

# **POPS (5) Presidential Election Survey 2011**

**Institute of Policy Studies, Singapore  
September 2011**

Updated 10 November

## Acknowledgement

This research is made possible by the generous  
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Tote Board and Singapore Pools



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Source: EDMW Times

# Outline

- Research Background and Objectives
- Methodology
- Key Findings
- Conclusions

Citizens in the higher socio-economic groups tend to be more 'critical', in that they are more questioning or demanding of the system and its outcome.

# Research Background and Objectives

# Research Background & Objectives

## POPS

### or 'Perception Of Policies in Singapore' Survey Series

- An IPS survey series to take timely snap-shots of stakeholders' response to changes or events in the policy and political environment, for policy discussion.
- Questions and analysis by IPS research team, fieldwork by third party survey firm.
- Random sample of about 2000 Singapore citizens of voting age, 21 years and above.

# Research Objectives & Background

## **POPS (5): Presidential Election (PE) Survey Presented in November 2011.**

The main objective is to understand the factors that shaped voters' decision-making in the 27 August 2011 Presidential Election.

It was only the second election since 28 August 1993, for an institution that is young and complex.

# Research Objectives & Background

## The Burning Questions for PE2011 Survey

- Do voters know the roles of the Elected President?
- What are the qualities voters look for in candidates?
- What medium of communication influenced their decision?
- Overall, how do voters view the election system and its outcome?



# Methodology

# Methodology

- Fieldwork conducted from 20 September to 5 October 2011. Survey administered via telephone by firm, Degree Census at its premises. Phone numbers were picked randomly out of the residential phone book.
- Actual and weighted sample size is n=2025. Weight factors used were based on the proportions of the gender, race and age groups in the Singapore Citizen population (Census 2010) and are as follows:

<b>MALES</b>	<b>Chinese</b>	<b>Malay</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Others</b>
21-29	1.13	1.05	0.85	0.33
30-39	1.05	0.97	0.78	0.31
40-54	1.11	1.03	0.83	0.33
55-64	1.30	1.20	0.97	0.38
65 and above	1.30	1.20	0.97	0.38

<b>FEMALES</b>	<b>Chinese</b>	<b>Malay</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Others</b>
21-29	0.97	0.89	0.72	0.28
30-39	0.89	0.83	0.67	0.26
40-54	0.95	0.88	0.71	0.28
55-64	1.11	1.02	0.83	0.32
65 and above	1.10	1.02	0.82	0.32

# Methodology - Weighted Sample Profile

➤ **Voted in Aug 27 election** (n=2,025)  
 Yes 93%  
 No 7%

➤ **Voted in May 7 election** (n=2,025)  
 Yes 90%  
 No 10%

➤ **Gender** (n=2,025)  
 Male 49%  
 Female 51%

➤ **Employment status...** (n=2,025)  
 Employer 7%  
 Own account worker 6%  
 Employee 61%  
 Unpaid family worker 0%  
 Full-time homemaker 6%  
 Full-time student 5%  
 Retiree 12%  
 Unemployed 4%

➤ **Occupation of employee...** (n=1699)  
 Senior executives  
 Professionals  
 Technicians, supervisors  
 } **S** 54%

-----  
 Clerical workers  
 Service workers  
 } **I** 27%

-----  
 Operators, semiskilled  
 Unskilled workers  
 } **W** 20%

S- Service Class I- Intermediate Class  
 W- Working Class

**Housing type...** (n=2025)  
 HDB 1-3 room 15%  
 HDB 4 room 33%  
 HDB 5-6 room/Executive 31%  
 Private 21%

# Methodology – Weighted Sample Profile

➤ **Ethnic group...** (n=2025)

Chinese	79%
Malay	13%
Indian	7%
Others	1%

➤ **Age group...** (n=2025)

21-29	16%
30-39	18%
40-54	34%
55-64	18%
65 & above	14%

➤ **Household income...** (n=1727)

None - \$1,999	17%	<b>L</b>
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Post-independence (21-44)	46%
Pre-independence (Above 45)	54%

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S\$2,000 - \$4,999	28%	<b>LM</b>
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S\$5,000 - \$6,999	17%	<b>MM</b>
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S\$7,000 and above	38%	<b>UM</b>
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➤ **Education level...** (n=1988)

PSLE or below	11%
Secondary	33%
Post secondary	9%
Diploma	18%
University/ Professional	29%

L Low  
 LM Low-Middle  
 MM Middle-Middle  
 UM Upper-Middle

# Methodology - Response Rate

Total calls: 18,583.

Calls found ineligible (like, non-citizens): 2,336.

Out 15,247 remaining calls, completed surveys: 2,025.

Refusals: 420

The rest:14,827

They were

- unanswered calls
- answered but interviewers asked to ring again (i.e. eligible residents were not home)
- survey was incomplete

# Methodology - Response Rate

The following slides provide the key findings of the survey.

The text boxes above the bar charts describe the relationship that the listed variable has with other demographic variables at the level of statistical significance.

The sections in red highlight the findings that are different from those when the data was weighted according to resident population.

**Limitations:** While the survey asked respondents about their voting choices, the response rate was too low and bore little relation to the voting outcome to justify reporting those findings or using them for further statistical analysis.

# Roles of the Elected President

# Roles of the Elected President

Understanding of and agreement with the roles of the Elected President, based on the official interpretation, was limited.

Representing Singapore in foreign relations was the most recognised role.

Key:

12 statements.

1 removed in analysis.

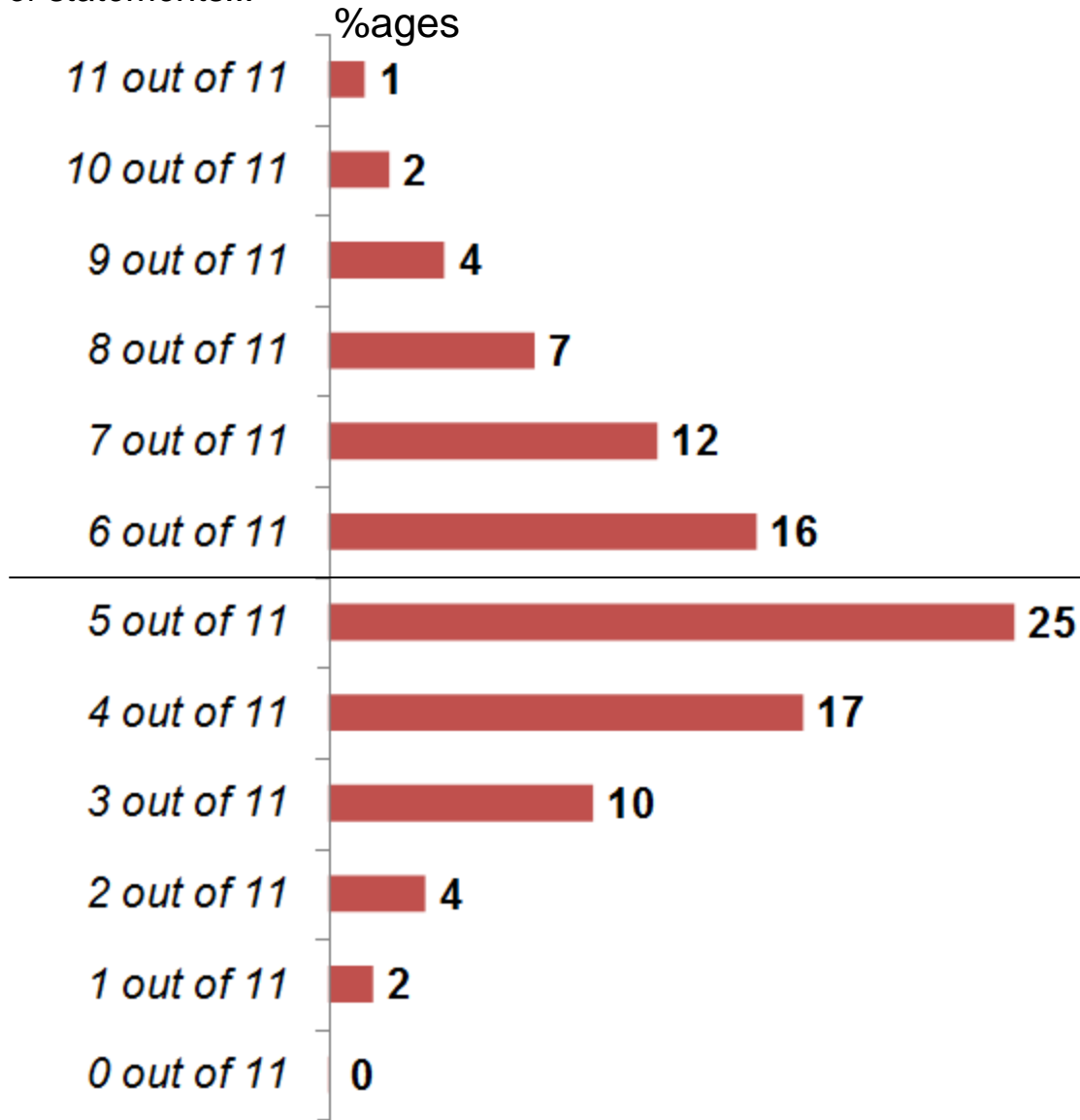
'Yes' if it is a role, 'no' if it is not.

'Important' or 'not important' in shaping vote.



# Roles of the Elected President

Number of statements...



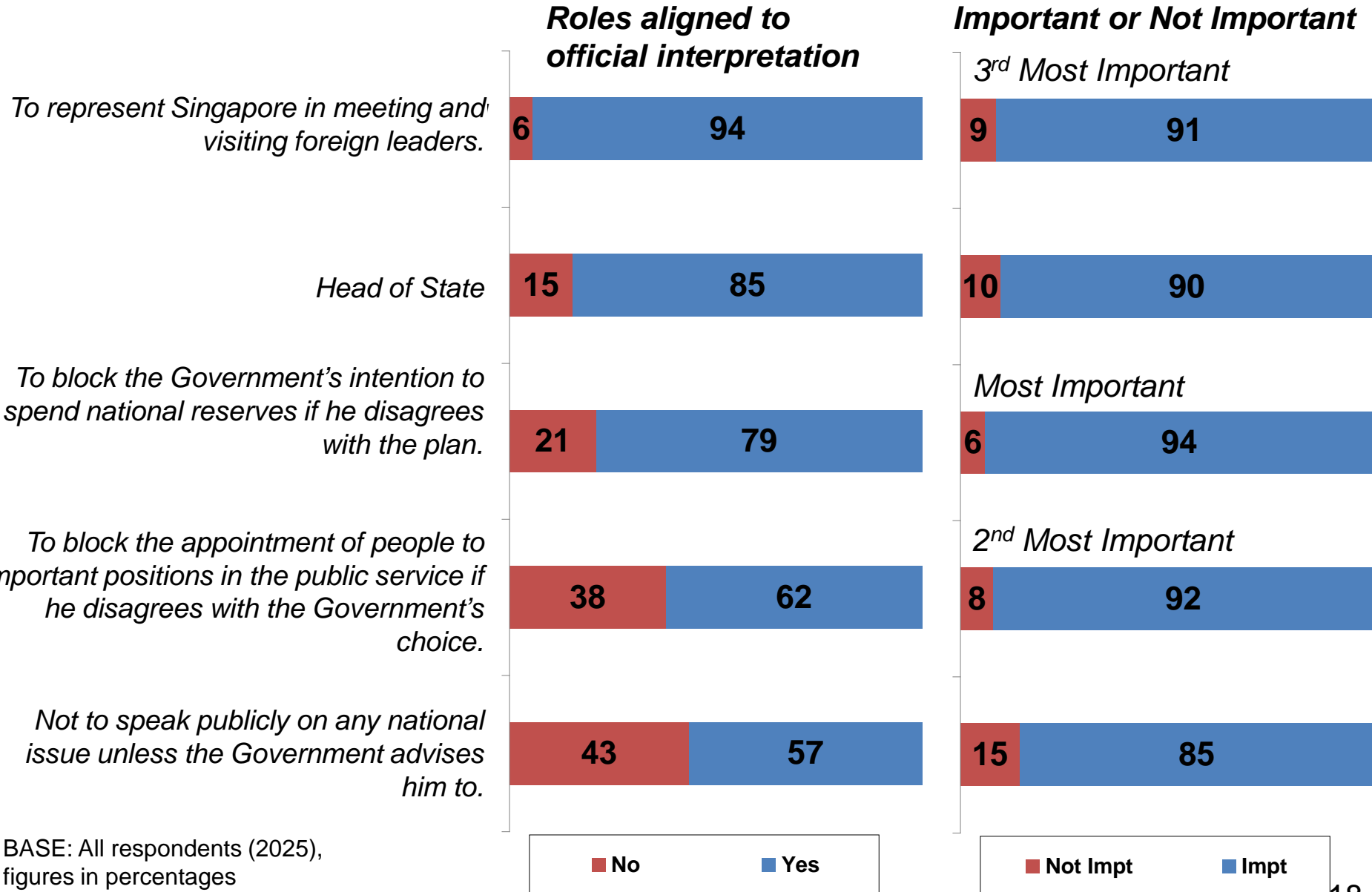
**42% cited 6 or more correctly**

Likely to be Service class, middle-middle income group, highly-educated, Chinese, males and people living in private housing.

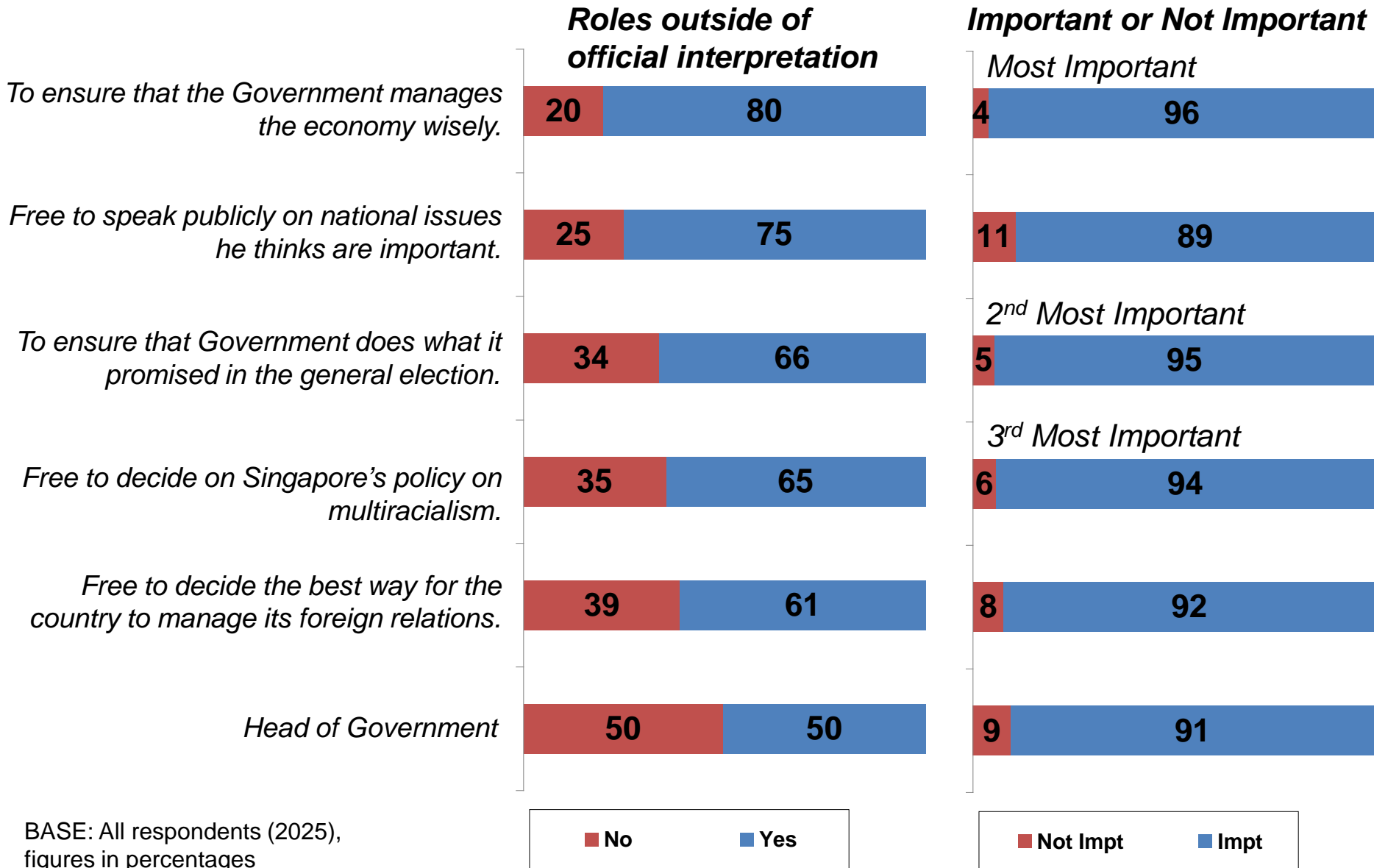
**58% cited 5 or less correctly**

Likely to be 65 years & above, Working class, low-income group, less-educated (PSLE or below), Malay, females, and people living in HDB 1-3 room flats.

# Roles of the Elected President



# Roles of the Elected President



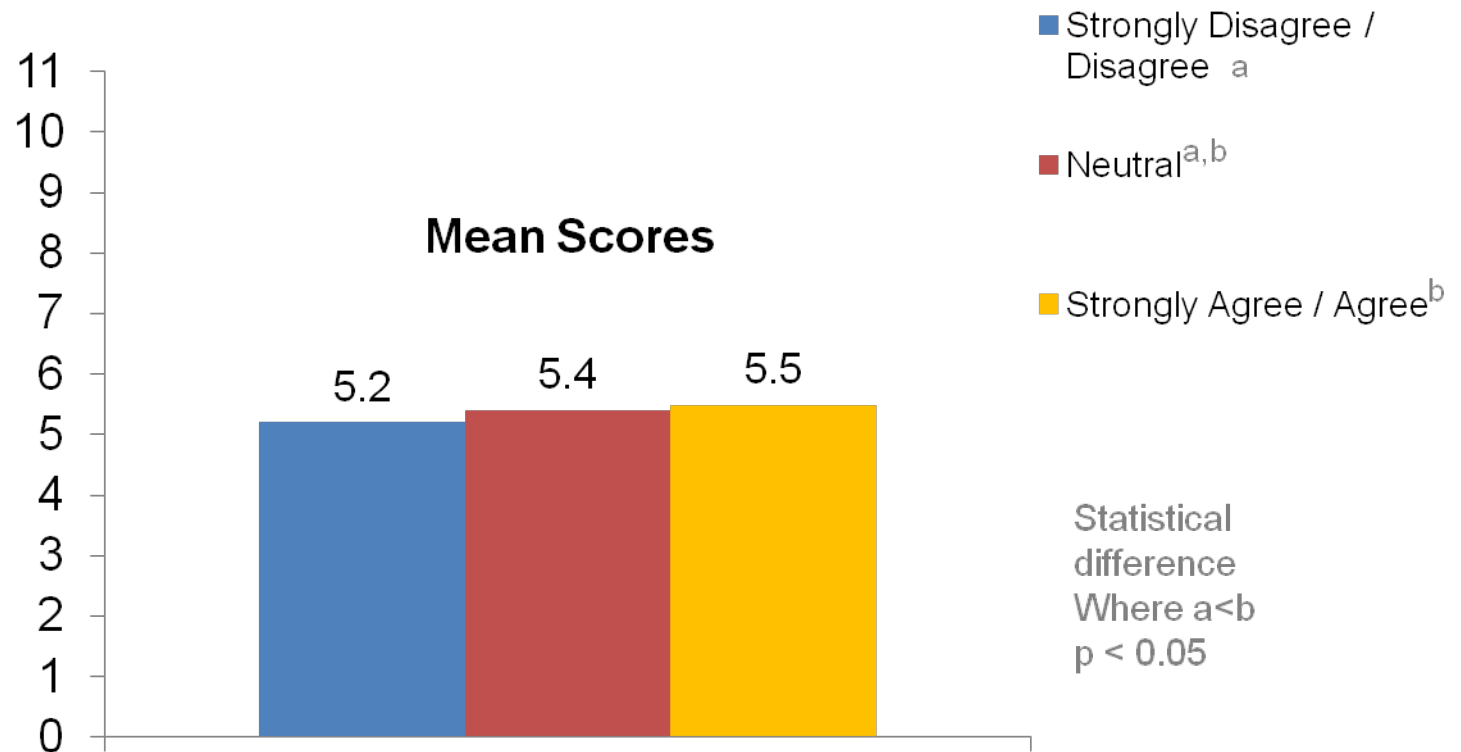
# Roles of the Elected President

- Top three roles cited
  - To represent Singapore in meeting and visiting foreign leaders
  - Head of state
  - To ensure that the Government manages the economy wisely, (most likely cited by post-secondary respondents)
- Top three roles, when cited, were considered ‘important’ in shaping vote
  - To ensure that the Government manages the economy wisely
  - To ensure that Government does what it promised in the general election
  - To block the Government’s intention to spend national reserves if he disagrees with the plan
- We call this our ‘political knowledge’ indicator, where mean score is 5.4 out of a possible 11 points.

# Political Knowledge

**“I am interested in matters related to Singapore’s governing system.”**

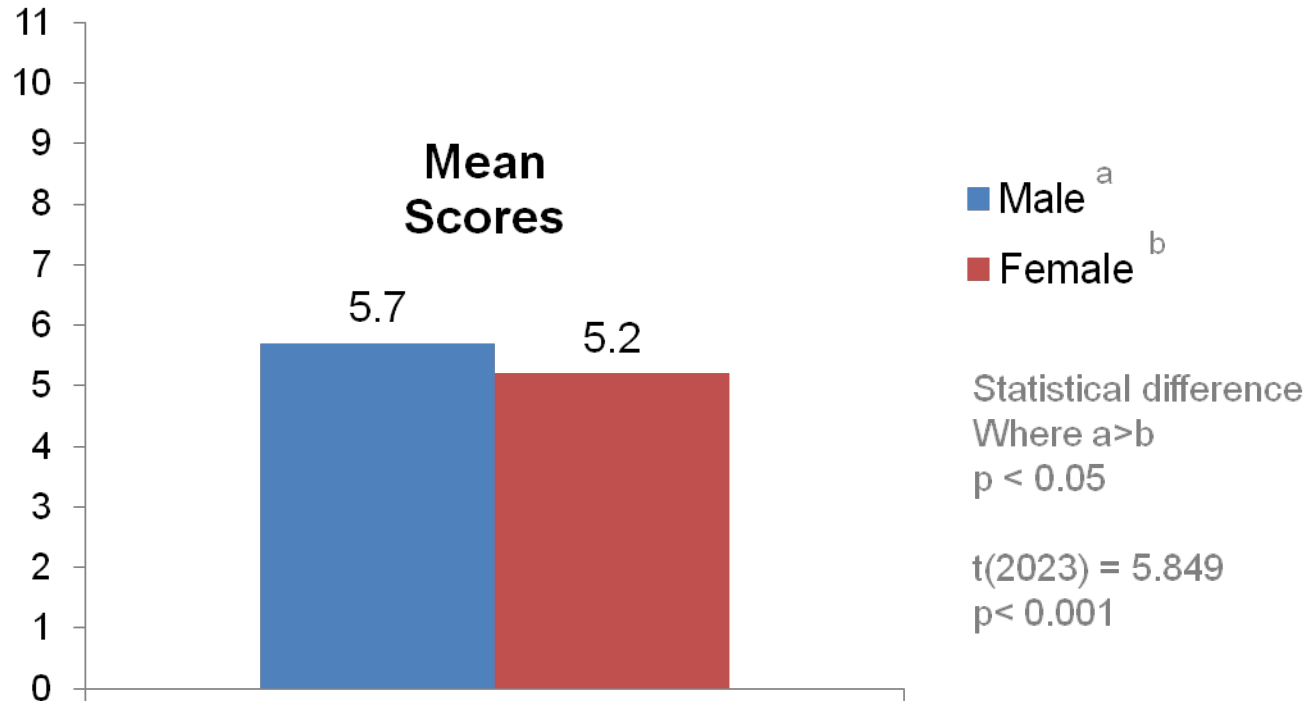
Respondents who strongly agreed and agreed were likely to have just a slightly higher mean score, but difference is of statistical significance.



# Political Knowledge

## GENDER

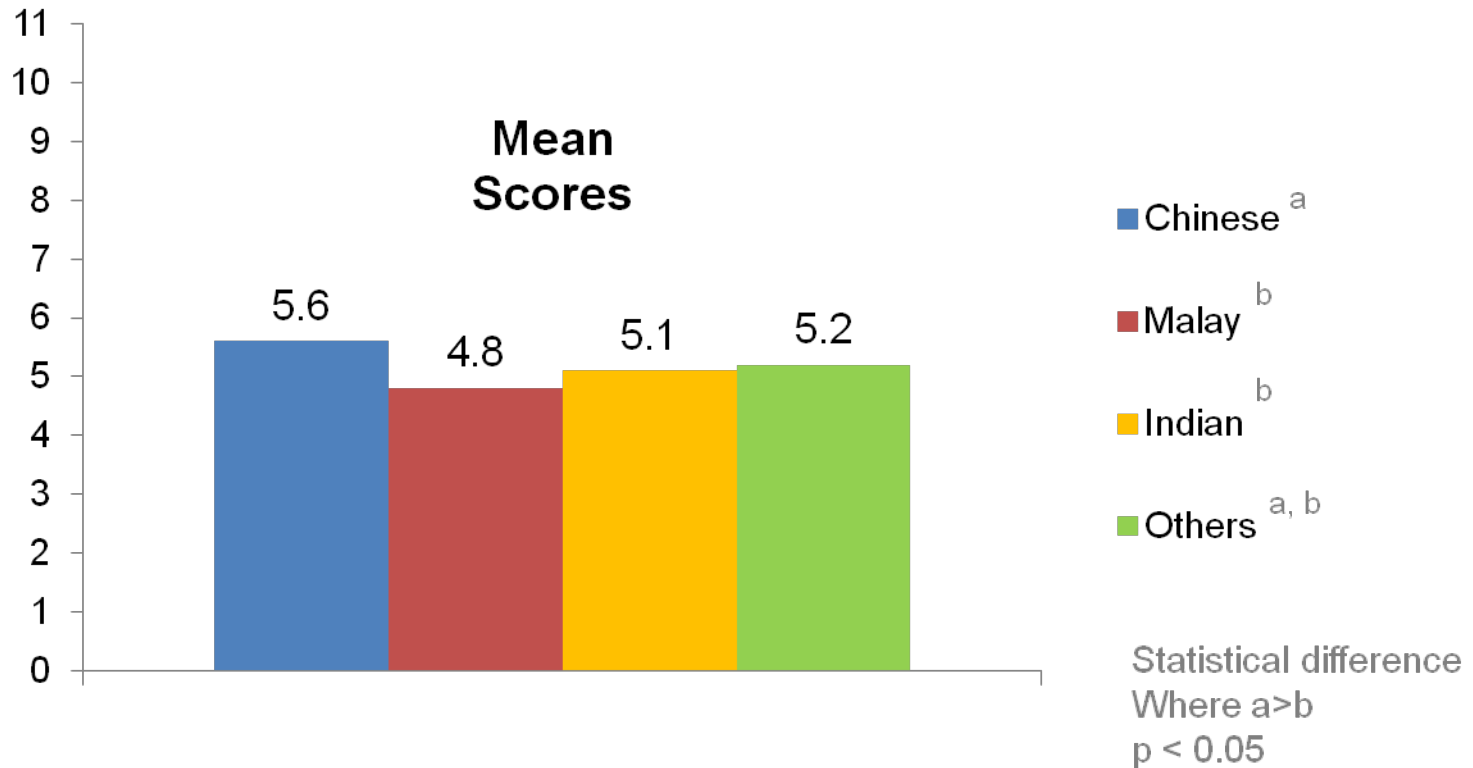
Male respondents were closer to official interpretation.



# Political Knowledge

## ETHNICITY

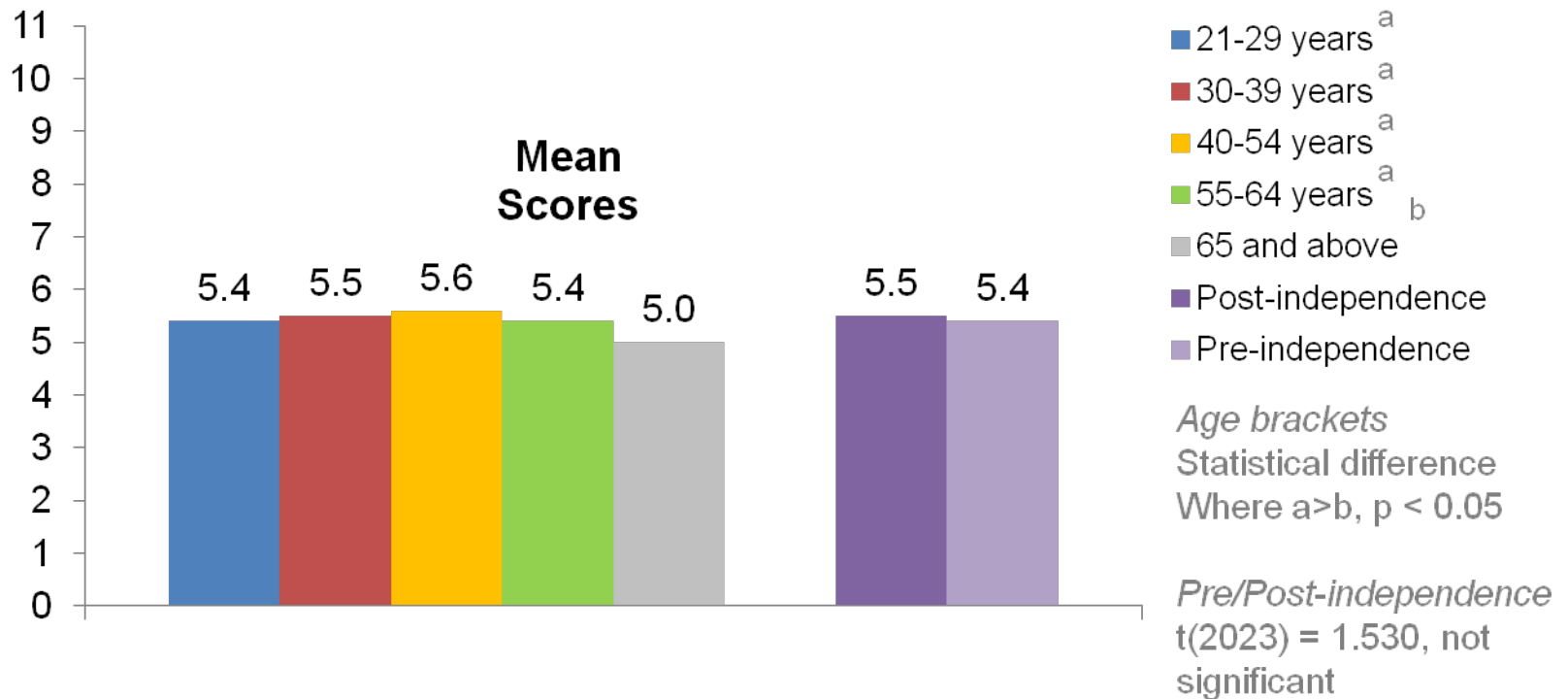
Chinese respondents were closer to official interpretation.



# Political Knowledge

## AGE

The oldest respondents were furthest from the official interpretation.

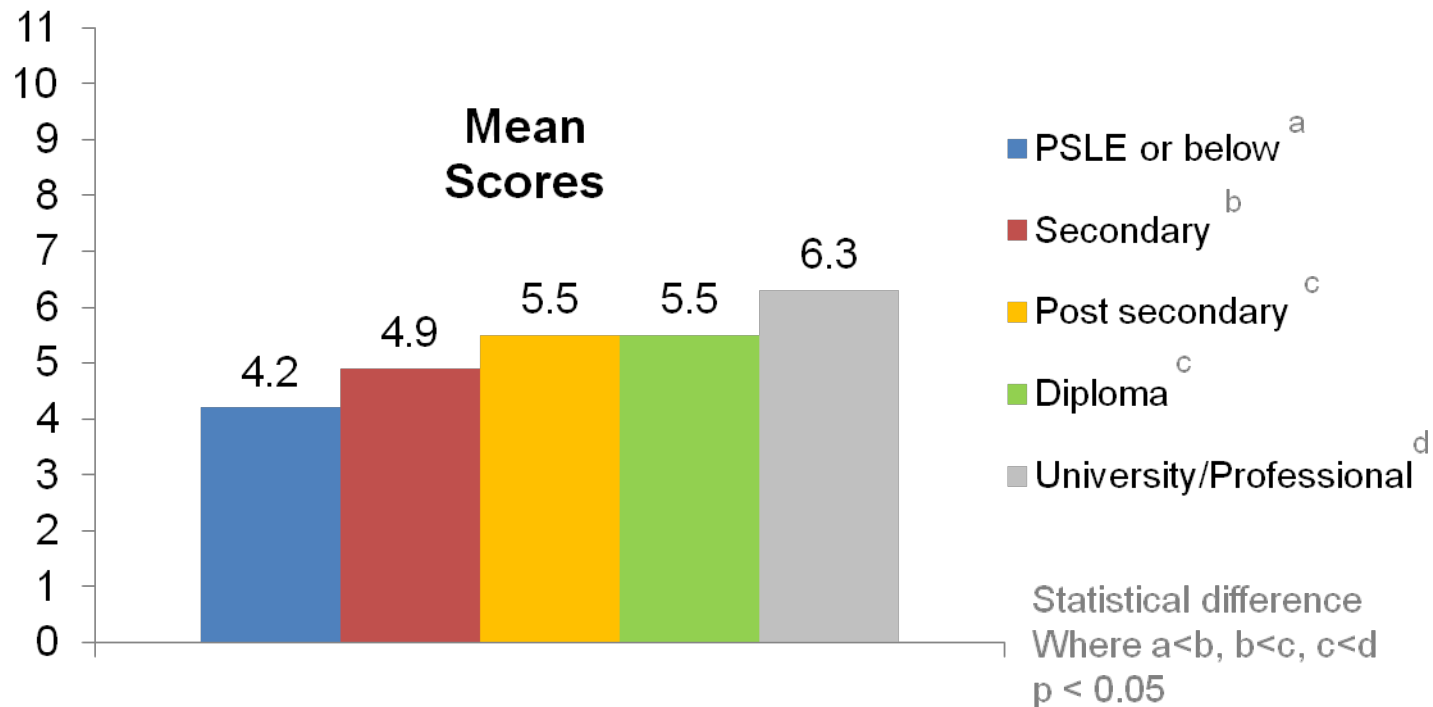




# Political Knowledge

## EDUCATION

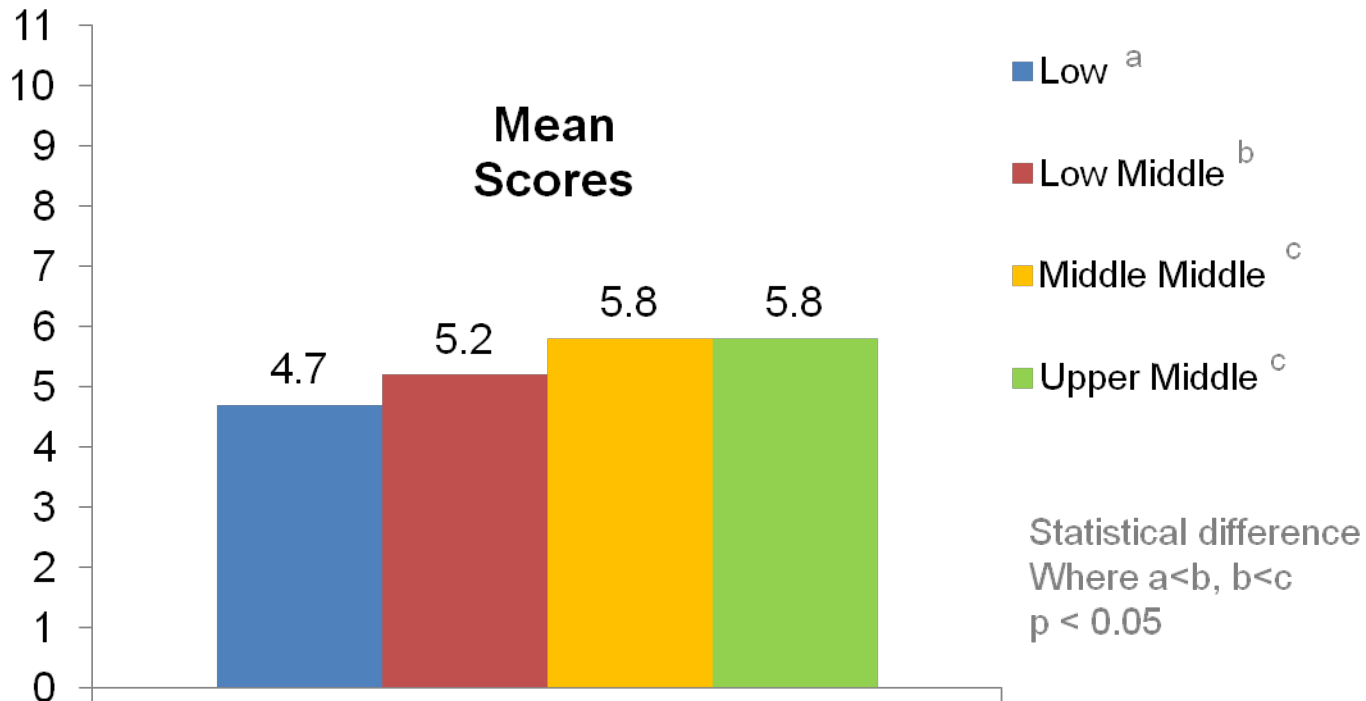
Better-educated were closest to official interpretation.



# Political Knowledge

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

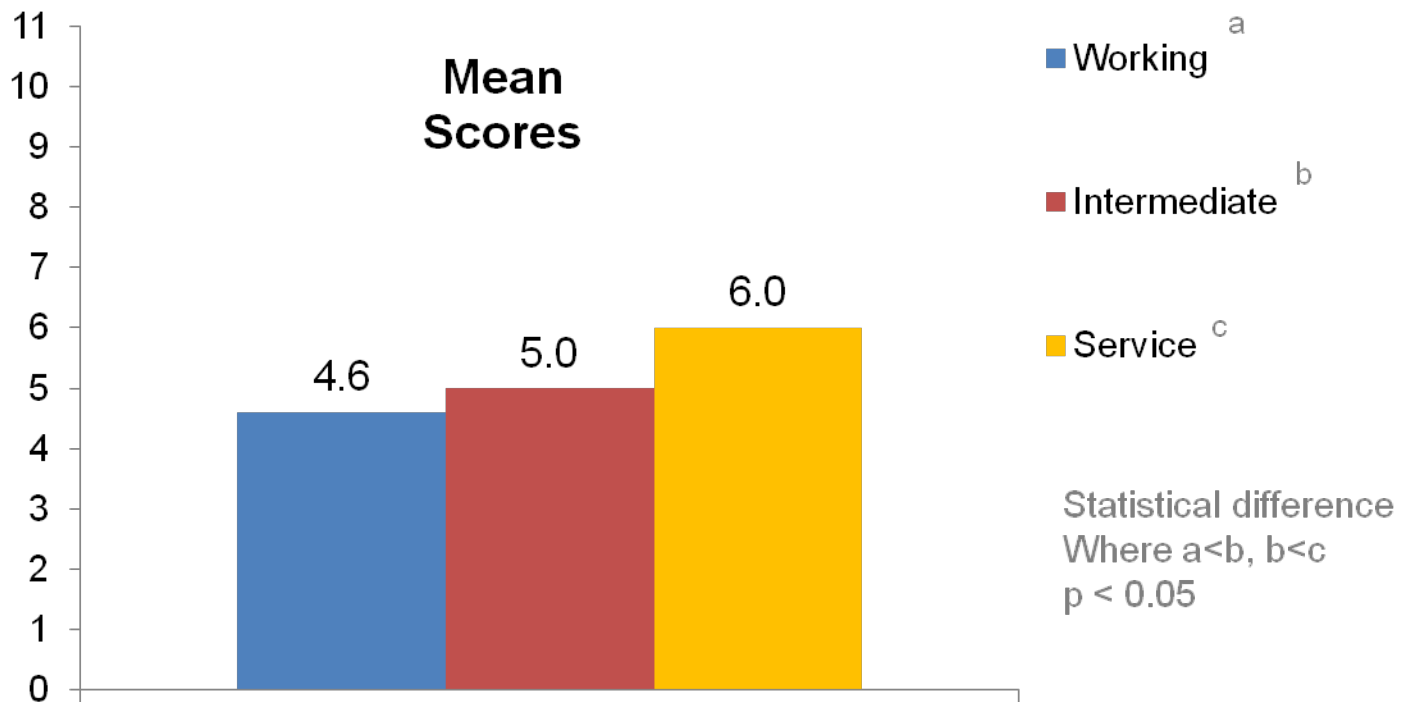
Respondents in higher household income brackets were closer to official interpretation.



# Political Knowledge

## OCCUPATIONAL CLASS

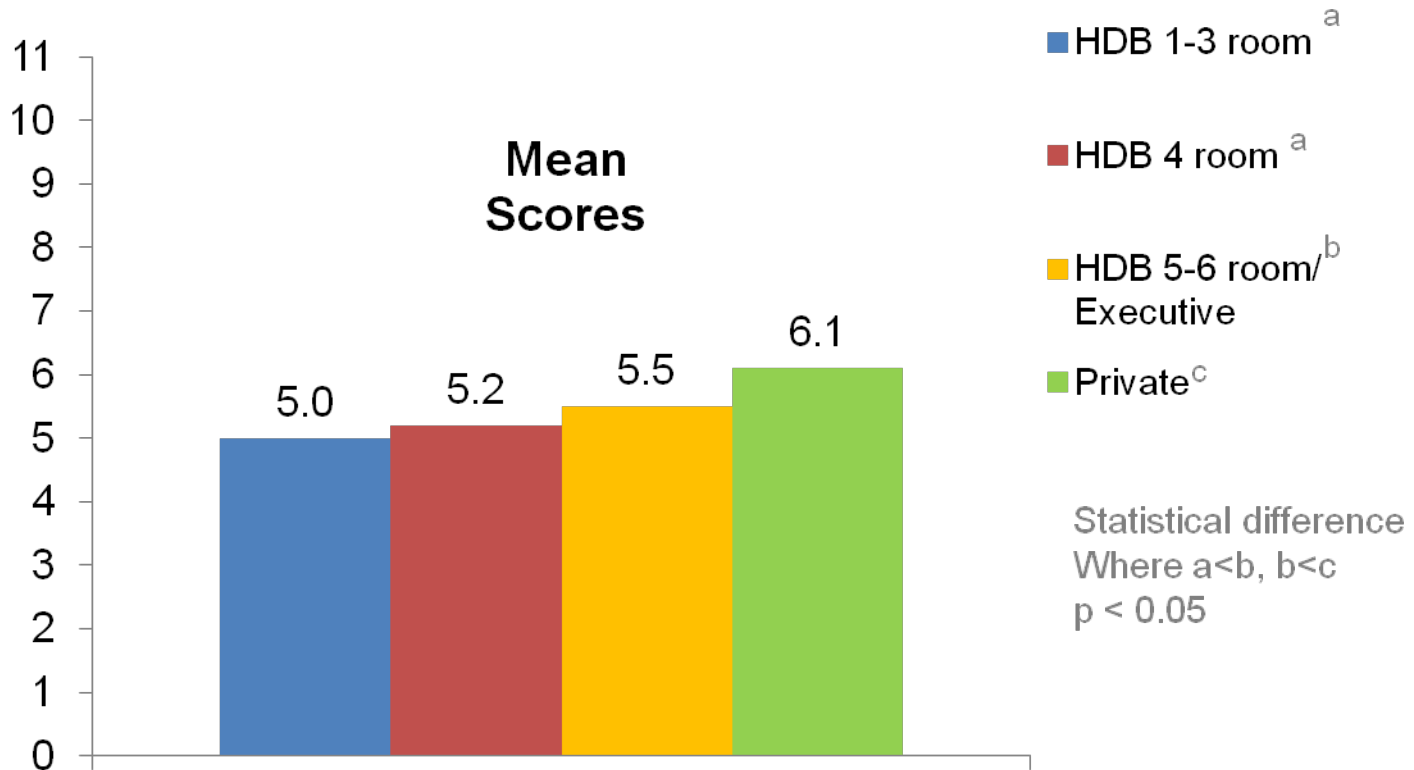
Respondents in the Service occupational class were closer to official interpretation.



# Political Knowledge

## HOUSING TYPE

Respondents in private dwelling type were closer to official interpretation.



# Characteristics of Candidates

# Characteristics of Candidates

Honesty, fairness and ability to represent the country well were the most important qualities.

Independence from political parties and resonance with candidates' views on national issues with respondents were least important.

Scale 1 to 5

1: Not important at all

2: Not so important

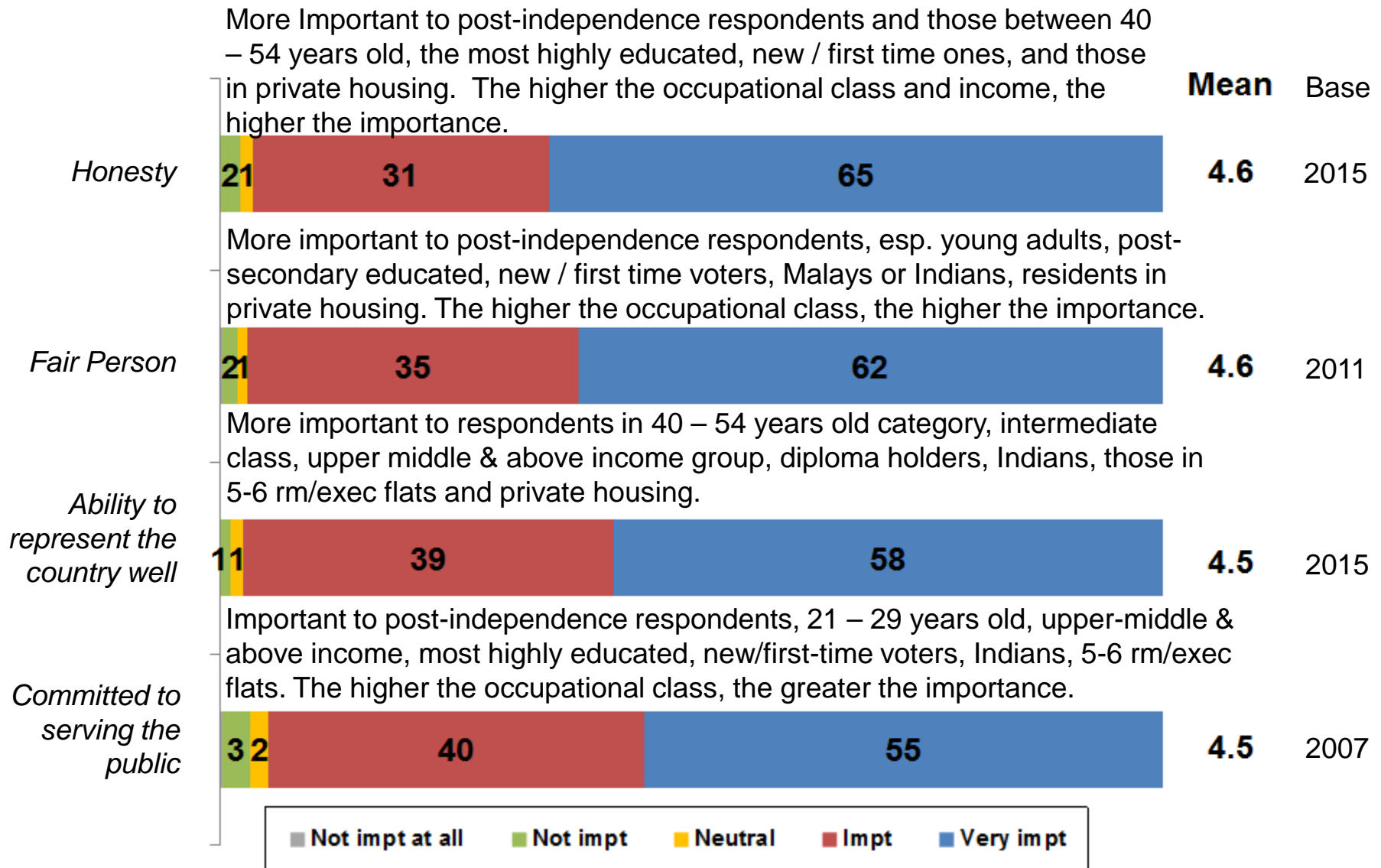
3: Neutral

4: Important

5: Very important

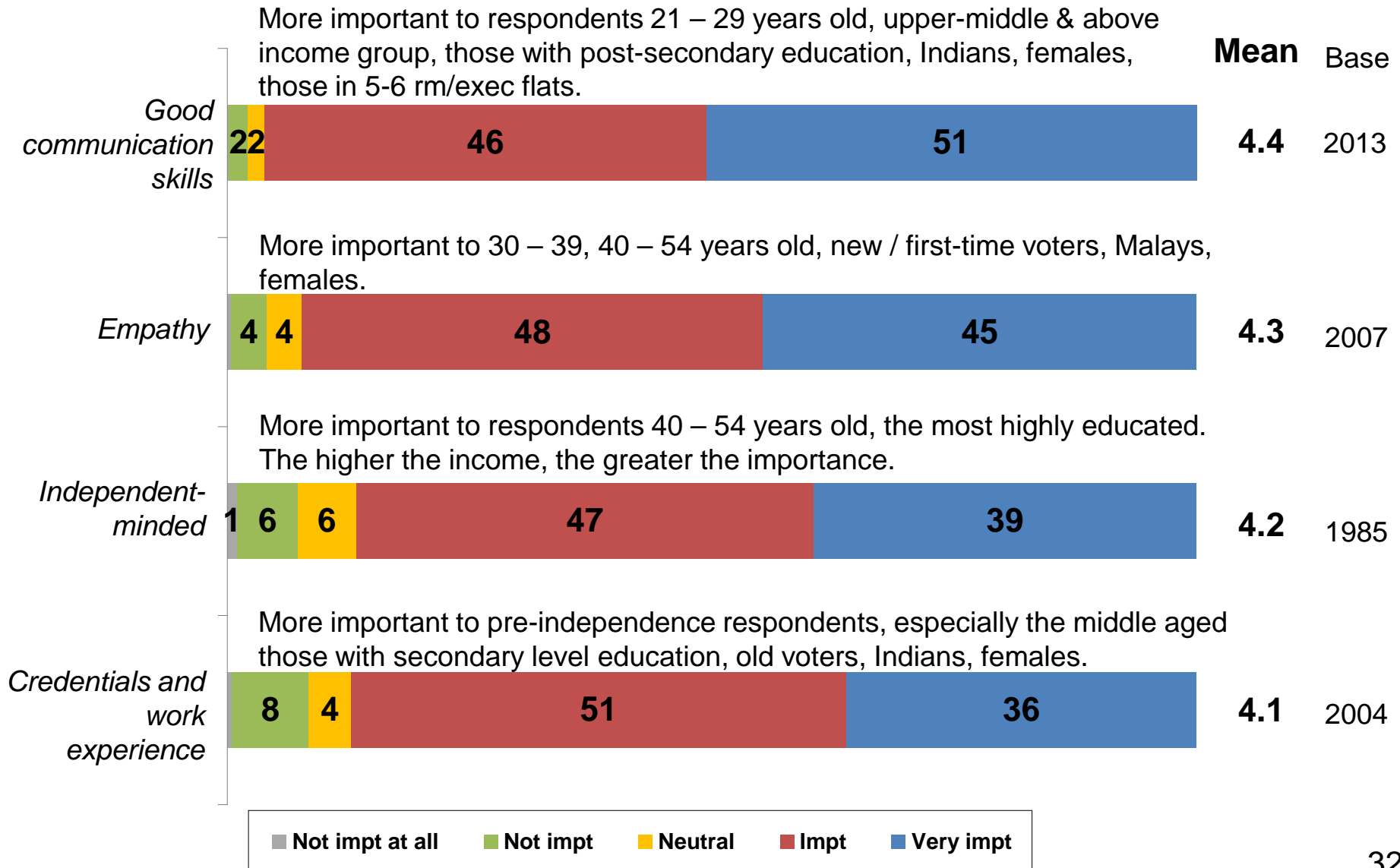
# Characteristics of Candidates

## How important...



# Characteristics of Candidates

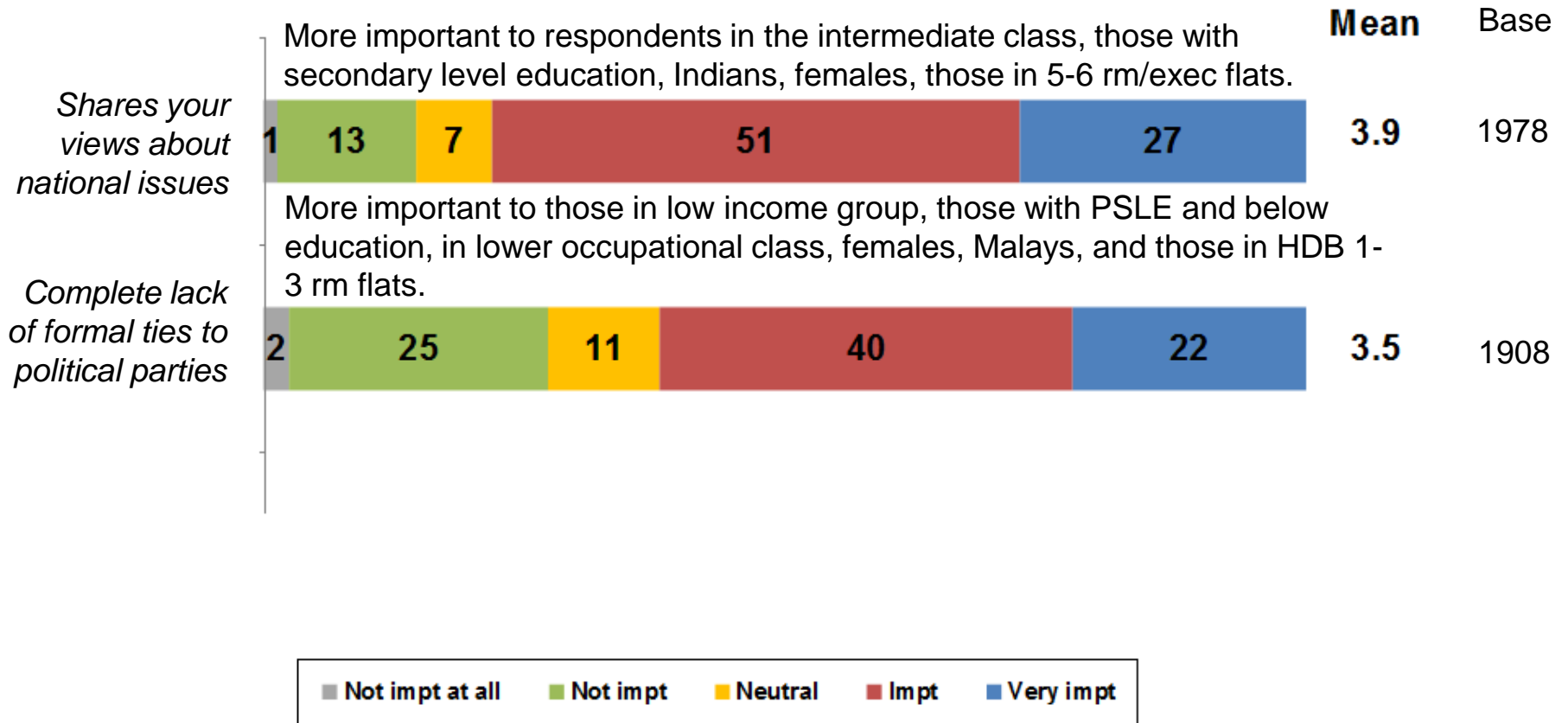
## How important...





# Characteristics of Candidates

*How important...*



# Characteristics of Candidates

- Independence from political parties was more important to those in the
  - Working Class
  - Those with PSLE education and below
  
- Why did it matter more to this group and less to the others?

Perhaps because the others took a realistic view that candidates are likely to have some association with political parties.

# Communication Channels

# Communication Channels

Traditional media - newspapers and TV, followed by the Internet, were significant in providing material that shaped voter preferences.

Scale 1 to 5

1: Not important at all

2: Not so important

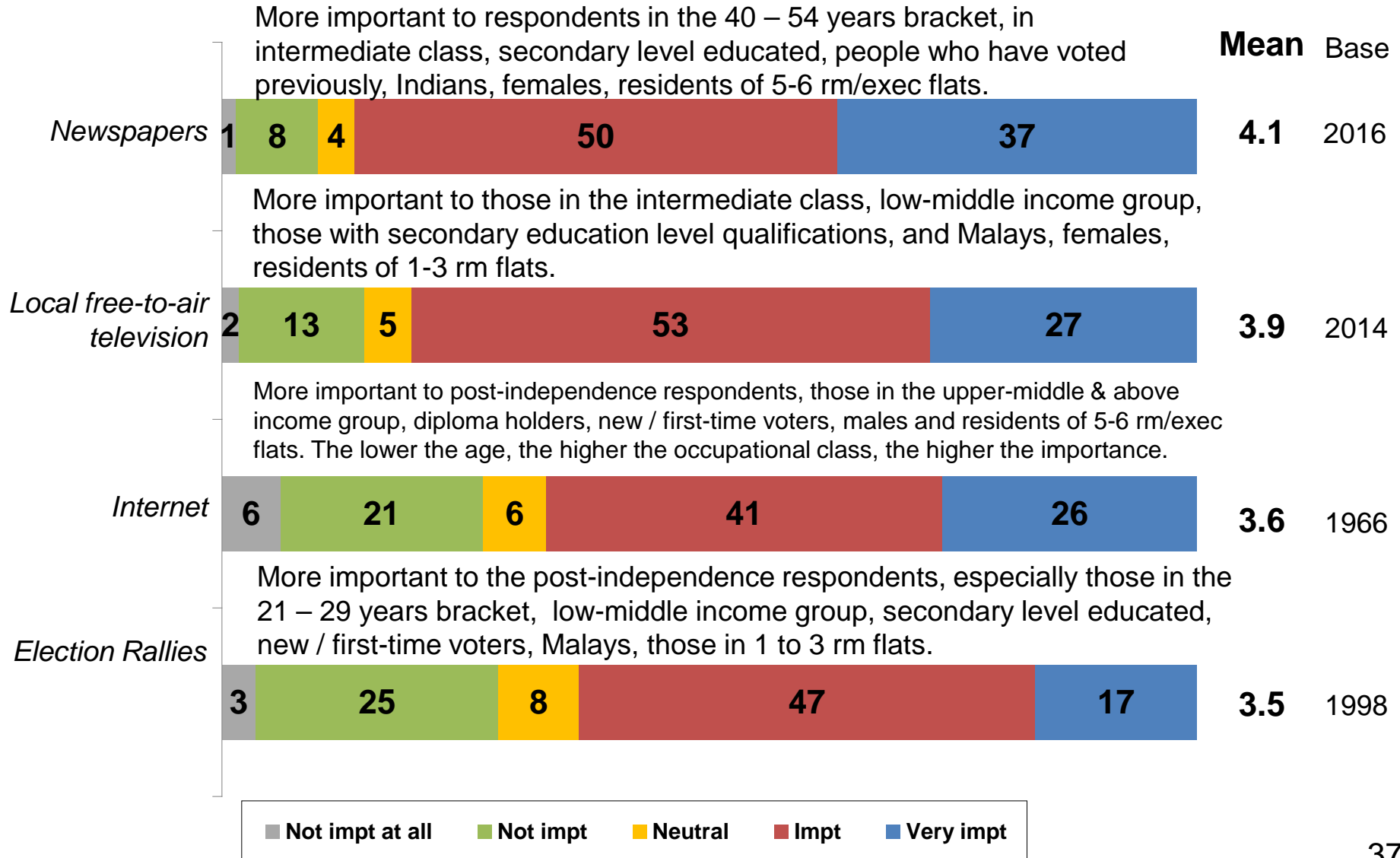
3: Neutral

4: Important

5: Very important

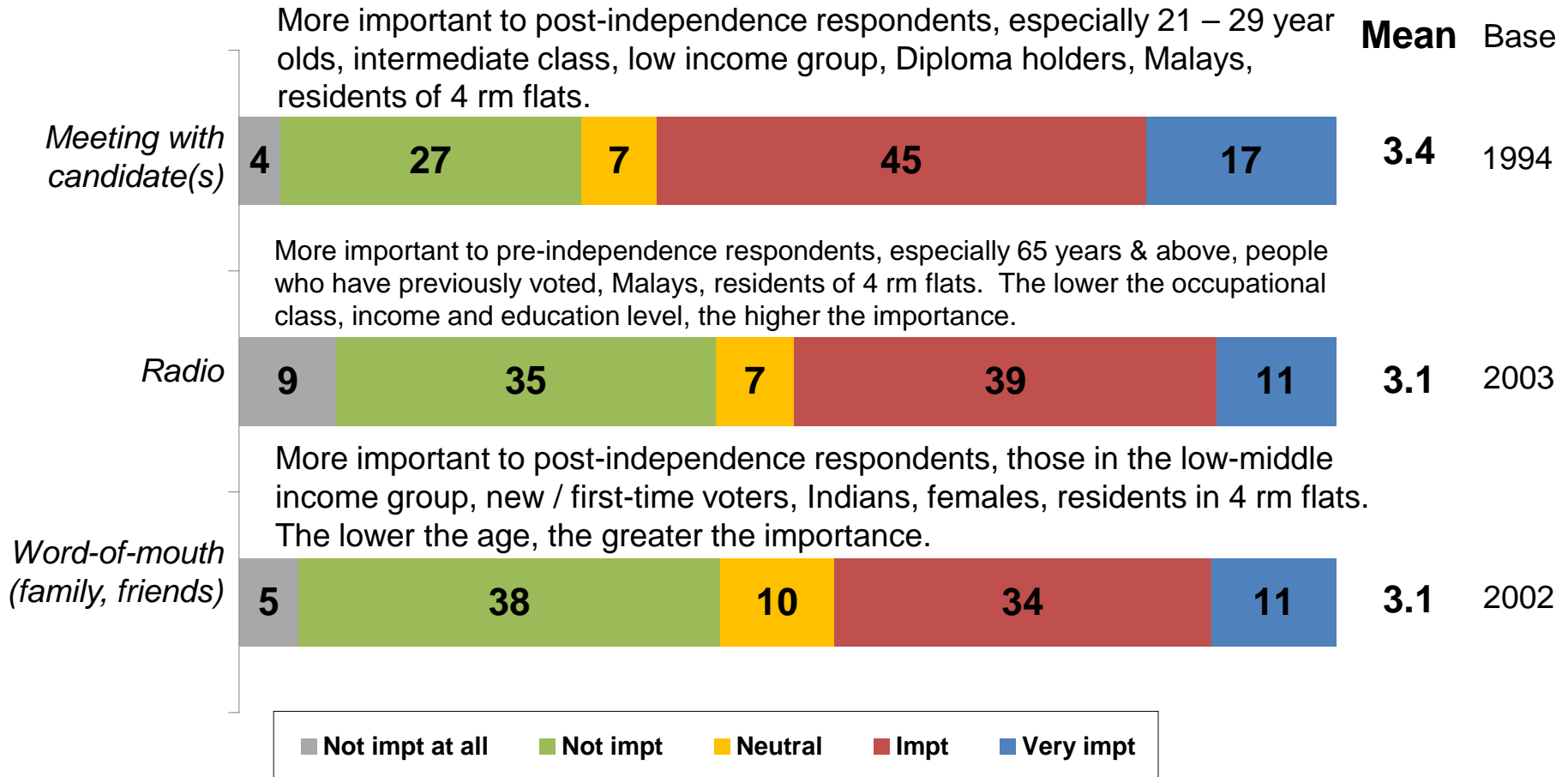
# Influence of Communication Channel

## In shaping voting decision...



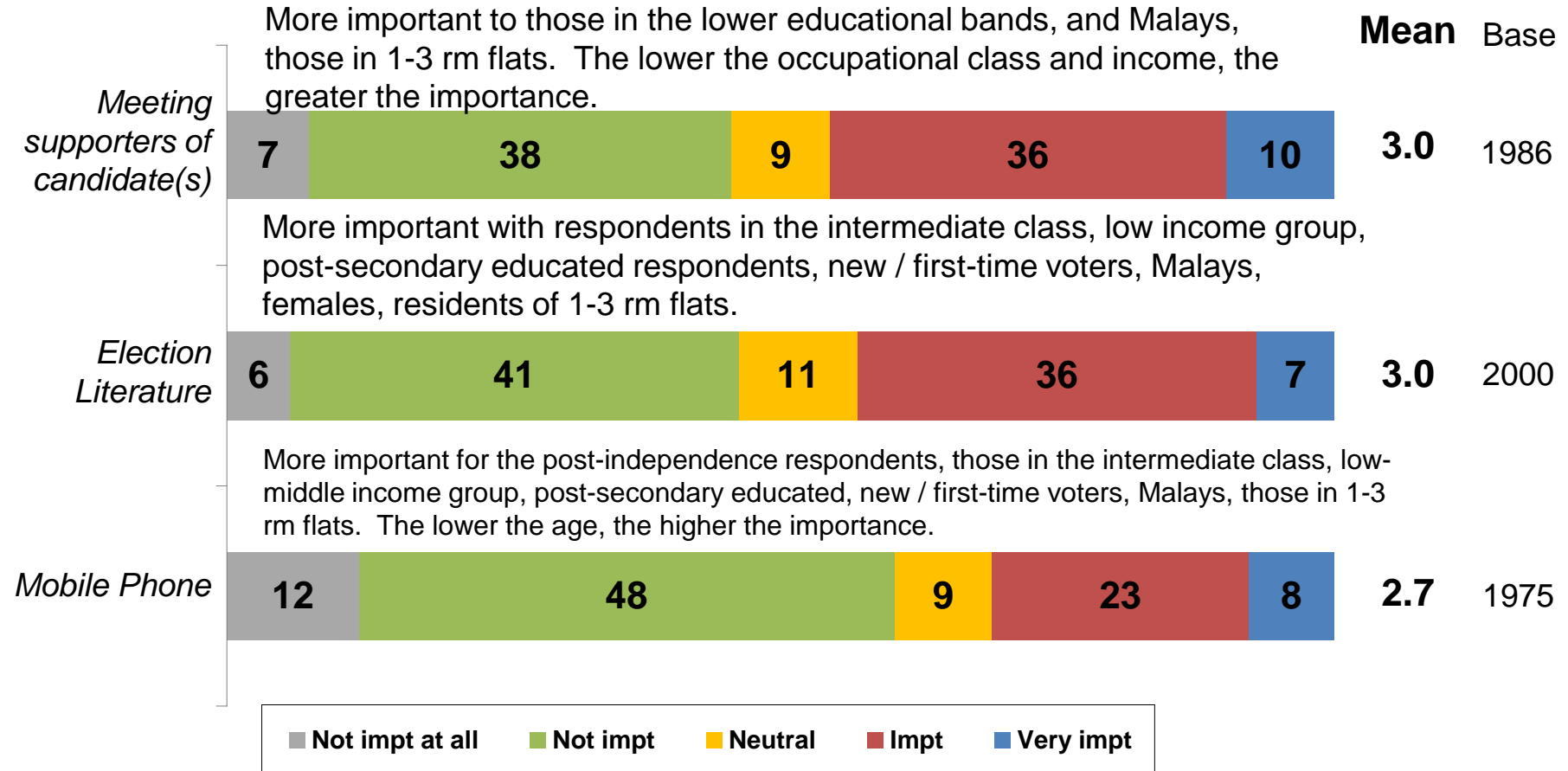
# Influence of Communication Channel

## *In shaping voting decision...*



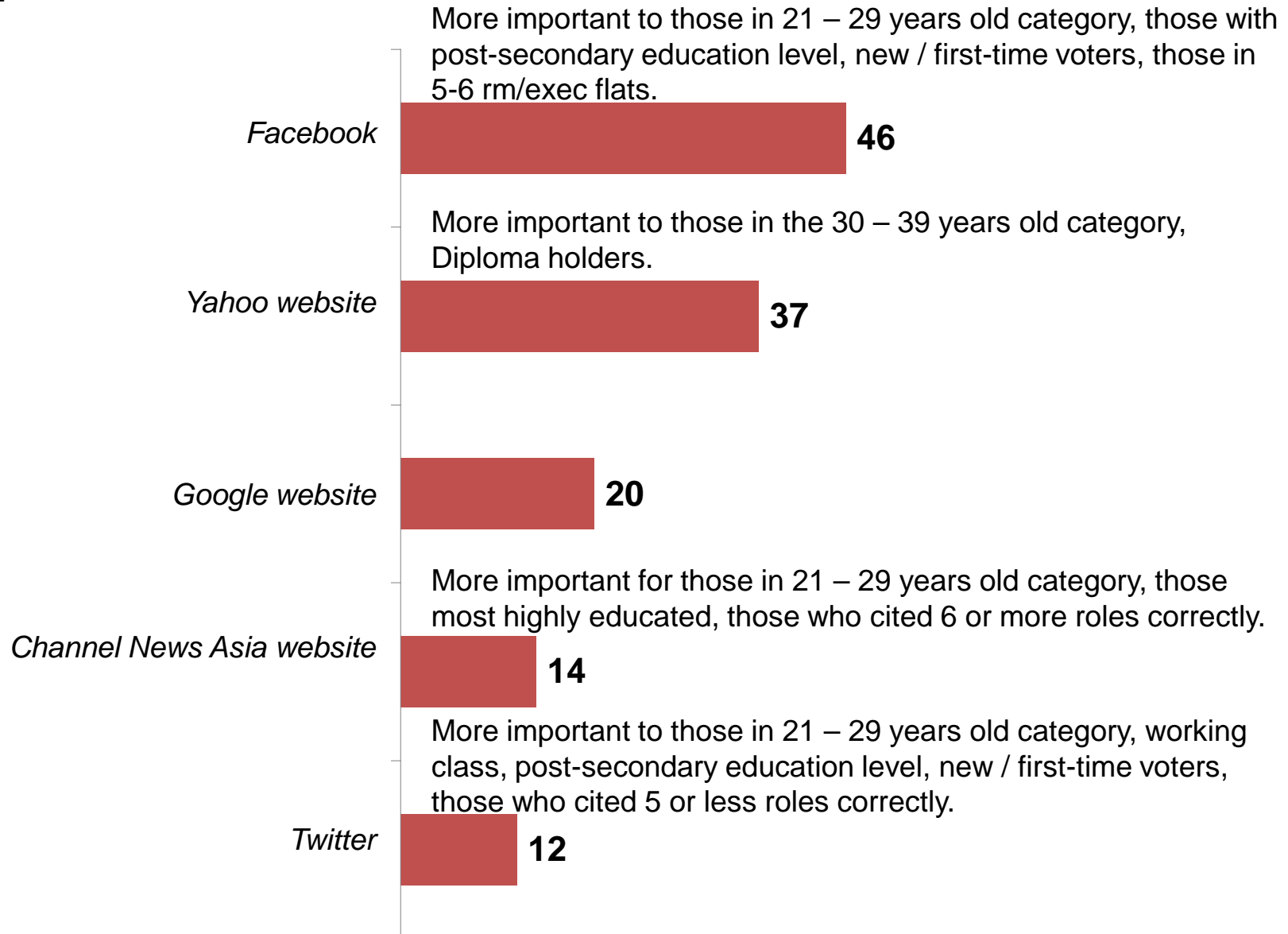
# Influence of Communication Channel

*In shaping voting decision...*



# Influence of Communication Channel

## Top 5 Online Channels Mentioned



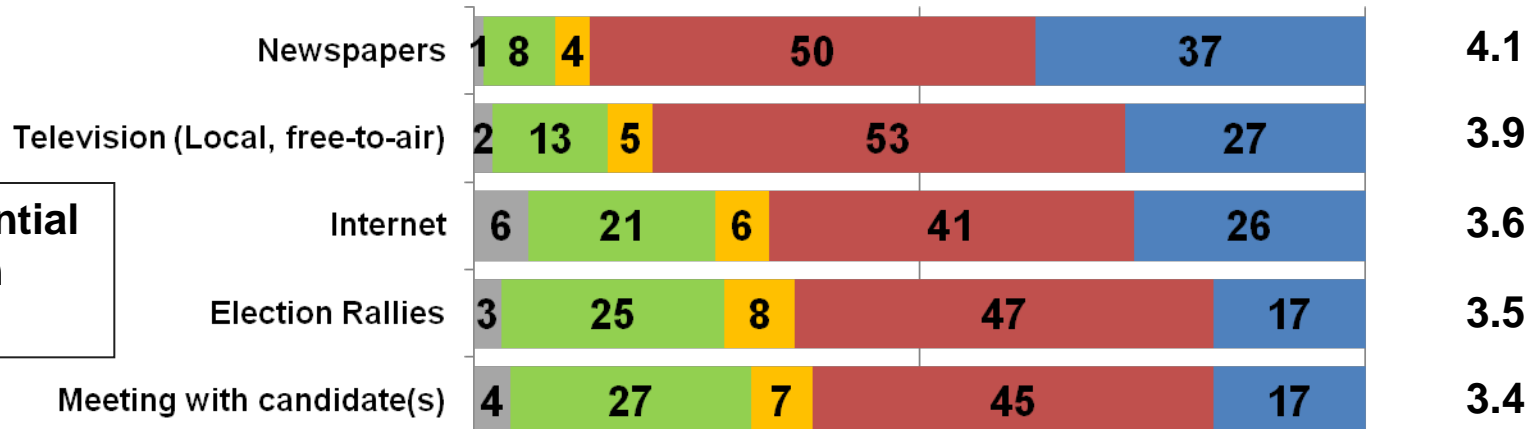


# Influence of Communication Channel

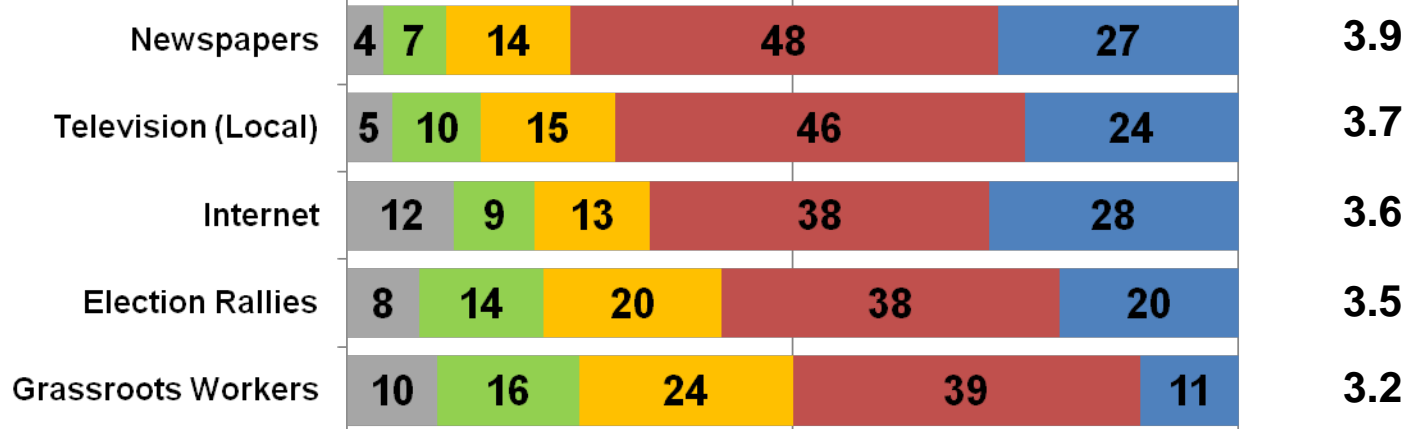
*In shaping voting decision...*

Mean

**Presidential Election 2011**



**General Election 2011**



# Communication Channels

- Newspapers still most important but *less* so for respondents in the following categories:
  - 21 – 29 to 30 – 39 age bracket
  - Service class
  - New / first-time voters
- Those groups tended to view Internet as an important channel. It was more influential
  - the lower the age; and
  - the higher the occupational class.
- Among Internet sources, different groups were attracted to the top two sources of Facebook and Yahoo website.

# Election System and Others

# Election System and Others

In this section of the survey on the election system and its outcome, two further indicators were developed - 'political legitimacy' and 'institutional independence'.

On 'political legitimacy', those in the lower socio-economic groups and older respondents score higher; they are more likely to feel that both the election system and outcome are legitimate.

On 'institutional independence', those in the higher socio-economic groups and younger respondents score higher; they are more likely to feel that the system should stand independent of other centres of authority.

# Election System and Others

## Agree or disagree that...

*The process of certifying who is eligible to contest for the post of Elected President is necessary.*

More agree in the 30 – 39 years old, middle-middle income group categories, females. Less agree in the 21 – 29 / 65 and above categories, low middle income categories.



**Mean** Base

**4.2** 1966

*The 2011 process of certification gave those I think were truly qualified the chance to contest.*

More agree among the less-educated, Malays. Less agree among diploma holders, Chinese and higher occupational groups.



**3.9** 1931

*The issue of the financial competence of the candidates was very important in my decision about who to vote.*

More agree among the pre-independence respondents, those who voted previously, less educated and Malays. Less agree among the highly educated and Chinese.



**3.5** 1949

■ Strongly Disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Neutral
 ■ Agree
 ■ Strongly Agree

# Election System and Others

## Agree or disagree that...

*The Elected President must be chosen through an election by Singaporeans and not selected by Parliament.*

More agree among the post-independence respondents, new/first-time voters, service class, upper-middle income, Diploma holders, males. Less agree among the younger respondents, those in the lower occupational class.

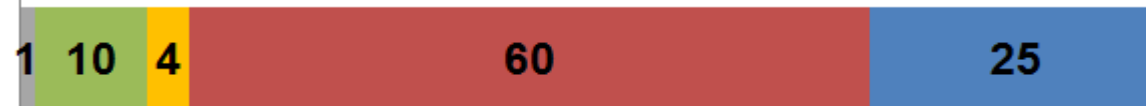
**Mean** Base



**4.3** 2002

*I believe a person of an ethnic minority group can be elected as president through the current system.*

More agree among the post-independence respondents, new/first-time voters, service class, degree holders, Indians, 5-6 rm/exec flat dwellers, males. The lower the age, higher the income, the higher the agreement.



**4.0** 1961

*Overall, there is **no need to change anything** in the system of the Elected Presidency.*

More agree among the pre-independence respondents, those who have voted before, working class, with PSLE or below qualifications, Indians, users of traditional media. The lower the age, the higher the income, the lower the agreement and especially among netizens..



**3.4** 1945

■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

# Election System and Others

*Agree or disagree that...*

**Political parties** should not be allowed to endorse candidates in the presidential election.

More agree among 30 – 39 years old, new/first-time voters, Middle-Middle income group, Indians, males those in private housing. The higher the occupational and educational class, the more likely to agree. Less agree among those who are 65 years & above, in the low income group, Chinese.



**Mean** Base  
3.8 1945

**Social organisations, unions or other community groups** should not be allowed to endorse candidates in the presidential election.

More agree among the respondents in the 40 – 54 years old category, service class, upper middle income group, better-educated (diploma and degree holders), males, dwellers of 5-6 rm/exec flats and those in the 'others' ethnic group. Less agree in the 65 & above group, low income group and Chinese.



**3.7** 1945



# Election System and Others

## Agree or disagree that...

*All candidates got **fair coverage by the mass media**, that is, free-to-air television, newspapers and radio.*

More agree in the pre-independence group, among those who have voted before, secondary educated and Indians, females and 1-3 rm flat dwellers. Less agree from the degree holders and netizens. The lower the age, higher the occupational group and income, the lower the agreement.



**Mean** Base  
**3.7** 1985

*The Patrick Tan issue was very important in my decision about who to vote.*

More agree in the post-independence category, new/first-time voters, young adults, low income and Malays, 1-3 rm flat dwellers. Less agree in the Old category, the middle middle income, higher occupational category and degree holders.



**2.9** 1712





# Election System and Others

## Agree or disagree that...

*The outcome of who has been elected on 27 August will strengthen Singapore's governing system.*

More agree in the pre-independence respondents, old voters and those with lower education, females and 1-3 rm flat dwellers. The lower the age, the higher the occupational group and income level, the lower the agreement.



**Mean** Base  
**3.6** 1904

*The outcome of the May general election shaped my vote in the presidential election.*

More agree the lower the occupational class, income and educational level, those in 4 rm flats and among Malays. Chinese tend to disagree.

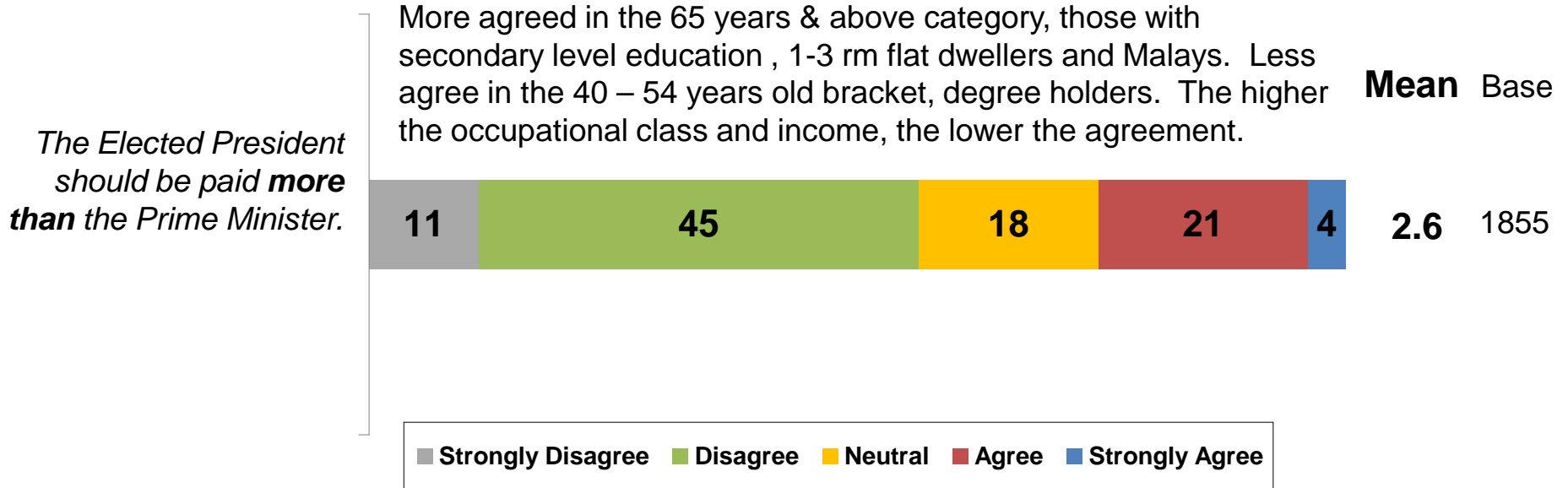


**3.1** 1949

Strongly Disagree
  Disagree
  Neutral
  Agree
  Strongly Agree

# Election System and Others

*Agree or disagree that...*



# Election System and Others

## Agree or disagree that...

More agree among the 40-54 age category, degree holders, Indians, males and dwellers of private homes. The higher the occupational class and income the higher the agreement. Less agree in the 21 – 29 years old bracket, those who with PSLE or below and among Chinese. Those more interested in politics would have cited more than six statements about the role of the presidency correctly.

*I am interested in matters related to Singapore's governing system.*



**Mean** Base

**3.8** 1972

■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

# Political Legitimacy

# Political Legitimacy

Draws on responses to four statements on the election system:

- The 2011 process of certification gave those I think were truly qualified the chance to contest.
- Overall, there is no need to change anything in the system of the Elected Presidency.
- All candidates got fair coverage by the mass media, that is, free-to-air television, newspapers and radio.
- The outcome of who has been elected on 27 August will strengthen Singapore's governing system.
- Mean score of 14.5 out of 20 points.

# Political Legitimacy

## GENDER

Female respondents scored higher.



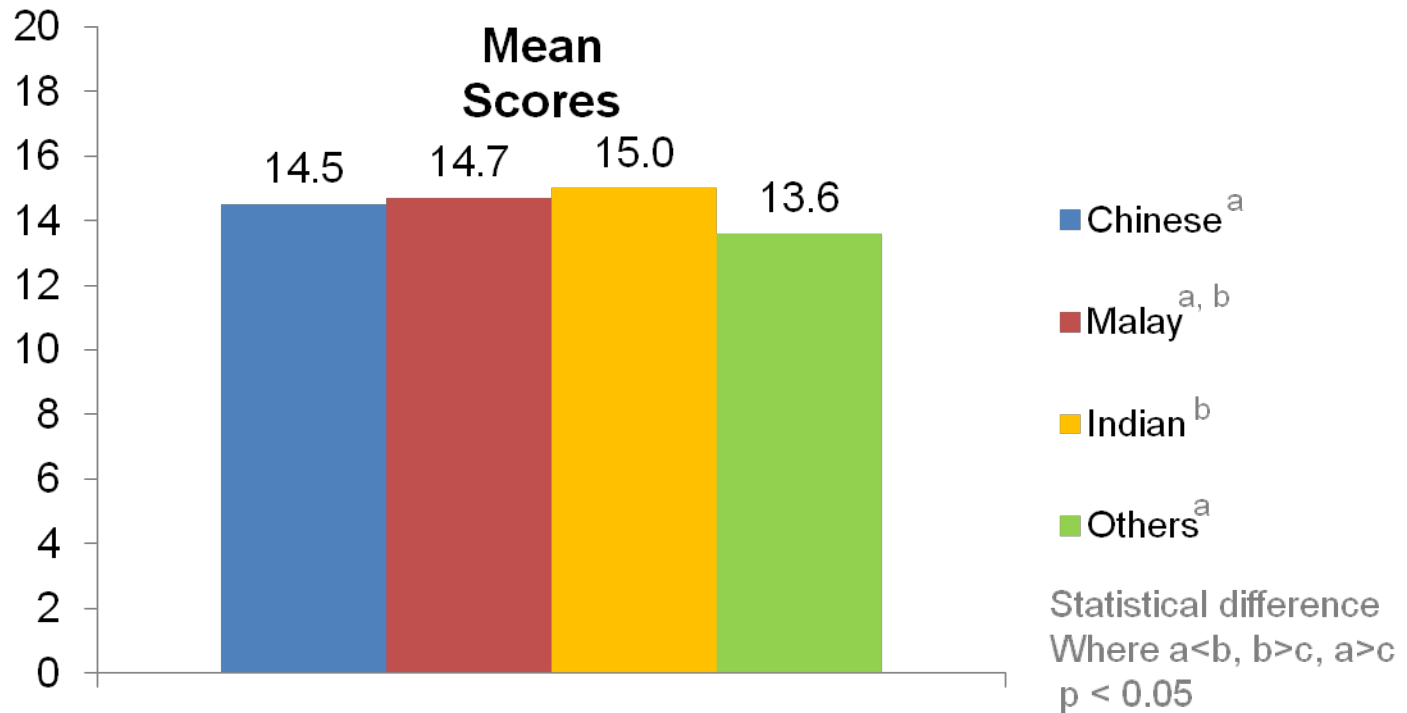
■ Male <sup>a</sup>  
■ Female <sup>b</sup>

Statistical Difference  
 $a < b$   
 $t(2023) = -2.415$   
 $p < 0.05$

# Political Legitimacy

## ETHNICITY

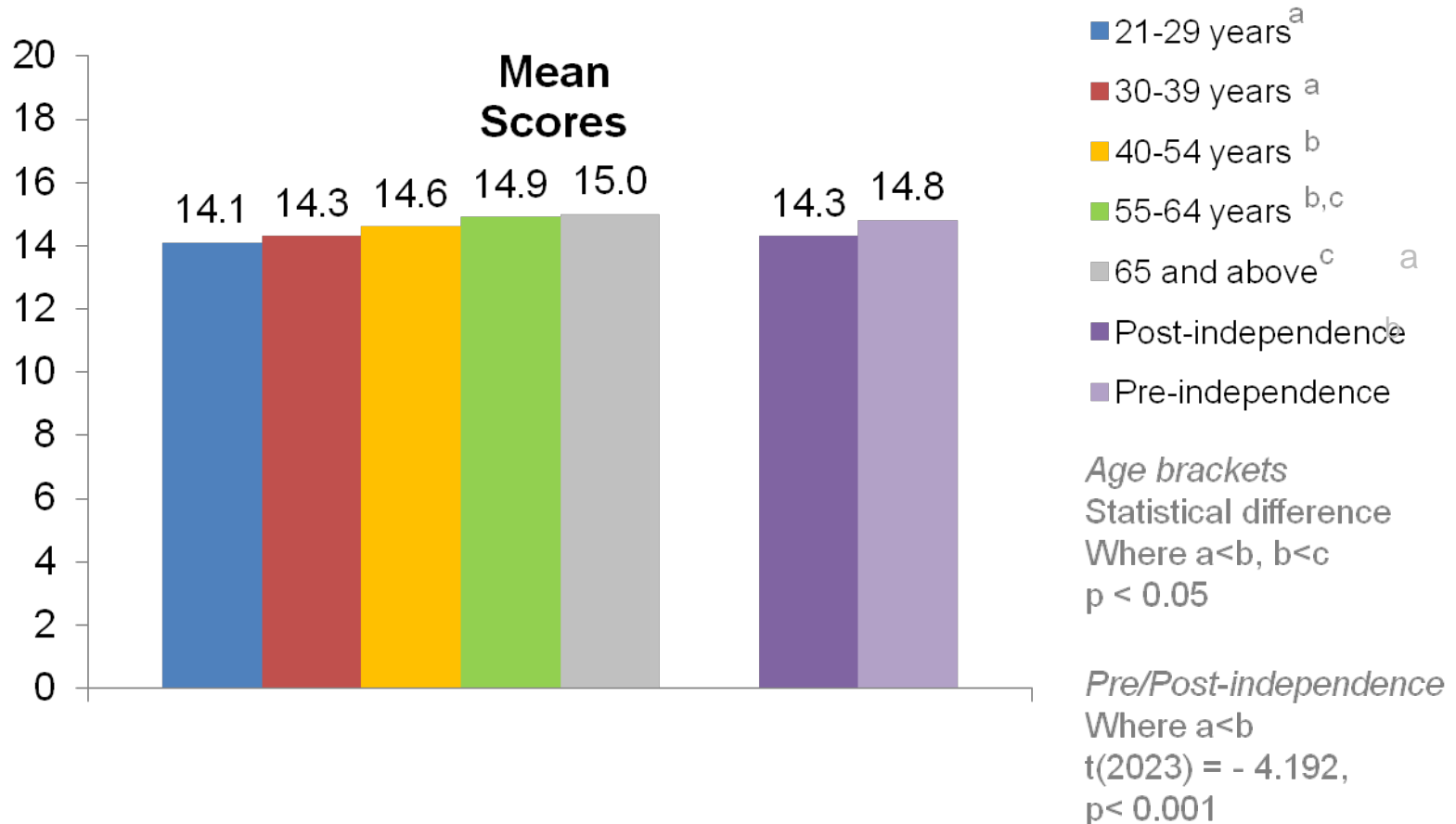
'Others' scored the lowest.



# Political Legitimacy

## AGE

The older respondents, 55 years and above, scored higher than the rest.

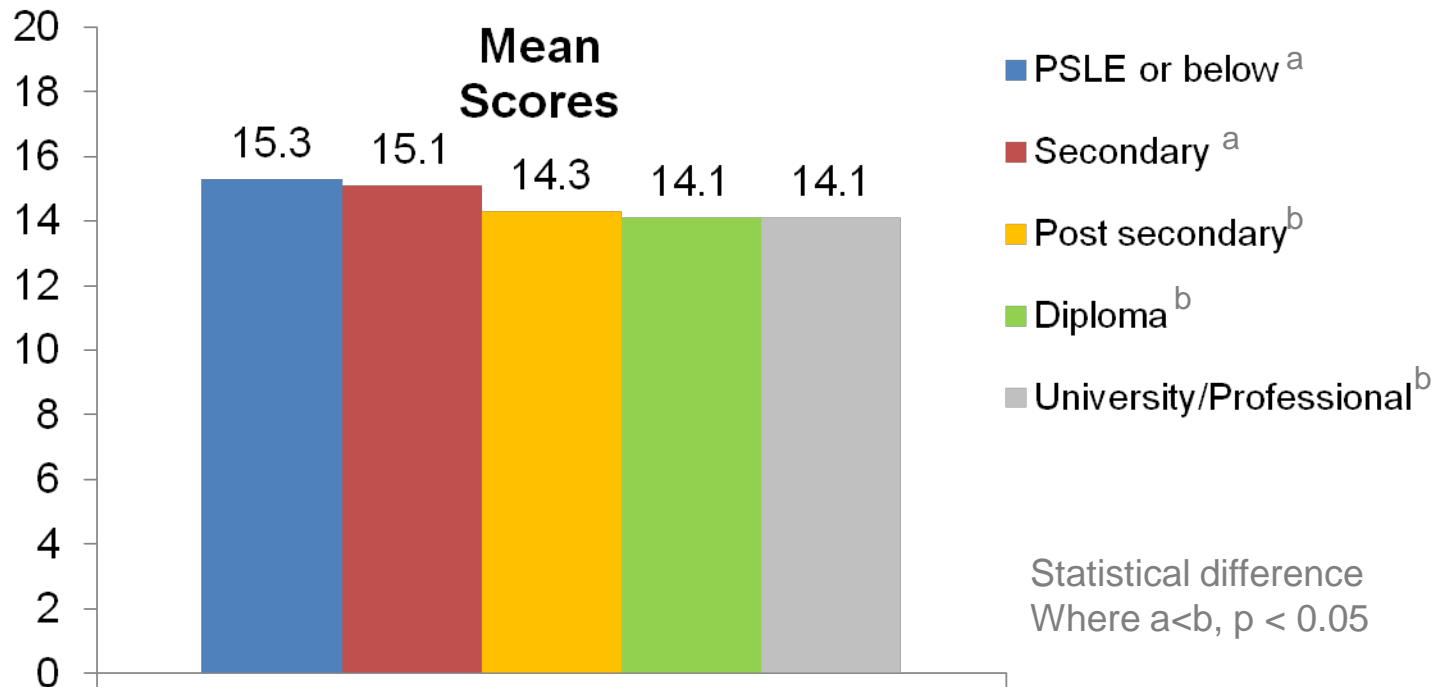




# Political Legitimacy

## EDUCATION

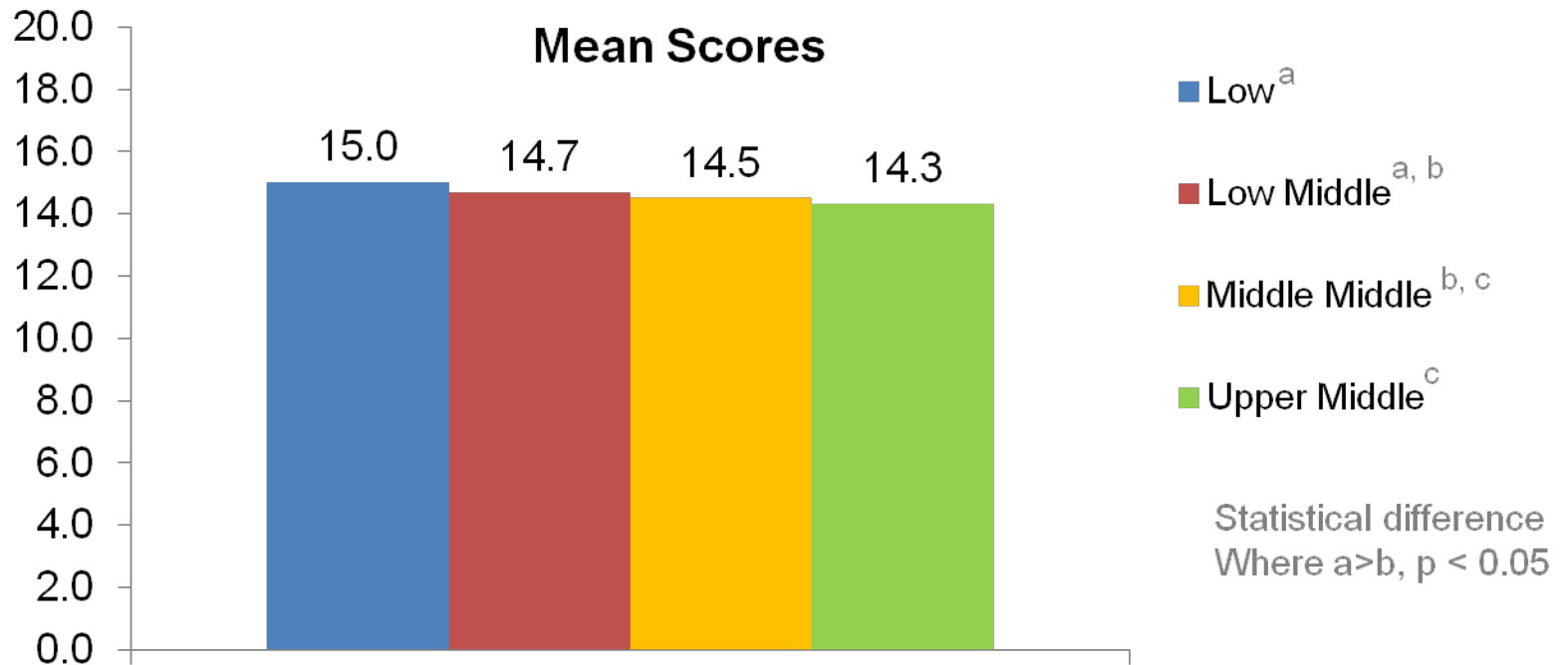
Lower educated respondents, secondary level scored higher than the rest.



# Political Legitimacy

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

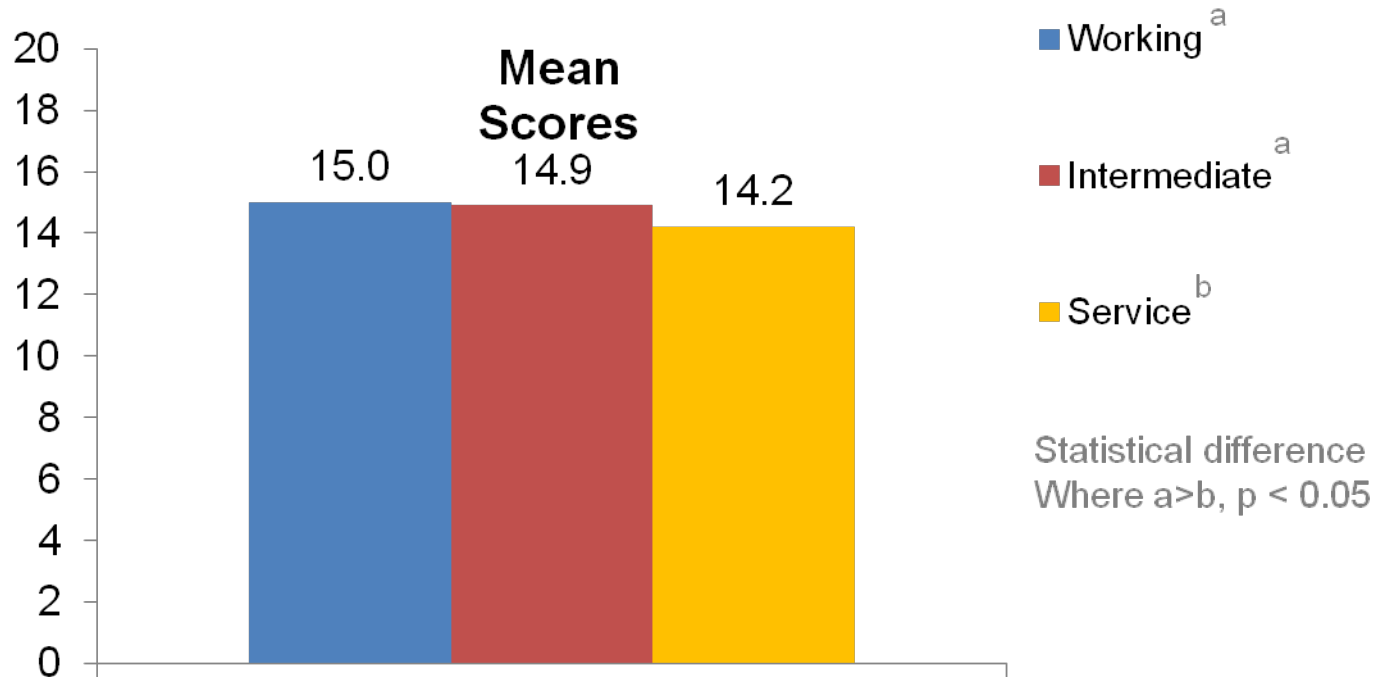
Respondents in low income group scored differently from those in the upper-middle income group.



# Political Legitimacy

## OCCUPATIONAL CLASS

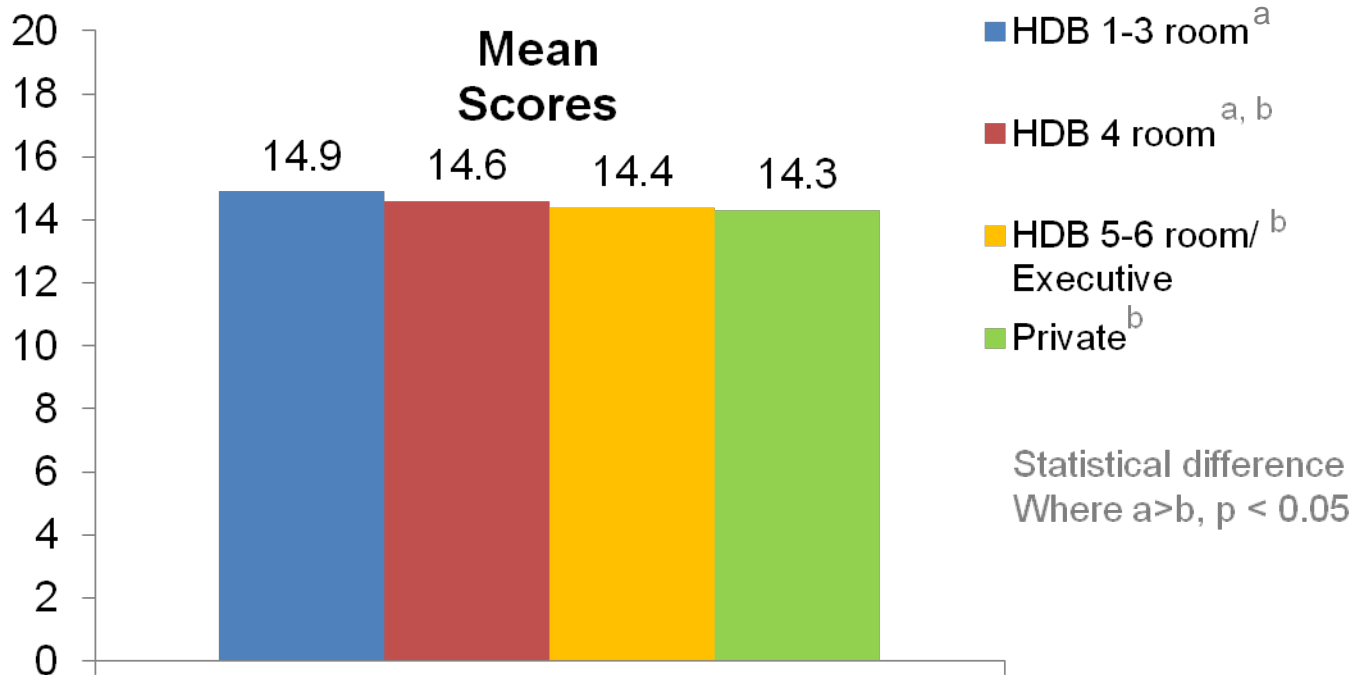
Service class respondents scored the lower than the rest.



# Political Legitimacy

## HOUSING TYPE

Respondents in least expensive dwelling types scored differently from those in private housing.



# Institutional Independence

# Institutional Independence

Draws on responses to three statements on the election system:

- The person who exercises the powers of the Elected President must be chosen through an election by Singaporeans and not selected by Parliament.
- Social organisations, unions or other community groups should not be allowed to endorse candidates in the presidential election.
- Political parties should not be allowed to endorse candidates in the presidential election.
- Mean score is 11.8 out of 15 points.

# Institutional Independence

## GENDER

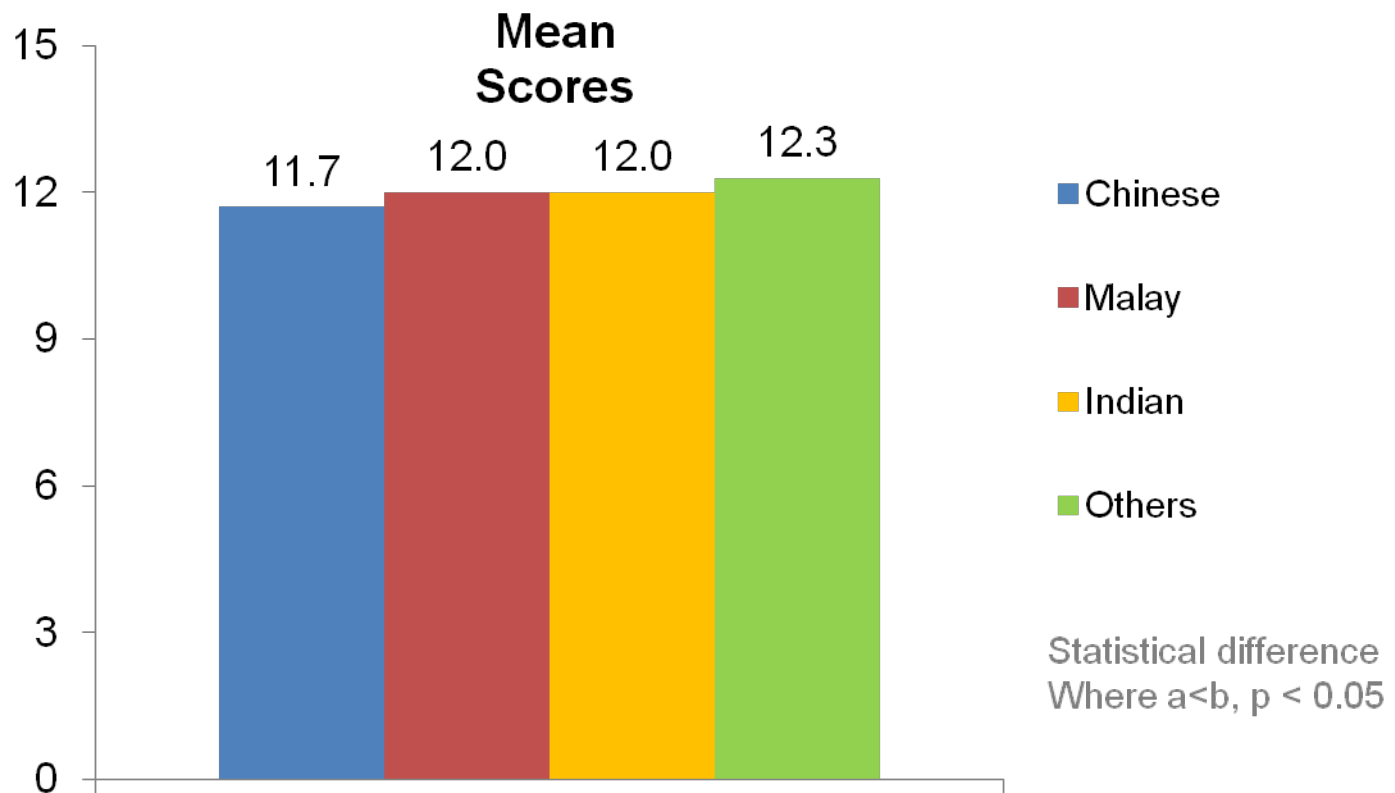
Male respondents scored higher.



# Institutional Independence

## ETHNICITY

No difference in ratings on institutional independence among the ethnic groups.

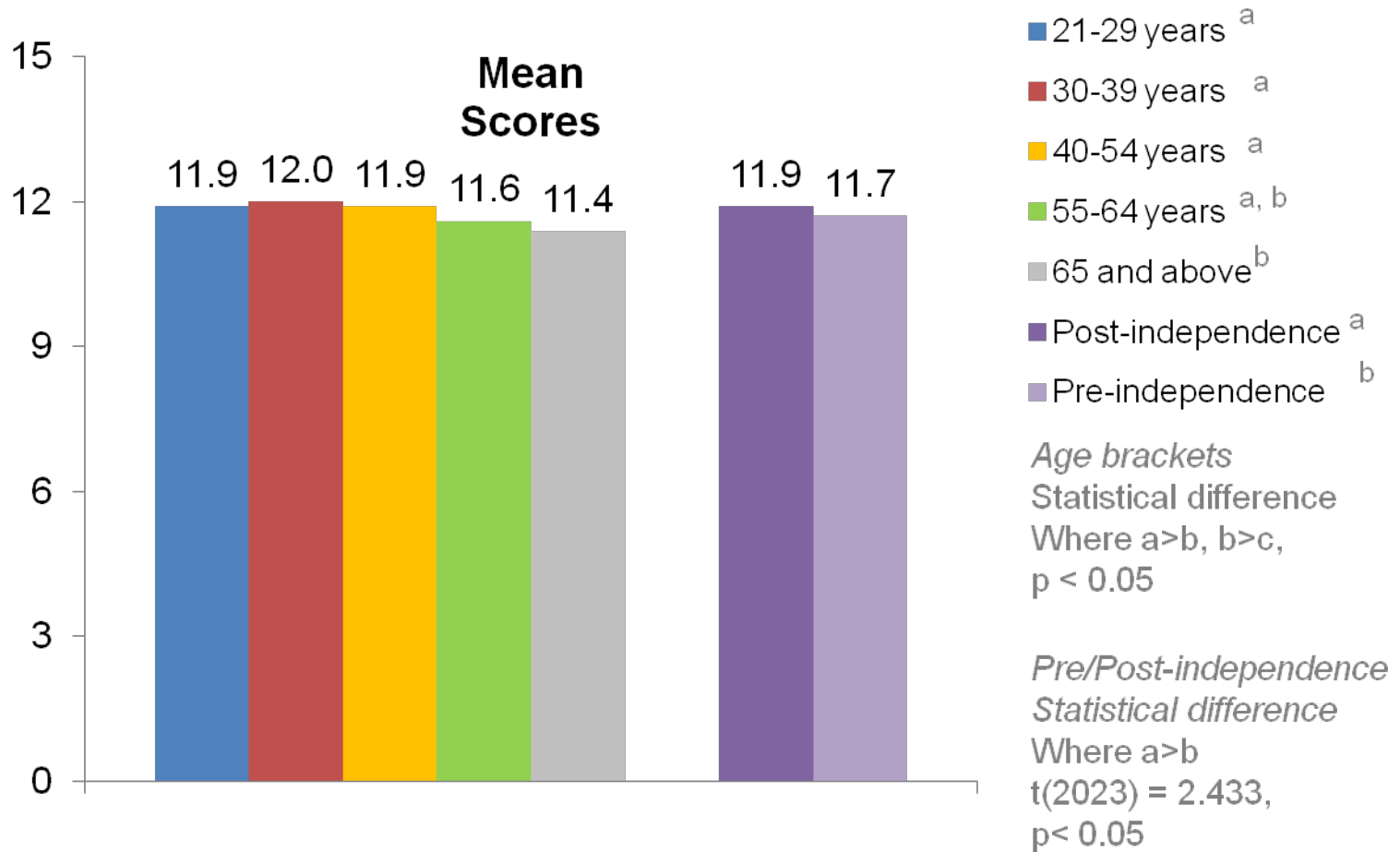




# Institutional Independence

## AGE

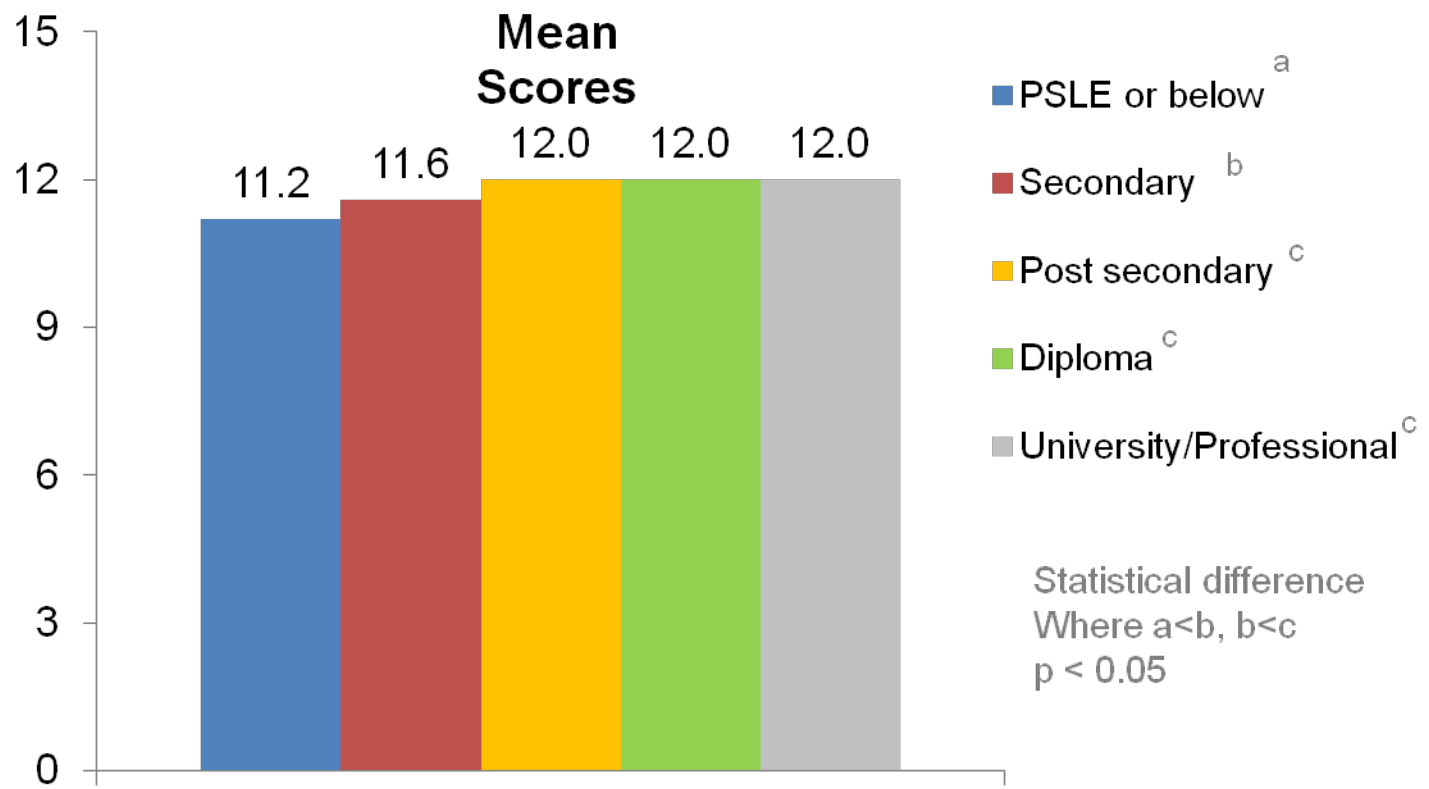
The post-independence group scored lower than the pre-independence one.



# Institutional Independence

## EDUCATION

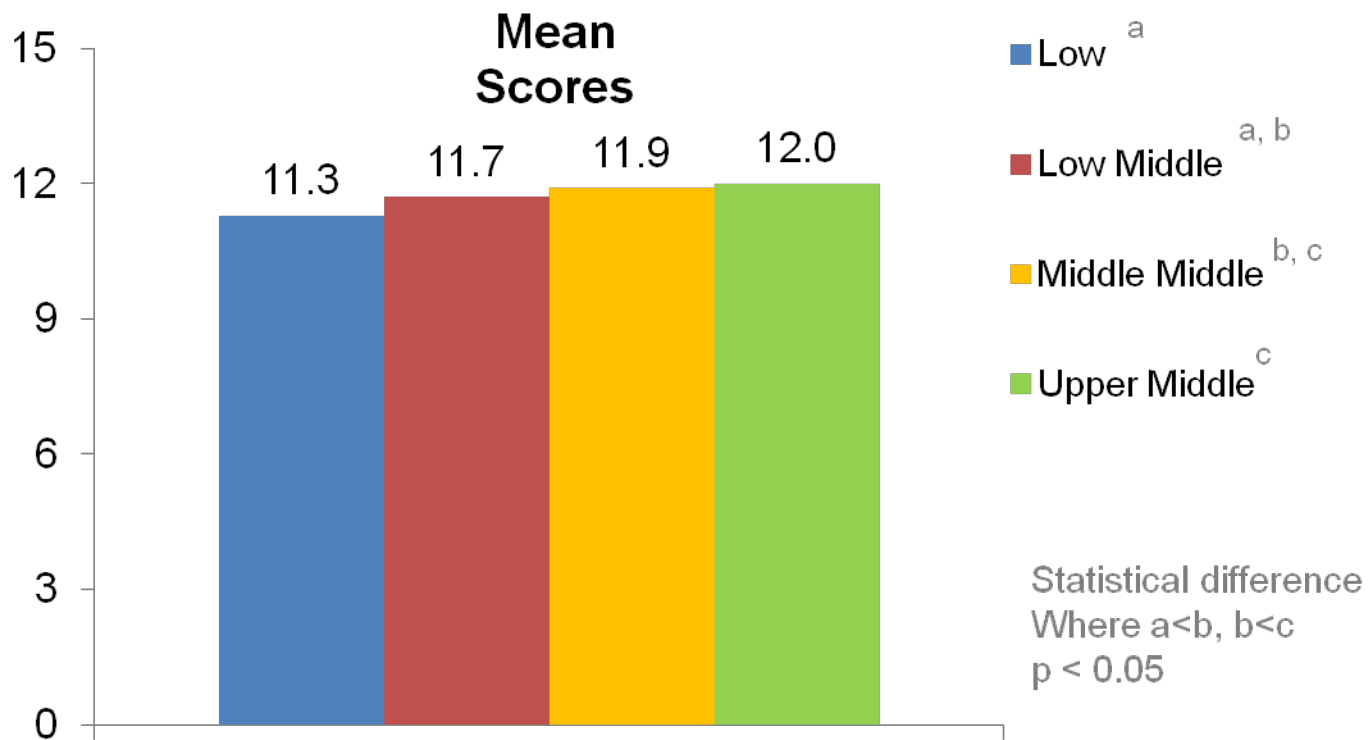
Respondents in the PSLE or below category scored lower than the rest.



# Institutional Independence

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

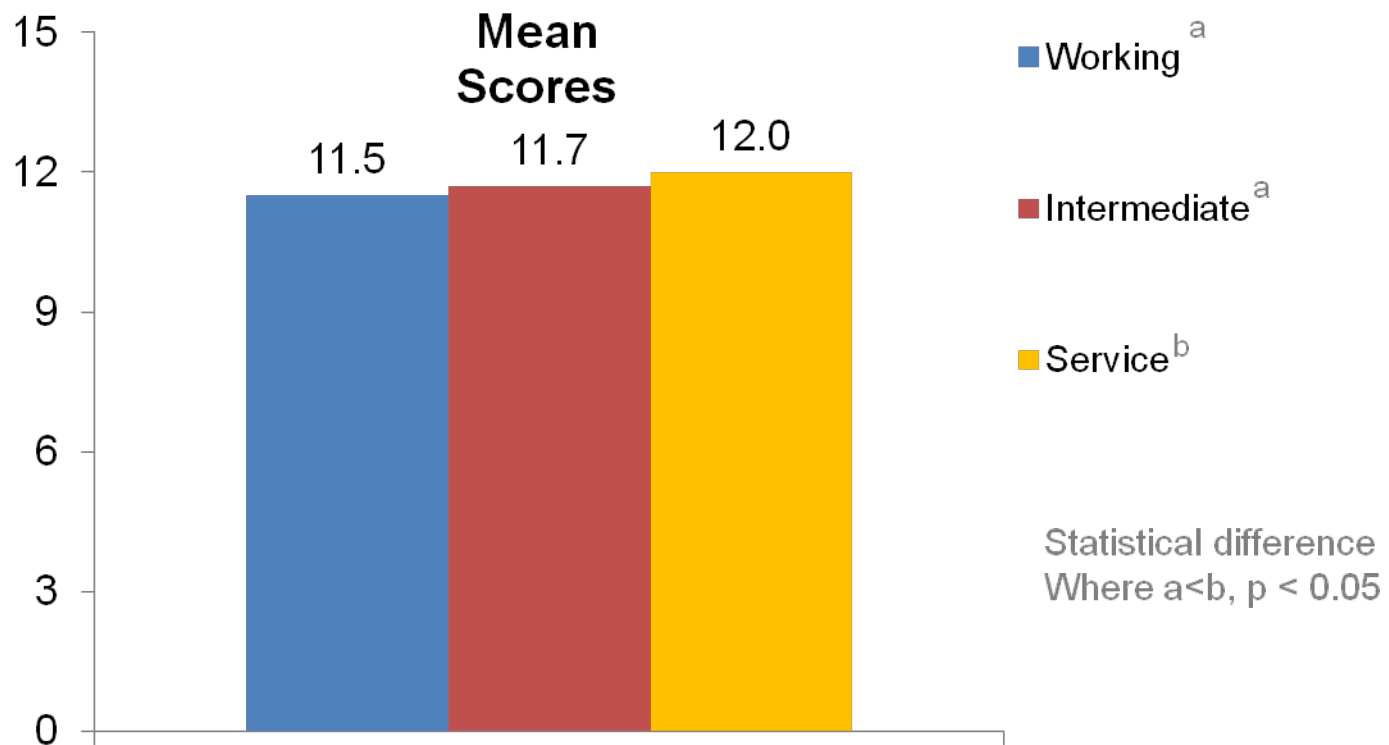
Those in the low category were different in their response when compared to those in the upper-middle category.



# Institutional Independence

## OCCUPATIONAL CLASS

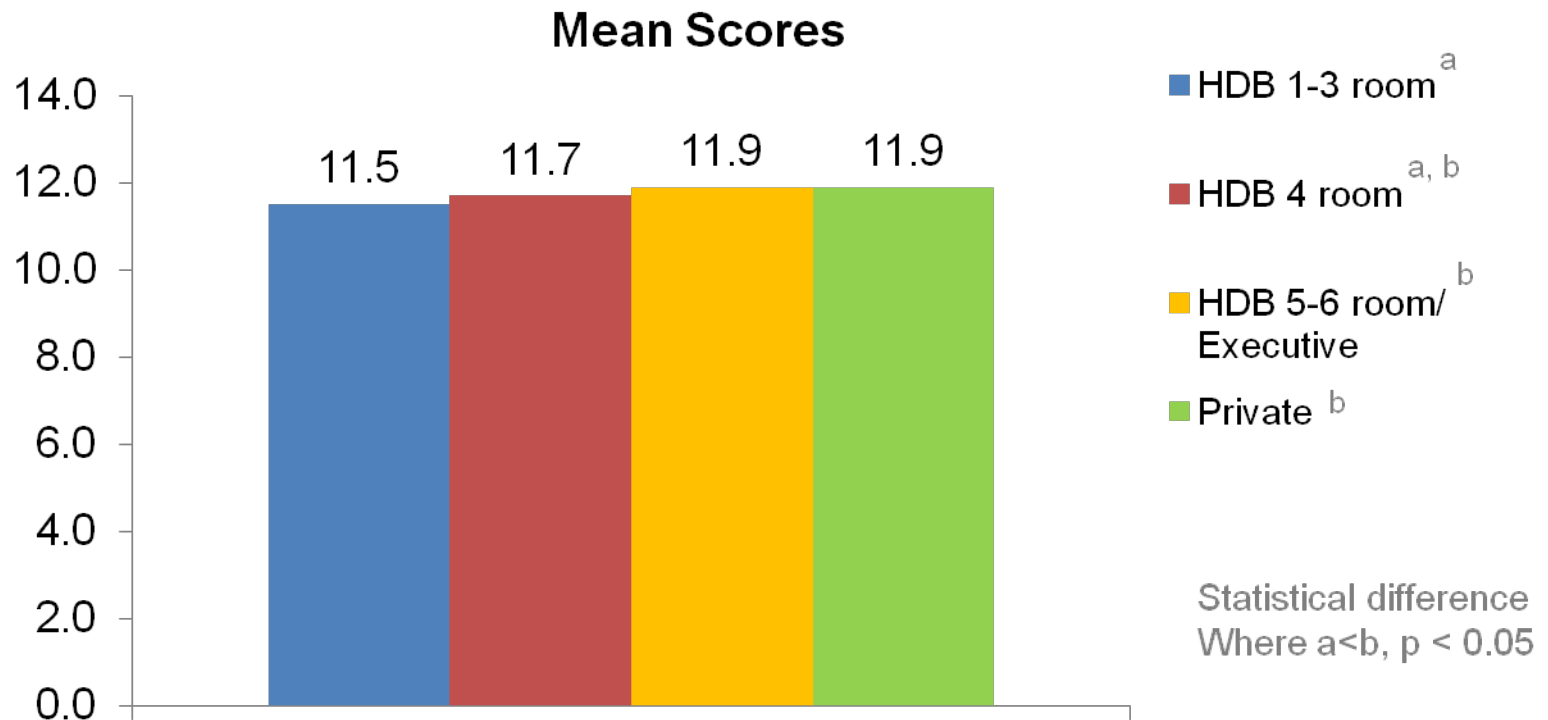
Respondents in Service Class scored the higher than the rest.



# Institutional Independence

## HOUSING TYPE

Respondents in the HDB 1-3 room category scored differently from those in private housing.



# Correlations Among Political Attitudes

Those who are politically knowledgeable prefer more institutional independence for the PE, and are less likely to view the election system as fully legitimate.

Variables	Political Legitimacy	Institutional Independence	Political Knowledge
Political Legitimacy	--		
Institutional Independence	0.041	--	
Political Knowledge	-0.167 **	0.076**	--

Table showing Pearson r coefficients  
 \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

# Conclusion

- More education is needed on the role of the elected president for an informed debate on the system and in time for the next election.
- Survey suggests however that the more knowledgeable the voter, the more likely he or she will be a critical one – someone who questions if the election system or the outcome are the best for Singapore.
- This survey reinforces the idea that those in the higher socio-economic groups are more critical voters.
- The younger, better-educated netizens are less likely to think all candidates got fair coverage by traditional media, and would rely on social and alternative online media too.

# Acknowledgements

- The POPS(5) research team comprised
  - Dr Gillian Koh, Senior Research Fellow;
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# The End