical to the rule of law were never justifiable, but adopted a middle-of-the-range stance on issues of family and sexuality

When comparing responses on justifiable actions across polities, only three had mean scores of under 2 across all rule-of-law based actions: Japan, Mainland China, and Singapore. Japanese respondents were globally most likely to indicate that acts such as fare evasion, tax evasion, bribery, theft, and terrorism were never justified; followed closely by the Chinese and Singaporeans. This suggests that these three polities are culturally similar in terms of their citizenry placing rule-of-law in high regard. In contrast, polities such as South Korea and Malaysia had mean scores above 2 and 3 across all rule-of-law based actions, with the latter adopting the most "liberal" views on rule-of-law.

However, when it came to social issues concerning family and sexuality, Singapore respondents weighed in at the middle of the range of conservative and liberal stances. To this regard, responses from Anglo-American polities such as Australia, UK and US had mean scores of 6 to 7, indicating the more liberal moral stances typically held by these societies vis-à-vis issues such as divorce, premarital sex, homosexuality, and abortion. On the other end of the spectrum, Confucian societies typically had much lower mean scores for these items, with Mainland Chinese responses being the most conservative. Singapore's mid-table performance reflects a society comprising diverse views (see Table 75).

Table 75: To what extent are these actions justifiable, by mean and median responses

Action	Mean Statistical Indicator (range from 1 to 10) for each polity*										
	SG	MY	TH	JP	KR	CN	HK	TW	AU	UK	US
Death penalty	4.80	4.58	4.50	6.80	4.34	5.34	4.41	6.92	4.81	4.61	5.54
Divorce	4.23	4.64	4.59	6.80	5.26	3.69	5.22	4.95	7.63	7.16	6.51
Euthanasia	4.19	3.95	2.76	6.18	4.43	3.90	6.01	6.02	6.56	6.55	5.27
Premarital sex	4.09	3.82	4.48	6.87	4.78	3.68	5.13	5.16	7.96	NA	6.49
Homosexuality	3.48	3.59	4.28	6.71	3.23	2.28	4.92	4.40	7.38	7.31	6.19
Parents beating children	3.36	4.47	2.35	1.30	2.40	3.29	3.74	4.26	1.74	NA	2.01
Abortion	3.32	3.52	2.41	4.87	3.91	2.36	3.79	3.35	6.57	6.15	4.86
Casual sex	2.92	3.59	2.48	2.67	2.51	1.49	3.22	3.32	6.61	5.31	5.47
Prostitution	2.82	3.39	2.54	1.98	2.65	1.47	3.31	3.20	5.28	3.58	3.60
Claiming unentitled govt benefits	2.53	4.40	2.22	1.76	3.24	3.37	2.98	3.06	1.98	1.69	2.62
Suicide	2.49	3.15	2.51	2.71	2.68	1.90	3.22	2.82	4.07	3.95	3.26
Avoiding public transport fare	1.82	3.98	2.23	1.32	2.97	1.63	2.42	2.27	2.47	2.60	2.95
Violence against other people	1.60	3.28	1.89	1.31	2.16	1.63	2.22	1.64	1.78	NA	2.32
Political violence	1.56	3.15	2.30	1.39	2.44	1.50	2.41	1.67	1.88	2.03	2.22
Cheating on taxes	1.54	3.41	1.74	1.26	2.22	1.50	2.14	1.74	2.00	1.75	1.88
Accepting a bribe	1.41	3.08	1.77	1.39	2.22	1.62	1.97	1.60	1.58	1.39	1.77
Stealing property	1.35	3.10	1.83	1.11	2.21	1.29	1.97	1.43	1.51	NA	1.90
For a man to beat his wife	1.33	3.13	2.01	1.27	2.01	1.55	2.00	1.56	1.34	NA	1.40
Terrorism	1.31	3.10	1.85	1.21	2.26	1.33	1.95	1.37	1.42	NA	1.56

N/A denotes responses for that item not available for that polity; highest mean value for each row is in highlighted in yellow while lowest value is in red.

3.3.6 Better-educated respondents were more likely to indicate support for the death penalty, and for parents to beat their children

The death penalty had the highest proportions of support, with 21.8 per cent saying it was mostly or always justifiable, and 41.7 per cent saying it was sometimes justifiable (see Figure 17). However, pronounced differences were found when perusing results by education level. Higher-educated respondents were more likely to think the death penalty justifiable compared to their less-educated counterparts. While 45.5 per cent of those with below secondary education said it was never or seldom justifiable, only 27.9 per cent of degree holders indicated likewise. This suggests that education in Singapore potentially 1) strengthens stances vis-à-vis the prevailing rule of law, which caters for the punishment in select capital offences; and 2) contributes to more nuanced views on the pertinence of the death penalty (see Table 76).

Table 76: To what extent is the death penalty justifiable, by education level

Education Level *N = 1,984*	To what extent is the death penalty justifiable		
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	**Sometimes justifiable**	**Mostly/ Always justifiable**
Below secondary	45.5	35.5	19.0
Secondary/ ITE	42.4	39.9	17.6
Dip. / Prof. qual.	35.8	44.6	19.5
Bachelor's and above	27.9	44.7	27.4

Education also exerted an impact of respondents' views on parents beating their children. 7.4 per cent of the overall responses indicated it was always or mostly justifiable, while 35.4 per cent indicated it was sometimes justifiable (see Figure 17). However, when perusing results by education level, negative correlations were found for the proportions choosing responses along the never/ seldom justifiable range. While 59.1 per cent of those with below secondary school education indicated they felt parents beating their children was never or seldom justifiable, the proportion of degree holders indicating likewise was lower at 53.7 per cent. This could suggest that higher-educated respondents were perhaps more supportive of according some level of autonomy vis-à-vis parenting styles (see Table 77).

Table 77: To what extent is parents beating children justifiable, by education level

Education Level *N = 1,996*	To what extent is parents beating children justifiable		
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	**Sometimes justifiable**	**Mostly/ Always justifiable**
Below secondary	59.1	34.4	6.5
Secondary/ ITE	61.3	31.4	7.3
Dip. / Prof. qual.	54.9	37.9	7.2
Bachelor's and above	53.7	38.3	8.0

3.3.7 Higher-SES respondents were more likely to feel that parents beating children was justified to varying degrees, but less likely to feel the same way if someone claimed government benefits he/she was not entitled to

In the same vein as the above analysis, while 60.3 per cent of those living in 1- to 3-room flats indicated they felt parents beating children was never or seldom justifiable, this proportion drops progressively across larger housing types to 52.1 per cent for private property dwellers. This trend holds too when considering income brackets (see Table 78).

Table 78: To what extent is parents beating children justifiable, by housing type

Housing Type *N = 2,000*	To what extent is parents beating children justifiable		
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
1- to 3-room HDB	60.3	32.1	7.6
4-room HDB	57.0	37.3	5.7
5+-room HDB	56.6	35.0	8.4
Private property	52.1	38.9	9.0

Affluence also wielded a significant impact for responses on whether claiming undeserved government benefits was justifiable. Respondents with higher incomes were more likely to feel this was never or seldom defensible; 83.6 per cent of those in the highest income bracket (above $6,999) indicated as such, with this proportion dropping substantially to just 67.4 per cent for those in the lowest income bracket (below $1,500). A similar pattern was also observed for those whose responses fell in the "sometimes justifiable" category. In this instance, affluence could have engendered a more acute sense of how taxpayer monies were spent, e.g., on social welfare, given the higher tax contributions of this group. This might explain the more resolute stance on the inappropriate claiming of social benefits. Additionally, more affluent individuals are possibly less able to empathise with the potential financial struggles of their less privileged peers, given their privileged circumstances (see Table 79).

Table 79: To what extent is claiming undeserved benefits justifiable, by income level

Income Level *N = 1,218*	To what extent is claiming undeserved benefits justifiable		
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
Below $1,500	67.4	31.2	1.4
$1,500 - $2,999	71.5	24.6	3.9
$3,000 - $4,999	74.9	20.0	5.1
$5,000 - $6,999	74.5	23.0	2.4
Above $6,999	83.6	13.8	2.5

3.3.8 Older respondents were more likely to adopt hard-line stances on the indefensibility of claiming undeserved government benefits and public transport fare evasion, relative to their younger peers

Overall, only 4.1 per cent said that claiming government benefits to which they were not entitled was always or mostly justifiable, while 73.9 per cent said it was never or seldom justifiable (see Figure 17). However, when analysing these results by age cohorts, we note that respondents younger than 51 years old were less likely to think that this act was never or seldom justifiable. They seemed more reluctant to see it as a completely unjustifiable act, given that higher proportions of this group chose answers within the "sometimes justifiable" range compared to older respondents (see Table 80).

Table 80: To what extent is claiming undeserved benefits justifiable, by age cohort

| Age Cohort
N = 2,000 | To what extent is claiming undeserved benefits justifiable | | |
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
21-35	69.6	27.8	2.5
36-50	69.7	24.4	5.8
51-65	79.1	17.8	3.1
Above 65	78.4	16.1	5.5

A similar pattern emerges with responses on public transport fare evasion. With the exception of age, other demographic variables did not seem to exert a significant impact on the nature of responses. While over 92 per cent of those aged 51 and above said that avoiding public transport fares was never or seldom a justifiable act, smaller proportions of the younger groups said the same – 85.5 per cent of those aged between 36 and 50, and 79.7 per cent of the respondents aged between 21 and 35. The aforementioned trends suggest that younger cohorts may be more cognizant, or empathetic of possible instances whereby individuals may well be compelled to commit such acts – perhaps due to trying social or financial circumstances, relative to their older peers (see Table 81).

Table 81: To what extent is public transport fare evasion justifiable, by age cohort

| Age Cohort
N = 1,999 | To what extent is public transport fare evasion justifiable | | |
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
21-35	79.7	18.4	1.8
36-50	85.5	12.4	2.1
51-65	92.1	7.2	0.7
Above 65	93.3	5.8	0.9

3.3.9 In some instances, one's circumstances rather than fixed attributes may impact views on what is defensible, as with the case of claiming government benefits

When comparing responses pertaining to the claiming of government benefits by those who were not entitled to them across employment status, we find that individuals who were employed part-time, unemployed, housewives and students were slightly more likely to feel that this act was sometimes, mostly, or always justifiable. While approximately 75 per cent of full-time employees, retirees and the self-employed felt that claiming undeserved benefits was never defensible, this proportion is marginally lower for other respondents. It is intuitive for responses of individuals with more precarious financial circumstances to reflect their being more inclined to justify claiming of undeserved government benefits (see Table 82).

**Table 82: To what extent is claiming undeserved benefits justifiable,
by employment status**

| Employment Status
N = 2,000	To what extent is claiming undeserved benefits justifiable		
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
Full-time employee	73.9	22.7	3.4
Part-time employee	72.4	25.4	2.2
Self-employed	75.4	19.4	5.2
Retired/pensioned	77.2	17.6	5.2
Housewife	73.6	19.4	6.9
Student	70.8	28.1	1.1
Unemployed	71.1	22.7	6.3

3.4 MATING, MARRIAGE, AND MORTALITY

Overall, respondents were somewhat more likely to condone controversial acts falling into the ambit of family, sexuality, and mortality; relative to those pertaining to the rule of law. In addition, it appears that the former group of items elicited a wider range of responses from the sample population. Based on these items, we computed a moral conservatism scale to examine which demographics were more likely to be less accepting of these issues. The scale aggregates responses regarding 8 acts or practices: premarital sex, casual sex, homosexuality, prostitution, divorce, abortion, euthanasia, and suicide. The Cronbach's alpha for this aggregate measure is 0.918, which suggests that these items are conceptually closely related to each other; and that the measure exhibits high internal consistency.

The possible scores for this moral conservatism scale range between 0 and 80; with lower scores indicating higher levels of moral conservatism. The overall mean score was 26.91,

while the median score was 24. As both scores were much lower than the halfway point of 40, it implies that overall, Singapore respondents were markedly more conservative in their attitudes towards these issues compared to others.

We then examined compared mean scores across age, education, and housing type; all of which reported statistically significant differences. None of the scores went above the halfway point, indicating a certain degree of conservativeness overall, even though there still exist some variations amongst different groups in the population. Unsurprisingly, age was found to have a significant positive correlation with moral conservatism. The youngest group had a mean score of 37.37, which is rather near the halfway point. In contrast, the oldest group had a mean score of only 17.11. *In toto*, we find that both education and housing had a strong negative correlation with moral conservatism, as the groups with higher education or who lived in larger housing had larger mean scores (see Table 83).

Table 83: Moral conservatism scores* by age, education, and housing type

Age F = 151.82***	Mean	Education F = 66.47***	Mean	Housing type F = 12.29***	Mean
21-35	37.37	Below secondary school	18.81	1- to 3-room HDB	24.56
36-50	28.05	Secondary school / ITE	23.69	4-room HDB	26.44
51-65	21.30	Diploma / Prof. qual.	29.88	5+-room HDB	27.46
Above 65	17.11	Bachelor's and above	32.42	Private property	31.46

* *Lower implies more morally conservative; higher implies less morally conservative; range 0-80*

3.4.1 In general, younger, higher-educated and more affluent respondents were more likely to hold more liberal attitudes towards homosexuality, premarital sex, abortion, prostitution, and divorce

Based on the eight items pertaining to mating, marriage and mortality, we took a closer look at the former two themes by creating a sub-indicator aggregating the responses for divorce, sex before marriage, homosexuality, abortion, and prostitution. These are traditionally viewed as antithetical to the traditional family unit and marriage norms. The Cronbach's alpha for this set of indicators was 0.914, with the value of the Cronbach's alpha reduced when any of the items were removed (indicating that all items were conceptually related). Possible scores for this sub-indicator range from 0 to 50, with the overall mean score being 17.71 and the median being 15. The question on casual sex was not included in this index, as it did not have an impact on increasing the internal reliability of this measure.

When means of responses were compared across different demographic variables, we find that similar to the larger aggregate index, age had a negative correlation with mean scores;

while education and housing type had positive correlations with mean scores. Overall, these differences indicate that there are more relaxed attitudes towards different interpretations of marriage and sexuality amongst those who are younger, or from higher socioeconomic backgrounds (see Table 84).

Table 84: Mating and marriage scores by age, education level, and housing type

Age F = 150.34***	Mean	Education F = 73.75***	Mean	Housing type F = 14.37***	Mean
21-35	24.70	Below secondary school	11.80	1- to 3-room HDB	16.04
36-50	18.89	Secondary school / ITE	15.54	4-room HDB	17.22
51-65	13.89	Diploma / Prof. qual.	19.42	5+-room HDB	17.98
Above 65	10.66	Bachelor's and above	21.88	Private property	21.27

3.4.2 While two-thirds of Singapore respondents indicated they felt casual sex was never or seldom justifiable, men and younger respondents were far more likely to think otherwise relative to their female and older peers

With regards to having casual sex, 25.2 per cent felt it was sometimes justifiable, while 7.5 per cent felt it was always or mostly justifiable (see Figure 17). Distinct differences in responses were however found across gender and age cohorts. The results indicate that males and younger respondents were considerably more likely to see casual sex as justifiable to varying extents. Compared to 42.8 per cent of males, only 22.2 per cent of female respondents said it was at least sometimes justifiable. In the same vein, while 89.1 per cent of those above 65 years old felt it was never or seldom justifiable, only 42.8 per cent of those aged between 21 and 35 indicated likewise. When the results for the age groups were split across genders, both age and gender differences remained, with the youngest males most likely to perceive casual sex as justified, and the oldest females most likely to be diametrically opposed (see Tables 85 to 87).

Table 85: To what extent is casual sex justifiable, by gender

Gender N = 1,988	To what extent is casual sex justifiable		
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
Male	57.1	32.5	10.4
Female	77.8	17.5	4.7

Table 86: To what extent is casual sex justifiable, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 1,988	To what extent is casual sex justifiable		
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
21-35	42.8	39.7	17.5
36-50	69.0	25.3	5.7
51-65	80.1	25.3	5.7
Above 65	89.1	10.0	0.9

Table 87: To what extent is casual sex justifiable, by age cohort and gender

Age Cohort and Gender N = 1,988		To what extent is casual sex justifiable		
		Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
21-35	Male	33.9	44.9	21.2
	Female	51.9	34.4	13.7
36-50	Male	56.7	34.2	9.1
	Female	77.6	19.1	3.3
51-65	Male	66.4	28.1	5.5
	Female	91.9	7.4	0.7
Above 65	Male	83.6	15.1	1.3
	Female	93.8	5.6	0.6

3.4.3 Younger and higher-educated respondents were more likely to think homosexuality and prostitution as justifiable, against the backdrop of a predominantly conservative populace

With regards to homosexuality, 13.2 per cent felt that it was always or mostly justifiable and 27.5 per cent felt it was sometimes justifiable, while 59.3 per cent believed that it was never or seldom justifiable (see Figure 17). The demographic variables for which there were large significant differences were age cohort and education. While 38.2 per cent of respondents aged between 21 and 35 years old felt that it was justifiable to some extent, only 5.1 per cent of those aged above 65 felt the same. Given that large disparity in responses, this implies generational differences in how homosexuality is perceived (see Table 88).

Table 88: To what extent is homosexuality justifiable, by age cohort

Age Cohort *N = 1,988*	To what extent is homosexuality justifiable		
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
21-35	36.7	36.9	26.4
36-50	53.0	34.6	12.4
51-65	74.4	19.7	6.0
Above 65	84.9	12.1	3.0

The proportions that believed homosexuality was never or seldom justifiable decreased across educational groups. Compared to 82.2 per cent of those with below secondary school education, under half of degree holders felt that it was never or seldom justifiable. Correspondingly, a larger proportion of those with university education felt that homosexuality was always or mostly justifiable (Table 89).

Table 89: To what extent is homosexuality justifiable, by education level

Education Level *N = 1,984*	To what extent is homosexuality justifiable		
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
Below secondary	82.2	13.7	4.0
Secondary/ ITE	66.9	24.5	8.6
Dip. / Prof. qual.	54.0	31.8	14.1
Bachelor's and above	44.7	34.5	20.8

We also found differences in perceptions of homosexuality across religious affiliations. Aside from respondents with no religion, the group with the largest proportion saying that homosexuality is mostly or always justifiable was the Catholics. Meanwhile, the respondents who believed in Hinduism or Islam were most likely to feel that homosexuality was never or seldom justifiable (see Table 90).

Table 90: To what extent is homosexuality justifiable, by religion

Religion* *N = 1,988*	To what extent is homosexuality justifiable		
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
Buddhist	58.6	27.0	14.5
Taoist / Chinese religion	61.5	28.4	10.1
Protestant	68.3	25.3	6.4
Catholic	58.7	23.0	18.3
Muslim	75.2	21.1	3.7
Hindu	69.7	21.1	9.2
No religion	43.8	34.9	21.3

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

When asked about prostitution, just 5.6 per cent of the overall respondent pool responded that it was always or mostly justifiable. However, stark differences were found across age and education. While under half of the youngest age cohort felt prostitution was never or seldom justifiable, 89.7 per cent of those aged above 65 years old indicated likewise. The same pattern was observed for the "sometimes justifiable" category, with younger respondents showing significantly higher levels of acceptance. When compared across education levels, we find that respondents with lower education were less likely to say that prostitution was sometimes or always justifiable. 40.9 per cent of degree holders indicated as such, compared to just 15.1 per cent of those with below secondary education (see Tables 91 and 92).

Across these two sets of results, we posit that education enables individuals to consider issues of homosexuality and prostitution in a more open-minded and tolerant fashion. Alongside generational differences distinct across how issues of sex and marriage are perceived, these two factors have resulted in significant shifts in mindsets.

Table 91: To what extent is prostitution justifiable, by age cohort

Age Cohort *N = 1,988*	To what extent is prostitution justifiable		
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
21-35	48.0	43.0	9.0
36-50	66.1	28.1	5.7
51-65	80.4	16.9	2.7
Above 65	89.7	7.3	3.0

Table 92: To what extent is prostitution justifiable, by education level

Education Level N = 1,984	To what extent is prostitution justifiable		
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
Below secondary	84.9	11.9	3.2
Secondary/ ITE	73.8	21.8	4.5
Dip. / Prof. qual.	64.2	30.8	5.0
Bachelor's and above	59.1	33.4	7.4

3.4.4 Youth and religious adherents were significantly more likely to think premarital sex and abortion as justified, relative to their older and non-religious counterparts

Overall perceptions of premarital sex mirrored that of divorce, with 15.3 per cent of the respondents indicating it was always or mostly justifiable, and 38.8 per cent indicating it was sometimes justifiable (see Figure 17). There was a negative correlation found between age cohorts and the proportion of respondents more amenable to premarital sex. While 77.1 per cent of the youngest group said it was sometimes or always justifiable, only 26.6 per cent of the oldest group indicated likewise. These results again attest to generational disparities in values pertaining to sex and marriage (see Table 93).

Table 93: To what extent is premarital sex justifiable, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 1,987	To what extent is premarital sex justifiable		
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
21-35	22.9	48.1	29.0
36-50	40.8	44.5	14.7
51-65	60.3	32.7	7.0
Above 65	73.4	21.8	4.8

Religion played an instrumental role in influencing perspectives on premarital sex too. Religious adherents were on the whole less likely to feel that sex before marriage was justifiable, as compared to their peers without religion. Among the latter group, just 29.7 per cent said it was never or seldom justifiable; under half of Buddhists, Taoists and traditional Chinese belief adherents indicated likewise; and more than half of Christians, Hindus and Muslims indicated likewise. However, there seems to be higher acceptance of premarital sex amongst religious adherents compared to abortion, and to some extent, homosexuality (see Table 94).

Table 94: To what extent is premarital sex justifiable, by religious affiliation

Religion* *N = 1,987*	To what extent is premarital sex justifiable		
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
Buddhist	44.1	39.5	16.4
Taoist / Chinese religion	44.9	44.9	10.2
Protestant	59.6	30.7	9.6
Catholic	51.6	38.9	9.5
Muslim	60.1	33.9	5.9
Hindu	56.5	34.3	9.3
No religion	29.7	43.9	26.4

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

Similarly, within the population, only 9.4 per cent indicated that abortion was always or mostly justifiable, while only 30.3 per cent said that it was sometimes justifiable (see Figure 17). There was quite a big age cohort difference in responses. 54.2 per cent of respondents aged above 35 said that abortion was never or seldom justifiable, with this proportion ballooning to over three-quarters for older respondents. In contrast, 42.3 per cent of those aged between 21 and 35 gave the same answer; indicating that more than half of this youngest age cohort felt that there were situations where abortion could be justified (see Table 95).

Table 95: To what extent is abortion justifiable, by age cohort

Age Cohort *N = 1,988*	To what extent is abortion justifiable		
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
21-35	42.3	38.6	19.1
36-50	54.2	37.0	8.8
51-65	72.7	23.5	3.8
Above 65	83.4	13.3	3.3

Respondents who said that they had no religion were also more likely to say that abortion was justifiable to some extent, with 39.7 per cent of this group indicating it was sometimes justifiable, and 17.7 per cent indicating it was always or mostly justifiable. There seems to be some religious influence on opinions towards abortion, given that less than 10 per cent of the different religious groups felt that it was always or mostly justifiable, which was markedly lower than the proportion reported for non-religious respondents (see Table 96).

Table 96: To what extent is abortion justifiable, by religion

Religion* *N = 1,988*	To what extent is abortion justifiable		
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
Buddhist	62.5	28.4	9.1
Taoist / Chinese religion	62.8	32.4	4.7
Protestant	66.5	28.3	5.2
Catholic	69.0	26.2	4.8
Muslim	75.3	19.6	5.2
Hindu	69.1	21.8	9.1
No religion	42.7	39.7	17.7

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

3.4.5 Over half of respondents indicated divorce as at least sometimes justifiable, though silvers, religious adherents and less-educated respondents were much less likely to feel this way

There was a slightly higher acceptance of divorce relative to other mating and marriage issues. 15.3 per cent felt that it was always or mostly justifiable, while 41.8 per cent felt it was sometimes justifiable (see Figure 17). There were however substantial differences in views across age cohorts. While 27.5 per cent of those aged between 21 and 35 felt that divorce was never or seldom justifiable, this proportion increased progressively across age cohorts to reach 66.2 per cent for those aged above 65. These results point to very different norms regarding marriage and divorce across different generations (see Table 97).

Table 97: To what extent is divorce justifiable, by age cohort

Age Cohort *N = 1,990*	To what extent is divorce justifiable		
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
21-35	27.5	45.8	26.7
36-50	37.6	47.1	15.2
51-65	51.2	39.1	9.7
Above 65	66.2	28.1	5.7

Views towards divorce appear to be guided to some extent by religion. While the proportions choosing with the range of "sometimes justifiable" were quite similar across the different religious groups, there were wider variations for the other two response categories. Respondents with no religion were the most accepting towards divorce, with 27.9 per cent saying that it was always or mostly justifiable. Meanwhile, Buddhist respondents gave the next

highest response rate for the mostly or always justifiable category, with 14.9 per cent indicating that divorce was mostly or always justifiable (see Table 98).

Table 98: To what extent is divorce justifiable, by religion

Religion* *N = 1,988*	To what extent is divorce justifiable		
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
Buddhist	44.7	40.3	14.9
Taoist / Chinese religion	45.6	42.2	12.2
Protestant	49.3	41.1	9.6
Catholic	52.4	38.9	8.7
Muslim	47.4	44.5	8.1
Hindu	56.9	32.1	11.0
No religion	29.2	43.0	27.9

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

When dissecting responses with socioeconomic factors, we find that more privileged individuals were more likely to think divorce as justifiable to some extent. In particular, there were significant differences found for education; while 60.8 per cent of respondents with below secondary school education felt that divorce was never or seldom justifiable, only 30.9 per cent of degree holders gave similar responses. In addition, 23.4 per cent of degree holders felt that divorce was always or mostly justifiable; much higher than the rest of the groups (see Table 99).

Table 99: To what extent is divorce justifiable, by education level

Education Level *N = 1,987*	To what extent is divorce justifiable		
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
Below secondary	60.8	33.5	5.7
Secondary/ ITE	49.8	39.1	11.1
Dip. / Prof. qual.	38.6	44.9	16.5
Bachelor's and above	30.9	45.7	23.4

3.4.6 Similar to findings on sex and marriage issues, younger, higher-educated and more affluent respondents were more likely to hold more liberal attitudes towards self-determination of death

We next examined respondents' attitudes towards self-determination of death using the summation of two items: suicide and euthanasia. The two items in aggregate had a

Cronbach's alpha of 0.661, indicating the measure was internally reliable. Based on this twin-summation, there were statistically significant differences in means across age, race, education, and housing types. Possible scores ranged from 0 to 20, with higher scores indicating higher openness towards the two items. The overall mean score was 6.54 and the median score was 6, which indicates that respondents were more likely to feel suicide and euthanasia were not justifiable. Based on the comparisons of means, it appears that respondents who are younger, more educated, or more affluent were more likely to feel suicide and euthanasia were justifiable to varying extents. In particular, the respondents aged between 21 and 35 had the highest mean score of 8.53 (see Table 100).

Table 100: Self-determination of death scores by age, education, and housing type

Age F = 64.10***	Mean	Education F = 3.78***	Mean	Housing type F = 7.89***	Mean
21-35	8.53	**Below secondary school**	5.06	**1- to 3-room HDB**	6.01
36-50	6.65	**Secondary school / ITE**	5.80	**4-room HDB**	6.45
51-65	5.48	**Diploma / Prof. qual.**	7.04	**5+-room HDB**	6.62
Above 65	4.82	**Bachelor's and above**	7.68	**Private property**	7.53

3.4.7 In particular, age was the primary factor driving views on suicide and euthanasia; proportions of respondents who felt these were never or seldom justifiable doubled from the youngest to the oldest age cohort

Suicide was seen by a large majority as not justifiable; overall, 75.1 per cent said that it was never or seldom justifiable (see Figure 17). To this regard, the clearest differences in responses were found when comparing results across age. Compared with the rest of the population, respondents aged between 21 and 35 viewed suicide in a slightly different way. While nearly three-quarters of the rest of the population felt that it was never or seldom justifiable, only 54.9 per cent of those aged between 21 and 35 said the same. There was also a sizeably larger proportion of the youngest age cohort which felt that it was sometimes, mostly, or always justifiable compared to the rest of the population (see Table 101).

Table 101: To what extent is suicide justifiable, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 1,991	To what extent is suicide justifiable		
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
21-35	54.9	35.2	9.9
36-50	74.3	21.9	3.7
51-65	86.9	11.5	1.6
Above 65	92.7	6.6	0.6

Respondents were similarly asked for their opinions on euthanasia. As the pilot test had revealed that this term was not commonly understood across all spectrums of the population, a short definition was included. It was explained as "the choice of a person (usually in great pain or facing a terminal illness) to end their life prematurely with medical assistance". Based on this definition, 49.4 per cent felt that it was never or seldom justifiable, 31.3 per cent felt that it was sometimes justifiable, while 19.3 per cent felt that it was always or mostly justifiable (see Figure 17).

Against this backdrop, we find a negative correlation between age and the proportion of respondents indicating euthanasia was justified to varying extents. The youngest age cohort saw two-thirds of respondents indicating euthanasia was sometimes, mostly, or always justifiable; less than half of their older peers indicated likewise. Furthermore, there was a considerable difference between the stances expressed by the oldest and youngest age group. While 32.9 per cent of those aged between 21 and 35 felt euthanasia was never or seldom justifiable, 63.7 per cent of those aged above 65 gave similar answers (see Table 102).

These differences seem to suggest that younger respondents were perhaps 1) more open in giving individuals a choice on when to die; and/or 2) more empathetic of the circumstances upon which individuals would consider these two acts, relative to their older counterparts.

Table 102: To what extent is euthanasia justifiable, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 1,991	To what extent is euthanasia justifiable		
	Never/ Seldom justifiable	Sometimes justifiable	Mostly/ Always justifiable
21-35	32.9	42.3	24.8
36-50	48.1	31.9	20.0
51-65	57.7	26.7	15.6
Above 65	63.7	21.1	15.1

Chapter 4

Religion and Religiosity

CHAPTER 4 | RELIGION AND RELIGIOSITY

Religion is an integral component of Singapore. Singapore is known as the world's most religiously diverse nation with 43.2 per cent of its population Buddhist or Taoist, 18.8 per cent Christian, 14.7 per cent Muslim, 5.0 per cent Hindu, 0.7 per cent other religions, and 18.5 per cent professing not having any religion (Singapore Department of Statistics, 2015). Even within each religion, there exists intra-religious diversity with a great deal of syncretism observed. Recently, the outbreak of COVID-19 has brought religion and an individual's religiosity into sharper focus.

In her speech on religiosity solidarity amid COVID-19, then-Minister for Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) Grace Fu observed two responses that people have with regard to religion in COVID times (MCCY, 2020). On the one hand, it has triggered religious division, a rise in Islamophobia, religious extremism, and xenophobia around the world. In the world, there have been physical and verbal attacks against Asians blaming them for the spread of the virus and even calling for them to be denied access to medical care. Even in Singapore, there were racist and insensitive comments directed at foreign workers blaming them for the spread of COVID-19 in dorms. On the other hand, an increasing number of people are turning to religion for comfort and solace during the pandemic. People's spiritual needs are rising in times of crisis. It is hence more than timely for us to explore religiosity in the context of Singapore. Studying the reach and influence of religion is also imperative in maintaining interreligious harmony and surveying public sentiment in public policy.

Many of the religious studies that utilised and interpreted WVS data were predicated on what is known as the theory of secularisation. This largely stems from Inglehart's study of cultural values in societies. He contends that in agrarian economies, "social values emphasised social order, collective orientations, religious beliefs, absolute norms and acceptance of the existing status quo, and rejected individual greed for wealth accumulation". However, as society industrialises, the predominant values become economic accumulation at the individual level and economic growth at the societal level. There is hence a shift away from traditional religiosity and toward secular-rational, materialist values.

In post-industrial societies, Inglehart argues that the value that holds top priority is economic achievement and a decreasing emphasis on religiosity. In other words, to put his argument briefly, as society modernises, there is increasing secularisation and decreasing religiosity. Religiosity would be replaced by individual spirituality. However, secularisation has been criticised for its inability to account for high levels of religiosity even in some highly modernised societies (Hamberg, 2015; Ruiter and van Tubergen, 2009; Reed, 2007; Selinger, 2004). Indeed, we have seen the reverse happening: a revival of religion has occurred across the globe. The globalisation of religion, the harkening back to the sacred and the rise of religious extremism are still very much current trends.

Similarly, in the Singapore context, secularisation theory has also failed to materialise. Chang uses Singapore as an empirical case to show the inadequacy of Inglehart's interpretation of top value priorities derived from the WVS. Using survey data from 1999 on the values of Singapore's youths and their parent, he finds that for most Singaporeans, their top value priority is not wealth accumulation (which Inglehart argues is the top priority value in post-

materialist societies) but a preference for being moral (Chang, 2009, p. 166). More importantly, Chang hypothesises that why most Singaporeans hold moral/ethical values as their top value priorities could be due to traditions, much of which stems from religion. This means that religion remains a key factor that needs to be recognised in the literature. A similar argument is extended by Pereira (2005). Using data from the WVS (2002), Pereira (2005) finds that Singaporeans are not very secularised, are religious, have a high level of belief in religious aspects, and fulfil their religious obligations and activities.

According to an IPS Working Paper on Religion in Singapore (Mathews, Lim and Selvarajan, 2019) which was based on the International Social Survey Program on Religion, there are high levels of religiosity in Singapore. The majority of respondents were found to identify themselves as religious when asked about their level of religiosity (Mathews, Lim and Selvarajan, 2019, p.23). An important question that reveals religiosity is regarding whether they believe in God (a supreme deity). Around half of the respondents indicated that they believed in the existence of a God (Mathews, Lim and Selvarajan, 2019, p.30).

In addition, there is a relatively high level of practice of religion. Around four in 10 respondents reported that they either pray once daily or several times a day. Consistent with obligatory prayer requirements in Islam, 77 per cent of the Muslim respondents were the most likely to pray at least once a day. Another indication of active practice of religious practices can be seen when nearly 37 per cent of Christian respondents participated in such activities either several times a week, every week, or nearly every week. These findings corroborate with Pereira's analysis that Singaporeans remain strongly religious even in a highly modernised and economically developed nation.

Other studies that engaged with WVS data to study religion touch on a myriad of other topics such as the impact of state regulation on religiosity (Fox and Tabory, 2008); religion and life satisfaction (Dorahy et al., 1998; Headey et al., 2010; Bergan and McConatha, 2000; Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2010); the impact of religion on trust towards science (Chan, 2018); war and its impact on religion (Chi and Du, 2016); how different religious experiences affect levels of happiness and life satisfaction (Ngamaba and Soni, 2018) and religiosity as a moderator for the relationship between income inequality and subjective well-being (Joshanloo and Weijers, 2016).

The questions presented in the next three sections include self-reports of religiosity, respondents' understanding of the role of religion in a person's life, as well as their opinions of various aspects of spirituality and the supernatural. Respondents who were older, female, or more religious had a higher propensity to believe in the supernatural. Furthermore, Muslims and Protestant Christians were more likely to be practising believers. They were also more likely to choose religion over science and view their religion in exclusive terms.

4.1   MAKING SENSE OF RELIGION

Respondents were asked about their opinions on the basic meaning of religion. Specifically, they were asked whether religion was founded upon ceremonies and norms or for the good of

others; and whether religion was to make sense of life after death or life in this world. These questions established whether religion was viewed by respondents as otherworldly focused and eccentric or this-worldly and humanitarian. The majority of the population reflected that religion was meant to do good to others and to make sense of life in this world.

4.1.1 Most felt religion entailed doing good to others as opposed to merely following norms and ceremonies, and entailed making sense of life in this world as opposed to life after death

A majority felt that the basic meaning of religion is to do good to other people rather than follow religious norms and ceremonies. Overall, 78.4 per cent chose the first option, while 21.6 per cent chose the other. Similar proportions in responses – where around three-quarters chose the first option and the rest chose the second – were also found when Australians, Chinese, Taiwanese, Hongkongers, Japanese, and Americans were surveyed. In comparison, 51.2 per cent of Malaysians, 49.9 per cent of South Koreans, and 39.8 per cent of Thais felt that following religious norms and ceremonies was the preferred option. When the results were compared across demographic variables, respondents who were younger, had no religious affiliation, or had higher education were more likely to choose the first option.

When respondents were asked for their opinions on whether religion meant making sense of their lives now, or making sense of life after death, nearly three-quarters indicated identifying with the former stance (see Figures 18 and 19). Findings from Australia, China, Taiwan, Thailand, and America also reported similar proportions. Meanwhile, nearly 90 per cent of Japanese respondents chose the first option. In contrast, respondents from Hong Kong, South Korea, and Malaysia were less likely to do so. Around two-thirds of Hong Kong and South Korean respondents felt that the meaning of religion was to make sense of life now. Interestingly, only 48.6 per cent of Malaysian respondents chose this option over the other.

Figure 18: The basic meaning of religion is...
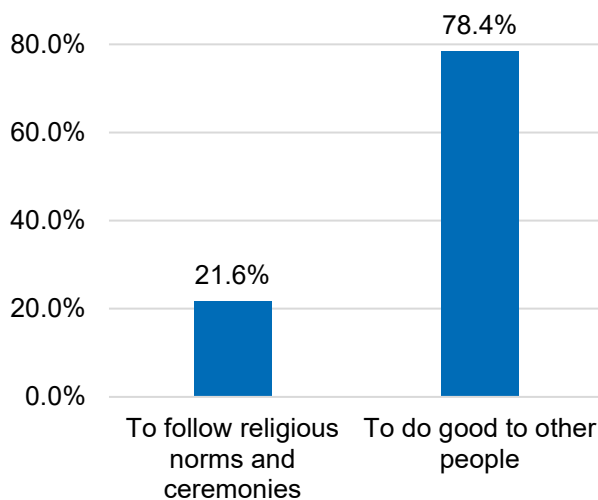
Figure 19: The basic meaning of religion is...
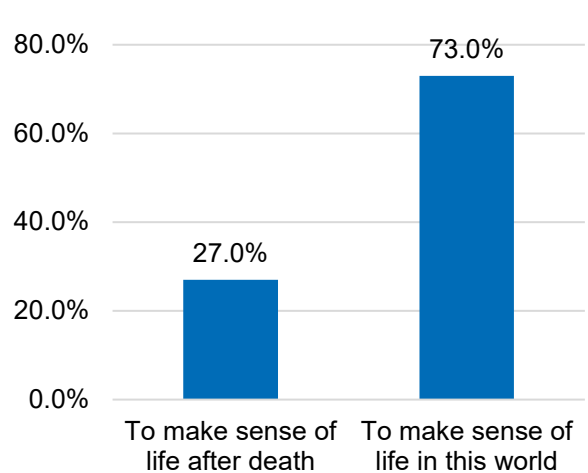
4.1.2 In general, Muslims, silvers, and less-educated respondents were more likely than their peers to indicate that the basic meaning of religion entailed the following of norms and ceremonies

When the responses were examined across religious groups, the group with the largest response rate of 34.7 per cent for "follow religious norms and ceremonies" were the Muslim respondents. In contrast, respondents with no religion were the most likely to indicate otherwise. Of this group, 87.6 per cent begged to differ, indicating that the predominant view of religion from non-believers' perspectives was one that entailed doing good to others. It appears that most religions focused on these two aspects to varying extents, and were in general somewhat dissimilar with the idea of religion held by non-believers (see Table 103).

Table 103: Basic meaning of religion (first pairing), by religious affiliation

Religion* *N = 1,925*	The basic meaning of religion is:	
	To follow religious norms and ceremonies	To do good to other people
Buddhist	21.2	78.8
Taoist / Chinese religion	17.9	82.1
Protestant	27.3	72.7
Catholic	26.0	74.0
Muslim	34.7	65.3
Hindu	12.7	87.3
No religion	12.4	87.6

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

The above notwithstanding, age and education play an outsized role in impacting views. For respondents with no religion, over 14 per cent of those aged 21-35 and 51-65 years old felt that the basic meaning of religion was to follow religious norms and ceremonies. This was a slightly larger proportion compared to the other two age groups. For the religious groups, the proportions choosing this same option generally increased with age. Religious adherents with higher education levels were also more likely to believe that the basic meaning of religion was to do good to other people. Meanwhile, there was no discernible trend across education levels for respondents with no religion (see Tables 104 and 105).

Table 104: Basic meaning of religion (first pairing), by religious affiliation and age

Religion and Age Cohort *N = 1,925*		The basic meaning of religion is:	
		To follow religious norms and ceremonies	To do good to other people
Buddhist	21-35	17.1	82.9
	36-50	16.4	83.6
	51-65	26.6	73.4
	Above 65	24.0	76.0
Taoist/ Chinese religion	21-35	12.5	87.5
	36-50	9.3	90.7
	51-65	20.5	79.5
	Above 65^	28.2	71.8
Protestant	21-35	27.1	72.9
	36-50	24.7	75.3
	51-65	25.8	74.2
	Above 65	34.0	66.0
Catholic	21-35^	12.5	87.5
	36-50	26.5	73.5
	51-65	30.3	69.7
	Above 65	37.5	62.5
Muslim	21-35	27.2	72.8
	36-50	37.9	62.1
	51-65	33.8	66.2
	Above 65	54.5	45.5
Hindu	21-35^	18.8	81.3
	36-50^	5.9	94.1
	51-65	0	100.0
	Above 65^	45.5	54.5
No religion	21-35	17.2	82.8
	36-50	8.2	91.7
	51-65	14.0	86.0
	Above 65	5.5	94.5

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N; ^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

Table 105: Basic meaning of religion (first pairing), by religion and education level

Religion and Education Level *N = 1,925*		The basic meaning of religion is:	
		To follow religious norms and ceremonies	**To do good to other people**
Buddhist	**Below secondary**	28.1	71.9
	Secondary/ ITE	27.5	72.5
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	17.3	82.7
	Bachelor's and above	10.5	89.5
Taoist/ Chinese religion	**Below secondary**	27.8	72.2
	Secondary/ ITE	11.8	88.2
	Dip. / Prof. qual.^	17.4	82.6
	Bachelor's and above	8.8	91.2
Protestant	**Below secondary^**	42.9	57.1
	Secondary/ ITE	29.4	70.6
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	26.9	73.1
	Bachelor's and above	23.4	76.6
Catholic	**Below secondary^**	54.5	45.5
	Secondary/ ITE	17.6	82.4
	Dip. / Prof. qual.^	30.0	70.0
	Bachelor's and above	24.1	75.9
Muslim	**Below secondary**	42.6	57.4
	Secondary/ ITE	35.0	65.0
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	33.3	66.7
	Bachelor's and above^	13.0	87.0
Hindu	**Below secondary^**	0	100.0
	Secondary/ ITE^	22.7	77.3
	Dip. / Prof. qual.^	15.8	84.2
	Bachelor's and above	10.7	89.3
No religion	**Below secondary**	18.0	82.0
	Secondary/ ITE	9.2	90.8
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	15.1	84.9
	Bachelor's and above	11.2	88.8

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N; ^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

4.1.3 Muslims were far more likely than others to indicate they perceived religion as sense-making for life after death; higher-educated and more affluent respondents were more likely to think otherwise

It appears that most of the population looked to religion to seek guidance on worldly matters rather than the afterlife, as 73 per cent said that the basic meaning of religion was to make sense of life in this world. When the results were categorised by religious affiliation, over half of the Muslim respondents (53.8 per cent) said that the basic meaning of religion was to make sense of life after death. This was in contrast to those of other religious affiliations who tended to indicate that religion provided a way to make sense of life in this world. While there was a greater tendency for those of monotheistic faiths to choose this option – 36.4 per cent among Roman Catholics and 27.5 per cent among Protestant Christians, the substantially higher number of Muslims who chose option perhaps shows the greater other-worldly aspirations of the Muslim population here (see Table 106).

Table 106: Basic meaning of religion (second pairing), by religious affiliation

Religion* *N = 1,896*	The basic meaning of religion is:	
	To make sense of life after death	**To make sense of life in this world**
Buddhist	24.6	75.4
Taoist / Chinese religion	21.2	78.8
Protestant	27.5	72.5
Catholic	36.4	63.6
Muslim	53.8	46.2
Hindu	11.0	89.0
No religion	16.4	83.6

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

When perusing results by education and income levels, we find that in general, education had a positive correlation with the proportions choosing "to make sense of life in this world". Respondents with higher education typically were more likely to think that the basic meaning of religion was "to make sense of life in this world" rather than "life after death". When compared across income groups, we note that respondents in the highest income brackets (with the notable exception of Muslims) were more likely to indicate that the basic meaning of religion to them was to make sense of life in this world (see Tables 107 and 108).

Table 107: Basic meaning of religion (second pairing), by religion and education level

Religion and Education Level *N = 1,925*		The basic meaning of religion is:	
		To make sense of life after death	To make sense of life in this world
Buddhist	**Below secondary**	36.5	63.5
	Secondary/ ITE	26.6	73.4
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	25.8	74.2
	Bachelor's and above	11.4	88.6
Taoist/ Chinese religion	**Below secondary**	39.3	60.7
	Secondary/ ITE	17.6	82.4
	Dip. / Prof. qual.^	9.1	90.9
	Bachelor's and above	2.9	97.1
Protestant	**Below secondary^**	29.6	70.4
	Secondary/ ITE	34.8	65.2
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	31.9	68.1
	Bachelor's and above	22.1	77.9
Catholic	**Below secondary^**	36.4	63.6
	Secondary/ ITE	47.1	52.9
	Dip. / Prof. qual.^	35.0	65.0
	Bachelor's and above	30.4	69.6
Muslim	**Below secondary**	54.5	45.5
	Secondary/ ITE	56.4	43.6
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	54.2	45.8
	Bachelor's and above^	36.4	63.6
Hindu	**Below secondary^**	0	100.0
	Secondary/ ITE^	14.3	85.7
	Dip. / Prof. qual.^	10.5	89.5
	Bachelor's and above	12.5	87.5
No religion	**Below secondary**	23.3	76.7
	Secondary/ ITE	17.9	82.1
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	13.8	86.2
	Bachelor's and above	14.1	85.9

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N; ^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

Table 108: Basic meaning of religion (second pairing), by religion and income level

Religion and Income Level *N = 1,921*		The basic meaning of religion is:	
		To make sense of life after death	To make sense of life in this world
Buddhist	**Below $1,500**	21.6	78.4
	$1,500-$2,999	37.0	63.0
	$3,000-$4,999	22.4	77.6
	$5,000-$6,999	11.6	88.4
	Above $6,999^	14.3	85.7
Protestant	**Below $1,500**	27.8	72.2
	$1,500-$2,999	18.2	81.8
	$3,000-$4,999	22.7	77.3
	$5,000-$6,999^	33.3	66.7
	Above $6,999^	14.8	85.2
Muslim	**Below $1,500**	50.0	50.0
	$1,500-$2,999	59.0	41.0
	$3,000-$4,999	51.4	48.6
	$5,000-$6,999^	25.0	75.0
	Above $6,999^	71.4	28.6
No religion	**Below $1,500^**	20.7	79.3
	$1,500-$2,999	19.6	80.4
	$3,000-$4,999	16.5	83.5
	$5,000-$6,999	10.9	89.1
	Above $6,999	17.8	82.2

* Certain categories omitted from analyses due to low N and/or no statistically significant differences, for ease of reference; ^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

4.2 BELIEF IN THE SUPERNATURAL

Respondents were next queried on their belief in various notions of the supernatural and after-life. The list of questions posed addressed respondents' beliefs in concepts such as God, life after death, hell, and heaven. A majority of respondents believed in all the aspects included in the survey, with God garnering the most answers in the affirmative.

4.2.1 In general, the majority of respondents in Singapore indicated belief in the concepts of God, life after death, hell, and heaven; though this group largely comprises religious adherents

Amongst the population, 80.1 per cent said that they believed in God. This proportion was very high compared to many other Asian societies – 54.8 per cent of Japanese, 53 per cent of Hongkongers, 46 per cent of Thais, 40.6 per cent of South Koreans, and 17 per cent of Chinese said they also believed in God. In contrast, 95.2 per cent of Malaysians and 82.5 per cent of Taiwanese chose "yes" as their responses. Meanwhile, 56.8 per cent of Australians, 82.1 per cent of Americans, 48.4 per cent of British, 67.6 per cent of the Swiss, and 36.1 per cent of Swedes believed in the existence of God (see Table 109).

Table 109: Which, if any, of the following do you believe in, by polity

Item	Indication of Belief												
	SG	MY	TH	JP	KR	CN	HK	TW	AU	US	UK	SZ	SW
God	80.1	95.2	46	54.8	40.6	17	53	82.5	56.8	82.1	48.4	67.6	36.1
Life after death	69.9	81.9	57.9	48.1	33.7	11.6	40.6	57.3	55.2	70.6	42.2	53.4	41.4
Hell	70.0	87.7	78.1	28.1	31.6	11.8	45.1	63.7	31.2	69.1	24.2	17.6	12.7
Heaven	72.8	89.6	77.9	38.8	32.2	12.5	48.5	63.2	49.6	68.6	35.6	40.1	30.1

A more in-depth explication of these findings by age, education, and affluence follows in 4.2.2. A clear difference was found between respondents with no religion and those who identified with a religion. Only 45.6 per cent of respondents with no religion said that they believed in God, the only group in which less than half gave this answer. Meanwhile, over 90 per cent of Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, and Hindus; as well as over 80 per cent of Buddhists, Taoists and traditional Chinese belief adherents said they believed in God (see Figure 20 and Table 110).

Figure 20: Which, if any, of the following do you believe in?
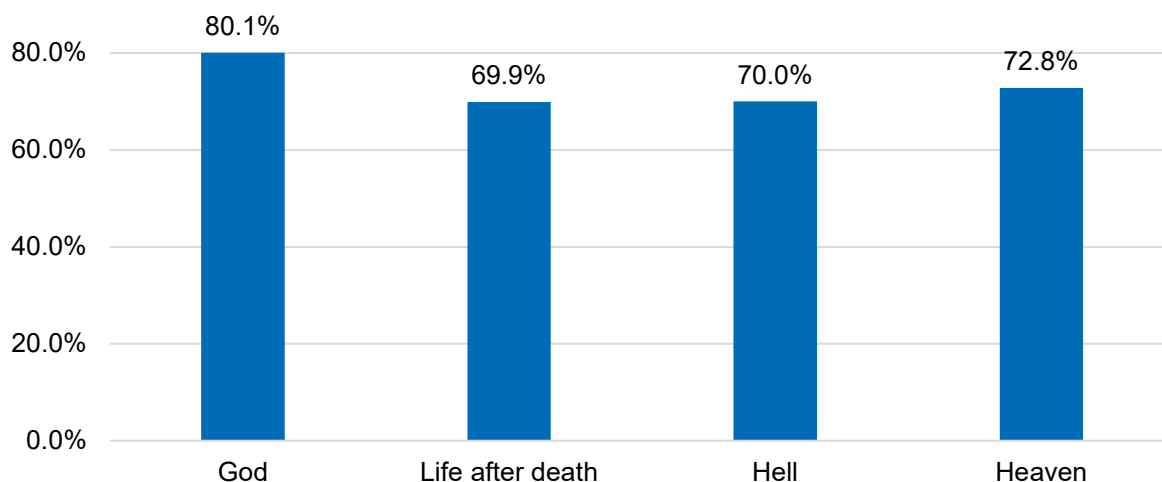
Table 110: Belief in God, by religious affiliation

Religion* N = 1,962	Do you believe in God	
	Yes	**No**
Buddhist	82.3	17.7
Taoist / Chinese religion	85.5	14.5
Protestant	98.6	1.4
Catholic	96.8	3.2
Muslim	97.1	2.9
Hindu	94.5	5.5
No religion	45.6	54.4

"Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

4.2.2 Higher educated and more affluent respondents without a religion were more likely to profess a belief in God; in contrast, older and less-educated religious adherents were generally more likely to feel the same way

When the different religion categories were examined across age, different patterns were found. Non-religious, Taoist, and Buddhist respondents were more likely to believe in God if they were older. The only exception was those aged above 65 with no religion. With only had 36.8 per cent saying they believed God, this proportion was even lower than the youngest cohort in the same religious category. Meanwhile, for the believers of the rest of the religions listed, which were either monotheistic or polytheistic religions, no large age differences were observed. Meanwhile, for respondents with no religious affiliation, those with higher education are more likely to believe in God. This pattern is however reversed for believers of Taoism or

Chinese religion, and Buddhism, with no major educational differences found for the rest of the religions (see Tables 111 and 112).

As for affluence, an overall positive correlation with housing type was generally observed for non-religious respondents. However, Buddhists living in larger housing types were more likely to believe in God; and as for the rest of the religious adherents, housing type did not have a statistically significant effect on their sentiments about God (see Table 113).

Table 111: Belief in God, by religious affiliation and age

Religion and Age Cohort *N = 1,962*		Do you believe in God	
		Yes	**No**
Buddhist	**21-35**	76.4	23.6
	36-50	75.5	24.5
	51-65	85.7	14.3
	Above 65	92.4	7.6
Taoist/ Chinese religion	**21-35^**	73.9	26.1
	36-50	83.3	16.7
	51-65	90.2	9.8
	Above 65	89.7	10.3
Protestant	**21-35**	97.7	2.3
	36-50	100.0	0
	51-65	99.1	0.9
	Above 65	96.6	3.4
Catholic	**21-35**	96.9	3.1
	36-50	91.9	8.1
	51-65	100.0	0
	Above 65^	100.0	0
Muslim	**21-35**	96.3	3.7
	36-50	96.7	3.3
	51-65	98.6	1.4
	Above 65	97.1	2.9
Hindu	**21-35**	93.8	6.3
	36-50	92.2	7.8
	51-65^	100.0	0
	Above 65^	100.0	0
No religion	**21-35**	43.7	56.3
	36-50	46.9	53.1
	51-65	51.4	48.6
	Above 65	36.8	63.2

* *"Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N; ^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30*

Table 112: Belief in God, by religious affiliation and education level

Religion and Education Level *N = 1,958*		Do you believe in God	
		Yes	No
Buddhist	Below secondary	92.6	7.4
	Secondary/ ITE	82.9	17.1
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	78.8	21.2
	Bachelor's and above	74.2	25.8
Taoist/ Chinese religion	Below secondary	91.1	8.9
	Secondary/ ITE	81.8	18.2
	Dip. / Prof. qual.^	82.6	17.4
	Bachelor's and above	81.8	18.2
Protestant	Below secondary^	100.0	0
	Secondary/ ITE	96.0	4.0
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	98.6	1.4
	Bachelor's and above	99.4	0.6
Catholic	Below secondary^	100.0	0
	Secondary/ ITE	100.0	0
	Dip. / Prof. qual.^	90.0	10.0
	Bachelor's and above	96.7	3.3
Muslim	Below secondary	95.7	4.3
	Secondary/ ITE	98.4	1.6
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	98.3	1.7
	Bachelor's and above^	91.3	8.7
Hindu	Below secondary^	100.0	0
	Secondary/ ITE^	95.5	4.5
	Dip. / Prof. qual.^	94.7	5.3
	Bachelor's and above	92.7	7.3
No religion	Below secondary	35.2	64.7
	Secondary/ ITE	45.2	54.8
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	42.1	57.9
	Bachelor's and above	50.8	49.2

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N; ^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

Table 113: Belief in God, by religious affiliation and housing type

Religion and Housing Type N = 1,962		Do you believe in God	
		Yes	**No**
Buddhist	**1- to 3-room HDB**	84.1	15.9
	4-room HDB	87.2	12.8
	5+-room HDB	77.3	22.7
	Private property	71.2	28.8
Taoist/ Chinese religion	**1- to 3-room HDB**	92.3	7.7
	4-room HDB	84.2	15.8
	5+-room HDB	77.8	22.2
	Private property^	92.3	7.7
Protestant	**1- to 3-room HDB**	98.8	1.2
	4-room HDB	98.8	1.2
	5+-room HDB	98.4	1.6
	Private property	98.3	1.7
Catholic	**1- to 3-room HDB^**	100.0	0
	4-room HDB	88.9	11.1
	5+-room HDB	100.0	0
	Private property^	100.0	0
Muslim	**1- to 3-room HDB**	97.6	2.4
	4-room HDB	97.0	3.0
	5+-room HDB	97.8	2.2
	Private property^	66.7	33.3
Hindu	**1- to 3-room HDB**	93.0	7.0
	4-room HDB	97.4	2.6
	5+-room HDB^	90.9	9.1
	Private property^	100.0	0
No religion	**1- to 3-room HDB**	41.4	58.6
	4-room HDB	49.6	50.4
	5+-room HDB	37.7	62.3
	Private property	53.5	46.5

"Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N; ^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

4.2.3 While the majority of respondents generally indicated belief in concepts of life after death, heaven, and hell, views are primarily split along religious and non-religious affiliations

The majority of respondents, especially those who embraced a religion believed in heaven, hell, and life after death. Overall, 69.9 per cent said that they believed in life after death; 70

per cent in hell and 72.8 per cent in heaven (see Figure 20). It is noteworthy that marginally lower proportions believed in life after death as compared to heaven or hell; perhaps the concept of "life after death" might not have been as clear to respondents, or held slightly different connotations such as reincarnation, relative to concepts such as "living" in heaven and/or hell. The data also shows that a small proportion of those who embrace heaven may not at the same time embrace notions of hell, perhaps eschewing from a framing of religion that focusses on punishment. As expected, a much smaller proportion of the non-religious indicate that they believe in these concepts compared to those with religious beliefs.

Compared to other societies, these proportions were on the higher side, together with responses from Malaysians, over 81 per cent of which believed in life after death, hell, and heaven; Thais, which had over 77 per cent believing in heaven and hell; and Americans, of which an average of 69 per cent believed in life after death, heaven, and hell. In contrast, respondents from China were the least likely to believe in these concepts, with under 13 per cent responding in the affirmative. Meanwhile, between 40 and 49 per cent of Hong Kong respondents indicated belief in these three concepts, while a third of South Korean respondents did the same. Of note were also the responses from Switzerland and Sweden – while under 18 per cent from each country believed in hell, 40.1 per cent of the Swiss and 30.1 per cent of Swedes believed in heaven.

When perusing life after death responses by religious affiliation, we note that Muslims, Christians, and Buddhists were most likely to indicate belief in life after death (approximately 80 per cent or more); in contrast, Taoists, adherents of traditional Chinese religion and Hindus were marginally less likely to indicate likewise (approximately 70 per cent). However, it is noteworthy that a substantial minority – just under 40 per cent – of those with no religion indicated belief in life after death, as with heaven and hell (see Table 114).

Table 114: Belief in life after death, by religious affiliation

Religion* *N = 1,924*	Do you believe in life after death	
	Yes	**No**
Buddhist	78.4	21.6
Taoist / Chinese religion	72.5	27.5
Protestant	78.9	21.1
Catholic	82.4	17.6
Muslim	88.6	11.4
Hindu	65.4	34.6
No religion	38.2	61.8

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

Of the population, 72.8 per cent expressed that they believed in the existence of heaven (see Figure 20). When the results are compared across religions, over 90 per cent of the followers of the three monotheistic religions — Protestants, Catholics, and Muslims — indicated that

they believed in heaven. In contrast, only 38.4 per cent of respondents who said they had no religion chose "yes" as their answer. Meanwhile, 70 per cent of the overall respondent pool indicated that they believed in hell (see Figure 20). When compared across religions, 91.2 per cent of Muslim respondents chose "yes" as their answers, the highest of all religions. On the other hand, only 37.1 per cent of respondents who had no religion indicated similar responses (see Tables 115 and 116).

Table 115: Belief in heaven, by religious affiliation

Religion* *N = 1,930*	Do you believe in heaven	
	Yes	**No**
Buddhist	73.5	26.5
Taoist / Chinese religion	72.0	28.0
Protestant	96.2	3.8
Catholic	90.3	9.7
Muslim	95.6	4.4
Hindu	61.0	39.0
No religion	38.4	61.6

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

Table 116: Belief in hell, by religious affiliation

Religion* *N = 1,927*	Do you believe in hell	
	Yes	**No**
Buddhist	74.0	26.0
Taoist / Chinese religion	72.7	27.3
Protestant	87.7	12.3
Catholic	82.3	17.7
Muslim	91.2	8.8
Hindu	59.0	41.0
No religion	37.1	62.9

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

4.2.4 Age is negatively correlated with belief in life after death, heaven, or hell for Buddhist, Protestant, and non-religious respondents; however, the converse applied for Taoists, Catholics, Muslims, and Hindus

Responses to the three concepts were next examined across age cohorts. We note that while older non-religious respondents, Buddhists, and Protestants were less likely to indicate belief in them, the reverse was true for all other groups. In other words, older Taoists, Catholics, Muslims, and Hindus were more likely to believe in life after death. While 58.3 per cent, 75 per cent, 74.8 per cent and 68.8 per cent of the youngest age cohort within these groups respectively indicated as such, these proportions rose to 68.4 per cent, 87.5 per cent, 93.9 per cent, and 90 per cent respectively for the oldest age cohorts. In contrast, while 41.2 per cent of non-religious respondents aged 21-35 years old indicated belief in life after death, this proportion dropped to a quarter for those above 65. Parallel trends, albeit with significantly higher baselines, were noted for Buddhists and Protestants (see Table 117).

Table 117: Belief in life after death, by religious affiliation and age

Religion and Age Cohort N = 1,924		Do you believe in life after death	
		Yes	No
Buddhist	21-35	86.0	14.0
	36-50	76.9	23.1
	51-65	77.5	22.5
	Above 65	74.0	26.0
Taoist/ Chinese religion	21-35^	58.3	41.7
	36-50	76.2	23.8
	51-65	81.6	18.4
	Above 65	68.4	31.6
Protestant	21-35	83.0	17.0
	36-50	78.2	21.8
	51-65	79.8	20.2
	Above 65	71.4	28.6
Catholic	21-35	75.0	25.0
	36-50	78.4	21.6
	51-65	90.6	9.4
	Above 65^	87.5	12.5
Muslim	21-35	84.8	15.2
	36-50	85.0	15.0
	51-65	94.6	5.4
	Above 65	93.9	6.1
Hindu	21-35^	68.8	31.3
	36-50^	53.2	46.8
	51-65	80.0	20.0
	Above 65^	90.0	10.0
No religion	21-35	41.2	58.8
	36-50	40.2	59.8
	51-65	38.5	61.5
	Above 65	24.5	75.5

"Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N; ^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

When asked if they believe in heaven, only 20.4 per cent of those aged above 65 with no religion said they did; a much lower proportion compared to the rest of the age cohorts in the same category. A slight negative correlation for age and belief in heaven was also observed for Buddhists and Protestants. In contrast, older respondents were more likely to believe in heaven compared to younger respondents for Taoists, Catholics, Muslims, and Hindus (see Table 118).

Table 118: Belief in heaven, by religious affiliation and age

Religion and Age Cohort N = 1,930		Do you believe in heaven	
		Yes	No
Buddhist	**21-35**	78.7	21.3
	36-50	72.1	27.9
	51-65	73.0	27.0
	Above 65	70.4	29.6
Taoist/ Chinese religion	**21-35^**	58.3	41.7
	36-50	78.6	21.4
	51-65	77.5	22.5
	Above 65	67.6	32.4
Protestant	**21-35**	96.6	3.4
	36-50	97.6	2.4
	51-65	97.4	2.6
	Above 65	91.2	8.8
Catholic	**21-35**	87.5	12.5
	36-50	86.5	13.5
	51-65	93.8	6.3
	Above 65^	95.7	4.3
Muslim	**21-35**	93.4	6.6
	36-50	96.7	3.3
	51-65	97.3	2.7
	Above 65	97.1	2.9
Hindu	**21-35**	59.4	40.6
	36-50	57.1	42.9
	51-65^	66.7	33.3
	Above 65^	77.8	22.2
No religion	**21-35**	40.3	59.7
	36-50	40.2	59.8
	51-65	42.6	57.4
	Above 65	20.4	79.6

"Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N; ^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

As for hell, the oldest age cohort in the non-religious group was the least likely to indicate belief (20.8 per cent). However, this proportion rose to 39.6 per cent for the youngest non-religious respondents, with similar patterns across age cohorts observed for Buddhists and Protestants. Like the trends outlined above for belief in life after death and heaven, age conversely had a positive correlation with belief in hell for Taoists, Catholics, Muslims, and Hindus (see Table 119).

Table 119: Belief in hell, by religious affiliation and age

Religion and Age Cohort N = 1,927		Do you believe in hell	
		Yes	No
Buddhist	21-35	80.6	19.4
	36-50	71.9	28.1
	51-65	71.7	28.3
	Above 65	73.5	26.5
Taoist/ Chinese religion	21-35	58.3	41.7
	36-50	76.2	23.8
	51-65	82.5	17.5
	Above 65	67.6	32.4
Protestant	21-35	92.0	8.0
	36-50	86.4	13.6
	51-65	87.0	13.0
	Above 65	84.2	15.8
Catholic	21-35	68.8	31.3
	36-50	81.1	18.9
	51-65	90.6	9.4
	Above 65^	91.3	8.7
Muslim	21-35	86.8	13.2
	36-50	91.7	8.3
	51-65	94.6	5.4
	Above 65	97.0	3.0
Hindu	21-35	59.4	40.6
	36-50	55.1	44.9
	51-65^	60.0	40.0
	Above 65^	77.8	22.2
No religion	21-35	39.6	60.4
	36-50	39.4	60.6
	51-65	38.9	61.1
	Above 65	20.8	79.2

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N; ^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

4.3 RECKONING RELIGIOSITY

This section presents findings on respondents' levels of religiosity. This portion peruses responses to questions on the importance of God in respondents' lives; self-reporting of religiosity; whether religion trumps science; and the acceptability of other religions.

4.3.1 While a large majority still acknowledge the importance of God in their lives, overall religiosity has waned over two decades. Age, religion, education, and housing are the four main variables influencing views

How important is God in the lives of Singaporeans? Respondents gave their answers along a 10-point scale whereby 1 denoted not important and 10 denoted important. This scale was aggregated into three categories for ease of analysis – ratings of 1 to 3 indicated not important at all or not very important; 4 to 7 indicated some degree of importance, while ratings of 8 to 10 meant that God was quite or very important. Amongst the population, 18.2 per cent indicated God was not or not very important in their lives; 34.2 per cent said indicated God was somewhat important, while 47.6 per cent indicated God was quite or very important (see Figure 21).

Figure 21: How important is God in your life?

- Not important at all / not very important
- Somewhat important
- Quite important / Very important

18.2%
47.6%
34.2%
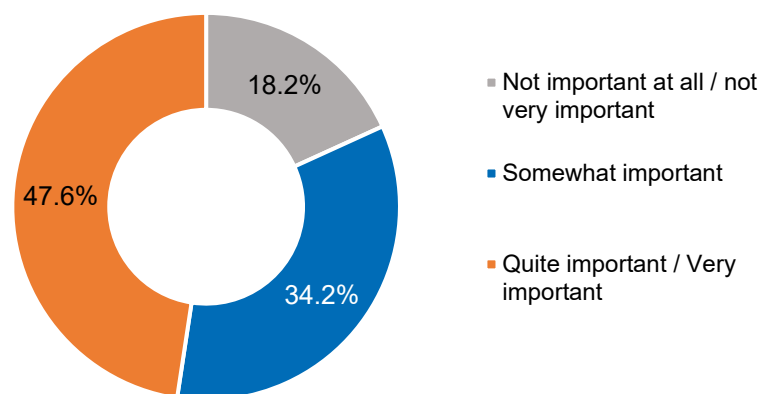
When examined as a scale, the overall mean score was 6.70, while the median score was 7. There was a drop in mean scores across the waves for this question, as the mean was 7.19 in 2002 and 6.95 in 2012. In addition, a larger proportion of respondents in 2020 said that God was not important – compared to 18.2 per cent of respondents for this wave, only 13 per cent in 2012 and 9.4 per cent in 2002 indicated likewise. These imply that while overall religiosity has fallen, the majority of Singaporeans still ascribes importance vis-à-vis God in their lives.

Perceptions of God varied across societies. While the mean scores from the US (7.05) and Malaysia (8.46) were higher compared to Singapore's, there were lower levels of importance ascribed to God by respondents from Thailand (5.09), Japan (4.52), South Korea (5.04), China (2.77), Hong Kong (4.84), Taiwan (6.06), Australia (4.54), the UK (4.40), Switzerland (5.15), and Sweden (3.48).

Mean scores for this question were also compared across selected demographic variables. Unsurprisingly, the largest disparities came from the comparison across religions. While respondents with no religion had a mean score of 3.84, Muslims had a mean score of 8.97. Overall, negative correlations were found for age, education, and housing type. However, the

differences between the maximum and minimum scores were not very large, probably because these relationships are moderated by religious differences (see Table 120).

Table 120: Importance of God, by age, religion, education, and housing type

Age F = 13.40***	Mean	Religion F = 208.75***	Mean	Education F = 5.42***	Mean	Housing F = 6.71***	Mean
21-35	6.16	Buddhist	6.33	Below secondary	6.87	1- to 3-room HDB	7.12
36-50	6.60	Taoist / TCB	5.97	Secondary / ITE	7.09	4-room HDB	6.69
51-65	7.15	Protestant	8.86	Diploma / Prof. qual.	6.49	5+-room HDB	6.30
Above 65	7.16	Catholic	8.10	Bachelor's and above	6.48	Private property	6.65
		Muslim	8.97				
		Hindu	8.03				
		No religion	3.84				

4.3.2 Religious adherents, females, the elderly, and less-educated respondents were in general more likely to feel God was important in their lives

Given that God is an essential religious element or concept across most faiths, it is unsurprising to see that the vast majority of respondents with religious beliefs indicated God was important in their lives to varying extents. Meanwhile, 51 per cent of those with no religion indicated likewise. Amongst those with religious beliefs, Buddhists and Taoists were much less likely to indicate that God was quite or very important in their lives (about one-third), compared with other religious adherents (two-thirds or more) (see Table 121).

Table 121: How important is God in your life, by religious affiliation

Religion* N = 2,001	How important is God in your life		
	Not at all / Not very important	Somewhat important	Quite / very important
Buddhist	14.8	48.9	36.4
Taoist / Chinese religion	15.6	56.5	27.9
Protestant	2.3	15.3	82.4
Catholic	4.8	26.2	69.0
Muslim	2.2	13.2	84.6
Hindu	4.5	30.6	64.9
No religion	49.0	40.9	10.1

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

Gender differences were observed for non-religious respondents, Buddhists, Protestants, Muslims, and Hindus. In general, females in these groups were more likely to attribute greater importance to God in their lives. The most pronounced difference was observed for the non-religious respondents – compared to 52.5 per cent of males who said that God was not important in their lives, only 45.4 per cent of females indicated likewise. Across the religions (with the exception of Taoism), the responses of females were more likely to fall in the last category attributing the highest levels of importance, relative to their male counterparts (see Table 122).

Table 122: How important is God in your life, by religious affiliation and gender

Religion* and Gender *N = 2,001*		How important is God in your life		
		Not at all / Not very important	Somewhat important	Quite / very important
Buddhist	**Male**	18.9	46.8	34.3
	Female	11.4	50.5	38.1
Taoist / TCB	**Male**	15.7	54.3	30.0
	Female	15.6	58.4	26.0
Protestant	**Male**	4.6	19.2	76.2
	Female	0.9	12.9	86.2
Catholic	**Male**	5.0	35.0	60.0
	Female	4.5	18.2	77.3
Muslim	**Male**	3.1	17.2	79.7
	Female	1.4	9.7	89.0
Hindu	**Male**	7.0	29.8	63.2
	Female	1.9	31.5	66.7
No religion	**Male**	52.5	39.5	8.0
	Female	45.4	42.4	12.2

"Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

We next peruse results across age cohorts. For the non-religious respondents, respondents in the youngest and oldest age groups were most likely to feel that God was not important in their lives; while a larger proportion of those aged between 51 and 65 felt God was at least somewhat important. For respondents with a declared religion, age was generally positively correlated with the propensity to say that God was very or quite important in their lives. For instance, while 34.4 per cent of the youngest Catholics indicated as such, this proportion ballooned to 87.5 per cent for the oldest Catholics. This trend (albeit less stark) was mirrored across most other religions (see Table 123).

Education meanwhile seemed to exert varying effects on the responses of participants depending on their religious affiliations. While more-educated Buddhists, Taoists, Catholics, Muslims, and Hindus were more likely to attribute less or no importance to God in their lives, the reverse was true for Protestants and those with no religion (see Table 124).

Table 123: How important is God in your life, by religious affiliation and age

Religion* and Age Cohort N = 2,001		How important is God in your life		
		Not at all / Not very important	Somewhat important	Quite / very important
Buddhist	**21-35**	26.1	51.4	22.5
	36-50	19.6	50.0	30.4
	51-65	9.5	48.1	42.4
	Above 65	3.8	45.7	50.5
Taoist/ Chinese religion	**21-35^**	29.2	54.2	16.7
	36-50	16.3	65.1	18.6
	51-65	17.1	51.2	31.7
	Above 65	5.1	53.8	41.0
Protestant	**21-35**	4.5	22.7	72.7
	36-50	0	17.6	82.4
	51-65	0.9	6.0	93.1
	Above 65	5.2	19.0	75.9
Catholic	**21-35**	3.1	62.5	34.4
	36-50	10.8	18.9	70.3
	51-65	3.0	9.1	87.9
	Above 65^	0	12.5	87.5
Muslim	**21-35**	3.7	17.8	78.5
	36-50	3.3	6.7	90.0
	51-65	0	13.7	86.3
	Above 65	0	9.1	90.9
Hindu	**21-35**	3.1	40.6	56.3
	36-50	5.8	26.9	67.3
	51-65^	6.3	31.3	62.5
	Above 65^	0	18.2	81.8
No religion	**21-35**	55.5	36.1	8.4
	36-50	48.9	40.1	10.9
	51-65	37.1	52.6	10.3
	Above 65	55.9	32.2	11.9

"Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N; ^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

Table 124: How important is God in your life, by religious affiliation and education

| Religion* and Education Level *N = 2,001*		How important is God in your life		
		Not at all / Not very important	Somewhat important	Quite / very important
Buddhist	**Below secondary**	5.7	47.5	46.7
	Secondary / ITE	9.9	49.7	40.4
	Dip. / Prof. Qual.	22.3	51.5	26.2
	Bachelor's and above	23.0	47.4	29.6
Taoist/ Chinese religion	**Below secondary**	5.4	57.1	37.5
	Secondary / ITE	14.7	58.8	26.5
	Dip. / Prof. Qual.^	17.4	56.5	26.1
	Bachelor's and above	32.4	52.9	14.7
Protestant	**Below secondary^**	3.4	27.6	69.0
	Secondary / ITE	4.0	12.0	84.0
	Dip. / Prof. Qual.	1.3	14.7	84.0
	Bachelor's and above	1.8	14.9	83.3
Catholic	**Below secondary^**	0	9.1	90.9
	Secondary / ITE	0	20.6	79.4
	Dip. / Prof. Qual.^	14.3	52.4	33.3
	Bachelor's and above	5.0	23.3	71.7
Muslim	**Below secondary**	1.5	17.9	80.6
	Secondary / ITE	0.8	11.4	87.8
	Dip. / Prof. Qual.	5.0	10.0	85.0
	Bachelor's and above^	4.3	17.4	78.3
Hindu	**Below secondary^**	0	30.8	69.2
	Secondary / ITE^	4.5	27.3	68.2
	Dip. / Prof. Qual.^	10.0	20.0	70.0
	Bachelor's and above	3.6	35.7	60.7
No religion	**Below secondary**	59.4	30.4	10.1
	Secondary / ITE	41.1	45.5	13.4
	Dip. / Prof. Qual.	51.5	41.2	7.2
	Bachelor's and above	49.5	40.9	9.7

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N; ^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

4.3.3 Over half of respondents felt they were religious independent of whether they attended religious services; this was especially so for Protestants

Next, respondents were asked to choose the most fitting self-description out of three options posed to them — "a religious person", "not a religious person", and "an atheist". A majority, or

56.2 per cent, said that they were religious people. This proportion was similar to that found in 2012, in which 58.8 per cent said they were religious people. In contrast, only 9.6 per cent said that they were atheists, while 34.2 per cent said they were not religious (see Figure 22).

Figure 22: Independently of whether you attend religious services or not, would you say you are…

- A religious person
- Not a religious person
- An atheist
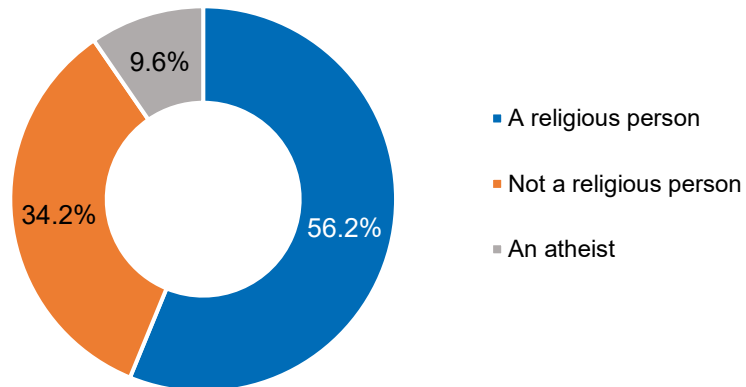
It is intuitive that respondents with no religion had the highest response rate for the "atheist" category, at 33.8 per cent. However, a larger proportion of 57.6 per cent instead chose to identify as non-religious rather than atheist; perhaps due to their reluctance to rule out the existence of any supernatural force or being. On the other end of the spectrum, 81.2 per cent of Protestant respondents indicated they considered themselves religious, independently of whether they attended religious services or otherwise (see Table 125).

Table 125: Self-perceptions of religiosity, by religious affiliation

Religion* N = 1,972	Independently of whether you attend religious services or not, would you say you are		
	A religious person	Not a religious person	An atheist
Buddhist	67.7	28.3	4.0
Taoist / Chinese religion	65.8	32.2	2.1
Protestant	81.2	18.2	0.6
Catholic	66.4	32.8	0.8
Muslim	70.3	28.6	1.1
Hindu	72.7	24.5	2.7
No religion	8.6	57.6	33.8

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

4.3.4 Religious adherents, females, the elderly, and less affluent respondents were in general more likely to think themselves as religious

The results were then examined across demographic variables. It appears that respondents who were female, older, Protestant Christians, or were less well-off socioeconomically were more likely to report being religious people. With regards to gender, females across all religious groups were more likely to identify as religious independently of attending services. For instance, three-quarters of Catholic women indicated as such, compared to just over half of their male counterparts. This trend is paralleled across all other groups except for Muslims and the non-religious, for which there were no discernible differences (see Table 126).

Table 126: Self-perceptions of religiosity, by religious affiliation and gender

Religion* and Gender *N = 1,972*		Independently of whether you attend religious services or not, would you say you are		
		A religious person	Not a religious person	An atheist
Buddhist	**Male**	62.8	32.5	4.8
	Female	71.6	24.9	3.5
Taoist / TCB	**Male**	59.2	36.6	4.2
	Female	72.0	28.0	0
Protestant	**Male**	72.7	25.8	1.6
	Female	86.3	13.7	0
Catholic	**Male**	56.7	41.7	1.7
	Female	75.4	24.6	0
Muslim	**Male**	70.9	28.3	0.8
	Female	69.7	28.9	1.4
Hindu	**Male**	70.2	24.6	5.3
	Female	75.5	24.5	0
No religion	**Male**	8.9	55.3	35.7
	Female	8.2	60.0	31.8

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

When considering the effects of age, we note that among respondents with no religious affiliation, older age cohorts were more likely to classify themselves as atheists while younger respondents were more likely to indicate they were not religious. Meanwhile, for those with declared religious affiliations, older respondents were far more likely to say they were religious compared to younger respondents. While there were marked differences between the youngest and oldest groups for most religions, this was not the case for Protestants for which over three-quarters considered themselves religious across all age groups (see Table 127).

Table 127: Self-perceptions of religiosity, by religious affiliation and age

Religion* and Age Cohort N = 1.972		Independently of whether you attend religious services or not, would you say you are		
		A religious person	Not a religious person	An atheist
Buddhist	**21-35**	43.2	51.4	5.4
	36-50	57.5	36.3	6.2
	51-65	81.5	15.3	3.2
	Above 65	86.8	12.3	0.9
Taoist/ Chinese religion	**21-35^**	34.8	65.2	0
	36-50	57.1	40.5	2.4
	51-65	78.0	19.5	2.4
	Above 65	80.0	17.5	2.5
Protestant	**21-35**	78.2	20.7	1.1
	36-50	79.3	19.5	1.2
	51-65	83.3	16.7	0
	Above 65	84.2	15.8	0
Catholic	**21-35**	46.9	50.0	3.1
	36-50	70.3	29.7	0
	51-65	65.6	34.4	0
	Above 65^	87.5	12.5	0
Muslim	**21-35**	59.2	38.8	1.9
	36-50	70.7	27.6	1.7
	51-65	78.4	21.6	0
	Above 65	85.3	14.7	0
Hindu	**21-35**	59.4	40.6	0
	36-50	78.4	15.7	5.9
	51-65^	68.8	31.3	0
	Above 65^	90.9	9.1	0
No religion	**21-35**	8.7	60.7	30.7
	36-50	6.6	57.4	36.0
	51-65	11.4	56.1	32.5
	Above 65	7.3	52.7	40.0

"Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N; ^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

There was an overall negative correlation between identification as "a religious person" and socioeconomic status, although the latter had varying impact on different religions, and no discernible impact for those without a religion. Less-educated, less affluent Buddhists and Taoists were more likely to identify themselves as religious. In contrast, more educated, more affluent Catholics were more likely to identify as such. Meanwhile, housing type was positively

correlated with Protestants' propensities to classify themselves as religious; but education had no effect. For Muslims, respondents with higher education were more likely to say they were religious; but income had no effect (see Tables 128 to 130).

Table 128: Self-perceptions of religiosity, by religious affiliation and education level

Religion* and Education Level *N = 1,972*		Independently of whether you attend religious services or not, would you say you are		
		A religious person	Not a religious person	An atheist
Buddhist	**Below secondary**	87.7	9.8	2.5
	Secondary/ ITE	76.4	20.5	3.1
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	53.8	43.3	2.9
	Bachelor's and above	49.2	43.2	7.6
Taoist/ Chinese religion	**Below secondary**	80.7	17.5	1.8
	Secondary/ ITE	66.7	33.3	0
	Dip. / Prof. qual.^	52.2	43.5	4.3
	Bachelor's and above	48.5	48.5	3.0
Protestant	**Below secondary^**	82.8	17.2	0
	Secondary/ ITE	84.5	15.5	0
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	79.2	18.1	2.8
	Bachelor's and above	80.4	19.6	0
Catholic	**Below secondary^**	100	0	0
	Secondary/ ITE	57.6	42.4	0
	Dip. / Prof. qual.^	66.7	28.6	4.8
	Bachelor's and above	65.0	35.0	0
Muslim	**Below secondary**	66.7	33.3	0
	Secondary/ ITE	71.2	28.8	0
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	74.6	23.7	1.7
	Bachelor's and above^	65.2	26.1	8.7
Hindu	**Below secondary^**	76.9	23.1	0
	Secondary/ ITE^	68.2	27.3	4.5
	Dip. / Prof. qual.^	70.0	25.0	5.0
	Bachelor's and above	74.5	23.6	1.8
No religion	**Below secondary**	11.9	55.2	32.8
	Secondary/ ITE	5.7	59.4	34.9
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	10.3	58.8	30.9
	Bachelor's and above	8.2	56.6	35.2

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N; ^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

Table 129: Self-perceptions of religiosity, by religious affiliation and housing type

Religion* and Housing Type *N = 1,972*		Independently of whether you attend religious services or not, would you say you are		
		A religious person	Not a religious person	An atheist
Buddhist	1- to 3-room HDB	76.2	19.2	4.6
	4-room HDB	65.0	32.0	3.0
	5+-room HDB	68.8	25.9	5.4
	Private property	53.3	43.3	3.3
Taoist/ Chinese religion	1- to 3-room HDB	79.5	20.5	0
	4-room HDB	66.7	33.3	0
	5+-room HDB	59.5	35.1	5.4
	Private property^	38.5	53.8	7.7
Protestant	1- to 3-room HDB	75.6	23.2	1.2
	4-room HDB	80.0	20.0	0
	5+-room HDB	83.1	16.9	0
	Private property	84.9	14.3	0.8
Catholic	1- to 3-room HDB^	77.8	22.2	0
	4-room HDB	59.5	40.5	0
	5+-room HDB	64.9	32.4	2.7
	Private property^	66.7	33.3	0
Muslim	1- to 3-room HDB	70.5	29.5	0
	4-room HDB	68.4	29.6	2.0
	5+-room HDB^	76.1	23.9	0
	Private property^	33.3	33.3	33.3
Hindu	1- to 3-room HDB	70.5	25.0	4.5
	4-room HDB	87.2	12.8	0
	5+-room HDB^	47.8	47.8	4.3
	Private property^	100.0	0	0
No religion	1- to 3-room HDB	8.0	47.3	44.6
	4-room HDB	11.4	62.1	26.5
	5+-room HDB	5.6	63.0	31.5
	Private property	8.7	57.3	34.0

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N; ^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

Table 130: Self-perceptions of religiosity, by religious affiliation and income level

Religion* and Income Level N = 1,205		Independently of whether you attend religious services or not, would you say you are		
		A religious person	Not a religious person	An atheist
Buddhist	**Below $1,500**	72.7	20.0	7.3
	$1,500-$2,999	75.3	22.2	2.5
	$3,000-$4,999	59.1	36.4	4.5
	$5,000-$6,999	40.5	57.1	2.4
	Above $6,999^	62.1	31.0	6.9
Protestant	**Below $1,500**	87.5	12.5	0
	$1,500-$2,999	64.7	35.3	0
	$3,000-$4,999	73.5	26.5	0
	$5,000-$6,999^	96.3	0	3.7
	Above $6,999	77.4	22.6	0
Muslim	**Below $1,500**	79.5	20.5	0
	$1,500-$2,999	57.1	40.3	2.6
	$3,000-$4,999	72.2	27.8	0
	$5,000-$6,999^	70.0	30.0	0
	Above $6,999^	71.4	14.3	14.3
No religion	**Below $1,500^**	9.7	54.8	35.5
	$1,500-$2,999	15.8	45.6	38.6
	$3,000-$4,999	12.8	61.7	25.5
	$5,000-$6,999	0	66.7	33.3
	Above $6,999	4.3	58.7	37.0

Certain categories omitted from analyses due to low N and/or no statistically significant differences, for ease of reference; ^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

4.3.5 While the majority disagreed that religion trumps science in times of conflict, Muslims and Christians were far more likely to think otherwise

Given that the majority of Singaporeans believe in certain aspects of the supernatural – they believe in God and the life hereafter – do they place greater weight on religious knowledge relative to scientific knowledge? How do they view other religions? Two-thirds of respondents to this regard indicated their disagreement or strong disagreement with the statement that "whenever science and religion are in conflict, religion is always right". Over three-quarters also eschewed the view that their religion is the only one which is acceptable. Similar proportions expressed disagreement with these two statements in 2012; 35.2 per cent agreed, and 64.8 per cent disagreed with the notion that religion is always right; while 23.2 per cent agreed while 76.8 per cent disagreed with the notion that their own religion was the only

acceptable These indicate sustained trends prioritising scientific enterprise over the ambit of faith, as well as increased openness towards other religions (see Figure 23).

Figure 23: How much do you agree with these statements?
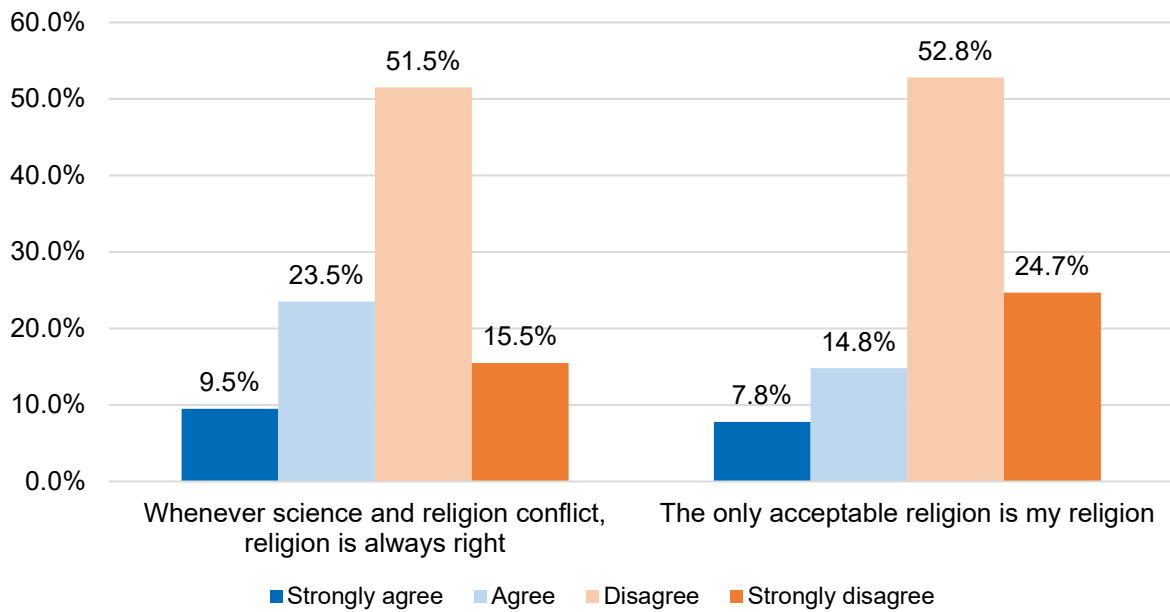
It is unsurprising to find the vast majority of non-religious respondents disagreeing with the statement on science versus religion; 63.9 per cent of this group disagreed, while 28.9 per cent said they strongly disagreed. In contrast, the majority of religious adherents were inclined to agree, with Muslims and Protestants most likely to express agreement or strong agreements that religion trumped science. However, Taoists, adherents of traditional Chinese beliefs, and Buddhists had relatively similar response rates across all categories compared to non-religious respondents (see Table 131).

Table 131: Science versus religion, by religious affiliation

Religion* N = 2,001	Whenever science and religion conflict, religion is always right			
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Buddhist	2.8	19.0	63.4	14.8
Taoist / Chinese religion	1.4	15.5	74.6	8.5
Protestant	22.3	35.8	34.6	7.3
Catholic	6.5	39.0	46.3	8.1
Muslim	26.6	43.4	22.8	7.1
Hindu	10.2	25.0	49.1	15.7
No religion	1.3	5.9	63.9	28.9

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

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4.3.6 Females, silvers, less-affluent, and less educated respondents were generally more likely to agree that religion trumped science in times of conflict; with exceptions for some religions

There were no major gender differences in overall agreement rates for those with no religion and Buddhists to the statement that religion is always right when there is a conflict between science and religion. Among Taoists, there was a 7 per cent difference with more men agreeing that religion is always right. For the rest of the religions, females were more likely than males to agree that religion is always right when science and religion conflict with the greatest differences seen among Christians. Among Roman Catholics, while 55.4 per cent of females agreed, only 34.5 per cent of males agreed with this statement (see Table 132).

Table 132: Science versus religion, by religious affiliation and gender

Religion* and Gender *N = 1,935*		Whenever science and religion conflict, religion is always right			
		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Buddhist	**Male**	4.0	18.2	56.0	21.8
	Female	1.8	19.6	69.4	9.3
Taoist / TCB	**Male**	1.5	19.1	67.6	11.8
	Female	1.4	12.2	81.1	5.4
Protestant	**Male**	22.3	26.4	39.7	11.6
	Female	22.3	41.3	31.6	4.9
Catholic	**Male**	6.9	27.6	55.2	10.3
	Female	6.2	49.2	38.5	6.2
Muslim	**Male**	26.8	41.7	21.3	10.2
	Female	26.4	45.0	24.3	4.3
Hindu	**Male**	9.1	21.8	54.5	14.5
	Female	11.3	28.3	43.4	17.0
No religion	**Male**	1.3	5.7	59.6	33.5
	Female	1.3	6.3	68.3	24.1

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

When analysing responses across age cohorts, we note that for respondents with no religious affiliation, younger respondents were more likely to indicate that they strongly disagreed with religion trumping science in times of conflict. For Buddhists, Taoists, Protestants, Catholics and Hindus, older respondents were in contrast more likely to agree with the statement. There were no major age differences found for Muslims (see Table 133).

Table 133: Science versus religion, by religious affiliation and age

Religion* and Age Cohort N = 1,935		Whenever science and religion conflict, religion is always right			
		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Buddhist	21-35	1.8	15.6	54.1	28.4
	36-50	2.1	17.9	66.2	13.8
	51-65	5.2	18.8	65.6	10.4
	Above 65	1.0	24.5	66.3	8.2
Taoist/ Chinese religion	21-35^	4.3	4.3	65.2	26.1
	36-50	0	11.6	81.4	7.0
	51-65	2.6	17.9	71.8	7.7
	Above 65	0	24.3	75.7	0
Protestant	21-35	14.3	26.2	42.9	16.7
	36-50	21.3	36.3	35.0	7.5
	51-65	29.9	40.2	27.1	2.8
	Above 65	22.3	35.8	34.6	7.3
Catholic	21-35	3.1	15.6	71.9	9.4
	36-50	0	50.0	33.3	16.7
	51-65	9.7	38.7	48.4	3.2
	Above 65^	16.7	54.2	29.2	0
Muslim	21-35	26.7	43.8	19.0	10.5
	36-50	30.5	39.0	25.4	5.1
	51-65	26.8	40.8	28.2	4.2
	Above 65	18.8	56.3	18.8	6.3
Hindu	21-35	9.4	15.6	50.0	25.0
	36-50	10.0	24.0	56.0	10.0
	51-65^	6.3	43.8	31.3	18.8
	Above 65^	20.0	30.0	40.0	10.0
No religion	21-35	1.3	2.0	56.3	40.4
	36-50	0.8	8.4	61.1	29.8
	51-65	1.8	7.1	75.2	15.9
	Above 65	1.7	8.5	67.8	22.0

"Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N; ^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

For Buddhists, Taoists, Muslims, and respondents with no religion, those living in larger housing types were more likely to indicate they strongly disagreed with religion trumping science in times of conflict. However, the pattern was reversed for Protestants, with affluent respondents more likely to agree with the statement (see Table 134).

Table 134: Science versus religion, by religious affiliation and housing type

Religion* and Housing Type *N = 1,935*		Whenever science and religion conflict, religion is always right			
		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Buddhist	1- to 3-room HDB	4.8	19.7	64.6	10.9
	4-room HDB	2.1	21.4	59.4	17.2
	5+-room HDB	1.8	16.5	67.9	13.8
	Private property	1.7	13.8	65.5	19.0
Taoist/ Chinese religion	1- to 3-room HDB	2.6	20.5	71.8	5.1
	4-room HDB	1.8	18.2	69.1	10.9
	5+-room HDB	0	8.6	85.7	5.7
	Private property^	0	7.7	76.9	15.4
Protestant	1- to 3-room HDB	12.7	36.7	45.6	5.1
	4-room HDB	25.0	32.9	38.2	3.9
	5+-room HDB	18.6	40.7	27.1	13.6
	Private property	29.2	34.5	28.3	8.0
Catholic	1- to 3-room HDB^	11.5	46.2	38.5	3.8
	4-room HDB	2.8	33.3	55.6	8.3
	5+-room HDB	2.7	40.5	51.4	5.4
	Private property^	12.5	37.5	33.3	16.7
Muslim	1- to 3-room HDB	31.1	44.3	21.3	3.3
	4-room HDB	22.9	43.8	21.9	11.5
	5+-room HDB^	21.7	43.5	30.4	4.3
	Private property^	33.3	0	0	66.7
Hindu	1- to 3-room HDB	11.9	23.8	52.4	11.9
	4-room HDB	10.5	26.3	47.4	15.8
	5+-room HDB^	8.7	21.7	43.5	26.1
	Private property^	0	40.0	60.0	0
No religion	1- to 3-room HDB	0.9	9.6	59.6	29.8
	4-room HDB	1.6	5.6	63.5	29.4
	5+-room HDB	0	3.6	73.6	22.7
	Private property	2.9	4.8	58.7	33.7

"Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N; ^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

Finally, when responses are sorted by education level, we find that higher-educated, non-religious respondents were much more likely to disagree with religion trumping science. This educational effect was also mirrored for Buddhists, Taoists, Protestants and Muslims (see Table 135).

Table 135: Science versus religion, by religious affiliation and education

Religion* and Education Level *N = 1,931*		Whenever science and religion conflict, religion is always right			
		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Buddhist	**Below secondary**	3.5	26.3	61.4	8.8
	Secondary / ITE	1.9	18.6	70.5	9.0
	Dip. / Prof. Qual.	4.9	11.8	63.7	19.6
	Bachelor's and above	1.5	18.0	57.1	23.3
Taoist/ Chinese religion	**Below secondary**	1.9	21.2	71.2	5.8
	Secondary / ITE	0	20.6	73.5	5.9
	Dip. / Prof. Qual.^	0	9.1	77.3	13.6
	Bachelor's and above	2.9	5.9	79.4	11.8
Protestant	**Below secondary^**	18.3	34.5	51.7	0
	Secondary / ITE	17.1	45.7	34.3	2.9
	Dip. / Prof. Qual.	29.6	33.8	26.8	9.9
	Bachelor's and above	22.9	32.5	35.0	9.6
Catholic	**Below secondary^**	9.1	54.5	36.4	0
	Secondary / ITE	12.1	36.4	48.5	3.0
	Dip. / Prof. Qual.^	0	23.8	66.7	9.5
	Bachelor's and above	5.2	43.1	39.7	12.1
Muslim	**Below secondary**	21.9	43.8	29.7	4.7
	Secondary / ITE	29.2	43.3	22.5	5.0
	Dip. / Prof. Qual.	28.3	46.7	16.7	8.3
	Bachelor's and above^	21.7	34.8	21.7	21.7
Hindu	**Below secondary^**	15.4	46.2	30.8	7.7
	Secondary / ITE^	9.5	38.1	47.6	4.8
	Dip. / Prof. Qual.^	10.5	15.8	52.6	21.1
	Bachelor's and above	9.1	18.2	52.7	20.0
No religion	**Below secondary**	0	13.0	69.6	17.4
	Secondary / ITE	0.9	8.3	64.8	25.9
	Dip. / Prof. Qual.	2.2	2.2	72.0	23.7
	Bachelor's and above	1.7	3.9	56.4	38.1

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N; ^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

4.3.7 Similar to findings on science versus religion, most disagreed that their religion was the only acceptable one. However, Muslims and Christians were far more likely to subscribe to religious exclusivism

In tandem with the multireligious social fabric of Singapore, most respondents indicated support for religious pluralism. 52.8 per cent disagreed, and 24.7 per cent strongly disagreed with the statement that "the only acceptable religion is my religion" (see Figure 23). However, these responses were largely dependent on participants' religious beliefs (or lack thereof). While less than 5 per cent indicated support for religion exclusivism for the non-religious on one end of the spectrum, this proportion grew to approximately half for Protestants and Muslims on the other end. 21.9 per cent chose "strongly agree", and 31.6 per cent chose "agree" for Protestants; while for Muslims, 17.7 per cent chose "strongly agree" and 31.2 per cent chose "agree" (see Table 136).

Table 136: Acceptance of other religions, by religious affiliation

Religion* N = 1,940	The only acceptable religion is my religion			
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Buddhist	2.9	9.1	63.4	24.7
Taoist / Chinese religion	1.4	11.0	68.3	19.3
Protestant	21.9	31.6	35.6	10.9
Catholic	6.4	10.4	60.8	22.4
Muslim	17.7	31.2	42.3	8.8
Hindu	3.7	6.4	57.8	32.1
No religion	1.1	3.8	52.5	42.6

"Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

4.3.8 In the same vein, females, silvers, less-educated respondents were more likely to express support for religious exclusivism

In general, female respondents were more likely than their male counterparts to agree that their religion was the only acceptable religion. In particular, Buddhist, Christian and Hindu women were more likely to indicate as such. However, the converse was true for Taoists. There were no statistically significant differences found for gender vis-à-vis Muslims and respondents with no religion (see Table 137).

Table 137: Acceptance of other religions, by religious affiliation and gender

Religion* and Gender N = 1,940		The only acceptable religion is my religion			
		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Buddhist	Male	3.5	7.4	57.6	31.4
	Female	2.4	10.3	67.9	19.3
Taoist / TCB	Male	2.9	17.4	58.0	21.7
	Female	0	5.3	77.6	17.1
Protestant	Male	25.6	22.3	33.9	18.2
	Female	19.7	37.0	36.5	6.7
Catholic	Male	1.7	10.2	61.0	27.1
	Female	10.6	10.6	60.6	18.2
Muslim	Male	17.7	31.5	39.5	11.3
	Female	17.6	30.9	44.9	6.6
Hindu	Male	0	3.6	61.8	34.5
	Female	7.4	9.3	5.7	29.6
No religion	Male	1.3	3.5	48.9	46.3
	Female	0.9	4.1	56.2	38.7

"Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

Age and education also emerged as two key variables impacting acceptance of other religions. Younger respondents with typically more likely to express support for religious pluralism relative to their older counterparts. In particular, levels of acceptance for other religions decreased significantly for Christians from the youngest to oldest age cohort. This trend is mirrored across other religions and for those without a religion; albeit less starkly. There was no discernible age difference for Buddhist respondents (see Table 138).

In contrast with age, the effect of education on support for religious exclusivism was more nuanced. Higher-educated Buddhists, Catholics, Muslims, Hindus, and respondents without religion were more likely to support religious pluralism, related to their lower-educated counterparts. In contrast, higher-educated Taoists and Protestants were more likely to support religious exclusivism relative to their less-educated peers (see Table 139).

Table 138: Acceptance of other religions, by religious affiliation and age

Religion* and Age Cohort N = 1,940		The only acceptable religion is my religion			
		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Buddhist	21-35	2.7	9.1	44.5	43.6
	36-50	2.7	9.5	59.5	28.4
	51-65	3.2	7.6	74.5	14.6
	Above 65	2.9	10.6	72.1	14.4
Taoist/ Chinese religion	21-35^	4.2	12.5	45.8	37.5
	36-50	0	11.6	76.7	11.6
	51-65	0	5.0	65.0	30.0
	Above 65	2.6	15.8	76.3	5.3
Protestant	21-35	12.2	20.7	43.9	23.2
	36-50	14.8	34.6	43.2	7.4
	51-65	29.4	37.6	25.7	7.3
	Above 65	31.6	31.6	31.6	5.3
Catholic	21-35	0	6.3	50.0	43.8
	36-50	2.7	10.8	56.8	29.7
	51-65	6.3	12.5	71.9	9.4
	Above 65^	20.8	12.5	66.7	0
Muslim	21-35	18.4	21.4	46.6	13.6
	36-50	23.6	32.7	34.5	9.1
	51-65	17.4	40.6	39.1	2.9
	Above 65	6.1	39.4	48.5	6.1
Hindu	21-35	0	6.3	50.0	43.8
	36-50	4.0	6.0	62.0	28.0
	51-65^	0	6.3	62.5	31.3
	Above 65^	18.2	9.1	54.5	18.2
No religion	21-35	0.7	2.7	38.7	58.0
	36-50	0.8	4.7	50.4	44.1
	51-65	1.8	4.4	62.8	31.0
	Above 65	1.8	3.6	73.2	21.4

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N; ^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

Table 139: Acceptance of other religions, by religious affiliation and education

Religion* and Education Level N = 1,936		The only acceptable religion is my religion			
		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Buddhist	**Below secondary**	3.3	11.6	70.2	14.9
	Secondary / ITE	1.3	10.6	73.8	14.4
	Dip. / Prof. Qual.	4.9	6.8	59.2	29.1
	Bachelor's and above	3.0	6.0	48.5	42.5
Taoist/ Chinese religion	**Below secondary**	0	11.1	72.2	16.7
	Secondary / ITE	2.9	8.8	73.5	14.7
	Dip. / Prof. Qual.^	0	8.7	56.5	34.8
	Bachelor's and above	2.9	14.7	64.7	17.6
Protestant	**Below secondary^**	14.3	28.6	53.6	3.6
	Secondary / ITE	26.4	37.5	30.6	5.6
	Dip. / Prof. Qual.	19.7	32.4	36.6	11.3
	Bachelor's and above	22.2	29.1	34.2	14.6
Catholic	**Below secondary^**	18.2	0	81.8	0
	Secondary / ITE	11.8	17.6	58.8	11.8
	Dip. / Prof. Qual.^	0	4.8	66.7	28.6
	Bachelor's and above	3.4	10.2	55.9	30.5
Muslim	**Below secondary**	14.5	41.9	38.7	4.8
	Secondary / ITE	21.8	32.8	40.3	5.0
	Dip. / Prof. Qual.	17.5	22.8	45.6	14.0
	Bachelor's and above^	4.5	13.6	54.5	27.3
Hindu	**Below secondary^**	7.7	23.1	46.2	23.1
	Secondary / ITE^	4.5	13.6	68.2	13.6
	Dip. / Prof. Qual.^	0	5.3	57.9	36.8
	Bachelor's and above	3.6	0	56.4	40.0
No religion	**Below secondary**	3.0	3.0	76.1	17.9
	Secondary / ITE	0.9	6.5	57.9	34.6
	Dip. / Prof. Qual.	2.2	3.2	51.6	43.0
	Bachelor's and above	0	2.8	40.3	56.8

"Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N; ^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

Chapter 5

Family and Gender

CHAPTER 5 | PARENTING AND PROGENY

Family is an important aspect of most people's lives. The following section provides an understanding of what values people in the country want to instil in the younger generation, as well as how they view the structure of family. Current research on family values focus less on the children and largely on the parents of the household. In his study on Singaporean's values, Kau (2004) finds that Singaporeans were highly family-oriented. He also finds that the family values of Singapore strongly align with the family values espoused by the state. Which of these family values of the older generation get passed down to the younger generation, however, is an under-researched area. The findings from this section will likely provide some preliminary answers to this question.

It is also important to investigate what Singaporeans think is the ideal family structure when alternative family structures have begun to emerge in Singapore, concomitant with the nation's rapidly changing demographic and socioeconomic conditions. The Singapore government has promoted a certain ideal for the Singaporean family. The traditional nuclear family is one that consists of a heterosexual, legally married couple with children. This is the ideal, state-endorsed, and legitimate family structure that forms the bedrock of Singapore society (Quah, 2016). However, divorce rates have been rising steadily in Singapore for the past three decades, giving rise to more single-parent family units. In addition, other forms of family structures such as unmarried parents, widowed parents, and same-sex parents present themselves as a challenge to the traditional, Confucian concept of the complete family as promoted by the government. (For an overview of alternative family structures, see Quah, 2016; Wong et al. [2004]; Hing & King [2004]; and Quah & Tang [2017]).

Singapore is also experiencing an ultra-low fertility rate. The rise of more educated individuals and the trend of marrying later has led to couples deciding to give birth later, have fewer children or not give birth at all. Another key reason for declining birth rates is because more women are in the labour workforce and find it difficult to balance working and raising a child (Lenore, 1998). The demanding workplace of Singapore also means married women may experience family-to-work conflict (Fackrell et al., 2013). It is thus imperative to examine whether society perceives working mothers as posing disadvantages to their children as they work to gain income.

The findings indicate that there were some differing perspectives on family from different segments of society. Respondents who were younger, had higher education levels, earned higher income, or who lived in larger housing types were more likely to be more open to different types of family structures like working mothers and homosexual parents. In contrast, older respondents who were older or from less well-off socio-economic backgrounds were more likely to approve of a more traditional conception of family where they saw having children as a duty towards society, while being less open to alternative family structures. However, the concept of family was still strong, with most respondents across all segments of society disagreeing it was selfish to have children. There was also a strong consensus that adult children should take care of their elderly parents.

5.1   DESIRED TRAITS IN CHILDREN

Children represent hope for the future. The types of values respondents feel children should be encouraged to learn at home, in turn, gives us a good idea of what respondents view as important in life. The WVS survey presented respondents with a list of eleven qualities potentially inculcated in children at home, and asked respondents to pick up to five qualities they considered important. The results are explicated in the ensuing four sub-sections.

5.1.1   Good manners, responsibility, and respect for others were top qualities identified as important for children in 2020; meanwhile proportions picking hard work, thrift and obedience suffered a decline over the years

Overall, good manners were the most important quality children should have, as identified by respondents. Nearly four-fifths of the respondent pool chose this as one of the five most important qualities that children should be encouraged to learn at home. This quality was also ranked first (i.e., the quality that most respondents considered important) by other societies like Malaysia, Thailand, Japan, China, Australia, and the United Kingdom. Other important qualities identified by respondents include responsibility (72.7 per cent), tolerance and respect for other people (64.4 per cent), independence (55.7 per cent) and hard work (48.5 per cent). On the flipside, imagination, obedience, and religious faith were the least popular. When compared across the different waves, feeling of responsibility and tolerance and respect for other people were consistently ranked high; unselfishness, imagination, and religious faith were consistently at the bottom of the list; while independence, hard work, and obedience dropped in rankings across the waves (see Figure 24).

Figure 24: Here is a list of qualities that children can be encouraged to learn at home. Which, if any, do you consider to be especially important?
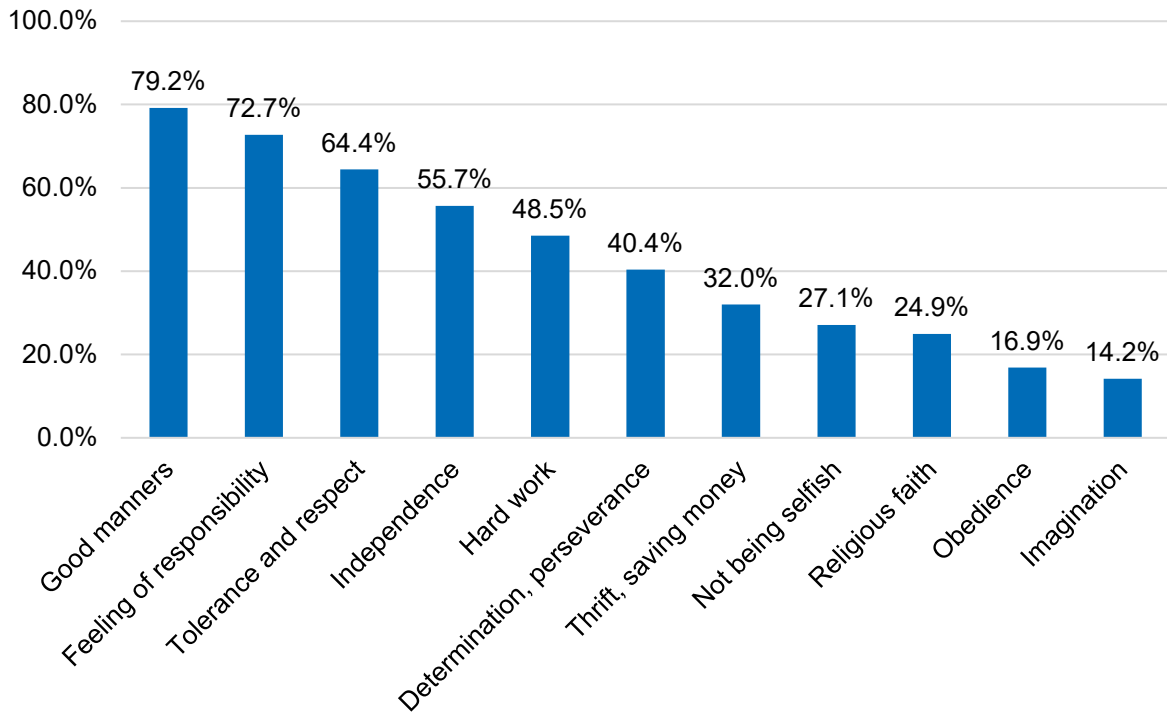
When comparing responses across survey iterations, we note that aside from good manners (a new item appearing only in the 2020 survey iteration), Singapore respondents consistently identified responsibility, tolerance and respect for others and independence as other key preferred qualities for children. At least half or more of respondents for each survey iteration included these attributes in their shortlist of the top five qualities they felt children should learn at home. Hard work was also one of the top five qualities across all waves; although proportions of respondents including this in their top five shortlist dropped from 70.1 per cent in 2002, to 60.3 per cent in 2012, and to 48.5 per cent in 2020. Other qualities which saw a marked decline in prioritisation across the years included thrift and obedience (see Table 140).

Table 140: Ranking of preferred qualities for children across WVS waves

Rank	WVS 2002		WVS 2012		WVS 2020	
	Quality	%	Quality	%	Quality	%
1	Feeling of responsibility	85.4	Independence	72.2	Good manners*	79.2
2	Independence	73.6	Feeling of responsibility	69.7	Feeling of responsibility	72.7
3	Hard work	70.1	Hard work	60.3	Tolerance and respect for other people	64.4
4	Tolerance and respect for other people	70.1	Tolerance and respect for other people	53.9	Independence	55.7
5	Thrift, saving money and things	47.3	Thrift, saving money and things	47.1	Hard work	48.5
6	Obedience	46.9	Determination, perseverance	45.6	Determination, perseverance	40.4
7	Determination, perseverance	34.7	Obedience	38.2	Thrift, saving money and things	32.0
8	Religious faith	29.1	Religious faith	26.9	Not being selfish (unselfishness)	27.1
9	Unselfishness	26.8	Unselfishness	25.8	Religious faith	24.9
10	Imagination	11.7	Imagination	18.6	Obedience	16.9
11			Self-expression^	14.1	Imagination	14.2

^ Only for 2012 wave; * Only for 2020 wave

The 2020 rankings for these eleven qualities were then examined for differences across demographic indicators such as age, housing type, and religion; with analyses presented in 5.1.2 thru 5.1.4.

5.1.2 Older respondents were more likely to view hard work, thrift, religious faith, unselfishness, and obedience as important qualities for children, relative to their younger peers

There were no age cohort differences found for the top three qualities. However, while independence was the fourth-ranked quality for most of the sample, hard work was in fourth place for the oldest group. There seemed to be a significant age difference in the importance attributed towards hard work; over half of those aged above 50 years old shortlisting this quality, while 42.2 per cent of those aged between 36 and 50, as well as 49.3 per cent of those aged between 21 and 35, did so. These differences were discernible from the rankings. While hard work was the fourth most chosen quality for the oldest age cohort, it fell to fifth or sixth

place for younger age cohorts. Meanwhile, older respondents were also more likely to prioritise thrift, religious faith, unselfishness, and obedience compared to their younger counterparts.

There was also an outsized age difference in perspectives on the importance of determination. While only 20.4 per cent of those aged above 65 years old identified determination as the top five most important qualities for children to learn at home, over half, or 52.9 per cent of the youngest group gave the same answer. Besides determination, younger respondents were also more likely to shortlist qualities of independence and imagination compared to their older peers (see Table 141).

Table 141: Ranking of preferred qualities for children by age cohort

Rank	21-35 years old		36-50 years old		51-65 years old		> 65 years old	
	Quality	%	Quality	%	Quality	%	Quality	%
1	Good manners	82.2	Good manners	76.9	Good manners	78.3	Good manners	81.1
2	Feeling of responsibility	71.6	Feeling of responsibility	74.9	Feeling of responsibility	74.7	Feeling of responsibility	68.2
3	Tolerance and respect	61.4	Tolerance and respect	67.5	Tolerance and respect	65.1	Tolerance and respect	63.7
4	Independence	58.5	Independence	60.1	Independence	52.8	Hard work	55.9
5	Determination, perseverance	52.9	Determination, perseverance	45.2	Hard work	51.2	Independence	47.7
6	Hard work	49.3	Hard work	42.2	Determination, perseverance	33.5	Thrift, saving money	39.0
7	Thrift, saving money	31.2	Thrift, saving money	29.5	Thrift, saving money	31.7	Not being selfish	25.5
8	Not being selfish	29.3	Not being selfish	27.0	Religious faith	31.0	Religious faith	24.6
9	Religious faith	20.8	Religious faith	22.4	Not being selfish	25.7	Obedience	20.4
10	Imagination	16.3	Obedience	17.7	Obedience	18.5	Determination, perseverance	20.4
11	Obedience	13.0	Imagination	14.8	Imagination	11.2	Imagination	13.2

5.1.3 Affluent respondents were more likely to prioritise responsibility, tolerance, and respect, determination, and thrift as important qualities to inculcate in children, relative to their less well-off counterparts

When comparing responses prioritising the qualities children should be taught at home across housing types, we note that the top four qualities listed by respondents regardless of affluence types were the same. However, while the least affluent respondents were most likely to pick good manners as an important quality to inculcate in children (83.3 per cent), this proportion dropped across the housing categories. Responsibility was slightly more important for private property dwellers (74.5 per cent); with good manners weighing in second at 72.7 per cent. Meanwhile, more affluent respondents were more likely to pick tolerance and respect for others as an important quality relative to less well-off peers.

It is also interesting to note that respondents living in larger housing types were significantly more likely to pick determination as an important quality to inculcate in children. In fact, over half of the respondents living in private properties did so, in contrast with under one-third of respondents residing in 1-3 room HDB units. Privately property dwellers were also marginally more likely to prioritise thrift. In contrast, hard work and obedience were viewed as more important by those who were living in public housing. 52.7 per cent and 18.9 per cent of respondents residing in 1-3 room HDB units indicated as such respectively; these proportions dropped to 41.5 per cent and 12.2 per cent respectively for private property dwellers (see Table 142).

Table 142: Ranking of preferred qualities for children by housing type

Rank	1- to 3-room HDB		4-room HDB		5+-room HDB		Private property	
	Quality	**%**	**Quality**	**%**	**Quality**	**%**	**Quality**	**%**
1	Good manners	83.3	Good manners	81.0	Good manners	76.9	Feeling of responsibility	74.5
2	Feeling of responsibility	71.7	Feeling of responsibility	73.0	Feeling of responsibility	72.7	Good manners	72.7
3	Tolerance and respect	61.4	Tolerance and respect	62.9	Tolerance and respect	66.2	Tolerance and respect	70.9
4	Independence	55.1	Independence	55.5	Independence	55.8	Independence	56.4
5	Hard work	52.7	Hard work	49.6	Hard work	48.4	Determination, perseverance	53.7
6	Determination, perseverance	31.1	Determination, perseverance	38.1	Determination, perseverance	44.2	Hard work	41.5
7	Thrift, saving money	29.1	Thrift, saving money	32.5	Thrift, saving money	33.3	Thrift, saving money	35.3
8	Not being selfish	26.4	Not being selfish	27.0	Not being selfish	28.0	Religious faith	28.5
9	Religious faith	24.7	Religious faith	23.6	Religious faith	23.6	Not being selfish	27.0
10	Obedience	18.9	Obedience	19.3	Imagination	17.4	Imagination	13.1
11	Imagination	13.8	Imagination	12.3	Obedience	15.3	Obedience	12.2

5.1.4 Muslims and Christians were most likely to prioritise religious faith as an important quality to teach children; Taoists and non-religious individuals were on the other hand, the least likely to do so

Given how about one-quarter of respondents mentioned religious faith as an important attribute to be taught to children, we examine these responses across religion for a more in-depth understanding of which faiths emphasise the imparting of religious faith in adherents' offspring. We find that Muslims (55.3 per cent) and Protestants (50.4 per cent) were the most likely to shortlist religious faith as an important attribute; they were the only two groups with over half of respondents indicating as such. In contrast, similar proportions of Taoists and adherents of traditional Chinese beliefs (6.1 per cent) identified religious faith as an important attribute, relative to those with no religion (5.3 per cent) (see Table 143).

Table 143: Religious faith as preferred quality for children, by religious affiliation

Religion* *N = 2,012*	Do you consider religious faith to be especially important?	
	Mentioned	**Not Mentioned**
Buddhist	12.0	88.0
Taoist / Chinese religion	6.1	93.9
Protestant	50.4	49.6
Catholic	36.5	63.5
Muslim	55.3	44.7
Hindu	21.6	78.4
No religion	5.3	94.7

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

5.2 PERUSING PROGENY

This next tranche of questions focused on issues pertaining to children: whether having children was a duty to society, whether adult children had the duty to care for their parents (notions of filial piety), as well as the respondents' planned number of children. Overall, there seemed to be substantial support for traditional family values. In particular, there was a desire to have children, even if younger respondents did not see it as a duty towards society as much as older respondents. In addition, there was strong support for the value of filial piety, as a large majority felt that adult children should provide long-term care for their parents.

In general, there seemed to be differences in perspectives between respondents of different age groups and socioeconomic backgrounds. Those who were older and from less well-off socio-economic backgrounds indicated higher agreement with more conservative values, including having children as a duty to society, and for adult children to take care of their elderly parents.

There were varying reactions to each statement in overall terms. The statement on adult children having a duty to care for parents was the only one where nearly half of the respondents agreed. Meanwhile, 77 per cent of respondents disagreed that it was selfish to have children. It appears that there was some agreement amongst the population that children should take care of their parents in their old age, and that having children was not something that should be frowned upon. There was more contention regarding whether having children was a duty towards society, given that around 30 per cent of the population remained neutral on these two statements (see Figure 25).

Figure 25: How do you feel about the following statements?

Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Categories: It is a duty towards society to have children; It is selfish to have children; Adult children have the duty to provide long-term care for their parents
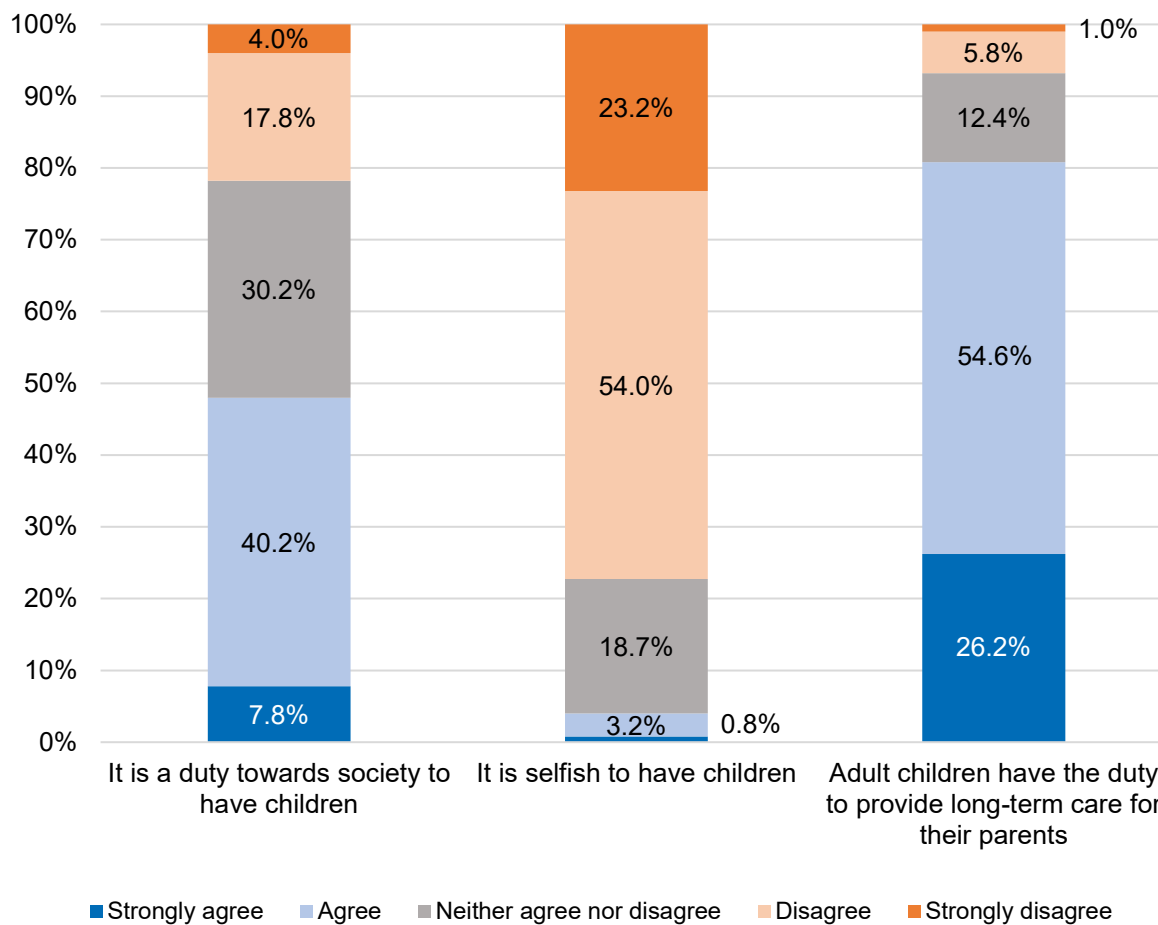
5.2.1 Just under half of Singapore respondents felt having children was a societal duty; this proportion places Singapore in the middle of the pack relative to other Asian societies

For Singapore respondents, slightly less than 50 per cent agreed to some extent that it was a duty towards society to have children. Specifically, 7.8 per cent said they strongly agreed, and 40.2 per cent said they agreed with the statement. The proportion that expressed neutrality (30.2 per cent) was also larger than the combined proportions for "disagree" and "strongly disagree" (21.8 per cent) (see Figure 25).

When compared against selected societies, there was a clear divide observed between those located in Asia and those outside of Asia. The Asian societies had much higher agreement rates; at least 45 per cent of these polities (with the exception of Japan and Hong Kong) agreed with the statement. Meanwhile, less than 20 per cent of respondents from Australia, the US, the UK, Sweden, and Switzerland agreed that it is a duty towards society to have children. *In toto*, these trends reflected the general cultural divisions between Asian societies and Eurocentric or Anglocentric societies (see Figure 26).

Figure 26: It is a duty towards society to have children
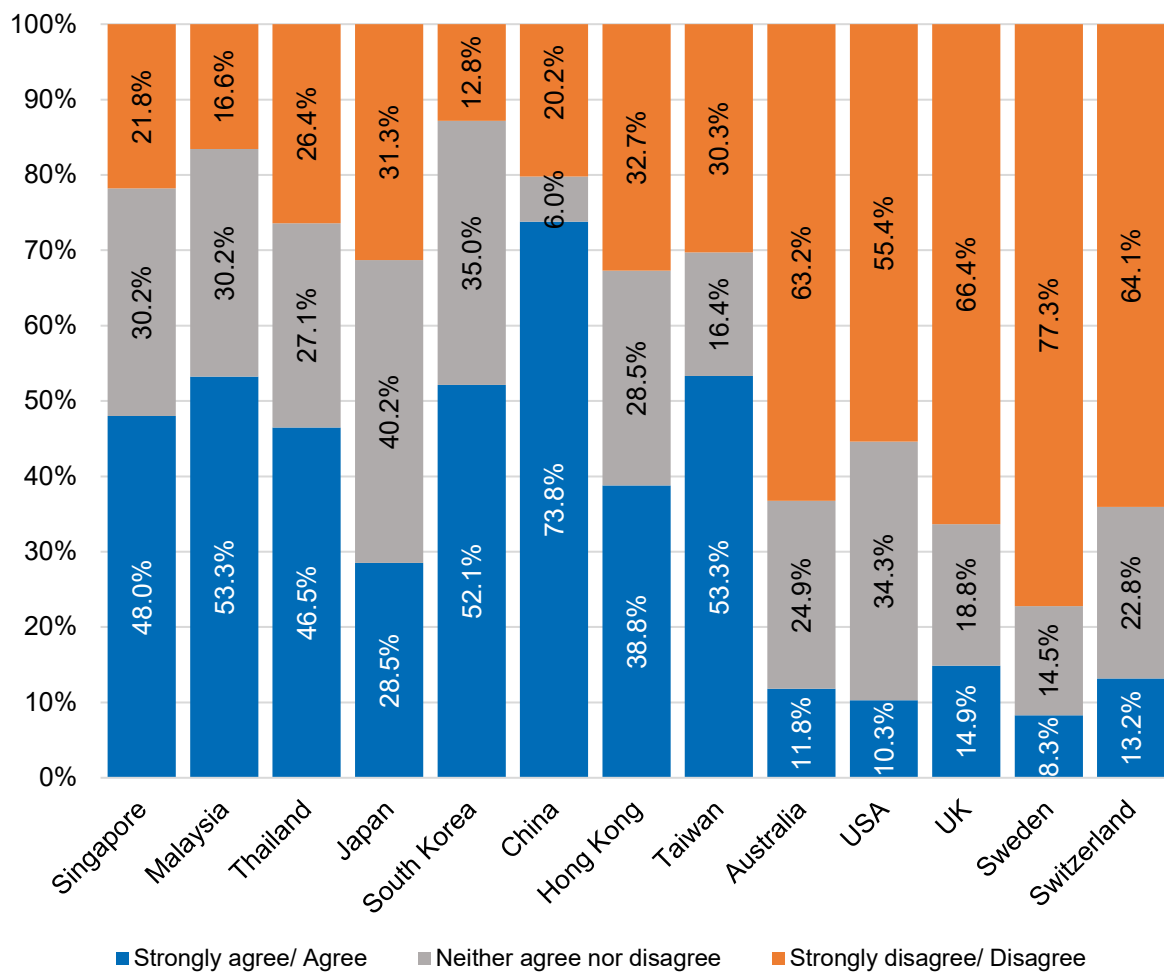
While many respondents did not see having children as primarily a societal duty, neither did they see having children as a selfish act. In Singapore, reproduction was at some point framed by political leaders as a national duty. Wong and Yeoh (2003) argue that women are seen to be responsible for Singapore's survival through biological reproduction. Practically, the state enacts pro-natalist policies such as implementing financial incentives in the form of the Baby Bonus Scheme or the Third Child Paid Maternity Leave Scheme (Williams, 2014). Despite increased efforts to promote child-bearing, fertility remains low in Singapore.

However, the Singapore population has thus far not embraced anti-natalist views. In some quarters internationally, giving birth to children is viewed as selfish or irrational. These arguments centre around pessimism about human life (see, for example, Benatar, 2006), the environmental impact of overpopulation (see Murtaugh and Schlax, 2009), the inability to obtain the consent of the non-existent, the severe opportunity cost of parenting (Stuart, 2014) and the simple fact that the costs (usually financial) of having a child outweighs the material benefits of having children (Barbato et al., 2009).

5.2.2 Views on having children as duty to society are primarily influenced by age, education, and affluence; older, less-educated, and less affluent respondents are more likely to feel as such

Compared with younger respondents, older respondents were much more likely to choose "agree" and less likely to choose "neither agree nor disagree" or "disagree". In particular, 76.5 per cent of respondents older than 65 years old either strongly agreed or agreed that it was a duty towards society to have children — the only group to have an agreement rate exceeding 60 per cent. This proportion dropped precipitously across age cohorts; only 33.7 per cent of the youngest respondents felt likewise. This implies a stronger connection between societal duty and having children amongst older respondents, while younger respondents were much less convinced by this viewpoint (see Table 144).

Table 144: It is a duty towards society to have children, by age cohort

Age Cohort *N = 2,005*	It is a duty towards society to have children		
	Strongly agree / Agree	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree / strongly disagree**
21-35	33.7	39	27.3
36-50	41.6	32.1	26.2
51-65	53.1	28.7	18.2
Above 65	76.5	12.3	11.1

When analysing results by socio-economic factors, we find that respondents with higher education, higher income, and who lived in larger housing types were less likely to agree with the statement. While only 35.5 per cent of the respondents with university degrees, 34.6 per cent of those earning above $6,999, and 35 per cent of private property dwellers agreed that it is a duty towards society to have children, 71 per cent of those with below secondary school education, 55.3 per cent of those earning below $1,500, and 55.3 per cent of those living in 1- to 3-room flats said the same. There was also a greater likelihood among those with higher levels of education, income, and housing levels to choose the neutral option. It therefore seems that respondents with higher socioeconomic levels were more likely to see having children as a personal decision rather than one which impacts society (see Tables 145 to 147).

Table 145: It is a duty towards society to have children, by education level

Education Level *N = 2,001*	It is a duty towards society to have children		
	Strongly agree / Agree	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree / strongly disagree**
Below secondary	71	15.1	14
Secondary/ ITE	55.5	26.1	18.3
Dip. / Prof. qual.	38.8	38.3	22.9
Bachelor's and above	35.5	36	28.5

Table 146: It is a duty towards society to have children, by income level

Income Level *N = 1,221*	It is a duty towards society to have children		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree / strongly disagree
Below $1,500	55.3	22.6	22.2
$1,500 - $2,999	50	29.7	20.3
$3,000 - $4,999	38.8	40.4	20.8
$5,000 - $6,999	40.8	39.6	19.5
Above $6,999	34.6	36.5	28.9

Table 147: It is a duty towards society to have children, by housing type

Housing Type *N = 2,005*	It is a duty towards society to have children		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree / strongly disagree
1- to 3-room HDB	55.3	23.2	21.5
4-room HDB	49.6	30.7	19.7
5+-room HDB	47.7	31.9	20.3
Private property	35	36.8	28.2

5.2.3 Four-fifths of Singapore respondents agreed that it was the duty of adult children to care for their parents over the long-term; this proportion was among the highest in Asia

The statement about adult children having the duty to care for their parents garnered the highest agreement rates among Singapore respondents. Overall, 26.2 per cent strongly agreed, and 54.6 per cent agreed with the statement. In contrast, only 1 per cent strongly disagreed, and 5.8 per cent disagreed. When compared with other Asian and Western societies as shown in the chart below, Singapore had one of the highest rates of agreement, falling behind only Malaysia and China. This suggests that notions of filial piety and shouldering the responsibility of caring for elderly parents are still strongly rooted in the minds of Singapore respondents. In general, Asian societies, with the exception of Japan, were also far more likely to indicate agreement for this act of filial piety relative to Western societies (see Figure 27).

Figure 27: Adult children have the duty to provide long-term care for their parents

Legend: ■ Strongly agree/ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Strongly disagree/ Disagree
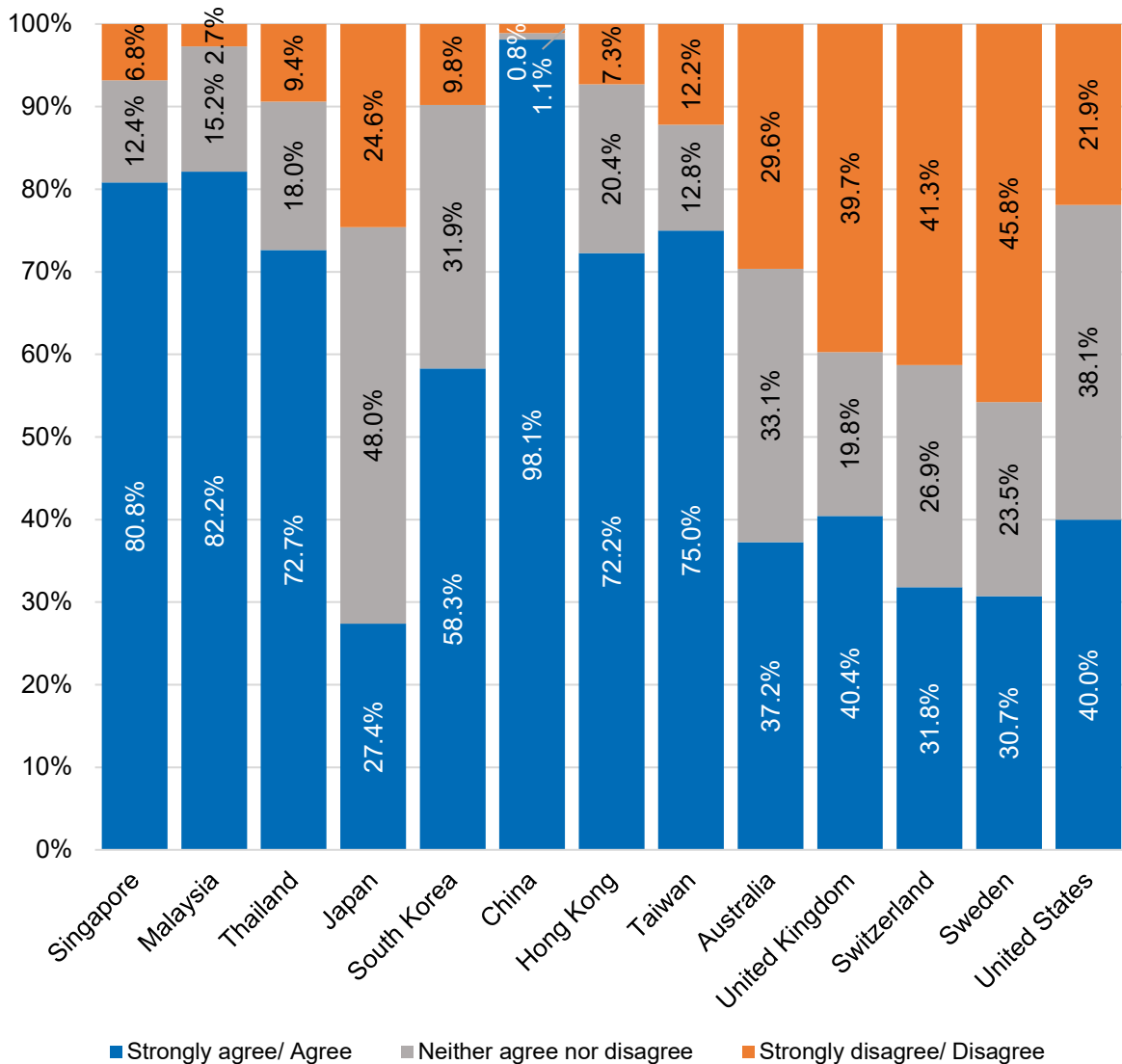
5.2.4 The elderly, lower-educated, and less affluent individuals were also more likely to agree that it was the duty of adult children to care for their parents in the long haul

Older respondents were more likely to agree that adult children had the duty to provide long-term care for their parents. In particular, 90.3 per cent of the oldest age group chose either "strongly agree" or "agree" as their response. In contrast, younger respondents had a higher propensity to express neutrality. Compared with 5.7 per cent of those aged above 65, 16.1 per cent of those aged between 21 and 35 said they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement (see Table 148).

Table 148: Adult children have the duty to care for parents, by age cohort

Age Cohort *N = 2,011*	Adult children have the duty to provide long-term care for their parents		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree / strongly disagree
21-35	76.1	16.1	7.8
36-50	78.4	13.1	8.5
51-65	82.9	11.8	5.4
Above 65	90.3	5.7	3.9

Meanwhile, respondents with lower education were also more likely to indicate agreement or strong agreement with the statement, with a slight increase in disagreement rates across education levels too. When age is considered alongside education levels, however, education effects were observed particularly for those aged 65 or younger. For these age cohorts, the overall proportions of respondents agreeing to the statement decreased when education levels increased (see Tables 149 and 150).

Table 149: Adult children have the duty to care for parents, by education level

Education Level *N = 2,002*	Adult children have the duty to provide long-term care for their parents		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree / strongly disagree
Below secondary	89.6	6.7	3.8
Secondary/ ITE	82	12.2	5.9
Dip. / Prof. qual.	79.6	12.4	7.9
Bachelor's and above	76.3	15.4	8.2

Table 150: Adult children have the duty to care for parents, by age and education level

Age Cohort and Education Level *N = 2,007*		Adult children have the duty to provide long-term care for their parents		
		Strongly agree / Agree	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree / strongly disagree**
21-35	**Below secondary^**	100.0	0	0
	Secondary/ ITE	79.7	16.4	3.9
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	77.0	15.2	7.8
	Bachelor's and above	72.2	17.5	7.2
36-50	**Below secondary**	82.0	12.8	5.1
	Secondary/ ITE	74.5	14.8	10.6
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	79.8	10.9	9.3
	Bachelor's and above	79.0	13.3	7.6
51-65	**Below secondary**	88.8	8.1	3.1
	Secondary/ ITE	82.3	12.4	5.4
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	83.4	10.3	6.4
	Bachelor's and above	76.1	16.4	7.5
Above 65	**Below secondary**	91.3	4.3	4.3
	Secondary/ ITE	90.7	5.4	3.9
	Dip. / Prof. qual.^	92.8	0	7.1
	Bachelor's and above^	84.0	16.0	0

^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

We then consider the impact of socio-economic status on respondents' views vis-à-vis filial piety. The lowest proportions of agreement were among respondents earning above $6,999 who were also more likely to choose the "neither agree nor disagree" option. In fact, its agreement rate of 68.5 per cent was much lower than the rest of the groups, all of which have at least 80 per cent choosing either "agree" or "strongly agree" as their answers. While there was not much variation in disagreement rates across the different housing types, private property dwellers were more likely than the other groups to say that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. Correspondingly, this group had a lower proportion agreeing to the statement. In fact, it was the only group with an agreement rate of less than 80 per cent (see Tables 151 and 152).

Table 151: Adult children have the duty to care for parents, by income level

Income Level *N = 1,224*	Adult children have the duty to provide long-term care for their parents		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree / strongly disagree
Below $1,500	84.3	12.4	3.2
$1,500 - $2,999	80.1	13.2	6.7
$3,000 - $4,999	81.2	11.8	7
$5,000 - $6,999	84.3	9.7	6.1
Above $6,999	68.5	18.2	13.2

Table 152: Adult children have the duty to care for parents, by housing type

Housing Type *N = 2,011*	Adult children have the duty to provide long-term care for their parents		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree / strongly disagree
1- to 3-room HDB	80.6	12.5	6.9
4-room HDB	83.2	11.2	5.6
5+-room HDB	83.8	9.5	6.7
Private property	73.9	17.8	8.3

5.2.5 In general, over three-quarters of respondents indicated their desire for at least one child; signalling that the majority still had expectations of forming a family and nurturing future generations despite our low TFR

The next question asked respondents how many children they intend to have. As this was a question specific to Singapore in this wave, there is no basis for comparison either longitudinally or across polities. However, the answers provide a snapshot of the trends vis-à-vis Singapore respondents' future family plans. In addition, the proportion of respondents who indicated they wanted children versus those who indicated otherwise provides some indication of how positively the populace views having children.

Overall, 23.4 per cent indicated they did not intend to have any children. Given that there was a majority who wanted to have at least one child, it appears that the majority of Singapore respondents still had expectations of forming a family and nurturing future generations. Among those with plans to have children, 39.7 per cent indicated intending to have two children – the largest proportion. Over a quarter stated that they want three or more children (see Figure 28).

Figure 28: How many children do you intend to have?
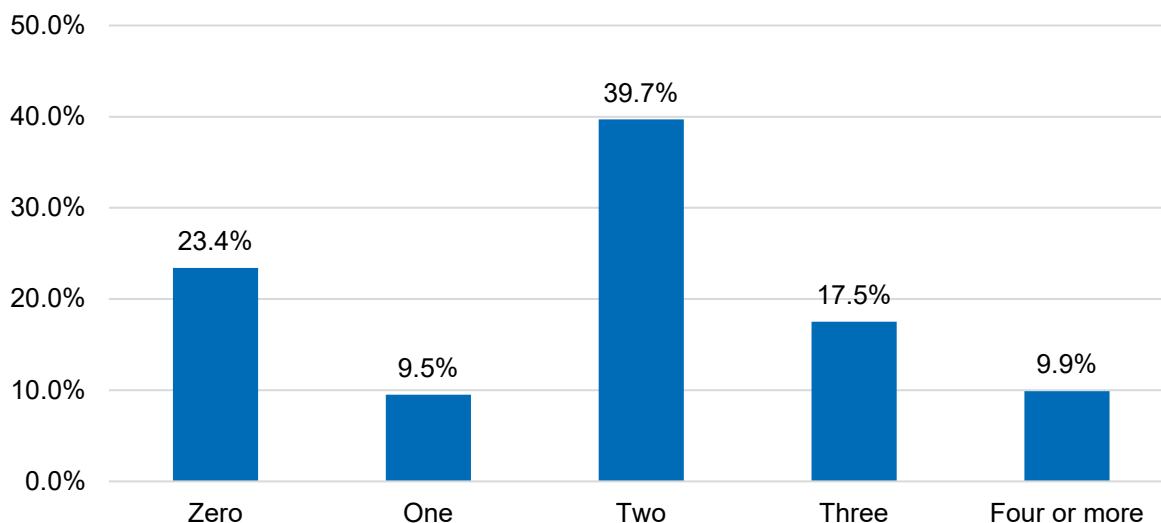
5.2.6 Older, more educated, and more affluent respondents are likelier to eschew children; positive stances on having children as a duty to society were correlated with intent to have children

To further understand sentiments towards childbearing, we next examine the responses of respondents within conventional childbearing age who do not yet have children. While the size of this group is limited (N = 473), the results serve as a general sense of the attitude towards childbearing amongst those who have not yet formed traditional nuclear families. Within this group, there was a general downward trend in the proportion of those who want to have at least one child with increasing age.

Given that 1) those in their forties are likely to be more settled in their current lifestyles without children, and 2) females in this age range are more likely to face biological hurdles to conceive, it was not surprising that 63.1 per cent did not intend to have any children. For the two younger groups, however, a large majority expressed their intentions for having children. In particular, over 80 per cent of those aged between 21 and 30 wanted at least one child, indicating that there is still a prevailing desire for children amongst the majority of young Singaporeans (see Table 153).

Table 153: Number of intended children, by typical childbearing age cohort

Childbearing Age Cohort *N = 473*	How many children do you intend to have	
	Zero	One or more
21-30	14.4	85.6
31-40	30.5	69.5
41-50	63.1	36.9

When the responses are analysed across education levels, we find a positive correlation between education and proportions eschewing children for the youngest group. Compared to over 90 per cent of those with diploma qualifications and below, only 77.6 per cent of degree holders indicated wanting children. For those aged 31 to 50, there were more respondents in the higher education categories who indicated they wanted no children. These trends suggest that higher-educated respondents seem to have more reservations about children (see Table 154).

Table 154: Number of intended children, by typical childbearing age and education

Childbearing Age Cohort and Education Level *N = 473*		How many children do you intend to have	
		Zero	**One or more**
21-30	**Below secondary^**	0	100.0
	Secondary/ ITE	10.0	90.0
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	9.8	90.2
	Bachelor's and above	22.4	77.6
31-40	**Below secondary^**	50.0	50.0
	Secondary/ ITE^	38.5	61.5
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	30.0	70.0
	Bachelor's and above	28.8	71.2
41-50	**Below secondary^**	62.5	37.5
	Secondary/ ITE^	53.8	46.2
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	69.2	30.8
	Bachelor's and above	64.0	36.0

^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

The responses were then examined across housing types. As the numbers in each category for those aged 41 to 50 were too small, only the results for the two youngest groups are presented. Housing type seems to have some effect on the intention to have children, with respondents living in smaller housing types generally more likely to want children. This result is interesting as it indicates that respondents with better socioeconomic backgrounds are more reluctant to have children compared to those who are relatively less well-off. This suggests different considerations vis-à-vis having children across the socioeconomic spectrum (see Table 155).

Table 155: Number of intended children, by typical childbearing age and education

Childbearing Age Cohort and Housing Type N = 473		How many children do you intend to have	
		Zero	One or more
21-30	1- to 3-room HDB	7.7	92.3
	4-room HDB	12.4	87.6
	5+-room HDB	18.9	81.1
	Private property	17.9	82.1
31-40	1- to 3-room HDB	32.4	67.6
	4-room HDB	26.7	73.3
	5+-room HDB^	23.8	76.2
	Private property^	44.4	55.6

^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

To round up the analyses in this section, we examined respondents' intentions to have children in relation to their responses to earlier statements on childbearing. When responses to the statement "It is a duty towards society to have children" were juxtaposed against intended numbers of children, respondents between 21 and 50 who intended to have at least one child were more likely to agree with the statement to varying extents. Similarly, when responses to the statement "It is selfish to have children" were considered, we find that respondents with no intention to have children were more likely to express agreement.

While it should be noted that the proportions expressing agreement remained low, with less than 15 per cent of each included age group doing so, the agreement rates for those who intend to have children are far lower. While the direction of causation cannot be established from these preliminary examinations, these findings do imply that intent to have children is correlated with respondents' values on childbearing (see Tables 156 and 157).

Table 156: Number of intended children, by age and views on children as duty

Childbearing Age Cohort and Views on having children as duty N = 473		How many children do you intend to have	
		Zero	One or more
21-30	Agree / Strongly agree	23.1	32.0
	Neither agree nor disagree	17.9	40.3
	Disagree / Strongly disagree	59.0	27.7
31-40	Agree / Strongly agree	11.4	28.0
	Neither agree nor disagree	31.4	50.0
	Disagree / Strongly disagree	57.1	22.0
41-50	Agree / Strongly agree	15.1	38.8
	Neither agree nor disagree	35.8	32.3
	Disagree / Strongly disagree	49.0	39.0

Table 157: Number of intended children, by age and views on children as selfish

Childbearing Age Cohort and Views on having children as selfish *N = 473*		How many children do you intend to have	
		Zero	One or more
21-30	**Agree / Strongly agree**	10.3	1.7
	Neither agree nor disagree	35.9	22.0
	Disagree / Strongly disagree	53.8	50.4
31-40	**Agree / Strongly agree**	14.3	3.6
	Neither agree nor disagree	28.6	20.7
	Disagree / Strongly disagree	57.1	75.6
41-50	**Agree / Strongly agree**	9.4	0
	Neither agree nor disagree	28.3	12.9
	Disagree / Strongly disagree	62.3	87.1

5.3 GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN FAMILY

Two questions in the WVS survey elicited respondents' opinions about issues of gender and sexuality in the family. Respondents were asked for their thoughts on working mothers and homosexual parents. Overall, Singapore respondents had predominantly neutral or positive evaluations of homosexual couples' parenting abilities and acceptance of working mothers; especially among younger demographics.

5.3.1 Just under two-thirds of Singapore respondents indicated disagreement with the notion that children would suffer if their mothers were working or employed

The first question asked respondents to state their opinion on the statement, "When a mother works for pay, the children suffer." This statement elicited negative attitudes towards working mothers, levelled against its possible negative impact on child well-being. Given that there was no mention of fathers in the statement, responses to the statement could also provide an indirect indication of the extent respondents believed in gender segregation of childcare duties. The majority disagreed with this statement— 53.5 per cent said they disagreed and 10.9 per cent said they strongly disagreed. An additional 30.5 per cent agreed with the statement, while 5.1 per cent said they strongly agreed (see Figure 29).

Figure 29: When a mother works for pay, the children suffer.
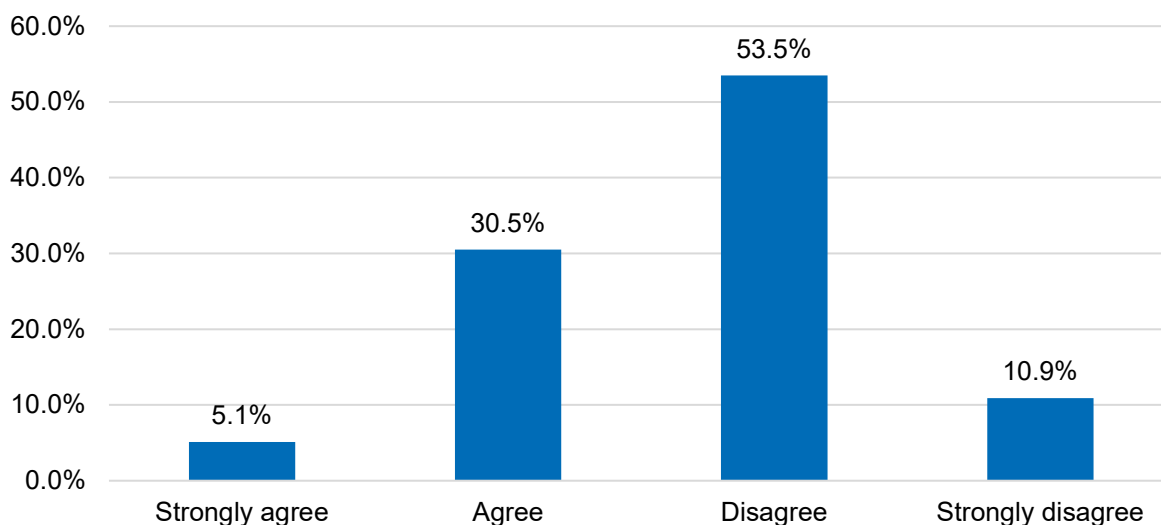
5.3.2 Perceptions of working mothers were primarily impacted by age, education, and affluence; younger, more educated, and more affluent respondents were more likely to view working mothers positively

There were few differences when comparing across gender and citizenship statuses. However, respondents who were older, less-educated, or less affluent were more likely to agree that working mothers would cause their children to suffer. Compared to one-quarter of the youngest age cohort, over 47 per cent of the rest of the sample either strongly agreed or agreed that children suffered when they had a working mother. Furthermore, the youngest cohort also had the highest proportion expressing strong disagreement with the statement (18.0 per cent); this proportion dipped to just 4.5 per cent for the oldest age cohort (see Table 158).
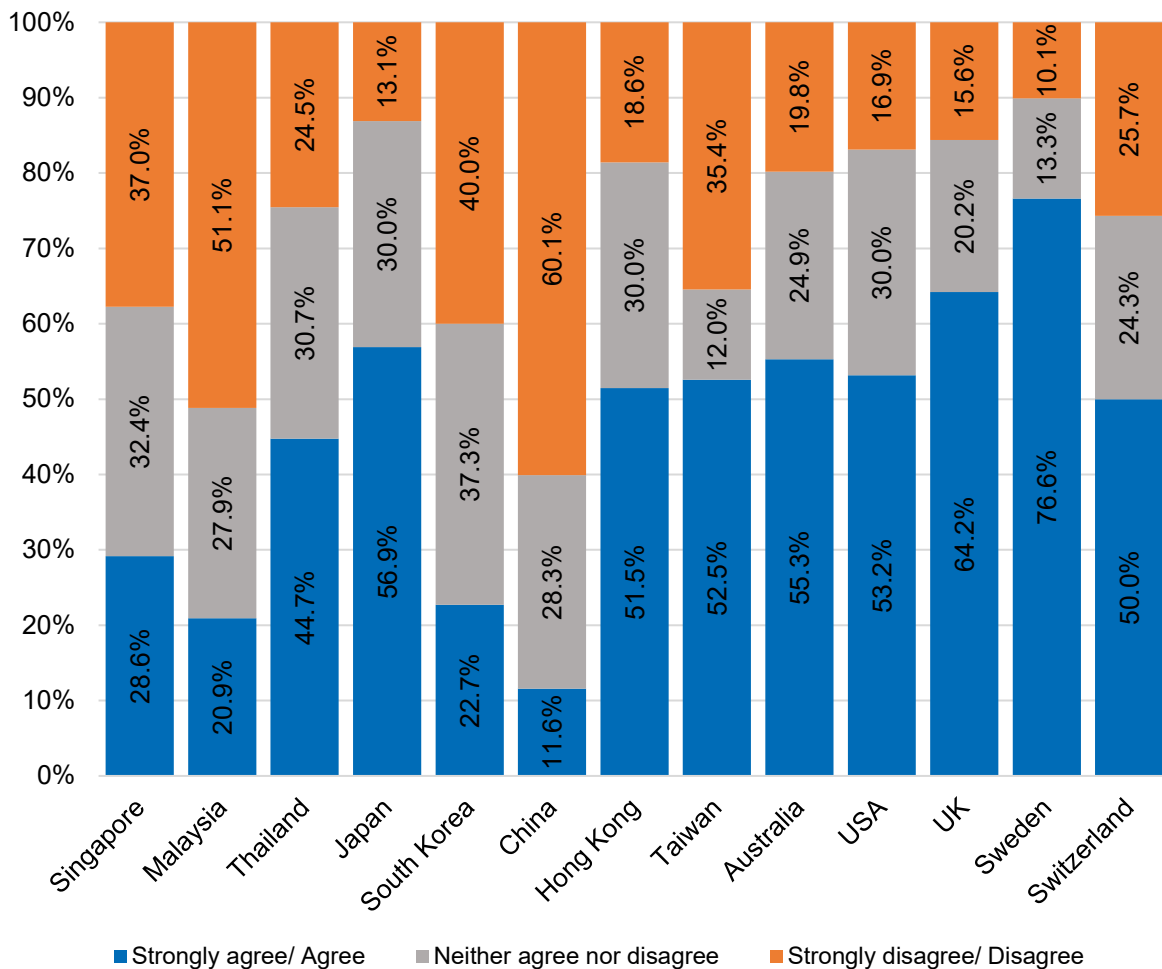
Table 158: When a mother works for pay the children suffer, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 2,004	When a mother works for pay, the children suffer			
	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
21-35	4.5	21.3	56.2	18.0
36-50	7.3	31.3	48.8	12.6
51-65	4.8	32.2	57.1	5.9
Above 65	3.3	39.1	53.0	4.5

When analysing results by education level, there was more disagreement among higher-educated respondents. It appears that the variations were mostly from the "agree" and "strongly disagree" categories. While 37.8 per cent of respondents with below secondary

school education agreed with the statement, 24.4 per cent of degree holders indicated likewise. In contrast, 15.6 per cent of degree holders strongly disagreed with the statement; a higher proportion compared with just 4.9 per cent for those with below secondary school education (see Table 159).

When comparing the agreement rates for respondents who were housewives, those with higher education levels were still more likely to disagree. Compared to 51.4 per cent of housewives with below secondary education, 59.3 per cent of housewives with university education either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement. Nonetheless, these proportions are lower than the overall results for education, suggesting a slightly weaker education effect on women who are personally staying at home.

Table 159: When a mother works for pay the children suffer, by education level

Education Level *N = 2,000*	When a mother works for pay, the children suffer			
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Below secondary	4.1	37.8	53.2	4.9
Secondary/ ITE	5.9	31.4	54.4	8.4
Dip. / Prof. qual.	5.2	30.6	52.0	12.2
Bachelor's and above	5.2	24.4	54.7	15.6

When considering responses across socio-economic status, the results show that respondents residing in private property had the highest disagreement rates across the different housing types. Over 77 per cent of this group indicated they either disagreed or strongly disagreed that children suffered because of working mothers. The group with the second-highest disagreement rate of 65.9 per cent were respondents living in 4-room flats. In contrast, only 59 per cent of those living in 1- to 3-room flats disagreed with the statement to some extent (see Table 160).

Table 160: When a mother works for pay the children suffer, by housing type

Housing Type *N = 2,004*	When a mother works for pay, the children suffer			
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1- to 3-room HDB	6.6	34.4	51.2	7.8
4-room HDB	6.3	27.8	54.5	11.4
5+-room HDB	4.4	34.5	53.0	8.1
Private property	1.5	21.3	58.4	18.9

5.3.3 Over a quarter of Singapore respondents agreed or strongly agreed that homosexual parents were just as good as other couples; this proportion was low compared to most other societies globally

Given how a minority of the population (40.7 per cent) indicated that homosexuality was sometimes, mostly, or always justifiable as elaborated upon in 3.3 (see Figure 17), it is remarkable to find that the majority of respondents indicated agreement or were neutral on the view that homosexual parents were as good as other couples – in this case, the implied comparison being with heterosexual parents. More than 28 per cent either agreed or strongly agreed that homosexual parents are as good as other couples in parenting, while about a third expressed neutrality. However, when compared against selected polities globally, Singaporean respondents were generally more conservative. Positive appraisals of homosexual parents were as high as 76.6 per cent in Sweden, and 64.2 per cent in the United Kingdom. Only China, Malaysia and South Korea were more conservative than Singapore to this regard (see Figure 30).

Figure 30: Homosexual parents are as good as other couples

Country	Strongly agree/ Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree/ Disagree
Singapore	28.6%	32.4%	37.0%
Malaysia	20.9%	27.9%	51.1%
Thailand	44.7%	30.7%	24.5%
Japan	56.9%	30.0%	13.1%
South Korea	22.7%	37.3%	40.0%
China	11.6%	28.3%	60.1%
Hong Kong	51.5%	30.0%	18.6%
Taiwan	52.5%	12.0%	35.4%
Australia	55.3%	24.9%	19.8%
USA	53.2%	30.0%	16.9%
UK	64.2%	20.2%	15.6%
Sweden	76.6%	13.3%	10.1%
Switzerland	50.0%	24.3%	25.7%

■ Strongly agree/ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Strongly disagree/ Disagree

5.3.4 Men were more likely to express neutrality vis-à-vis homosexual parents; younger, non-religious, more educated, and more affluent respondents were more likely to view homosexual parents as good as other couples

When perusing results by gender, we find that a larger proportion of male respondents (35.9 per cent) remained neutral about whether homosexual parents were as good at parenting as other couples, as compared with 28.8 per cent of female respondents. Female respondents were more likely to indicate clear stances on homosexual parenting and eschew neutrality. This suggests that male respondents were on the whole more undecided about homosexual couples' parenting abilities compared their female peers (see Table 161).

Table 161: Homosexual parents are as good as other couples, by gender

Gender *N = 1,990*	Homosexual parents are as good as other couples		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree / Disagree
Male	26.6	35.9	37.4
Female	29.7	28.8	41.5

When compared across other demographic variables, respondents who were younger, had no religion or were Taoist, had higher education levels, or lived in larger housing were more likely to agree that homosexual parents were as good as other couples. At the outset, younger respondents were more likely to agree with this statement. In particular, the youngest group had the highest agreement rates compared with the other age groups. However, it also had the highest proportion choosing "neither agree nor disagree" (39.1 per cent). Nonetheless, it does appear that there was overall a slightly more positive opinion of homosexual parents amongst younger respondents, especially those aged between 21 and 35 (see Table 162).

Table 162: Homosexual parents are as good as other couples, by age cohort

Age Cohort *N = 1,990*	Homosexual parents are as good as other couples		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree / Disagree
21-35	41	39.1	19.9
36-50	28	31.5	40.5
51-65	22	29.4	48.6
Above 65	18.2	25.8	55.9

Given that there were some religious differences in the acceptance of homosexuality as set out in 3.4, the results for this statement were also examined across religions. It is unsurprising to find that respondents with no religion had the highest agreement rates when compared with other groups. Taoists or those who were practitioners of traditional Chinese religion had the

second-highest agreement rates. Meanwhile, on the other end of the spectrum, Protestants — of which 86.6 per cent had said that homosexuality was not justified — had the highest disagreement rate of 57.2 per cent. This was the only group where more than half indicated disagreement. Though Muslims had the second-highest disagreement rate at 48.4 per cent, it is interesting to note that 32.2 per cent of Muslims expressed neutrality vis-à-vis the statement — a very similar proportion compared to respondents with no religion (see Table 163).

Table 163: Homosexual parents are as good as other couples, by religious affiliation

Religion* *N = 1,990*	Homosexual parents are as good as other couples		
	Strongly agree / Agree	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Strongly disagree / Disagree**
Buddhist	27.9	35.8	36.2
Taoist / Chinese religion	32	35.4	32.7
Protestant	16.7	26.1	57.2
Catholic	29.6	26.4	44
Muslim	19.4	32.2	48.4
Hindu	28.4	23.9	47.7
No religion	40.3	34.3	25.4

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

When considering education and housing, there were positive correlations between these two variables and the propensity of respondents to view that homosexual parents are as good as other couples. Compared with 24.1 per cent of the respondents with below secondary school education, 33.6 per cent of those with university degrees agreed with the statement. In addition, 30.8 per cent of the private property dwellers agreed as compared to 28 per cent of those living in 1- to 3-room flats indicating likewise.

There was a corresponding decline in disagreement rates as education levels increased and for larger housing types; 51.8 per cent of the respondents with below secondary education and 41 per cent of those living in 1- to 3-room flats either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, but this proportion dropped to 32.9 per cent for degree holders and 37.1 per cent for those living in private property respectively (see Tables 164 and 165).

Table 164: Homosexual parents are as good as other couples, by education level

Education Level *N = 1,986*	Homosexual parents are as good as other couples		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree / Disagree
Below secondary	24.1	24.1	51.8
Secondary/ ITE	25.2	33.5	41.2
Dip. / Prof. qual.	27.5	34.9	37.6
Bachelor's and above	33.6	33.4	32.9

Table 165: Homosexual parents are as good as other couples, by housing type

Housing Type *N = 1,990*	Homosexual parents are as good as other couples		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree / Disagree
1- to 3-room HDB	28	31	41
4-room HDB	27.3	34.3	38.5
5+-room HDB	28.4	30.2	41.5
Private property	30.8	32	37.1

Finally, respondents with higher income levels were slightly more likely to remain neutral, and considerably less likely to say they disagreed with the statement relative to their less well-off counterparts. (see Table 166).

Table 166: Homosexual parents are as good as other couples, by income level

Income Level *N = 1,213*	Homosexual parents are as good as other couples		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree / Disagree
Below $1,500	23.2	29.6	47.2
$1,500 - $2,999	29.9	30.5	39.6
$3,000 - $4,999	32.5	34.4	33
$5,000 - $6,999	26.7	35.8	37.5
Above $6,999	29	36.8	34.2

5.4   PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER

Views on gender exert significant influence on the degree of gender equality within a society. Measuring gender equality requires both attention to issue-based concerns such as societal

attitudes towards gender roles (Lomazzi and Crespi 2019) and sectoral approaches (Ertan, 2016). In Singapore, some sectors which have seen a lower representation of women have included Parliament (Cabuyao and Vasu, 2016) and corporate boards (Duppati et al., 2020). In both cases though, there has been steady progress in achieving greater representation in recent years. Beyond sectoral representation, there are ongoing concerns that while women are well represented at the workforce, traditional gendered divisions of labour still occur in the household (Teo, 2007) making it harder for women to achieve progress. This is especially so if the dominant view and expectation at both the household and state level that the primary role of women is motherhood (Suratman, 2011)

5.4.1 The majority of respondents disagreed that men were better leaders in politics or business, or that university education was more important for men; but agreed being a housewife was just as fulfilling as salaried work

Against this backdrop, the survey presented a series of statements which reflected traditional gender beliefs, including men making better political leaders or business executives, and university education being more important for men. Another question on normalising subordinate positions for women also queried respondents whether they felt being a housewife is as fulfilling as salaried employment. For most of these statements which elicit opinion on traditional gender ideology, the proportion of respondents choosing "disagree" and "strongly disagree" was higher than those who agreed. The only exception was the statement, "Being a housewife is as fulfilling as working for pay"; in which a majority of the respondents expressed some degree of agreement. Responses to this item did not exhibit significant differences even when perused across gender. On average, about a fifth of survey respondents agreed with the statements on men making better leaders in politics and business, and university education being more important for men (see Figure 31).

Figure 31: How much do you agree or disagree with these statements?

Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree
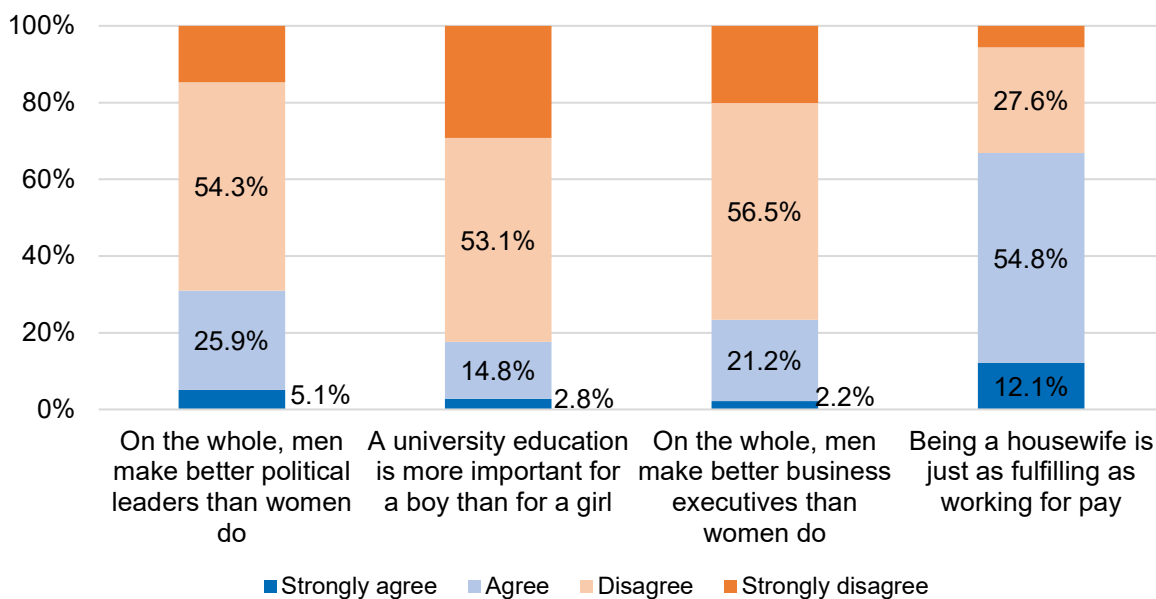
When asked if men make better political leaders than women, 5.1 per cent strongly agreed while 25.9 per cent agreed. In contrast, 54.3 per cent said they disagreed, and 14.7 per cent strongly disagreed. In relation to many other Asian societies like Malaysia (58.2 per cent), Thailand (46.3 per cent), South Korea (52 per cent), and China (50.4 per cent), Singapore was more accepting towards female politicians. Comparable sentiments were found in Japan (29.3 per cent), Hong Kong (28 per cent), and Taiwan (22 per cent); while higher acceptance was found in Anglo-European societies like Australia (12.6 per cent), USA (16.5 per cent), the UK (11.8 per cent), Switzerland (12.5 per cent) and Sweden (5.2 per cent).

It is also clear that there has been greater acceptance over the years towards female politicians. When comparing the 2020 responses with the 2012 and 2002 survey waves, respondents in 2020 were less likely to agree that men made better political leaders. Compared to 31 per cent of 2020 respondents, 46.5 per cent and 56.3 per cent in 2012 and 2002 respectively agreed.

The statement about university education being more important for boys than girls had the least agreement amongst the questions. Here, 2.8 per cent said they strongly agreed with the statement, while 14.8 per cent expressed agreement. In contrast, 53.1 per cent said they disagreed, and 29.2 per cent said they strongly disagreed. Compared to the 26.1 per cent in 2012 who agreed to this statement, the current 17.6 per cent in 2020 clearly indicates that fewer in Singapore now subscribe to according gendered privileges.

These results place Singapore around the middle when compared to other societies, with stronger opinions on gendered privileges coming from Malaysia (36.1 per cent), Thailand (32.8 per cent), South Korea (33.7 per cent), China (21.7 per cent), and Hong Kong (19.2 per cent); and more equal perceptions coming from Japan (14.5 per cent), Taiwan (11.4 per cent), Australia (2.4 per cent), USA (9.9 per cent), the UK (4.1 per cent), Switzerland (7.5 per cent), and Sweden (1.4 per cent).

Meanwhile, 2.2 per cent strongly agreed, and 21.2 per cent agreed with the statement that men make better business executives than women, while 56.5 per cent disagreed and 20.1 per cent strongly disagreed with the statement. In contrast, 39.4 per cent of respondents in 2012 agreed with the statement, indicating that the perceptions of female business executives have grown more positive in this wave.

Singaporean respondents were more positive about female business executives compared to Malaysians (44.3 per cent), Thais (43.3 per cent), Koreans (47.9 per cent), Mainland Chinese (34.1 per cent), and Hongkongers (29.5 per cent), but less so than Japanese (22.6 per cent), Taiwanese (19 per cent), Australians (10.8 per cent), Americans (12.7 per cent), British (9.4 per cent), Swiss (11.5 per cent), and Swedes (4.7 per cent).

Interestingly, a majority of respondents agreed that being a housewife was just as fulfilling as working for pay. Here, 12.1 per cent strongly agreed, while 54.8 per cent agreed with the statement. In contrast, 27.6 per cent disagreed, while 5.6 per cent strongly disagreed. Similar sentiments were expressed in 2012, given that 66.4 per cent agreed to the statement to some degree, while reception towards this statement was even more positive in 2002, as 75.3 per cent said they either strongly agreed or agreed.

While Singaporeans were more likely to feel that household work was fulfilling compared to Malaysians (62.6 per cent), Thais (47.2 per cent), Koreans (49.7 per cent), and Australians (65.2 per cent), they were less likely to feel as such compared to Japanese (81.9 per cent), Mainland Chinese (71.9 per cent), Hongkongers (87.4 per cent), Taiwanese (81.4 per cent), and Americans (70.3 per cent).

5.4.2 Similarly, over half of respondents disagreed that men should be prioritised over women for hiring during a jobs-scarce climate, and that problems would likely ensue if wives earned more than husbands

The WVS survey posed another two scenario-based questions on gender: whether men should have more rights to a job than women if jobs were scarce, and whether women earning more than their husbands would inevitably cause problems. Unlike the 4-point Likert scale for the aforementioned questions, a 5-point scale including an option for a neutral stance accompanied these two questions.

The sentiment that men should have more right to a job than women when jobs are scarce garnered disagreement from a majority of the population, with 37.5 per cent choosing "disagree" and 14.7 per cent choosing "strongly disagree". Meanwhile, 19.9 per cent remained neutral about this statement, while 27.9 per cent either agreed or strongly agreed with it. In 2012, respondents were evenly spread between "agree", "neither agree nor disagree", and "disagree" options, while there was an inclination to disagree with the statement in 2002.

Singaporean respondents in 2020 felt stronger about men having more rights to scarce jobs compared to Australians (6.8 per cent), Americans (5.2 per cent), Brits (6.5 per cent), the Swiss (9.8 per cent), and Swedes (2.9 per cent), but less so compared to other Asian counterparts like Malaysians (47.8 per cent), Thais (31.3 per cent), Japanese (25.9 per cent), Koreans (53 per cent), Mainland Chinese (45.6 per cent), Hongkongers (31.5 per cent), and Taiwanese (40.5 per cent).

Finally, slightly over half of the population disagreed that a woman earning more money than her husband would likely engender problems; 10.3 per cent indicated strong disagreement while 41.8 per cent indicated disagreement with this statement. An additional 26.4 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed. Meanwhile, 1.9 per cent strongly agreed, and 19.6 per cent agreed with the statement. It appears attitudes towards this scenario have liberalised, given that only 34.8 per cent of the respondents in 2012 said they disagreed with the statement, 42.8 per cent remained neutral, and 22.4 per cent agreed (see Figure 32).

While Singaporeans were more likely to agree compared to Japanese (14.4 per cent), Taiwanese (19.8 per cent), Australians (6.4 per cent), and Americans (10 per cent), they were less likely to do so compared to Malaysians (29.1 per cent), Thais (30.9 per cent), Koreans (32.5 per cent), Mainland Chinese (27.3 per cent), and Hongkongers (27.1 per cent).

Figure 32: How much do you agree or disagree with these statements?

Legend: Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree

When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women
- Strongly agree: 4.5%
- Agree: 23.4%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 19.9%
- Disagree: 37.5%
- Strongly disagree: 14.7%

If a woman earns more money than her husband, it's almost certain to cause problems
- Strongly agree: 1.9%
- Agree: 19.6%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 26.4%
- Disagree: 41.8%
- Strongly disagree: 10.3%

Chapter 6

Economy and Employment

CHAPTER 6 | ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

This section examines respondents' perspectives on economic issues specifically matters of foreign labour, distribution of incomes, the degree of government interference on business, as well as whether environmental protection should be compromised for economic growth.

Singapore's economic success is due to a strategy of rapid, sustainable economic growth (read Chong [2010] and Lim [2016] for an excellent overview of Singapore's economic development). There are also a few key principles that the Singapore government has followed in order to push for economic growth. Notably, there is active government intervention in the economy. Public institutions, like the public sector and government-linked corporations (GLCs), are actively involved in influencing economic policy (Ronald & Ulrich, 2014). Therefore, rather than submitting the market to free-market forces, the Singapore state plays an active role in it. Due to the active hand of the state in the market, many scholars have come to view Singapore as a developmental state (Pereira, 2008).

After industrialisation in the 1990s, the foreign labour pool has been imperative in sustaining the economic growth in Singapore (Hui, 1997; Pang & Lim, 1982; Chia, 2011). In addition, an increasing brain drain, decreasing fertility and an ageing population have served to increase the reliance the Singapore government has on the foreign workforce. However, the open policy towards immigration has been met with less than positive reactions from Singaporeans. There is reluctance among some Singaporeans to regard new immigrants as part of the community. Some also perceive these immigrants as competing with their jobs (Koh et al., 2015).

Interestingly, in Singapore, the economy and the environment are inextricably linked. Singapore's first Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, saw that the greening of Singapore was good for "morale, for tourists and for investors" (Min, 2015, p. 72). It will be useful to explore how Singaporeans regard this posited link between the economy and the environment as well.

Overall, respondents had a strong regard for market competition but also preferred some elements of government protection. Most were also concerned about the environment, and indicated that protecting the environment should take priority even if it meant slower economic growth.

6.1   SYSTEMIC IDEALS

With the above background in mind, the questions presented and analysed in this section pertain to respondents' ideal characteristics and opinions of the economy. These comprise the outcomes of competition; prioritisation of private or government ownership of businesses; whether hard work matters more than luck or connections; and prioritisation of environmental or economic prerogatives.

6.1.1 Overall, respondents were more likely to feel that competition is good, and hard work would result in a better life; however, they were undecided whether private or public ownership of businesses was desirable

At the outset, respondents were posed statements on the outcomes of competition; whether the government should own more businesses; and whether success was more likely to result from hard work or luck and connections. For each of these items, respondents were asked to select a response on a 10-point scale for each question, with two diametrically opposed views on each end of the spectrum. For ease of understanding and analysis, the responses were coded into three different categories: ratings of 1 to 4 indicated preference to varying extents for the first stance; ratings of 7 to 10 indicated preference to varying extents for the second stance; while ratings of 5 and 6 indicated that respondents were somewhat undecided.

The overall mean scores for responses to each question were then generated to provide a clear sense of the general trends. Overall, respondents were more likely to feel that competition is good, and that hard work usually engendered a better life. However, respondents were somewhat undecided whether private ownership trumped government ownership of businesses. There was a shift towards preferring government ownership of businesses in 2012 and 2020 compared to 2002. Meanwhile, there was some shift away from a general embracing of competition in 2012 and 2020 compared to 2002. Attitudes towards how to achieve a better life, however, were quite similar in 2012 and 2020 (see Table 167).

Table 167: Mean scores for economic values across waves

Question / Statement	Mean Scores (range from 1 to 10)		
	WVS 2002	**WVS 2012**	**WVS 2020**
Competition is good vs Competition is harmful	3.34	4.41	3.88
Increase private ownership of business vs Increase government ownership of business	4.70	5.15	5.10
In the long run, hard work usually brings a better life vs It's more a matter of luck and connections	N/A (not asked)	4.56	4.49

Singaporeans' sentiments about competition and private ownership of business were middle-of-the-range compared to many other societies. Singapore's mean score for the question on competition was lower compared to those found for Malaysia (4.20), Thailand (5.27), Japan (4.57), South Korea (4.74), Hong Kong, (4.02), and Switzerland (3.95), which indicates that respondents in these societies were somewhat more likely to hold a more critical view of competition relative to Singaporeans. In contrast, respondents from China (3.43), Taiwan (3.34), Australia (3.60), the US (3.30), the UK (3.77), and Sweden (3.27) were more likely to view competition as a good thing.

Meanwhile, Singaporean respondents were more in favour of private ownership of business compared to Malaysians (5.45), Thais (6.20), Koreans (5.68), Chinese (5.64), Hongkongers (5.74), Taiwanese (5.28), and Brits (5.28); but less in favour compared to Japanese (4.01), Australians (5.05), Americans (3.72), the Swiss (4.8), and Swedes (4.83). Hard work was more valued by Singaporeans compared to Malaysians (4.79), Thais (4.83), Japanese (4.86), Koreans (5.54), Hongkongers (4.63); but less so compared to Chinese (3.72), Taiwanese (4.38), Australians (4.31), and Americans (3.73) (see Table 168).

Table 168: Mean scores for economic values, by polity

Question / Statement	Mean Statistical Indicator (range from 1 to 10) for each polity*												
	SG	MY	TH	JP	KR	CN	HK	TW	AU	US	UK	SZ	SW
Competition is good vs Competition is harmful	3.88	4.2	5.27	4.57	4.74	3.43	4.02	3.34	3.6	3.3	3.77	3.95	3.27
Increase private ownership of business vs Increase government ownership of business	5.1	5.45	6.2	4.01	5.68	5.64	5.74	5.28	5.05	3.72	5.28	4.8	4.83
In the long run, hard work usually brings a better life vs It's more a matter of luck and connections	4.49	4.79	4.83	4.86	5.54	3.72	4.63	4.38	4.31	3.73	N/A	N/A	N/A

* N/A denotes responses for that item not available for that polity; highest mean value for each row is in highlighted in yellow while lowest value is in red.

In general, there was a preference for free-market elements like competition and hard work. However, more respondents were undecided about whether there should be more private or public ownership of businesses. Respondents who had higher incomes, higher education levels, or who lived in larger housing types — all groups that were most likely to have benefited from such arrangements — were more likely to support many of these stances. Figure 33 illustrates the responses of participants across the aforementioned three questions, as well as two other questions addressing views on the government's economic obligations to citizens.

Figure 33: What are your views on these issues?
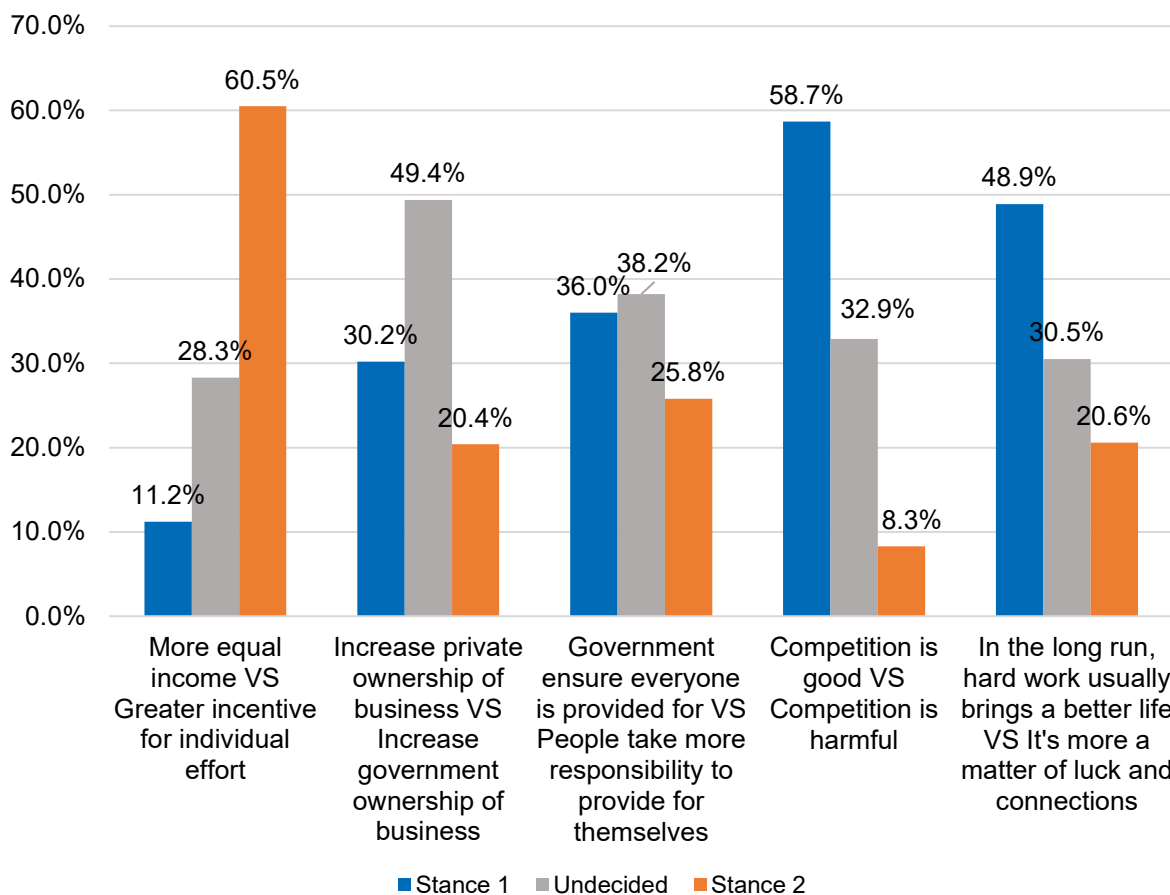
6.1.2 **The majority of respondents perceived competition in the economy as a good thing; however, higher-educated and more affluent respondents were more likely to feel this way relative to their less well-off peers**

Competition was generally viewed as good, rather than harmful. Amongst the population, 58.7 per cent expressed some degree of preference for competition in their responses, compared to 32.9 per cent who were undecided and 8.3 per cent who felt that competition was harmful (see Figure 33). However, when comparing across the different demographic variables, respondents earning higher incomes or possessing higher educational qualifications were more likely to perceive competition in the economy as a good thing. Compared to 47.8 per cent of respondents with below secondary education and 51.4 per cent of respondents who earned below $1,500 indicating they felt competition was good, 68.1 per cent of university graduates and 78 per cent of those earning above $6,999 indicated likewise. Given that higher educated, more affluent respondents are the likely beneficiaries of a competitive system, it is unsurprising for them to hold more positive stances on competition relative to their less well-off counterparts (see Table 169 and 170).

Table 169: Competition is good versus competition is harmful, by education level

Education Level *N = 2,003*	How would you place your views on this scale		
	Competition is good	Undecided	Competition is harmful
Below secondary	47.8	37.8	14.3
Secondary/ ITE	52.1	37.6	10.3
Dip. / Prof. qual.	60.9	31.6	7.5
Bachelor's and above	68.1	27.7	4.2

Table 170: Competition is good versus competition is harmful, by income level

Income Level *N = 1,222*	How would you place your views on this scale		
	Competition is good	Undecided	Competition is harmful
Below $1,500	51.4	35.2	13.4
$1,500 - $2,999	48.7	40.3	11.0
$3,000 - $4,999	57.5	36.0	6.5
$5,000 - $6,999	66.7	29.7	3.6
Above $6,999	78.0	20.8	1.3

6.1.3 More respondents were in favour of increasing private ownership of businesses; in particular, higher educated and more affluent respondents were more likely to feel this way compared to their less well-off peers

When asked about their preferred type of business ownership, 30.2 per cent preferred increasing private ownership, while 20.4 per cent preferred increasing government ownership. The most popular responses, however, were within the "undecided" range, with nearly half, or 49.4 per cent, indicating that they did not swing either way. This could have been due to the fact that concepts of business ownership, along with their implications, are somewhat harder to grasp, relative to other concepts featuring in the survey. When the results were compared across demographic factors, we find that males, youth, and the more affluent were more likely to support private ownership of businesses.

When the results were compared across gender, a larger proportion of male respondents preferred to have more private ownership of business when compared with female respondents. The gender differences were still found for most of the employment categories where there were sufficient numbers of males and females. There were no gender differences found in the preference for private ownership of businesses for the self-employed and unemployed. In particular, there were very similar response patterns for male and female respondents who were self-employed. These two groups also had the highest proportions supporting private ownership of businesses. Since these individuals are most likely to benefit

from private ownership given their nature of work, this finding is within expectation (see Table 171).

Table 171: Private vs public ownership of businesses, by gender

Gender *N = 1,996*	How would you place your views on this scale?		
	Private ownership of business and industry should be increased	Undecided	Government ownership of business and industry should be increased
Male	33.8	48.3	17.8
Female	26.6	50.4	23.0

When responses were analysed by age and socio-economic indicators, we find that these variables exerted a significant impact on preferences regarding business ownership. At the outset, respondents aged between 21 and 35 were most likely to be undecided, with over half of the group giving such responses. Meanwhile, respondents aged between 51 and 65 were most likely to support private ownership of businesses to some extent (see Table 172).

Table 172: Private vs public ownership of businesses, by age cohort

Age Cohort *N = 1,996*	How would you place your views on this scale?		
	Private ownership of business and industry should be increased	Undecided	Government ownership of business and industry should be increased
21-35	29.2	56.3	14.5
36-50	29.8	47.6	22.6
51-65	33.2	47.4	19.4
Above 65	25.7	44.6	29.7

When turning our attention to socioeconomic factors including education, income, and housing type, we find that in general, respondents with the highest education qualifications, income levels, or residing in the largest housing types had a stronger preference for more private ownership of businesses. It is likely that this trend resulted as respondents with higher socioeconomic backgrounds were likely beneficiaries of the free market economy (see Tables 173 to 175).

Table 173: Private vs public ownership of businesses, by education level

Education Level N = 1,992	How would you place your views on this scale?		
	Private ownership of business and industry should be increased	Undecided	Government ownership of business and industry should be increased
Below secondary	23.0	47.3	29.8
Secondary/ ITE	35.8	50.3	23.9
Dip. / Prof. qual.	30.3	55.0	14.7
Bachelor's and above	37.0	46.8	16.3

Table 174: Private vs public ownership of businesses, by income level

Income Level N = 1,220	How would you place your views on this scale?		
	Private ownership of business and industry should be increased	Undecided	Government ownership of business and industry should be increased
Below $1,500	30.1	44.4	25.5
$1,500 - $2,999	25.6	52.8	21.7
$3,000 - $4,999	31.2	51.9	16.9
$5,000 - $6,999	32.9	51.2	15.9
Above $6,999	47.2	39.6	13.2

Table 175: Private vs public ownership of businesses, by housing type

Housing Type N = 1,996	How would you place your views on this scale?		
	Private ownership of business and industry should be increased	Undecided	Government ownership of business and industry should be increased
1- to 3-room HDB	23.2	46.1	30.7
4-room HDB	29.3	51.4	19.3
5+-room HDB	31.9	53.5	14.7
Private property	40.4	46.4	13.3

6.1.4 Nearly half of respondents felt that hard work begets a better life, with silvers and the least affluent most likely to feel this way

Nearly half, or 48.9 per cent, supported the idea that hard work, rather than luck and connections, would bring a better life and success. In comparison, 20.6 per cent felt that luck and connections mattered more, while 30.5 per cent were undecided (see Figure 33). Given that Singapore operates on meritocratic principles, having a large proportion choose the stance crediting hard work with bringing about a better life is not surprising. However, it is interesting to note that there was still a substantial proportion who were neutral or felt differently about the subject.

There were some differing opinions when comparing the results across age groups. Respondents between 21 and 35 years old, as well as those between 51 and 65, were slightly less likely to think that hard work usually brought a better life, when compared with the other two age groups. In addition, the youngest group had the highest proportion indicating some level of indecisiveness between the two stances. Meanwhile, respondents above 65 were the most inclined to think that hard work usually brought a better life, with 62.3 per cent of the group choosing responses indicating so (see Table 176).

Table 176: Hard work versus luck and connections, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 2,008	How would you place your views on this scale?		
	In the long run, hard work usually brings a better life	Undecided	Hard work doesn't generally bring success—it's more a matter of luck and connections
21-35	41.4	37.0	21.6
36-50	50.5	29.8	19.7
51-65	47.2	29.1	23.7
Above 65	62.3	22.3	15.4

Respondents with below secondary education were the most likely to believe in hard work bringing success, with 53.2 per cent selecting responses within that category. Meanwhile, respondents with diploma or professional qualifications had the highest proportion indicating that they were undecided compared to the rest of the groups (see Table 177).

Table 177: Hard work versus luck and connections, by education level

Education Level N = 2,004	How would you place your views on this scale?		
	In the long run, hard work usually brings a better life	Undecided	Hard work doesn't generally bring success—it's more a matter of luck and connections
Below secondary	53.2	28.8	18.0
Secondary/ ITE	47.2	29.3	23.6
Dip. / Prof. qual.	46.0	33.8	20.1
Bachelor's and above	50.3	29.7	20.0

While 52.7 per cent of respondents living in 1- to 3-room HDB flats felt that hard work usually brought a better life, under 50 per cent of the rest of the sample had the same opinion. Given that housing types provide some indication of socioeconomic backgrounds, it is likely that respondents living in larger housing types have more access to connections and other resources that can facilitate success. In contrast, those living in 1- to 3-room flats are likely to see more examples of hard workers succeeding, which might explain the higher degree of preference for the first stance (see Table 178).

Table 178: Hard work versus luck and connections, by housing type

Housing Type N = 2,008	How would you place your views on this scale?		
	In the long run, hard work usually brings a better life	Undecided	Hard work doesn't generally bring success—it's more a matter of luck and connections
1- to 3-room HDB	52.7	26.9	20.4
4-room HDB	47.5	30.7	21.9
5+-room HDB	46.1	35.0	19.0
Private property	49.6	29.9	20.6

6.1.5 The majority of respondents felt that protecting the environment should be prioritised over economic growth; younger, more educated, and more affluent respondents were more likely to feel this way

A separate question examined the relative importance of economic growth and the environment for respondents, proffering binary responses. Specifically, it asked whether respondents would prefer economic growth even if it came at the expense of the environment; or whether they were willing to compromise on economic growth and jobs to protect the

environment. The majority of respondents (60.8 per cent) felt that protecting the environment should be prioritised, even if it resulted in slower economic growth and some loss of jobs. Singaporeans seem to have become more environmentally conscious across the years, given that only 30.8 per cent and 43.3 per cent chose the same option in 2002 and 2012 respectively (see Figure 34).

Figure 34: Which of these statements come closer to your own point of view?

- Protecting the environment should be given priority, even if it causes slower economic growth and some loss of jobs

- Economic growth and creating jobs should be the top priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent
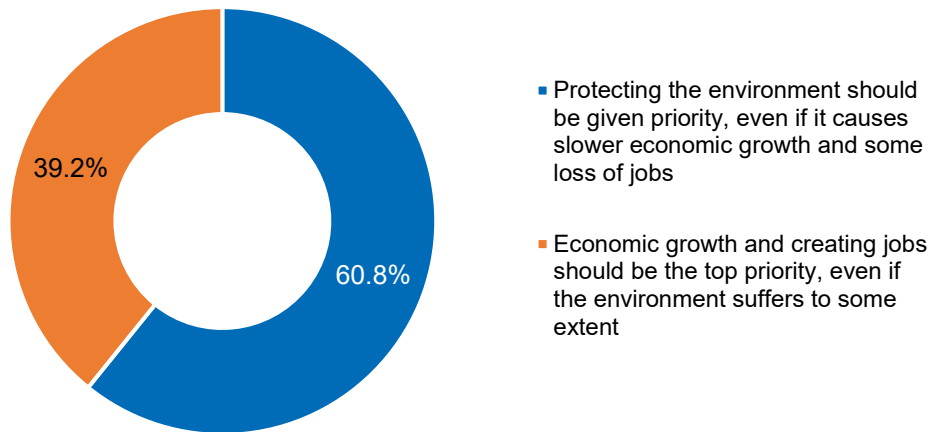
Sentiments in Singapore were similar to those in Malaysia, Japan, Taiwan, and the UK. In comparison, respondents in China, Australia, Switzerland, and Sweden were more environmentally conscious (see Figure 35).

Figure 35: Which of these statements come closer to your point of view?*

■ Protecting environment ■ Economic growth and creating jobs
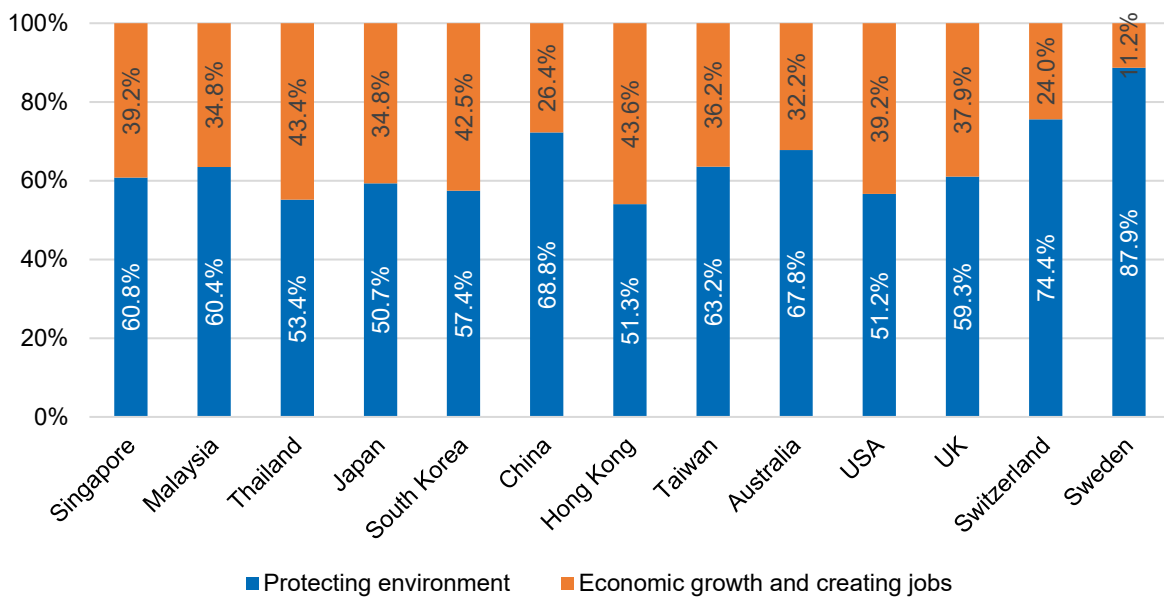
*Proportions may not add up to 100% because the findings for some polities included the option for "other answers"

When perusing responses by age, we find that there was a greater awareness of environmental protection amongst the younger respondents. Compared with 53.5 per cent of the respondents aged above 65 indicating that protecting the environment should be given priority, 66.9 per cent of younger respondents felt the same. Meanwhile, there was a positive correlation found between preferences for protecting the environment and education level. While 50.2 per cent of those with below secondary education took the side of the environment, 71 per cent of those with university degrees did the same. One possible reason for this trend could be that individuals with higher education were more knowledgeable about the impact of economic activity on the environment (see Tables 179 and 180).

Table 179: Environment versus economic growth, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 1,844	Which of these statements comes closer to your own point of view?	
	Protecting the environment should be given priority, even if it causes slower economic growth and some loss of jobs	Economic growth and creating jobs should be the top priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent
21-35	66.9	33.1
36-50	60.9	39.1
51-65	58.0	42.0
Above 65	53.5	46.5

Table 180: Environment versus economic growth, by education level

Education Level N = 1,841	Which of these statements comes closer to your own point of view?	
	Protecting the environment should be given priority, even if it causes slower economic growth and some loss of jobs	Economic growth and creating jobs should be the top priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent
Below secondary	50.2	49.8
Secondary/ ITE	53.6	46.4
Dip. / Prof. qual.	62.6	37.4
Bachelor's and above	71.0	29.0

When comparing responses across income levels, we find the group earning between $5,000 and $6,999 to be the most concerned about the environment. 76.2 per cent of this group felt the environment should be prioritised over economic growth. In contrast, less than 60 per cent of the groups earning below $5,000 felt the same. It is likely that these groups were more concerned about their own livelihoods and therefore chose to protect jobs and the economy. Meanwhile, 68.6 per cent of those earning above $6,999 chose environment protection over economic growth. While this proportion is larger than that reported for the lower-income

groups, it is still lower compared with those earning between $5,000 and $6,999 (see Table 181).

Table 181: Environment versus economic growth, by income level

Income Level N = 1,137	Which of these statements comes closer to your own point of view?	
	Protecting the environment should be given priority, even if it causes slower economic growth and some loss of jobs	Economic growth and creating jobs should be the top priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent
Below $1,500	59.2	40.8
$1,500 - $2,999	57.3	42.7
$3,000 - $4,999	59.6	40.4
$5,000 - $6,999	76.2	23.8
Above $6,999	68.6	31.4

The trends explicated above for income are mirrored for housing too, supporting the hypothesis that socioeconomic status exerts a positive impact on support of the environment. Private property dwellers seemed to be more concerned about the environment compared with those living in public housing. While an average of 59 per cent of those living in public housing felt that protecting the environment should take priority, 69.3 per cent of those living in private properties chose the same response (see Table 182).

Table 182: Environment versus economic growth, by housing type

Housing Type N = 1,844	Which of these statements comes closer to your own point of view?	
	Protecting the environment should be given priority, even if it causes slower economic growth and some loss of jobs	Economic growth and creating jobs should be the top priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent
1- to 3-room HDB	57.8	42.2
4-room HDB	60.0	40.0
5+-room HDB	58.5	41.5
Private property	69.3	30.8

6.2   ECONOMIC OBLIGATIONS TO CITIZENS

This section aims to examine respondents' views on the obligations of the government to its citizens vis-à-vis the economy. The analyses that follow explicate responses to questions on whether citizens should be prioritised over foreigners for employment in times of jobs scarcity;

whether income should be distributed more equally; and to what extent the government is responsible for taking care of its citizens.

6.2.1 Respondents were more likely to prefer incentivising individual efforts; the government to ensure all were provided for; and for employers to prioritise Singaporeans over immigrants when jobs were scarce

Similar to 6.1, the overall mean score of each question was also generated to look at the leanings of respondents for each topic. In general, there was a marginal preference for incentivising individual efforts as opposed to the pursuit of more equal incomes. However, respondents were also more likely to indicate a preference for the government to ensure all are provided for, as opposed to prioritising individual responsibility. This represented an increase in preference for more state assistance relative to previous waves (see Table 183).

Table 183: Mean scores for economic obligations across waves

Question / Statement	Mean Scores		
	WVS 2002	**WVS 2012**	**WVS 2020**
More equal income vs Greater incentive for individual effort	6.99	5.78	6.93
Government ensure everyone is provided for vs People take more responsibility to provide for themselves	5.24	5.33	4.98

In comparison with other societies, Singaporeans were far more likely to feel that greater incentives should be provided for individual effort, as opposed to the pursuit of more equal incomes. Within the societies of comparison, only the Taiwanese (7.17) were more likely to indicate as such. In contrast, those from Malaysia (6.46), Thailand (5.48), Japan (5.36), South Korea (6.66) China (5.5), Hong Kong (6.31), Australia (6.20), the US (4.93), Switzerland (5.01), the UK (5.53), and Sweden (6.38) felt that there should be more income equality.

With respect to government provisions, Japanese respondents (3.95) supported it more strongly compared to Singaporeans; in fact, the Japanese were the most likely of all societies-of-interest to feel that the onus was on the government, rather than individuals, to ensure all are provided for. However, Malaysians (5.26), Thais (5.27), South Koreans (5.27), Chinese (5.35), Hongkongers (5.62), Taiwanese 95.46), Australians (5.31), Americans (5.68), Brits (6.25), the Swiss (6.73), and Swedes (6.58) were more likely than Singaporeans to feel that people should take more responsibility to fend for themselves (see Table 184).

Table 184: Mean scores for economic obligations, by polity

Question / Statement	Mean Statistical Indicator (range from 1 to 10) for each polity*												
	SG	MY	TH	JP	KR	CN	HK	TW	AU	US	UK	SZ	SW
More equal income vs Greater incentive for individual effort	6.93	6.46	5.48	5.36	6.66	5.53	6.31	7.17	6.2	4.93	5.53	5.01	6.38
Government ensure everyone is provided for vs People take more responsibility to provide for themselves	4.98	5.26	5.27	3.95	5.27	5.35	5.62	5.46	5.31	5.68	6.25	6.73	6.58

* N/A denotes responses for that item not available for that polity; highest mean value for each row is in highlighted in yellow while lowest value is in red.

Respondents were also asked whether Singaporeans should be prioritised over immigrants when jobs are scarce, with a five-point Likert scale. There was a high level of agreement with this statement; 79.1 per cent said they agreed or strongly agreed. While there were 11.8 per cent who took a neutral position, a very small minority disagreed with the statement. These sentiments have clearly changed over the years – in 2012, 69.5 per cent agreed with the statement, while the agreement rate was 87.4 per cent in 2002 (see Figure 36).

Figure 36: When jobs are scarce, employers should give priority to people of Singapore over immigrants

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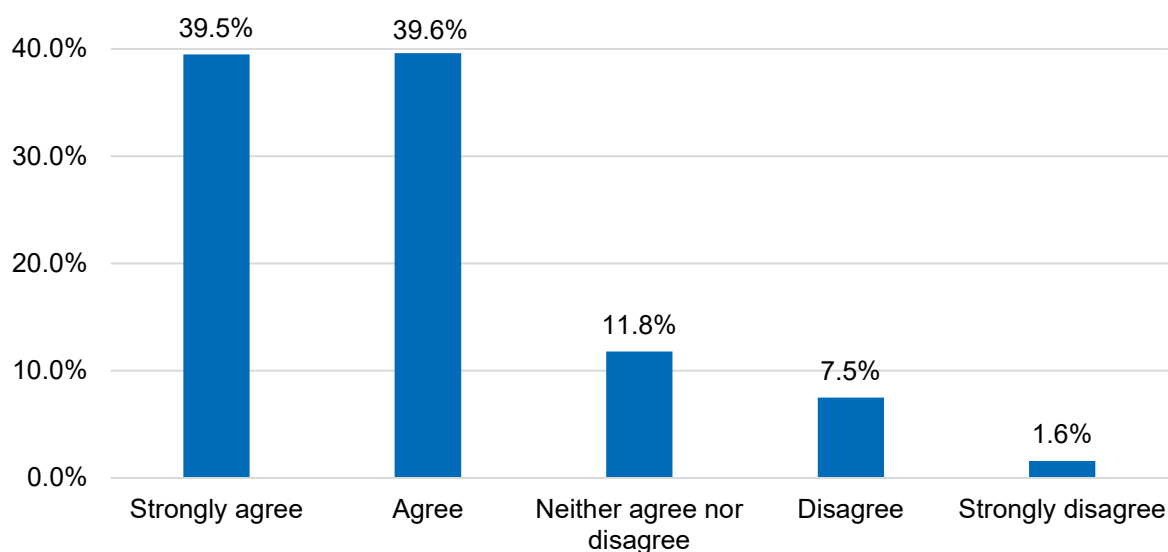
There were differing sentiments towards immigrants when we examine responses across societies. Similar to Singapore's results, over 70 per cent of respondents from Malaysia, Thailand, South Korea, China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan agreed that employers should prioritise locals over immigrants when jobs are scarce. Agreement rates ranged between 35 and 59 per cent for respondents from Japan, Australia, the US, the UK, and Switzerland. In contrast, Swedes seemed to view immigrants most magnanimously, with 72.5 per cent actually saying that they disagreed (see Figure 37).

Figure 37: When jobs are scarce, employers should give priority to people of [society] over immigrants

Legend: ■ Strongly agree/Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Strongly disagree/Disagree
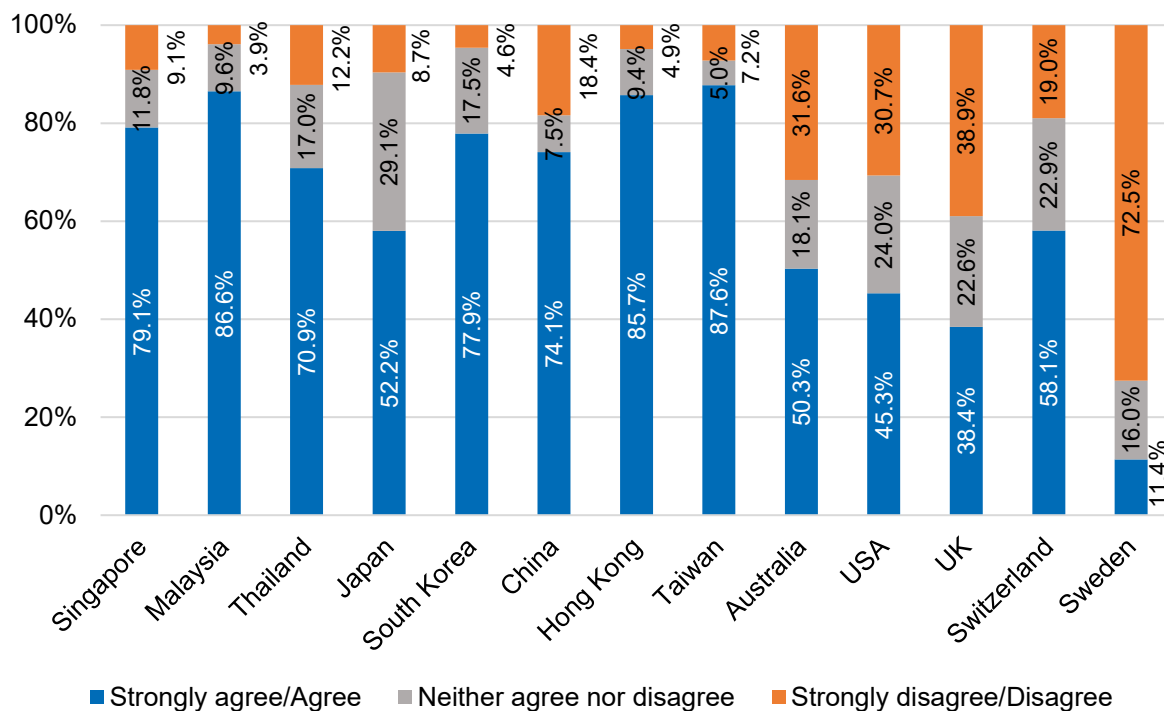
6.2.2 Older respondents and born citizens were more likely to support employers prioritising Singaporeans over immigrants in times of job scarcity, relative to their younger, foreign-born counterparts

When results were compared across demographic variables for jobs scarcity prioritisation, respondents older than 35 years old, who were born in Singapore, currently unemployed, or part of the middle income or education levels were more likely to agree with the statement. Compared with the rest of the sample population, respondents aged between 21 and 35 were less likely to say they strongly agreed with the statement. In contrast, they were more likely to choose "neither agree nor disagree" or "disagree". However, given that 71.4 per cent of this group chose either "agree" or "strongly agree", there is still a significant majority within the group that approved of priority given to protecting locals' livelihoods over that of immigrants (see Table 185).

Table 185: Prioritising Singaporeans over immigrants, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 2,009	When jobs are scarce, employers should give priority to people of Singapore over immigrants		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree / Strongly disagree
21-35	71.4	16.7	11.9
36-50	77.7	12.2	10.1
51-65	82.3	10	7.7
Above 65	89.4	5.4	5.1

Given that the naturalised citizens and PRs are considered immigrants at least at one point in time when they arrived in Singapore, it is unsurprising to see a much smaller proportion expressing strong agreement for prioritising Singaporeans over immigrants, due potentially to their greater ability to empathise with the latter group given their personal experiences. However, a majority of the group, or 66.2 per cent, still stated that employers should give priority to the people of Singapore over immigrants when jobs are scarce (see Table 186).

Table 186: Prioritising Singaporeans over immigrants, by citizenship status

Citizenship Status N = 2,009	When jobs are scarce, employers should give priority to people of Singapore over immigrants		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree / Strongly disagree
Born citizen	82.3	10.2	7.4
Naturalised citizen/ PR	66.2	17.8	16

6.2.3 Self-employed and unemployed respondents, as well as those belonging to mid-level education and income groups, are more likely to support prioritising Singaporeans over immigrants in times of jobs scarcity

When the results were examined by employment status, we find that the groups most likely to strongly agree with the statement were the unemployed, followed by the self-employed. This is not surprising, given that both these groups could have been displaced from full-time work because of the perceived competition posed by an immigrant workforce. Aggregating the five categories into three broader ones, we find that in general, retirees, housewives, and the self-employed were most likely to support prioritising Singaporeans over immigrants in times of jobs scarcity. Students were the least likely to express strong agreement with the statement, although many chose the "agree" option. Since students do not generally experience workplace competition, they may perhaps not have as strong feelings about reducing competition for jobs compared to gainfully employed individuals (see Table 187).

Table 187: Prioritising Singaporeans over immigrants, by employment status

Employment Status *N = 2,009*	When jobs are scarce, employers should give priority to people of Singapore over immigrants		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree / Strongly disagree
Full-time employee	76.7	12.9	10.4
Part-time employee	78.5	11.8	9.7
Self-employed	83.7	10.4	5.9
Retired/pensioned	87.8	7.7	4.5
Housewife	84.2	8.8	7
Student	66.3	18	15.7
Unemployed	78.1	12.5	9.4

When perusing results by education level, we find that secondary and polytechnic graduates (qualifications in the middle of Singapore's educational attainment framework) were more likely to express strong agreement for the statement as compared with the lowest and highest educated respondents. A similar trend was observed for income levels, where respondents earning between $1,500 and $4,999 were more likely to strongly agree with the statement as compared to their least well-off and most well-off peers (see Tables 188 and 189).

One possible reason for this trend could be these "sandwiched" groups are among the most likely to face competition for jobs from foreigners or immigrants in Singapore's labour context. These groups typically seek job positions actively pursued by immigrants with mid-level work passes (S-Pass holders). Given that they are particularly impacted by immigrants entering the workforce, their preference for the prioritisation of locals over foreigners is to be expected.

Table 188: Prioritising Singaporeans over immigrants, by education level

Education Level *N = 2,009*	When jobs are scarce, employers should give priority to people of Singapore over immigrants		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree / Strongly disagree
Below secondary	81.8	9.7	8.6
Secondary/ ITE	84.4	9	6.6
Dip. / Prof. qual.	77.8	12.2	9.9
Bachelor's and above	74	14.9	11.1

Table 189: Prioritising Singaporeans over immigrants, by income level

Income Level *N = 1,223*	When jobs are scarce, employers should give priority to people of Singapore over immigrants		
	Strongly agree / Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree / Strongly disagree
Below $1,500	80.2	10.6	9.2
$1,500 - $2,999	81.3	9.3	9.3
$3,000 - $4,999	77.6	14.6	7.8
$5,000 - $6,999	73.3	13.9	12.7
Above $6,999	74.2	11.3	14.5

6.2.4 Younger, lower-educated, and less affluent respondents were less likely to support greater incentives for individual effort relative to their older and more well-off peers, but just as likely to support income equality

When asked about their preferred mode of income distribution, only 11.2 per cent felt that incomes should be made more equal. In contrast, 60.5 per cent felt that there should be greater incentives for individual effort, while 28.3 per cent were undecided (see Figure 33). The mean for this question was 6.93, indicating a general inclination towards individual efforts being rewarded (see Table 174). However, when we dissect results by age cohort, we note that respondents aged between 21 and 35 were slightly less in favour of having greater incentives for individual effort. Meanwhile, the group aged between 51 and 65 had the largest proportion indicating indecision between the two stances (see Table 190).

Table 190: Equal incomes vs incentives for individual effort, by age cohort

Age Cohort *N = 2,001*	How would you place your views on this scale?		
	Incomes should be made more equal	Undecided	There should be greater incentives for individual effort
21-35	12.5	29.9	57.5
36-50	11.9	22.8	65.2
51-65	8.2	33.0	58.8
Above 65	11.3	26.2	62.5

In general, positive correlations were found between response rates for the statement, "There should be greater incentives for individual effort" and education, as well as income. Respondents from the highest education and income groups were most likely to feel this way; 66.4 per cent of those with university degrees, as well as 69 per cent of those earning above $6,999 felt that there should be greater incentives for individual effort. In contrast, 53.3 per cent of the least-educated respondents, and just over half of those earning below $3,000 felt

this way. Meanwhile, there was no statistically significant difference in proportions identifying with the statement that "incomes should be made more equal" (see Tables 191 and 192).

Table 191: Equal incomes vs incentives for individual effort, by education level

Education Level N = 1,997	How would you place your views on this scale?		
	Incomes should be made more equal	Undecided	There should be greater incentives for individual effort
Below secondary	13.6	33.2	53.3
Secondary/ ITE	10.5	30.7	58.7
Dip. / Prof. qual.	10.2	28.1	61.7
Bachelor's and above	10.3	23.4	66.4

Table 192: Equal incomes vs incentives for individual effort, by income level

Income Level N = 1,221	How would you place your views on this scale?		
	Incomes should be made more equal	Undecided	There should be greater incentives for individual effort
Below $1,500	11.1	28.2	60.6
$1,500 - $2,999	14.5	33.9	51.6
$3,000 - $4,999	9.1	29.3	61.6
$5,000 - $6,999	10.9	25.5	63.6
Above $6,999	7.6	23.4	69.0

6.2.5 In general, more felt that it was the responsibility of the government to ensure all were taken care of, although the least-educated and middle-income respondents were especially likely to feel this way

Lastly, when respondents were asked whether government or individuals should take more responsibility for their socio-economic well-being, we find that a slightly larger proportion of respondents indicated a preference for the former. Overall, 36 per cent felt that the government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone was provided for, while 25.8 per cent believed the people have more responsibility. In addition, 38.2 per cent were undecided between these two stances (see Figure 33).

When comparing across education levels, the highest support for the government to ensure everyone was provided for came from the least-educated group, with 42 per cent indicating their preferences as such. Meanwhile, the rest of the groups had a slightly lower preference for government support, with under 35 per cent indicating likewise (see Table 193).

Table 193: Government vs personal responsibility, by education level

Education Level *N = 2,003*	How would you place your views on this scale?		
	Government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for	Undecided	People should take more responsibility to provide for themselves
Below secondary	42.0	36.9	21.0
Secondary/ ITE	34.4	37.6	28.0
Dip. / Prof. qual.	33.8	41.8	24.4
Bachelor's and above	34.7	36.5	28.8

Responses on government versus personal responsibility were also influenced by affluence. Middle-income earners were least likely to indicate a preference for the government taking responsibility relative to other income groups; these respondents also had the highest propensity to register their indecision vis-à-vis this issue. This could reflect "sandwiched class" issues, whereby respondents in this category may desire more government assistance.

Higher-income earners drawing more than $5,000 were on the other hand marginally more likely to indicate a preference for people taking more responsibility to provide for themselves. This could tie in with findings in 3.3.7, whereby affluence is hypothesised to engender a more acute sense of how taxpayer monies were spent, e.g., on social welfare, given the augmented tax contributions of this group. This might explain why the most affluent are marginally more likely to indicate a preference for personal responsibility (see Table 194).

Table 194: Government vs personal responsibility, by income level

Income Level *N = 1,222*	How would you place your views on this scale?		
	Government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for	Undecided	People should take more responsibility to provide for themselves
Below $1,500	35.2	38.0	26.9
$1,500 - $2,999	39.0	39.4	21.6
$3,000 - $4,999	30.1	43.8	26.1
$5,000 - $6,999	38.8	29.7	31.5
Above $6,999	32.1	37.1	30.8

Chapter 7

State and Society

CHAPTER 7 | STATE AND SOCIETY

This chapter peruses survey questions and their accompanying responses pertaining to a broad range of issues within contemporary society: 1) wide-ranging national priorities and the demographic differences in perceiving their importance; 2) issues of law and justice; 3) values of freedom, equality, and security and how they are perceived across demographics; and 4) opinions on social change and revolution. *In toto*, these provide a broad-brush understanding of what the populace values in society today.

7.1   NATIONAL PRIORITIES

Respondents were also asked about the objectives they prioritised for the nation. They were provided with three sets of four options each, and asked to select the top two choices from each set. They were not allowed to choose the same option twice. In general, respondents felt that a stable functioning of the country's economy and law and order was much more important compared with things like freedom of speech, beautifying surroundings, and having ideas count more than money.

All things considered, Singapore respondents seem to value material wellbeing over other ideals. Such a priority among Singaporeans reflects the workings of the developmental state; one that prioritises economic growth over all else (Pereira, 2008). Some have argued that the state has placed economic growth as a key priority, with equity placed as secondary to it (Ian, 2009). Wong and Huang (2010) argue that the prioritisation of economic values might be due to the economic legitimacy that the PAP has based itself on. Another reason they posit is that the principle of meritocracy has propagated a culture of competition amongst young Singaporeans. This contributes to attitudes of materialism as well.

It is useful to note that the trio of questions presented in the next six subsections is meant to contribute to a broader post-materialism scale (Inglehart, 1977). The latter measures whether people tend to be more materialistic or post-materialistic by aggregating their responses to the three sets of questions. A more comprehensive analysis incorporating this scale will be incorporated in a future publication. However, for clarity purposes, we have presented a breakdown of responses across the three component questions. In general, we find that Singaporeans still predominantly veer toward materialist values; though with an avid eye on incrementally pursuing post-materialist values such as citizen participation and engagement.

7.1.1   Respondents were most likely to feel that pursuing high economic growth and ensuring strong national defence forces are top priorities, relative to encouraging more citizen participation and beautifying the environment

The first question set of four items comprised the following: 1) pursuing a high level of economic growth, 2) ensuring strong national defence forces, 3) promoting citizen participation, and 4) beautifying the physical and built environment. Figure 38 presents the

actual item wordings and weighted proportions of the respondent pool indicating the item-of-interest as a priority. Economic growth was the most popular objective amongst respondents. Overall, 40.3 per cent chose having a high level of economic growth as their first choice, while 29 per cent chose national defence (see Figure 38).

Economic growth was also the most popular choice for Australians, Taiwanese, Hongkongers, Japanese, South Koreans, Malaysians, Swedes, Thais, and Brits. Chinese and American respondents were more interested in strong national defence, while the Swiss preferred having more say about their jobs and their community.

There was also a quarter of the population choosing citizen participation as their first choice. Meanwhile, only 4.8 per cent picked that beautifying the nation as their first choice. When asked to choose the next most important priority, 34.4 per cent chose national defence, and 32.3 per cent chose economic growth. Beautifying the surroundings remained the least popular choice, with only 8.7 per cent selecting it as their second priority.

Figure 38: Selection of national priorities (first set)
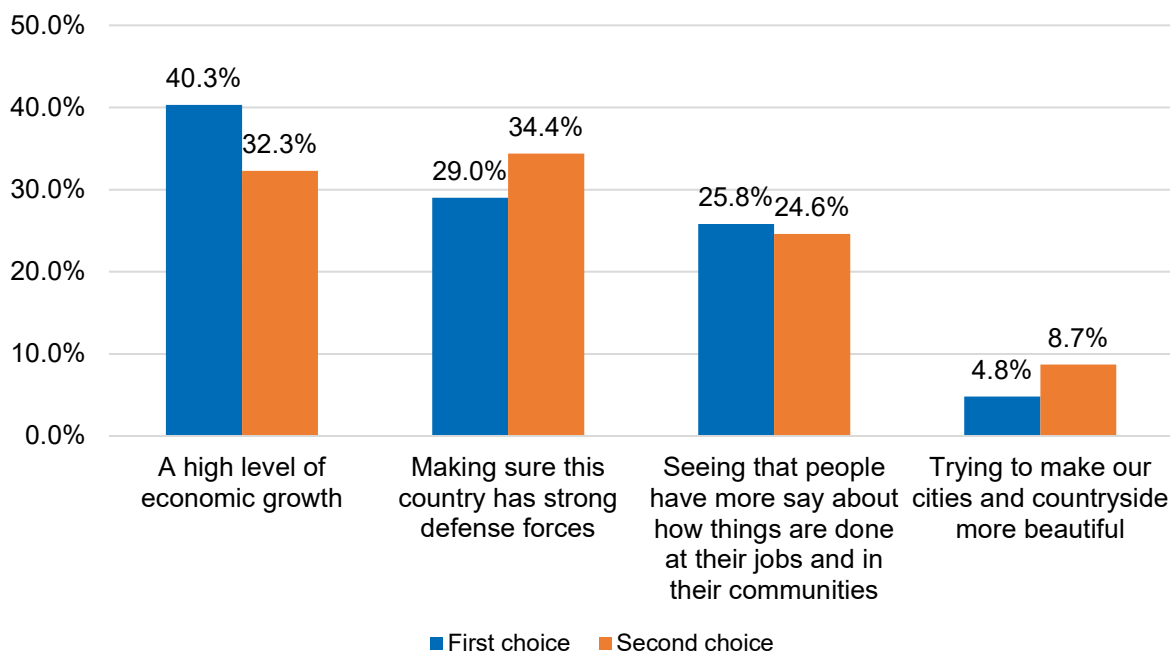
The pursuit of economic growth notwithstanding, respondents who were younger, better educated, or more affluent were more likely to choose people having more say as a priority. Meanwhile, respondents who were older or less-educated were more likely to prioritise national defence. The least popular choice overall was beautifying the physical and built environment. However, this may not mean that respondents view this objective as unimportant; rather, in light of other priorities perceived as vital or critical to the nation, this aim might have been perceived as less essential. Moreover, given Singapore's prior and continuing efforts to develop itself as a garden city with a lot of care taken in maintaining a

beautiful façade, perhaps few see this as a current priority. The responses are analysed across demographics in further detail over the next few sub-sections.

7.1.2 While economic growth is the top priority across all demographic groups, male, younger, higher-educated and more affluent respondents were more likely to prioritise citizen participation over defence

In line with the overarching trends in 7.1.1, economic growth was the most popular choice for both genders. For both groups, 40.5 per cent selected it as their first choice. However, the next most popular choice for both genders was different. While female respondents felt strong national defence forces were more integral relative to citizen participation (32.5 per cent), their male counterparts were more likely to indicate higher participation in how things are done in their jobs and communities as their priority as opposed to defence (29.1 per cent) (see Table 195).

Table 195: Selection of national priorities (first set), by gender

Gender N = 1,994	Most important national priority			
	A high level of economic growth	Making sure this country has strong defence forces	Seeing that people have more say about how things are done …	Trying to make our cities and countryside more beautiful
Male	40.5	25.1	29.1	5.3
Female	40.5	32.5	22.6	4.4

Additional significant differences were found when examining responses across age groups and education levels. For all age groups, the most popular choice was economic growth. However, the second most popular choice for the two younger age cohorts was participation; older age cohorts were more likely to prioritise national defence. In fact, the support for economic growth and participation were very similar for the youngest age cohort; 36.7 and 35.1 per cent of this group selected these two options respectively (see Table 196).

Table 196: Selection of national priorities (first set), by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 1,994	Most important national priority			
	A high level of economic growth	Making sure this country has strong defence forces	Seeing that people have more say about how things are done …	Trying to make our cities and countryside more beautiful
21-35	36.7	24.4	35.1	3.8
36-50	40.7	26.8	27.7	4.8
51-65	42.3	31.7	21.8	4.1
Above 65	43.5	36.5	12.5	7.6

A similar trend was prevalent across education levels. While economic growth was still the top priority across all age groups, there were variations for proportions selecting defence and citizen participation. About 31 per cent of each education group chose defence as their first choice, with the exception of degree holders for which only a quarter indicated likewise. For this highest-educated group of respondents, citizen participation was of greater importance to them (31.6 per cent) (see Table 197).

Table 197: Selection of national priorities (first set), by education level

Education Level N = 1,990	Most important national priority			
	A high level of economic growth	Making sure this country has strong defence forces	Seeing that people have more say about how things are done …	Trying to make our cities and countryside more beautiful
Below secondary	45.7	31.0	15.5	7.9
Secondary/ ITE	41.2	31.4	22.6	4.8
Dip. / Prof. qual.	35.6	31.6	29.1	3.7
Bachelor's and above	40.2	24.5	31.6	3.8

The results were then analysed across socio-economic indicators. At the outset, economic growth was consistently the most popular choice across income groups and housing types. The second most popular choice of respondents earning between $3,000 and $4,999 as well as those earning between above $6,999 was citizen participation, while the other groups preferred national defence. This result is also corroborated when considering housing type; private property dwellers were more likely to prefer citizen participation rather than defence, with the converse holding true for respondents residing in public housing.

This could potentially be indicative of "sandwiched class" stressors driving a desire for more people participation, alongside greater priorities vis-à-vis social engagement for more affluent

respondents. It is also notable that the most affluent respondents were also most likely to prioritise economic growth (46.2 per cent) relative to their less-off peers (see Tables 198 and 199).

**Table 198: Selection of national priorities (first set), by income level**

| Income Level N = 1,218 | Most important national priority | | | |
	A high level of economic growth	Making sure this country has strong defence forces	Seeing that people have more say about how things are done …	Trying to make our cities and countryside more beautiful
Below $1,500	39.5	29.8	24.7	6.0
$1,500 - $2,999	36.7	30.2	27.3	5.8
$3,000 - $4,999	38.4	27.2	31.2	3.2
$5,000 - $6,999	37.6	30.3	29.1	3.0
Above $6,999	46.2	22.8	25.3	5.7

Table 199: Selection of national priorities (first set), by housing type

| Housing Type N = 1,994 | Most important national priority | | | |
	A high level of economic growth	Making sure this country has strong defence forces	Seeing that people have more say about how things are done …	Trying to make our cities and countryside more beautiful
1- to 3-room HDB	38.9	31.1	22.0	8.0
4-room HDB	42.6	28.5	25.4	3.4
5+-room HDB	37.4	30.9	27.4	4.4
Private property	43.4	24.4	29.8	2.4

7.1.3 Maintaining order emerged as the clear priority for most respondents, while giving people more say in policymaking and fighting rising prices featured as the next line of priorities

The next question set of four items comprised 1) maintaining order in the nation, 2) giving people more say in important government decisions, 3) fighting rising prices, and 4) protecting freedom of speech. Figure 39 presents the actual item wordings and weighted proportions of the respondent pool indicating the item-of-interest as a priority. When comparing the combined proportions of respondents choosing each item as a first or second choice, maintaining order in the nation was the clear winner (see Figure 39).

Figure 39: Prioritising objectives for the country
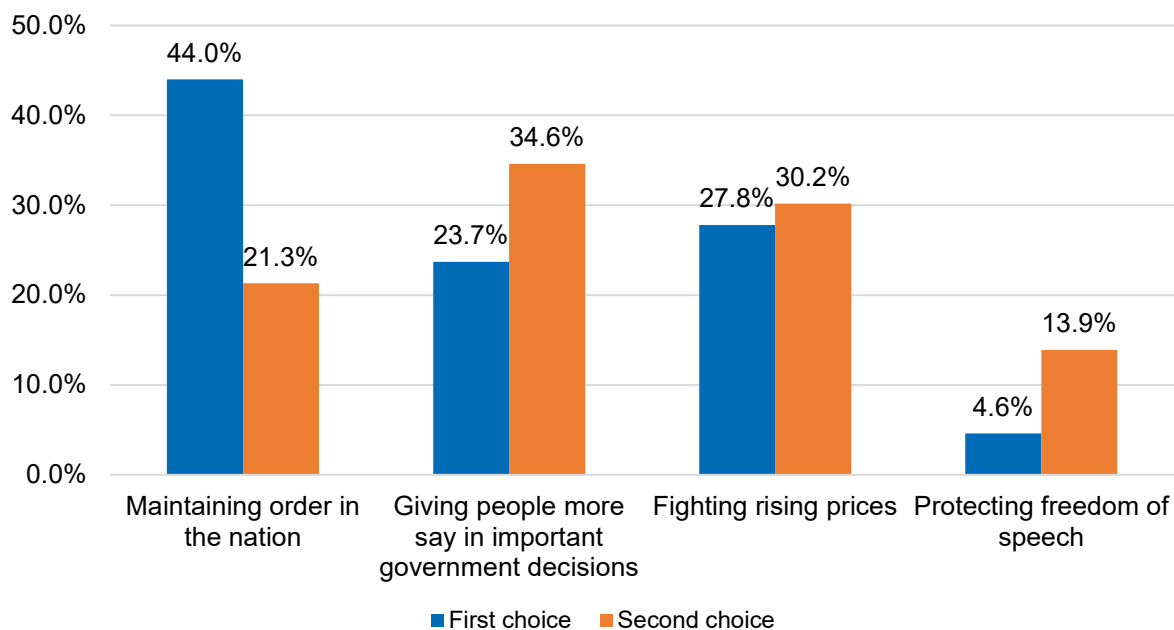
Maintaining order was also the top choice for respondents from China, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Sweden, Thailand, and the US. Similar proportions chose fighting rising prices and giving people more say, while freedom of speech came in last of this quartet. Meanwhile, freedom of speech was the most popular choice in Switzerland; Australians and the British prioritised giving people more say in important government decisions; and Taiwanese and South Koreans felt that fighting rising prices was most important. In general, less affluent respondents were more likely to prioritise fighting rising prices.

When the results for the first and second choices were separated, it was found that maintaining order for the country was the most popular first choice, with 44 per cent selecting it. Fighting rising prices was the second most popular at 27.8 per cent, while 23.7 per cent of the population felt that people should be given more say. Only 4.6 per cent felt that the most important priority was to protect freedom of speech. With respect to the second choice, the most popular option was giving people more say at 34.6 per cent. Another 30.2 per cent chose fighting rising prices, making it quite a close second. Meanwhile, 21.3 per cent selected maintaining order, and 13.9 per cent chose protecting freedom of speech. Taking these results in tandem with those presented in 7.1.1, it is clear that Singapore respondents were more likely to prioritise economic and security prerogatives.

7.1.4   While maintaining order in the nation was the foremost priority, younger, less-educated and less-affluent respondents were likelier to prioritise citizen involvement in policy-making and fighting rising prices

For respondents aged above 35, there was a clear preference for maintaining order in the nation as the most important priority, at least 47 per cent of each group selected this option. In comparison, respondents in the youngest age cohort were more split between maintaining

order and fighting rising prices; 34.5 per cent chose the first option, while 32.1 per cent chose the second option. This could reflect generational differences between the youngest age cohort and older respondents. Meanwhile, the second most popular choice was fighting rising prices for all the age groups except those aged between 36 and 50. Nearly equal proportions of this group chose either giving people more say and fighting rising prices (see Table 200).

Table 200: Selection of national priorities (second set), by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 2,001	Most important national priority			
	Maintaining order in the nation	Giving people more say in important government decisions	Fighting rising prices	Protecting freedom of speech
21-35	34.5	25.6	32.1	7.8
36-50	47.0	25.0	24.5	3.4
51-65	47.8	21.8	27.2	3.2
Above 65	49.7	19.0	28.0	3.3

Respondents with higher education levels were more concerned about maintaining order in the nation, while respondents with lower education levels were more concerned about fighting rising prices. While the most popular choice for the three higher education groups was maintaining order in the nation, respondents with below secondary education were clearly more concerned with rising prices. This is further supported by how 18.4 per cent of those with below secondary education chose giving people more say, compared with around 24 per cent for the rest of the respondent pool (see Table 201).

Table 201: Selection of national priorities (second set), by education level

Education Level N = 1,997	Most important national priority			
	Maintaining order in the nation	Giving people more say in important government decisions	Fighting rising prices	Protecting freedom of speech
Below secondary	37.6	18.4	39.7	4.3
Secondary/ ITE	43.2	24.3	27.7	4.8
Dip. / Prof. qual.	44.6	24.4	25.7	5.2
Bachelor's and above	48.7	24.3	22.9	4.1

Affluence was also another factor exerting an impact on the priorities of respondents for this quartet of options. While maintaining order and fighting rising prices were still the two most popular choices in sequence across all housing types, more affluent respondents were more

likely to indicate maintaining order in the nation compared to their less-off counterparts. Over half of those residing in private property felt this way, compared to 38.9 per cent of those residing in 1- to 3-room flats.

This is intuitive due to the significantly different socio-economic stressors and considerations of the affluent, and the not-so-affluent. Beneficiaries of the prevailing socio-political order would be more inclined towards a maintenance of the status quo. Nonetheless, less affluent respondents were also more likely to feel involving people in policy-making is important (see Table 202).

Table 202: Selection of national priorities (second set), by housing type

Housing Type N = 2,001	Most important national priority			
	Maintaining order in the nation	Giving people more say in important government decisions	Fighting rising prices	Protecting freedom of speech
1- to 3-room HDB	38.9	26.9	29.4	4.8
4-room HDB	43.0	22.9	29.4	4.6
5+-room HDB	47.2	22.5	26.4	3.9
Private property	51.9	18.8	24.5	4.8

7.1.5 Though most selected a stable economy as their top priority, a significant proportion viewed a less impersonal, more humane society as important

The last question set of four items comprised 1) a stable economy, 2) progressing towards a less impersonal, more humane society, 3) progressing towards a society in which ideas value more than money, and 4) the fight against crime. Figure 40 presents the actual item wordings and weighted proportions of the respondent pool indicating the item-of-interest as a priority. Similar to results in 7.1.1, the economy was again the most important priority, with over 80 per cent choosing it as either the first or second choice. When compared across societies like Malaysia, Thailand, Japan, South Korea, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Australia, and the US, the economy was deemed most important by all. Meanwhile, more in Singapore chose the option of moving towards a more humane society as a second priority. The fight against crime was accorded the lowest priority (see Figure 40).

Figure 40: Prioritising objectives for the country
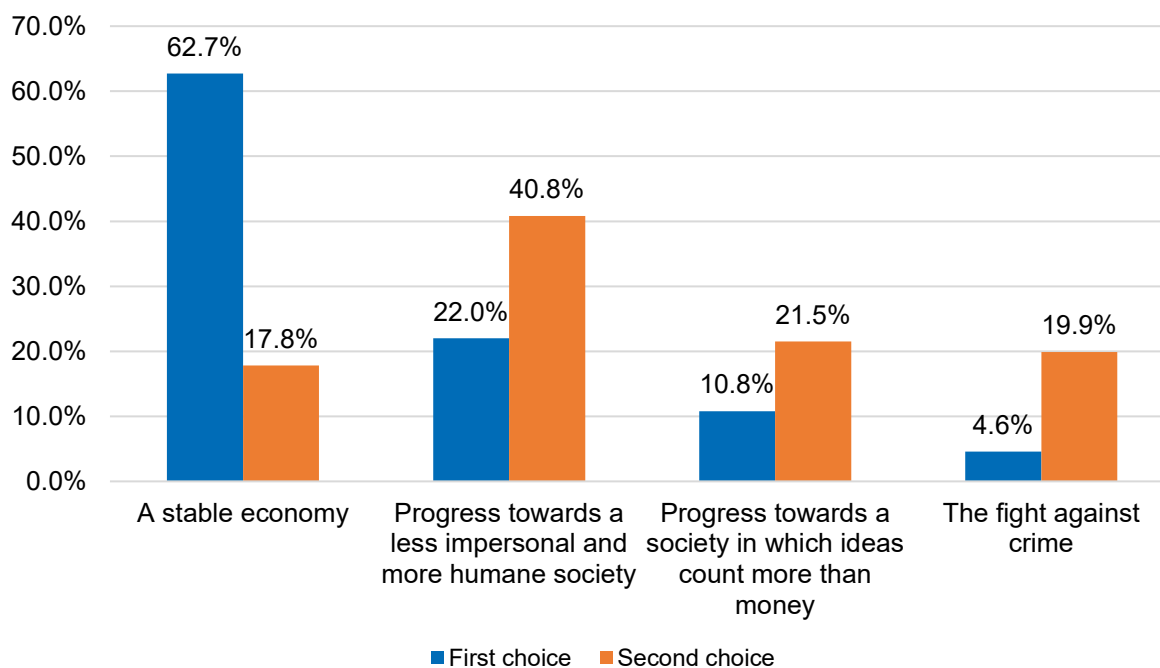
When it came to respondents' first choice, 62.7 per cent chose a stable economy as the most important priority, 22 per cent chose progress towards a less impersonal and more humane society, 10.8 per cent chose progressing towards a society in which ideas count more than money, while 4.6 per cent selected the fight against crime. When asked about the next most important priority, progressing towards a more humane society was the most popular choice, with 40.8 per cent selecting this option. Meanwhile, 21.5 per cent chose a society in which ideas count more than money, 17.8 per cent chose a stable economy, and 19.9 per cent chose the fight against crime.

Given that security is seen as a priority in other questions, one possible reason for fewer Singaporean respondents choosing this priority might be the phrasing of the item which emphasised the notion of crime. As there is a low crime rate in Singapore, this might not be seen as an important priority presently when compared with the rest of the items. However, lower-educated, less-affluent, and older respondents aged above 65 were more likely to choose this option as their second choice.

7.1.6 Younger and more affluent respondents are more likely to value progress toward a less impersonal and more humane society, even as most acknowledged the importance of a stable economy

Across all age groups, the most popular choice was a stable economy, followed by a less impersonal and more humane society. However, younger respondents seemed slightly more concerned about progressing towards a society in which ideas count more than money. Compared with less than 10 per cent of the other groups, 14.1 per cent of those aged between

21 and 35 chose this item as the most important priority. The same trend applied vis-à-vis proportions prioritising a less impersonal, more humane society (see Table 203).

Table 203: Selection of national priorities (third set), by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 2,009	Most important national priority			
	A stable economy	Progress toward a less impersonal and more humane society	Progress toward a society in which ideas count more than money	The fight against crime
21-35	56.7	25.4	14.1	3.8
36-50	62.8	21.8	9.7	5.7
51-65	68.2	18.2	9.5	4.1
Above 65	66.6	22.0	6.3	5.1

The prioritisation of items was similarly identical across all income groups. However, approximately one-third of the most affluent respondents prioritised progressing towards a less impersonal and more humane society, compared to just over a fifth for the rest of the respondents. However, the most affluent were marginally less likely to prioritise valuing ideas more than money. This may be due to their current financial circumstances, whereby they are beneficiaries of the prevailing capitalist status quo (see Table 204).

Table 204: Selection of national priorities (third set), by income level

Income Level N = 1,223	Most important national priority			
	A stable economy	Progress toward a less impersonal and more humane society	Progress toward a society in which ideas count more than money	The fight against crime
Below $1,500	60.6	19.0	11.1	9.3
$1,500 - $2,999	59.2	23.8	11.6	5.5
$3,000 - $4,999	61.0	23.7	11.8	3.5
$5,000 - $6,999	64.8	20.6	10.9	3.6
Above $6,999	56.6	32.7	8.8	1.9

7.2 LAW AND JUSTICE

The analyses in this section pertain to two questions specific to the Singapore survey, which asked respondents to indicate what they prioritised in the ambit of law and justice. The first question called for a value judgement, given a hypothetical binary between convicting an innocent person or letting a guilty person go free. The second question addressed issues of administrating law by querying respondents whether the law should be obeyed without exceptions or otherwise. While a neutral option was provided, the majority of respondents was able to choose between the two scenarios provided. Overall, Singapore respondents felt that convicting an innocent person was worse compared to letting a guilty person go free; and that people should obey the law with allowance for special circumstances. Taken together, these two results suggest preferences for a more compassionate administration of justice (see Figures 41 and 42).

Figure 41: All systems of justice make mistakes, but which do you think is worse?

- To convict an innocent person
- To let a guilty person go free
- Can't choose

55.8%
27.7%
16.5%
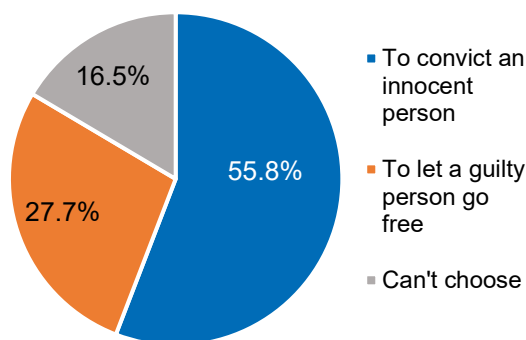
Figure 42: What is your opinion on the following?

- Obey the law without exception
- Obey the law with exception
- Can't choose

28.8%
59.8%
11.4%
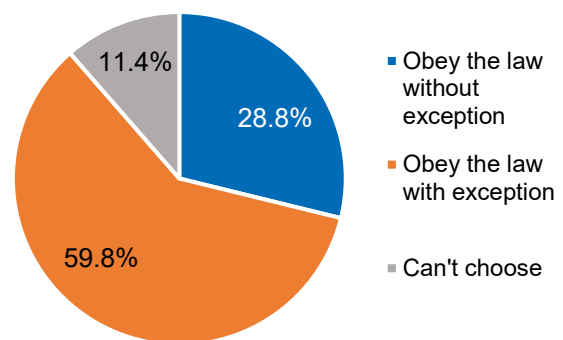
7.2.1 While the majority of respondents felt convicting the innocent was worse than letting the guilty walk free; younger respondents were more likely to feel this way relative to their older peers

Overall, 55.9 per cent of the population felt that convicting an innocent person was a worse mistake than to let a guilty person go free. In contrast, 27.7 per cent felt that letting a guilty person go free was worse, while 16.5 per cent could not choose between the two options (see Figure 41). However, respondents who were younger, more educated, and more affluent were more likely to think that convicting the innocent was worse than letting the guilty walk free.

When perusing results across age cohorts, we find that the proportion of respondents indicating they felt letting the guilty walk free was worse remained quite constant at between 26 per cent and 29 per cent across all cohorts. Meanwhile, younger respondents were more likely to feel that convicting an innocent person was worse (60.5 per cent) relative to their older

counterparts. Correspondingly, there was a larger proportion of older respondents who selected a neutral response between the two options (see Table 205).

Table 205: Convicting the innocent vs letting the guilty walk free, by age cohort

Age Cohort *N = 1,997*	All systems of justice make mistakes, but which do you think is worse		
	To convict an innocent person	To let a guilty person go free	Can't choose
21-35	60.5	26.0	13.5
36-50	55.4	27.3	17.3
51-65	55.0	28.5	16.6
Above 65	49.5	29.0	21.5

7.2.2 In the same vein, the higher educated and more affluent were more likely to perceive convicting the innocent as a worse transgression relative to letting the guilty go free

In general, larger proportions of respondents with higher education, higher income, or residing in larger housing types felt that convicting an innocent person was a worse mistake than letting a guilty person off. 61.9 per cent of degree holders, 59.5 per cent of respondents earning $7,000 or more, and 63 per cent of private property dwellers felt this way, as opposed to under half of the least educated and the least affluent respondents. In addition, the least-educated and least well-off were more likely to indicate neutrality in response to the question posed (see Tables 206 to 208).

Table 206: Convicting the innocent vs letting the guilty walk free, by education level

Education Level *N = 1,993*	All systems of justice make mistakes, but which do you think is worse		
	To convict an innocent person	To let a guilty person go free	Can't choose
Below secondary	47.2	29.0	23.8
Secondary/ ITE	51.4	29.4	19.2
Dip. / Prof. qual.	60.0	29.8	10.3
Bachelor's and above	61.9	23.9	14.2

Table 207: Convicting the innocent vs letting the guilty walk free, by income level

Income Level *N = 1,216*	All systems of justice make mistakes, but which do you think is worse		
	To convict an innocent person	To let a guilty person go free	Can't choose
Below $1,500	47.9	28.8	23.3
$1,500 - $2,999	54.7	32.9	12.4
$3,000 - $4,999	60.1	27.0	12.9
$5,000 - $6,999	61.2	27.3	11.5
Above $6,999	59.5	24.7	15.8

Table 208: Convicting the innocent vs letting the guilty walk free, by housing type

Housing Type *N = 1,997*	All systems of justice make mistakes, but which do you think is worse		
	To convict an innocent person	To let a guilty person go free	Can't choose
1- to 3-room HDB	49.2	28.8	22.0
4-room HDB	56.7	28.2	15.2
5+-room HDB	57.6	29.8	12.6
Private property	63.0	21.2	15.8

7.2.3 More respondents felt that the law should be obeyed with exceptions, though silvers were more likely to feel otherwise

On the question of whether the law should be obeyed without exception or there was merit in people choosing to follow their conscience even if it involves breaking the law in some circumstances, the most popular option for this question was "obey the law with exception". Overall, 59.7 per cent chose this option, while 28.8 per cent felt that people should obey the law without exception (see Figure 42). Respondents who were younger, more educated, and more affluent were in general more likely to prefer a justice system where the law is obeyed, albeit with concessions for special cases.

We note, however, that there were sizeable differences when the results were examined by age cohorts. 70.2 per cent of the youngest age cohort felt that people should obey the law, but with exceptions. This proportion dropped across the older age cohorts, with less than half of the respondents above 65 years old choosing the same option. Meanwhile, 38.9 per cent of the oldest group felt that people should obey the law without exception, a significantly larger proportion as compared to 20.5 per cent of the youngest age cohort indicating likewise (see Table 209).

Table 209: Obey the law without exception vs with exception, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 1,994	What is your opinion on the following		
	Obey the law without exception	Obey the law with exception	Can't choose
21-35	20.5	70.2	9.3
36-50	29.2	57.8	13.1
51-65	29.9	57.7	12.4
Above 65	38.9	49.1	12.0

7.2.4 In general, higher educated and more affluent respondents were more likely to prefer a justice system where the law is obeyed with exceptions

When perusing overall trends by education levels and affluence, the results illustrate that in general, higher educated and more affluent respondents preferred a justice system where the law is obeyed with exceptions. Meanwhile, larger proportions of respondents with lower education or who lived in smaller housing types chose "obey the law without exceptions" and "can't choose". However, results dissected by income reflected somewhat different trends. Respondents earning between $5,000 and $6,999 were an anomaly; they were most likely to prefer obeying the law with exceptions (69.5 per cent). Compared to the rest, the most affluent respondents earning above $6,999 were most likely to indicate they preferred obeying the law without exceptions (32.7 per cent) (see Tables 210 to 212).

Table 210: Obey the law without exception vs with exception, by education level

Education Level N = 1,990	What is your opinion on the following		
	Obey the law without exception	Obey the law with exception	Can't choose
Below secondary	34.6	47.0	18.4
Secondary/ ITE	29.8	58.1	12.1
Dip. / Prof. qual.	29.1	64.1	6.8
Bachelor's and above	24.1	65.7	10.3

Table 211: Obey the law without exception vs with exception, by housing type

Housing Type N = 1,994	What is your opinion on the following		
	Obey the law without exception	Obey the law with exception	Can't choose
1- to 3-room HDB	31.2	52.9	15.9
4-room HDB	29.1	60.6	10.2
5+-room HDB	30.7	59.8	9.5
Private property	20.1	70.0	9.9

Table 212: Obey the law without exception vs with exception, by income level

Income Level *N = 1,215*	What is your opinion on the following		
	Obey the law without exception	Obey the law with exception	Can't choose
Below $1,500	25.6	61.4	13.0
$1,500 - $2,999	30.3	60.6	9.1
$3,000 - $4,999	27.6	61.9	10.5
$5,000 - $6,999	19.5	69.5	11.0
Above $6,999	32.7	59.1	8.2

7.3   OF FREEDOM, EQUALITY AND SECURITY

To better understand the inclinations of the population vis-à-vis all-encompassing societal ideals and values, respondents in the survey were also asked broader questions about what should be prioritised — freedom, equality, or security. Commentators have discussed the emphasis on Confucian values and ethics among early Singapore state leaders. Confucian values embed individual's rights, duties, and responsibilities within the context of that individual's role in society. As such, the state and the community come before the self. Therefore, self-interests are subordinate to societal interests and the larger good. The curtailment of individual freedom is justified in the name of maintaining public order, racial harmony, and national security (read more in Englehart [2000] and Song [2017]).

State ideology has at least some impact on the beliefs of Singaporeans. Ho (2016) explores how civic education in Singapore has effectively socialised many students to accept and internalise state rhetoric. Other scholars have highlighted how the Singapore state has championed Asian values as a way of justifying state paternalism and authoritarianism. These are reflected in the responses to the prioritisation questions, with the vast majority valuing security over freedom, and a slight majority prioritising equality over freedom (see Figures 43 and 44).

Figure 43: Most people consider both freedom and equality to be important, but if you had to choose between them, which one would you consider more important?
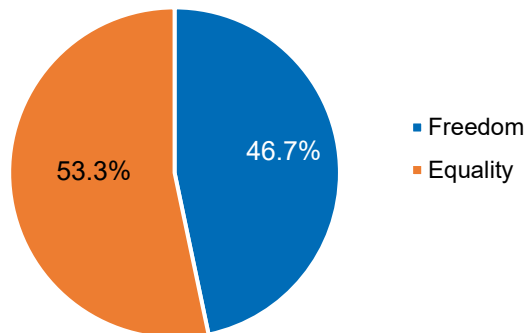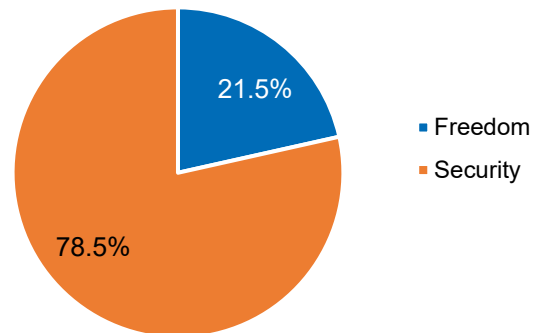
Figure 44: Most people consider both freedom and security to be important, but if you had to choose between them, which one would you consider more important?


46.7%
53.3%
■ Freedom
■ Equality

21.5%
78.5%
■ Freedom
■ Security

7.3.1 Singapore respondents were somewhat more likely to prioritise equality over freedom; although responses were most divided compared to other countries

As reflected in Figure 43, Singapore respondents were somewhat more likely to prioritise equality ideals over freedom; 53.3 per cent valued equality over freedom, while 46.7 per cent thought otherwise. When comparing responses globally, we find that Singapore's responses were the most 'divided' in terms of relatively similar proportions indicating a preference for both values compared to other polities. Malaysian and Thai respondents were similarly split between these two options, although Malaysians were slightly more likely to value freedom.

However, the responses of most other polities indicated significantly clearer preferences whereby larger swathes of their population prioritised freedom over equality. Over 60 per cent of Japanese, South Koreans, Hongkongers and Taiwanese felt this way; this proportion rose to approximately three-quarters for Australians and Americans – perhaps illustrating the cultural differences between Asian and Anglo-American societies whereby personal freedoms are particularly prized by the latter. On the other end of the spectrum, two-thirds of Mainland Chinese indicated a preference for equality as compared to freedom (see Figure 45).

Figure 45: Freedom vs Equality
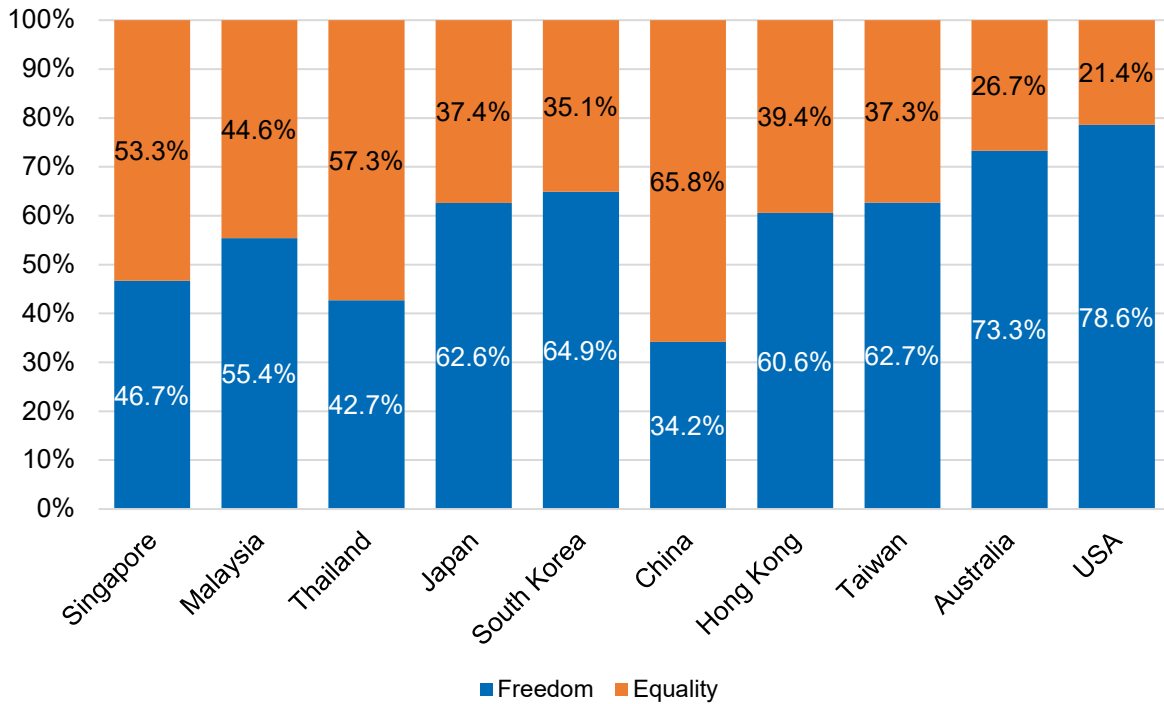
7.3.2 **While a larger proportion of respondents indicated a preference for equality as opposed to freedom, the most affluent respondents were more likely to think otherwise**

When compared across demographics, it was found that respondents earning above $6,999 or who lived in private properties were more likely to prefer freedom over equality. In fact, a larger proportion of those earning above $6,999 preferred freedom to equality; this is disparate to all other income groups. Given that these individuals come from more privileged backgrounds, questions of equality might not be as pertinent to them, and hence they may have slightly higher propensities to prefer freedom. Meanwhile, respondents earning below $1,500 had a nearly equal distribution between the two options (see Table 213).

Table 213: Freedom vs equality, by income level

Income Level *N = 1,208*	Which would you consider more important	
	Freedom	**Equality**
Below $1,500	49.3	50.7
$1,500 - $2,999	44.9	55.1
$3,000 - $4,999	44.3	55.7
$5,000 - $6,999	42.1	57.9
Above $6,999	52.6	47.4

The affluence effect on responses is further validated with results across housing types. When comparing the results across housing types, we find that slightly over half of the respondents living in private properties preferred freedom over equality. In contrast, the pattern is reversed for respondents living in public housing (see Table 214).

Table 214: Freedom vs equality, by housing type

Housing Type *N = 1,988*	Which would you consider more important	
	Freedom	**Equality**
1- to 3-room HDB	46.8	53.2
4-room HDB	43.5	56.5
5+-room HDB	47.7	52.3
Private property	50.5	49.5

7.3.3 Over three-quarters of Singapore respondents valued security over freedom, in tandem with most Asian societies

Compared with the earlier question, respondents were significantly more likely to prioritise security over freedom. Overall, 78.5 per cent of respondents indicated as such, which is in line with preferences across Asian societies. Mainland Chinese were overwhelmingly in favour of security (92.9 per cent) as opposed to freedom on one end of the spectrum, while nearly three-quarters of American respondents expressed a stronger preference for freedom on the other end. These trends further support findings in 7.3.1, and seem to corroborate the cultural differences between Asian and Anglo-American societies (see Figure 46).

Figure 46: Freedom vs Security
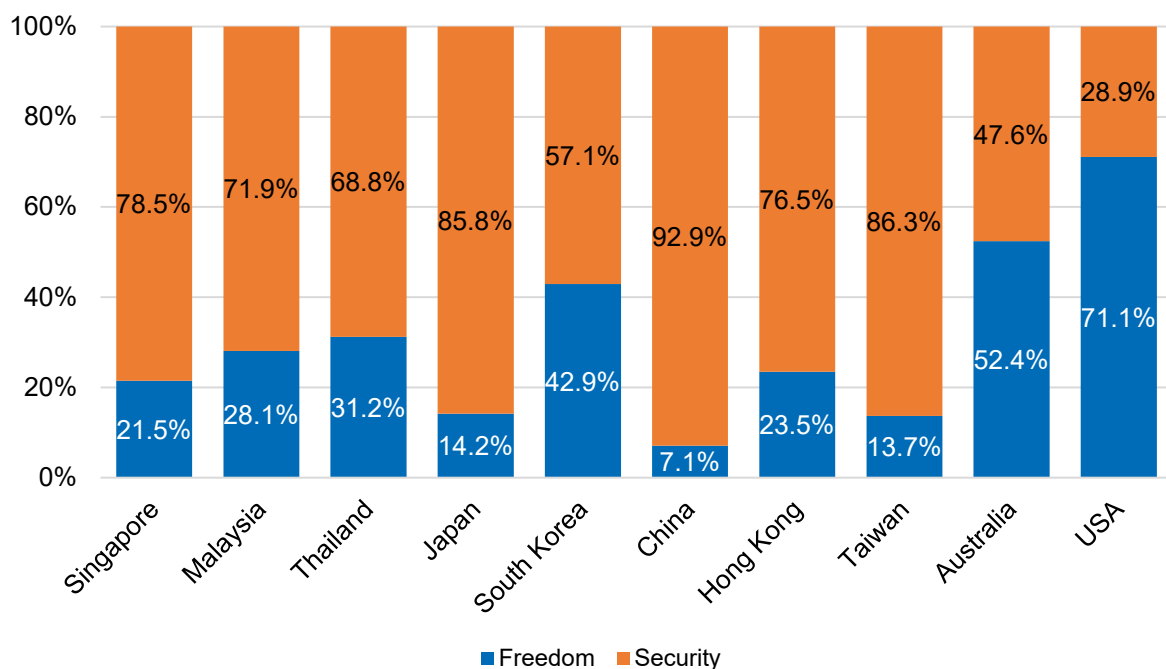
7.3.4 Preferences for freedom versus security were influenced by gender, age, education, and affluence, with greater proportions of females, youth, the less-educated, and the less affluent prioritising freedom over security

Both genders expressed a higher preference for security. A larger proportion of female respondents chose security over freedom. Compared with 72.4 per cent of male respondents, 84.2 per cent of female respondents chose it as their answer. A similar positive correlation between age and proportions choosing security was apparent from the responses; compared with 72 per cent of the group aged between 21 and 35, 83.5 per cent of the respondents aged above 65 felt that security was more important than freedom. These elevated proportions applied to for degree holders relative to less-educated respondents; in fact, degree holders were the only group with over 80 per cent choosing security as their answer (see Tables 215 to 217).

Table 215: Freedom vs security, by gender

Gender *N = 1,989*	Which would you consider more important	
	Freedom	**Security**
Male	27.6	72.4
Female	15.8	84.2

Table 216: Freedom vs security, by age cohort

Age Cohort *N = 1,989*	Which would you consider more important	
	Freedom	**Security**
21-35	28.0	72.0
36-50	18.3	81.7
51-65	20.1	79.9
Above 65	16.5	83.5

Table 217: Freedom vs security, by education level

Education Level *N = 1,985*	Which would you consider more important	
	Freedom	**Security**
Below secondary	22.8	77.2
Secondary/ ITE	21.5	78.5
Dip. / Prof. qual.	25.7	74.3
Bachelor's and above	17.4	82.6

Finally, the degree of affluence exerted a U-shaped curvilinear effect on responses. Over four-fifths of respondents from the lowest and highest income groups preferred security over freedom. In contrast, approximately three-quarters of respondents within the middle-income brackets felt that security was more important than freedom (see Table 218).

Table 218: Freedom vs security, by income level

Income Level *N = 1,211*	Which would you consider more important	
	Freedom	**Security**
Below $1,500	18.7	81.3
$1,500 - $2,999	29.4	70.6
$3,000 - $4,999	25.1	74.9
$5,000 - $6,999	20.1	79.9
Above $6,999	16.5	83.5

7.4   SOCIAL CHANGE AND REVOLUTION

This chapter concludes with analyses pertaining to two broad questions on issues of social change and revolution. The first question prompts respondents to choose one of three statements that best reflects their stance on change in society: whether the status quo should be defended from subversion; whether incremental reforms should be pursued; or whether radical change by means of revolution should be pursued. A large majority, or 71.6 per cent, chose the second option. Meanwhile, 15 per cent said that the current structure should be radically changed by revolution, a slightly higher proportion than the 13.4 per cent who said that the current society should be valiantly defended against subversion (see Figure 47).

Figure 47: Please choose the statement which best describes your own opinion
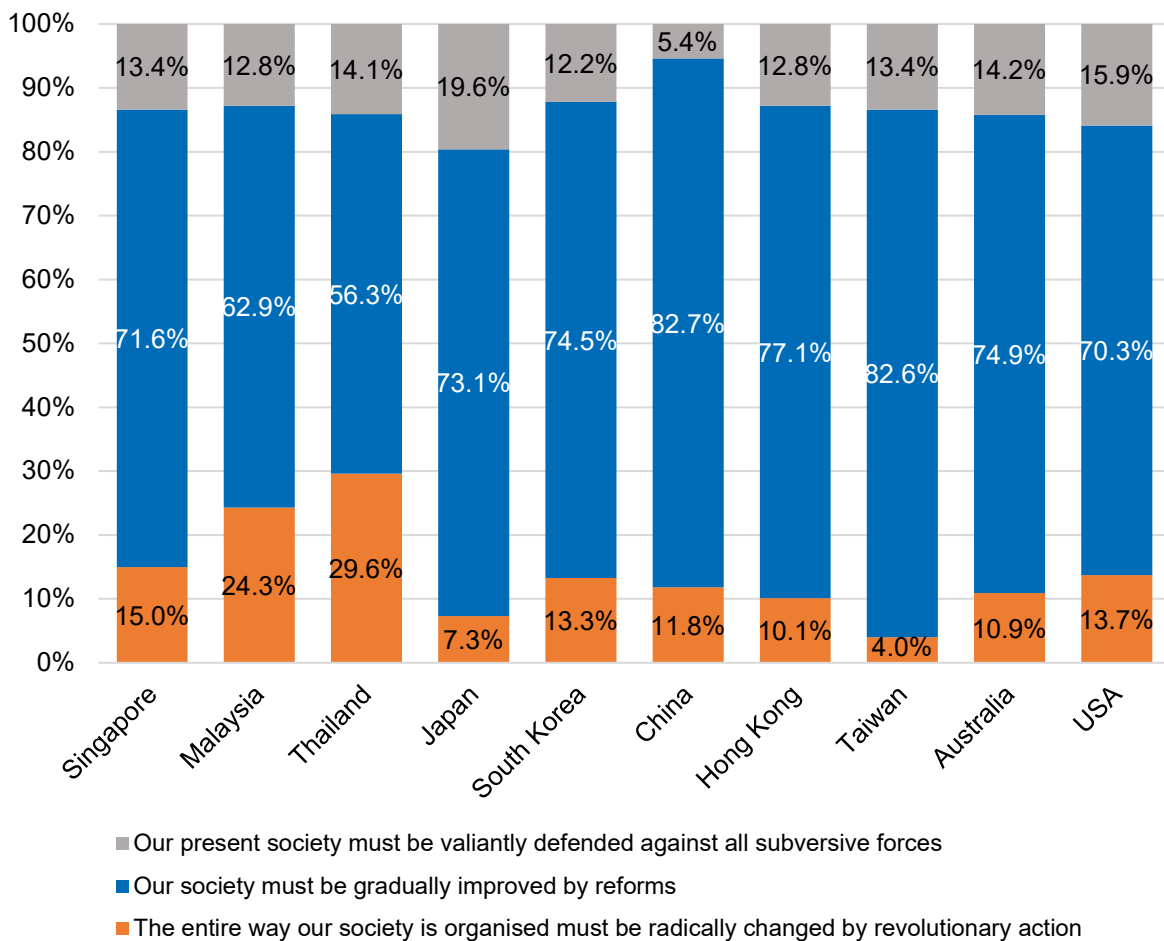

202
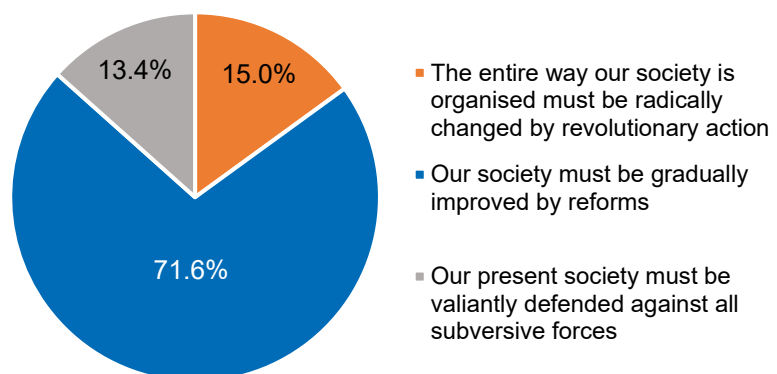
7.4.1 While a significant majority indicate a preference for incremental reforms, the remainder were evenly split between defending the status quo and pursuing revolutionary change

Based on the responses as reflected in Figure 47, most of the population seem to support incremental changes in Singapore society, implying some acknowledgement of societal imperfections. However, while most were inclined towards gradual reform, a small proportion (15 per cent) indicated a preference for more radical forms of change such as revolutionary action, and the remainder felt the status quo should be valiantly defended.

When compared across selected polities globally, we find that Malaysian and Thai respondents were most likely to thirst for revolution (24.3 per cent and 29.6 per cent respectively). Meanwhile, the Japanese were most likely to support a valiant defence of the status quo (19.6 per cent). While Singapore's responses warrant further scrutiny, it should be noted that they may well be reflective of a repudiation of incremental actions for some, rather than actual intent or courage to pursue a particular course of action (see Figure 48).

Figure 48: Please choose the statement which best describes your own opinion

■ Our present society must be valiantly defended against all subversive forces
■ Our society must be gradually improved by reforms
■ The entire way our society is organised must be radically changed by revolutionary action

7.4.2 The majority of respondents across demographic categories supported gradual reforms; however, younger, less-educated and less-affluent respondents were most likely to prefer radical change

We next examine results across demographic groups, and find that in general, gradual reforms were preferred by respondents who had higher education qualifications or lived in larger housing types. Older respondents meanwhile had a higher propensity to choose defending the status quo from subversion. Respondents who were younger, had lower education or lived in smaller housing types were slightly more likely to prefer radical change.

Delving in-depth into responses by age cohort, we find that around 13 per cent of all age groups preferred revolutionary change except for the youngest age cohort, for which 19.5 per cent felt this way. The latter group also showed the least support for the statement arguing to defend the status quo from subversion compared to their older peers. Nonetheless, a large majority of all age cohorts (over 70 per cent) still preferred gradual reforms (see Table 219).

Table 219: Attitudes towards societal change, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 1,806	Please choose the statement which best describes your own opinion		
	The entire way our society is organised must be radically changed by revolutionary action	Our society must be gradually improved by reforms	Our present society must be valiantly defended against all subversive forces
21-35	19.5	72.2	8.3
36-50	13.1	72.1	14.8
51-65	14.3	69.6	16.1
Above 65	13.5	73.7	12.8

In addition, we find that on average, less educated and less affluent respondents were also more likely to support radical change as opposed to gradual reform, or defending the status quo, compared to their more privileged counterparts. 21.9 per cent of the least-educated respondents and 19.1 per cent of respondents residing in the smallest public housing units indicated their preference for revolutionary change, as opposed to under 15 per cent of their more well-off peers.

Results across income brackets also support these findings; while respondents earning between $1,500 and $2,999 were most likely to support the radical change option, respondents earning above $6,999 were least inclined towards radical change. These trends could be explained by how more privileged respondents are beneficiaries of the status quo, and hence view the current socio-political order in a more favourable light (see Tables 220 to 222).

Table 220: Attitudes towards societal change, by income level

Income Level *N = 1,088*	Please choose the statement which best describes your own opinion		
	The entire way our society is organised must be radically changed by revolutionary action	Our society must be gradually improved by reforms	Our present society must be valiantly defended against all subversive forces
Below $1,500	13.8	72.0	14.3
$1,500 - $2,999	19.9	69.3	10.8
$3,000 - $4,999	16.6	70.3	13.1
$5,000 - $6,999	13.4	72.5	14.1
Above $6,999	9.2	73.2	17.6

Table 221: Attitudes towards societal change, by education level

| Education Level *N = 1,803*	Please choose the statement which best describes your own opinion		
	The entire way our society is organised must be radically changed by revolutionary action	Our society must be gradually improved by reforms	Our present society must be valiantly defended against all subversive forces
Below secondary	21.9	69.6	8.5
Secondary/ ITE	14.7	69.6	15.7
Dip. / Prof. qual.	16.3	71.5	12.1
Bachelor's and above	11.5	74.5	14.1

Table 222: Attitudes towards societal change, by housing type

Housing Type *N = 1,806*	Please choose the statement which best describes your own opinion		
	The entire way our society is organised must be radically changed by revolutionary action	Our society must be gradually improved by reforms	Our present society must be valiantly defended against all subversive forces
1- to 3-room HDB	19.1	68.0	12.9
4-room HDB	15.2	73.4	11.4
5+-room HDB	14.5	71.8	13.8
Private property	9.3	74.7	16.0

7.4.3 Respondents were most likely to think positively of embracing technological change, but had mixed views on whether there should be more respect for authority and less importance placed on work

The second question in this series queried respondents on whether they viewed specific types of changes in positive, negative, or ambivalent terms. The items included placing less importance on work in people's lives, more emphasis on the development of technology, and greater respect for authority. Overall, most viewed technological change as positive. However, respondents were equally divided on whether placing less importance on work was a good or bad thing. There was also slightly greater ambivalence and disagreement on whether greater respect for authority was a good thing (see Figure 49).

Figure 49: Opinions on possible changes in the future
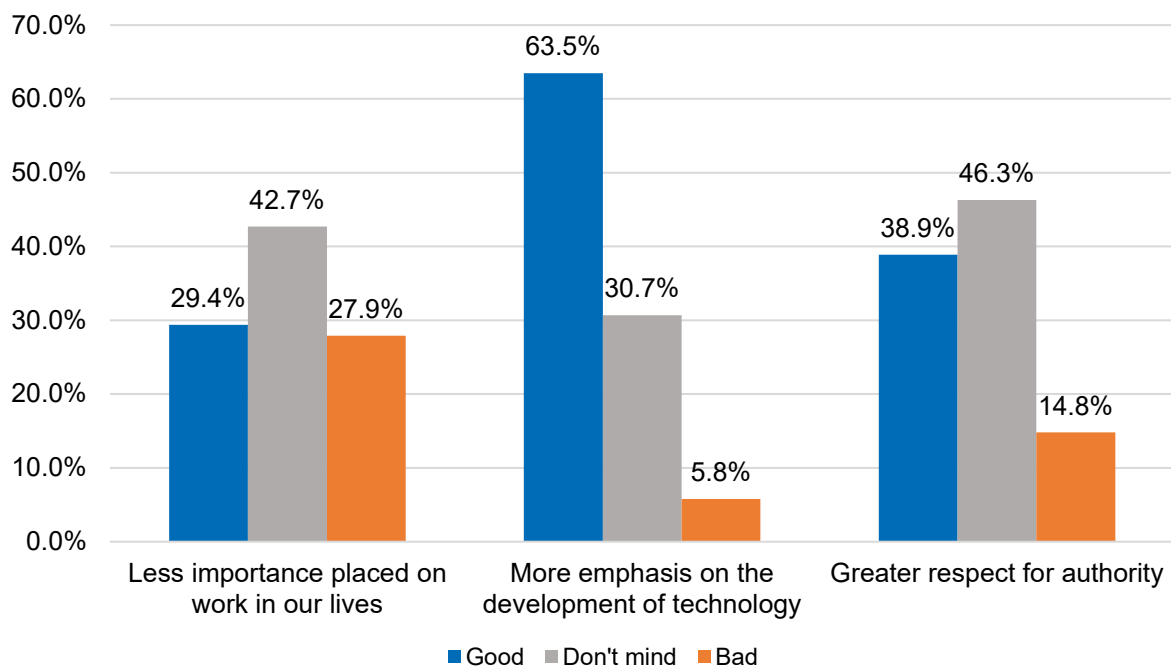
When asked about less importance being placed on work in people's lives, 42.7 per cent did not mind it happening. Meanwhile, 29.4 per cent felt that it would be a good thing, and 27.9 per cent thought it would be a bad thing. Sentiments seemed to have changed over time, with a more positive bent in current times. In 2002, similar proportions of respondents chose each of the three options, with a slight preference towards the "bad" option. In 2012, 46.7 per cent of the respondents indicated they did not mind, while 38.4 per cent indicated it was a good thing, leaving 14.9 per cent choosing the "bad" option.

It therefore seems that work is still viewed as a priority, even as many respondents would not mind their lives being less centred on work. When compared across demographic variables, respondents who were younger, had higher income, higher educational qualifications, or lived in larger housing types were more likely to see this change as a good thing.

7.4.4 Younger, more educated, and more affluent respondents were significantly more likely to view deprioritising work as a good thing, with their older and less privileged counterparts indicating otherwise

While younger respondents were more likely to feel that having less importance placed on work was a good change, there were more older respondents who thought that this was an undesirable change. The sentiment that work becoming less important was a bad thing was especially prominent amongst respondents aged above 65, as it was the only group for which "bad" had the highest response rate compared with "don't mind" and "good" (see Table 223).

Table 223: Less importance placed on work in our lives, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 2,001	Possible future change: Less importance placed on work in our lives		
	Good	Don't mind	Bad
21-35	37.0	48.9	14.1
36-50	31.6	42.1	26.3
51-65	25.6	39.2	35.1
Above 65	19.6	35.8	44.6

There were similar patterns across socioeconomic factors including education, income, and housing. Overall, respondents with higher education levels, higher incomes, and larger residences were more likely to view less importance placed on work in our lives as a good thing. Forty per cent of degree holders, 41.8 per cent of respondents earning above $6,999, and 37.5 per cent of private property dwellers felt this way, as opposed to just 19.1 per cent of the least-educated respondents, 26.7 per cent of respondents in the lowest income bracket, and 27.8 per cent of 1-3 room HDB flat dwellers. The considerable differences may suggest that lower-SES individuals view work as an important pathway to socio-economic upgrading and success (see Tables 224 to 226).

Table 224: Less importance placed on work in our lives, by education level

Education Level N = 1,997	Possible future change: Less importance placed on work in our lives		
	Good	Don't mind	Bad
Below secondary	19.1	35.5	45.4
Secondary/ ITE	22.1	44.7	33.3
Dip. / Prof. qual.	32.3	47.0	20.8
Bachelor's and above	40.0	40.7	19.3

Table 225: Less importance placed on work in our lives, by income level

Income Level *N = 1,217*	Possible future change: Less importance placed on work in our lives		
	Good	**Don't mind**	**Bad**
Below $1,500	26.7	38.2	35.0
$1,500 - $2,999	25.3	45.5	29.2
$3,000 - $4,999	29.7	51.4	18.9
$5,000 - $6,999	37.2	45.1	17.7
Above $6,999	41.8	38.0	20.3

Table 226: Less importance placed on work in our lives, by housing type

Housing Type *N = 2,001*	Possible future change: Less importance placed on work in our lives		
	Good	**Don't mind**	**Bad**
1- to 3-room HDB	27.8	37.5	34.7
4-room HDB	24.5	45.0	30.5
5+-room HDB	32.9	43.4	23.8
Private property	37.5	43.2	19.3

7.4.5 Though most embrace technology, the elderly and the more affluent were more likely to view it as a good thing relative to their younger and less well-off counterparts

Unlike the divided views on the importance of work, respondents were largely in favour of the embrace of technology. 63.5 per cent of respondents indicated it would be a good thing, and an additional 30.7 per cent indicated ambivalence (see Figure 49). In 2012, 44.7 per cent said it was a good thing; 53.3 per cent did not mind; while only 1.9 per cent said it was a bad thing. Respondents in 2002 had different opinions, with 68.1 per cent said it was a good thing, 28.1 per cent not minding, and 3.8 per cent saying it was bad. These indicate sustained high levels of support for technological change. Respondents who were older or more affluent were in addition more likely to value technology more than the rest of the population.

There was a more positive evaluation of technology by respondents aged above 65 years old compared with the rest of the population. While less than 63 per cent of respondents aged between 21 and 65 felt that more emphasis on technological development was a good thing, the proportion increased to 72.5 per cent for those above 65. This finding is interesting given the concerns raised about difficulties of technology adoption among older Singaporeans. Perhaps despite the difficulties faced, many seniors still see such developments as positive for society-at-large (see Table 227).

Table 227: More emphasis on the development of technology, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 2,004	Possible future change: More emphasis on the development of technology		
	Good	**Don't mind**	**Bad**
21-35	62.6	33.6	3.8
36-50	62.5	31.1	6.4
51-65	60.8	31.1	8.1
Above 65	72.5	22.7	4.8

Respondents earning between $1,500 and $2,999 had the lowest response rate for "good" and the highest response rate for "don't mind" when compared with the rest of the income groups. Meanwhile, respondents earning above $6,999 had the highest response rate for "good" amongst the income groups. Perhaps among low wage earners, there are concerns that greater development of technology can make their current work redundant (see Table 228).

Table 228: More emphasis on the development of technology, by income level

Income Level N = 1,220	Possible future change: More emphasis on the development of technology		
	Good	**Don't mind**	**Bad**
Below $1,500	61.1	30.6	8.3
$1,500 - $2,999	57.3	39.2	3.6
$3,000 - $4,999	59.3	34.5	6.2
$5,000 - $6,999	67.3	30.3	2.4
Above $6,999	70.4	23.9	5.7

7.4.6 While more respondents were ambivalent on whether there should be greater respect for authority, older and less affluent respondents were more likely to view this positively

When asked about having greater respect for authority, the bulk of respondents seemed ambivalent. The most popular response was "don't mind", with 46.3 per cent choosing this option. Meanwhile, 38.9 per cent felt it was a good thing, while 14.8 per cent thought it was a bad thing (see Figure 49). Responses in 2002 were markedly different, with 51.8 per cent of respondents indicating it was a good thing, 41.8 per cent indicating ambivalence, and 6.3 per cent indicating it was a bad thing. Meanwhile, sentiments in 2012 were more similar, with 38.8 per cent saying it was a good thing, 56 per cent did not mind, while 5.2 per cent said it was a bad thing.

When considering responses across demographics, we find that older and less affluent respondents were more likely to deem respect for authority as a good thing. The proportion of respondents who had negative perceptions regarding respect for authority was fairly consistent across the age groups, education levels, and affluence (approximately 15 per cent). Younger respondents were more likely to choose the neutral option. In fact, over half of respondents aged between 21 and 35 indicated ambivalence, while over half of those aged above 65 chose "good". These trends are emulated for education and affluence, with larger proportions of less-educated, less-affluent respondents indicating support of respect for authority (see Tables 229 to 232).

Table 229: Greater respect for authority, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 1,988	Possible future change: Greater respect for authority		
	Good	Don't mind	Bad
21-35	30.8	56.0	13.3
36-50	39.7	45.3	15.0
51-65	40.0	42.9	17.1
Above 65	50.5	35.3	14.3

Table 230: Greater respect for authority, by education level

Education Level N = 1,984	Possible future change: Greater respect for authority		
	Good	Don't mind	Bad
Below secondary	45.3	37.9	16.8
Secondary/ ITE	42.7	43.6	13.7
Dip. / Prof. qual.	38.5	49.0	12.5
Bachelor's and above	32.8	50.5	16.7

Table 231: Greater respect for authority, by income level

Income Level N = 1,208	Possible future change: Greater respect for authority		
	Good	Don't mind	Bad
Below $1,500	45.3	36.4	18.2
$1,500 - $2,999	36.9	50.3	12.7
$3,000 - $4,999	32.4	54.8	12.8
$5,000 - $6,999	37.2	54.3	8.5
Above $6,999	34.4	47.8	17.8

Table 232: Greater respect for authority, by housing type

Housing Type *N = 1,988*	Possible future change: Greater respect for authority		
	Good	**Don't mind**	**Bad**
1- to 3-room HDB	47.6	38.5	13.9
4-room HDB	37.7	47.8	14.5
5+-room HDB	33.2	52.3	14.5
Private property	34.5	47.0	18.6

Chapter 8

Politics and Governance

CHAPTER 8 | POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

In this final substantive chapter, we peruse responses to survey questions on politics and governance. McCann defines core political values as "overarching normative principles and belief assumptions about government, citizenship, and society" (1997). These include attitudes in the political domain such as civil liberties, limited government, and egalitarianism (Caprara et al., 2014). Political values are typically measured by asking how much one agrees or disagrees with prescriptions for how the government or society should function. In our study, we utilise the single left-right or liberal-conservative ideological dimension to organise the political attitudes of respondents. There were also broad questions asking about respondents' overall political stances and how much they valued having honest elections, what they thought of different governing styles, as well as their idea of what democracy entails.

8.1   GENERAL POLITICAL ORIENTATIONS

This section presents and explicates the responses to a question requesting respondents to indicate their political leanings across a left-right political spectrum. As these terminologies may not be familiar to everyone in Singapore, and going into too much detail can be overly confusing to people unfamiliar with politics, a simple explanation was given to respondents: "Left-wing politics usually support social equality, liberty, progress, and reform; while right-wing politics support social hierarchy, order, and tradition".

Respondents were asked to place themselves on a 10-point scale with 1 being the most left, and 10 being the most right. For easy reference and comparison, these responses have been recoded into three broad categories. 1 to 4 indicate a preference for left-wing politics or a more liberal political stance; 7 to 10 indicate a preference for right-wing politics or a more conservative political stance; and 5 and 6 indicate respondents' indecision or preferences not to associate themselves with a particular political stance.

8.1.1   Nearly half of respondents were somewhat undecided about their political orientations, or chose not to identify with left or right-leaning views; of the remainder, more identified with a liberal blend of politics

For the overall respondent pool, 30.6 per cent felt that their preferences fit more into the descriptions for left-wing politics, while 20.8 per cent leaned towards right-wing politics. Interestingly, nearly half, or 48.6 per cent chose the two middle responses, indicating that they were quite undecided about their leanings. The results were then compared across different demographic variables. It was found that respondents who were younger or more highly-educated were more likely to be left-leaning (see Figure 50).

Figure 50: Distribution of political stances
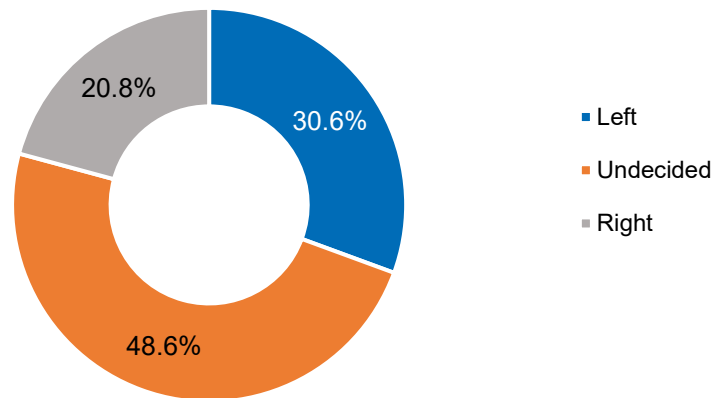
We then examined the distribution of political stances for different societies for which this question was asked. It should be noted, however, that different societies have varying ideas of what constitutes "conservative" and "liberal" policies. Therefore, such comparisons should be used only to see how sure respondents are of their own political stances, based on local understandings of the left and right. A majority of respondents in most of the societies we looked at chose to place themselves in the middle of the 10-point scale. The only exception was Taiwan, for which a larger proportion of respondents self-categorised themselves within the "left" range. It was also the society with the lowest proportion selecting options within the "right" range (see Figure 51).

Figure 51: Distribution of political stances
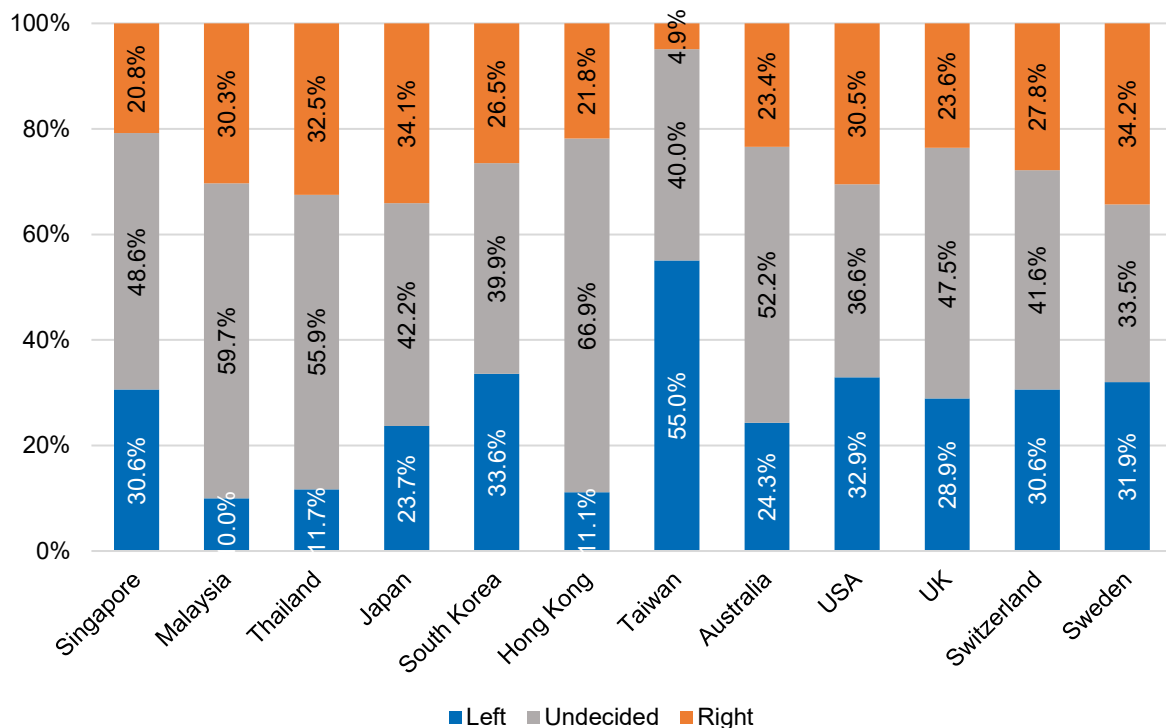
8.1.2 In line with general trends across polities, older respondents were significantly more likely to identify as politically conservative; younger respondents were in contrast likelier to identify as politically liberal

Older respondents were less likely to place themselves on the left-wing half of the spectrum, compared with younger respondents. While 42.7 per cent of respondents aged between 21 and 35 said they would place themselves somewhere on the left, only 22.7 per cent of respondents aged above 65 did so. The opposite trend was observed for respondents professing a preference for right-wing politics. Older respondents were more likely than younger respondents to indicate such a preference. Outside of these preferences, a large proportion of each age cohort (over 42 per cent) indicated that they were undecided, or preferred not to associate themselves with a particular political stance (see Table 233).

Table 233: Distribution of political stances, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 1,745	Distribution of political stances		
	Left	Undecided	Right
21-35	42.7	42.2	15.1
36-50	31.0	52.1	16.9
51-65	24.3	50.9	24.7
Above 65	22.7	45.5	31.8

When considering responses by education levels, we find that lower-educated respondents were generally less likely to support left-leaning political stances as compared with the rest of the sample population. Compared to one-third or more of respondents with diploma and higher qualifications, just one-quarter of less-educated respondents indicated a left-leaning orientation. The least educated respondents were also most likely to identify with a conservative stance (25.3 per cent), compared to approximately 20 per cent for the rest of the respondent pool (see Table 234).

Table 234: Distribution of political stances, by education level

Education Level N = 1,743	Distribution of political stances		
	Left	Undecided	Right
Below secondary	25.3	49.5	25.3
Secondary/ ITE	26.3	52.4	21.3
Dip. / Prof. qual.	37.0	48.1	14.9
Bachelor's and above	33.6	43.9	22.5

We next intersected education and age to yield some interesting findings. At the outset, a general pattern of older respondents leaning right politically was observed. In contrast, the

age differences in left-wing preferences were especially pronounced for those with diploma qualifications and above. Over 40 per cent of the youngest age cohort in the two highest educational groups indicated leaning left politically; this proportion dropped precipitously to approximately one-fifth for the older respondents. Taken together, the above findings support the hypothesis that the combined effect of age and education results in respondents leaning more towards politics described as "supporting social equality, liberty, progress, and reform" (see Table 235).

Table 235: Distribution of political stances, by education level and age cohort

Age Cohort and Education Level *N = 2,007*		Distribution of political stances		
		Left	**Undecided**	**Right**
Below secondary	**21-35^**	25.0	50.0	25.0
	36-50	24.2	63.6	12.1
	51-65	30.6	47.6	21.8
	Above 65	20.3	47.7	32.0
Secondary school/ ITE	**21-35**	36.9	54.4	8.7
	36-50	25.9	56.5	17.6
	51-65	20.8	54.9	24.3
	Above 65	25.4	43.2	31.4
Diploma / Prof. qual.	**21-35**	48.7	41.4	9.9
	36-50	32.1	51.8	16.1
	51-65	21.1	54.9	23.9
	Above 65^	28.6	57.1	14.3
Bachelor's and above	**21-35**	42.7	35.8	22.5
	36-50	33.5	49.0	17.5
	51-65	24.8	46.4	28.8
	Above 65^	16.7	37.5	45.8

^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

8.2   PREFERENCES FOR DEMOCRACY

The survey next examined respondents' broad views on democracy. They were asked 1) what they thought about democracy as a political system, 2) how important it was for them to live in a democratically governed country, and 3) how important honest elections were for them. The responses to these initial trio of questions provide a good basis to then assess respondents' views on the various attributes of democracies as presented in 8.3 to 8.5.

8.2.1 Juxtaposed against other political systems such as technocracies and autocracies, an overwhelming majority of respondents had positive perceptions of democracy

At the outset, respondents were asked about what they thought of different political systems, including having strong leaders without parliament or elections, experts making governing decisions, military rule, democracy, or religious rule. Figure 52 illustrates the results. The strongest preference among respondents was for a democratic political system, with nearly half perceiving that it was a very good way of governing a country. Respondents with higher education levels, higher income, and who lived in larger housing types showed greater preference for a democratic political system and saw military rule or religious rule as bad. More in-depth analyses of the alternative modalities of governance are presented in 8.6.

Figure 52: What do you think about these political systems?
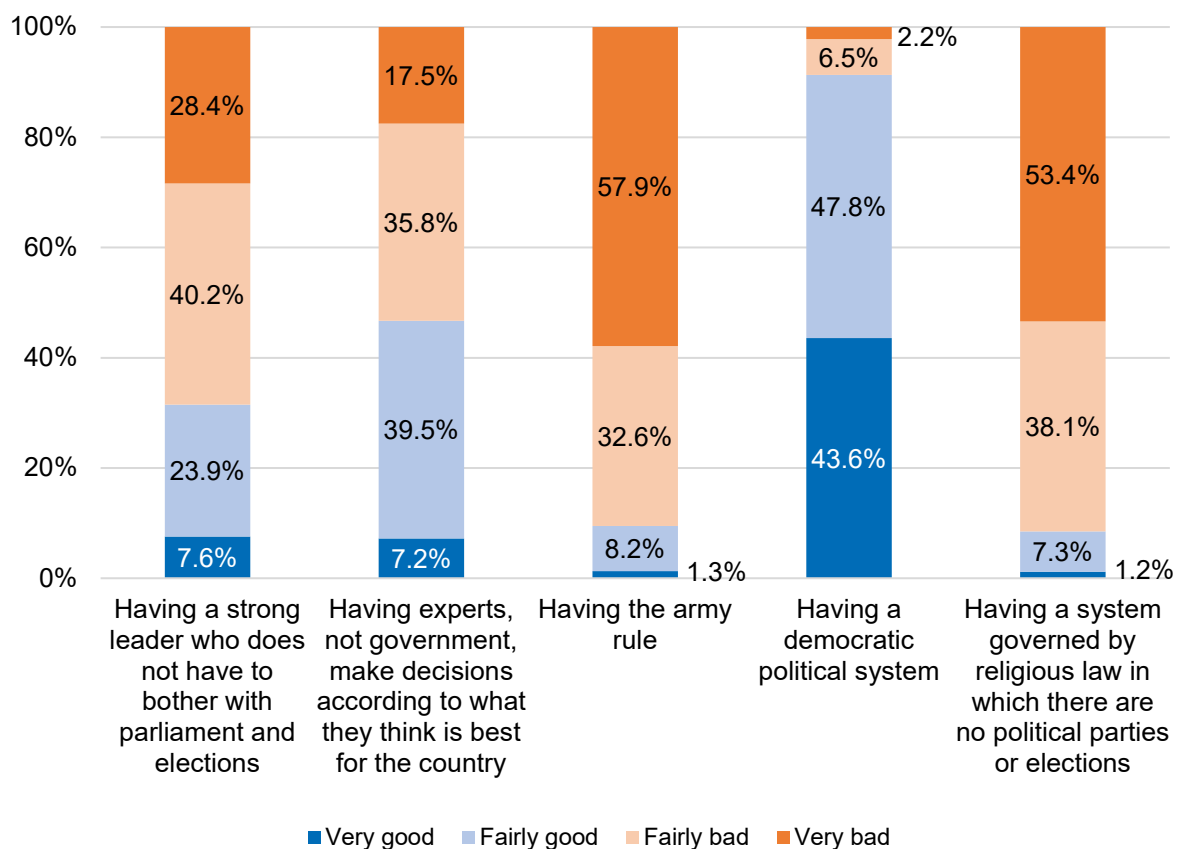
A democratic political system was perceived most positively by Singapore respondents amongst the different governing styles. 43.6 per cent said that it was very good, while 47.8 per cent said it was fairly good. Meanwhile, only 8.7 per cent felt that it was either fairly bad or very bad. These perceptions were similar to responses in 2012 and 2002, for which 91.6 per cent and 94 per cent of respondents perceived democracy as a good thing respectively (see Figure 52).

Other societies similarly had very high proportions stating that democracy was a very good or fairly good system – Japan, China, Taiwan, the UK, Switzerland, and Sweden all had over 90 per cent of respondents stating as such. Over 80 per cent of respondents from Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Australia, and the US also felt that democracy was a good system. Meanwhile, 70.1 per cent of South Koreans expressed the same sentiments.

However, when proportions of respondents are compared across the five items presented, we note that in a few polities, respondents were also likely to view other political systems as favourably, or even more favourably. In the case of Thailand, 91.2 per cent of respondents indicated they felt having a strong leader who did not have to bother with parliament and elections as "very good" or "fairly good", even more than responses for democracy. In South Korea, two-thirds also indicated positive perceptions of autocracy, as compared to 70.1 per cent for democracy. Meanwhile, military rule and theocracy were least likely to be positively perceived across nearly all polities (see Table 236).

Table 236: What do you think about these political systems, by polity

Rank	"Very good" and "Fairly good" responses aggregated for each polity										
	SG	MY	TH	JP	KR	CN	HK	TW	AU	US	UK
1	Demo (91.4)	Demo (88.3)	Auto (91.2)	Demo (93.1)	Demo (70.1)	Demo (91.8)	Demo (81.6)	Demo (92.8)	Demo (89.8)	Demo (85)	Demo (93.9)
2	Tech (46.7)	Tech (77.2)	Demo (87.7)	Tech (49)	Auto (66.8)	Auto (41.6)	Tech (46.1)	Auto (67.8)	Tech (58.7)	Tech (52.5)	Tech (55.3)
3	Auto (31.5)	Auto (69.9)	Tech (69.7)	Auto (32.3)	Tech (53)	Mil (41.1)	Auto (33.6)	Tech (66.9)	Auto (32.3)	Auto (38)	Auto (28.2)
4	Mil (9.5)	Theo (52)	Mil (61.6)	Mil (2.2)	Theo (20.7)	Tech (37.4)	Theo (18.2)	Theo (15.5)	Mil (10.8)	Mil (20.9)	Mil (16.2)
5	Theo (8.5)	Mil (45.9)	Theo (53.5)	Theo (1.6)	Mil (17.5)	Theo (5.2)	Mil (12.6)	Mil (12.5)	Theo (7.2)	Theo (19.4)	

*Auto = Autocracy; Tech = Technocracy; Mil = Military; Demo = Democracy; Theo = Theocracy. Refer to Figure 52 for full item listing

8.2.2 Older, higher-educated, and more affluent respondents were more likely to perceive democracy in a positive light, relative to the rest of the respondent pool

When the results were compared across demographic variables, respondents who were older, earned higher income, had obtained higher educational qualifications, or lived in larger housing were more likely to say such a system was fairly good or very good. Older respondents were more likely than younger respondents to choose the "very good" option, while it was the other way around for the "fairly good" option. In general, however, over 90 per cent of each age group felt that a democratic political system was good to some extent (see Table 237).

Table 237: Having a democratic political system, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 1,885	Having a democratic political system			
	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly bad	Very bad
21-35	41.1	50.1	7.7	1.1
36-50	39.9	50.8	6.7	2.7
51-65	46.1	44.3	6.1	3.5
Above 65	48.9	45.2	4.9	1.0

In general, there was also a marked positive correlation between socioeconomic status and positive perceptions of democracy. Compared with 86.8 per cent of respondents with below secondary education, 89.4 per cent of respondents earning below $1,500, and 87.6 per cent of respondents living in 1- to 3-room flats, 94.5 per cent of degree holders, 92.5 per cent of respondents earning above $6,999, as well as 94.2 per cent of private property dwellers chose the options "very good" or "fairly good" as their answers (see Tables 238 to 240).

Table 238: Having a democratic political system, by education level

Education Level N = 1,883	Having a democratic political system			
	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly bad	Very bad
Below secondary	41.8	45.0	9.0	4.2
Secondary/ ITE	40.3	48.4	8.1	3.2
Dip. / Prof. qual.	45.8	47.6	5.9	0.8
Bachelor's and above	45.4	49.1	4.3	1.2

Table 239: Having a democratic political system, by income level

Income Level N = 1,168	Having a democratic political system			
	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly bad	Very bad
Below $1,500	32.8	56.6	9.6	1.0
$1,500 - $2,999	44.6	44.2	6.8	4.4
$3,000 - $4,999	46.4	44.7	8.1	0.8
$5,000 - $6,999	42.1	52.2	3.8	1.9
Above $6,999	44.7	47.8	4.4	3.1

Table 240: Having a democratic political system, by housing type

Housing Type *N = 1,885*	Having a democratic political system			
	Very good	**Fairly good**	**Fairly bad**	**Very bad**
1- to 3-room HDB	40.3	47.3	9.5	3.0
4-room HDB	43.2	48.1	6.2	2.6
5+-room HDB	46.2	47.8	5.0	1.0
Private property	45.4	48.8	4.3	1.5

8.2.3 In line with predominantly positive perceptions of democracy, four-fifths of respondents feel it is important for them to live in a democratically governed country

The question of interest in this sub-section asked respondents how important was it for them to live in a democratically governed country, and required responses along a 10-point scale (1 being not important, and 10 being important). The responses are then condensed into three major categories for easy reference and comparison; ratings of 1 to 4 indicate "not important", ratings of 7 to 10 indicate "important", and ratings of 5 and 6 indicate that respondents were somewhat undecided or ambivalent about the issue.

It appears that a large majority feel that it was important for them to live in a country that was governed democratically, with the mean score being 7.98. There seems to be a slightly higher dedication towards democracy, given that the mean score in 2012 was 7.70. The findings can also be read together with the result that 75.9 per cent felt Singapore was democratic to some extent (presented in a separate report). Hence, respondents who felt that Singapore's political system was democratic were likely to have that notion in mind when responding to this question. Overall, 79.6 per cent felt that it was important for them to live in a democratically governed country, while only 2.3 per cent did not think so. The remaining 18.1 per cent were relatively undecided (see Figure 53).

Figure 53: How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically?
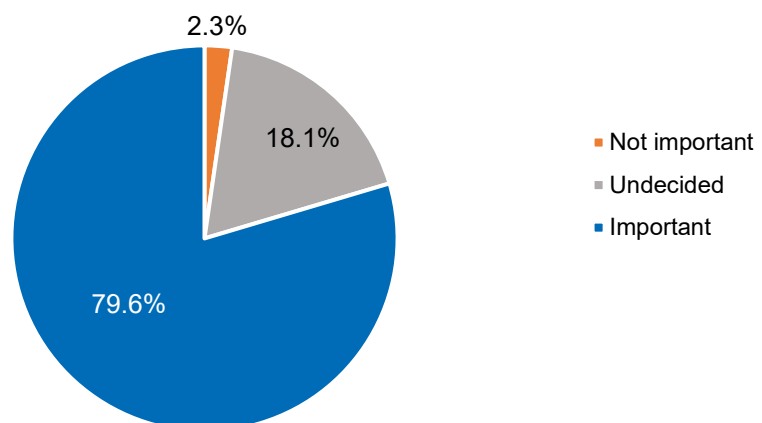
8.2.4 Education and affluence exert a significant positive impact on the perceived importance of living in a democratic country

When the results are compared across demographic variables, respondents who were more educated and more affluent were more likely to view living in a democratic country as important. Meanwhile, no significant differences of interest were found across gender, age, and citizenship status. While 69.3 per cent of respondents with below secondary school education and 75 per cent of those earning below $1,500 said residing in a democratic country was important for them to varying extents, this proportion increased to 86.2 per cent for those with university degrees and 86.1 per cent for those earning above $6,999.

In the same vein, while 76 per cent of respondents living in 1- to 4-room public housing units felt that it was important for them to live in a democratic country, over 84 per cent of the remaining respondents residing in larger or private property indicated likewise (see Tables 241 to 243).

Table 241: Importance of living in a democracy, by education level

Education Level *N = 1,972*	How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically		
	Not important	**Undecided**	**Important**
Below secondary	4.2	26.5	69.3
Secondary/ ITE	0.7	20.2	79.1
Dip. / Prof. qual.	1.3	19.9	78.8
Bachelor's and above	3.0	10.7	86.2

Table 242: Importance of living in a democracy, by income level

| Income Level *N = 1,207*	How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically		
	Not important	**Undecided**	**Important**
Below $1,500	0.5	24.5	75.0
$1,500 - $2,999	3.3	22.3	74.4
$3,000 - $4,999	1.6	17.2	81.2
$5,000 - $6,999	2.4	12.1	85.5
Above $6,999	3.2	10.8	86.1

Table 243: Importance of living in a democracy, by housing type

Housing Type *N = 1,975*	How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically		
	Not important	**Undecided**	**Important**
1- to 3-room HDB	2.8	20.3	76.9
4-room HDB	2.8	21.3	75.9
5+-room HDB	1.2	13.6	85.2
Private property	1.5	13.8	84.7

8.2.5 An overwhelming majority indicated that honest elections were rather important or very important for them; this is in tandem with earlier findings on the importance of democracy

Thirdly, respondents were asked about how much they valued having honest elections – an integral aspect of a functioning democracy. A vast majority of them felt it was important to some extent; 69.7 per cent chose "very important", while 25.7 per cent chose "rather important". In contrast, only 4 per cent said it was not very important, and 0.5 per cent said it was not at all important. The distribution of responses between "very important" and "rather important" was different in 2012, with 57.9 per cent choosing "very important" and 35.7 per cent choosing "rather important". However, it should be noted that a large majority in 2012 also indicated that honest elections were important to some extent. Respondents who were older or had higher education were more likely to view honest elections as important (see Figure 54).

Figure 54: How important would you say is having honest elections for you?
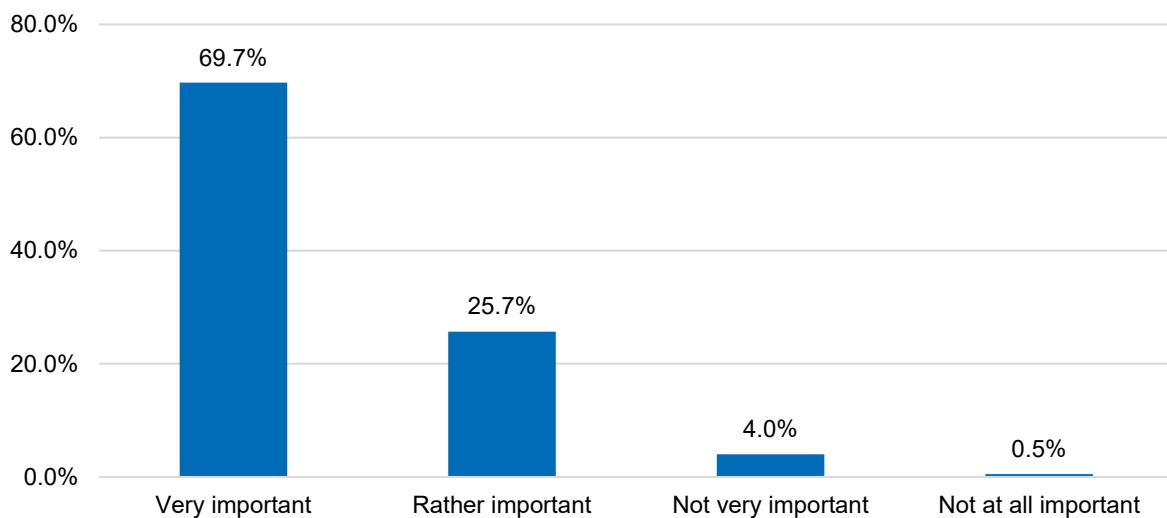
8.2.6 While virtually all respondents felt honest elections were important, the degree of importance attributed is positively correlated with age, political interest, and education

We find three main factors impacting perceptions of importance vis-à-vis honest elections. Firstly, compared with younger respondents, larger proportions of older respondents felt that having honest elections is "very important". The highest response rate for the "very important" category of 76.2 per cent was reported for respondents aged between 51 and 65; this fell to 60.4 per cent of respondents aged between 21 and 35. It should however be noted that when considering the proportions who considered honest elections as very or rather important, there is little difference across age groups (see Table 244).

Political interest was the second significant factor related to these response patterns. Younger respondents who were not politically interested were much less likely to say that having honest elections was very important to them, while older respondents who were politically interested were far more likely to say honest elections was very important. Education was another factor impacting perceptions of importance. Though more than 66 per cent of respondents from the first three education groups felt that having honest elections was very important, an even larger proportion of university graduates, or 73.2 per cent, gave the same answer (see Tables 245 and 246).

Table 244: How important are honest elections, by age cohort

Age Cohort *N = 1,983*	How important are honest elections			
	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important
21-35	60.4	34.1	5.1	0.4
36-50	70.0	25.1	4.3	0.5
51-65	76.2	19.8	3.2	0.7
Above 65	74.2	23.4	2.1	0.3

Table 245: How important are honest elections, by age cohort and political interest

Age and Political Interest N = 1,384		How important are honest elections			
		Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important
21-35	Not politically interested	53.4	39.1	6.9	0.6
	Politically interested	72.7	25.3	2.0	0
36-50	Not politically interested	63.8	31.2	4.2	0.9
	Politically interested	79.6	15.7	4.6	0
51-65	Not politically interested	68.5	26.8	3.9	0.9
	Politically interested	88.1	9.1	2.3	0.5
Above 65	Not politically interested	68.1	28.3	3.1	0.4
	Politically interested	87.4	12.6	0	0

Table 246: How important are honest elections, by education level

Education Level N = 1,979	How important are honest elections			
	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important
Below secondary	66.3	28.2	4.4	1.1
Secondary/ ITE	68.9	25.2	5.5	0.4
Dip. / Prof. qual.	68.3	28.0	3.3	0.5
Bachelor's and above	73.2	23.9	2.6	0.3

8.3   DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

Sections 8.3 to 8.5 peruse responses to questions which required respondents to indicate whether certain practices prevalent in political regimes were essential characteristics for democracy. For this set of questions, responses were aggregated across three categories: 1 to 4 represent "not an essential characteristic of democracy", 7 to 10 represent "an essential characteristic of democracy", while ratings of 5 and 6 indicate that respondents were somewhat undecided, or ambivalent about the characteristic being considered as part of democratic politics.

Women having the same rights as men was the characteristic with the highest proportion saying that it is essential for democracy. Choosing leaders in free elections come in a close second. Meanwhile, religious influence on laws and army taking over an incompetent

government, which describe undemocratic regimes, were the least acknowledged as characteristic of democracies. Similar observations were derived from the mean and median scores. These results indicate that Singaporeans' understanding of democracy does not deviate very much from the conventional understanding of democracy and include the bare-bones elements like elections and citizen rights for all (see Figure 55 and Table 247).

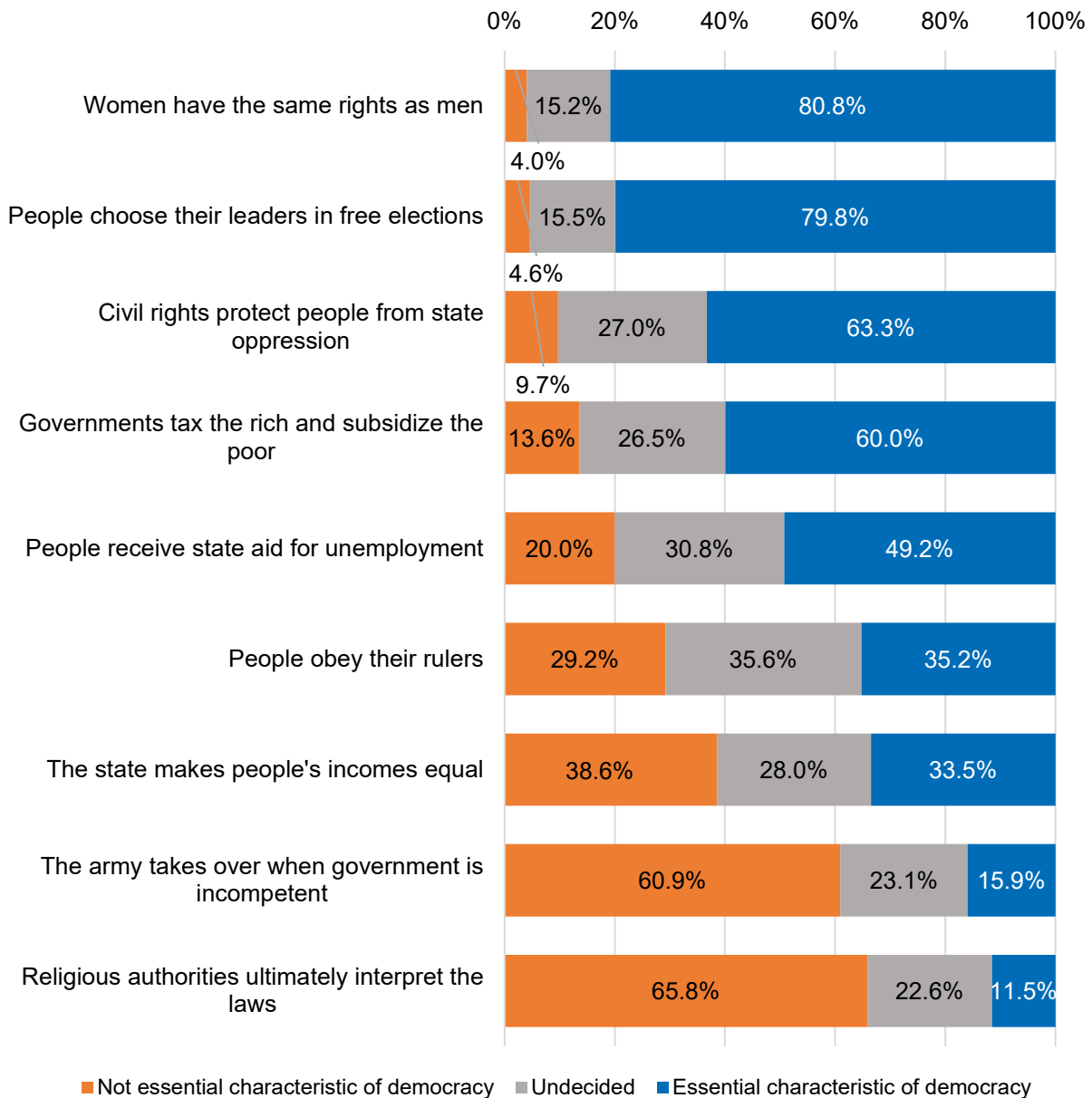**Figure 55: Essential characteristics of democracy**

Table 247: Essential characteristics of democracy, by mean and median responses

Characteristic *N = 2,005*	Statistical Indicator (range from 1 to 10)	
	Mean	**Median**
Women have the same rights as men	8.18	9.00
People choose their leaders in free elections	8.17	9.00
Civil rights protect people from state oppression	7.11	7.00
Governments tax the rich and subsidize the poor	6.78	7.00
People receive state aid for unemployment	6.31	6.00
People obey their rulers	5.44	6.00
The state makes people's incomes equal	5.09	5.00
The army takes over when government is incompetent	3.70	3.00
Religious authorities ultimately interpret the laws	3.30	3.00

However, the response patterns also indicate that there was more contention about whether democracy also constitutes having equal income, unemployment benefits from the state, as well as people obeying their rulers. In effect, a large proportion of Singaporeans see democracy as more related to procedures and rules that ensure fairness in citizenship rights for all citizens, while enforced equality in resource distribution is viewed as essential by much smaller proportions. Based on these findings, fairness seems to be a highly valued characteristic in Singaporeans' concept of democracy, while equality is given less priority.

When comparing the 2020 results to the responses in 2012, we note some shifts in opinion. There was greater agreement in 2020 that taxing the rich and subsidising the poor, free elections, receiving state unemployment aid, civil rights, and women having equal rights were essential components of democracy. In contrast, there were lower rates of consensus that religious authorities interpreting the laws, army taking over, equal incomes, and people obeying their rulers were essential characteristics. Given that most of the latter set described other types of regimes, these changes seem to indicate that, in general, Singaporeans' understanding of democracy has shifted closer to theoretical definitions (see Table 248).

The responses to these nine items are further analysed across three sections from 8.3 to 8.5: items on democratic rights (including civil rights, voting rights, and women's rights); items pertaining to democratic socialism (including wealth transfers through taxation, unemployment benefits, and equal incomes); and items on bases of power in democracies (including obedience to rulers, religious authorities, and military takeovers).

Table 248: Essential characteristics of democracy, by mean across waves

Characteristic	Mean (range from 1 to 10)	
	WVS 2012	**WVS 2020**
Women have the same rights as men	6.73	8.18
People choose their leaders in free elections	7.36	8.17
Civil rights protect people from state oppression	6.36	7.11
Governments tax the rich and subsidize the poor	6.28	6.78
People receive state aid for unemployment	6.14	6.31
People obey their rulers	5.68	5.44
The state makes people's incomes equal	5.20	5.09
The army takes over when government is incompetent	4.07	3.70
Religious authorities ultimately interpret the laws	3.97	3.30

8.3.1 More affluent and higher-educated respondents were likelier to view civil rights as an essential part of democracy

Overall, 63.3 per cent felt that civil rights protecting people from state oppression was an essential characteristic of democracy (see Figure 55). Respondents who had higher incomes, obtained higher levels of education, or lived in larger housing were more likely to indicate as such. Compared to 67.7 per cent of respondents earning above $6,999, 69.6 per cent of respondents with university degrees and 71.8 per cent of respondents who lived in private properties; 54.7 per cent of those earning below $1,500, 60.1 per cent of respondents with below secondary school education and 60.3 per cent of respondents who lived in 1- to 3-room flats felt that civil rights were an essential characteristic of democracy (see Tables 249 to 251).

Table 249: Civil rights as essential characteristic of democracy, by income level

Income Level N = 1,164	Civil rights protect people from state oppression		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
Below $1,500	12.6	32.6	54.7
$1,500 - $2,999	13.5	28.6	57.9
$3,000 - $4,999	8.3	25.8	65.8
$5,000 - $6,999	13.0	24.7	62.3
Above $6,999	5.2	27.1	67.7

Table 250: Civil rights as essential characteristic of democracy, by education level

Education Level N = 1,882	Civil rights protect people from state oppression		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
Below secondary	8.8	31.1	60.1
Secondary/ ITE	13.1	29.8	57.0
Dip. / Prof. qual.	9.0	27.9	63.1
Bachelor's and above	8.0	22.4	69.6

Table 251: Civil rights as essential characteristic of democracy, by housing type

Housing Type N = 1,885	Civil rights protect people from state oppression		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
1- to 3-room HDB	11.2	28.5	60.3
4-room HDB	9.8	27.7	62.6
5+-room HDB	10.3	28.8	60.8
Private property	6.8	21.4	71.8

8.3.2 More educated, more affluent, and older respondents were more likely to feel that free elections were essential in a democracy; other demographic categories had slightly higher proportions which were undecided

There was quite a lot of agreement among respondent that people choosing their leaders in free elections was an essential characteristic of democracy. Amongst the population, 79.8 per cent chose answers within that range (see Figure 55). Overall, positive correlations were found between proportions choosing ratings that fit the category for "essential characteristic of democracy" and the three socioeconomic variables of education, income, and housing. In general, larger proportions of respondents with higher education, higher incomes, and larger housing type felt that choosing leaders in free elections was an essential characteristic of democracy (see Tables 252 to 254).

Table 252: Free elections as essential characteristic of democracy, by education level

Education Level N = 1,946	People choose their leaders in free elections		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
Below secondary	4.1	19.8	76.2
Secondary/ ITE	6.5	18.6	75.0
Dip. / Prof. qual.	4.3	13.9	81.9
Bachelor's and above	3.9	11.2	84.9

Table 253: Free elections as essential characteristic of democracy, by income level

Income Level N = 1,199	People choose their leaders in free elections		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
Below $1,500	8.3	20.1	71.6
$1,500 - $2,999	4.9	21.2	73.9
$3,000 - $4,999	6.5	12.0	81.5
$5,000 - $6,999	2.4	12.1	85.5
Above $6,999	3.8	12.8	83.3

Table 254: Free elections as essential characteristic of democracy, by housing type

Housing Type N = 1,949	People choose their leaders in free elections		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
1- to 3-room HDB	5.7	19.7	74.6
4-room HDB	6.0	15.3	78.7
5+-room HDB	4.0	13.5	82.5
Private property	1.5	10.0	88.5

Some differences were also found across age cohorts for the responses on free elections. There was a smaller proportion of respondents aged above 65 who were undecided – compared to over 15 per cent for the rest of the sample, 10 per cent of this group indicated as such. Consequently, 86.6 per cent of respondents in this oldest age cohort identified free elections as essential to democracy, more than the rest of the sample. Meanwhile, were similarly low proportions (3 to 5 per cent) indicating that it was not an essential characteristic across the age groups (see Table 255).

Table 255: Free elections as essential characteristic of democracy, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 1,949	People choose their leaders in free elections		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
21-35	3.5	17.0	79.5
36-50	5.9	16.1	78.1
51-65	5.5	15.9	78.6
Above 65	3.4	10.0	86.6

8.3.3 Against the backdrop of broad agreement that equal rights for women is an essential part of democracy, higher-SES respondents more likely to think this way relative to their less privileged peers

There was general consensus amongst a large majority that women having the same rights as men, choosing leaders in free elections, and civil rights were essential characteristics of democracy (see Figure 55). Regardless, respondents with higher socioeconomic backgrounds were more likely to indicate such sentiments rather than choosing ratings in the "undecided" category compared to their counterparts from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. This also suggests that those with higher levels of education may have more access to political education and the knowledge of the fundamentals of democratic processes.

Respondents earning above $2,999 were more likely to say that gender equality was an essential characteristic of democracy. Respondents with lower income levels were also more likely to respond within the "undecided" category. In addition, respondents with higher education levels or who lived in larger housing types were slightly more likely to say that gender equality was an essential characteristic of democracy. Compared with 76.6 per cent of respondents with below secondary school education and those living in 1- to 3-room flats, 86.1 per cent of respondents with university education and 85 per cent of those living in private properties felt that it was an essential characteristic of democracy (see Tables 256 to 258).

Table 256: Women's rights as essential characteristic of democracy, by income level

Income Level N = 1,199	Women have the same rights as men		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
Below $1,500	3.4	26.3	70.2
$1,500 - $2,999	5.5	18.6	75.9
$3,000 - $4,999	2.7	11.2	86.1
$5,000 - $6,999	5.5	10.9	83.6
Above $6,999	1.9	15.4	82.7

Table 257: Women's rights as essential characteristic of democracy, by education

Education Level *N = 1,948*	Women have the same rights as men		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
Below secondary	3.5	19.9	76.6
Secondary/ ITE	5.6	18.8	75.6
Dip. / Prof. qual.	3.8	13.8	82.4
Bachelor's and above	3.2	10.7	86.1

Table 258: Women's rights as essential characteristic of democracy, by housing type

Housing Type *N = 1,950*	Women have the same rights as men		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
1- to 3-room HDB	4.6	18.8	76.6
4-room HDB	4.1	14.2	81.7
5+-room HDB	3.5	15.3	81.2
Private property	3.7	11.3	85.0

8.4 DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM

Respondents were also asked if items related to resource distribution and socialist ideals were characteristics of democracy. These include three characteristics: taxing the rich and subsidising the poor; providing state unemployment aid; and making incomes equal. Older respondents were more likely than younger respondents to say that each of these characteristics was essential for democracy. With the exception of taxing the rich and subsidising the poor, there was a negative correlation between socioeconomic backgrounds and the proportions indicating that these characteristics were essential for democracy.

8.4.1 Views on whether wealth transfers through taxation was essential to democracy were positively correlated with views on whether the government was responsible for providing for all, as well as age

Of the population, 60 per cent felt that government taxing the rich to subsidise the poor was an essential characteristic of democracy (see Figure 55). Differences in response patterns were found when the sample was divided by their opinions on whether the government has the responsibility to provide for the people. Compared to 11.3 per cent of those who felt the government should provide for everyone and 12.9 per cent of those who were undecided, 21.6

per cent of those who felt people should take responsibility for themselves felt that taxing the rich to subsidise the poor was not an essential characteristic of democracy. When compared across age, a larger proportion of older respondents said that taxing the rich and subsidising the poor was an essential characteristic of democracy. The group aged between 21 and 35 was also the only age group for which less than 60 per cent felt that it was an essential characteristic of democracy. The youngest group was also the most undecided about this characteristic.

It appears that the perception that government should provide for citizens had varying levels of correlation with the opinions that different age groups had about democracy. For respondents who felt that people should provide for themselves, the youngest group had the lowest proportion saying that taxing the rich to subsidise the poor is an essential characteristic of democracy and the largest proportion who were undecided. Those who felt that government should take responsibility were much more likely than their same-age cohorts to say taxing the rich to subsidise the poor was an essential characteristic of democracy, but this effect was weaker for those aged between 21 and 35 (see Tables 259 to 261).

Table 259: Wealth transfers through taxation as essential characteristic of democracy, by opinions on government and individual responsibilities

Opinions on Government / Individual Responsibility N = 1,946	Governments tax the rich and subsidise the poor		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
Government should ensure everyone is provided for	11.3	19.4	69.3
Undecided	12.9	31.0	56.1
People should take more responsibility to provide for themselves	21.6	21.9	56.5

Table 260: Wealth transfers through taxation as essential characteristic of democracy, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 1,918	Governments tax the rich and subsidise the poor		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
21-35	12.8	33.4	53.8
36-50	14.3	24.8	60.9
51-65	13.6	23.9	62.5
Above 65	14.6	22.1	63.3

Table 261: Wealth transfers through taxation as essential characteristic of democracy, by opinions on government and individual responsibilities and age cohort

Opinions on Government / Individual Responsibility and Age Cohort *N = 1,946*		Governments tax the rich and subsidise the poor		
		Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
Government should ensure everyone is provided for	21-35	13.8	26.2	60.0
	36-50	8.5	19.0	72.5
	51-65	12.9	15.8	71.2
	Above 65	10.1	16.2	73.7
Undecided	21-35	10.8	36.4	52.8
	36-50	15.2	30.1	54.6
	51-65	12.0	28.2	59.9
	Above 65	14.8	26.5	58.6
People should take more responsibility to provide for themselves	21-35	21.5	30.8	47.7
	36-50	21.4	16.7	61.9
	51-65	20.5	21.7	57.8
	Above 65	23.9	19.6	56.5

8.4.2 Older, less-educated and less-affluent respondents were more likely to perceive the provision of unemployment benefits by the state as an essential part of democracy

Receiving state aid for unemployment was another aspect that 49.2 per cent of the population indicated was an essential characteristic of democracy, while 30.8 per cent indicated some level of indecisiveness. People seemed a little more unsure about this characteristic, given that there were over 30 per cent who chose ratings at the mid-point (see Figure 55). Older respondents were more likely to say that people receiving state aid for unemployment was an essential characteristic of democracy. Compared with 41.6 per cent of respondents aged between 21 and 35, 60.2 per cent of respondents aged above 65 said that it was an essential characteristic of democracy (see Table 262).

Meanwhile, the proportion of respondents saying that it was an essential characteristic of democracy dropped across education levels, income levels, and housing types. Compared with 60.8 per cent of respondents with below secondary school education, 48.5 per cent of respondents earning below $1,500, and 52.8 per cent of respondents living in 1- to 3-room flats, 39.9 per cent of respondents with university degrees, 37.3 per cent of those earning above $6,999, and 37.3 per cent of those living in private properties thought that it was an essential characteristic of democracy (see Tables 263 to 265).

Since respondents with better socioeconomic backgrounds have more resources, it is likely that they might be less willing to support state aid. Furthermore, given the prevalent belief in meritocratic principles in Singapore, those who have obtained some level of success within

this system as attested by their higher socioeconomic backgrounds are also less likely to lend support for policies that increase individuals' dependency on the government. This group would be more inclined to encourage those with employment difficulties to be independent.

Table 262: State unemployment benefits as essential characteristic of democracy, by age cohort

Age Cohort *N = 1,944*	People receive state aid for unemployment		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
21-35	18.4	40.0	41.6
36-50	21.7	30.1	48.2
51-65	21.9	27.1	50.9
Above 65	16.0	23.8	60.2

Table 263: State unemployment benefits as essential characteristic of democracy, by education level

Education Level *N = 1,941*	People receive state aid for unemployment		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
Below secondary	9.4	29.8	60.8
Secondary/ ITE	16.8	33.2	50.0
Dip. / Prof. qual.	17.4	29.5	53.1
Bachelor's and above	29.1	30.9	39.9

Table 264: State unemployment benefits as essential characteristic of democracy, by income level

Income Level *N = 1,198*	People receive state aid for unemployment		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
Below $1,500	16.3	35.1	48.5
$1,500 - $2,999	15.7	30.2	54.1
$3,000 - $4,999	17.6	33.6	48.8
$5,000 - $6,999	30.5	30.5	39.0
Above $6,999	36.1	26.6	37.3

Table 265: State unemployment benefits as essential characteristic of democracy, by housing type

Housing Type N = 1,944	People receive state aid for unemployment		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
1- to 3-room HDB	15.9	31.4	52.8
4-room HDB	17.9	31.9	50.2
5+-room HDB	20.8	27.6	51.7
Private property	29.5	33.1	37.3

8.4.3 Mirroring trends on state unemployment benefits, older, less-educated and less-affluent respondents were also more likely to feel that the government making incomes equal is an essential part of democracy

Among the population, 33.5 per cent felt that the state making people's incomes equal was an essential characteristic of democracy, while 28 per cent were undecided (see Figure 55). Older respondents were more likely than younger respondents to say that the state making people's incomes equal was an essential characteristic of democracy. Compared with 52.8 per cent of the respondents aged above 65, only 38.8 per cent of respondents aged between 21 and 35 said the same (see Table 266).

Table 266: Equal incomes as essential characteristic of democracy, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 1,920	The state makes people's incomes equal		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
21-35	40.8	34.9	24.3
36-50	35.9	27.8	36.3
51-65	41.2	26.1	32.7
Above 65	34.6	21.7	43.7

When perusing responses by education level, we find that respondents with university degrees were least likely to say that the state making incomes equal was an essential characteristic of democracy. It was the only group with less than 30 per cent choosing responses within this category. In contrast, 38.9 per cent of those with below secondary education, 34.1 per cent of those with secondary or ITE qualifications, and 36.4 per cent of those with diploma or professional qualifications felt that it was an essential characteristic (see Table 267).

Affluence was another significant factor impacting responses on equal incomes. Respondents earning above $6,999 or who live in private properties had markedly different perspectives towards the state making people's incomes equal. While over 45 per cent of those earning

above $4,999 and 51.1 per cent of those living in private properties said it was not an essential characteristic of democracy, under 40 per cent of the rest of the income and housing groups said the same. Such response trends might be probably an indication of personal circumstances, where those who are better off may be adversely affected if societies push for greater egalitarianism (see Tables 268 and 269).

Table 267: Equal incomes as essential characteristic of democracy, by education level

Education Level N = 1,918	The state makes people's incomes equal		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
Below secondary	27.7	33.4	38.9
Secondary/ ITE	36.7	29.3	34.1
Dip. / Prof. qual.	34.3	29.3	36.4
Bachelor's and above	48.2	24.3	27.5

Table 268: Equal incomes as essential characteristic of democracy, by income level

Income Level N = 1,186	The state makes people's incomes equal		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
Below $1,500	38.3	35.3	26.4
$1,500 - $2,999	32.3	29.7	38.0
$3,000 - $4,999	35.8	28.1	36.1
$5,000 - $6,999	45.7	24.4	29.9
Above $6,999	50.3	26.5	23.2

Table 269: Equal incomes as essential characteristic of democracy, by housing type

Housing Type N = 1,920	The state makes people's incomes equal		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
1- to 3-room HDB	34.2	32.7	33.1
4-room HDB	35.5	29.6	35.0
5+-room HDB	38.8	24.5	36.7
Private property	51.1	23.5	25.0

8.5   BASES OF POWER IN DEMOCRACIES

The last tranche of items respondents was asked to consider if they were essential for democracies pertained to bases of power. These included 1) obedience to rulers, 2) religious authorities holding ultimate authority to interpret laws, and 3) the army taking over if government is incompetent. In general, respondents were less inclined to think of these three attributes as essential components of a democracy; over 60 per cent indicated that second and third items were non-essential to democracy. In particular, younger and more affluent respondents were more likely to feel these items were not essential.

8.5.1   More were ambivalent or felt that obedience to rulers was not essential to democracy, with younger and more educated respondents especially likely to feel as such

There was greater contention on whether obeying one's rulers was an important characteristic of democracy. Overall, 35.2 per cent felt that people obeying their rulers was an essential characteristic of democracy. A very similar proportion of 35.6 per cent, however, were undecided (see Figure 55). There was a positive correlation between age and those who chose this as an essential characteristic of democracy. Compared with 24.7 per cent of respondents aged between 21 and 35, 46.7 per cent of respondents aged above 65 felt that it was an essential characteristic of democracy. In addition, respondents with higher education levels were less likely to say that people obeying their rulers was an essential characteristic of democracy (see Table 270 and 271).

Table 270: Obedience to rulers as essential characteristic of democracy, by age

Age Cohort *N = 1,928*	People obey their rulers		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
21-35	35.5	39.8	24.7
36-50	30.3	32.7	37.0
51-65	28.1	34.8	37.1
Above 65	18.4	349	46.7

Table 271: Obedience to rulers as essential characteristic of democracy, by education

Education Level N = 1,926	People obey their rulers		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
Below secondary	19.0	36.5	44.5
Secondary/ ITE	26.7	39.1	34.3
Dip. / Prof. qual.	26.7	36.8	36.5
Bachelor's and above	38.2	31.4	30.4

8.5.2 While two-thirds felt religion wielding ultimate power to interpret laws was non-essential to democracy, Muslims, the less-educated and less affluent were likelier to feel otherwise or indicate ambivalence

Overall, only 11.5 per cent of respondents thought that religious authorities interpreting the laws was an essential characteristic of democracy to some extent – the lowest proportion of all nine items presented to respondents (see Figure 55). By proportion, there were marginally more Muslim and Roman Catholic respondents who felt that religious authorities interpreting the law was an essential characteristic of democracy, relative to adherents of other religions. In the same vein, while two-thirds or more of most respondents felt religious power was non-essential to democracy, just under half of Muslims indicated likewise (see Table 272).

Table 272: Religious power as essential characteristic of democracy, by religion

Religion* N = 1,886	Religious authorities ultimately interpret the laws		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
Buddhist	68.0	20.5	11.5
Taoist / Chinese religion	73.7	24.1	2.2
Protestant	67.2	20.7	12.1
Catholic	61.9	22.0	16.1
Muslim	49.2	33.7	17.1
Hindu	61.9	22.9	15.2
No religion	73.1	19.1	7.8

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

Views on religious power as essential to democracy were also tempered by socio-economic status. Respondents who had a degree, higher incomes, or who reside in private properties were more likely to see this as a non-essential characteristic of democracy relative to their less privileged counterparts (see Tables 273 to 275).

Table 273: Religious power as essential characteristic of democracy, by education

Education Level *N = 1,946*	Religious authorities ultimately interpret the laws		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
Below secondary	60.0	24.7	15.3
Secondary/ ITE	62.0	25.8	12.2
Dip. / Prof. qual.	64.4	23.5	12.1
Bachelor's and above	73.6	18.2	8.2

Table 274: Religious power as essential characteristic of democracy, by income

Income Level *N = 1,165*	Religious authorities ultimately interpret the laws		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
Below $1,500	63.2	26.9	9.8
$1,500 - $2,999	58.1	25.8	16.1
$3,000 - $4,999	66.5	21.8	11.7
$5,000 - $6,999	71.0	21.0	8.0
Above $6,999	70.1	20.8	9.1

Table 275: Religious power as essential characteristic of democracy, by housing

Housing Type *N = 1,886*	Religious authorities ultimately interpret the laws		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
1- to 3-room HDB	62.5	25.6	11.9
4-room HDB	62.6	23.8	13.6
5+-room HDB	67.3	21.5	11.2
Private property	77.7	16.0	6.3

8.5.3 Similar to 8.5.2, most felt that the option of military rule was non-essential to democracy; youth, higher-educated, and more affluent respondents were more likely to feel this way

Most did not perceive the army taking over if the government was incompetent to be an essential characteristic of democracy. Only 15.9 per cent felt that it was an essential

characteristic of democracy (see Figure 55). There was a larger proportion of younger respondents who felt that the army taking over an incompetent government was not an essential characteristic of democracy. In addition, respondents with higher education, income, or who lived in larger housing types were more likely to say that the army taking over was not an essential characteristic of democracy. Compared with 48.6 per cent of respondents with below secondary school education, 55.4 per cent of those earning below $1,500, and 53.8 per cent of those living in 1- to 3-room flats, 68.9 per cent of those with university education, 71 per cent of those earning above $6,999, and 68 per cent of private property dwellers felt that it was not an essential characteristic of democracy (see Tables 276 to 279).

Table 276: Military rule option as essential characteristic of democracy, by age

Age Cohort N = 1,884	The army takes over when government is incompetent		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
21-35	66.1	22.1	11.8
36-50	60.1	22.3	17.6
51-65	59.1	22.3	18.6
Above 65	54.6	27.6	17.7

Table 277: Military rule option as essential characteristic of democracy, by education

Education Level N = 1,881	The army takes over when government is incompetent		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
Below secondary	48.6	27.9	23.5
Secondary/ ITE	56.6	26.6	16.8
Dip. / Prof. qual.	62.1	20.4	17.5
Bachelor's and above	68.9	19.6	11.5

Table 278: Military rule option as essential characteristic of democracy, by income

Income Level N = 1,170	The army takes over when government is incompetent		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
Below $1,500	55.4	25.9	18.7
$1,500 - $2,999	58.5	26.1	15.4
$3,000 - $4,999	65.7	18.5	15.7
$5,000 - $6,999	64.6	19.9	15.5
Above $6,999	71.0	19.4	9.7

Table 279: Military rule option as essential characteristic of democracy, by housing

Housing Type N = 1,884	The army takes over when government is incompetent		
	Not an essential characteristic of democracy	Undecided	Essential characteristic of democracy
1- to 3-room HDB	53.8	24.4	21.8
4-room HDB	60.6	22.2	17.2
5+-room HDB	64.1	23.6	12.3
Private property	68.0	21.8	10.1

8.6   ALTERNATIVE MODES OF GOVERNANCE

To recap, respondents were asked about what they thought of different political systems, including having strong leaders without parliament or elections, experts making governing decisions, military rule, democracy, or religious rule. The strongest preference among respondents was for a democratic political system, for which in-depth analyses have been set out in 8.2. In this last section, we examine respondents' perceptions of alternative modes of governance. Of the remaining four types of governance respondents were requested to appraise, a technocrat-led system where experts rather than the government are the decision-makers was second-most positively viewed after democracy.

Interestingly, just under one-third indicated positive perceptions of autocratic governance – having a strong leader who does not have to bother with government and elections. This proportion is high relative to the majority of other polities globally. Most respondents, however, held withering views of military administrations or theocracies, with over 90 per cent of the population indicating they were "fairly bad" or "very bad" (see Figure 52).

8.6.1 Male, younger, higher-educated and more affluent respondents, as well as those indicating confidence in Parliament, were more likely to view technocracy positively relative to other respondents

Slightly less than half of the population felt that having experts rather than a government make decisions for the country was very good or fairly good. Specifically, 7.2 per cent felt that it was very good, while 39.5 per cent said it was fairly good. Meanwhile, 35.8 per cent said it was fairly bad, and 17.5 per cent said it was very bad (see Figure 52). Overall, Singaporean respondents' perceptions of a technocracy (46.7 per cent fairly good or very good) were not as positive as those held by respondents from Malaysia (77.2 per cent), Thailand (69.7 per cent), South Korea (49 per cent), Taiwan (66.9 per cent), Australia (58.7 per cent), the US (52.5 per cent), and the UK (55.3 per cent), but also less negative compared to respondents from Hong Kong (46.1 per cent), Switzerland (35 per cent), and Sweden (37.4 per cent) (see Table 236).

In 2012, 55.4 per cent of respondents felt it was good to some extent, while 36.2 per cent of respondents in 2002 said the same. Sentiments expressed in this wave towards this regime type hence seem to be more similar to those expressed in 2002. Compared with 50.8 per cent of male respondents who felt that technocracy is a fairly good or very good thing, 42.2 per cent of female respondents felt the same (see Table 280).

Table 280: Perceptions of technocracy, by gender

Gender *N = 1,789*	Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country			
	Very good	**Fairly good**	**Fairly bad**	**Very bad**
Male	9.0	41.8	32.0	17.3
Female	5.4	36.8	39.4	18.5

Meanwhile, younger respondents were more likely than older respondents to say that it was a fairly good or very good situation. It is likely that these response patterns were related to respondents' existing perceptions of parliament and government. When these responses are compared against respondents' reported confidence in parliament, those who expressed confidence were more likely to say that such a regime was bad compared to those who did not. The differences were most pronounced for respondents aged between 21 and 35. While 51.4 per cent of those with confidence in parliament said that a technocratic regime was bad, only 38.1 per cent of those who expressed no confidence said so. Hence, it appears that the youngest group's opinions of different regime types are more affected by their current assessments of existing institutions (see Tables 281 and 282).

Table 281: Perceptions of technocracy, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 1,789	Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country			
	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly bad	Very bad
21-35	9.7	44.1	33.4	12.8
36-50	7.5	41.7	35.6	15.2
51-65	6.1	35.1	34.9	23.9
Above 65	3.5	32.9	42.6	21.1

Table 282: Perceptions of technocracy, by age cohort and confidence in Parliament

Age and Confidence in Parliament N = 1,735		Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country			
		Very good	Fairly good	Fairly bad	Very bad
21-35	Great deal / quite a lot of confidence in Parliament	7.7	40.9	37.8	13.6
	Not very much / no confidence in Parliament	14.3	47.6	26.5	11.6
36-50	Great deal / quite a lot of confidence in Parliament	7.1	43.0	35.0	14.8
	Not very much / no confidence in Parliament	8.3	36.8	38.9	16.0
51-65	Great deal / quite a lot of confidence in Parliament	5.2	33.8	37.9	23.2
	Not very much / no confidence in Parliament	8.6	37.5	26.6	27.3
Above 65	Great deal / quite a lot of confidence in Parliament	2.3	31.3	47.0	19.4
	Not very much / no confidence in Parliament	6.9	32.8	29.3	31.0

Socio-economic factors also exerted a marked positive influence on perceptions of technocracy. Respondents with diploma or professional qualifications were the most in favour of an expert system, with 56.2 per cent saying that it was very or fairly good. In contrast, respondents with below secondary school qualifications were least in favour, as 65.5 per cent said it was very or fairly bad. These differences likely reflect the age effects found in the tables above, given that the majority of respondents with below secondary education are above 50 years old (see Table 283).

Table 283: Perceptions of technocracy, by education level

Education Level *N = 1,787*	Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country Having a democratic political system			
	Very good	**Fairly good**	**Fairly bad**	**Very bad**
Below secondary	5.4	29.1	40.5	25.0
Secondary/ ITE	5.3	37.5	36.6	20.6
Dip. / Prof. qual.	10.6	45.6	29.4	14.4
Bachelor's and above	7.3	41.3	37.0	14.4

Meanwhile across income levels, we find that respondents earning below $1,500 thought most negatively of technocracy; 41.7 per cent felt it was fairly bad, and 21.4 per cent felt it was very bad. In contrast, the rest of the income groups had fairly similar perceptions of such a system, with slightly over 50 per cent saying that it was either a fairly good or very good system. This could be due to Singapore's prevailing mode of governance comprising strong elements of technocracy; better-off respondents who have reaped more benefits relative to their less-privileged counterparts would hence hold more positive views of this governing modality (see Table 284).

Table 284: Perceptions of technocracy, by income level

Income Level *N = 1,103*	Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country Having a democratic political system			
	Very good	**Fairly good**	**Fairly bad**	**Very bad**
Below $1,500	5.7	31.3	41.7	21.4
$1,500 - $2,999	6.4	43.6	30.7	19.3
$3,000 - $4,999	7.4	42.8	36.6	13.2
$5,000 - $6,999	12.0	38.7	37.3	12.0
Above $6,999	7.7	44.2	28.8	19.2

8.6.2 Under a third of respondents perceived autocracy positively; interestingly, younger respondents were more likely to feel this way. Education meanwhile had a strengthening effect on views

When respondents were asked to evaluate a political system in which there is a strong leader who does not have to contend with parliament and elections, essentially some form of dictatorial or authoritarian rule, a majority felt that it was fairly bad or very bad. Here, 40.2 per cent chose "fairly bad" while 28.4 per cent chose "very bad" as their answers. Meanwhile, 7.6 per cent felt that it was very good, and 23.9 per cent felt it was fairly good (see Figure 52).

It appears that Singaporean respondents' perceptions of autocracy were on the low side compared to some other societies – over 65 per cent of Malaysian, Korean, and Taiwanese respondents felt that it was very or fairly good. Thai respondents were the most supportive, with 91.2 per cent rating it positively. Meanwhile, around one-third of respondents from Japan, Hong Kong, Australia, the US, the UK and Sweden saw autocracy positively, which were more in line with Singaporean results. Swiss respondents were the most opposed to autocracy, with only 21.8 per cent saying that it was fairly or very good (see Table 236).

Compared across waves, 50.6 per cent and 21.1 per cent of Singaporean respondents in 2012 and 2002 respectively felt that it was very good or fairly good. Therefore, it appears that the very large jump in positive perceptions in 2012 towards this regime type might have been an anomaly which was not sustained. While the differences were marginal, when comparing results across demographic variables, it was found that respondents who were younger, had higher education, or who earned between $5,000 and $6,999 were more sympathetic of such a political system. Meanwhile, there were only slight variations found for gender, citizenship status, and housing type.

Older respondents were more likely to say that having a strong leader without elections or parliament was bad to some extent. While around 65 per cent of those aged 50 and below said it was either "fairly bad" or "very bad", around 72 per cent of those aged above 50 years old did so. It is possible that these age differences are a derivative of respondents' perceptions towards elections, in which older respondents were more likely to express confidence in elections. Compared to 58.8 per cent of those aged between 21 and 35 who said they have confidence in elections, 82.3 per cent of those aged above 65 said the same.

Across each age group, those who had confidence in elections were slightly more likely to say that a regime without elections and parliament is bad. Such sentiments are thus magnified due to the larger proportions of respondents thinking in this manner amongst the younger groups (see Tables 285 and 286).

Table 285: Perceptions of autocracy, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 1,801	A strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections			
	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly bad	Very bad
21-35	8.4	26.5	42.0	23.1
36-50	8.6	25.5	36.5	29.4
51-65	6.3	21.1	38.0	34.6
Above 65	5.5	22.4	47.2	24.8

Table 286: Perceptions of autocracy, by age cohort and confidence in elections

Age and Confidence in elections *N = 1,735*		A strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections			
		Very good	Fairly good	Fairly bad	Very bad
21-35	Great deal / quite a lot of confidence in elections	8.1	25.3	49.1	17.6
	Not very much / no confidence in elections	8.3	27.9	32.4	31.4
36-50	Great deal / quite a lot of confidence in elections	9.6	25.0	36.9	28.5
	Not very much / no confidence in elections	7.5	26.7	33.6	32.2
51-65	Great deal / quite a lot of confidence in elections	6.4	19.9	39.5	34.3
	Not very much / no confidence in elections	5.4	23.8	33.1	37.7
Above 65	Great deal / quite a lot of confidence in elections	5.4	24.4	49.3	20.8
	Not very much / no confidence in elections	5.7	20.8	37.7	35.8

Education was also found to be a statistically significant factor impacting views on autocracy. Respondents with below secondary school qualifications were most likely to indicate that having a strong leader without parliament or elections was fairly or very bad. However, for the rest of the educational groups, those with higher education were more likely to indicate that autocracy is fairly or very bad; perhaps reflecting a consolidating or solidifying effect education has on respondents' views. Hence, the high proportions found for the lowest educational group might be an effect of age as well as the corresponding perceptions of elections as discussed above. When the age groups were further divided according to educational qualifications, higher-educated respondents were found to be marginally more likely to indicate that autocracies were fairly or very bad (see Tables 287 and 288).

Table 287: Perceptions of autocracy, by education level

Education Level *N = 1,799*	A strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections			
	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly bad	Very bad
Below secondary	5.6	22.3	42.2	29.9
Secondary/ ITE	6.2	28.2	38.3	27.4
Dip. / Prof. qual.	7.0	25.1	46.0	22.0
Bachelor's and above	9.5	21.0	37.2	32.4

Table 288: Perceptions of autocracy, by age cohort and education level

Age Cohort and Education Level N = 1,799		A strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections			
		Very good	Fairly good	Fairly bad	Very bad
21-35	Below secondary^	0	22.2	33.3	44.4
	Secondary/ ITE	4.3	28.7	42.6	24.3
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	7.9	29.1	46.7	16.4
	Bachelor's and above	11.4	23.4	38.3	26.9
36-50	Below secondary	12.1	30.3	15.2	42.4
	Secondary/ ITE	7.8	31.4	37.3	23.5
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	3.7	30.6	38.9	26.9
	Bachelor's and above	10.4	20.7	37.8	31.1
51-65	Below secondary	4.5	20.3	37.6	37.6
	Secondary/ ITE	6.3	27.6	35.1	31.0
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	11.1	11.1	52.8	25.0
	Bachelor's and above	5.4	18.6	34.1	41.9
Above 65	Below secondary	5.6	22.2	54.8	17.5
	Secondary/ ITE	6.5	25.8	39.5	28.2
	Dip. / Prof. qual.^	0	7.1	57.1	35.7
	Bachelor's and above^	4.2	16.7	37.5	41.7

^ Number of respondents in this category is less than 30

8.6.3 Most respondents indicated an aversion to military rule to varying extents, with males, higher-educated and more affluent respondents especially likely to feel it was "very bad"

Military rule was not a very welcome option for most respondents. Only 1.3 per cent said that it was very good and 8.2 per cent said it was fairly good. In contrast, 57.9 per cent felt that it was very bad, and 32.6 per cent said it was fairly bad (see Figure 52). These sentiments were similar to those expressed in 2002, where 91.1 per cent felt that such a regime was bad. However, the perceptions were slightly more positive in 2012, as only 74.5 per cent of the respondents were against such a regime.

When compared across selected societies, Singaporean respondents were less likely to see military rule as positive. Only Japan (2.2 per cent fairly or very good), Switzerland (4.2 per cent), and Sweden (5.7 per cent) had lower proportions rating the system positively. Nonetheless, this political system was not well-received by many other societies – under 21 per cent of respondents from South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Australia, the US, and the UK felt that it was good. In contrast, respondents from China (41.1 per cent) and Thailand (61.6 per cent) held military rule in relatively high regard (see Table 236).

Male respondents seemed to have a stronger aversion to military rule when compared with females. While there were similar proportions of the two groups saying that it was fairly bad or very bad, a much larger proportion of males chose the "very bad" option. Compared with 51.7 per cent of female respondents, 64.1 per cent of male respondents said that military rule was very bad (see Table 289).

Table 289: Perceptions of military rule, by gender

Gender N = 1,873	Having the army rule			
	Very good	**Fairly good**	**Fairly bad**	**Very bad**
Male	1.0	6.3	28.6	64.1
Female	1.5	10.2	36.6	51.7

There were some similarities found when comparing results across education, income, and housing. For each variable, there were similar proportions of respondents who felt that military rule was bad to some extent. However, there were some differences in the distribution of responses. Greater proportions of respondents with higher education qualifications, who earned higher income, or who lived in larger housing types chose the option "very bad", suggesting some solidifying effect of affluence on negative views regarding military rule (see Tables 290 to 292).

Table 290: Perceptions of military rule, by education level

Education Level N = 1,871	Having the army rule			
	Very good	**Fairly good**	**Fairly bad**	**Very bad**
Below secondary	0.3	9.8	42.2	47.7
Secondary/ ITE	0.9	10.0	35.7	53.4
Dip. / Prof. qual.	3.1	8.3	34.8	53.8
Bachelor's and above	0.9	6.5	24.8	67.8

Table 291: Perceptions of military rule, by income level

Income Level N = 1,161	Having the army rule			
	Very good	**Fairly good**	**Fairly bad**	**Very bad**
Below $1,500	2.1	8.9	37.0	52.1
$1,500 - $2,999	1.7	9.8	32.9	55.6
$3,000 - $4,999	2.0	6.8	29.0	62.3
$5,000 - $6,999	0	7.5	30.4	62.1
Above $6,999	1.9	4.4	24.7	69.0

Table 292: Perceptions of military rule, by housing type

Housing Type N = 1,873	Having the army rule			
	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly bad	Very bad
1- to 3-room HDB	1.9	9.3	33.8	55.0
4-room HDB	1.6	9.0	37.7	51.6
5+-room HDB	1.0	8.5	29.0	61.6
Private property	0	5.6	27.0	67.4

8.6.4 In tandem with responses on military rule, most did not view theocracy favourably too; with males, polytheistic faithfuls, and higher-SES respondents especially likely to feel it was "very bad"

Similar to military rule, most viewed theocracy adversely too. Compared with 8.5 per cent who indicated it was either very good or fairly good, 53.4 per cent said it was very bad, while 38.1 per cent said it was fairly bad (see Figure 52). It was similarly unpopular amongst respondents from Japan (1.6 per cent), China (5.2 per cent), and Australia (7.2 per cent), while having slightly higher receptivity amongst those from South Korea (20.7 per cent), Hong Kong (18.2 per cent), Taiwan (15.5 per cent), and the US (19.4 per cent). Thailand was the most positive about religious rule, with 53.5 per cent rating it very good or fairly good (see Table 236).

In Singapore, respondents who were male, older, identified as Taoist or practitioners of Chinese religion, had higher educational levels, earned higher income, or lived in larger housing were more likely to disapprove of such a governing style. In particular, male respondents were more opposed to religious rule compared with female respondents. In particular, a larger proportion of male respondents said that such a system was very bad. Compared with 49.6 per cent of female respondents, 58.4 per cent of male respondents gave this answer (see Table 293).

Table 293: Perceptions of theocracy, by gender

Gender N = 1,845	Being governed by religious law in which there are no political parties or elections			
	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly bad	Very bad
Male	1.2	6.3	34.1	58.4
Female	1.0	8.0	41.4	49.6

When considering age, we find that respondents aged above 65 were more opposed to religious rule compared with the rest of the sample population. Compared with 90.6 per cent of respondents aged between 21 and 35, 90.5 per cent of those aged between 36 and 50, and 92.2 per cent of those aged between 51 and 65, 94.9 per cent of the oldest age group said that religious rule was very bad or fairly bad (see Table 294).

Table 294: Perceptions of theocracy, by age cohort

Age Cohort N = 1,845	Being governed by religious law in which there are no political parties or elections			
	Very good	**Fairly good**	**Fairly bad**	**Very bad**
21-35	1.3	8.1	37.4	53.2
36-50	0.6	8.9	36.0	54.5
51-65	1.0	6.8	36.5	55.7
Above 65	1.7	3.4	44.7	50.2

When examined across specified religions, Muslim (15.3 per cent) and Hindu (13 per cent) respondents reported the highest combined response rates for "very good" and "fairly good". This was followed by Protestant (11.2 per cent) and Roman Catholics (9.9 per cent). Meanwhile, Taoists or practitioners of Chinese religion had the lowest combined response rate of 3.2 per cent, even lower than the rate reported for respondents with no religion (see Table 295).

Table 295: Perceptions of theocracy, by religious affiliation

Religion* N = 1,845	Being governed by religious law in which there are no political parties or elections			
	Very good	**Fairly good**	**Fairly bad**	**Very bad**
Buddhist	0.4	5.2	43.7	50.6
Taoist / Chinese religion	0.8	2.4	38.6	58.3
Protestant	0.3	10.9	35.2	53.6
Catholic	2.5	7.4	39.3	50.8
Muslim	2.1	13.2	44.9	39.9
Hindu	4.0	9.0	27.0	60.0
No religion	0.7	4.3	32.2	62.9

* "Others" category omitted from analyses due to low N

Socio-economic factors also influenced views on theocracy in some part. In general, respondents with higher education, income levels, or who lived in larger housing types were more likely to say that religious rule was "very bad", but less likely to say that it was "fairly bad". However, there were still positive correlations found for the combined proportion of "fairly bad" and "very bad" with the three socioeconomic variables, indicating that respondents from higher socioeconomic background have stronger feelings against religious rule (see Tables 296 to 298).

Table 296: Perceptions of theocracy, by education level

Education Level N = 1,843	Being governed by religious law in which there are no political parties or elections			
	Very good	**Fairly good**	**Fairly bad**	**Very bad**
Below secondary	2.0	6.2	46.9	44.9
Secondary/ ITE	0.6	7.7	41.7	50.1
Dip. / Prof. qual.	2.1	8.6	39.1	50.3
Bachelor's and above	0.5	6.5	29.9	63.2

Table 297: Perceptions of theocracy, by income level

Income Level N = 1,151	Being governed by religious law in which there are no political parties or elections			
	Very good	**Fairly good**	**Fairly bad**	**Very bad**
Below $1,500	1.1	14.7	37.9	46.3
$1,500 - $2,999	1.7	7.5	47.5	43.4
$3,000 - $4,999	1.1	5.4	39.0	54.5
$5,000 - $6,999	0.6	7.6	28.7	63.1
Above $6,999	0.6	5.2	27.7	66.5

Table 298: Perceptions of theocracy, by housing type

Housing Type N = 1,845	Being governed by religious law in which there are no political parties or elections			
	Very good	**Fairly good**	**Fairly bad**	**Very bad**
1- to 3-room HDB	1.5	7.3	41.2	50.0
4-room HDB	1.2	7.2	42.1	49.6
5+-room HDB	1.2	8.3	35.4	55.1
Private property	0	5.7	28.2	66.1

Chapter 9

Concluding Analyses

CHAPTER 9 | CONCLUDING ANALYSES

The analyses vis-à-vis respondents' stances on the various issues set out in Chapter 2 to 8 have illustrated a variety of differences influenced by a wide range of factors. This chapter seeks to encapsulate the bulk of these findings across respondents' individual priorities, personal ethics, and values, in the ambit of religion, family and gender, the economy, society, and politics. As the responses pertain to a broad range of themes and issues, we condense the myriad findings presented using a two-step approach of 1) standard regressions based on pre-defined value indices; and 2) cluster analysis to discern collections of similar values or beliefs prevalent within the respondent pool.

At the outset, we construct value indices, or value dimensions which provide an aggregated measure of the values or principles respondents hold across various component issues. This yields seven value dimensions, which broadly pertain to each (or a combination of) earlier substantive chapters presented and are typically seen as contentious or polemic in nature: 1) democracy, 2) faith-based belief, 3) neoliberal economics, 4) self-determination of death, 5) liberal views on marriage and sexuality, 6) traditional work orientation, and 7) gender equality. Table 299 lists the components aggregated within these value dimensions.

Based on these value dimensions which aggregate participants' responses for each component, we ran extensive regressions to illustrate the key variables impacting or influencing responses for each group of values. Section 9.1 presents and discusses in broad terms the most salient regression models reflecting the statistically significant factors of interest across the value dimensions. More in-depth analyses pertaining to each variable are found in the prior substantive chapters.

Section 9.2 concludes the report with a cluster analysis of the values Singaporeans hold across the seven value dimensions, and presents four salient groupings where significant proportions of the population are posited to belong in: 1) Conservative Democrats, 2) Secular Liberals, 3) Conservative Autocrats, and 4) Middle-Grounders. These value groupings were largely driven by varying views across three broad dimensions: politics, economy, and society.

Table 299: Components of value dimensions

Value Dimensions	Components
Democracy	Support for a democratic system
	Importance of having honest elections
	Importance of living in a democratic country
	Support for a strong leader without parliament and elections (contrasting indicator)
	Support for a technocratic government (contrasting indicator)
	Support for military rule (contrasting indicator)
	Support for religious rule (contrasting indicator)
Faith-based belief	We depend too much on science and not enough on faith
	Importance of God in respondent's life
	When science and religion conflict, religion is always right.
Neoliberal economics	Support for greater individualised incentives vs more equal incomes
	Support for private ownership of business and industry vs government ownership of business and industry
	Support for people taking responsibility for themselves vs government supporting people
	Support for competition is good vs competition is harmful
	Support for hard work bringing about success vs luck and connections bringing about success
Self-determination of death	Degree to which suicide is justifiable
	Degree to which euthanasia is justifiable
Liberal views of marriage and sexuality	Degree to which homosexuality is justifiable
	Degree to which prostitution is justifiable
	Degree to which abortion is justifiable
	Degree to which divorce is justifiable
	Degree to which sex before marriage is justifiable
Traditional work orientation	Agree that people who don't work turn lazy
	Agree that work is a duty towards society
	Agree that work should always come first even if it means less spare time
Gender equality	Agree that men make better political leaders than women (contrasting indicator)
	Agree that university education is more important for boys than girls (contrasting indicator)
	Agree that men make better business executives than women (contrasting indicator)
	Agree that when jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women (contrasting indicator)
	Agree that there would be problems if a woman earns more than her husband (contrasting indicator)

Many of these components were correlated with each other. Here, only statistically significant results will be discussed. Faith-based beliefs were negatively correlated with gender equality, self-determination of death, and liberal views on marriage and sexuality. Gender equality was negatively correlated with traditional work orientation, but positively correlated with neoliberal economics, self-determination of death, liberal views of marriage and sexuality, and democracy.

Traditional work orientation, meanwhile, was negatively correlated with the self-determination of death, liberal views of marriage and sexuality, and democracy. Neoliberal economics was positively correlated with liberal views on marriage and sexuality and democracy. Self-determination of death was positively correlated with liberal views on marriage and sexuality as well as democracy, while liberal views on marriage and sexuality were positively correlated with democracy (see Table 300).

Table 300: Correlation statistics of value dimensions

	Gender equality	Traditional work orientation	Neoliberal economics	Self-determination of death	Liberal views on marriage and sexuality	Democracy
Faith-based belief	-.217**	.137***	.029	-.304***	-.381***	.038
Gender equality		-.336***	.099***	.276***	.382***	.110***
Traditional work orientation			.023	-.254***	-.299***	-.070**
Neoliberal economics				.037	.060**	.171***
Self-determination of death					.708***	.095***
Liberal views on marriage and sexuality						.103***

* p < 0.05. ** p < 0.01. *** p < 0.001.

9.1 REGRESSIONS

9.1.1 Younger, higher-educated, more affluent and politically interested respondents are likelier to indicate support for democracy

Support for democracy was found to be significantly correlated to political interest levels and the degree to which respondents prioritise politics in their lives. It is not a surprising finding, given that people who are more interested in politics would be more likely to understand the differences between the various regimes and what they entail to society-at-large. In terms of demographic characteristics, it was found that younger and more educated individuals were more inclined to have stronger support for democracy, while respondents living in 1- to 3-room HDB flats, compared to those living in private properties, were less likely to support democracy (see Table 301).

Table 301: Democracy (linear regression)

Variables	Standardised Coefficient
Political interest[1]	.149***
Prioritise politics in one's life	.064**
Gender (females vs males)	-.025
Age	
21-35	-.207***
36-50	-.171***
51-65	-.037
Reference group: Above 65	
Education	
Below secondary school	-.269***
Secondary school/ ITE	-.104***
Diploma/ Professional qualification	-.054*
Reference group: Bachelor's and above	
Housing type	
1- 3-room HDB	-.064*
4-room HDB	-.013
5+-room HDB	.005
Reference group: Private property	
Adjusted R[2]	.107

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

[1] The specific question is as follows: "How interested would you say you are in politics?"

9.1.2 Protestants, Muslims, females, silvers, and the less-educated were more likely to have higher levels of faith-based belief

Prioritising religion in one's life – an additional variable included for this particular analysis – was found to predict high scores for the religiosity index. Two regressions were conducted for the religiosity index to see if there was a difference between those with religious beliefs and without; as well as to note the difference between religions. Having a religious affiliation was a statistically significant correlation, whether it was a general comparison or when the different religions were separated. Separating the religious categories, however, allowed us to see which religions were more likely to score higher on the index. It was found that respondents who were Protestant or Muslim were more likely to have higher scores on this index.

With respect to other demographic variables in the regression model, we note that females were more likely to have slightly higher scores vis-à-vis faith-based belief. Meanwhile, the youngest age group was much less likely than the oldest age group to have high faith-based belief scores, and those with below secondary school education were much less likely than those with university degrees to have high scores (see Table 302).

Table 302: Faith-based belief (linear regression)

Variables	Model 1 Standardised Coefficient	Model 2 Standardised Coefficient
Prioritise religion in one's life	.393***	.485***
Religion		
Catholic	.145***	
Protestant	.301***	
Taoist	.066***	
Muslim	.253***	
Hindu	.129***	
Buddhist	.122***	
Reference group: No religion and Others		
Has a religious affiliation		.180***
Gender (females vs males)	.041*	.042*
Age		
21-35	-.127***	-.103***
36-50	-.042	-.040
51-65	-.008	-.002
Reference group: Above 65		
Education		
Below secondary school	-.054*	-.083***
Secondary school/ ITE	.032	.022
Diploma/ Professional qualification	.020	.015
Reference group: Bachelor's and above		
Housing type		
1- 3-room HDB	.060	.049
4-room HDB	.015	-.014
5+-room HDB	-.005	-.030
Reference group: Private property		
Adjusted R^2	.425	.394

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

9.1.3 Males, silvers, and more educated respondents, along with those who prioritised work in life were more likely to support neoliberal economics

Support for neoliberal economics was found to have a statistically significant correlation with the tendency to prioritise work in one's life, which might be explained by the support for hard work bringing about success in life. However, no such relationship was found for prioritising wealth in one's life, despite the focus on individual rewards. We also included religious beliefs in a second model to examine whether they had an effect on support for neoliberal economics.

However, no statistically significant relationships were found. With regards to demographics, it was found that overall, respondents who were male, older, and had higher education were more likely to have stronger support for neoliberal economics (see Table 303).

Table 303: Neoliberal economics (linear regression)

Variables	Model 1 Standardised Coefficient	Model 2 Standardised Coefficient
Prioritise work in one's life	.066**	.070**
Prioritise wealth in one's life	-.030	-.028
Gender (females vs males)	-.054*	-.057*
Age		
21-35	-.176***	-.163***
36-50	-.107**	-.097**
51-65	-.060	-.056
Reference group: Above 65		
Education		
Below secondary school	-.192***	-.171***
Secondary school/ ITE	-.119***	-.097***
Diploma/ Professional qualification	-.030	-.021
Reference group: Bachelor's and above		
Housing type		
1- 3-room HDB	-.054	-.039
4-room HDB	-.023	-.006
5+-room HDB	-.014	-.002
Reference group: Private property		
Religion		
Catholic		-.013
Protestant		.047
Taoist		.010
Muslim		-.050
Hindu		.016
Buddhist		-.035
Reference group: No religion and Others		
Adjusted R^2	.035	.038

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

9.1.4 Younger and more educated respondents were far more likely to be supportive of actions pertaining to self-determination of death

When it came to opinions about suicide and euthanasia, respondents aged between 21 and 50 were much more likely compared to those aged above 65 to see those two acts as justifiable to some extent. Educational differences were also found in the regression analysis – those with university education were more likely to score higher on this index compared to the rest of the educational groups. There were also clear religious differences in perceptions towards death – respondents with specified religions were more likely to score lower on this index compared to those without declared religious affiliations. It also appeared that Muslims were the least likely to see suicide and euthanasia as justifiable (see Table 304).

Table 304: Self-determination of death (linear regression)

Variables	Standardised Coefficient
Gender (females vs males)	-.012
Age	
21-35	.319***
36-50	.130***
51-65	.041
Reference group: Above 65	
Education	
Below secondary school	-.087**
Secondary school/ ITE	-.094***
Diploma/ Professional qualification	-.064**
Reference group: Bachelor's and above	
Housing type	
1- 3-room HDB	-.040
4-room HDB	-.047
5+-room HDB	-.041
Reference group: Private property	
Religion	
Catholic	-.119***
Protestant	-.168***
Taoist	-.070**
Muslim	-.232***
Hindu	-.167***
Buddhist	-.123***
Reference group: No religion and Others	
Adjusted R²	.153

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

9.1.5 Male, younger, more educated, and more affluent respondents were significantly more likely to hold liberal views on sex and marriage

The results from the regression model found that respondents who had higher support for gender equality and had no religious affiliation were more likely to hold liberal views on sexuality and marriage. There were statistically significant findings when compared across specific religious affiliations. While holding any religious beliefs predicted a lower score, Protestants, Muslims, and Hindus were much more likely compared to respondents from the other religions to score lower on this index. With regards to demographic variables, males, respondents aged below 51, with higher education, and living in private properties were more likely to hold liberal views (see Table 305).

Table 305: Liberal views on sex and marriage (linear regression)

Variables	Model 1 Standardised Coefficient	Model 2 Standardised Coefficient
Support for gender equality	.237***	.229***
Has a religious affiliation	-.160***	
Religion		
Catholic		-.103***
Protestant		-.185***
Taoist		-.056**
Muslim		-.185***
Hindu		-.152***
Buddhist		-.084***
Reference group: No religion and Others		
Gender (females vs males)	-.108***	-.106***
Age		
21-35	.361***	.380***
36-50	.191***	.199***
51-65	.052	.059*
Reference group: Above 65		
Education		
Below secondary school	-.070**	-.091***
Secondary school/ ITE	-.071**	-.078***
Diploma/ Professional qualification	-.065**	-.072***
Reference group: Bachelor's and above		
Housing type		
1- 3-room HDB	-.059*	-.048
4-room HDB	-.072**	-.077**
5+-room HDB	-.053*	-.059*
Reference group: Private property		
Adjusted R^2	.284	.304

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

9.1.6 Similar to views on sex and marriage, male, younger, more educated, and more affluent respondents also held weaker traditional work orientation

The results for the strength of traditional work orientation were notable. Those who prioritised leisure time in their lives actually held weaker traditional work orientation, while those who prioritised work in their lives held stronger traditional work orientation. When looking at demographic differences, it was found that respondents who were older, less educated, and

live in smaller housing types had propensities to subscribe to more traditional notions of work (see Table 306).

Table 306: Traditional work orientation (linear regression)

Variables	Standardised Coefficient
Prioritise work in one's life	.172***
Prioritise leisure time in one's life	-.086***
Gender (females vs males)	-.034
Age	
21-35	-.303***
36-50	-.170***
51-65	-.179***
Reference group: Above 65	
Education	
Below secondary school	.110***
Secondary school/ ITE	.092***
Diploma/ Professional qualification	.069**
Reference group: Bachelor's and above	
Housing type	
1- 3-room HDB	.080*
4-room HDB	.089**
5+-room HDB	.064*
Reference group: Private property	
Adjusted R^2	.103

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

9.1.7 Younger, more affluent, or higher-educated respondents were more likely to support gender equality

We created a scale of the five questions that clearly test for attitudes on gender equality, as stated earlier in the same chapter. The Cronbach's alpha for these five questions was 0.679, while the maximum score was 20 (higher scores indicate stronger support for gender equality). It hence appears that the overall population is hence quite supportive of gender equality values, given that the mean is 14.14, above the midpoint of 10.

In general, respondents with higher income levels or who lived in larger housing types were also less likely to agree that there should be preferential treatment for males. Younger respondents were also more likely to express this view (see Table 307).

Table 307: Gender equality (linear regression)

Variables	Standardised Coefficient
Gender (females vs males)	.145***
Age	
21-35	.314***
36-50	.134***
51-65	.083**
Reference group: Above 65	
Education	
Below secondary school	-.211***
Secondary school/ ITE	-.192***
Diploma/ Professional qualification	-.105***
Reference group: Bachelor's and above	
Housing type	
1- 3-room HDB	-.120***
4-room HDB	-.086**
5+-room HDB	-.067*
Reference group: Private property	
Adjusted R^2	.180

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

9.2   CLUSTER ANALYSIS

Cluster analysis refers to a broad-based quantitative exploratory analysis which attempts to identify structures or segments within the data. Based on the seven value dimensions analysed in 9.1, we map a total of four logically salient clusters of respondents, each holding relatively similar values: 1) Conservative Democrats, the largest group, which take up 45.2 per cent of the sample population; 2) Secular Liberals, who make up 14.2 per cent; 3) Conservative Autocrats, the smallest group at 6.0 per cent; and 4) the Middle Grounders, who form 34.6 per cent of the sample population.

The characteristics of each cluster are presented in the values map below (see Figure 56), with stronger views represented by the point located further away from the centre of the graph. A numeric representation of Figure 56 is presented in Table 308. The specific demographic characteristics and breakdowns of each cluster are presented thereafter (see Tables 309 to 314).

Figure 56: Values map of Singapore in 2020
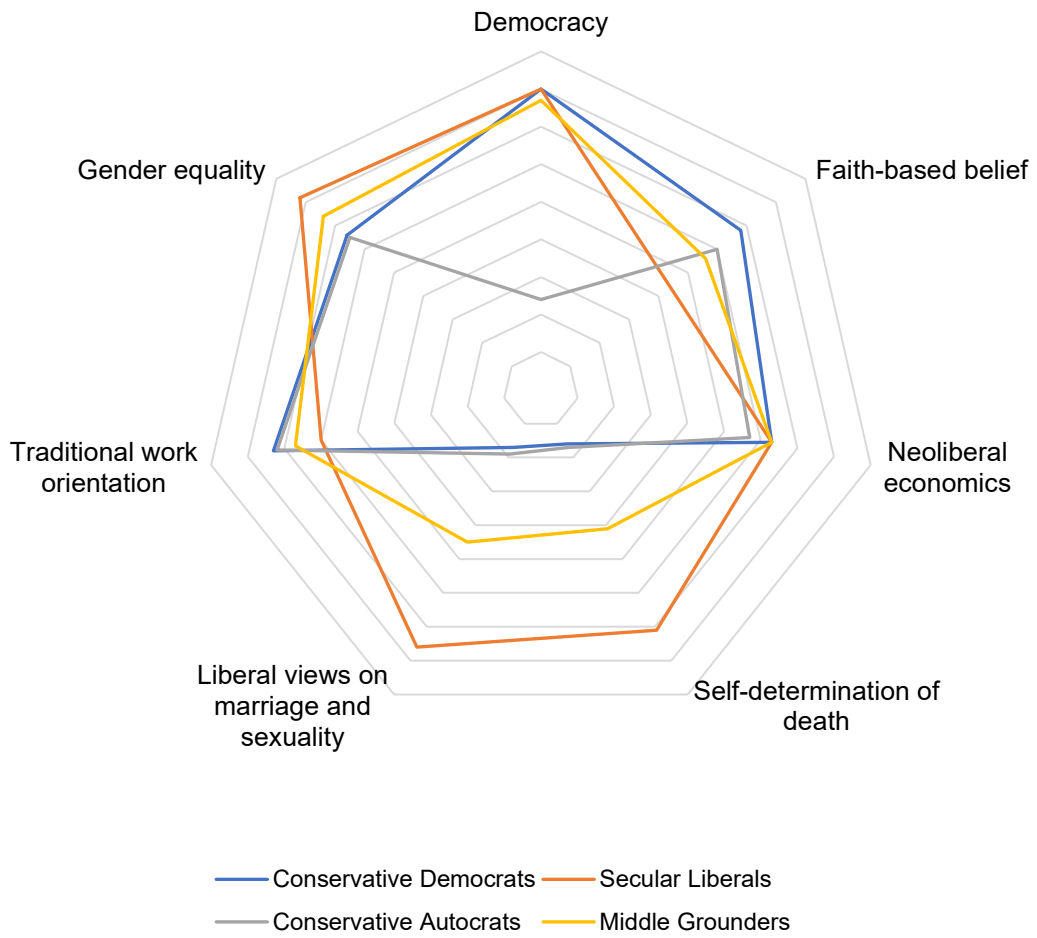
Table 308: Characteristics of each cluster, by value dimension

Value Dimension	Clusters			
	Conservative Democrats (N=899)	Secular Liberals (N=289)	Conservative Autocrats (N=116)	Middle Grounders (N=708)
Democracy	0.80	0.80	0.24	0.77
Faith-based belief	0.68	0.44	0.60	0.56
Neoliberal economics	0.63	0.63	0.57	0.63
Self-determination of death	0.16	0.71	0.17	0.41
Liberal views on marriage and sexuality	0.17	0.76	0.19	0.45
Traditional work orientation	0.73	0.60	0.72	0.67
Gender equality	0.66	0.82	0.65	0.74

Table 309: Breakdown of clusters, by age cohort

Clusters	Age Cohort			
	21-35	36-50	51-65	Above 65
Conservative Democrats	14.7	25.1	34.9	25.3
Secular Liberals	56.5	29.5	11.2	2.8
Conservative Autocrats	17.4	28.1	30.6	24.0
Middle Grounders	33.9	31.6	25.0	9.5
Overall	**27.4**	**28.1**	**27.9**	**16.6**

Table 310: Breakdown of clusters, by race

Clusters	Race			
	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
Conservative Democrats	69.5	16.9	11.6	2.0
Secular Liberals	85.3	5.3	5.6	3.9
Conservative Autocrats	63.6	20.7	15.7	0

| Middle Grounders | 85.8 | 6.0 | 7.0 | 1.1 |
| Overall | **77.0** | **11.7** | **9.4** | **1.8** |

Table 311: Breakdown of clusters, by marital status

| Clusters | Marital status | | |
	Married	Divorced / Separated / Widowed	Single
Conservative Democrats	71.4	11.4	17.1
Secular Liberals	38.9	4.2	57.6
Conservative Autocrats	57.0	16.5	26.4
Middle Grounders	54.5	9.5	36.1
Overall	**60.1**	**10.0**	**29.9**

Table 312: Breakdown of clusters, by religious affiliation

| Clusters | Religion | | | | | | |
	Buddhist	Taoist/ Chinese religion	Protestant	Catholic	Muslim	Hindu	No religion
Conservative Democrats	23.5	6.3	21.3	8.4	19.5	6.4	14.6
Secular Liberals	23.7	4.9	10.0	5.7	5.7	2.8	46.3
Conservative Autocrats	31.4	12.4	9.1	1.7	24.8	9.1	10.7
Middle Grounders	30.0	8.9	15.9	4.5	7.2	4.7	28.0
Overall	**26.1**	**7.4**	**17.2**	**6.3**	**13.7**	**5.5**	**23.5**

Table 313: Breakdown of clusters, by education level

Clusters	Education Level			
	Below secondary	**Secondary/ ITE**	**Diploma/ Prof. qual.**	**Bachelor's and above**
Conservative Democrats	22.8	34.3	18.5	24.4
Secular Liberals	3.5	21.5	22.2	52.8
Conservative Autocrats	47.5	28.3	10.0	14.2
Middle Grounders	14.2	22.8	22.8	40.1
Overall	**18.6**	**28.1**	**20.0**	**33.3**

Table 314: Breakdown of clusters, by housing type

Clusters	Education Level			
	1- to 3-room HDB	**4-room HDB**	**5+-room HDB**	**Private property**
Conservative Democrats	31.8	33.1	21.9	13.3
Secular Liberals	20.0	30.4	22.8	26.7
Conservative Autocrats	48.8	27.3	13.2	10.7
Middle Grounders	27.2	32.8	21.8	18.2
Overall	**29.5**	**32.3**	**21.5**	**16.7**

9.2.1 Conservative Democrats

Given the combination of a disposition towards democracy and neoliberal economics with conservative social values, we have given this group, the largest cluster within the population, the name Conservative Democrats. This group holds very positive views about democracy and neoliberal economics. They also have a very strong traditional work orientation, given their high inclination to agree that people who do not work will turn lazy, work is a duty towards society, and that work should be prioritised over spare time. They subscribe to a faith-based belief system and have the most conservative views on suicide and euthanasia as well as marriage and sexuality compared to the rest of the clusters. In addition, they are not that concerned about gender equality.

Compared to the overall population, there are some differences in the demographic make-up of this cluster. There is a much larger proportion of older respondents in this cluster, with 34.9 per cent aged between 51 and 65 and 25.3 per cent aged above 65, while the overall population has only 44.5 per cent of respondents aged 51 and above. The older average age of this cluster is not surprising given the results so far have indicated that there are generational differences in people's perceptions about social values. In addition, this cluster

has a lower proportion of Chinese respondents and higher proportions of Malay and Indian respondents.

There are also more Protestants, Muslims, and Catholics compared to the overall sample, while there was a lower proportion of respondents with no religious affiliation, which is not surprising given the high inclination of this group to turn to faith for answers. In addition, 71.4 per cent of the respondents in this cluster said they are married, much higher than the general population. Given the inclination to support more traditional views on marriage and sexuality, it is likely that personal circumstances such as being married may have some correlation with one's value system.

9.2.2 Secular Liberals

This cluster is characterised by a lower degree of faith-based beliefs relative to the rest of the population, as well as being more open about social issues. Respondents in this cluster hold very similar views on democracy and economics to the Conservative Democrats, but differ quite widely in terms of social values. Secular Liberals are much more likely compared to the other clusters to see suicide and euthanasia as justifiable, be more open to homosexuality, prostitution, divorce, abortion, and sex before marriage, and also be more concerned about gender equality. In addition, this group was less inclined towards a traditional work orientation, especially when compared to the rest of the clusters.

This group is overwhelmingly young and Chinese, with 56.5 per cent aged between 21 and 35 (versus 27.4 per cent in the overall sample), and 85.3 per cent being Chinese (versus 77 per cent in the overall sample). Given their low reliance on faith, it is not surprising to see that respondents in this cluster were also likely to be atheists, with 46.3 per cent declaring no religion, while the only religious group which had similar proportions to the overall sample was the Buddhists. Over half, or 56.8 per cent, were single, which is likely a result of the high proportion of young respondents.

This group is also the most highly-educated, given that 52.8 per cent hold at least a Bachelor's degree. It is possible that higher education has led to more open attitudes toward social issues. Finally, this group also had the largest proportion of private property dwellers at 26.7 per cent, which was much larger than the 16.7 per cent found in the overall sample.

9.2.3 Conservative Autocrats

The smallest cluster within the population is called Conservative Autocrats. In terms of traditional work orientation and views on suicide and euthanasia as well as marriage and sexuality, they are very similar to the Conservative Democrats. However, they differ significantly in terms of their attitude towards democracy – while Conservative Democrats indicate strong preferences for a democratic political system, Conservative Autocrats score very low on support for democracy.

In addition, Conservative Autocrats do not think as highly of neoliberal economic values compared to the rest of the population. With regards to social issues, this cluster holds a conservative stance. Respondents belonging to it do not approve of suicide and euthanasia, are conservative about marriage and sexuality, and are not that concerned about gender equality.

Respondents aged between 51 and 65 made up the largest age group in this cluster at 30.6 per cent, while those aged between 36 and 50 were a close second at 28.1 per cent. Therefore, the average age of this cluster is also older compared to that of the general population. While Chinese respondents still made up the majority of the group, it was a smaller proportion when compared to the overall sample.

In contrast, larger proportions of Malay and Indian respondents were part of this cluster. With regards to education, nearly half, or 47.5 per cent, said they had below secondary education, while 28.3 per cent said they had secondary school or ITE education. There was also a larger proportion of divorced, separated, or widowed respondents compared to the overall sample. In addition, nearly half, or 48.8 per cent of the cluster lived in 1- to 3-room flats.

9.2.4 Middle Grounders

Middle Grounders are named thus because of their centrist stance on all value dimensions relative to the other clusters. The second-largest cluster within the population, respondents in this group are relatively supportive of democracy, and moderately subscribe to faith-based belief, very supportive of neoliberal economics, relatively forgiving of suicide and euthanasia, have relatively open views about marriage and sexuality, adopt a traditional orientation to work, and are quite concerned about gender equality. Essentially, a large proportion of the sample population are quite supportive of democracy and neoliberal economic practices, and are not strongly for or against issues regarding the self-determination of death, marriage, sexuality, and gender.

Demographically, Middle Grounders are slightly younger when compared to the overall sample, given that 65.5 per cent of this group are below 51 years old, while the same age groups took up 55.5 per cent of the overall sample. Chinese respondents make up 85.5 per cent of the group, which is higher than the overall proportion.

Meanwhile, 40.1 per cent of this group had university education, which is slightly higher than the overall percentage of 33.3 per cent. The cluster also has a slightly higher proportion of single respondents and a slightly lower proportion of married respondents compared to the overall sample, which is probably a result of the group's lower average age. Meanwhile, the proportions of religions and housing types are similar to the overall sample.

9.2.5 Summary of Clusters

Given the cluster analysis results, it appears the values that Singaporeans hold can be examined based on two main angles: democracy and the economy; and social values. There

is relatively high consensus on democracy and the economy, but a larger disparity on social values. With the exception of Conservative Autocrats, who constitute a small minority, the population holds democracy and living in a democratic political system in high regard. Hence, it seems fair to conclude that Singaporeans want elections to be honest, and prefer to have a political system they deem democratic.

Based on the results from the previous section, this would include having equal rights and some degree of resource distribution. There is even lesser contention about how the economy should be structured. All the clusters support – with a degree of difference much smaller than other value dimensions – neoliberal economic values like competition, individualised incentives, and lower government intervention.

With respect to social values, we see a much larger variance in stances. While there are some aspects of social values, like work ethics and gender equality, where there is lesser contention, the sample is quite divided when it comes to family norms and the self-determination of death. When it comes to views on marriage and sexuality as well as suicide and euthanasia, the Conservative Democrats and Conservative Autocrats are similarly conservative. Together, they make up 51.2 per cent of the overall sample. Secular Liberals, who hold the most open social attitudes, make up 14.2 per cent of the sample, while the Middle Grounders, who are clustered right in the middle of these two extreme stances, make up 34.6 per cent.

Such a distribution of views indicates that, overall, the population veers closer to conservative or centrist views on these social issues. In addition, the education profile of the clusters implies that while respondents who hold such liberal views are more likely to be highly educated, highly-educated respondents may also be conservative, particularly those who are older. In addition, Secular Liberals, who are much less likely than other clusters to depend on faith-based beliefs, suggests an influence of religion on views regarding marriage and sexuality as well as suicide and euthanasia.

Annex 1

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Annex 2

Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Annex 3

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