

Press Statement
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18 February 2000

**Citizens and the Nation–
IPS Survey of National Pride and Citizens' Psychological Ties to the Nation**

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INTRODUCTION

A nation-wide random sample of 1,451 Singapore citizens aged 15 through 64 was surveyed to establish their pride in the nation and their psychological links with the nation. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in 1999. The profile of the sample surveyed, after weighting it to reflect the actual ethnic composition in the citizen population, approximated closely that of the citizen population of Singapore.

The survey is aimed at setting down, in a quantitative way, measures of Singaporeans' attitudes towards Singapore, the nation. Survey findings provide some basis for indexing Singaporeans' sense of nationhood as well as measures for national identity and pride in being Singaporean. Through the survey, Singaporeans help in defining their sense of national pride and their psychological ties with their nation.

THE GENERAL NATIONAL PRIDE (N-PRIDE) SCALE

In the survey, national pride was assessed using questions developed by the National Opinion Research Centre (NORC) in Chicago. The NORC has used the questions to draw up a scale for ranking 23 nations, ranging from long-established nations to new nations. A similar set of questions was incorporated into the 1999 survey. Gauging from their response to the survey questions, Singaporeans are very proud of their country. Singaporeans obtained a mean score of 17.2 on a scale ranging from the low end of 5 to the highest total of 25 points. The score compares very well with those of people in the other 23 countries that were surveyed by the NORC (see Table 1).

Singapore's mean score of 17.2 puts it on par with the United States, a nation with a far longer history, and ahead of Japan, which is ranked 9th with a score of 16.4. Singapore also ranks above Great Britain in 15th place with a score of 15.4 and the Netherlands in 17th place with a score of 14.5.

TABLE 1: NATIONAL PRIDE BY COUNTRY

(adapted and modified from Smith and Jarkko, 1998)

Rank	Country	Score (range 5-25)
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1	Austria	17.6
2	United States	17.2
2	Singapore	17.2
4	Bulgaria	17.0
5	Hungary	16.7
6	Canada	16.6
7	The Philippines	16.5
8	New Zealand	16.4
9	Japan	16.4
10	Ireland	16.3
11	Spain	16.0
11	Slovenia	16.0
13	Norway	15.8
13	Poland	15.8
15	Great Britain	15.4
16	Russia	15.3
17	The Netherlands	14.5
18	Sweden	14.4
19	Czech Republic	14.3
20	Italy	14.1
21	Latvia	13.9
22	Germany (West)	13.7
23	Germany (East)	13.6
24	Slovakia	13.5

MEASURE OF NATIONAL PRIDE

The five items adopted from the NORC and used in the survey are as follows:

- i. I would rather be a citizen of Singapore than of any other country in the world.
- ii. There are some things about Singapore that I am ashamed of.
- iii. The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like the citizens of Singapore.
- iv. Generally speaking, Singapore is a better country than most other countries.
- v. People should support their country even if it is in the wrong.

NATIONAL PRIDE SCORES AMONG SINGAPOREANS OF DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS

The high level of national pride among Singapore citizens applied to all groups, regardless of their ethnic background, gender, age, income or education. Among the different age groups, citizens aged 60 and above scored the highest at 18 points (see Table 2). Among the various ethnic groups, Indians scored highest at 18.1, followed by Malays at 17.7. Citizens with primary school education or less scored 17.6 while citizens with secondary school education was a close second with 17.4 points. Generally, Singaporeans with higher education score relatively lower for national pride. Citizens reporting total monthly household income of \$5,000 to \$5,999 scored 17.9 points, the highest compared to other household income brackets.

TABLE 2: SCORES FOR NATIONAL PRIDE SCALE AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES

	NATIONAL PRIDE SCALE SCORE
Overall	17.2
Age	

15–19	16.9
20–29	16.9
30–39	17.2
40–49	17.6
50–59	17.3
≥ 60	18.0
Gender	
Male	17.0
Female	17.4
Ethnicity	
Chinese	17.1
Malay	17.7
Indian	18.1
Others	16.7
Education-level	
≤ Primary	17.6
Secondary	17.4
Post–Secondary	16.9
Diploma	17.0
University	16.1
Total Monthly Household Income	
≤ \$1,000	17.4
\$1,000 – \$1,999	17.3
\$2,000 – \$2,999	17.4

\$3,000 – \$3,999	16.7
\$4,000 – \$4,999	17.1
\$5,000 – \$5,999	17.9
≥ \$6,000	16.8

CITIZEN-NATION PSYCHOLOGICAL TIES

The high score for national pride has its parallel in the strong psychological tie between Singaporeans and Singapore, the nation. The strength of this tie is captured in the survey's home-grown 24-item index entitled The Citizen-Nation Psychological Tie (CNP) Index. Singapore citizens scored high on the CNP Index, much in the same way that they had expressed national pride (see 1999 figures in Table 3).

TABLE 3: COMPARISON OF CITIZEN-NATION PSYCHOLOGICAL TIES, 1993 AND 1999

ITEMS IN THE CITIZEN-NATION PSYCHOLOGICAL TIE INDEX ¹		% POSITIVE TIE ²	
		1993	1999
1.	My Singapore citizenship means a lot to me.	96	97
2.	I am proud to be a Singaporean.	94	95
3.	All things considered, I can say that I love Singapore.	92	95
4.	Singapore is the only place where I feel completely at home.	91	89
5.	I feel proud whenever foreign leaders	90	94

	refer to Singapore as their model of economic success.		
6.	I would feel upset if I saw anyone burning the National Flag.	88	88
*7.	I am not concerned whether I am a Singapore citizen or not.	82	83
*8.	I do not feel a sense of belonging to Singapore yet.	82	88
9.	I feel annoyed whenever people criticise Singapore	76	76
*10.	It is not wrong for people to give up their Singapore citizenship in order to avoid National Service.	76	73
11.	Singapore is worth defending no matter what the cost is to me.	72	76
12.	I will support Singapore even if it requires me to perform compulsory service in the interest of the nation.	71	78
*13.	I remain a Singapore citizen because I have no where else to go now.	70	71
14.	No duties are more important than duties toward Singapore.	66	63
*15.	Given the right opportunity elsewhere, I would be willing to give up my Singapore citizenship.	66	69
*16.	I will only fight for Singapore if I can get some personal benefits from doing so.	66	76

*17.	In the event of war, I will leave Singapore.	60	73
ITEMS IN THE CITIZEN-NATION PSYCHOLOGICAL TIE INDEX ¹		% POSITIVE TIE ²	
		1993	1999
*18.	I think of myself as a citizen of the world and not of any country in particular	55	50
*19.	I will not defend Singapore if it means losing my life	55	66
20.	Even if I were given a better offer such as a higher paid job in another country, I will not emigrate.	53	57
*21.	It does not matter to me which country I am a citizen of as long as I can attain a high standard of living.	51	52
*22.	I will not support Singapore if it requires me to pay heavier taxes in the interest of the nation.	48	51
23.	If Singapore were to be attacked, those Singaporeans who left the country immediately before the attack should not be allowed to return back to Singapore when peace returned	47	51
*24.	I will not support Singapore if it requires me to undergo a huge pay-cut in the interest of the nation.	44	57

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Notes:

1. Statements posed in a negative direction are denoted by an asterisk (*).
2. The percentage reported is the sum of the proportion of respondents who "strongly agree" or "agree" with the statement. In the case of statements posed in a negative direction, the relevant response categories are "strongly disagree" and "disagree".

Almost all Singaporeans (97%) strongly agree or agree that their Singapore citizenship means a lot to them. Furthermore, 95% strongly agree or agree that they are proud to be Singaporeans and that all things considered, they can say that they love Singapore. Practically all Singaporeans (94%) also strongly agree or agree that they feel proud whenever foreign leaders refer to Singapore as their model of economic success.

In establishing what the strong ties to the nation actually imply for the Singaporeans, most of the citizens surveyed gave importance to respect for the national flag (item 6), sense of belonging (item 8), Singapore citizenship (items 1 and 7), compulsory service for national interest (item 12) and defence of Singapore at whatever costs (item 11), among others.

For some one in two citizens, the citizen-nation psychological ties do not extend to taking a huge pay-cut or paying heavier taxes in the interest of the nation. Hence, 43% strongly agree or agree that they will not support Singapore if it requires their taking a huge pay-cut in the interest of the nation. Likewise, some 49% strongly agree or agree that they will not support Singapore if it requires them to pay heavier taxes in the interest of the nation.

The survey of the ties linking citizen to their nation is interesting in terms of how such ties are defined by the citizens. Varying importance attached to each of the 24 items used to compute the index of citizen-nation psychological ties provides insights into the different ways that citizens consider their psychological ties.

Three in four Singaporeans (73%) therefore will not leave Singapore even in the event of war while two in three (66%) will defend Singapore even when it means losing their lives. Similarly, two in three citizens (63%) are of the view that no duties are more important than duties towards Singapore. Some three in four

citizens (73%) also believe that it is wrong for people to give up their Singapore citizenship in order to avoid National Service.

CITIZENS OF DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS AND CITIZEN-NATION PSYCHOLOGICAL TIES

The index mean scores for all groups of Singaporeans were high, that is, showing strong and positive ties to the nation. This was regardless of differences in gender, ethnicity, age, education and income. Among the different ethnic groups, the highest index mean scores were those of the Malays (90.3) and Indians (90.9). Both young and old scored high: 89.8 for citizens aged 15 to 19 and 91.4 for those aged 60 and above. However, young Singaporeans aged 20-29 are generally less likely to indicate a positive tie (88.1) with Singapore. Singaporeans with higher total monthly household income (\geq \$4,000) tend to exhibit a stronger tie. For example, citizens with total monthly household income of \$5,000 to \$5,999, scored highest (92.8) in the index for citizen-nation psychological ties (see Table 4).

TABLE 4: CITIZEN-NATION PSYCHOLOGICAL TIES INDEX SCORES AND PROFILE OF SINGAPOREANS

	CITIZEN-NATION PSYCHOLOGICAL TIES INDEX SCORE
Overall	89.2
Age	
15–19	89.8
20–29	88.1
30–39	89.1
40-49	89.6
50–59	89.4
\geq 60	91.4
Gender	

Male	89.1
Female	89.3
Ethnicity	
Chinese	88.8
Malay	90.3
Indian	90.9
Others	89.6
	CITIZEN-NATION PSYCHOLOGICAL TIES INDEX SCORE
Education-level	
≤ Primary	89.0
Secondary	89.5
Post–Secondary	88.3
Diploma	89.6
University	88.7
Total Monthly Household Income	
≤ \$1,000	87.5
\$1,000 – \$1,999	88.5
\$2,000 – \$2,999	89.5
\$3,000 – \$3,999	88.0
\$4,000 – \$4,999	90.7
\$5,000 – \$5,999	92.8
≥ \$6,000	90.1

COMPARISON OF CITIZEN-NATION PSYCHOLOGICAL TIES 1993 AND 1999

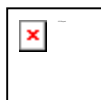
A 1993 survey had been conducted using the same set of questions. The findings provide the benchmarks against which to compare the 1999 findings. The strength of the ties has remained constant for most of the items incorporated in the index (see comparisons in Table 3). Indeed, ties concerning taking a huge pay-cut or paying heavier taxes in the interest of the nation appear to have strengthened slightly in terms of the relatively higher proportion who strongly agree or agree to support Singapore even if such measures are required of them.

RÉSUMÉ

The marks in the report card for Singapore's effort at nation-building in the last three decades or so can be considered very good given the high scores for national pride and citizen-nation psychological ties. For citizen-nation psychological ties, a comparison of the 1993 and 1999 survey findings highlights some strengthening of these ties. Our benchmarking Singapore against that of other countries on the NORC's General National Pride Scale also indicates that Singapore is doing well in its nation-building efforts. However, this is not to suggest that Singapore has arrived, but that it is ahead of many other countries, both old and new nations.

This survey was conducted by the Institute of Policy Studies. This statement was prepared by Dr Tan Ern Ser, sociologist and consultant for the survey and Dr Ooi Giok Ling, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies, who was coordinating the survey. For media clarifications, please contact Dr Tan Ern Ser at (65) 874-6062 or Dr Ooi Giok Ling at (65) 779-3549.

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