

S'poreans Against Sex Outside Marriage: Poll Finding

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SINGAPORE remains a largely conservative society in which extra-marital sex and having a child out of wedlock are still frowned on, according to a survey.

Eight in 10 of the residents polled said extra-marital affairs are almost always wrong while seven out of 10 felt the same way about getting pregnant before marriage.

Slightly more than half, or 56.4 per cent, also say sex should come after marriage. "Overall, as you can see, Singaporeans are fairly conservative in their outlook to such issues," said senior research fellow Mathew Mathews of the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS).

This finding on social morality is part of a wider IPS survey on race, language and religion. Dr Mathews is the survey's principal investigator. Released yesterday, the survey polled more than 4,000 Singapore residents.

They were asked to indicate how they feel on a range of social issues by choosing whether it is "not wrong most of the time or not wrong at all", "only wrong sometimes" or "always wrong or almost always wrong".

Their responses indicate there may be a wider acceptance of living with a partner before marriage, as fewer than half (44 per cent) say it is almost always wrong.

Similarly, with divorce: 43 per cent feel it is just wrong. On the other hand, relatively few accept homosexual relations between adults: Almost 80 per cent say no-no to it.

Also, 73 per cent are not in favour of gay marriage. But on gay couples adopting a child, a relatively smaller proportion - 61 per cent - say it is almost always wrong. On gambling, about seven out of 10 are against it.

Dr Mathews said it could be read as a response to "excessive gambling, not some kind of once-in-a-while social gambling". Seeing the effect of excessive gambling on families, "there's a stronger aversion to gambling", he added.