

**RELIGION, MORALITY AND CONSERVATISM IN
SINGAPORE**

**MATHEW MATHEWS
LEONARD LIM
and
SHANTHINI SELVARAJAN**

May 2019
IPS Working Papers No. 34

About Institute of Policy Studies (IPS)

The Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) was established in 1988 to promote a greater awareness of policy issues and good governance. Today, IPS is a think-tank within the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYSPP) at the National University of Singapore. It seeks to cultivate clarity of thought, forward thinking and a big-picture perspective on issues of critical national interest through strategic deliberation and research. It adopts a multi-disciplinary approach in its analysis and takes the long-term view. It studies the attitudes and aspirations of Singaporeans which have an impact on policy development and the relevant areas of diplomacy and international affairs. The Institute bridges and engages the diverse stakeholders through its conferences and seminars, closed-door discussions, publications, and surveys on public perceptions of policy.

IPS WORKING PAPERS NO. 34

RELIGION, MORALITY AND CONSERVATISM IN SINGAPORE

MATHEW MATHEWS

Senior Research Fellow

Institute of Policy Studies

Mathew.mathews@nus.edu.sg

and

LEONARD LIM

Research Associate

Institute of Policy Studies

and

SHANTHINI SELVARAJAN

Research Assistant

Institute of Policy Studies

May 2019

Please direct comments and queries to Mathew Mathews. We acknowledge the many useful comments and suggestions from participants during an IPS closed door discussion in April 2019 as well as our colleagues. Tan Zhi Han and Isaac Tan provided excellent research assistance.

CONTENTS

<i>Abstract</i>	3-6
1. Introduction	7
2. Literature Review	8
3. Methodology	15
4. Demographics	17
5. Topline Findings – Moral Issues	21
5.1 Overall Attitudes Towards Moral Issues	21
5.2 Religion and Attitudes Towards Moral Issues	26
5.3 Age and Attitudes Towards Moral Issues	31
5.4 Education Background and Attitudes Towards Moral Issues	36
5.5 Religion, Age and Attitudes Towards Moral Issues	40
5.6 Religion, Education and Attitudes Towards Moral Issues	50
6. Shift in Attitudes Towards Moral Issues Over Time (2013 vs 2018)	61
7. Topline Findings – Socio-political Values	66
7.1 Overall Stance on Various Issues	66
7.2 Religion and Socio-political Values	73
7.3 Age and Socio-political Values	77
7.4 Education Background and Socio-political Values	80
7.5 Religion, Age and Socio-political Values	83
7.6 Religion, Education and Socio-political Values	88
8. Regression Analysis on Moral Issues and Socio-political Values	92
9. Conclusion	101

RELIGION, MORALITY AND CONSERVATISM IN SINGAPORE

Abstract

This paper documents and tracks evolving trends of perceptions and attitudes towards social and moral issues. These include respondents' opinions towards homosexual sex and marriage, gambling, infidelity, freedom of speech, and the desired balance between personal responsibility and reliance on the state.

Data for this study relies on relevant sections of the second wave of the Institute of Policy Studies' (IPS) Survey of Race, Religion and Language (RRL), which was conducted between August 2018 and January 2019. It also compares the relevant results from the 2013 wave of the same survey. Altogether, 4,015 Singaporeans and Permanent Residents were polled in this second wave on issues ranging from aspects of their racial and religious identity, and their attitudes towards social and political issues.

Overall, Singaporeans remain fairly conservative in their outlook, though there have been distinct shifts on issues surrounding homosexual rights. This is especially so among respondents aged between 18 and 25, who were much more liberal about moral issues compared to the respondents aged 65 and above.

For example, nearly 6 in 10 of those aged between 18 and 25 indicated that gay marriage was not wrong at all or not wrong most of the time, more than five

times the proportion of respondents aged above 65 (9.6 per cent). This liberalism was also reflected amongst respondents who were more educated. Muslims and Christians tended to be more conservative towards moral issues.

The comparison of the two waves highlights shifts in attitudes towards moral issues in Singapore. The population has become less conservative, with the proportions who feel that various moral issues are either always wrong or almost always wrong falling, except for gambling. For gay marriage, 74.2 per cent felt this was always wrong or almost always wrong in 2013, compared to 60 per cent in 2018.

In another section, we compared cohort shifts in attitudes over the five-year period. In 2013, 17.8 per cent of 20 to 24-year-old respondents felt that homosexual sex was not wrong. In 2018, within this same cohort (who would now be between 25 and 29 years of age), the figure had more than doubled with just over 40 per cent feeling that homosexual sex was not wrong.

The survey also sought to ascertain how conservative or liberal respondents were in other areas related to the political, fiscal, and social spheres. Respondents were asked to indicate if they identified more with Position A or Position B, or were neutral. An example was picking between the “younger generation taking care of older generation” versus “each generation takes care of itself”.

Overall, respondents were neutral on many of the issues, but tended to be slightly closer to the conservative end of the spectrum on several issues. For example, while around 36 per cent were neutral between conservative and liberal sexual values, nearly half either strongly identified or slightly identified as conservative. In contrast, 14.6 per cent of respondents indicated that they slightly or strongly identified as liberal.

Finally, ordinary least squares regressions were conducted to determine the characteristics of those who were more conservative on gay rights. Demographic variables most associated with conservative beliefs on gay rights included being married and being older. We found that respondents who supported free speech, supported the adaptation of racial and religious customs to secular realities, and were accommodating of people of different backgrounds, were significantly less likely to be morally conservative on gay rights. Those who were more rooted in Singaporean values than global ones, who perceived governments as leaders of societal change, and who were financially frugal, were more likely to be morally conservative.

Overall, the paper's findings affirm the general conservatism of Singaporeans when it comes to many moral issues, including homosexual marriage, homosexual sex and adoption by gay couples. Simultaneously, the results point to the thawing of attitudes towards these issues, and continued resistance towards infidelity and gambling. These results mirror those of similar

longitudinal surveys conducted in countries such as the United States – little change in attitudes towards various moral issues over several years, but significant erosions in resistance towards issues surrounding homosexual rights in similar time periods.

RELIGION, MORALITY AND CONSERVATISM IN SINGAPORE

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper analyses a portion of the results from the second wave of the large-scale Race, Religion and Language (RRL) Survey. Conducted between August 2018 and January 2019, the study was a follow-up to the first RRL Survey in 2013. Altogether, 4,015 Singaporeans and Permanent Residents were polled on issues ranging from aspects of their racial and religious identity, to their experiences of living in a multi-racial society, and their attitudes towards social and political issues. Minority races were over-sampled so that their responses could be better analysed.

This paper aims to document and track evolving trends of perceptions and attitudes towards social, moral and political issues. These include respondents' opinions towards homosexual sex, gambling, abortion, sexual relations before marriage, freedom of speech, and the desired balance between personal responsibility and reliance on the state.

Findings were weighted by respondents' race and age group, to ensure that the sample demographics closely mirror population demographics.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In Singapore, the conservative-liberal divide has come under the spotlight in recent years, mirroring international trends especially in Western democracies. Citizens of different age brackets and religious affiliations have widely-opposing views towards moral issues such as abortion, gambling, and whether homosexual couples should be allowed to marry or adopt children. Some also have different opinions about political, fiscal and social issues. These include whether there should be unfettered freedom of speech versus being careful when speaking about sensitive topics; individuals being responsible for their financial situation versus the government stepping in to redistribute resources; and living thriftily versus spending and living well.

In many Western developed countries, support of gay marriage has steadily grown along with the number of countries legalising the practice. For instance, in Pew Research Center polling in 2001, Americans opposed same-sex marriage by a margin of 57 per cent to 35 per cent (Pew Research Center, 2017). In 2017, Pew reported that the proportion of Americans who opposed same-sex marriage had fallen to 32 per cent, while 62 per cent supported it.

Another study documents how the liberalisation of American attitudes towards gay rights have been “revolutionary”, compared to the typical stability of public opinion on most issues such as abortion (Rosenfeld, 2017). Using General Social Survey and American National Election Studies data, the Stanford

sociologist found that between the 1970s and this decade, public opinion on no other variable in the surveys changed more quickly and extensively compared to those relating to gay issues. For instance, in 1988, 11.6 per cent of Americans thought homosexuals should have the legal right to marry. In 2016, this had increased to nearly 6 in 10 Americans. In contrast, those who thought a poor woman should have access to legal abortion if she could not afford more children was relatively stable (48.9 per cent thought so in 1972, compared to 43.9 per cent in 2016).

Apart from moral issues, there is a rich literature examining attitudes towards fiscal matters in public policy, including the role of government redistribution in tackling inequality. For instance, the annual British Social Attitudes survey found a shift away from the belief that government should attempt to deliver a more equal society through income redistribution over time. Before 1997, the proportion agreeing with the view that “government should redistribute income from the better-off to those who are less well-off” consistently remained well above 40 per cent, even hovering around 50 per cent during the recession of the early 1990s. But from 1998 onwards, only once has the figure been higher than 40 per cent, with 37 per cent agreeing in 2011 (Park et al., 2012).

In the United States, more recent research by Alesina et al (2018), Lockwood and Weinzierl (2015, 2016), and Weinzierl (2018) have studied preferences for government redistribution based on one’s place in the national income

distribution or personal beliefs about intergenerational mobility, or utilised online survey tools to elicit respondents' social welfare judgements.

The recent focus in Singapore, however, has largely been on the division over moral issues and the interplay of one's religion and socio-economic background on such attitudes. In 2018, India lifted a colonial-era ban on gay sex, reigniting a heated debate in Singapore on whether a similar law (Section 377A) should be repealed. More recently in March 2019, the authorities' decision to ban heavy metal band Watain's concert just hours before their performance raised concerns over whether the Government was being too paternalistic (the liberal camp's view), or was simply protecting social harmony (the conservative view).

Tamney (1992) in discussing the case of Singapore notes its culture of political conservatism. As it is elsewhere, he argues that such conservatism prefers an "activist state that would publically endorse traditionalist values... which embody asceticism and extol hard work." The state is also expected to "restrain the barbaric qualities of the individual that threaten the social order." The conservative Singapore state has appealed to religion and 'Asian' values, particularly aspects of the traditional family unit, to justify conservative policies including its vision of public morality (Hoon, 2004; Leong, 2012).

Religion and religiosity were promoted as "cultural ballasts" to guard against "moral backslide" associated with liberal Western subcultures (Tong, 2007).

Tan (2003) argues that technocratic rationality or pragmatic governance

resulted in a sexually repressed and conservative moral majority, be it state or self-imposed. Additionally, Pugsley (2010) suggests that state intervention in the publications industry through “strict regime of moral standards” has resulted in a conservative Singaporean morality, aligned within out-of-bounds (OB) markers.

Conversely, other scholars have more recently noted the state’s efforts to adopt a more liberal approach in discussing contentious issues, such as gay rights in response to citizenry’s desire for agency (Chong, 2011; Wong, 2016). This may be recognition of a more educated populace, which is also more exposed to Western liberal ideas through the Internet and social media.

Two large-scale surveys, the 2013 Our Singapore Survey and the 2013 Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) Survey on Race, Religion and Language, showed that the majority of Singaporeans were conservative on moral issues such as gay rights, infidelity and gambling (MCI, 2014; Mathew, Mohammed and Teo, 2014). The Our Singapore Survey, which had 4,000 respondents, found that 55 per cent rejected same-sex marriage, compared to 24 per cent who were neutral and 21 per cent, who accepted it. The 2013 IPS survey, meanwhile, found that 74 per cent of the 4,100 respondents (all Singaporean residents) felt that gay marriage was either almost always wrong, or always wrong. A more recent IPS paper reporting on data collected from a random sample of 1800 Singaporean residents in the later part of 2018 as part of the International Social Survey Program Study of Religion revealed that 82 percent of respondents

indicated that infidelity was always wrong (Mathew, Lim & Selvarajan, 2019). Sixty eight percent of respondents indicated that homosexual sex was always wrong while 38 per cent said this in the case of abortion (if the family has very low income). Analysis of the survey results showed that both Muslims and Christians were more conservative on homosexual sex than those of other religions. However, there was a clear trend that there were more among the young, even if religious, who espoused liberal views on homosexual sex.

While these surveys elicited respondents' moral positions on several issues, a smaller study of 750 Singaporean citizens/residents using a non-probability sample by research agency Ipsos conducted online in 2018 asked more specific questions related to Section 377A of the Penal Code which criminalises gay sex between men. Fifty five per cent still supported keeping Section 377A of the Penal Code. Twelve percent said they opposed keeping the legislation. The study also showed that one in three Singaporeans reported that they had become more accepting of same-sex marriage compared to five years before (McPhedran, 2018). Those with higher levels of educational attainment (37 per cent for those with degree or higher, compared to 25 per cent for those with high school) and younger Singaporeans (59 per cent for those aged 15-24 versus 23 per cent for those aged 55-65) were more likely to agree that they were more accepting than they were five years ago.

Despite some sections of Singapore society being increasingly liberal and sympathetic to the concerns of the homosexual community, the state has

adopted a cautious approach in making policy shifts on this matter. It has highlighted the need to carefully study the ramifications of shifts away from traditional norms of family (Rashith, 2018, Au-Yong, 2019). In the face of international pressure to adopt more liberal positions on homosexuality, the state has remained adamant that Singapore society will decide on its own how much or how soon it will change and will not welcome foreign interference in this matter (Rashith, 2018).

Observers have reiterated the importance of the state's neutrality in negotiating debates between conservative and liberal activists (Mokhtar, 2018). The state has been accused of favouring a conservative agenda such as the recent move to ban *Watain* (Hadi, 2019) and in matters of sexuality. The Ministry of Education (MOE) suspended AWARE's sexual education program based on backlash from conservatives who complained that the program treated homosexuality or anal sex as neutral (Chong, 2011). Conservative sentiments were also reflected by the National Library Board's (NLB) decision to pull off two children's books following complaints that they normalised same-sex parenting, a deviation from traditional family values (Tan, 2014). While NLB maintained that it is circumspect on requests to remove books, having acted on fewer than a third of complaints (Tan, 2014), civil society activists criticised NLB's move as conceding to conservative paranoia (Chua, 2014). Nevertheless polls conducted by Reach during the heat of the debates, showed that a majority of Singaporeans (52 per cent of 843) polled, supported NLB's conservative move (MCI, 2014a). Only 21 per cent disagreed while 23 per cent indicated neutrality to NLB's decision. The conservative camp was also able to

mobilise itself to get more public support - the Singapore United for Family garnered 26,000 signatories (Tan, 2014), more than the 5000 signatures achieved by the #FreeMyLibrary campaign initiated by liberals (Campbell, 2014).

Local research has also shown that opinion on moral issues is at least somewhat linked to religion and can be contentious (Mathew, Lim & Selvarajan, 2019; Mathew, Mohammad & Teo, 2014). Christian and Muslim religious leaders have been vocal in their opposition to mainstreaming homosexuality because of their religious positions, which uphold traditional notions of family and sexual relationships (Tan, 2018a; Toh, 2018). They have also warned about the “undesirable moral and social consequences as seen in some countries” that have decriminalised homosexuality (Zaccheus, 2018). There have however been concerns about the entry of religious voices into the issue as these can have a polarising effect. Back in 2014, a Muslim religious teacher called for Muslims to wear white as a symbol of their allegiance to “purity” and traditional family values in opposition to the Pink Dot gay rights rally which was held at the start of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadhan. Pastor Lawrence Khong of megachurch Faith Community Baptist Church, among others, expressed his solidarity with the “Wear White” campaign and its espoused principles urging church members to also don white (Mathew, 2014). Such actions raised at least some concern as they divided society in very visible ways. More recently during the 2018 debates on repealing Section 377A, with Christian and Muslim leaders clarifying their stand to maintain Section 377A, highly regarded public intellectual Professor Tommy Koh wrote in a Straits

Times commentary that “It is not the business of the state to enforce the dogmas of those religions. In Singapore, there is a separation between religion and the state. Church leaders and Islamic leaders should respect that separation” (Koh, 2018).

Amid demographic shifts (especially the growing proportion of older citizens who are generally more conservative), as well as religious trends (those with religious affiliations tending to hold on to their religious identity more steadfastly, coupled with growing pockets of secular groups in society who tend to be more liberal), it is imperative that attitudes towards such issues are continually tracked. Such data will be highly informative, and provide civil society and policy makers a clear sense of where the public stands on highly contentious issues as well as the demographic groups which are seeing the greatest shifts in their moral opinion.

3. METHODOLOGY

The data for this study is derived from two waves of the IPS Survey of Race, Religion and Language. The first was conducted in December 2012 to April 2013 while the second commenced in August 2018 and was completed in January 2019¹. The methodology for the two waves were similar. A sampling frame comprised of a listing of 5000 random household addresses was

¹ Notwithstanding the fact that some data was collected in December 2012 and January 2019, for ease of subsequent mentions of this survey we denote the different waves based on when the bulk of responses were collected – i.e 2013 wave and the 2018 wave.

obtained from the Department of Statistics. Three thousand respondents were successfully interviewed from this listing. In addition to the main sample, an additional 1000 Indians and Malays were also surveyed to provide a booster sample. They were selected based on a predefined strategy – they lived in close proximity to households identified in the DOS sampling frame. The fieldwork for the 2018 survey was conducted by IPS Social Lab.

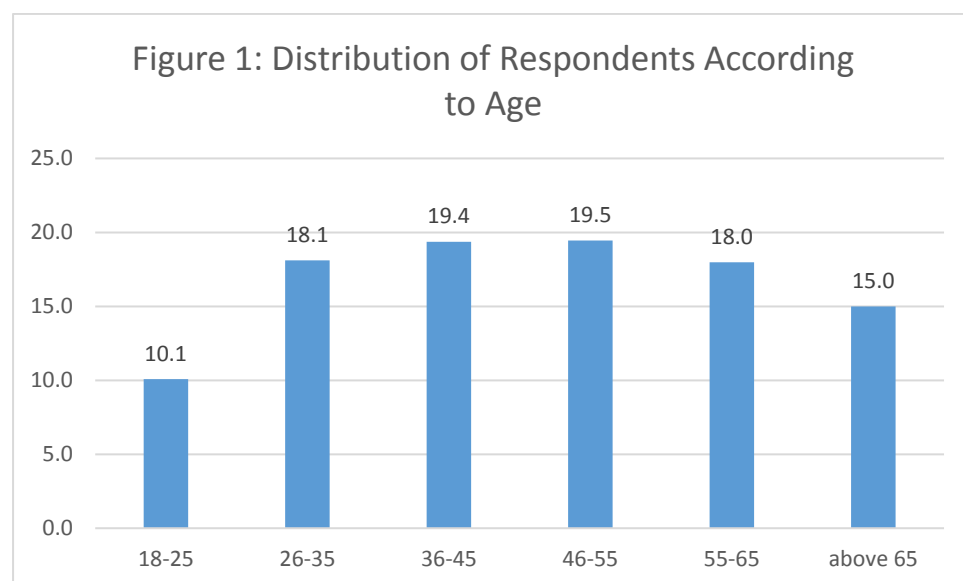
For both waves, the deviation in views of minorities in the booster and main sample were rather small and similar. As such, the data obtained from both these sampling methods have been combined and subsequently weighted to resemble the demographics of the national population on race and age.

Respondents who were identified for the study were visited by an interviewer from IPS Social Lab and briefed about the study. If they agreed to participate in the study, they received a booklet, which they had to complete on their own. This was to reduce biases, which could arise when responses were recorded by an interviewer. The survey booklets were made available in Singapore's four official languages. Among those who were unable to read or write, they were given the option of having the interviewer guide them through the survey instrument. There was a good response rate for this survey with nearly 70 per cent of those eligible to complete this study, doing so.

4. DEMOGRAPHICS

As our sample included a booster sample of Malays and Indians, we weighted our data to ensure the profile of our sample closely mirrored the general population. Our data was weighted by race and age following population proportions publicly accessible from the Department of Statistics, Singapore website².

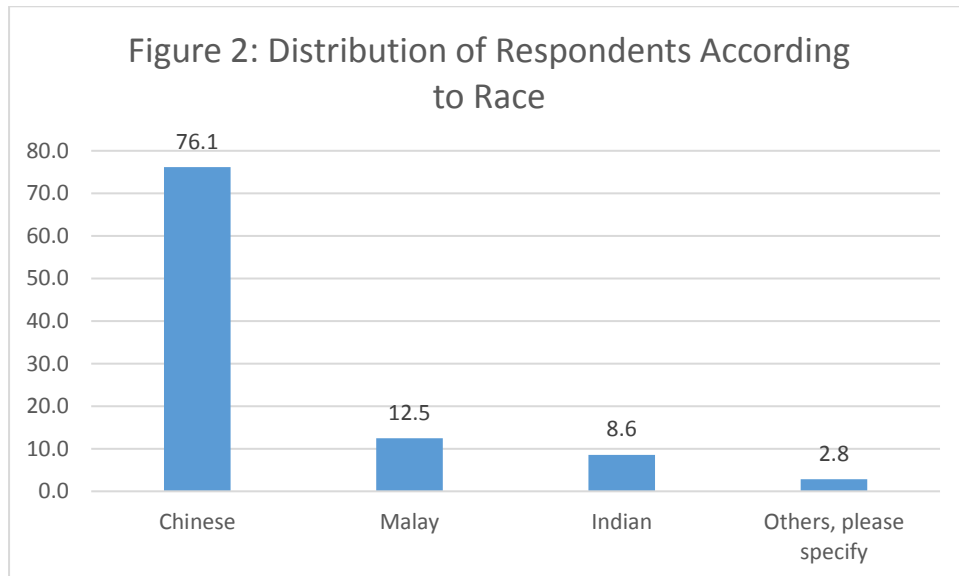
Different age groups were well represented in our sample, with 28.2 per cent between 18 and 35 years of age, 38.9 per cent between 36 and 55 years of age, and 33 per cent above 56 years old (see Figure 1).



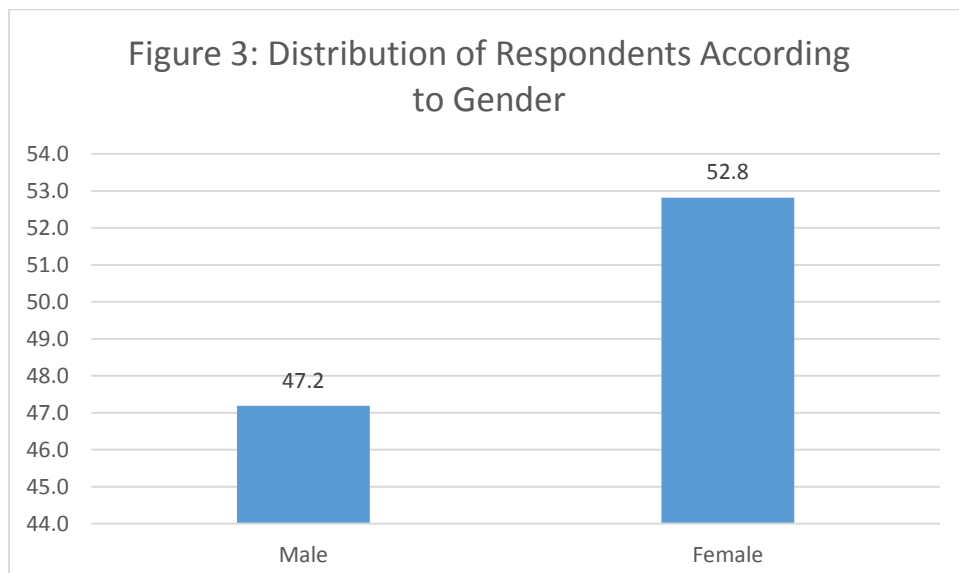
² Refer to

<https://www.tablebuilder.singstat.gov.sg/publicfacing/createDataTable.action?refId=14911&exportType=csv> for Singapore Residents By Age Group, Ethnic Group And Sex. Weights created used population proportions from the respective years.

After weighting, racial profiles in our sample closely mirrored that of the population with 76.1 per cent identifying as Chinese, 12.5 per cent Malay, 8.6 per cent Indian and 2.8 per cent others (see Figure 2).

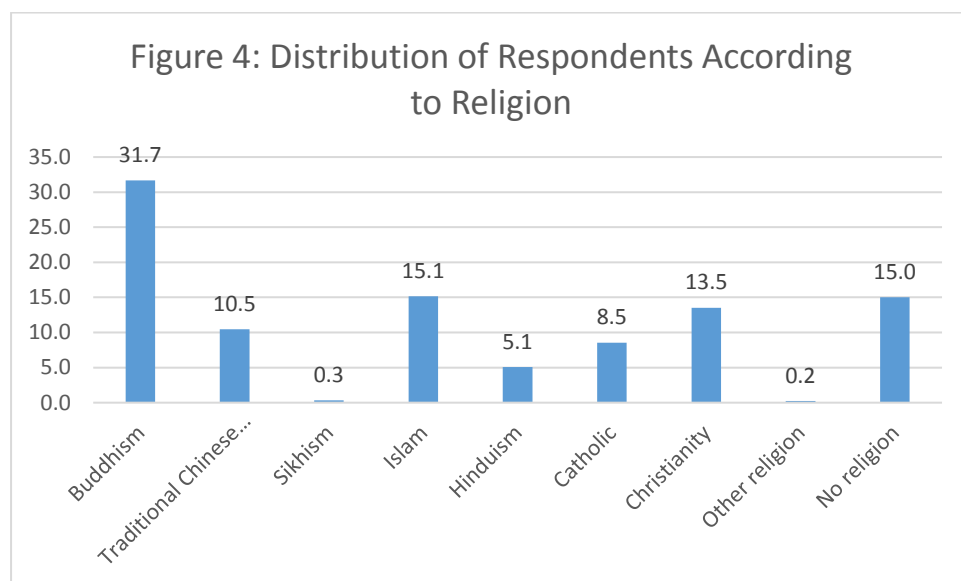


Our sample consisted of 47.2 per cent of respondents who identified as male and 52.8 per cent who identified as female (see Figure 3).



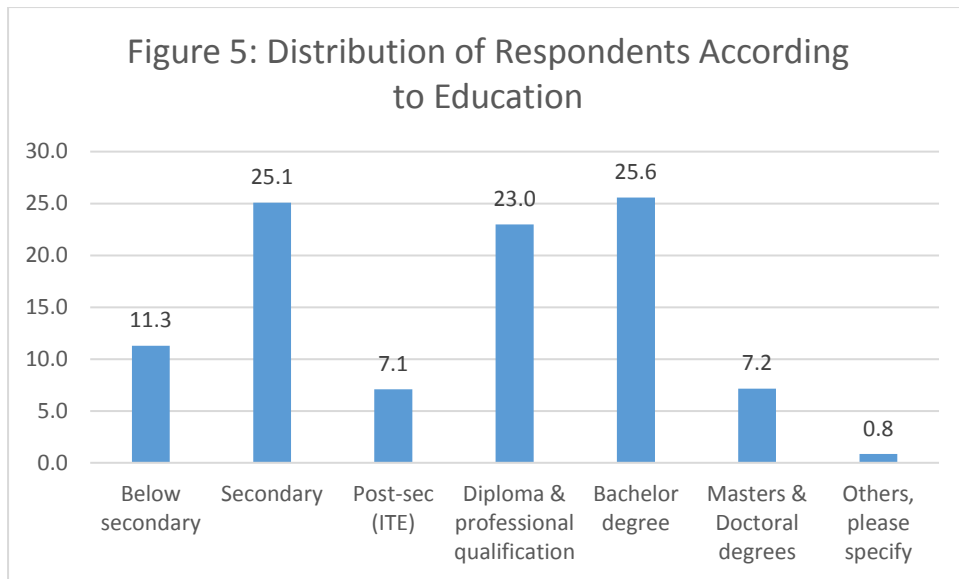
There was also good representation of a range of religions commonly practiced in Singapore, including respondents with no religion. There were 42.2 per cent

of respondents who identified as Buddhist or Taoist, 15.1 per cent who identified as Muslim, 5.1 per cent who identified as Hindu, 22 per cent who identified as Christian or Catholic³ and 15 per cent who identified as having no religion (see Figure 4). For the purposes of meaningful analyses, the Sikh and “Other religion” categories were excluded given their extremely small numbers.

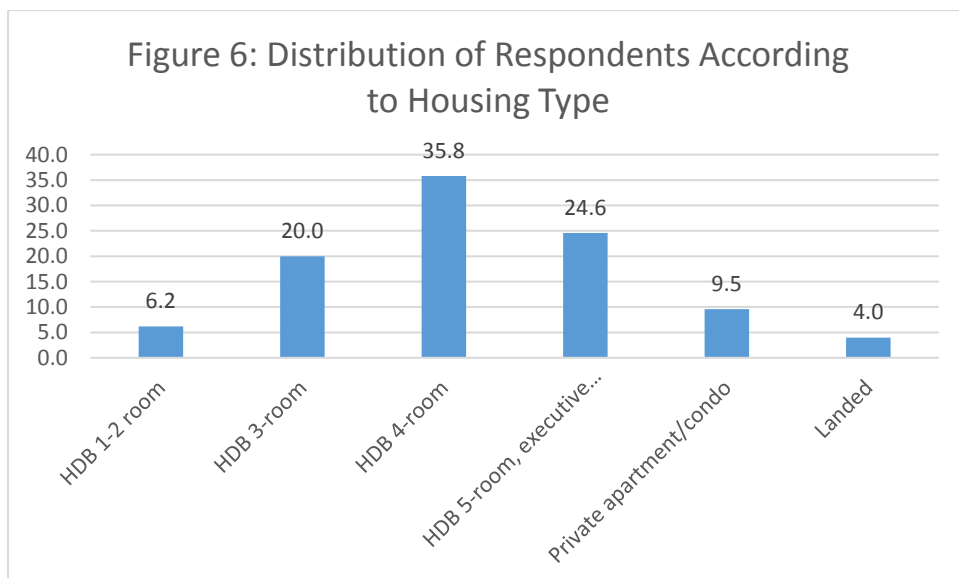


The proportion of degree holders (25.6 per cent), diploma holders (23.0), and those with secondary school qualifications (25.1 per cent) were similar (see Figure 5).

³ While Roman Catholics and Protestant Christians are normally categorised as Christians, in this study we have separated their responses as their views sometimes differ. While it would be most appropriate for us to categorise and present the two groups as Protestant Christians and Roman Catholic Christians, it is difficult for stylistic and presentation reasons to do so. As such we have separated the two groups as Christians and Catholics. In no way are we alleging that Roman Catholics are not Christians.



In our sample, slightly more than half of the respondents (60.4 per cent) reside in HDB 4-5 room or executive flats (see Figure 6).



5. TOPLINE FINDINGS – MORAL ISSUES

5.1 Overall attitudes towards moral issues

Following closely the questions asked in the well-cited American General Social Survey and British Social Attitudes Survey, we asked respondents for their opinions on ten issues related to sex, reproduction and matters that affect the family.⁴ These were: “sexual relations before marriage”; “sexual relations between two adults of the same sex”; “sexual relations with someone other than marriage partners”; “divorce”; “living with a partner before marriage”; “having a pregnancy outside of marriage”; “adoption of a child by a gay couple”; “gay marriage”; “gambling”; and “a gay couple having a child through surrogacy/artificial reproductive techniques”. With the exception of the last item, all the other items were also included in the 2013 wave⁵.

The phrasing of the question asked respondents to determine how wrong a particular behaviour (e.g. gambling) was. The options provided were between a continuum of “always wrong” to “not wrong at all”. Some have argued that such phrasing invites respondents to prejudge these behaviours as morally reprehensible from the onset and predisposes them to respond in a more conservative manner – i.e. the behaviour is always wrong. While we

⁴ For each issue, respondents could pick from five choices. These were “always wrong”, “almost always wrong”, “only wrong sometimes”, “not wrong most of the time”, and “not wrong at all”.

⁵ There are slight differences in the figures presented in this paper compared to the results from the 2013 survey. The 2014 publication presenting these figures (Mathew, Mohammad & Teo, 2014) did not weight the sample since the main sample used generally mirrored the general population. However since this report seeks to compare the results from two waves, a weighted sample is more accurate as it reduces potential biases related to different sample profiles.

acknowledge that such bias is possible, we also note that the behaviours in these questions have all been subject in more recent history to prohibitions, social sanctions and certainly debates. We expect that respondents who believe that these behaviours are morally acceptable will choose the available options of “not wrong at all”, or if they have reservations “not wrong most of the time”. In the same manner we expect those who believe that the behaviour is unequivocally wrong to choose the option of “always wrong” or “almost always wrong” (in case they make some concessions to the behaviour).

Further this phrasing has been used in many well-established surveys such as the well-cited American General Social Survey and the International Social Survey Programme Study of Religion over several decades. The questions have allowed researchers internationally to understand changes in their societies on various moral issues.

In this analysis, we compare the changes in responses on these eight items based on respondents’ religion, age, and educational background. We have also added another item pertaining to surrogacy/artificial reproductive techniques by a gay couple. This was not asked in the 2013 wave. We included this question as there was some discussion regarding this issue in late 2017 after the Singapore district court rejected the application of a gay doctor to adopt a child that he fathered through surrogacy (Vijayan, 2017)

Table 1 provides topline findings for each item. Overall, Singaporeans remain fairly conservative in their outlook on such matters, though there have been distinct shifts on issues such as homosexual sex. This is especially so among younger respondents which we detail later on.

Table 1: Overall attitudes towards moral issues (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Moral issues (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Sexual relations before marriage	30.7 (39.7)	14.7 (18.5)	27.5 (21.6)	14.8 (9.2)	12.4 (11.0)
Sexual relations between two adults of the same sex	50.4 (61.6)	13.2 (18.4)	14.8 (9.8)	10.2 (4.7)	11.4 (5.6)
Sexual relations with someone other than marriage partner	63.4 (62.2)	17.8 (19.2)	12.7 (11.1)	3.3 (4.5)	2.9 (3.0)
Divorce	17.9 (24.4)	13.5 (19.7)	41.1 (34.1)	13.5 (11.9)	13.9 (9.9)
Living with a partner before marriage	25.0 (29.6)	11.1 (16.9)	24.6 (22.4)	19.9 (14.1)	19.4 (17.0)
Pregnancy outside of marriage	47.2 (52.6)	17.7 (20.9)	21.4 (15.2)	8.0 (6.8)	5.8 (4.4)
Adoption of a child by a gay couple	41.2 (45.9)	12.2 (15.9)	16.6 (14.5)	13.2 (10.5)	16.8 (13.2)
A gay couple having a child through surrogacy/artificial reproductive techniques (not in 2013 survey)	44.0	12.6	15.6	12.5	15.3
Gay marriage	48.5 (58.8)	11.5 (15.4)	13.1 (11.2)	10.5 (6.2)	16.4 (8.4)
Gambling	55.6 (53.8)	18.8 (16.3)	19.1 (17.2)	3.4 (6.5)	3.2 (6.2)

Table 1 shows that infidelity and gambling were the two issues that respondents were most unanimous in perceiving as at least almost always wrong. About 81 per cent of respondents indicated that sexual relations with someone other than one's marriage partner was either always wrong or almost always wrong.

Meanwhile, 74.4 per cent of respondents had similar sentiments towards gambling.

When it came to issues such as homosexual sex and gay marriage, 63.6 per cent of respondents⁶ indicated that the former was at least almost always wrong and 60 per cent of respondents indicated similar sentiments for the latter. Respondents were more open towards the issues of a gay couple adopting a child, and gay couples having a child through surrogacy. Half of the respondents (53.4 per cent) indicated that adoption of a child by a gay couple is at least almost always wrong and 56.6 per cent indicated that a gay couple having a child through surrogacy or artificial reproductive techniques was at least almost always wrong. This indicates that compared to homosexual sex and gay marriage, respondents were more open towards, and accepting of, issues to do with homosexual couples desiring children and forming a family unit through artificial reproductive means.

Nearly 40 per cent of respondents did not think it wrong most or all the time to live with a partner before marriage although fewer (27.2 percent) seemed to think that premarital sex was not wrong. It seemed that while respondents might

⁶ This figure is comparatively lower than the 68 percent of respondents who in the International Social Survey Program Study of Religion survey (2018) that we recently reported, indicated that homosexual sex is always wrong. The difference in figures between this current survey and that one might be attributable to survey methodology. The ISSP survey asked respondents using a face to face interview on their opinions while this survey used a self-administered method. When some individuals are directly asked questions on morality they might prefer to present themselves in ways that they perceive general society views particular issues – thus a more conservative response might be expected. Further the ISSP survey did not provide a middle option (i.e only wrong sometimes) which we have provided in this survey.

have less qualms about cohabitation, fewer thought that it should be an appropriate site for pregnancy – 64.9 percent viewed this as always or almost always wrong.

Of the ten items, divorce was the issue viewed most liberally. Just over 31 per cent of respondents indicated that getting a divorce was always wrong or almost always wrong.

Comparison with 2013 results

The contrast in findings between the 2018 and 2013 waves of the Race, Religion and Language survey gives an indication of the shifts in attitudes towards moral issues in Singapore over time. The population has become less conservative over time, with the proportions who feel that the various issues are either always wrong or almost always wrong all falling, except for gambling. Among the steepest falls were for sexual relations between two adults of the same sex (see Table 1). The proportion of respondents who felt this was always wrong or almost always wrong in 2013 was 80 per cent. There was an approximately 20 per cent fall for the 2018 wave. For gay marriage, 74.2 per cent felt this was always wrong or almost always wrong in 2013, compared to 60 per cent in 2018. When it came to a gay couple adopting a child, 61.8 per cent felt this was always wrong or almost always wrong in 2013. The proportion who had similar sentiments in 2018 was 53.4 per cent. In later sections, we examine the changes over time on opinions towards these issues (gay

marriage, gay couples adopting, and homosexual sex) when respondents' backgrounds are segregated by their religious affiliation and age.

5.2 Religion and attitudes towards moral issues

When the findings were analysed further according to respondents' religious background, the results mirrored the aforementioned ones slightly. Muslims and Christians were most likely to think that sexual relations with someone other than one's marriage partner was always wrong or almost always wrong (see Table 2). For both Islam and Christianity, 91 per cent of respondents from each religious community had such sentiments.

Table 2: Respondents' views towards infidelity, by religion (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Religion (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Buddhism	54.0 (54.7)	21.7 (21.3)	16.9 (13.9)	4.3 (5.5)	3.0 (4.5)
Taoism	57.2 (54.2)	20.9 (26.0)	16.6 (12.0)	2.4 (5.0)	2.9 (2.8)
Islam	84.3 (77.9)	6.7 (14.5)	5.2 (5.1)	2.2 (1.0)	1.7 (1.5)
Hindus	73.8 (70.0)	12.9 (18.1)	7.9 (6.6)	3.5 (3.5)	2.0 (1.8)
Catholicism	66.9 (65.3)	17.2 (20.6)	9.8 (10.6)	2.1 (2.4)	4.1 (1.1)
Christianity	75.5 (77.6)	15.5 (11.7)	5.4 (5.5)	1.3 (3.5)	2.2 (1.7)
No religion	50.1 (52.5)	22.8 (18.5)	18.4 (16.6)	5.2 (8.0)	3.5 (4.3)

The trends for respondents' opinions towards sexual relations before marriage were similar. About 68 per cent of Christians and 80 per cent of Muslims felt this was always wrong or almost always wrong (see Table 3). There was much less levels of conservatism among Buddhists and those with no religious affiliation – less than a third of Buddhists and only around one in five of those with no religion had similar sentiments.

Table 3: Respondents' views towards pre-marital sex, by religion (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Religion (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Buddhism	14.2 (28.4)	14.5 (17.6)	38.1 (28.1)	18.5 (12.2)	14.8 (13.8)
Taoism	24.9 (25.5)	12.1 (22.1)	30.9 (27.9)	17.9 (11.9)	14.3 (12.6)
Islam	68.0 (72.6)	11.7 (15.8)	10.2 (7.3)	5.9 (2.0)	4.2 (2.2)
Hindus	46.8 (56.8)	13.9 (18.1)	20.4 (12.8)	8.5 (6.2)	10.4 (6.2)
Catholicism	36.5 (41.0)	17.1 (22.8)	20.4 (21.2)	13.2 (6.3)	12.9 (8.7)
Christianity	45.0 (59.0)	23.2 (16.2)	17.4 (13.2)	9.0 (4.2)	5.4 (7.5)
No religion	10.7 (21.6)	10.9 (18.3)	35.4 (26.8)	22.1 (13.8)	20.8 (19.5)

On whether sexual relations between two adults of the same sex was wrong, 52.7 per cent of Buddhists and 44.5 per cent of respondents with no religion indicated that gay sex was at least almost always wrong (see Table 4). However, 81.2 per cent of Christians and 84.7 per cent of Muslims had similar sentiments. Hindu respondents were more likely to occupy the middle ground between these groups; with 64 per cent saying gay sex was either always wrong or almost always wrong.

Comparison with 2013 results

Among religious communities, the rise in acceptance of homosexual sex in the 2018 survey was greatest among the Buddhists, Muslims and Hindus. While 10.6 per cent of Buddhists, 2.6 per cent of Muslims and 9.3 per cent of Hindus thought this was not wrong most of the time or not wrong at all in 2013, 26 per cent of Buddhists (more than double), 8.5 per cent of Muslims (more than triple) and 24.5 per cent of Hindus (nearly triple) had similar sentiments in the 2018 wave. There was little change in the attitudes of Christians and Catholics – over 80 per cent of Christians and 73 per cent of Catholics felt homosexual sex was

always wrong or almost always wrong. This was a slide of about 6 per cent in each case.

Table 4: Respondents' views towards homosexual sex, by religion (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Religion (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Buddhism	35.9 (55.6)	16.8 (19.8)	21.3 (14.0)	12.9 (4.7)	13.1 (5.9)
Taoism	46.9 (58.1)	16.4 (21.6)	15.9 (10.6)	10.6 (6.5)	10.1 (3.2)
Islam	76.5 (81.4)	8.2 (12.3)	6.7 (3.7)	4.0 (1.4)	4.5 (1.2)
Hindus	51.0 (68.1)	13.0 (16.8)	11.5 (5.8)	11.5 (3.1)	13.0 (6.2)
Catholicism	61.3 (60.9)	12.6 (18.1)	8.7 (9.0)	8.1 (6.4)	9.3 (5.6)
Christians	73.7 (75.7)	7.5 (11.8)	6.9 (4.3)	5.8 (4.0)	6.2 (4.3)
No religion	30.5 (44.1)	14.0 (23.9)	19.7 (13.4)	15.2 (5.9)	20.6 (12.7)

Similar to homosexual sex, Buddhists, Christians and Muslims diverged in their opinions on gay marriage as well, though there was slightly less opposition across the board (see Table 5). About 48 per cent of Buddhists and 42 per cent of those with no religion felt this issue was always wrong or almost always wrong. In comparison, 83.2 per cent of Muslims and 79.3 per cent of Christians felt likewise. About 51 per cent of Hindus expressed similar sentiments.

Comparison with 2013 results

Among religious groups, the sharpest rise in acceptance of gay marriage (measured as a response of either not wrong most of the time or not wrong at all) was seen among Buddhists, Taoists, Muslims and Hindus. The proportions in each community who had such sentiments in the 2018 wave was about double the proportion of Buddhists, Taoists and Hindus who had such sentiments in 2013 (14.8 per cent, 13.7 per cent, 4.8 per cent and 19.3 per cent

respectively). The slides among Christians and Catholics who saw gay marriage as always wrong or almost always wrong was about 4 to 5 per cent.

Table 5: Respondents' views towards gay marriage, by religion (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Religion (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Buddhism	33.6 (56.5)	14.3 (15.5)	18.9 (13.3)	13.4 (6.2)	19.7 (8.6)
Taoism	44.6 (55.7)	13.0 (17.8)	15.9 (12.8)	12.0 (6.5)	14.5 (7.2)
Islam	76.5 (77.1)	6.7 (12.2)	6.2 (6.0)	3.8 (1.7)	6.8 (3.1)
Hinduism	39.2 (55.6)	12.1 (14.8)	12.6 (10.3)	13.6 (6.7)	22.6 (12.6)
Catholicism	63.9 (55.2)	9.8 (13.3)	5.3 (15.5)	7.4 (8.0)	13.6 (8.0)
Christianity	73.1 (72.6)	6.2 (10.8)	6.9 (5.3)	5.0 (5.3)	8.8 (6.0)
No religion	27.1 (42.8)	14.8 (20.6)	16.6 (12.5)	15.5 (9.4)	26.1 (14.7)

Regarding gay couples adopting a child, the strongest opposition came again from Muslims and Christians. About 73 per cent of Christians and just over 71 per cent of Muslims felt this was always wrong or almost always wrong (see Table 6).

Comparison with 2013 results

Among religious communities, Buddhists and Hindus saw the sharpest rise in acceptance of a gay couple adopting a child. While 25 per cent of Buddhists and 33.9 per cent of Hindus said this was either not wrong at all or not wrong most of the time in 2013, the proportions in 2018 were 36.1 per cent and 41.8 per cent respectively. Interestingly, the proportion of Catholics who viewed such practices as always wrong rose sharply from 46.6 per cent in 2013 to 57.0 per cent in 2018.

Table 6: Respondents' views towards gay couples adopting a child, by religion (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Religion (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Buddhism	29.2 (41.0)	13.3 (17.2)	21.4 (16.8)	16.0 (11.8)	20.1 (13.2)
Taoism	43.2 (41.9)	11.4 (19.8)	17.9 (16.9)	13.5 (11.1)	14.0 (10.2)
Islam	60.1 (59.0)	11.3 (13.1)	11.1 (13.4)	7.7 (5.5)	9.8 (9.0)
Hinduism	32.3 (40.6)	10.0 (13.8)	15.9 (11.6)	17.4 (12.5)	24.4 (21.4)
Catholicism	57.0 (46.6)	9.9 (15.8)	8.4 (14.5)	9.9 (12.6)	14.9 (10.5)
Christianity	62.5 (62.4)	10.9 (15.0)	10.7 (8.0)	7.0 (5.8)	8.9 (8.8)
No religion	21.7 (35.5)	14.6 (15.4)	21.2 (14.4)	17.8 (13.1)	24.6 (21.6)

The trend of strong Christian and Muslim opposition was replicated for the issue of a gay couple having a child through surrogacy or artificial reproduction techniques (see Table 7). While about 46 per cent of Buddhists and 39 per cent of respondents with no religion felt this was always wrong or almost always wrong, more than three out of four Christians and Muslims had similar sentiments.

Table 7: Respondents' views towards gay couple having a child through surrogacy/artificial reproduction, by religion

Religion (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Buddhism	31.3	14.5	20.8	15.4	18.0
Taoism	43.0	11.8	17.9	14.3	13.0
Islam	66.7	10.1	9.1	5.9	8.2
Hinduism	34.5	10.0	14.0	17.5	24.0
Catholicism	59.8	9.5	8.9	8.0	13.7
Christianity	66.6	9.9	9.0	6.6	7.9
No religion	23.0	16.4	20.1	18.0	22.5

The issue that respondents seemed to be most liberal about was living with a partner before marriage. About half of Buddhists and Taoists felt cohabitation was not wrong at all or not wrong most of the time, and 58 per cent of respondents with no religion expressed similar sentiments (see Table 8).

Among Muslims and Christians, 15.4 per cent and 24.7 per cent said cohabitation was not wrong at all or not wrong most of the time respectively.

Table 8: Respondents' views towards living with a partner before marriage, by religion (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Religion (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Buddhism	10.4 (20.6)	8.4 (13.9)	31.0 (27.4)	25.8 (16.6)	24.4 (21.5)
Taoism	19.3 (15.9)	9.4 (15.3)	25.8 (27.6)	24.6 (20.9)	20.8 (20.3)
Islam	57.5 (61.7)	14.1 (17.3)	13.1 (13.1)	8.9 (3.9)	6.5 (3.9)
Hinduism	35.1 (39.2)	15.3 (20.7)	21.8 (17.6)	12.9 (10.6)	14.9 (11.9)
Catholicism	30.0 (29.5)	12.8 (21.8)	24.3 (22.1)	16.0 (12.8)	16.9 (13.8)
Christianity	39.8 (41.5)	15.8 (21.4)	19.7 (15.7)	12.9 (9.5)	11.8 (11.9)
No religion	7.7 (16.8)	7.6 (15.7)	26.7 (23.7)	27.1 (17.3)	30.9 (26.6)

5.3 Age and attitudes towards moral issues

We also analysed our results by respondents' age brackets, to examine differences in attitudes towards certain moral issues between the generations. There was a very evident divergence in perceptions according to age. Older respondents were likely to be much more conservative and younger cohorts were more likely to adopt a more liberal stance. For example, 46.5 per cent of those aged between 18 and 25 thought that pre-marital sex was not wrong at all or not wrong most of the time, about three times more than the 15.6 per cent of respondents aged above 65 (see Table 9).

Table 9: Respondents' views towards pre-marital sex, by age (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Age (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
18-25	17.9 (33.2)	11.9 (15.5)	23.6 (23.0)	22.1 (12.3)	24.4 (16.1)
26-35	20.1 (32.1)	11.8 (15.5)	26.8 (22.4)	19.4 (13.0)	21.8 (17.1)
36-45	27.3 (36.5)	14.0 (17.0)	28.0 (23.5)	18.4 (11.1)	12.3 (11.8)
46-55	37.4 (44.8)	15.7 (19.7)	28.6 (21.5)	11.8 (6.6)	6.5 (7.4)
56-65	36.8 (44.2)	16.7 (19.9)	29.0 (20.1)	10.3 (8.1)	7.1 (7.8)
Above 65	40.4 (49.9)	17.2 (25.4)	26.9 (18.1)	8.8 (2.0)	6.8 (4.6)

When it came to opinions on homosexual sex, 48.7 per cent of 18 to 25-year-olds and 34.3 per cent of 26 to 35-year-olds thought that gay sex was not wrong most of the time or not wrong at all (see Table 10). This compares with much more conservative attitudes of older respondents. Only 12.8 per cent of those aged between 56 and 65, and more than 10.4 per cent of those above 65, had similar sentiments.

Comparison with 2013 results

There were steep drops in the 18 to 25 and 26 to 35 age brackets, in terms of their opposition towards homosexual sex. While 66.4 per cent of 18 to 25-year-olds and 72.2 per cent of 26 to 35-year-olds felt this was always wrong or almost always wrong in 2013, the corresponding proportions in 2018 were 34.9 per cent and 47.9 per cent respectively. For 18 to 25-year-olds, the proportion of respondents who felt homosexual sex was not wrong at all nearly tripled – from 11.6 per cent in 2013 to just over 30 per cent in 2018.

Table 10: Respondents' views towards homosexual sex, by age (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Age (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
18-25	25.4 (47.6)	9.5 (18.8)	16.5 (14.5)	18.5 (7.5)	30.2 (11.6)
26-35	36.6 (54.2)	11.3 (18.0)	17.8 (12.0)	14.0 (6.1)	20.3 (9.7)
36-45	47.3 (63.9)	15.5 (15.8)	16.5 (9.3)	11.0 (5.8)	9.7 (5.2)
46-55	58.2 (65.9)	13.4 (18.5)	15.2 (9.9)	6.6 (3.0)	6.5 (2.8)
56-65	61.2 (65.7)	12.5 (21.3)	13.6 (6.7)	7.2 (3.3)	5.6 (3.0)
Above 65	64.9 (70.8)	15.8 (18.9)	8.9 (6.9)	7.2 (1.8)	3.2 (1.5)

Another major divergence between the young and old was in the contentious issue of gay marriage (see Table 11). Nearly 6 in 10 of those aged between 18 and 25 indicated that gay marriage was not wrong at all or not wrong most of

the time, more than five times the proportion of respondents aged 56 to 65 (13.7 per cent), and aged above 65 (9.6 per cent), who held such opinions.

Comparison with 2013 results

Once again, similar to other moral issues, there were steep falls in the proportions of young respondents who opposed gay marriage. While six in 10 of those aged between 18 and 25 felt this was always wrong or almost always wrong in 2013, less than three in 10 had similar sentiments in 2018. In fact, the majority of 18 to 25-year-olds (58.4 per cent) felt gay marriage was either not wrong at all or not wrong most of the time. The proportions of those aged 56 to 65, and above 65, who opposed gay marriage also fell but only by a few percentage points.

Table 11: Respondents' views towards gay marriage, by age (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Age (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
18-25	23.9 (44.2)	6.5 (15.9)	11.2 (14.4)	16.4 (8.4)	42.0 (17.1)
26-35	33.9 (50.5)	9.3 (15.6)	15.6 (12.8)	15.1 (8.8)	26.1 (12.3)
36-45	43.6 (61.3)	13.1 (12.9)	15.2 (11.8)	12.7 (6.3)	15.4 (7.7)
46-55	54.1 (62.5)	11.9 (17.3)	12.7 (10.3)	9.0 (4.5)	12.3 (5.4)
56-65	60.9 (63.8)	12.8 (16.9)	12.8 (10.0)	6.5 (4.2)	7.2 (5.0)
Above 65	67.1 (70.4)	13.5 (13.1)	9.7 (8.0)	4.8 (4.1)	4.8 (4.4)

Another noticeable divergence in the 2018 results was on adoption of a child by a gay couple. About 6 in 10 respondents who were aged between 18 and 25 indicated this was either not wrong at all or not wrong most of the time, a proportion that was at least three times more than the 16.5 per cent of

respondents aged between 56 and 65, and 18.4 per cent of those aged above 65 (see Table 12).

Comparison with 2013 results

Similar to the changes in views towards gay marriage, there was a steep drop in opposition towards adoption by a gay couple among 18 to 25-year-olds. While 46.5 per cent of these respondents felt it was always wrong or almost always wrong in 2013, the proportion expressing such sentiments in 2018 was nearly halved, to 24.4 per cent. In fact, in 2018, the majority of respondents in this age category (60.9 per cent) felt such practices were not wrong at all, or not wrong most of the time. The opposition towards adoption by a gay couple by older respondents (those aged 46 and above) also fell over time, but only by a few percentage points.

Table 12: Respondents' views towards adoption by a gay couple, by age (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Age (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
18-25	18.4 (31.3)	6.0 (15.2)	14.7 (17.2)	20.1 (13.6)	40.8 (22.7)
26-35	29.6 (36.6)	9.6 (15.5)	18.3 (16.3)	16.7 (12.0)	25.8 (19.5)
36-45	36.2 (49.9)	14.4 (13.8)	18.2 (14.8)	14.9 (9.8)	16.3 (11.6)
46-55	49.3 (50.6)	12.6 (15.2)	16.3 (14.0)	10.6 (10.3)	11.2 (9.8)
56-65	52.7 (49.2)	13.2 (19.7)	17.5 (14.1)	8.4 (8.3)	8.1 (8.6)
Above 65	53.1 (56.3)	15.0 (16.6)	13.5 (9.7)	11.0 (9.2)	7.4 (8.2)

When it came to gay couples having children through surrogacy or artificial reproductive techniques, 16.6 per cent of respondents aged above 65 and 15.7 per cent of respondents aged between 56 and 65 felt this was not wrong at all or not wrong most of the time (see Table 13). In contrast, 55.7 per cent of

respondents aged between 18 and 25, and 38.7 per cent of those aged between 26 and 35, had similar views.

Table 13: Respondents' views towards gay couple having a child through surrogacy/artificial reproduction, by age

Age (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
18-25	20.9	9.2	14.2	18.4	37.3
26-35	32.1	11.1	18.1	15.8	22.9
36-45	40.4	13.6	17.1	14.0	15.0
46-55	52.1	11.3	15.2	10.6	10.9
56-65	53.9	14.4	16.0	8.3	7.4
Above 65	56.2	15.2	12.0	9.9	6.7

One issue that saw consistent cross-generational agreement in conservative attitudes was that of infidelity. More than 8 in 10 respondents aged 18 to 35 felt this was always wrong or almost always wrong (see Table 14). This was largely similar to the proportions of those in the 56 to 65, and 66 and above, age brackets. This points to a near-universal consensus that the act of cheating on one's spouse is morally wrong, whereas issues to do with homosexuals (and their family formation) are less clear-cut.

Comparison with 2013 results

Compared to the issues surrounding homosexuality outlined above, there was much less change in attitudes towards infidelity among young respondents. In 2013, 76.2 per cent of those aged between 18 and 25 felt infidelity was always wrong or almost always wrong. In 2018, the corresponding proportion was actually *higher* at 81.2 per cent. Among older respondents aged between 56 and 65, there was a slight fall. About 84 per cent felt infidelity was always wrong or almost always wrong in 2013, slightly higher than the 80.3 per cent in 2018.

Table 14: Respondents' views towards infidelity, by age (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Age (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
18-25	62.3 (58.9)	18.9 (17.3)	8.9 (11.6)	4.2 (8.0)	5.7 (4.3)
26-35	64.5 (59.2)	17.5 (19.3)	9.8 (12.8)	3.7 (6.4)	4.4 (2.4)
36-45	60.6 (65.1)	20.0 (16.7)	13.8 (10.8)	3.2 (4.6)	2.3 (2.8)
46-55	64.9 (64.8)	16.4 (18.2)	15.1 (10.7)	2.2 (2.9)	1.4 (3.4)
56-65	64.7 (59.4)	15.6 (24.8)	14.0 (9.2)	3.8 (3.8)	2.0 (2.8)
Above 65	62.6 (63.9)	19.0 (20.1)	12.6 (12.2)	3.0 (1.8)	2.7 (2.0)

5.4 Education background and attitudes towards moral issues

We also analysed our data by respondents' educational background, to gauge differences in attitudes towards moral issues. The respondents were classified into three categories: those with secondary school and below education, those with post-secondary education (diploma-holders, Institute of Technical Education and Junior College graduates) and university degree holders (Bachelor's or more advanced degrees).

The higher a respondent's level of education, the more likely he or she was to adopt a more liberal stance towards the moral issues the survey sought to elicit their opinions on.

For example, just over 50 per cent of those who had secondary school or lower education felt that pre-marital sex was always wrong or almost always wrong (see Table 15). However, the corresponding proportions of post-

secondary/diploma holders, and degree-holders, who had similar sentiments was 44.2 per cent and 40.6 per cent respectively.

Table 15: Respondents' views towards pre-marital sex, by education background (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Education (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Below Secondary/Secondary	36.0 (47.0)	14.8 (18.9)	30.1 (20.5)	11.3 (6.0)	7.8 (7.7)
Post-Secondary/Diploma	30.4 (35.2)	13.8 (18.9)	26.4 (21.8)	17.3 (11.7)	12.1 (12.4)
Bachelors/Masters	25.0 (33.0)	15.6 (17.7)	25.2 (22.7)	16.2 (11.5)	18.0 (15.1)

When it came to homosexual sex, 72.1 per cent of secondary school and below-educated respondents indicated this was always wrong or almost always wrong (see Table 16). This compares with 63.5 per cent of those with post-secondary or diploma qualifications, and 53.9 per cent of degree holders.

Comparison with 2013 results

The falls in the proportion of respondents who felt homosexual sex was either always wrong or almost always wrong was sharpest among the better educated, a group more likely to have greater exposure to Western media and ideas that sometimes portray homosexuals in a positive light. In 2013, 73.3 per cent of degree holders expressed such sentiments, compared to 54 per cent in 2018.

Table 16: Respondents' views towards homosexual sex, by education background (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Education (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
---------------	--------------	---------------------	----------------------	----------------------------	------------------

Below Secondary/Secondary	57.1 (67.4)	15.0 (19.2)	14.2 (7.7)	7.7 (2.6)	6.1 (3.1)
Post- Secondary/Diploma	51.0 (58.2)	12.5 (18.4)	16.2 (12.0)	9.9 (5.5)	10.5 (5.9)
Bachelors/Masters	42.2 (55.9)	11.7 (17.4)	14.8 (10.6)	13.2 (6.8)	18.1 (9.2)

Meanwhile, around 7 in 10 respondents who had secondary and below education felt that gay marriage was always wrong or almost always wrong (see Table 17). In contrast, around 52 per cent of respondents holding degrees felt similarly.

Comparison with 2013 results

Similar to the trend for homosexual sex, the sharpest drop in those who viewed gay marriage as always wrong and almost always wrong in the 2018 survey were degree holders. About 51 per cent had such sentiments, compared to two in three degree holders in 2013.

Table 17: Respondents' views towards gay marriage, by education background (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Education (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Below Secondary/Secondary	56.6 (64.3)	13.4 (16.0)	13.0 (10.2)	7.6 (4.3)	9.3 (5.2)
Post- Secondary/Diploma	46.9 (56.5)	10.3 (15.6)	14.8 (10.8)	11.3 (7.7)	16.7 (9.3)
Bachelors/Masters	40.9 (53.2)	10.8 (14.5)	11.1 (13.0)	12.7 (7.4)	24.4 (11.8)

The 2018 topline trends for gay marriage were repeated in the questions examining respondents' attitudes towards a gay couple having a child through surrogacy or other reproductive techniques (see Table 18) and adoption by a

gay couple (see Table 19). However, there was generally slightly more acceptance towards these by respondents across all educational backgrounds, compared to the issues of gay marriage and homosexual sex. For example, 64 per cent of secondary school and below-educated respondents felt it was always wrong or almost always wrong for a gay couple to have a child through surrogacy or artificial reproduction. On gay marriage and homosexual sex, at least 7 in 10 of such respondents expressed similar sentiments.

Comparison with 2013 results

Similar to homosexual sex and gay marriage, the sharpest falls in the proportion of respondents who viewed adoption by a gay couple as always wrong or almost always wrong were among degree holders. While 56.3 per cent of degree holders expressed such sentiments in 2013, the corresponding proportion in 2018 was 45.7 per cent.

Table 18: Respondents' views towards gay couple having a child through surrogacy/artificial reproduction, by education background

Education (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Below Secondary/Secondary	50.4	13.6	15.1	10.5	10.3
Post-Secondary/Diploma	43.8	12.0	15.8	13.4	15.0
Bachelors/Masters	37.0	12.5	15.5	13.7	21.4

Table 19: Respondents' views towards adoption by a gay couple, by education background (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Education (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Below Secondary/Secondary	48.1 (50.4)	13.5 (16.7)	16.8 (14.1)	11.0 (9.1)	10.7 (9.8)

Post-Secondary/Diploma	40.3 (43.5)	12.2 (15.7)	17.4 (15.3)	13.1 (11.0)	17.0 (14.5)
Bachelors/Masters	34.5 (41.0)	11.2 (15.3)	15.8 (14.0)	14.9 (12.5)	23.5 (17.2)

Despite their educational background differences, all respondents, however, were largely unanimous in perceiving infidelity unfavourably (see Table 20). For example, 79 per cent of secondary school-educated and below respondents, 80.2 per cent of post-secondary/diploma holders, and 84.9 per cent of degree holders felt infidelity was always wrong or almost always wrong. This may indicate that despite one's socio-economic status or educational qualifications, cheating on one's spouse is an act that is largely universally frowned upon.

Table 20: Respondents' views towards infidelity, by education background (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Education (%)	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Below Secondary/Secondary	63.3 (63.5)	15.7 (19.9)	15.0 (10.5)	3.5 (3.2)	2.6 (2.9)
Post-Secondary/Diploma	63.4 (60.0)	16.8 (18.2)	13.4 (11.7)	3.5 (6.5)	2.8 (3.5)
Bachelors/Masters	63.5 (62.4)	21.4 (19.4)	9.1 (11.4)	2.7 (4.2)	3.3 (2.7)

5.5 Religion, age and attitudes towards moral issues

We next broke down the findings by respondents' religious affiliation and age bracket. We used responses for this section from the *unweighted* data in order to ensure that there were sufficient number of respondents in the different categories to perform meaningful analysis. While Muslims and Christians were generally the most conservative across all the religions (followed by Catholics and Hindus) towards moral issues, younger respondents from these two religions generally had a slightly more liberal outlook. However, the majority of

Christians and Muslims from the 18 to 35 age bracket still had strong views against issues such as pre-marital sex, homosexual sex and gay marriage.

For example, regarding pre-marital sex, 67.5 per cent of Muslims aged between 18 and 35 indicated this was always wrong or almost always wrong (see Table 21). Around 87 per cent of Muslims aged 55 and above had similar sentiments. Among Christians, 54 per cent of those aged 18 to 35 felt pre-marital sex was always wrong or almost always wrong. In contrast, 77.2 per cent of Christians aged above 55 had similar sentiments.

Those with no religious affiliation were the most liberal – only around 1 in 10 of such respondents aged between 18 and 35 felt pre-marital sex was always wrong or almost always wrong. However, older respondents without a religious affiliation were, like their peers who were part of a religious community, likely to adopt a more conservative outlook. For those aged above 55, about a third felt pre-marital sex was always wrong or almost always wrong.

Comparison with 2013 results

There was a general drop in opposition towards pre-marital sex across the 18 to 35-year-old age bracket, as well as those aged above 55, for most religious communities between 2013 and 2018. Notably, in 2018, the majority of Buddhists, Taoists, and Catholics in the younger age category felt that pre-

marital sex was either not wrong at all or not wrong most of the time, a marked change from five years before.

Table 21: Respondents' views towards pre-marital sex, by religious background and age (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Religion/Age (%)		Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
18-35	Buddhism	6.0 (16.0)	10.8 (16.0)	32.7 (25.4)	27.1 (18.8)	23.5 (23.8)
	Taoism	6.3 (10.4)	8.8 (20.1)	31.3 (32.1)	26.3 (17.9)	27.5 (19.4)
	Islam	54.2 (71.3)	13.3 (14.4)	14.3 (10.4)	9.7 (1.3)	8.4 (2.6)
	Hinduism	26.9 (52.1)	14.4 (12.4)	23.1 (17.5)	17.3 (9.3)	18.3 (8.8)
	Catholicism	13.6 (24.7)	15.3 (28.2)	20.3 (28.2)	25.4 (8.2)	25.4 (10.6)
	Christianity	36.0 (51.7)	18.0 (12.5)	19.1 (15.0)	13.5 (9.2)	13.5 (11.7)
	No Religion	5.2 (16.5)	5.2 (11.9)	33.5 (27.8)	20.6 (18.0)	35.5 (25.8)
Above 55	Buddhism	18.9 (43.1)	17.1 (18.8)	45.1 (22.3)	10.1 (9.4)	8.7 (6.4)
	Taoism	40.5 (41.3)	14.4 (22.1)	27.9 (23.1)	11.7 (9.6)	5.4 (3.8)
	Islam	78.1 (66.7)	9.2 (23.8)	8.5 (4.8)	3.5 (2.6)	0.8 (2.1)
	Hinduism	55.4 (51.0)	13.1 (35.7)	19.2 (5.1)	5.4 (3.1)	6.9 (5.1)
	Catholicism	42.4 (51.3)	18.4 (20.5)	17.6 (17.9)	9.6 (2.6)	12.0 (7.7)
	Christianity	53.7 (53.2)	23.5 (17.7)	16.1 (22.6)	4.7 (0.0)	2.0 (6.5)
	No Religion	17.7 (33.3)	16.2 (22.6)	36.9 (22.6)	20.0 (7.5)	9.2 (14.0)

When it came to homosexual sex, three in four Muslims aged 18 to 35 said this was always wrong or almost always wrong. Nine in 10 Muslims aged above 55 expressed similar sentiments (see Table 22). Older respondents with no religious affiliation were still rather conservative on this issue – more than 6 in 10 of those aged above 55 felt it was always wrong or almost always wrong. Among those aged 18 to 35 and with no religion, 23.8 per cent had similar views.

Notably, among those who had a religious affiliation and were aged between 18 and 35, at least 4 in 10 Buddhists, Taoists, Hindus, and Catholics felt that homosexual sex was either not wrong at all, or not wrong most of the time. For respondents aged above 55 and from each of these religious communities, the proportions who felt similarly were less than 2 in 10.

Comparison with 2013 results

There was a slide in opposition towards homosexual sex among respondents aged 18 to 35, across all religious communities. For instance, while 72.5 per cent of Christians in this age bracket felt gay sex was always wrong or almost always wrong in 2013, 68.6 per cent had similar sentiments in 2018. The fall in opposition was more dramatic in communities such as Buddhism (63.3 per cent in 2013 to 29.6 per cent in 2018) and Hinduism (77.4 per cent in 2013 to 43.7 per cent in 2018). Among older respondents (aged above 55), there were noticeable drops in opposition especially in the Buddhist, Hindu and Taoist communities.

It was also noteworthy that there was a hardening in positions amongst older Christians and Muslims. The proportions of Christians and Muslims aged above 55 who felt homosexual sex was always wrong *increased* in 2018 compared to 2013. For instance, 84.6 per cent of Muslims aged above 55 felt homosexual sex was always wrong in the 2018 wave, compared to about 73 per cent in the 2013 wave.

Table 22: Respondents' views towards homosexual sex, by religious background and age (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Religion/Age (%)		Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
18-35	Buddhism	19.2 (40.9)	10.4 (22.4)	24.8 (18.1)	19.6 (5.9)	26.0 (12.6)
	Taoism	21.3 (44.4)	11.3 (21.5)	21.3 (12.6)	20.0 (14.8)	26.3 (6.7)
	Islam	65.4 (83.8)	10.2 (8.1)	9.2 (3.7)	6.6 (1.8)	8.7 (2.6)
	Hinduism	34.0 (61.9)	9. (15.5%)	13.6 (7.2)	20.4 (5.2)	22.3 (10.3)
	Catholicism	25.9 (48.2)	13.8 (22.4)	17.2 (14.1)	19.0 (4.7)	24.1 (10.6)
	Christianity	56.2 (63.3)	12.4 (9.2)	7.9 (11.7)	12.4 (5.8)	11.2 (10.0)
	No Religion	13.5 (25.8)	10.3 (23.7)	20.0 (18.0)	16.1 (8.8)	40.0 (23.7)
Above 55	Buddhism	47.4 (67.0)	19.3 (18.0)	17.9 (10.0)	9.1 (2.5)	6.3 (2.5)
	Taoism	59.5 (69.2)	22.5 (21.2)	8.1 (4.8)	6.3 (3.8)	3.6 (1.0)
	Islam	84.6 (72.9)	7.3 (22.9)	5.0 (2.7)	2.7 (1.6)	0.4 (0.0)
	Hinduism	58.5 (62.2)	13.8 (29.6%)	10.0 (4.1)	9.2 (2.0)	8.5 (2.0)
	Catholicism	69.4 (68.8)	12.1 (13.0)	6.5 (7.8)	5.6 (6.5)	6.5 (3.9)
	Christianity	84.6 (74.2)	5.4 (21.0)	5.4 (1.6)	2.0 (3.2)	2.7 (0.0)
	No Religion	46.5 (56.5)	16.3 (26.1)	17.8 (8.7)	13.2 (1.1)	6.2 (7.6)

The 2018 trends for homosexual sex were replicated for gay marriage. More than 7 in 10 Muslims aged 18 to 35 felt this was always wrong or almost always wrong, compared to more than 9 in 10 Muslims aged above 55 (see Table 23). Among Christians, about 65 per cent of those aged between 18 and 35 felt gay marriage was always wrong or almost always wrong, compared to nearly 9 in 10 of those aged above 55. For respondents with no religion, 62.1 per cent of those aged above 55 had such sentiments, compared to just 21.3 per cent of those aged between 18 and 35. For Buddhists, Taoists, Hindus and Catholics aged between 18 and 35, at least half said gay marriage was not wrong most of the time or not wrong at all. For respondents aged above 55 and from each

of these religious communities, the proportions who felt similarly were less than 1 in 4.

Comparison with 2013 results

Similar to the views of 18 to 35-year-olds towards gay sex, opposition towards gay marriage fell in 2018 compared to 2013, across all religious communities. In fact, the majority of Buddhists, Taoist, Hindus, Catholics and those with no religion in this age bracket felt gay marriage was not wrong at all or not wrong most of the time in 2018, a stark reversal from 2013 when those who expressed such sentiments were in the minority.

The changes were less marked among respondents aged above 55. There was noticeably stronger opposition (that is, respondents who felt gay marriage was always wrong) towards gay marriage in 2018 compared to five years before, among Muslims, Christians and Catholics in this age bracket. This was similar to that observed for homosexual sex outlined above. This trend towards a hardening of position among older respondents from particular religious communities portends potential polarisation among different camps in society in future.

Table 23: Respondents' views towards gay marriage, by religious background and age (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Religion/Age (%)		Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
18-35	Buddhism	14.4 (39.8)	7.6 (17.6)	18.0 (16.0)	21.6 (10.9)	38.4 (15.6)
	Taoism	21.3 (39.6)	6.3 (19.4)	16.3 (17.2)	21.3 (7.5)	35.0 (16.4)
	Islam	64.6 (78.0)	7.8 (8.9)	7.8 (5.2)	7.3 (3.1)	12.4 (4.7)
	Hinduism	20.6 (51.9)	14.7 (11.6)	12.7 (13.8)	16.7 (5.8)	35.3 (16.9)
	Catholicism	29.3 (41.2)	8.6 (14.1)	10.3 (21.2)	15.5 (10.6)	36.2 (12.9)
	Christianity	53.9 (57.5)	11.2 (9.2)	7.9 (11.7)	12.4 (9.2)	14.6 (12.5)
	No Religion	12.3 (25.8)	9.0 (19.6)	16.8 (13.9)	14.8 (12.9)	47.1 (27.8)
Above 55	Buddhism	50.2 (68.5)	17.9 (11.0)	16.8 (12.0)	7.7 (4.0)	7.4 (4.5)
	Taoism	58.0 (69.9)	17.0 (15.5)	15.2 (7.8)	4.5 (4.9)	5.4 (1.9)
	Islam	85.4 (70.1)	6.2 (20.9)	5.0 (5.9)	1.5% (1.)	1.9 (2.1)
	Hinduism	51.2 (53.6)	10.9 (17.5)	13.2 (9.3)	10.1 (8.2)	14.7 (11.3)
	Catholicism	73.8 (58.4)	11.1 (14.3)	3.2 (14.3)	5.6 (3.9)	6.3 (9.1)
	Christianity	84.6 (70.5)	4.7 (18.0)	4.0 (4.9)	2.0 (4.9)	4.7 (1.6)
	No Religion	41.9 (56.5)	20.2 (23.9)	19.4 (4.3)	10.9 (5.4)	7.8 (9.8)

On whether a gay couple having a child through surrogacy or other artificial reproduction techniques was wrong, 65 per cent of Muslims aged between 18 and 35 felt this was always wrong or almost always wrong. In comparison, 85.3 per cent of Muslims aged above 55 expressed similar views. Around 1 in 5 with no religion and aged between 18 and 35 said such practices were always wrong or almost always wrong, compared to around 53 per cent of those aged above 55 and with no religious affiliation as well.

Table 24: Respondents' views towards gay couple having a child through surrogacy/artificial reproduction, by religious background and age

Religion/Age (%)		Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
18-35	Buddhism	15.9	10.4	18.3	20.3	35.1
	Taoism	22.5	6.3	16.3	23.8	31.3
	Islam	54.4	10.6	12.9	6.8	15.2
	Hinduism	19.6	9.8	13.7	24.5	32.4
	Catholicism	27.1	8.5	15.3	20.3	28.8
	Christianity	55.1	9.0	7.9	15.7	12.4
	No Religion	8.4	12.9	21.9	18.7	38.1
Above 55	Buddhism	41.2	18.3	20.4	12.0	8.1
	Taoism	57.1	12.5	17.9	8.0	4.5
	Islam	72.8	12.5	4.7	6.6	3.5
	Hinduism	50.0	6.2	13.1	14.6	16.2
	Catholicism	65.9	12.7	6.3	4.8	10.3
	Christianity	76.4	9.5	7.4	2.7	4.1
	No Religion	32.6	20.2	23.3	14.7	9.3

It was also interesting that Christian and Muslim respondents, who were the most opposed to gay marriage and homosexual sex as indicated earlier, were marginally more open and accepting towards gay couples relying on surrogacy or artificial reproduction to have a child. This was the case even for older respondents. For instance, 10.1 per cent of Muslims and 6.8 per cent of Christians who were aged above 55 said gay couples having a child through surrogacy or artificial reproduction was either not wrong most of the time, or not wrong at all. In comparison, 3.4 per cent of Muslims and 6.7 per cent of Christians in this age category held such views towards gay marriage (see

Table 24 earlier). In the case of homosexual sex, 3.1 per cent of Muslims and 4.7 per cent of Christians aged above 55 expressed such sentiments.

One reason for this may be that some Christians and Muslims, despite their religious teachings taking a strong stand against homosexual sex and marriage, may sympathise with the innate desire among many to raise up offspring and are slightly more open to the idea of homosexuals having children through adoption or surrogacy.

When it came to adoption by a gay couple, Muslims and Christians were also marginally more open to such practices, compared to homosexual sex or gay marriage. Around 28 per cent of Muslims aged between 18 and 35 felt adoption by a gay couple was not wrong at all or not wrong most of the time (see Table 25). The corresponding figure for Christians in that age category who felt similarly was 30.4 per cent. Even among older Muslims and Christians who were aged 55 and above, 10.6 per cent of Muslims and 8.2 per cent of Christians felt adoption in such instances was not wrong at all or not wrong most of the time.

Comparison with 2013 results

Opposition toward a gay couple adopting a child fell in 2018 compared to 2013 among 18 to 35-year-olds in all communities (but only by 0.5 per cent among the Christians). In fact, in 2018, the majority of Buddhists, Taoists, Hindus, and

Catholics in this age category felt such practices were not wrong at all or not wrong most of the time, a reversal from five years before when those who expressed such sentiments were in the minority.

For respondents aged above 55, there was noticeably *stronger* opposition among certain communities, a pattern similar to the one relating to gay marriage. Higher proportions of Taoists, Muslims, Hindus, Catholics and Christians in this age bracket said such adoptions were always wrong in 2018, compared to 2013.

Table 25: Respondents' views towards adoption by a gay couple, by religious background and age (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Religion/Age (%)		Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
18-35	Buddhism	15.5 (23.8)	7.2 (15.6)	18.3 (21.9)	19.9 (16.0)	39.0 (22.7)
	Taoism	20.0 (30.6)	6.3 (20.9)	17.5 (12.7)	18.8 (15.7)	37.5 (20.1)
	Islam	47.1 (55.6)	9.6 (13.2)	14.9 (14.3)	10.4 (4.0)	18.0 (13.0)
	Hinduism	19.8 (33.3)	11.9 (9.0)	13.9 (14.3)	21.8 (14.3)	32.7 (29.1)
	Catholicism	22.0 (27.9)	8.5 (19.8)	8.5 (20.9)	28.8 (11.6)	32.2 (19.8)
	Christianity	48.3 (44.2)	11.2 (15.8)	10.1 (10.8)	16.9 (10.8)	13.5 (18.3)
	No Religion	9.1 (20.6)	6.5 (12.9)	22.1 (16.0)	20.1 (16.5)	42.2 (34.0)
Above 55	Buddhism	40.9 (49.8)	15.7 (16.4)	21.7 (14.4)	12.2 (8.5)	9.4 (10.9)
	Taoism	55.4 (49.0)	15.2 (23.1)	17.0 (16.3)	8.9 (7.7)	3.6 (3.8)
	Islam	66.8 (59.4)	14.1 (19.3)	8.6 (10.7)	6.3 (4.8)	4.3 (5.9)
	Hinduism	44.6 (40.8)	6.9 (24.5)	16.2 (7.1)	14.6 (12.2)	17.7 (15.3)
	Catholicism	65.6 (48.7)	10.4 (16.7)	9.6 (12.8)	4.0 (14.1)	10.4 (7.7)
	Christianity	74.0 (60.7)	9.6 (24.6)	8.2 (6.6)	3.4 (4.9)	4.8 (3.3)
	No Religion	32.6 (45.7)	19.4 (16.3)	23.3 (10.9)	14.7 (8.7)	10.1 (18.5)

5.6 Religion, education and attitudes towards moral issues

We next analysed the findings by respondents' religious affiliation and their educational qualifications (note that the 2018 and 2013 responses for this section also used the *unweighted* data).

Generally, the data showed that Muslims and Christians were the most conservative but within each religious community, the higher a respondent's educational attainment, the less likely he or she would adopt conservative positions. For example, nearly 32 per cent of Buddhists with secondary or lower

education said that pre-marital sex was always wrong or almost always wrong (see Table 26). Among Buddhist degree-holders, 27.9 per cent felt similarly. Among Muslims who had secondary or lower education, over 84 per cent felt pre-marital sex was always wrong or almost always wrong, compared to 77.7 per cent of Muslim degree holders.

Table 26: Respondents' views towards pre-marital sex, by religious and educational background (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Religion/Education (%)		Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Below Secondary/Sec	Buddhism	18.4 (38.2)	13.5 (18.2)	44.4 (25.1)	12.9 (9.6)	10.8 (8.8)
	Taoism	36.0 (36.1)	11.8 (20.2)	33.1 (26.2)	12.5 (9.3)	6.6 (8.2)
	Hinduism	50.8 (56.1)	16.9 (23.1)	19.2 (9.8)	6.2 (4.6)	6.9 (6.4)
	Catholicism	36.1 (54.4)	17.6 (14.4)	23.1 (23.3)	12.0 (1.1)	11.1 (6.7)
	Christianity	43.7 (59.5)	23.9 (11.4)	21.1 (20.3)	8.5 (0.0)	2.8 (8.9)
	Islam	71.7 (71.8)	12.5 (16.6)	9.4 (7.8)	3.8 (1.7)	2.6 (2.1)
	No religion	14.8 (29.9)	13.9 (19.4)	39.3 (27.6)	22.1 (6.0)	9.8 (17.2)
Post-Secondary/ Diploma	Buddhism	8.2 (19.3)	15.1 (14.1)	37.5 (26.5)	23.4 (18.9)	15.8 (21.3)
	Taoism	13.5 (15.4)	13.5 (21.7)	31.1 (30.1)	28.4 (16.8)	13.5 (16.1)
	Hinduism	40.8 (55.8)	11.5 (16.9)	20.8 (15.7)	13.8 (5.2)	13.1 (6.4)
	Catholicism	39.7 (35.7)	19.2 (28.7)	13.7 (21.7)	15.1 (7.0)	12.3 (7.0)
	Christianity	48.4 (51.8)	20.3 (19.6)	17.2 (12.5)	8.6 (8.0)	5.5 (8.0)
	Islam	63.9 (72.8)	10.4 (16.5)	13.0 (7.0)	7.2 (1.8)	5.6 (2.0)
	No religion	13.4 (18.3)	6.7 (17.7)	31.9 (29.3)	26.9 (15.9)	21.0 (18.9)
Degree holders	Buddhism	13.8 (19.4)	14.1 (22.0)	31.7 (31.9)	21.4 (10.5)	19.0 (16.2)
	Taoism	13.3 (12.1)	7.8 (23.3)	30.0 (31.9)	18.9 (14.7)	30.0 (18.1)
	Hinduism	48.8 (57.0)	13.4 (14.5)	18.0 (14.0)	7.6 (8.5)	12.2 (6.0)
	Catholicism	32.7 (35.8)	16.3 (25.8)	21.4 (16.7)	15.3 (10.0)	14.3 (11.7)
	Christianity	43.3 (66.2)	23.0 (12.9)	15.7 (9.4)	11.1 (5.0)	6.9 (6.5)
	Islam	65.4 (75.9)	12.3 (7.2)	4.6 (9.6)	10.0 (3.6)	7.7 (3.6)
	No religion	7.9 (17.0)	10.7 (14.5)	33.7 (22.6)	18.5 (18.2)	29.2 (27.7)

Regarding homosexual sex however, Muslims adopted a consistently conservative stance regardless of their educational background (see Table 27). For example, 86.8 per cent of lower-educated Muslim respondents (secondary

or lower education) thought that this was always wrong or almost always wrong, compared to 81.1 per cent of post-secondary/diploma holders and 83.1 per cent of higher-educated (degree holders) Muslims who had similar sentiments.

There was however some divergence based on educational qualifications for those from other religious communities. For instance, 90.1 per cent of less educated Christians felt homosexual sex was always wrong or almost always wrong, compared to three in four degree-holding Christians. It is notable that even among those with no religion, more than half of respondents with secondary and below education felt that homosexual sex was always wrong or almost always wrong. Among degree holders who had no religion though, only around a third felt similarly.

Comparison with 2013 results

While the proportion of Muslims with secondary or lower qualifications who felt homosexual sex was always wrong or almost always wrong was not very much different, there was a marked change among Muslim degree holders. While 91.5 per cent of Muslims with degrees expressed such sentiments in 2013, 83.1 per cent did so in 2018. This trend was repeated in the Christian community. Buddhist degree-holders saw the sharpest drop in terms of the proportion who viewed homosexual sex as always wrong or almost always wrong. While 7 in 10 expressed such sentiments in 2013, 43.4 per cent did so in 2018.

Table 27: Respondents' views towards homosexual sex, by religious and educational background (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Religion/Educational (%)		Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Below Secondary/Sec	Buddhism	42.2 (62.9)	18.5 (18.7)	20.5 (11.9)	11.4 (3.0)	7.3 (3.5)
	Taoism	54.4 (69.8)	22.1 (19.2)	9.6 (7.7)	8.1 (2.2)	5.9 (1.1)
	Hinduism	60.8 (70.3)	13.8 (19.8)	10.8 (4.1)	3.1 (1.7)	11.5 (4.1)
	Catholicism	62.6 (64.8)	14.0 (15.9)	8.4 (10.2)	7.5 (3.4)	7.5 (5.7)
	Christianity	83.1 (75.6)	7.0 (17.9)	5.6 (2.6)	1.4 (1.3)	2.8 (2.6)
	Islam	78.8 (78.9)	8.0 (14.8)	7.1 (3.6)	3.5 (1.7)	2.6 (0.9)
	No religion	38.3 (50.0)	15.8 (24.6)	26.7 (10.0)	10.8 (3.8)	8.3 (11.5)
Post-Secondary/ Diploma	Buddhism	33.3 (44.2)	16.2 (23.3)	24.4 (17.3)	13.5 (5.6)	12.5 (9.6)
	Taoism	40.5 (47.9)	12.2 (23.2)	24.3 (12.7)	14.9 (12.7)	8.1 (3.5)
	Hinduism	46.9 (69.9)	10.0 (19.1)	13.8 (5.2)	18.5 (1.7)	10.8 (4.0)
	Catholicism	57.5 (66.1)	13.7 (14.8)	9.6 (9.6)	8.2 (3.5)	11.0 (6.1)
	Christianity	75.8 (70.5)	8.6 (6.3)	5.5 (8.9)	5.5 (7.1)	4.7 (7.1)
	Islam	71.3 (84.0)	9.8 (9.5)	8.2 (3.8)	4.4 (1.3)	6.3 (1.5)
	No religion	36.4 (35.4)	11.9 (27.4)	17.8 (18.3)	13.6 (6.1)	20.3 (12.8)
Degree holders	Buddhism	29.3 (51.3)	14.1 (19.4)	19.0 (13.1)	16.2 (8.4)	21.4 (7.9)
	Taoism	33.7 (45.3)	12.4 (21.4)	19.1 (16.2)	13.5 (9.4)	21.3 (7.7)
	Hinduism	46.7 (62.9)	13.0 (12.2)	8.9 (8.6)	13.6 (6.6)	17.8 (9.6)
	Catholicism	54.5 (54.6)	11.1 (21.8)	11.1 (7.6)	12.1 (9.2)	11.1 (6.7)
	Christianity	67.3 (79.9)	8.3 (8.6)	8.3 (4.3)	7.8 (2.2)	8.3 (5.0)
	Islam	74.6 (85.5)	8.5 (6.0)	3.8 (3.6)	6.9 (1.2)	6.2 (3.6)
	No religion	19.6 (40.3)	13.4 (19.5)	19.6 (12.6)	17.9 (7.5)	29.6 (20.1)

The 2018 trends for homosexual sex were largely replicated for gay marriage (see Table 28). About 86 per cent of Muslims with secondary or lower education felt gay marriage was always wrong or almost always wrong, compared to 78.7 per cent of Muslims with post-secondary/diploma qualifications and 81.4 per

cent of Muslims who held degrees. Among Christians, 84.6 per cent of those with secondary or below qualifications had similar sentiments, compared to 74.7 per cent of those with degrees. Again, even among those who had no religious affiliation, a slight majority of those with secondary and lower education (54.6 per cent) felt gay marriage was always wrong or almost always wrong. However, among degree holders with no religion, the opposite held true. A slight majority (53.1 per cent) felt gay marriage was not wrong at all or not wrong most of the time.

Comparison with 2013 results

Despite their religious teachings on homosexuals, there was a steep drop in the proportion of degree-holding Christians who felt that gay marriage was either always wrong or almost always wrong. While 88.3 per cent of Christians who were degree holders expressed such sentiments in 2013, 74.7 had similar opinions in 2018. Other communities also saw steep falls in opposition to gay marriage across respondents' educational backgrounds, notably the Buddhists, Taoists and Hindus.

Table 28: Respondents' views towards gay marriage, by religious and educational background (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Religion/Education (%)		Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Below Secondary/Sec	Buddhism	42.5 (62.8)	15.9 (12.4)	18.3 (14.3)	11.2 (4.3)	12.1 (6.2)
	Taoism	53.7 (64.8)	16.9 (19.0)	14.0 (9.5)	8.8 (3.9)	6.6 (2.8)
	Hinduism	49.2 (51.5)	14.6 (17.0)	10.0 (11.1)	13.1 (10.5)	13.1 (9.9)
	Catholicism	64.2 (61.4)	10.1 (14.8)	6.4 (12.5)	6.4 (2.3)	12.8 (9.1)
	Christianity	76.1 (67.1)	8.5 (17.7)	9.9 (7.6)	1.4 (3.8)	4.2 (3.8)
	Islam	79.6 (75.2)	6.6 (15.8)	6.1 (5.7)	2.1 (1.3)	5.6 (1.9)
	No religion	36.4 (51.5)	18.2 (20.1)	21.5 (8.2)	12.4 (7.5)	11.6 (12.7)
Post-Secondary/ Diploma	Buddhism	27.4 (49.0)	12.2 (18.1)	24.1 (11.2)	16.2 (8.4)	20.1 (13.3)
	Taoism	35.1 (48.2)	12.2 (18.4)	20.3 (13.5)	14.9 (10.6)	17.6 (9.2)
	Hinduism	28.7 (56.8)	12.4 (15.4)	14.0 (11.2)	19.4 (5.9)	25.6 (10.7)
	Catholicism	60.8 (59.3)	13.5 (12.4)	4.1 (13.3)	5.4 (7.1)	16.2 (8.0)
	Christianity	75.0 (65.2)	6.3 (8.0)	7.0 (7.1)	3.9 (10.7)	7.8 (8.9)
	Islam	72.0 (77.8)	6.7 (9.6)	7.2 (6.0)	5.8 (2.0)	8.3 (4.5)
	No religion	30.3 (37.8)	10.1 (20.7)	13.4 (16.5)	16.8 (9.8)	29.4 (15.2)
Degree holders	Buddhism	25.6 (49.2)	13.5 (18.8)	14.2 (14.1)	15.6 (7.3)	31.1 (10.5)
	Taoism	34.4 (44.4)	7.8 (15.4)	14.4 (19.7)	16.7 (6.8)	26.7 (13.7)
	Hinduism	40.2 (56.6)	8.9 (12.8)	11.2 (10.7)	11.2 (4.6)	28.4 (15.3)
	Catholicism	59.6 (49.2)	7.1 (11.7)	6.1 (18.3)	10.1 (12.5)	17.2 (8.3)
	Christianity	68.2 (80.3)	6.5 (8.0)	6.9 (3.6)	7.4 (2.2)	11.1 (5.8)
	Islam	71.3 (83.1)	10.1 (2.4)	4.7 (4.8)	7.0 (4.8)	7.0 (4.8)
	No religion	15.6 (32.9)	16.8 (18.4)	14.5 (13.3)	16.8 (11.4)	36.3 (24.1)

On the issue of gay couples having children through surrogacy or artificial reproduction techniques, Muslims and Christians were marginally less likely to be in opposition to the practice, compared to gay marriage or homosexual sex,

possibly for the same reasons outlined earlier (sympathy for the desire among many people – whether homosexual or heterosexual - to raise children). However, lower-educated Muslims and Christians were still more likely to be in opposition to gay couples turning to surrogacy or artificial reproduction techniques, compared to their better-educated peers. About 8 in 10 Muslims and Christians with secondary or lower educational qualifications said such practices would be always wrong or almost always wrong (see Table 29). Among Muslims and Christians with degrees, about 7 in 10 expressed similar sentiments. When it came to respondents with no religion, a sizeable proportion of those with lower educational qualifications opposed the idea. About 47 per cent of those with secondary and lower qualifications among the group that had no religious affiliation felt it was always wrong or almost always wrong. However, just under a third of degree holders who had no religious affiliation felt similarly. Notably, among Buddhist, Taoist and Hindu degree holders, at least 4 in 10 felt that such adoptions were not wrong at all not wrong most of the time.

Table 29: Respondents' views towards gay couple having a child through surrogacy/artificial reproduction, by religious and educational background

Religion/Education (%)		Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Below Secondary/Sec	Buddhism	38.5	13.6	21.9	14.2	11.8
	Taoism	53.7	12.5	16.9	11.0	5.9
	Hinduism	46.5	10.9	10.9	16.3	15.5
	Catholicism	59.3	13.0	4.6	5.6	17.6
	Christianity	67.6	11.3	11.3	5.6	4.2
	Islam	68.8	11.6	7.6	5.9	6.1
Post-Secondary/ Diploma	No religion	27.3	19.8	19.8	17.4	15.7
	Buddhism	28.0	14.5	22.4	18.4	16.8
	Taoism	32.9	11.0	20.5	19.2	16.4
	Hinduism	29.0	6.9	13.0	26.0	25.2
	Catholicism	56.8	9.5	9.5	12.2	12.2
	Christianity	71.9	10.2	5.5	5.5	7.0
Degree holders	Islam	62.8	9.5	10.9	6.0	10.7
	No religion	24.4	16.0	19.3	16.8	23.5
	Buddhism	24.5	14.5	18.3	14.8	27.9
	Taoism	31.1	12.2	15.6	17.8	23.3
	Hinduism	31.6	9.9	14.6	12.3	31.6
	Catholicism	57.6	6.1	13.1	8.1	15.2
Christianity	60.8	9.7	10.6	9.2	9.7	
Islam	58.1	11.6	12.4	7.8	10.1	
No religion	16.9	15.2	19.1	20.2	28.7	

When asked about their views on adoption by a gay couple, at least 7 in 10 Muslims, Catholics and Christians who had secondary or lower education said this was always wrong or almost always wrong. However, among respondents with university degrees from these religious communities, those who expressed similar sentiments ranged from 63 per cent (Catholics) to 69 per cent (Christians). For degree holders who did not have a religion, around 54 per cent said such adoptions were not wrong at all or not wrong most of the time. Notably, among Buddhist, Taoist and Hindu degree holders, at least 4 in 10 felt that such adoptions were not wrong at all not wrong most of the time.

Comparison with 2013 results

Among religious communities, the sharpest drop in opposition to adoption by a gay couple came from Buddhist degree holders. While 55.0 per cent felt this was always wrong or almost always wrong in 2013, 33.9 per cent felt likewise in 2018. There was also a notable change in Hindu degree holders' views – while 33.9 per cent felt such practices were not wrong most of the time or not wrong at all in 2013, the corresponding proportion with such opinions in 2018 had risen to 43.5 per cent.

Table 30: Respondents' views towards adoption by a gay couple, by religious and educational background (figures in red and brackets are from the 2013 wave)

Religion/Education (%)		Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Below Secondary/Sec	Buddhism	36.8 (45.3)	13.2 (15.9)	23.8 (15.1)	13.5 (10.5)	12.6 (13.2)
	Taoism	53.7 (47.5)	13.2 (20.1)	15.4 (19.0)	13.2 (8.9)	4.4 (4.5)
	Hinduism	43.8 (40.9)	11.5 (14.6)	13.1 (10.5)	13.1 (15.8)	18.5 (18.1)
	Catholicism	58.9 (55.7)	12.1 (17.0)	6.5 (13.6)	4.7 (5.7)	17.8 (8.0)
	Christianity	65.7 (65.8)	8.6 (17.7)	15.7 (7.6)	2.9 (2.5)	7.1 (6.3)
	Islam	62.4 (60.8)	11.6 (13.4)	11.1 (13.8)	7.3 (5.8)	7.6 (6.1)
	No religion	27.3 (39.6)	20.7 (17.2)	19.0 (14.9)	19.8 (7.5)	13.2 (20.9)
Post-Secondary/ Diploma	Buddhism	25.3 (33.7)	13.5 (15.3)	22.0 (19.7)	19.1 (14.9)	20.1 (16.5)
	Taoism	33.8 (39.0)	10.8 (21.3)	20.3 (12.8)	16.2 (12.8)	18.9 (14.2)
	Hinduism	25.4 (39.8)	10.0 (13.5)	14.6 (11.7)	23.8 (12.3)	26.2 (22.8)
	Catholicism	50.0 (49.1)	10.8 (15.5)	9.5 (15.5)	12.2 (11.2)	17.6 (8.6)
	Christianity	67.2 (49.5)	10.9 (14.4)	10.2 (11.7)	5.5 (9.0)	6.3 (15.3)
	Islam	56.3 (57.3)	10.7 (14.3)	12.3 (13.8)	8.4 (4.3)	12.3 (10.3)
	No religion	23.5 (31.1)	14.3 (17.1)	24.4 (16.5)	13.4 (13.4)	24.4 (22.0)
Degree holders	Buddhism	21.6 (34.6)	12.3 (20.4)	19.5 (18.8)	16.4 (12.0)	30.1 (14.1)
	Taoism	31.1 (30.8)	8.9 (17.9)	18.9 (18.8)	14.4 (13.7)	26.7 (18.8)
	Hinduism	30.0 (41.0)	7.1 (12.8)	19.4 (12.3)	14.1 (10.8)	29.4 (23.1)
	Catholicism	57.0 (38.3)	6.0 (14.2)	9.0 (15.0)	12.0 (16.7)	16.0 (15.8)
	Christianity	56.0 (67.4)	13.0 (12.3)	10.2 (5.8)	10.2 (5.1)	10.6 (9.4)
	Islam	52.7 (58.5)	12.4 (7.3)	12.4 (7.3)	10.1 (6.1)	12.4 (20.7)
	No religion	14.0 (29.7)	12.3 (11.4)	19.6 (11.4)	20.7 (18.4)	33.5 (29.1)

Overall, on issues related to homosexuals, respondents across the board (even if they had a religious affiliation) seemed to be more liberal when it came to family formation issues compared to homosexual sex or gay marriage.

6. SHIFT IN ATTITUDES TOWARDS MORAL ISSUES OVER TIME (2013 VS 2018)

This section compares cohort shifts in attitudes towards a range of moral issues over time. Given constantly evolving societal contexts and values, we predict differences in perceptions to exist amongst different age groups, especially amongst younger cohorts. Data was thus analysed across age intervals of five years, to mark nuanced changes in attitudes between the 2013 and 2018 survey waves. For instance, we compared the proportions of those aged between 20 and 24 who were accepting of such issues in 2013, and the proportions of this same group who would be aged between 25 and 29 in 2018 who were similarly accepting. This provides a useful longitudinal picture of how each cohort's views have changed within five years.

The biggest change we observed was that younger respondents in 2018 became much more liberal in their views, compared to 2013. This was especially in the case of gay sex and gay marriage (see figures 7 and 8). In 2013, 17.8 per cent of 20 to 24-year-olds respondents felt that gay sex was not wrong. In 2018, within this same cohort (who would now be between 25 and 29 years of age), the figure had more than doubled. Just over 40 per cent felt homosexual sex was not wrong.

Similarly, in 2013, 24.1 per cent of 20 to 24-year-olds felt that gay marriage was not wrong. In 2018, among this cohort (who would be between 25 and 29 years

of age now), the proportion who felt it was not wrong (49.0 per cent) had doubled.

In contrast, the shift to a more liberal attitude from 2013 to 2018 was much less pronounced for older respondents. For example, in the case of gay marriage, 11.4 per cent of 55 to 59-year-olds felt it was not wrong in 2013. Five years later, the proportion of those aged between 60 and 64 (that is, those who were aged between 55 and 59 five years before) who felt similarly was 14.7 per cent.

Figure 7: Graph measuring attitudes towards gay sex in 2013 against attitudes towards gay sex in 2018, across five-year age intervals

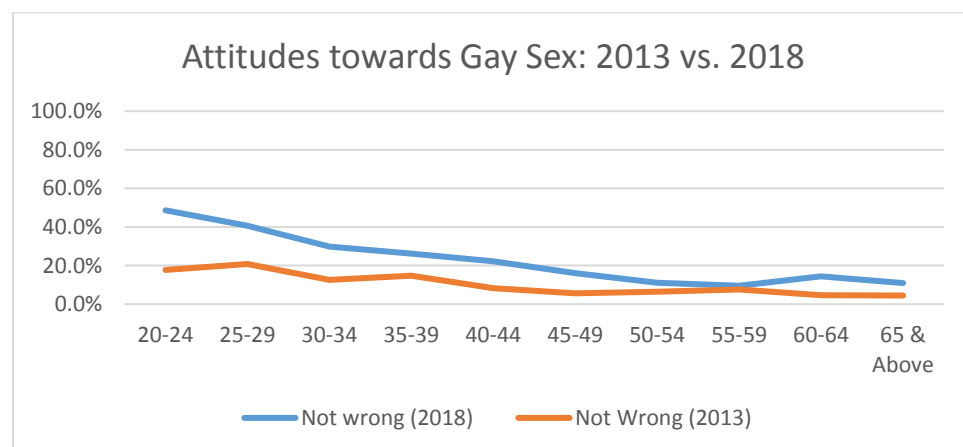
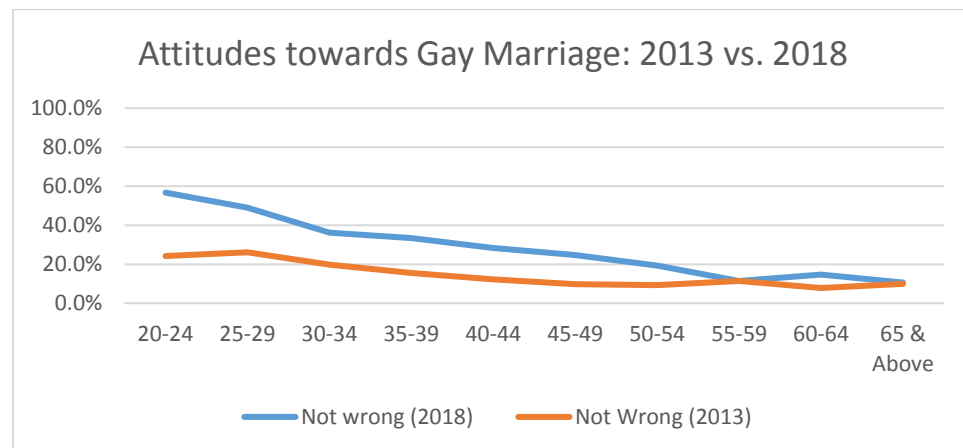
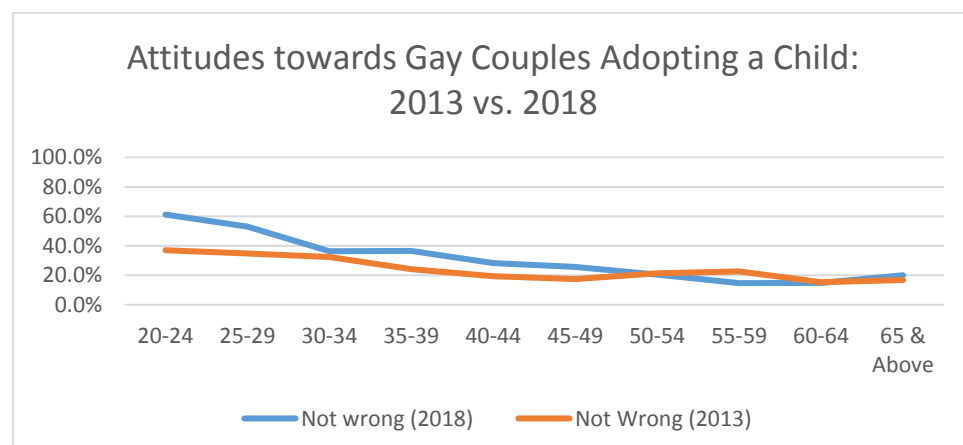


Figure 8: Graph measuring attitudes towards gay marriage in 2013 and 2018, across five-year age intervals



On the effect of inter-generational views, it should be noted that the significant shift towards more liberal attitudes in 2018 was mostly in the case of issues related to gay rights. Even issues of gay surrogacy and gay couples adopting a child saw bigger shifts towards liberal attitudes amongst younger cohorts. In 2013, 37 per cent of 20 to 24-year-olds felt adoption of a child by a gay couple was not wrong. Five years later, 52.9 per cent of this cohort (now aged between 25 and 29) felt similarly. In contrast, 17.3 per cent of those aged between 45 and 49 felt it was not wrong in 2013. Just over 20 per cent of those aged between 50 and 54 felt similarly in 2018.

Figure 9: Graph measuring attitudes towards gay couples adopting a child in 2013 and 2018, across five-year age intervals



Views towards cohabitation and premarital sex also saw some shifts towards more liberal attitudes amongst the young (see figures 10 and 11 below). While 30.9 per cent of 20 to 24-year-olds in 2013 perceived premarital sex as not wrong, the proportion of 25 to 29-year-olds who felt similarly five years later was 45.5 per cent.

Figure 10: Graph measuring attitudes towards premarital sex in 2013 and 2018, across five-year age intervals

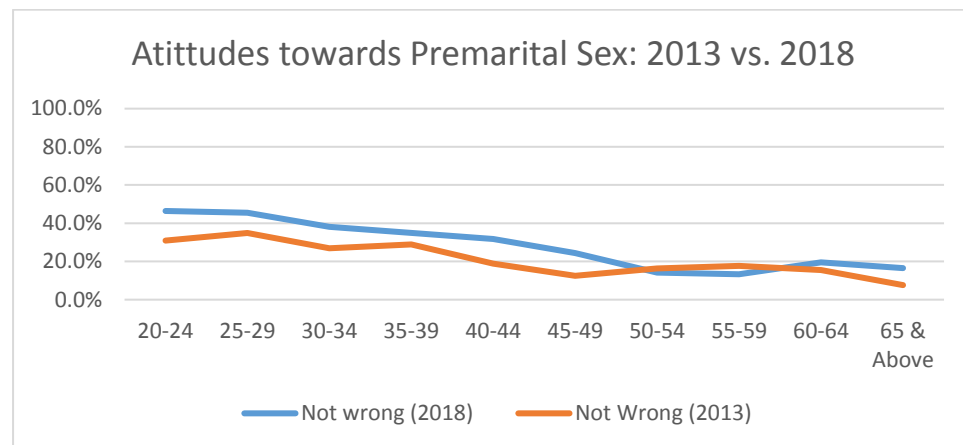
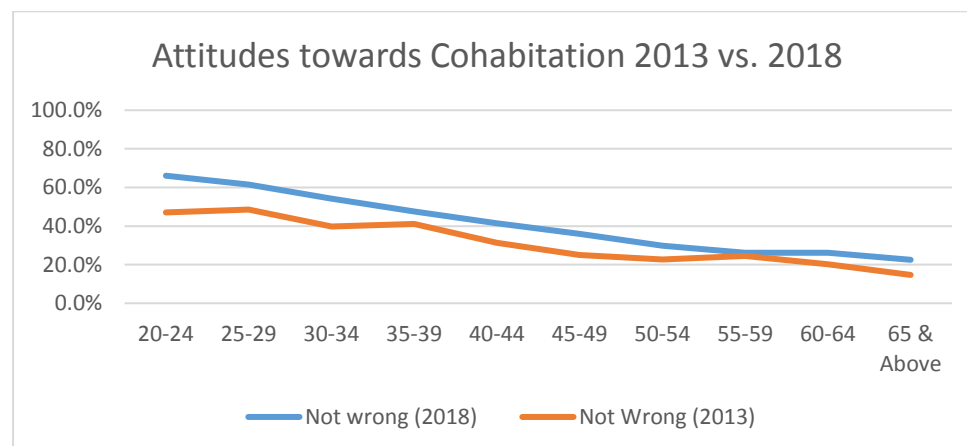


Figure 11: Graph measuring attitudes towards cohabitation in 2013 and 2018, across five-year age intervals



In the cases of infidelity and gambling, there were no distinct differences across time across all age cohorts. For instance, 13.2 per cent of 20 to 24-year-olds felt infidelity was not wrong in 2013. Five years later, the proportion of 25 to 29-

year-olds who felt similarly was 12.3 per cent. Among 50 to 54-year-olds, 6.6 per cent felt it was not wrong in 2013. Five years later, 5.8 per cent of 55 to 59-year-olds had similar sentiments.

For gambling, 19.1 per cent of 20 to 24-year-olds felt it was not wrong in 2013. Among 25 to 29-year-olds in 2018, more among them now view gambling as wrong with about 10 per cent of them indicating this on the survey. Among 50 to 54-year-olds, 10.4 per cent felt gambling was not wrong in 2013. Five years later, this had halved. About 5 per cent of 55 to 59-year-olds felt gambling was not wrong.

The findings on young respondents' views towards gambling and infidelity, in contrast to gay rights issues, shows that they are not liberal when it comes to all issues, and that there is still some discernment in their application of a liberal lens. The case of gay rights issues might be unique, given growing activism over the years as seen in social movements such as Pinkdot,⁷ activism in other countries as seen in the legalisation of same-sex marriages in countries such as India, as well as increasingly positive portrayals of LGBTQ individuals in media.

⁷ A non-profit social movement in support of the LGBTQ community in Singapore.

Figure 12: Graph measuring attitudes towards infidelity in 2013 and 2018, across five-year age intervals

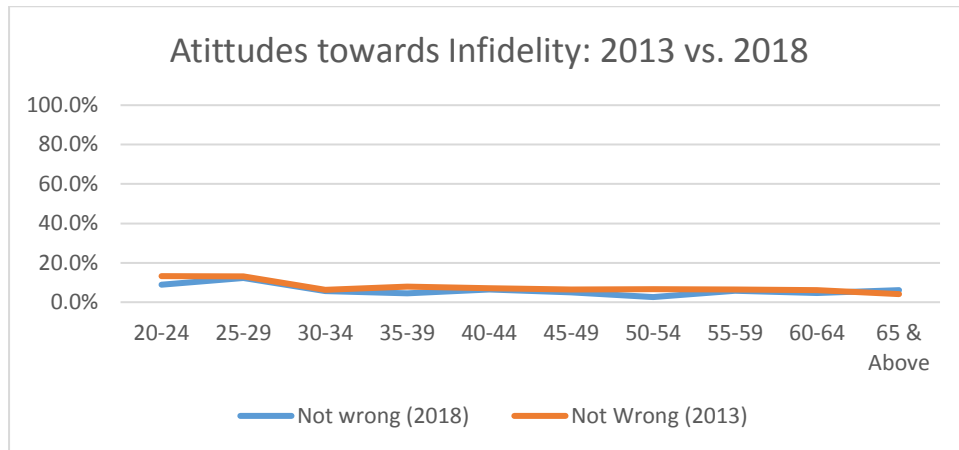
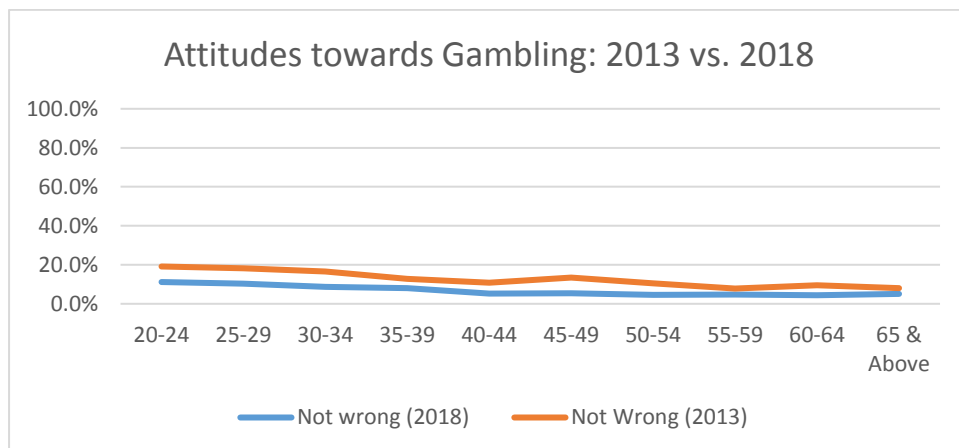


Figure 13: Graph measuring attitudes towards gambling in 2013 and 2018, across five-year age intervals



7. TOPLINE FINDINGS – SOCIO-POLITICAL VALUES

7.1 Overall stance on various socio-political issues

To ascertain respondents' stance on various issues, one question in the survey presented two positions thought to be held by significant sections of the citizenry on 11 issues relating to the political, fiscal, social, public and private

spheres. Respondents were asked to indicate if they identified more with Position A or Position B, or were neutral.⁸

The positions were:

- a) “younger generation taking care of older generation” versus “each generation takes care of itself”,
- b) “government taking the lead for change in society” versus “citizens leading change in society”,
- c) “allowing people to speak freely on any topic” versus “being careful when speaking about sensitive topics”,
- d) “valuing individual rights” versus “sacrificing individual rights for good of the community”,
- e) “adapting religion and religious customs to changing secular realities” versus “keeping religion as pure/traditional as possible”,
- f) “conservative sexual values” versus “liberal sexual values”,
- g) “valuing work-life balance” versus “being driven to achieve as much success as possible”,
- h) “individuals responsible for their own financial success” versus “community and/or the government provides help to those less successful”,

⁸ The question was: “The following are different values or positions people might have towards certain issues. For each item, would you say you identify more with the first position (A), the second position (B), or are neutral between either position.” For each, respondents could pick from “strongly identify with A”, “slightly identify with A”, “neutral”, “slightly identify with B”, and “strongly identify with B”.

- i) “accommodating towards people of different backgrounds” versus “getting everyone to conform to achieve greater unity”,
- j) “living thriftily and saving for a rainy day” versus “spending and living well to enjoy benefits of hard work”,
- k) “rootedness in the values of Singapore society” versus “rootedness in the values of global community”.

Generally, one position is one that is emphasised by Singapore state ideology (such as being careful when speaking about sensitive topics), while the other was an alternative (allowing people to speak freely on any topic). One point to note is that when we refer to a position held by respondents as a “conservative” one, it generally refers to the fact that they hew to the general Singapore state ideology⁹ on the issue, rather than them being “conservative” in the Western liberal democratic sense. Further the options we have given for positions are not necessarily the options that are most diametrically opposed to each other since some positions are not too conceivable¹⁰ in the Singaporean context.

⁹ We conclude that a particular position leans towards Singapore state ideology based on our analysis of previous state discourse on this matter and the direction of policy on these matters. We however acknowledge that state discourse and policy might have evolved on some matters and that it may not necessarily lean heavily to one side.

¹⁰ For instance for the position - Individuals responsible for their own financial success (A) versus Community and/or the government provides help to those less successful (B), the most contrasting positions would be individual responsibility for their own financial success versus Community and/or government responsible for individuals’ financial success. The latter option is unlikely to have any support.

Overall, respondents were neutral on many of the issues, but tended slightly closer to the position more commonly associated with the Singapore state on several positions (see Table 31). On political issues, nearly 42 percent were more comfortable with the government leading societal change compared to the 19.2 percent who leaned towards citizens leading such change. On freedom of speech, around four in 10 respondents identified with the position that people should be careful when speaking about sensitive topics, compared to around three in 10 who identified with the stance that people should be allowed to speak freely on any topic.

Respondents valued what has been sometimes termed “Asian” values such as filial piety, conservative sexual values and thrift. Fifty-seven per cent of respondents strongly or slightly identified with the stance that the younger generation should take care of the older generation, compared to 15.6 per cent who said they slightly or strongly identified with the position that each generation should take care of itself. Nearly half of the respondents aligned with conservative sexual values compared to less than 15 percent who leaned towards liberal sexual values. Fifty one percent of respondents were more comfortable with the position of living thriftily and saving for difficult times compared to the 15 percent who emphasised spending and living well to enjoy the benefits of hard work. It was interesting though that the value of sacrificing individual rights for community interests, commonly associated with a communitarian ideology emphasised in Asian societies, had comparatively less traction with respondents with 20.6 percent of respondents supporting this stance compared to the 41 percent of respondents who leaned to valuing

individual rights. While the Singapore state attempted to popularise the notion of “Community above Self” as a shared value in the 1990s, this finding from our study possibly shows that fewer are now convinced by the logic of sacrificing individual rights for community interests.

Table 31: Respondents’ overall stance on various socio-political issues

Socio-political values (%)	Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
Younger generation taking care of older generation (A) versus Each generation takes care of itself (B)	36.1	20.9	27.4	10.1	5.5
Government taking the lead for change in society (A) versus Citizens leading change in society (B)	19.7	22.2	38.9	12.4	6.8
Allowing people to speak freely on any topic (A) versus Being careful when speaking about sensitive topics (B)	14.8	14.5	30.6	19.4	20.7
Valuing individual rights (A) versus Sacrificing individual rights for good of the community (B)	21.3	19.7	38.3	14.3	6.3
Adapting religion and religious customs to changing secular realities (A) versus Keeping religion as pure/traditional as possible (B)	8.1	15.2	45.7	16.7	14.3
Conservative sexual values	33.4	15.5	36.4	9.1	5.5

(A) versus liberal sexual values (B)					
Valuing work-life balance (A) versus Being driven to achieve as much success as possible (B)	43.8	19.9	25.5	6.7	4.1
Individuals responsible for their own financial success (A) versus Community and/or the government provides help to those less successful (B)	23.2	18.1	29.3	16.7	12.7
Accommodating towards people of different backgrounds (A) versus Getting everyone to conform to achieve greater unity (B)	21.3	22.7	38.3	10.4	7.4
Living thriftily and saving for a rainy day (A) versus Spending and living well to enjoy benefits of hard work (B)	28.7	22.4	33.9	10.2	4.8
Rootedness in the values of Singapore society (A) versus Rootedness in the values of global community (B)	20.6	20.5	45.5	9.0	4.4

Respondents also appeared to value multi-culturalism. Forty-four per cent identified with being accommodating towards people of different backgrounds, compared to 17.8 per cent who aligned with the position of getting everyone to conform to achieve greater unity, a position that is sometimes articulated by

those who prefer a more assimilationist model of managing diversity. It is interesting however that on the issue of whether religion should adapt to secular realities or a more purist version of religion sustained, slightly more respondents (31 percent) leaned to keeping religion as pure/traditional as possible compared to those who supported religion adapting to secular realities (23.3 percent). Some would think that a society which values multiculturalism should emphasise more on religious adaptation to meet the considerations of a secular, multi-religious society. However to more respondents what might be more compelling is to allow religious traditions to generally remain as they are but society working to accommodate their religious requirements.

Despite how much Singapore is plugged into the broader global community because of the forces of globalisation, a sizeable proportion seemed to be more aligned to Singaporean rather than global values. Around 4 in 10 strongly or slightly identified with the position of rootedness in the values of Singapore. Just 13.4 per cent identified with the position of being rooted in the values of the global community. Taking this question as a proxy of whether Singaporeans should conform more to “Asian” or Western liberal democratic values and ideals (the latter often associated with the values of the global community), the responses suggest that fewer Singaporeans identified with these Western ideals and might prefer that local (and likely Asian values) continue to take pre-eminence.

7.2 Religion and socio-political values

When we analysed the results by respondents' religious affiliation, respondents largely fell into the conservative camp across issues related to politics, sexual values, pace of religious change and individual responsibility. For this section and the following ones where results were analysed by respondents' education background and age as well, there were significant proportions who were neutral on the issues, and generally relatively small proportions who were liberal.

First, on the issue of the government-led versus citizen-led changes in society, nearly half of Taoists, Christians and Catholics preferred the idea of the Government taking the lead (see Table 32). Around 40 per cent of Buddhists, Hindus and respondents with no religious affiliation had similar sentiments. Across all communities, less than 22 per cent of each community (the highest being the Muslims) identified with the stance of having citizens lead social change. About 4 in 10 in each community were neutral on the issue.

Table 32: Respondents' views on government taking the lead for change in society (A) versus citizens leading change in society (B), by religion

Religion (%)	Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
Buddhism	18.8	22.3	39.1	13.0	6.9
Taoism	20.3	26.6	40.7	8.7	3.6
Islam	19.7	16.2	42.1	12.1	9.9
Hinduism	20.4	19.9	39.8	10.9	9.0
Catholicism	24.3	21.6	37.6	9.2	7.4
Christianity	21.3	26.2	30.7	16.2	5.6
No religion	17.6	22.5	40.8	13.4	5.8

Respondents, however, were more likely to say that individuals should be responsible for their own financial success rather than having the Government or community stepping in to help the less fortunate (see Table 33). More than 4 in 10 Buddhists, Taoists, Catholics, Christians and those with no religion took the former rather than latter stance, while 37 per cent of Hindus felt similarly. The exception was the Muslim community. Less than 3 in 10 had similar sentiments.

Table 33: Respondents' views on individuals being responsible for their own financial success (A) versus community and/or the government provides help to those less successful (B), by religion

Religion (%)	Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
Buddhism	24.7	17.6	31.2	16.1	10.4
Taoism	29.8	17.2	29.8	14.0	9.2
Islam	15.9	13.3	33.3	17.4	20.1
Hinduism	24.5	12.5	33.5	14.0	15.5
Catholicism	24.8	17.1	21.8	18.9	17.4
Christianity	23.3	22.3	24.0	18.2	12.1
No religion	22.1	22.9	27.9	17.9	9.2

On the issue of whether Singaporeans should be rooted in local values or have a more global orientation on such matters, around half of Christians and Catholics preferred the idea of being rooted in Singapore values. Across all backgrounds (including those without a religious affiliation), only a minority (less than 20 per cent of each community) preferred the idea of being rooted in the global community's values. This finding is interesting considering the nature of Protestant Christianity and Roman Catholicism which connects many of their adherents to global Christian communities. Being plugged into global religious movements, does not seem to have hampered a strong orientation to local values.

Table 34: Respondents' views on rootedness in the values of Singapore society (A) versus rootedness in the values of global community (B), by religion

Religion (%)	Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
Buddhism	19.2	21.5	45.7	9.7	3.9
Taoism	21.1	19.9	49.2	6.8	3.1
Islam	21.9	15.0	50.3	7.4	5.4
Hinduism	16.6	14.6	51.3	9.0	8.5
Catholicism	27.1	22.7	39.5	6.5	4.1
Christianity	27.9	24.2	34.2	9.7	4.1
No religion	12.7	22.3	50.1	10.9	4.0

This was also evident in respondents' views on the issue of filial piety. More than half of respondents across all religious backgrounds identified with the view that the younger generation take care of the older generation, rather than each generation taking care of itself (see Table 35). Not more than 20 per cent of respondents from any community (the highest being Hindus) said they did not identify with filial piety.

Table 35: Respondents' views on younger generation taking care of older generation (A) versus each generation takes care of itself (B), by religion

Religion (%)	Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
Buddhism	36.3	20.6	27.7	9.2	6.2
Taoism	32.0	21.9	30.6	11.3	4.1
Islam	44.1	15.6	28.1	7.7	4.5
Hinduism	28.9	18.9	32.3	10.0	10.0
Catholicism	38.0	23.1	23.4	11.3	4.2
Christianity	37.0	24.5	22.1	10.6	5.8
No religion	31.0	22.8	28.9	12.8	4.5

Meanwhile, respondents, regardless of religious background, were generally of the view that sensitivity should be exercised when speaking about certain topics (see Table 36). This may be a recognition that unfettered freedom of speech may be disruptive to social harmony and cohesion in a multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-cultural environment such as Singapore. Even for those

without a religious affiliation, just over 35 per cent identified with such a stance, a figure comparable to the proportions in the Taoist and Hindu communities.

Table 36: Respondents' views on allowing people to speak freely on any topic (A) versus being careful when speaking about sensitive topics (B), by religion

Religion (%)	Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
Buddhism	14.8	15.2	30.3	19.7	20.0
Taoism	15.8	14.4	34.3	19.9	15.6
Islam	15.8	12.4	32.7	18.6	20.5
Hinduism	14.6	14.1	36.7	12.1	22.6
Catholicism	20.1	10.1	26.6	18.9	24.3
Christianity	11.5	16.7	22.1	20.4	29.2
No religion	13.4	16.6	33.6	20.8	15.6

When it came to sexual values, the majority of Christians, Catholics and Muslims were in the conservative camp (see Table 37). Nearly half of Buddhists, and respondents with no religion, were neutral on the issue.

Table 37: Respondents' views on conservative sexual values (A) versus liberal sexual values (B), by religion

Religion (%)	Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
Buddhism	21.3	17.1	46.0	10.1	5.4
Taoism	26.3	17.6	40.6	10.1	5.3
Islam	50.4	14.3	27.5	4.9	2.9
Hinduism	32.0	15.0	35.5	10.0	7.5
Catholicism	46.8	12.6	28.5	7.1	5.0
Christianity	58.9	14.3	18.0	5.7	3.1
No religion	17.6	14.1	44.0	14.3	10.1

The vast majority of respondents were neutral on the issue of religious adaptation (see Table 38). Muslims, Christians and Catholics were more likely to prefer keeping religion as pure or traditional as possible, compared to Buddhists, Taoists, and Hindus. Monotheistic faiths generally emphasise the authority of religious texts and a singular path to religious attainment. In Singapore various reform movements, especially among Protestant Christians and Muslims, have emphasised the importance of a more strict reading of

religious texts and an appeal for their adherents conform to a more fundamental version of the respective religions.

Table 38: Respondents' views on adapting religion and religious customs to changing secular realities (A) versus keeping religion as pure/traditional as possible (B), by religion

Religion (%)	Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
Buddhism	7.3	15.0	52.0	16.7	8.9
Taoism	7.3	18.4	49.9	14.8	9.7
Islam	7.6	11.5	39.4	14.9	26.6
Hinduism	12.2	16.3	43.4	11.7	16.3
Catholicism	8.3	14.8	35.8	21.9	19.2
Christianity	6.2	13.8	34.4	24.7	20.9
No religion	10.4	18.2	52.3	11.6	7.6

7.3 Age and socio-political values

Analysing the results by respondents' age group, we found that older respondents tended to be more conservative on most of the issues. For example, more than 4 in 10 respondents aged 36 and above identified with the view that the government take the lead for societal change (see Table 39). Around 3 in 10 of 18 to 35 year-old respondents aged had similar sentiments.

Table 39: Respondents' views on government taking the lead for change in society (A) versus citizens leading change in society (B), by age

Age (%)	Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
18-25	10.4	20.8	43.8	17.1	7.9
26-35	16.3	22.3	37.0	15.7	8.7
36-45	18.4	26.3	38.0	10.2	7.0
46-55	22.2	20.1	41.3	11.4	5.1
56-65	22.3	21.0	37.7	12.3	6.8
Above 65	25.8	21.7	37.1	9.5	5.9

Older respondents, especially those aged above 65, were also likely to be of the view that individuals should be responsible for their own financial success rather than the government or community stepping in to help (see Table 40).

More than 44 per cent of those aged 65 identified with the former rather than the latter, compared with 36.5 per cent of those aged between 18 and 25. The lower proportion of those between 18 to 25 years who strongly identified with the position that individuals are responsible for their financial success might stem from their current economic status as those who were either studying or new in the work force. After some years in the workforce and possibly having to pay income tax and other taxes, as well as facing more financial obligations, their views on the issue may have changed.

Table 40: Respondents' views on individuals being responsible for their own financial success (A) versus community and/or the government provides help to those less successful (B), by age

Age (%)	Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
18-25	13.9	22.6	31.6	20.4	11.4
26-35	23.2	18.9	30.3	18.4	9.2
36-45	23.3	19.5	28.2	16.8	12.3
46-55	23.3	16.8	31.2	16.8	11.8
56-65	24.8	15.7	28.2	14.8	16.5
Above 65	27.3	17.1	27.0	13.9	14.6

There were much sharper differences on the issue of being rooted in local or global values. Less than 3 in 10 of those aged 25 and below identified with the view of being rooted in local values (see Table 41). However, around half of respondents aged 56 and above had similar sentiments. Interestingly, a sizeable proportion (47 per cent) of respondents across several age brackets, but especially among those aged 55 and below, were neutral on the issue.

Table 41: Respondents' views on rootedness in the values of Singapore society (A) versus rootedness in the values of global community (B), by age

Age (%)	Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
18-25	8.9	19.3	55.4	11.1	5.2
26-35	14.9	20.8	49.6	10.3	4.5
36-45	18.5	19.7	47.0	11.0	3.9
46-55	22.0	18.6	46.3	9.2	3.9

56-65	27.7	21.5	38.7	6.3	5.7
Above 65	27.8	23.3	39.1	6.1	3.7

Younger respondents, however, were still more likely to identify with filial piety rather than having each generation take care of itself (see Table 42). More than six in 10 respondents aged 18 to 25, slightly more than the 57.7 per cent of respondents aged above 65, expressed such sentiments. This was a position that was held quite consistently across all other age groups.

Table 42: Respondents' views on younger generation taking care of older generation (A) versus each generation takes care of itself (B), by age

Age (%)	Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
18-25	31.8	28.8	26.3	9.7	3.5
26-35	33.0	23.7	27.2	11.4	4.7
36-45	35.3	20.2	25.6	11.4	7.6
46-55	38.3	18.2	26.8	10.7	6.1
56-65	39.0	18.2	28.5	9.5	4.9
Above 65	37.7	20.0	30.2	7.0	5.2

However, when it came to sexual values, there was a clear divide between generations. While at least half of those aged 36 and above identified with conservative sexual values, 29 per cent of those aged 18 to 25 and 39.5 per cent of those aged 26 to 35 had similar sentiments.

Table 43: Respondents' views on conservative sexual values (A) versus liberal sexual values (B), by age

Age (%)	Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
18-25	17.1	11.9	38.6	16.8	15.6
26-35	24.2	15.3	38.0	12.8	9.6
36-45	33.5	16.5	37.4	8.7	3.9
46-55	37.8	16.1	36.4	5.8	3.9
56-65	41.5	14.2	34.5	7.0	2.8
Above 65	40.3	17.6	33.9	6.9	1.3

Older respondents were also more likely to identify with living thriftily, rather than spending and living well (see Table 44). More than half of those aged 46

and above identified more with thriftiness. However, less than 4 in 10 respondents aged between 18 and 25 expressed similar sentiments. Rather than identifying with outlandish spending however, a significant proportion (about 40 per cent) of those aged 18 to 25, and those aged 26 to 35, were neutral on the issue.

Table 44: Respondents' views on living thriftily and saving for a rainy day (A) versus spending and living well to enjoy benefits of hard work (B), by age

Age (%)	Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
18-25	12.7	25.6	43.7	12.2	6.0
26-35	20.6	24.5	40.1	10.6	4.3
36-45	27.1	23.5	34.7	11.0	3.7
46-55	31.6	21.0	33.1	9.7	4.5
56-65	36.4	20.9	29.0	8.5	5.2
Above 65	38.3	20.2	25.8	10.0	5.7

7.4 Education background and socio-political values

When the results were analysed by respondents' education levels, there were generally few differences across different educational sub-categories. But on many of the issues, significant proportions of lower-educated respondents with secondary or below qualifications fell into the neutral category.

For instance, around 40 per cent of secondary and below, as well as post-secondary or diploma holders, and degree holders, identified with the stance that the government take the lead for societal changes (see Table 45). However, a sizeable proportion (44.7 per cent) of those with secondary and below education were neutral on the issue.

Table 45: Respondents' views on government taking the lead for change in society (A) versus citizens leading change in society (B), by education background

Education (%)	Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
Below Secondary/Secondary	21.8	18.0	44.7	10.1	5.4
Post-Secondary/Diploma	19.0	20.6	40.2	13.0	7.2
Bachelors/Masters	17.6	28.5	31.5	14.6	7.9

The picture was similar on the issue of allowing people to speak freely versus being careful when speaking about sensitive topics. Around 37 per cent of those with secondary and below qualifications were neutral, while about 30 per cent of respondents in each of the three educational categories identified with the position of allowing people unfettered freedom of speech.

Respondents with different educational backgrounds were also largely in agreement in preferring rootedness local values to rootedness in global norms. Between 39.5 per cent (respondents with secondary and below qualifications) and 45.6 per cent (respondents who are degree holders) identified with rootedness in the values of Singapore society (see Table 46). Again, a sizeable proportion (nearly half) of lower-educated respondents were neutral on this issue.

Table 46: Respondents' views on rootedness in the values of Singapore society (A) versus rootedness in the values of global community (B), by education background

Education (%)	Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
Below Secondary/Secondary	22.8	16.7	48.8	7.3	4.4
Post-Secondary/Diploma	19.6	18.8	49.7	7.2	4.7

Bachelors/Masters	19.0	26.6	37.8	12.3	4.3
-------------------	------	------	------	------	-----

However, better-educated respondents were more likely to identify with the position that individuals be responsible for their own financial success rather than community or the government stepping in to help (see Table 47). Nearly half of degree holders expressed such sentiments, compared to 36.8 per cent of those with secondary or below qualifications. This may be a reflection of their belief that Singapore's meritocratic model works well and by dint of hard work, they were able to achieve high levels of education, which contributes to a good standard of living.

Table 47: Respondents' views on individuals being responsible for their own financial success (A) versus community and/or the government provides help to those less successful (B), by education background

Education (%)	Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
Below Secondary/Secondary	23.4	13.4	34.3	14.2	14.7
Post-Secondary/Diploma	21.3	17.2	30.0	17.4	14.1
Bachelors/Masters	24.9	24.8	23.1	18.0	9.2

Better-educated respondents were slightly more likely to identify with filial piety over each generation taking care of itself (see Table 48). More than 6 in 10 degree holders adopted the former rather than latter stance, compared to 53.2 per cent of those with secondary or lower qualifications. The proportions of less educated who identified more with each generation taking care of itself was not sizeable though. Instead, a significant proportion (a third) were neutral on the issue.

Table 48: Respondents' views on younger generation taking care of older generation (A) versus each generation takes care of itself (B), by education background

Education (%)	Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
Below Secondary/Secondary	36.4	16.8	33.3	7.6	5.9
Post-Secondary/Diploma	36.4	19.4	29.2	10.3	4.7
Bachelors/Masters	35.5	26.2	19.9	12.7	5.8

Better-educated respondents were more likely to adopt a liberal stance towards sexual values, though they were still in the minority. Just over 2 in 10 degree holders identified with liberal sexual values rather than conservative sexual values, compared with 1 in 10 with secondary and below qualifications, and 13.3 per cent of those with post-secondary or diploma qualifications (see Table 49).

Table 49: Respondents' views on conservative sexual values (A) versus liberal sexual values (B), by education background

Education (%)	Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
Below Secondary/Secondary	33.1	15.0	41.9	7.3	2.7
Post-Secondary/Diploma	33.7	14.7	38.3	8.0	5.3
Bachelors/Masters	33.8	17.0	28.7	12.1	8.4

7.5 Religion, age and socio-political values

When the results were analysed by respondents' religion *and* age bracket, older respondents within each religious community were generally more conservative than their younger counterparts. For instance, on the issue of government-led versus citizen-led changes in society, among those aged above 55, 43.0 per cent of Buddhists, 44.6 per cent of Muslims and 46.4 per cent of those with no

religion identified with the position that the government be the ones taking the lead for such changes (see Table 50). This compares with 34.8 per cent of Buddhists, 26.2 per cent of Muslims and 34.7 per cent of those with no religion who were aged between 18 and 35. Interestingly, younger Christians were more likely to adopt a conservative position on the issue compared to older Christians. Half of those aged 18 to 35 identified with the government taking the lead for societal changes, compared to 42.2 per cent of Christians aged above 55.

Table 50: Respondents' views on government taking the lead for change in society (A) versus citizens leading change in society (B), by religious background and age

Religion/Age (%)		Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
18-35	Buddhism	14.2	20.6	41.9	15.8	7.5
	Taoism	12.5	33.8	35.0	15.0	3.8
	Islam	12.5	13.7	45.3	14.8	13.7
	Hinduism	19.4	13.6	48.5	13.6	4.9
	Catholicism	13.	20.3	44.1	13.6	8.5
	Christianity	21.6	28.4	27.3	18.2	4.5
	No Religion	10.3	24.4	37.2	20.5	7.7
Above 55	Buddhism	22.4	20.6	39.2	12.9	4.9
	Taoism	21.8	25.5	40.9	8.2	3.6
	Islam	26.5	18.1	35.8	11.9	7.7
	Hinduism	22.5	19.4	32.6	12.4	13.2
	Catholicism	24.2	21.8	33.9	10.5	9.7
	Christianity	22.1	20.1	36.2	14.1	7.4
	No Religion	24.0	22.4	41.6	8.8	3.2

There was also a clear age difference regarding sexual values. While 61.8 per cent of Christians aged between 18 and 35 identified with conservative rather than liberal sexual values, the corresponding figure for Christians aged above 55 was 78.3 per cent (see Table 51). This was repeated for all other religious communities. Even among those with no religion, 42.3 per cent of those aged above 55 identified with conservative sexual values, more than double the 19.2 per cent of those in the community who were aged between 18 and 35.

Table 51: Respondents' views on conservative sexual values (A) versus liberal sexual values (B), by religious background and age

Religion/Age (%)		Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
18-35	Buddhism	10.4	17.1	46.2	16.7	9.6
	Taoism	13.8	13.8	40.0	20.0	12.5
	Islam	38.9	15.0	35.6	5.6	4.8
	Hinduism	19.4	13.6	42.7	13.6	10.7
	Catholicism	27.1	13.6	30.5	15.3	13.6
	Christianity	50.6	11.2	21.3	9.0	7.9
	No Religion	9.6	9.6	39.1	20.5	21.2
Above 55	Buddhism	26.7	16.5	45.3	8.4	3.2
	Taoism	36.0	17.1	37.8	7.2	1.8
	Islam	57.4	13.6	22.9	5.0	1.2
	Hinduism	35.4	14.2	34.6	7.9	7.9
	Catholicism	47.6	14.3	29.4	5.6	3.2
	Christianity	63.8	14.5	17.1	3.3	1.3
	No Religion	26.9	15.4	46.9	10.0	0.8

When it came to choosing between rootedness in local or global values, the age divides within each community were also clear (see Table 52). For example, among Muslims above the age of 55, 44.7 per cent identified with

being rooted in Singapore societal values. The corresponding proportion for Muslims aged between 18 and 35 was 28.7 per cent. The young people most likely to identify with being rooted in global values were Hindus (23.3 per cent), followed by those with no religious affiliation (20 per cent) and Christians (19.1 per cent). Interestingly, apart from Christians, more than half of those aged between 18 and 35 from the other communities were neutral on the issue.

Table 52: Respondents' views on rootedness in the values of Singapore society (A) versus rootedness in the values of global community (B), by religious background and age

Religion/Age (%)		Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
18-35	Buddhism	12.7	23.4	50.8	9.5	3.6
	Taoism	10.0	27.5	55.0	5.0	2.5
	Islam	13.7	15.0	58.0	6.9	6.4
	Hinduism	7.8	16.5	52.4	12.6	10.7
	Catholicism	10.2	22.0	52.5	8.5	6.8
	Christianity	22.5	21.3	37.1	13.5	5.6
	No Religion	7.1	21.3	51.6	15.5	4.5
Above 55	Buddhism	26.5	21.2	41.7	6.7	3.9
	Taoism	27.3	20.9	40.9	4.5	6.4
	Islam	28.5	16.2	40.4	8.8	6.2
	Hinduism	21.1	16.4	46.1	7.0	9.4
	Catholicism	32.8	20.0	37.6	5.6	4.0
	Christianity	30.3	30.3	29.6	5.3	4.6
	No Religion	17.7	25.4	50.0	4.6	2.3

On the issue of whether religion should adapt with the times, younger respondents were generally less conservative on this and were slightly less likely to identify the position of keeping religion as pure or traditional as possible

(see Table 53). For example, within the 18 to 35 age category, 40.9 per cent of Christians, 36.7 per cent of Muslims and 20.7 per cent of Buddhists held the view that religion should be kept as pure or traditional as possible. This compares with 45.0 per cent of Christians, 48.3 per cent of Muslims and 27.2 per cent of Taoists who were aged above 55. Among young respondents with a religious affiliation, Catholics (nearly a quarter of those aged 18 to 25) were most likely to identify with the position that religious customs adapt to changing secular realities.

Table 53: Respondents' views on adapting religion and religious customs to changing secular realities (A) versus keeping religion as pure/traditional as possible (B), by religious background and age

Religion/Age (%)		Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
18-35	Buddhism	7.5	16.3	55.6	17.9	2.8
	Taoism	8.8	18.8	48.8	16.3	7.5
	Islam	5.6	12.6	45.1	16.2	20.5
	Hinduism	9.8	15.7	52.0	7.8	14.7
	Catholicism	12.3	12.3	33.3	33.3	8.8
	Christianity	6.8	13.6	38.6	25.0	15.9
	No Religion	14.1	16.7	48.7	10.9	9.6
Above 55	Buddhism	8.7	14.0	50.0	17.1	10.1
	Taoism	7.3	20.0	50.0	11.8	10.9
	Islam	8.9	8.6	34.2	15.6	32.7
	Hinduism	15.0	14.2	41.7	8.7	20.5
	Catholicism	5.6	17.5	40.5	16.7	19.8
	Christianity	5.3	12.6	37.1	23.8	21.2
	No Religion	7.8	13.3	61.7	12.5	4.7

7.6 Religion, education and socio-political values

Analysing the results by religious and educational background, we found that on particular issues, better-educated respondents were *more* conservative than less educated counterparts, within certain communities. This finding was unexpected, as the intuitive expectation would be that respondents with higher educational qualifications, due to their greater likelihood of exposure to overseas media and Western liberal views, are more likely to hold less conservative views on a range of political, moral and social issues.

However, we also note that large segments of less educated respondents (those with secondary or below qualifications) in many of the religious communities picked the neutral option, and the comparisons that are analysed below should also take this into account.

For instance, better-educated respondents within each community (except for Hindus) were generally more conservative on the issue of rootedness in local values versus global values (see Table 54). While 48.3 per cent of Buddhists, 50.5 per cent of Christians, and 43.6 per cent of Muslims with degrees identified with rootedness in Singapore societal values, the corresponding proportions of those from these religious communities and who had secondary or lower qualifications were 36.7 per cent, 43.7 per cent, and 34.5 per cent respectively. This was counter-intuitive, as one would expect higher educated respondents to be well travelled and enjoy greater consumption of overseas media and art

forms, factors that would lead them to identify more with global cosmopolitanism.

Another possible reason may be that better educated respondents work in positions or sectors where they face greater competition from foreigners, and this may affect their perceptions towards the emphasis they place on local values and being rooted to Singapore.

Table 54: Respondents' views on rootedness in the values of Singapore society (A) versus rootedness in the values of global community (B), by religious and educational background

Religion/Education (%)		Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
Below Secondary/Sec	Buddhism	21.0	15.7	52.4	7.4	3.6
	Taoism	23.7	17.0	48.9	5.9	4.4
	Hinduism	16.4	15.6	52.3	9.4	6.3
	Catholicism	30.6	14.8	43.5	5.6	5.6
	Christianity	26.8	16.9	43.7	4.2	8.5
	Islam	22.2	12.3	51.3	8.5	5.7
Post-Secondary/ Diploma	No religion	14.8	22.1	52.5	9.0	1.6
	Buddhism	16.4	20.4	50.7	8.6	3.9
	Taoism	20.3	17.6	55.4	5.4	1.4
	Hinduism	18.6	14.0	49.6	7.8	10.1
	Catholicism	20.3	27.0	44.6	4.1	4.1
	Christianity	32.8	21.1	32.0	9.4	4.7
Degree holders	Islam	19.5	14.8	54.3	5.6	5.8
	No religion	9.2	13.4	60.5	10.1	6.7
	Buddhism	18.2	30.1	34.9	12.7	4.1
	Taoism	16.7	26.7	45.6	8.9	2.2
	Hinduism	14.5	15.6	50.3	9.2	10.4
	Catholicism	21.8	27.7	36.6	8.9	5.0
Degree holders	Christianity	23.9	26.6	33.9	12.8	2.8
	Islam	21.4	22.2	41.3	10.3	4.8
	No religion	12.8	25.7	41.9	14.5	5.0

This trend was repeated on the issue of having conservative as opposed to liberal sexual values. Just over 6 in 10 Christians and 65.8 per cent of Muslims with secondary or below qualifications identified with conservative sexual

values (see Table 55). In contrast, 76.2 per cent of Christians and 71.6 per cent of Muslims who were degree holders had similar sentiments. This was also the case among Buddhists, Hindus, and Catholics. Another statistic worth highlighting is the fact that 35 per cent of respondents with degrees and no religious affiliation identified with liberal sexual values, the largest segment that had such a stance. This gels well with evidence cited elsewhere in this study where those with no religion and with high levels of education are the most liberal on several issues.

Table 55: Respondents' views on conservative sexual values (A) versus liberal sexual values (B), by religious and educational background

Religion/Education (%)		Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
Below Secondary/Sec	Buddhism	20.0	15.3	52.6	7.9	4.1
	Taoism	30.9	17.6	41.9	8.1	1.5
	Hinduism	29.7	16.4	39.1	9.4	5.5
	Catholicism	40.4	11.9	40.4	4.6	2.8
	Christianity	52.1	11.3	32.4	2.8	1.4
	Islam	51.1	14.7	27.0	5.7	1.7
Post-Secondary/Diploma	No religion	20.5	12.3	52.5	12.3	2.5
	Buddhism	19.8	17.8	46.5	10.6	5.3
	Taoism	23.0	16.2	48.6	8.1	4.1
	Hinduism	28.1	12.5	39.1	10.9	9.4
	Catholicism	47.3	12.2	28.4	5.4	6.8
	Christianity	57.0	13.3	20.3	5.5	3.9
Degree holders	Islam	47.7	11.9	32.8	4.9	2.8
	No religion	16.1	12.7	48.3	11.9	11.0
	Buddhism	22.2	18.4	39.9	13.0	6.5
	Taoism	18.9	18.9	33.3	15.6	13.3
	Hinduism	36.0	16.9	29.1	9.9	8.1
	Catholicism	46.5	14.9	20.8	9.9	7.9
Christianity	60.7	15.5	12.3	8.2	3.2	
Islam	53.5	18.1	19.7	4.7	3.9	
No religion	15.6	15.6	33.9	20.0	15.0	

Better educated Christians and Hindus were similarly more conservative than their less educated counterparts on the issue of keeping religious customs as traditional as possible, rather than adapting such customs to changing secular

realities. While 48.8 per cent of Christians and 29.5 per cent of Hindus with degrees identified with the latter, 36.2 per cent of Christians and 26.1 per cent of Hindus with secondary or lower qualifications had similar sentiments (see Table 56). The pattern was however reversed for some other communities. For example, 36.1 per cent of Catholics with secondary or lower qualifications identified with keeping religion as pure as possible, compared to 44.5 per cent of Catholics holding degrees.

Table 56: Respondents' views on adapting religion and religious customs to changing secular realities (A) versus keeping religion as pure/traditional as possible (B), by religious and educational background

Religion/Education (%)		Strongly identify with A	Slightly identify with A	Neutral	Slightly identify with B	Strongly identify with B
Below Secondary/Sec	Buddhism	6.5	14.4	53.8	15.3	10.0
	Taoism	6.7	17.8	53.3	13.3	8.9
	Hinduism	11.1	14.3	48.4	7.1	19.0
	Catholicism	6.5	14.8	42.6	13.9	22.2
	Christianity	2.9	11.6	49.3	13.0	23.2
	Islam	8.1	9.2	40.5	15.4	26.8
	No religion	5.8	8.3	66.7	14.2	5.0
Post-Secondary/ Diploma	Buddhism	7.6	12.5	53.8	17.5	8.6
	Taoism	4.1	12.2	58.1	13.5	12.2
	Hinduism	7.9	16.7	45.2	12.7	17.5
	Catholicism	11.0	12.3	42.5	21.9	12.3
	Christianity	8.7	9.4	38.6	24.4	18.9
	Islam	6.1	10.3	43.6	16.2	23.9
	No religion	10.9	16.0	55.5	10.1	7.6
Degree holders	Buddhism	7.5	19.5	49.5	16.4	7.2
	Taoism	10.0	23.3	40.0	17.8	8.9
	Hinduism	14.5	18.5	37.6	13.3	16.2
	Catholicism	8.9	16.8	29.7	27.7	16.8
	Christianity	5.9	17.4	27.9	29.2	19.6
	Islam	11.0	17.3	30.7	15.7	25.2
	No religion	14.4	25.0	40.0	11.7	8.9

8. REGRESSION ANALYSIS ON MORAL ISSUES AND SOCIO-POLITICAL VALUES

The preceding sections cover attitudes towards a range of moral issues, across lines of religion, age and education. This section in particular aims to examine the impact of personal beliefs and values on moral conservatism. We predict that conservatism across several facets (such as on social and fiscal fronts) would influence moral conservatism as well.

Our study found certain conservative values and beliefs share a positive relationship with moral conservatism, where attitude towards homosexual sex was employed as a proxy to gauge moral conservatism. For example, 63.1 per cent of respondents who believed in keeping religion pure (a conservative and sometimes regarded as fundamentalist position) perceived homosexual sex as always wrong, compared to 43.8 per cent of respondents who felt that religion and religions customs should adapt to changing secular realities, (refer to Table 57).

In addition, 56.6 per cent of respondents who felt that governments should take the lead for change in society (the more conservative view) perceived homosexual sex as always wrong, compared to 42.0 per cent of respondents who felt that citizens should be the leaders of change in society (refer to Table 58).

Table 57: Respondents' views on adapting religion and religious customs to changing secular realities (A) versus keeping religion as pure/traditional as possible (B), by their attitudes towards homosexual sex

(%)	Sexual relations between two adults of the same sex				
	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Adapting religion and religious customs to changing secular realities	43.8	12.3	12.4	13.8	17.7
Neutral	45.0	14.8	19.1	9.9	11.2
Keeping religion as pure/traditional as possible	63.1	11.3	10.6	8.1	6.9

Table 58: Respondents' views on government taking the lead for change in society (A) versus citizens leading change in society (B), by their attitudes towards homosexual sex

(%)	Sexual relations between two adults of the same sex				
	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Government should take the lead for change in society	56.6	13.1	13.6	7.9	8.9
Neutral	47.7	12.9	17.5	11.4	10.6
Citizens leading change in society	42.0	13.5	12.7	13.1	18.6

This relationship was evident across other conservative values as well (refer to Tables 59 to 61). Respondents who were more likely to believe that people should be careful when speaking about sensitive topics were more likely to be morally conservative (using conservativeness towards homosexual sex as a proxy for moral conservatism) than those who believe in speaking freely on any

topic. Respondents who were more financially frugal (believe in saving and living thriftily) were more likely to be morally conservative than those who believe in living and spending well to enjoy the benefits of hard work. Respondents who were more rooted in the values of Singapore were more likely to be morally conservative than those rooted in the values of global community.

Table 59: Respondents' views on allowing people to speak freely on any topic (A) versus being careful when speaking about sensitive topics (B), by their attitudes towards homosexual sex

(%)	Sexual relations between two adults of the same sex				
	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Allowing people to speak freely on any topic	45.7	12.3	15.0	11.2	15.9
Neutral	49.7	12.7	18.6	9.7	9.2
Be careful when speaking about sensitive topics	54.3	14.2	11.9	10.0	9.7

Table 60: Respondents' views on living thriftily and saving for a rainy day (A) versus spending and living well to enjoy the benefits of hard work (B), by their attitudes towards homosexual sex

(%)	Sexual relations between two adults of the same sex				
	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Living thriftily and saving for a rainy day	56.3	13.9	11.8	8.2	9.8
Neutral	42.6	13.5	19.7	12.4	11.9
Spending and living well to enjoy the benefits of hard work	47.5	10.3	14.2	12.2	15.8

Table 61: Respondents' views on rootedness in the values of Singapore society (A) versus rootedness in the values of global community (B), by their attitudes towards homosexual sex

	Sexual relations between two adults of the same sex				
	Always wrong	Almost always wrong	Only wrong sometimes	Not wrong most of the time	Not wrong at all
Rootedness in the values of Singapore society	58.7	12.4	11.4	8.5	9.1
Neutral	45.8	13.6	18.4	10.6	11.6
Rootedness in the values of global community	40.5	13.6	13.6	14.6	17.8

These patterns point to the likelihood of a pattern of conservatism across a range of issues, beliefs and values. If one is conservative on one issue, the chances of that person being conservative on other issues is relatively high.

While patterns and trends across these aforementioned lines are evident, there is a need to control for a range of variables to test for statistical significance. The subsequent parts of this section will examine the influence of a range of variables such as age, gender, religion, marital status and socioeconomic status on respondents' attitudes towards moral issues, through a regression model.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variable that we used for this regression analysis is *conservative beliefs on gay rights*. This is a scale variable that combines four

items: attitudes towards homosexual sex,¹¹ gay couples adopting a child,¹² gay surrogacy,¹³ and gay marriage. The more conservative¹⁴ respondents were towards these four moral issues, the higher the score of this scale variable. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale variable is 0.94, indicating good levels of scale reliability.

Independent variables

Based on the bivariate analysis we had performed, we predicted that respondents who were more conservative on certain socio-political values (i.e. more aligned to current Singapore state positions), such as in freedom of speech or fiscal matters, would also be more likely to be morally conservative.

We used ten socio-political values as binary variables which are described below. Respondents who were aligned to the position

- (a) that people should be allowed to speak freely on any topic were categorised as *Supporting free speech*.
- (b) that individual rights should not have to be sacrificed for the good of the community were categorised *Valuing individual rights*.
- (c) of being rooted to Singapore values were categorised as *Rooted in Singapore*.
- (d) that the younger generation should take care of the older generation were categorised as *Intergenerational caregiving*.

¹¹ The variable as reflected in the questionnaire is, "Sexual relations between two adults of the same sex".

¹² The variable as reflected in the questionnaire is, "The adoption of a child by a gay couple".

¹³ The variable as reflected in the questionnaire is, "A gay couple having a child through surrogacy/artificial reproductive techniques".

¹⁴ The more respondents deem issues of homosexual sex, gay couples adopting a child, gay surrogacy and gay marriage as wrong.

- (e) that government should take the lead in changing society were categorised as *Government leadership for change*.
- (f) that there should be an adaptation of religious customs to secular realities were categorised as *Flexible in religion*.
- (g) of valuing work-life balance rather than being driven to achieve success were categorised as *Valuing work-life balance*.
- (h) that individuals should be responsible for their own financial success were categorised as *Individual fiscal responsibility*..
- (i) that there should be an accommodation of people of different backgrounds were categorised as *Accommodating difference*
- (j) to live thrifty and save for a rainy day were categorised as *Financial Frugal*.

Controls

Gender, religion, age, religious orientation, housing type, citizenship status, marital status and education were used as controls for the demographic characteristics of the respondents, with females, respondents with no religion, public housing (HDB) and non-degree holders as the reference groups respectively.

Predicting respondents with greater conservatism on gay rights

Regressions (ordinary least squares) were conducted to determine the characteristics of those who were more conservative on gay rights. In the first model, demographic variables were regressed against the dependent variables, in the second model, variables on religion were included. The final

model also included the series of socio-political values which had been coded as binary positions. The results of the regression are displayed in Table 62.

Table 62: Ordinary least squares regression modelling the effects of demographic and scale variables on conservative beliefs on gay rights as dependent variable

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Male	0.018	0.275	0.328*
University Graduate	-0.566**	-0.429*	-0.515**
Residing in private housing	0.078	0.143	0.121
Age	0.101***	0.097***	0.088***
Singaporean	0.405	-0.039	-0.016
Married	1.592***	1.262***	1.156***
Religiosity		0.183***	0.163***
Buddhist		-0.110	-0.087
Taoist		0.905**	0.923**
Muslim		2.631***	2.781***
Hindu		-0.450	-0.125
Catholic		1.403***	1.413***
Christian		2.241***	2.119***
Supportive of for free speech			-0.850***
Valuing individual rights			-0.318
Rooted in Singapore			0.698***
Intergenerational caregiving			0.075
Government leadership for change			0.965***
Flexibility on religion			-1.205***
Valuing work-life balance			0.098
Individual fiscal responsibility			0.239
Accommodating difference			-0.428*
Financially frugal			0.744***

*P < .05, **P < .01, ***P < .001

Omitted categories: Respondents with no religion, females, public housing, non-degree holders.

Model 1 tested solely the effect of demographic variables such as age and gender, on conservative beliefs on gay rights. Model 1 found significant

education, age and marital status effects. Non-degree holding respondents, older respondents, and married respondents were more likely to be morally conservative on gay rights. The effect was strongest for married respondents, with married respondents being almost twice as likely as their non-married counterparts to be morally conservative.

The second model factored in respondents' religion and religiosity. As seen in trends previously highlighted in the paper, we predict certain religious groups (Muslims, Catholics and Christians) to be more conservative towards gay rights. In addition, we predict religiosity to be positively associated with conservatism.

Model 2 found that respondents from all religions, except Buddhism and Hinduism, were more likely than respondents with no religion to be conservative towards gay rights. The effect was the strongest for Muslim respondents – they were nearly three times more likely than respondents with no religion to be morally conservative. The effect was strong for Christians as well, who were two times more likely than respondents with no religion, to be morally conservative. The model also found higher levels of religiosity to be a significant predictor of conservative beliefs towards gay rights.

The third model introduced a range of respondents' values and beliefs in other spheres. We predicted that conservatism in some aspects, whether in the areas of fiscal or social-political matters, would translate into conservatism towards gay rights. Model 3 found that respondents who supported free speech,

supported the adaptation of racial and religious customs to secular realities and were accommodating of people of different backgrounds, were significantly less likely to be morally conservative on gay rights. Those who were more rooted in Singaporean values than global ones, who perceived governments as leaders of societal change and who supported financial frugality, were more likely to be morally conservative.

Gender became a significant predictor after factoring in religion and other values and beliefs subsequently into the regression model – males were more likely to be conservative about gay rights. The other demographic variables, including religion and religiosity, remained as significant as they were in previous models of the regression.

9. CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to contextualise moral conservatism and socio-political conservatism in Singapore, across dimensions of religion, age and education. The data is based on the Race, Religion and Language survey conducted in 2018. Results from this survey were also compared to results from the first wave of the survey conducted in 2013. This was to track shifts in attitudes towards a range of moral issues across dimensions of religion, age and education.

Overall, Singaporeans still remain fairly conservative towards a range of moral issues such as homosexual sex, homosexual marriage, premarital sex and pregnancy outside marriage. Respondents were the most conservative about infidelity and gambling, and respondents in 2013 were as likely as those in 2018 to be conservative about it. While the majority of all respondents remained conservative towards gay marriage and homosexual sex, there have been significant shifts in acceptance towards such issues based on the results from the 2013 and 2018 waves. This was especially prominent amongst younger respondents aged 18 to 25, who tended to be much more liberal about moral issues compared to their older counterparts aged above 65. For example, nearly 6 in 10 of those aged between 18 and 25 indicated that gay marriage was not wrong at all or not wrong most of the time, more than five times the proportion of respondents aged above 65 (9.6 per cent). This increase in liberal attitudes was also reflected amongst respondents who were more educated.

Our examination of the data, taking into account respondents' religious affiliations, had several notable findings. Respondents with a religion, probably guided by their beliefs, were generally more conservative. Also, Muslims and Christians tended to be markedly more conservative than those from other religions on certain issues. For example, about 68 per cent of Christians and 80 per cent of Muslims felt premarital sex was always wrong or almost always wrong, compared to around 29 per cent of Buddhists and 54 per cent of Catholics. In addition, there have been shifts to more liberal attitudes regarding gay rights issues from 2013 to 2018 especially among Buddhists and Hindus. However, the changes among Christians and Catholics were negligible.

Younger Christians and Muslims were more liberal than their older counterparts, but overall they were still conservative on premarital sex, homosexual sex and gay marriage. Additionally, we detected a hardening of positions among older respondents from the Christian and Muslim communities. Higher proportions felt that homosexual sex and homosexual marriage were always wrong in 2018, compared to 2013. This was contrary to the broad trends in society at large, and portends potential polarisation among different camps in society in future.

Beyond moral issues, respondents were also asked for their stance on various social and economic issues, to get a sense of their socio-political values. They were more likely to lean towards the position emphasised by Singapore state ideology (such as being sensitive when speaking about sensitive topics rather

than allowing people to speak freely). We identified this position of respondents which is aligned with state ideology as the “conservative” one.

While trends across religious communities mirror general trends, for issues relating to religion, Muslims, Christians and Catholics were more likely to be conservative. For example, these groups were more likely to think that religion should be kept as pure as possible instead of adapting to secular realities. Age differences were stark as well, with older respondents being more conservative towards most of the issues. For example, older respondents were more likely to think that the government should take the lead for societal change, instead of citizens. Younger respondents were more likely to be neutral across issues, instead of liberal. Akin to younger respondents, less educated respondents were more likely to be neutral when asked about their position on various socio-political values.

These findings affirm the general conservatism of Singaporeans when it comes to many moral issues including pregnancy outside marriage, gay marriage and homosexual sex. Simultaneously, the results point to the slow thawing of attitudes towards these very issues over time, as seen in the shift towards more liberal attitudes over the span of five years from 2013 to 2018. This could stem from the spread of liberal attitudes among the younger generation.

In particular, our findings in comparing the responses in age cohorts (those aged 20 to 24 in 2013, and their views in 2018 when they were aged between

25 and 29) mean that if present trends continue, there could be greater acceptance of gay rights in Singapore in the future. This is because increasingly larger proportions of younger Singaporeans could view gay sex and gay marriage as not wrong, even as the older respondents are slower in accepting issues surrounding gay rights. The increasing acceptance of the needs of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community over time finds the most support from youths, as they are the most accommodating of their concerns. This could possibly be a result of growing activism amongst millennials, especially with regard to human rights in general and the sub-category of gay rights, their greater likelihood to be in contact with those who self-identify as gay and their media consumption, which includes sitcoms and movies from countries where homosexuality has already become socially acceptable.

While the majority of Singaporeans remain conservative towards gay rights, if the trend towards more liberal attitudes among the young continues, certain social policies will have to inevitably be relooked and re-evaluated. The Government has on several occasions maintained that on issues such as the repeal of Section 377A (which criminalises gay sex between men), it will take into account the majority's views on the matter.

While the inter-generational divide on moral issues is one area that Singapore society will have to confront eventually, the effects of religion on one's views towards homosexual rights is another. Support for moral positions in the coming

years may be increasingly religiously based. If not managed well, this can be divisive with different religious groups uniting over moral positions, forming blocs and together opposing those of other religions who may differ on these moral positions. Based on the results of this study and our previous analysis of the International Social Survey Study of Religion (Mathew, Lim and Selvarajan, 2019), it is clear that moral conservatism in the Singapore case is somewhat related to religious affiliation and religiosity. While moral beliefs among Buddhists, Taoists and those with no religion are becoming more liberal especially in the domain of gay rights, there is comparatively less change among Christians, Muslims and Catholics who continue to hold firm positions on these issues. As degree-holders are generally more liberal, with Singapore society becoming increasingly educated, it remains to be seen whether the views of Muslims and Christians, which currently command the highest negative views towards homosexual rights, could reduce over time.

From a broader societal point of view, the results from our regressions point to another area of concern. We found that respondents who were conservative in other aspects were also likely to be conservative towards gay rights. For instance, someone who felt it was important to be careful when talking about sensitive matters rather than allowing unfettered free speech, and who believes that the Government should lead societal change rather than the citizenry, is more likely to feel that homosexual sex and homosexual marriage is wrong. By extension, if one takes the opposing view (allowing freedom of speech, and that citizens should lead change in society), then one is more likely to be sympathetic towards gay rights. This link between attitudes towards socio-

political matters and gay rights has the potential to aggravate already existing tensions between pro- and anti-LGBTQ camps. In addition to advocating for their respective agendas regarding LGBTQ rights (repealing vs. retaining Section 377A), these two camps may push for (or at least be sympathetic towards) other areas of change according to their respective beliefs. This points to the possible emergence of multiple areas of friction between different camps that hold vastly different beliefs on issues.

To prevent this friction from escalating into full-fledged conflict, any changes to legislation would have to be managed delicately, and may have to consider not just the majority's opinion on that specific matter, but the possibility that there may be wider ramifications for Singapore and even open the possibilities to changes in other spheres as well, bringing the country closer to a Western democratic society. There must also be an acknowledgement that current norms in the socio-political and fiscal arena may have been established in part due to Singapore's open economy (rendering it highly vulnerable to external influences), as well as its multi-cultural, multi-racial and multi-religious make-up.

Shifts in attitudes aside, Singaporeans across religions, age groups, and education levels champion certain values, especially those relating to filial respect, multiculturalism and national pride. They welcome the accommodation of difference, younger generations taking care of older ones, and rootedness in Singaporean values. This is a positive sign of a distinct Singaporean identity

shared by people of diverse backgrounds, grounded on certain sets of core values and principles that may remain unwavering across time.

REFERENCES

- Alesina, A. and Stantcheva, S. and Teso, E. (2018). Intergenerational Mobility and Preferences for Redistribution. *American Economic Review*, 108(2): 521-554.
- Au-Yong, R. (2019, January 14). Parliament: Authorities looking at adoption laws and surrogacy, do not support gay families, say Minister Desmond Lee. *The Straits Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/parliament-authorities-looking-at-adoption-laws-and-surrogacy-does-not-support-gay>
- Campbell, C. (2014, July 11). Singapore Provokes Outrage by Pulping Kid's Books About Gay Families. *Time Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://time.com/2975400/singapore-lgbt-gay-family-library-book-and-tango-makes-three-white-swan-express-whos-in-my-family/>
- Chong, T. (2011). *The AWARE saga: Civil Society and Public Morality in Singapore*. NUS Press.
- Chua, A. (2014, July 14). NLB pulls two children's book that 'don't promote family values. *Today newspaper*. Retrieved from <https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/nlb-pulls-two-childrens-books-dont-promote-family-values>.
- Hadi, E. A. (2019, April 1). Parliament: Two out of three Singaporeans back Government's move to cancel Watain concert. *The Straits Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.straitstimes.com/politics/singapolitics/parliament-two-out-of-three-singaporeans-back-governments-move-to-cancel>
- Hoon, C. Y. (2004). Revisiting the Asian Values Argument used by Asian Political Leaders and its Validity. *Indonesian Quarterly*, 32(2), 154-174.
- Koh, T. (2018, September 25). Section 377A: Science, religion and the law. *The Straits Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/section-377a-science-religion-and-the-law>
- Leong, L. (2012). Asian Sexuality or Singapore Exceptionalism? *Liverpool Law Review*. 33(1): 11-26.
- Lockwood, B. and Weinzierl, M. (2015) "De Gustibus non est Taxandum: Heterogeneity in Preferences and Optimal Redistribution." *Journal of Public Economics*, 124 (April): 74-80.
- Lockwood, B. and Weinzierl, M. (2016). "Positive and Normative Judgements Implicit in U.S. Tax Policy, and the Costs of Unequal Growth and Recessions." *Journal of Monetary Economics*, 77 (C): 30-47.
- Mathews, M., Lim, L., & Selvarajan, S. (2019). *Religion in Singapore: The Private and Public Spheres*. IPS Working Papers No. 33.
- Mathews, M., Mohammed, K. B., & Teo, K. K. (2014). *Religiosity and the management of religious harmony: Responses from the IPS survey on race, religion and language*. IPS Working Papers No. 21.
- McPhedran, R. (2018, September). Ipsos: Public Support Split on Section 377A of Singapore Penal Code. Retrieved from https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2018-09/singapore_public_support_split_on_337a_report_sept_2018.pdf. Accessed on April 15 2019
- Ministry of Communications and Information. (2014a). *MCI's response to Parliamentary Question on NLB's withdrawal of books from children's section, Parliament Sitting on 4 August 2014* [Press Release]. Retrieved from <https://www.mci.gov.sg/pressroom/news-and-stories/pressroom/2014/8/mcis-response-to-pq-on-nlbs-withdrawal-of-books-from-childrens-section?page=47>

Ministry of Communications and Information. (2014b). *Our Singapore Conversation Survey Final Report*. [Press Release]. Retrieved from <https://www.reach.gov.sg/read/our-sg-conversation>. Accessed on April 15 2019.

Mokhtar, F., & Loh, V. (2018). No discrimination against LGBTQ community work, in housing and education here: Ong Ye Kung. *Today newspaper*. Retrieved from <https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/no-discrimination-against-lgbtq-community-singapore-ong-ye-kung>

Park, A., Clery, E., Curtice, J., Phillips, M. and Utting, D. (eds.) (2012), *British Social Attitudes: the 29th Report*, London: NatCen Social Research.

Pew Research Center, (2017). "Support for Same-Sex Marriage Grows, Even Among Groups That Had Been Skeptical". Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center.

Pugsley, P. (2010). Singapore FHM: State Values and the Construction of Singaporean Masculinity in a Syndicated Men's Magazine. *Asian Studies Review*. 34 (2), 171-190.

Rashith, R. (2018, January 27). Envoy: Singapore will decide own pace of social change. *The Straits Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/envoy-spore-will-decide-own-pace-of-social-change>

Rosenfeld, M (2017). "Moving a Mountain: The Extraordinary Trajectory of Same-Sex Marriage Approval in the United States." *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World*, 3: 1–22.

Tamney, J. (1992). Conservative Government and Support for the Religious Institution in Singapore: An Uneasy Alliance. *Sociological Analysis*, 53(2), 201-217.

Tan, D. W. (2014, July 14). NLB saga: Two removed children's books will not go into adult section at library. *The Straits Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/nlb-saga-two-removed-childrens-books-will-go-into-adult-section-at-library>

Tan, K. P. (2003). Sexing up Singapore. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 6(4), 403-423.

Tan, D. W. (2014, July 14). NLB saga: Two removed children's books will not go into adult section at library. *The Straits Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/nlb-saga-two-removed-childrens-books-will-go-into-adult-section-at-library>

Tan, T. M. (2018a, September 19). Section 377A should not be repealed under the present circumstances: Archbishop William Goh. *The Straits Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/section-377a-should-not-be-repealed-under-the-present-circumstances-archbishop-william-goh>

Toh, T. W. (2018, September 20). Pergas rejects repeal of Section 377A as it can cause 'worrying implications'. *The Straits Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/pergas-rejects-repeal-of-section-377a-says-it-can-cause-worrying-implications>

Tong, C.K (2007). *Rationalizing Religion: Religious Conversion, Revivalism and Competition in Singapore Society*. Boston: Brill

Vijayan, K.C. (2017, December 28). Gay man fails to adopt child he had via surrogacy. *The Straits Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/gay-man-fails-to-adopt-child-he-had-via-surrogacy>

Weinzierl, M. (2018). "Revisiting the Classical View of Benefit-based Taxation." *Economic Journal*, 128 (612): F37-F64.

Wong, J. Y. C. (2016). Oscar Wilde in Singapore: Ambivalence, Enforcement and the Criminalization of Homosexuality. *Sexuality & Culture*. 20(3). 504-524.

Zaccheus, M. (2018, September 13). Church groups say they do not support repeal of 377A. *The Straits Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/national-council-of-churches-of-singapore-says-it-does-not-support-repeal-of-377a>

About IPS Working Paper Series

The IPS Working Papers Series is published in-house for early dissemination of works-in-progress. This may be research carried out by IPS researchers, work commissioned by the Institute or work submitted to the Institute for publication.

The views expressed in the Working Papers are strictly those of the author(s) alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the IPS.

Comments on the Working Papers are invited. Please direct your comments and queries to the author(s).

IPS Working Papers are available from the IPS at \$7.00 each (before GST). Postage and handling charges will be added for mail orders.

For more information, please visit www.lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/ips or contact email: ips@nus.edu.sg or tel: 6516-8388 or fax: 6777-0700.

Institute of Policy Studies
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy
National University of Singapore
1C Cluny Road House 5
Singapore 259599

Tel: (65) 6516 8388 Fax: (65) 6777 0700
Web: www.lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/ips
Registration Number: 200604346E