

SNAPSHOTS FROM THE 2011 IPS POST-ELECTION MEDIA USE AND POLITICAL TRAITS SURVEY

By

Tan Tarn How

Nanditha Das

Nadzirah Samsudin

Shawn Goh

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Introduction

This article presents snapshots of the major results of a nationwide survey conducted by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) right after the 2011 General Election. The survey aimed to find out how voters used media during the election, and how that use related to their demographics, political attitudes, political participation and voting behaviour. A total of 2,000 Singaporeans of voting age of 21 or above were interviewed by phone between 24 May (two weeks after Polling Day) to 17 July 2011. More details can be found in the appendix.

The questions asked in the survey shed light on many issues often discussed but seldom backed by rigorous data. They include the extent to which Singaporeans trust politicians, their liberalness or conservativeness and the degree to which they participate politically offline and online. As far as we know, the survey is also the first made public that asked how people voted in an election. It is also the first survey conducted in the Internet era about the use of new and old media, mainstream and alternative media that revealed fine-grained information about the use of the wide range of media in a Singapore election.

This survey was also used for different studies, including whether 2011 was an Internet election, the extent to which Singaporeans engaged in political discussion, the use of Twitter and Facebook during the election, the popularity of party political websites and Facebook page. These studies involving 14 scholars from different universities have just been published in a book [Battle for Hearts and Minds: New Media and Elections in Singapore](#).

The survey questionnaire can be accessed at <http://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/ips/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2012/05/IPS-Post-election-survey-Questionnaire.pdf>

We will be putting the raw data from the survey up on the IPS website. We hope that making the data public will enable other people to gain and publish further insights from the survey. Those who wish to have a copy of the data, please write in to ips.publicaffairs@nus.edu.sg. For other matters on this article, please contact tantarnhow@nus.edu.sg

How to read the snapshots

The snapshots are presented according to categories, such as demographics, political traits and media use, rather than the sequence in which the questions appear in the questionnaire. Most of the snapshots are presented as bar charts, though a few are given as tables because the results are more easily understood that way.

For each snapshot we give the number of the question as it appears in the questionnaire. Thus “Q3” means the Question 3 in the questionnaire, and “Q9 R2” means Question 9, Part 2. For each snapshot, we also give the question being asked.

Most of the charts and tables for a question give percentages of the respondents who gave each of the possible answers to the question. We also give the total number of respondents for each question. Most of the questions are asked of all the 2,000 respondents, and this indicated in the charts by the note ‘n=2000’. A few questions are follow-up questions to earlier questions and posed to only the subset of respondents who gave certain answers to these earlier questions. In these cases “n” would be less than 2,000.

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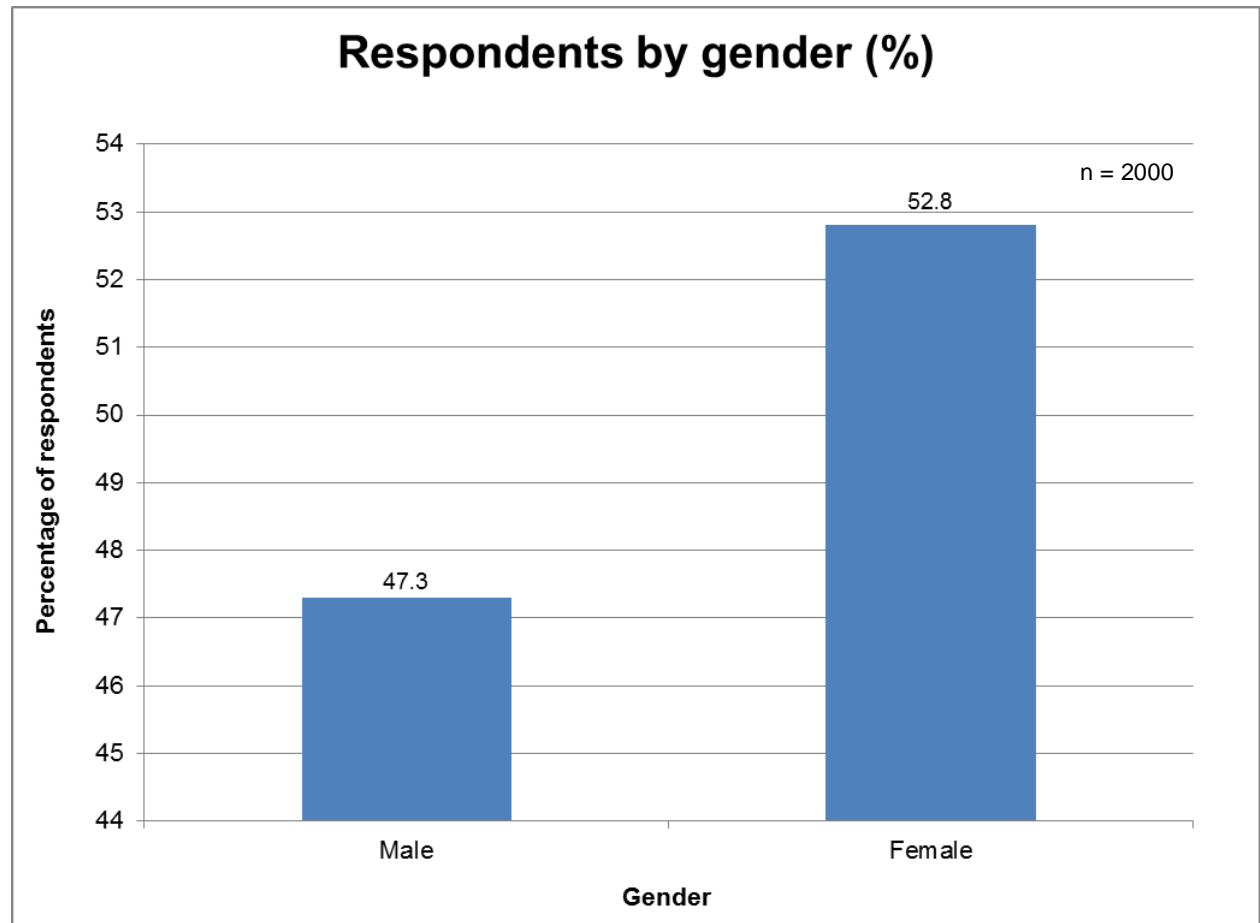
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1. Demographics

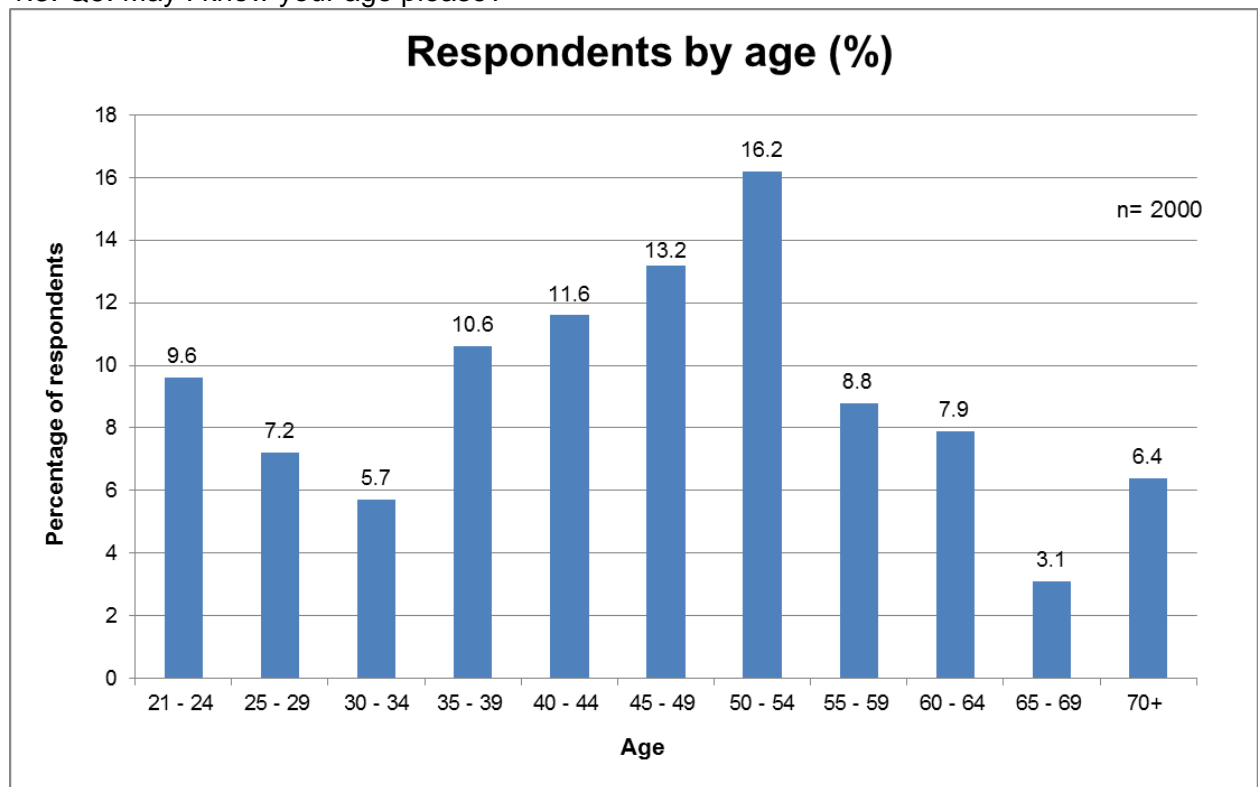
1.1. Q2: Nationality

Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Singaporean	2000	100.0

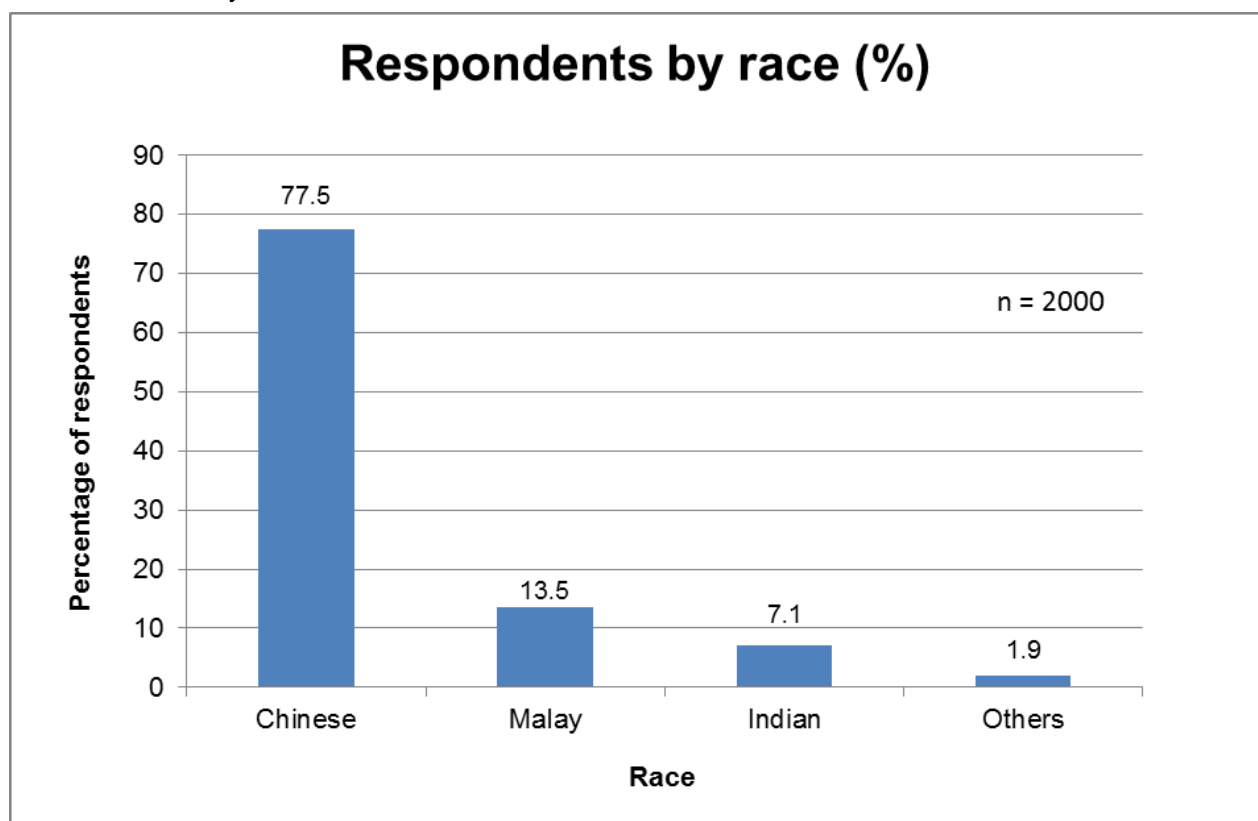
1.2. Q3: Gender



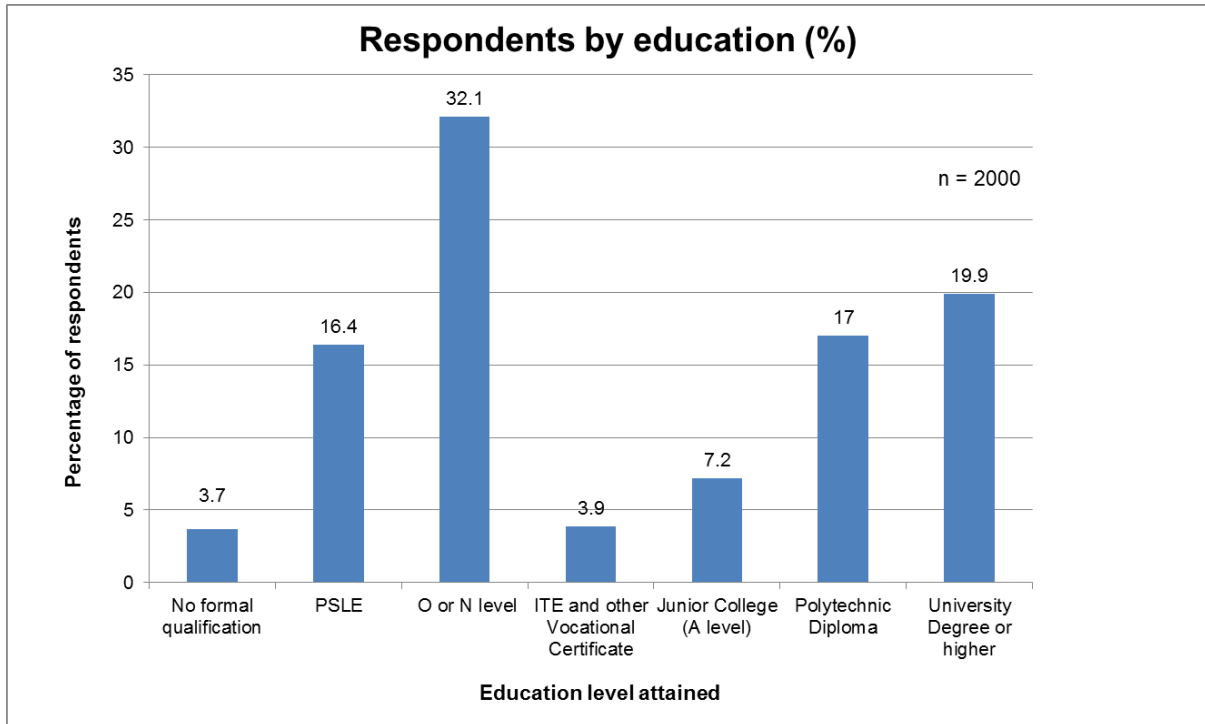
1.3. Q5: May I know your age please?



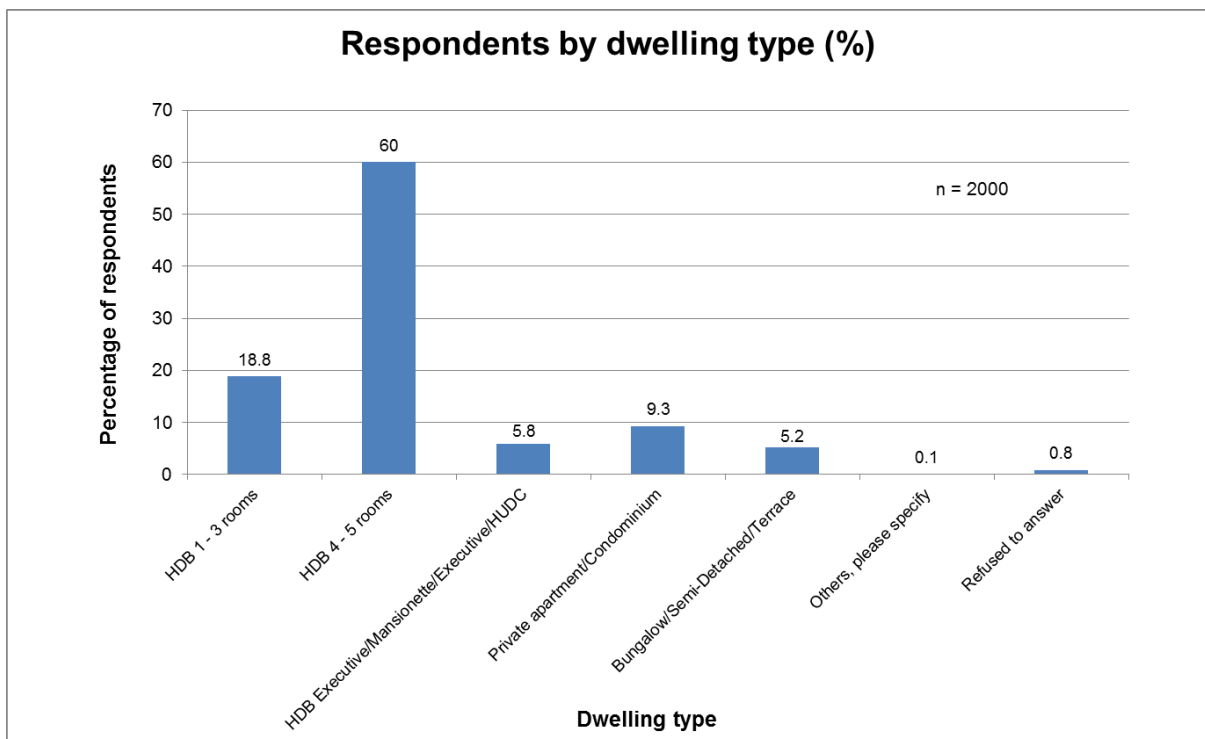
1.4. Q6: What is your race?



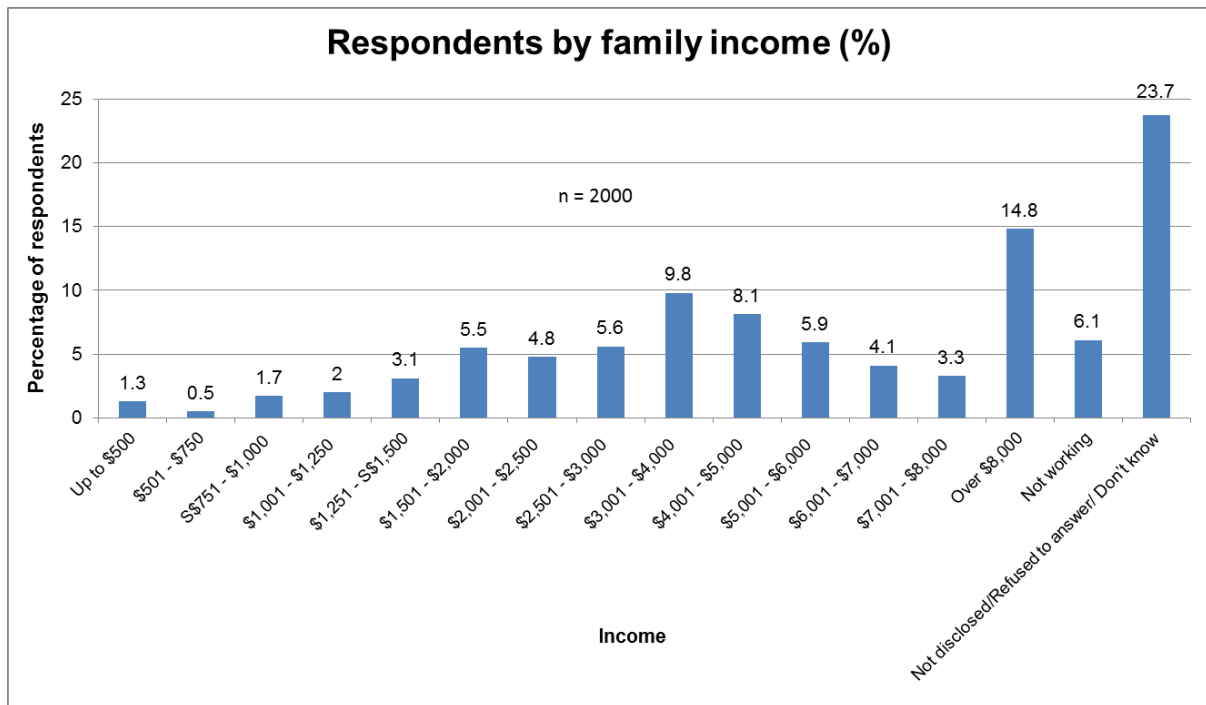
1.5. Q7: What is your highest education level?



1.6. Q8: May I know what dwelling type you live in?



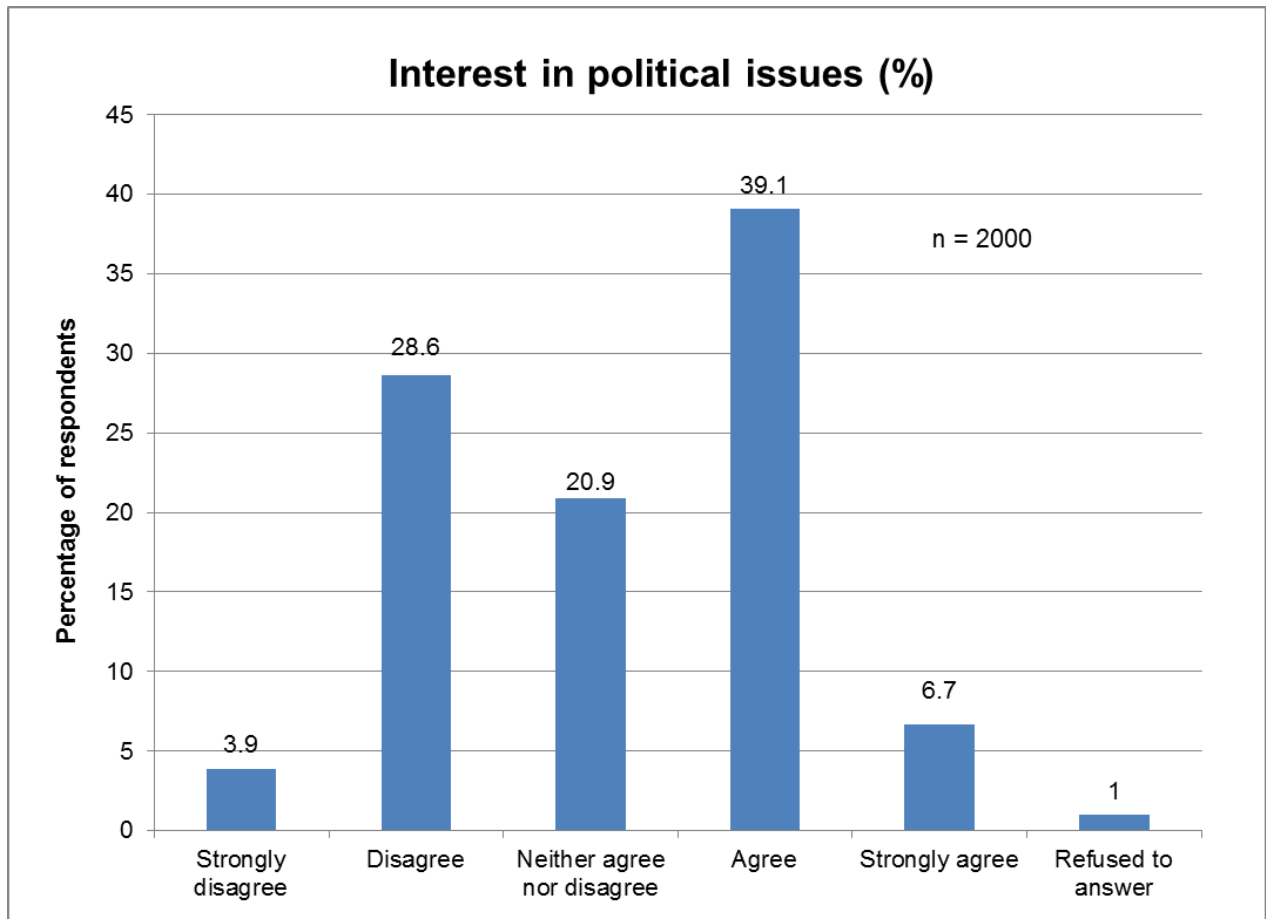
1.7. Q49: Respondents by family monthly income



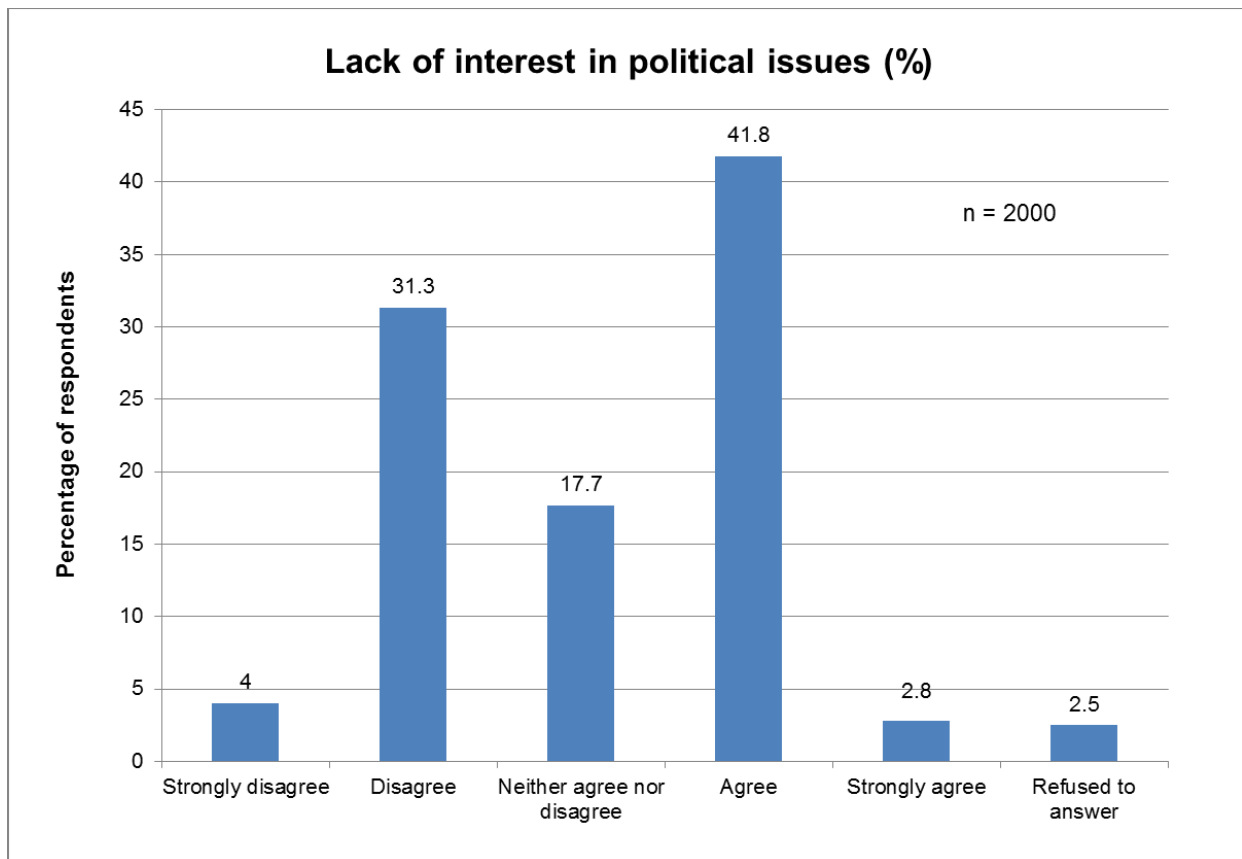
2. Political traits

2.1. Political interest

Q9 R1: How much would you agree with the statement, "I am interested in political issues"?



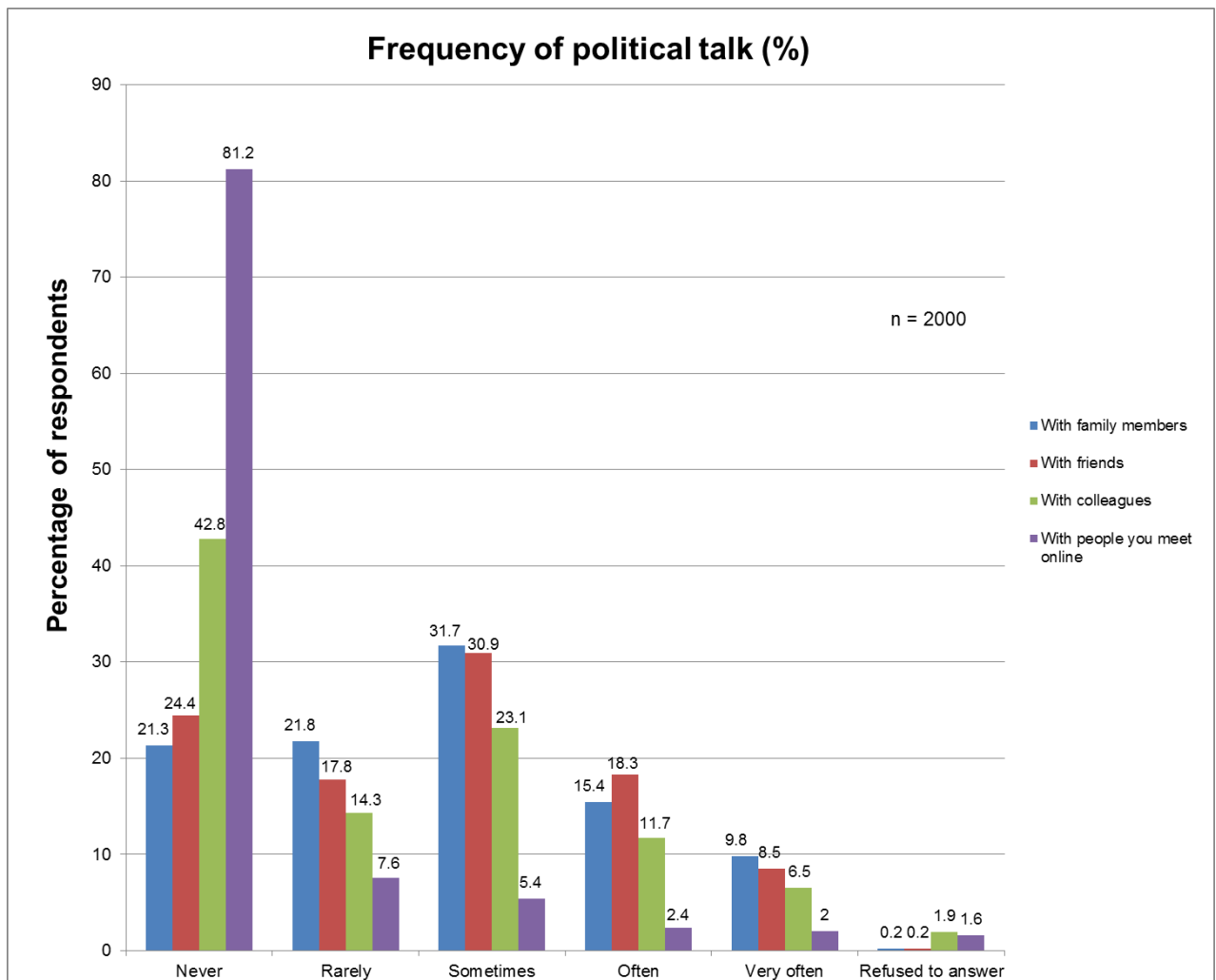
Q9 R2: How much would you agree with the statement, "It's enough for me that others take care of government and public affairs as I have no wish to be part of it"?



2.2. Political talk

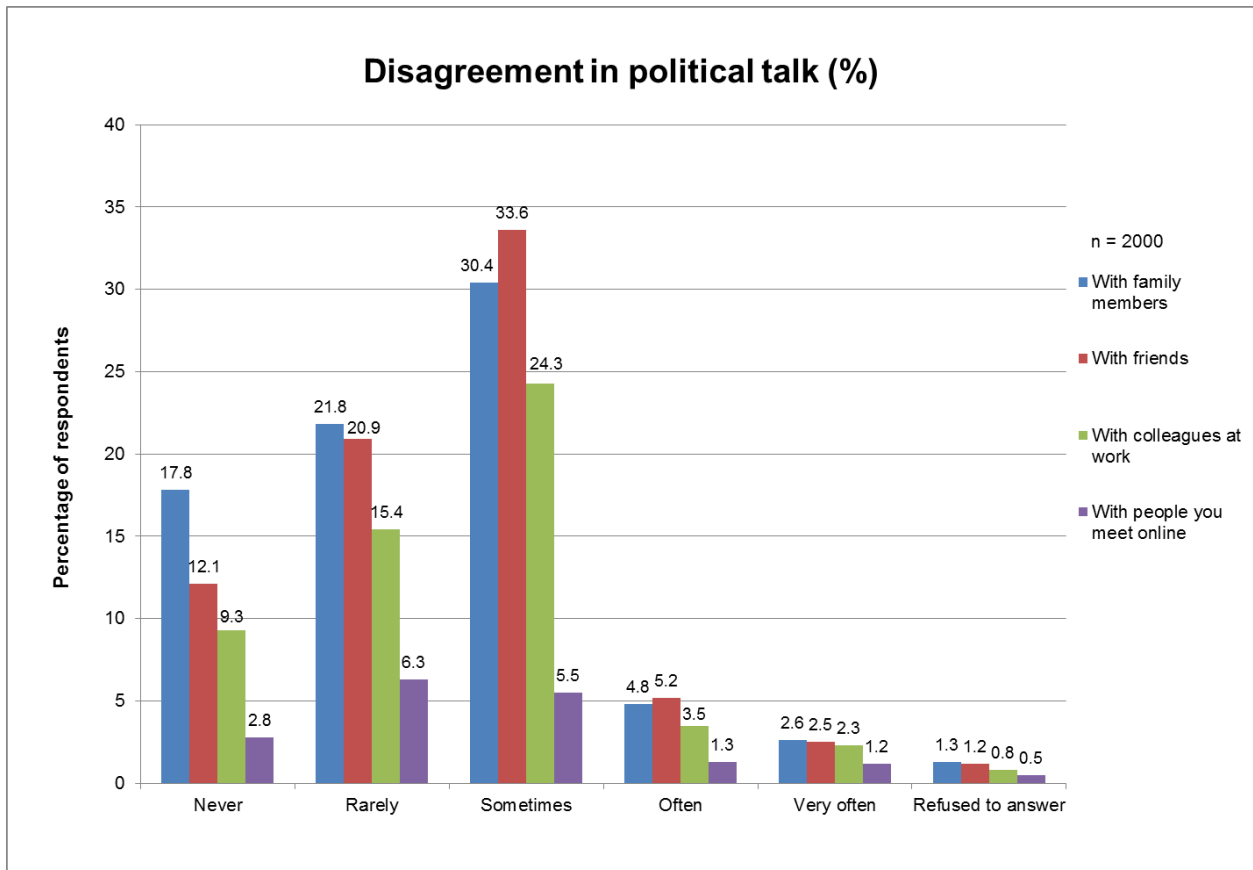
2.2.1. Frequency (self)

Q10 R1 – R4: How often do you discuss the election with your family members, friends, colleagues at work and people you meet online?



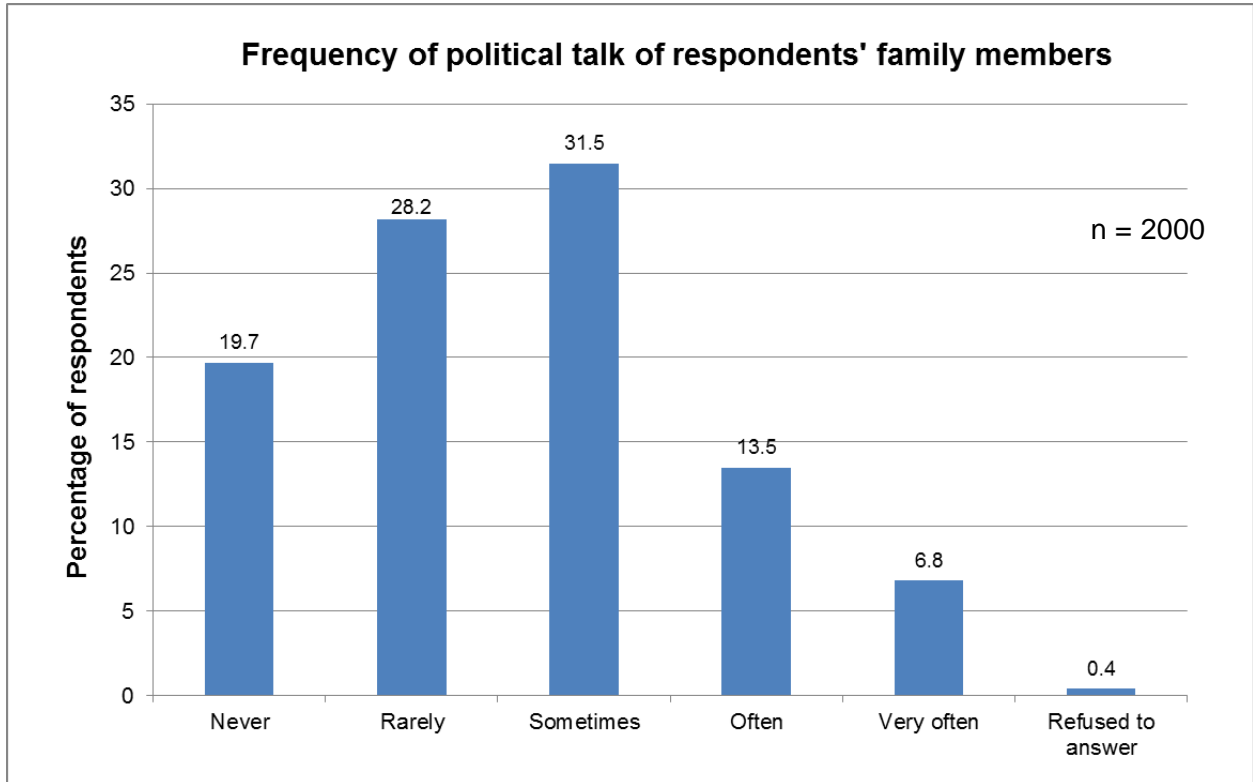
2.2.2. Disagreement

Q11 R1 – R4: When you discussed the election with the following parties (family members, friends, colleagues at work and people you meet online), how often did you disagree with them?

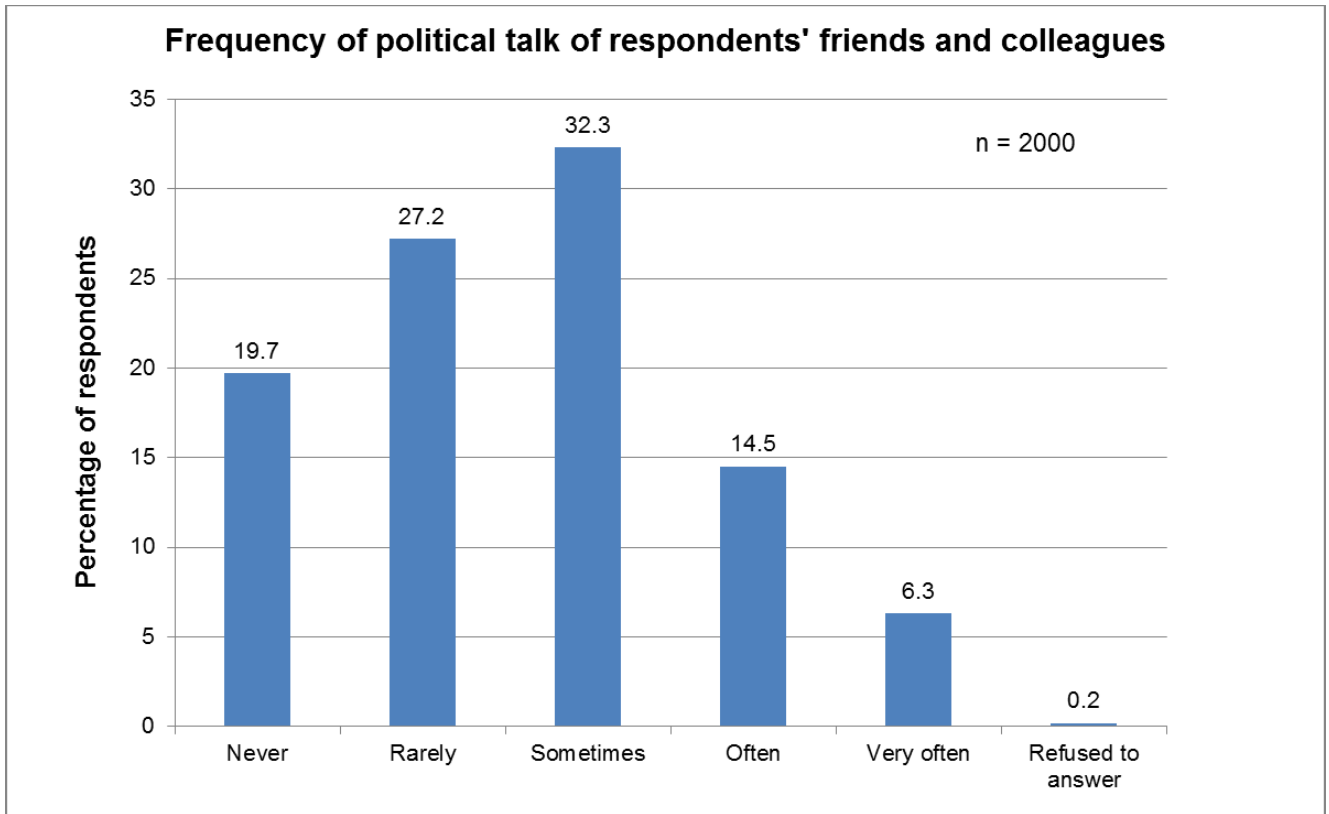


2.2.3. Frequency (others)

Q12: How often do you hear your family members talking about any political news, public affairs or government policies?



Q13: How often do you hear your friends or colleagues talking about political news, public affairs or government policies?



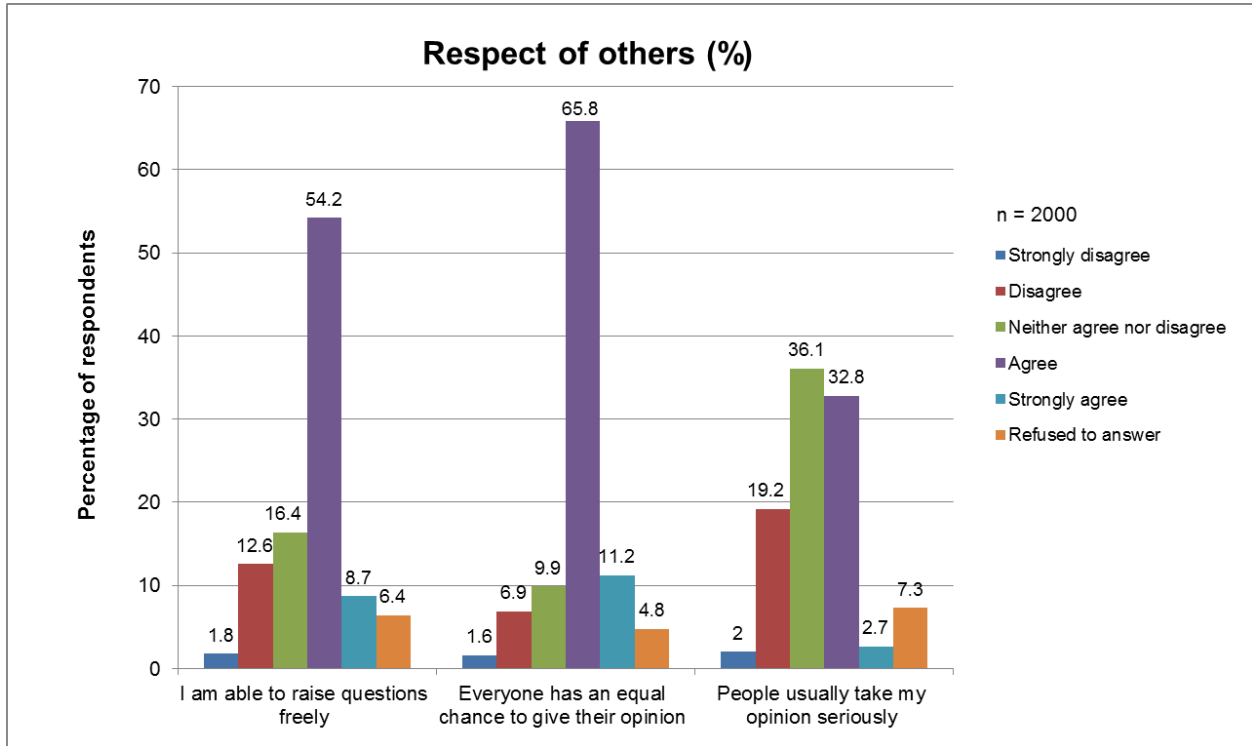
2.2.4. Respect of others

Q14 R1 – R3: How much would you agree with the following statements? When I discuss politics with others...

R1: I am able to raise questions freely

R2: Everyone has an equal chance to give their opinion

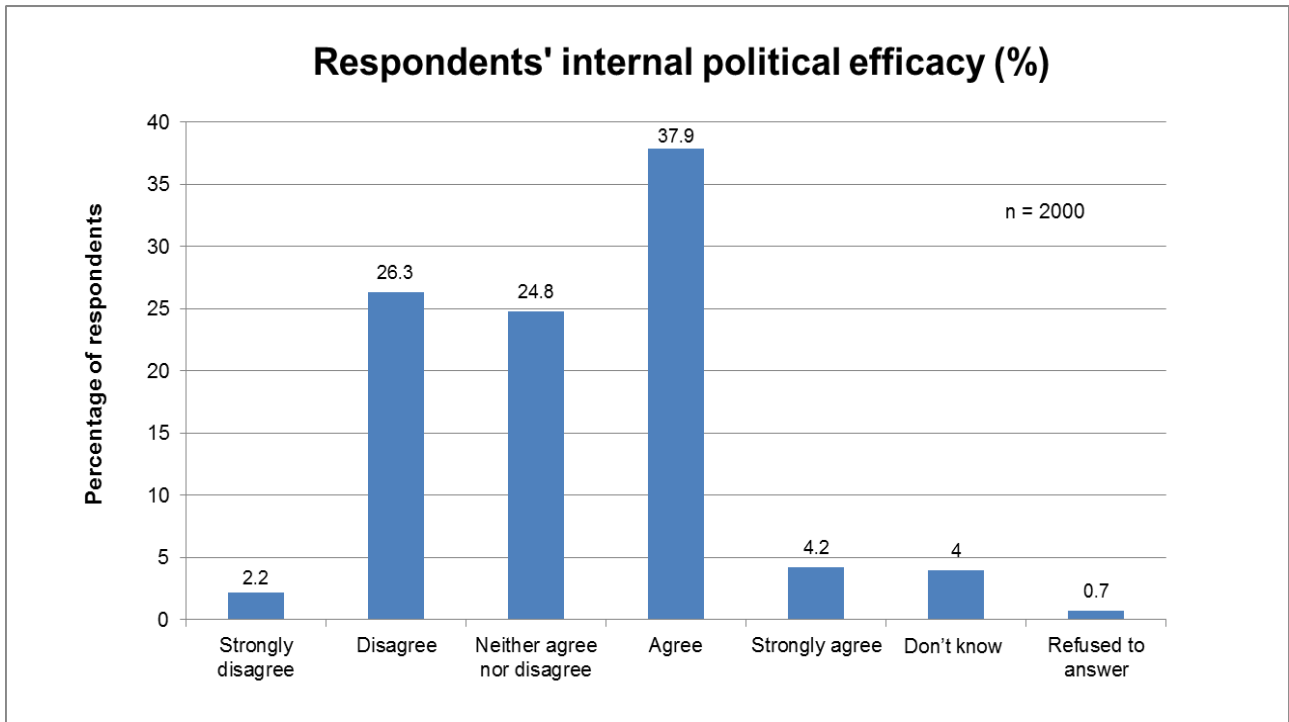
R3: People usually take my opinion seriously



2.3 Political Efficacy

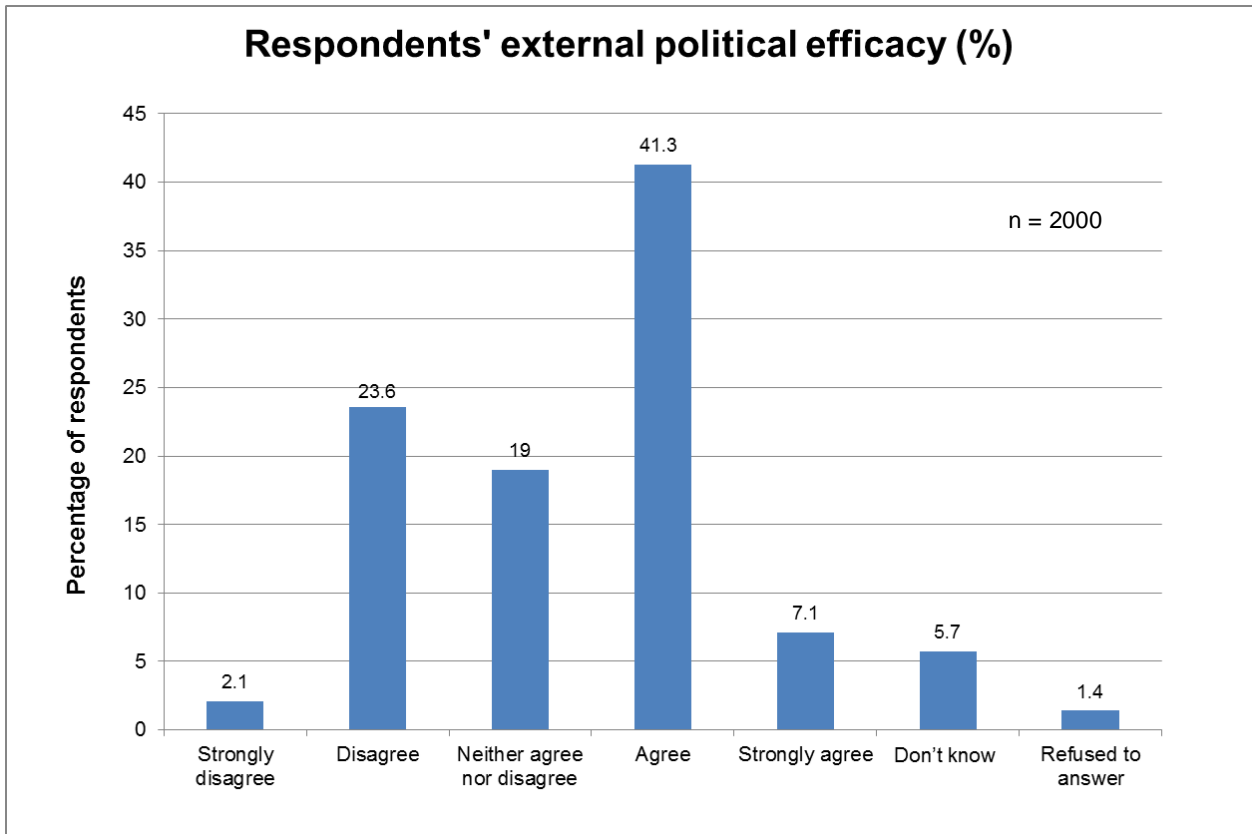
2.3.1. Internal Political Efficacy

Q20 R7: How much would you agree with the following statement, "I have a pretty good understanding of political issues"?



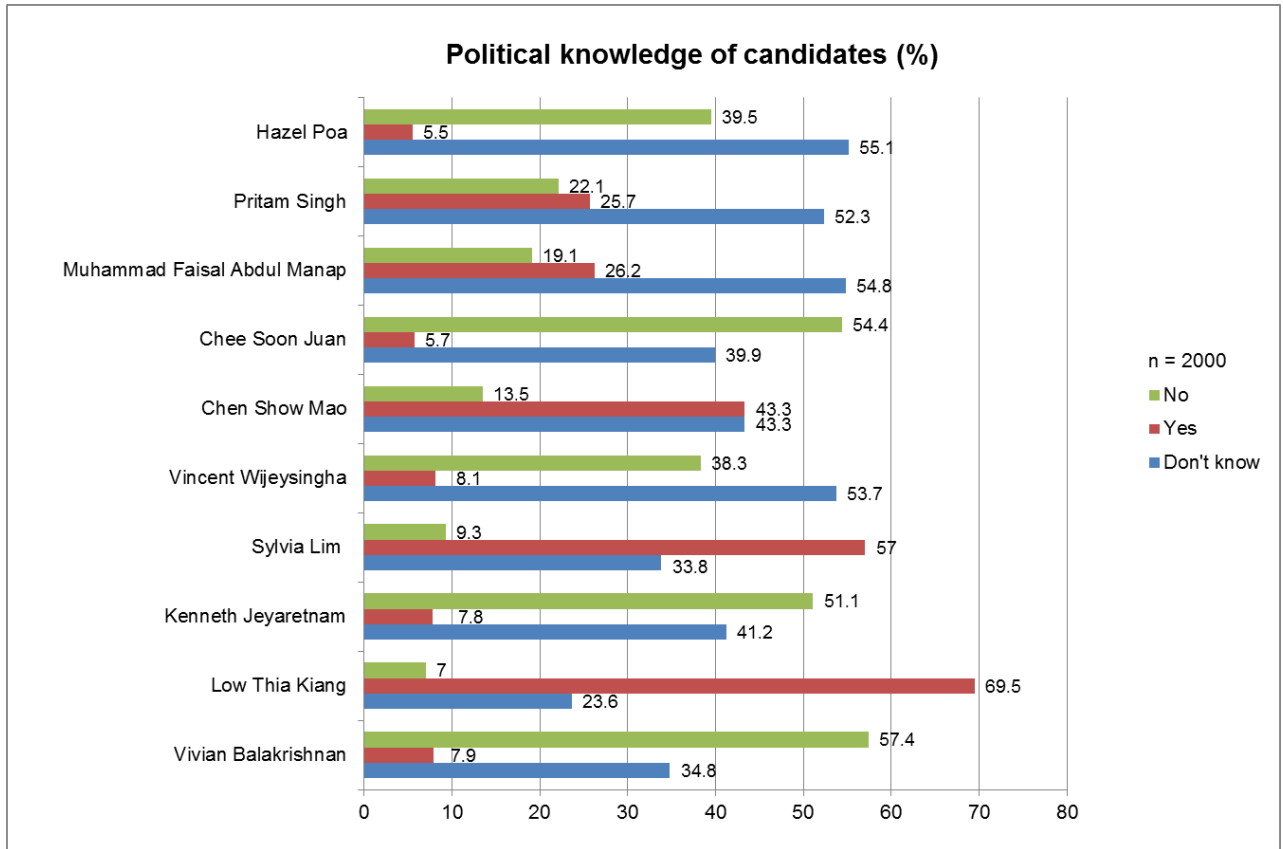
2.3.2. External Political Efficacy

Q20 R8: How much would you agree with the following statement, “I feel that I don’t have any say about what the government does”?

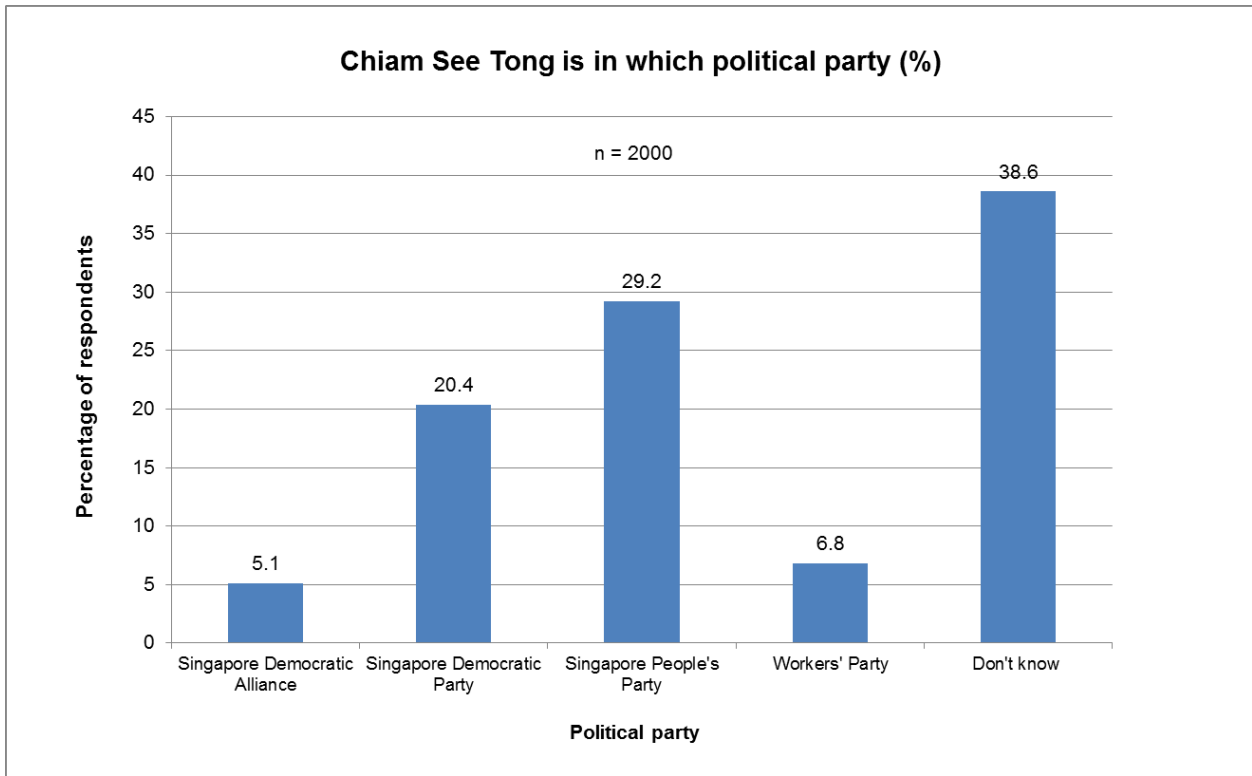


2.4. Political knowledge

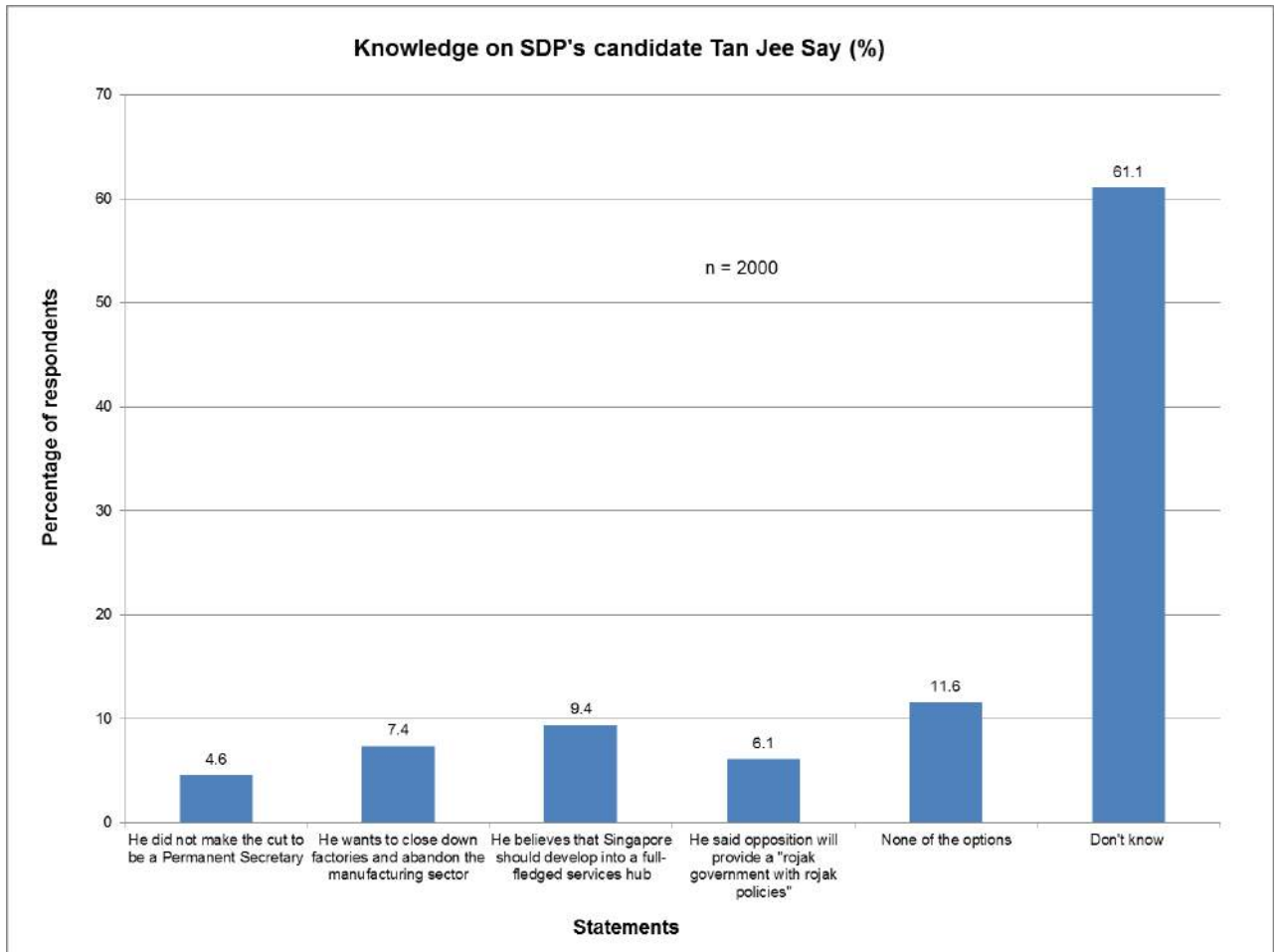
Q21: Did you know which of the following candidates contested in Aljunied GRC?



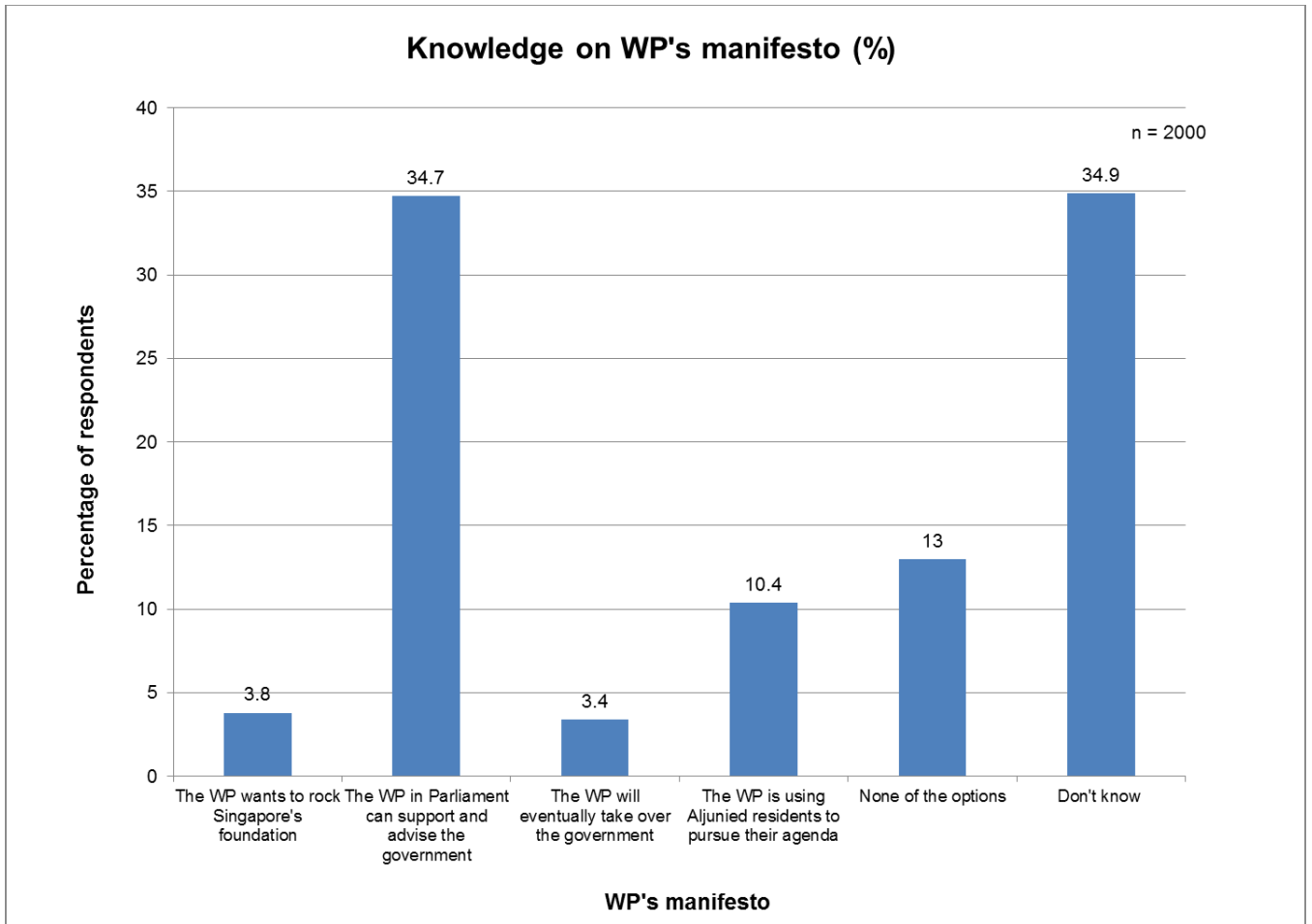
Q22: Which party is Chiam See Tong from?



Q23: During an election, certain things may be said about some candidates which may or may not be true. Which one of the following statements best describes Singapore Democratic Party candidate Tan Jee Say? Please pick one of the statements.

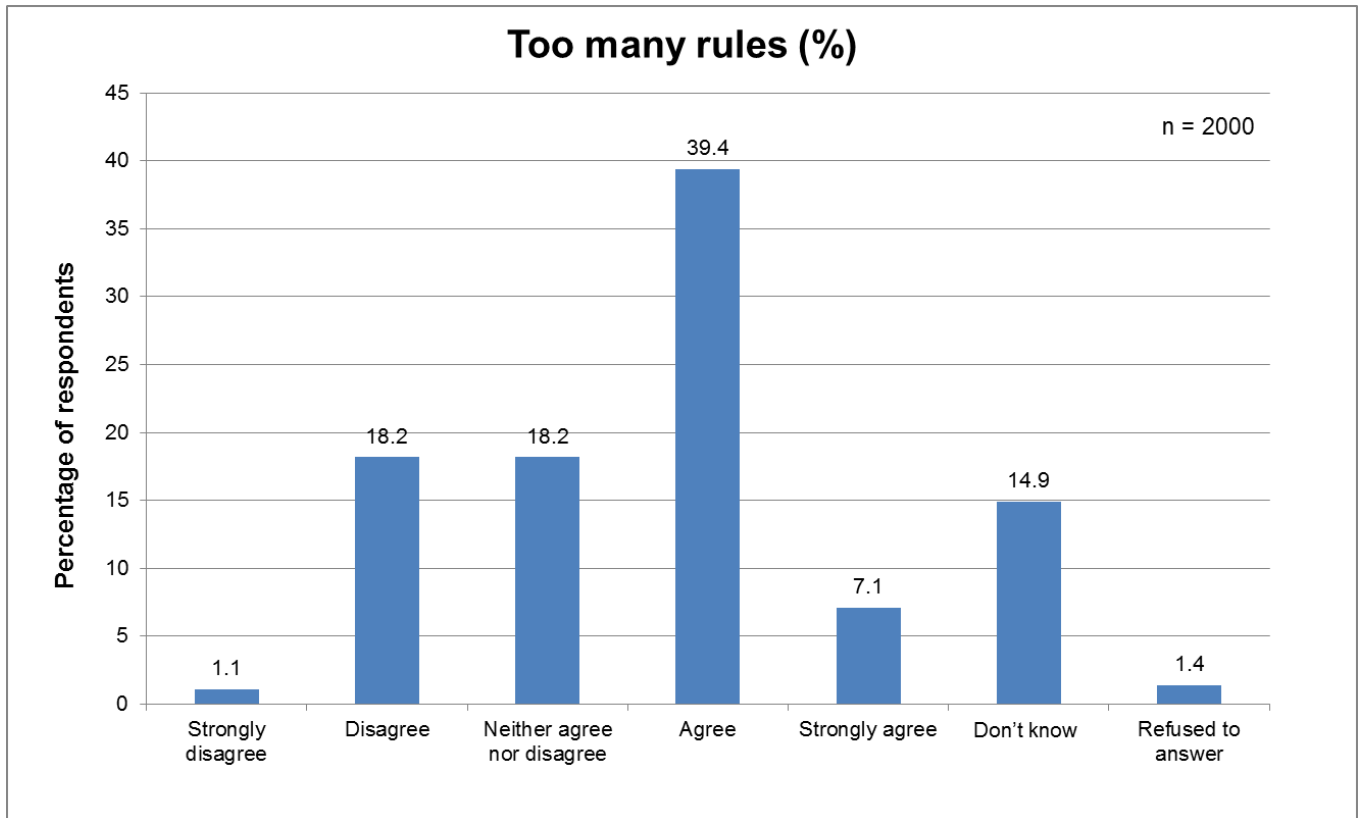


Q24: Which one of the following statements best describes the Workers' Party's manifesto, "Towards A First World Parliament"?



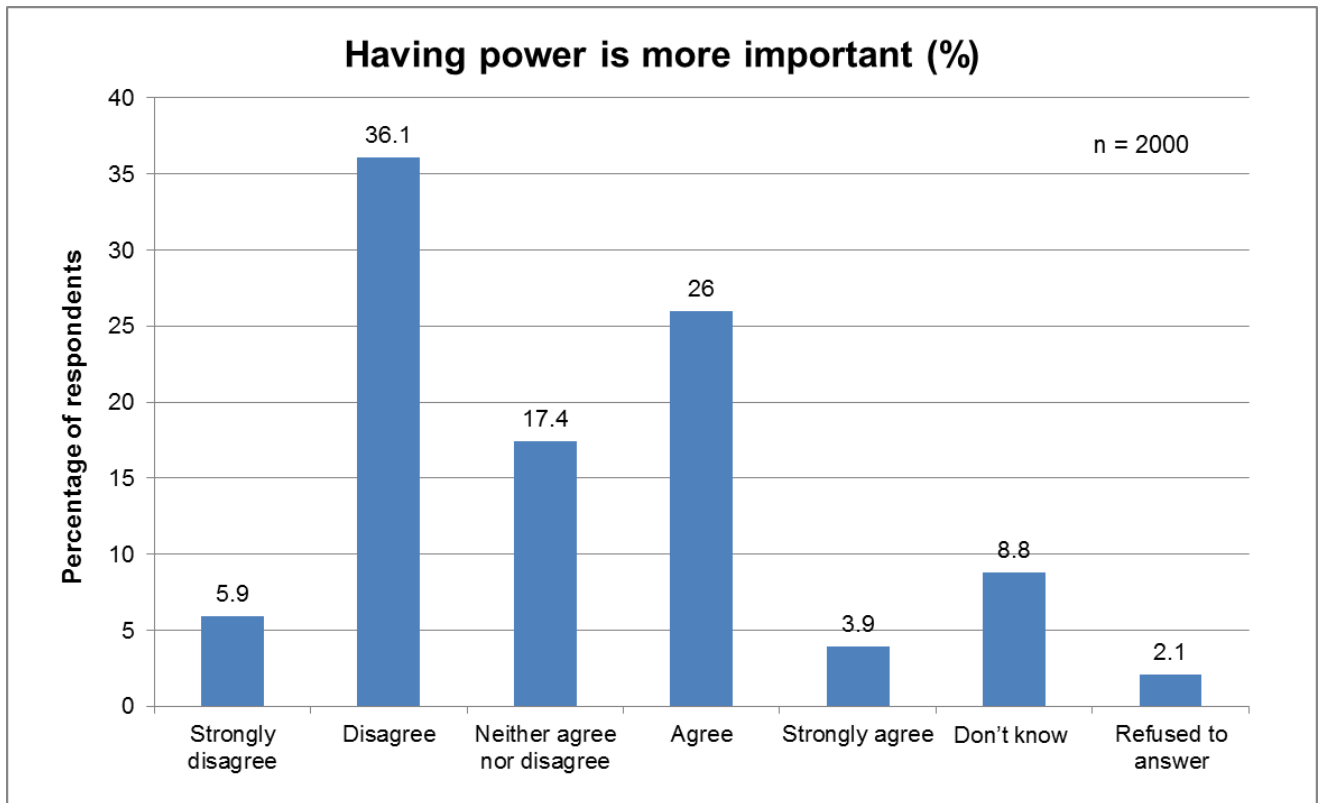
2.5. Political orientation

Q20 R1: How much would you agree with the following statement, “There are too many rules against participating in political activities in Singapore”?



2.6. Political cynicism

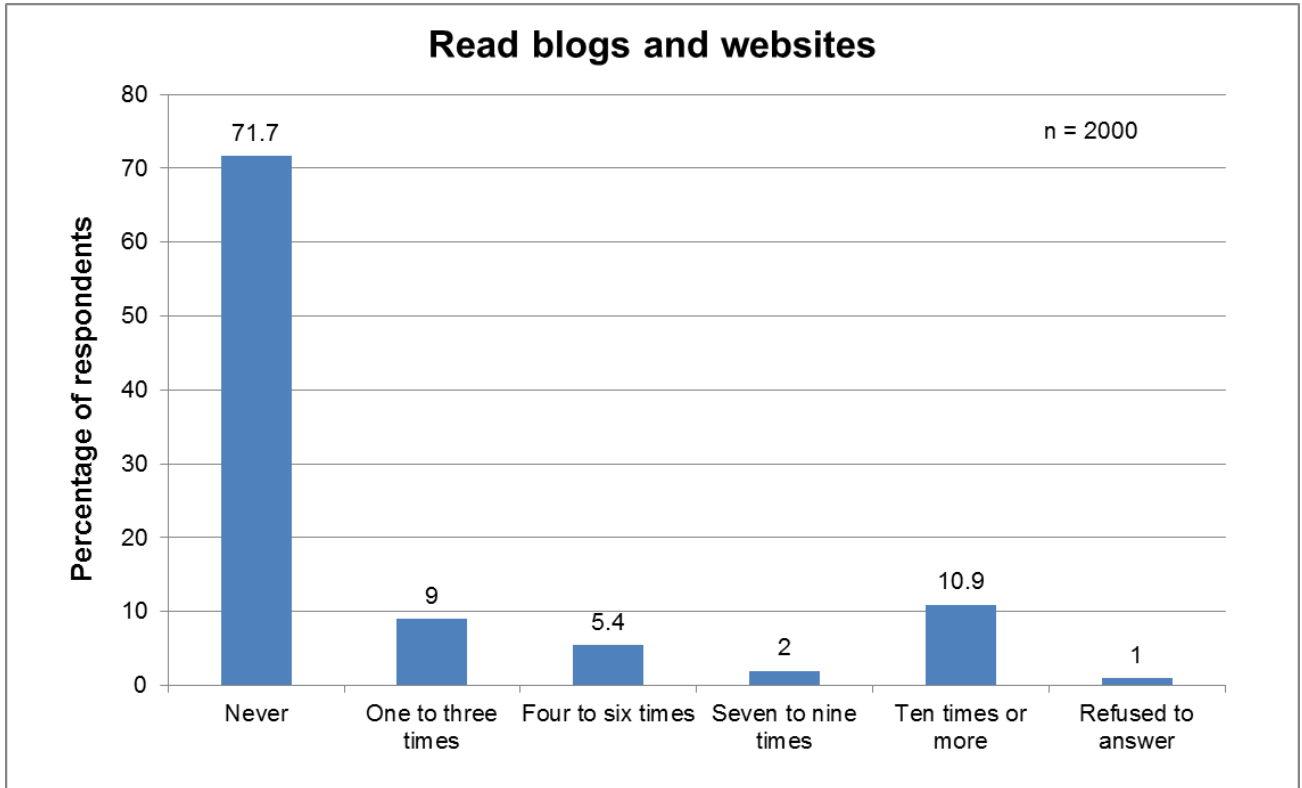
Q20 R2: How much would you agree with the following statement, “For politicians, having power is more important than catering to the people's wishes”?



3. Political participation

3.1. Online political participation

Q18 R4: In the past six months, how often did you read blogs and websites on political and social issues such as Yawning Bread, The Online Citizen and Temasek Review for discussions relating to the election for the past six months?



Q19 R1 – R7: How often do the following things happened during the election?

R1: I wrote on my blog, my Facebook page or Twitter account about the election on matters related to the election

R2: I wrote or commented on other people's blog, Facebook page, or responded to a tweet on the election or matters related to the election

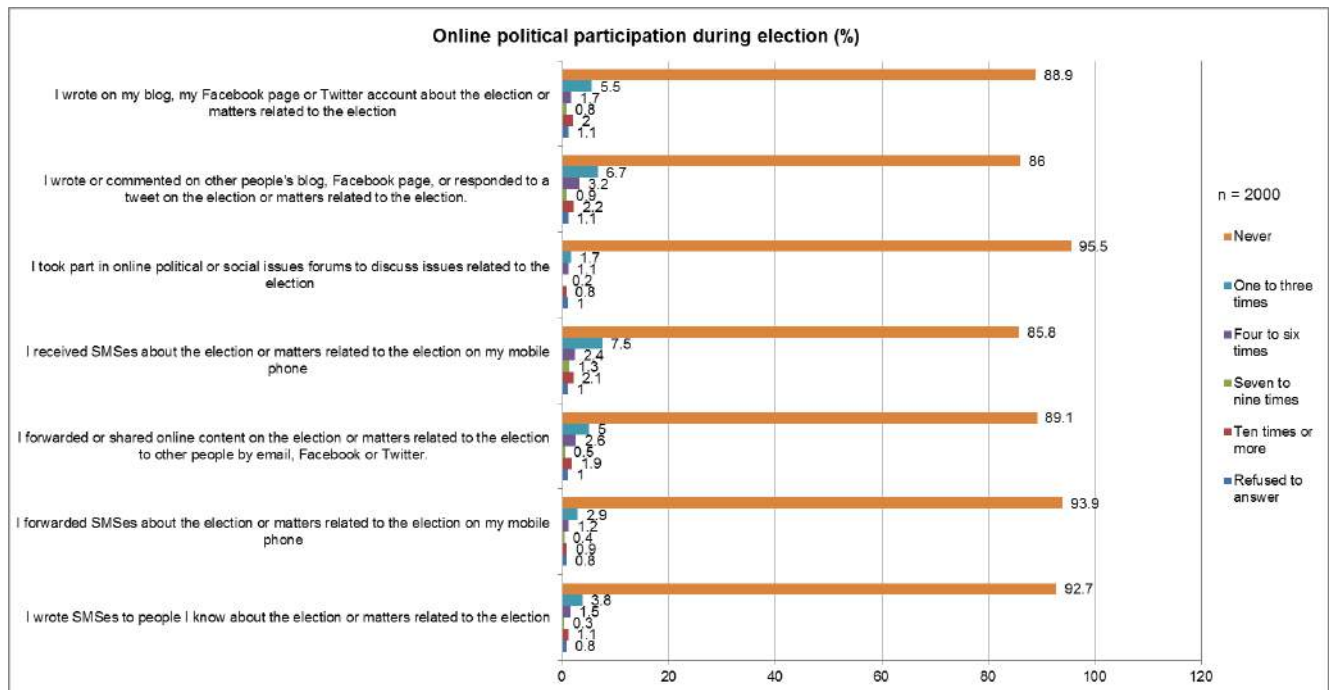
R3: I took part in online political or social issues forums to discuss issues related to the election

R4: I received SMSes about the election or matters related to the election on my mobile phone

R5: I forwarded or shared online content on the election or matters related to the election to other people by email, Facebook or Twitter

R6: I forwarded SMSes about the election or matters related to the election on my mobile phone

R7: I wrote SMSes to people I know about the election or matters related to the election



3.2. Offline political participation

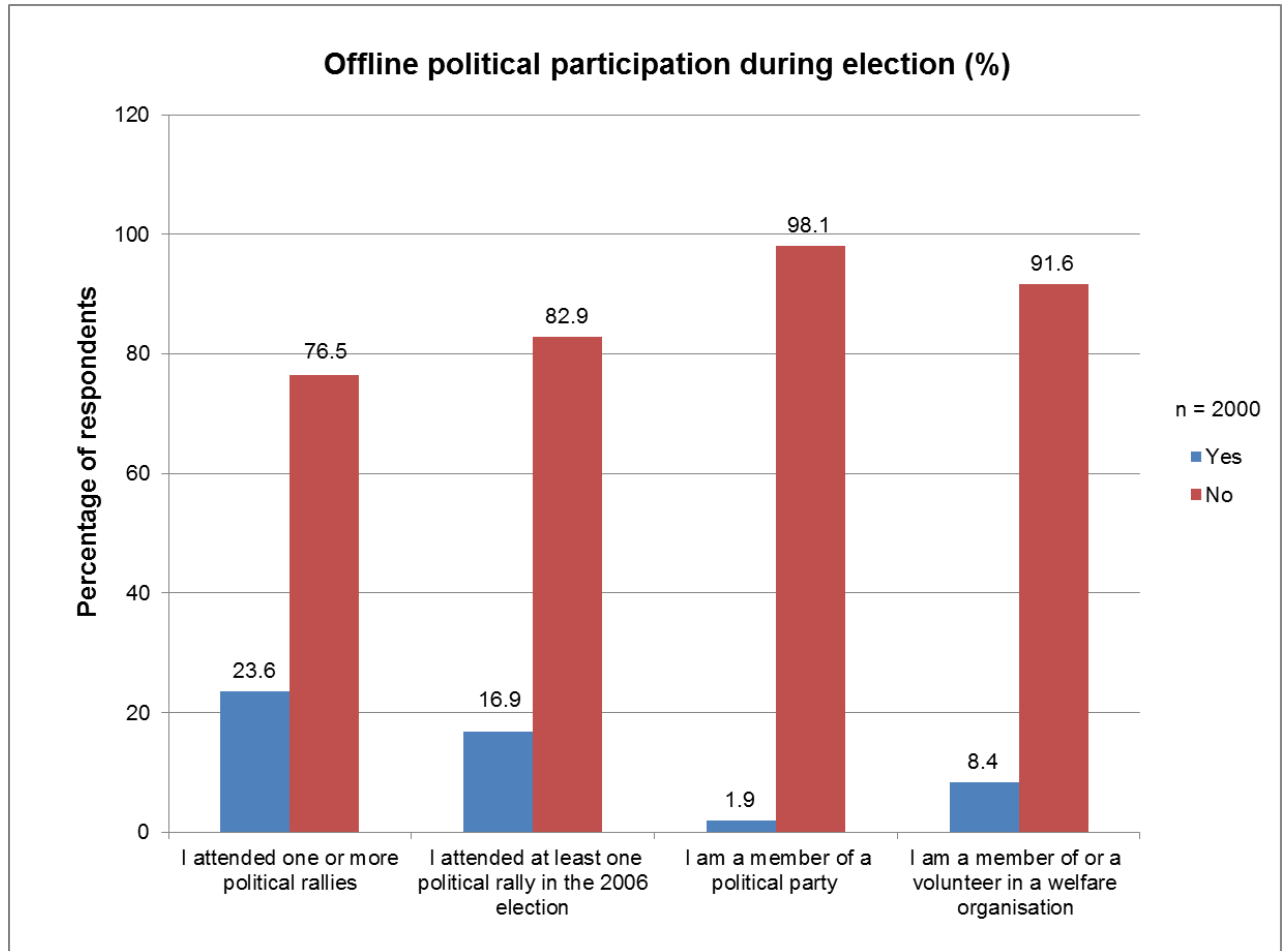
Q15 R1 – R4: Please indicate Yes or No for each of the following

R1: I attended one or more political rallies

R2: In the last election in 2006, I attended at least one political rally

R3: I am a member of a political party

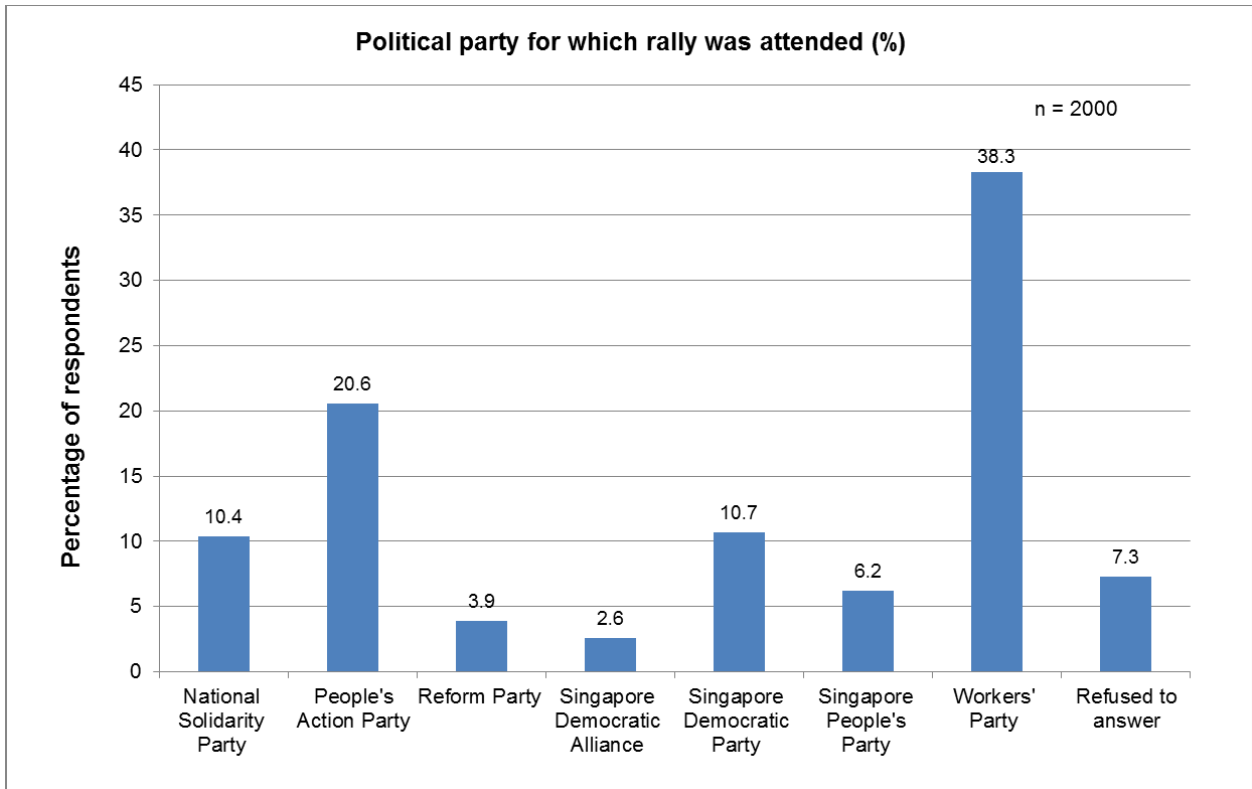
R4: I am a member of or a volunteer in a welfare organisation



Q16: How many times did you attend a political rally during the recent election?

Number of times respondents attended a political rally	Frequency	Percent
1	187	39.7
2	137	29.1
3	75	15.9
4	26	5.5
5	18	3.8
6	5	1.1
7	5	1.1
8	5	1.1
10	2	0.4
14	1	0.2
20	1	0.2
Don't know	9	1.9
Total	471	100.0

Q17: You mentioned that you attended one or more political rallies in the recent election. May I know for which parties?



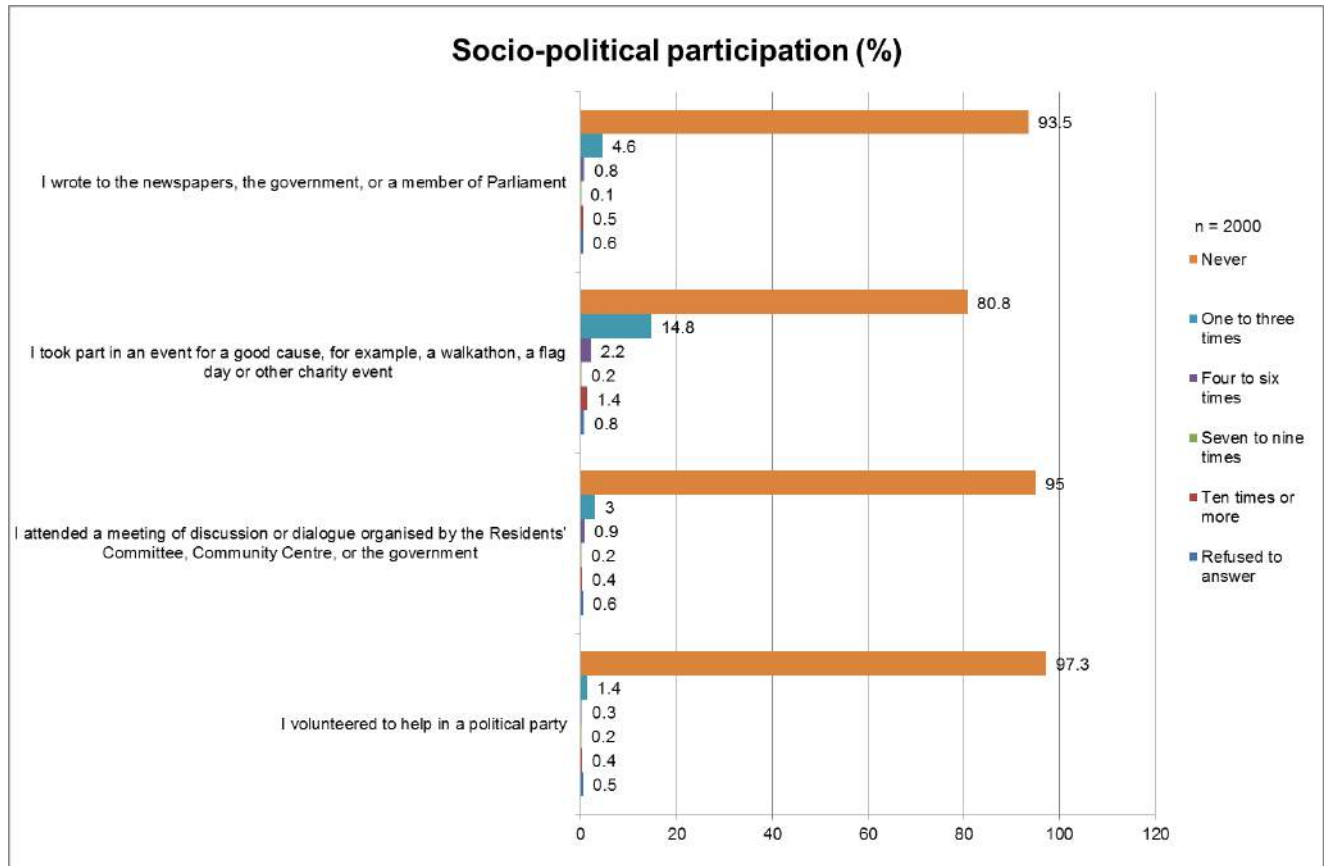
Q18 R1 – R5: Please tell me how often you did each of the following in the past 6 months?

R1: I volunteered to help in a political party

R2: I attended a meeting of discussion or dialogue organised by the Residents' Committee, Community Centre, or the government

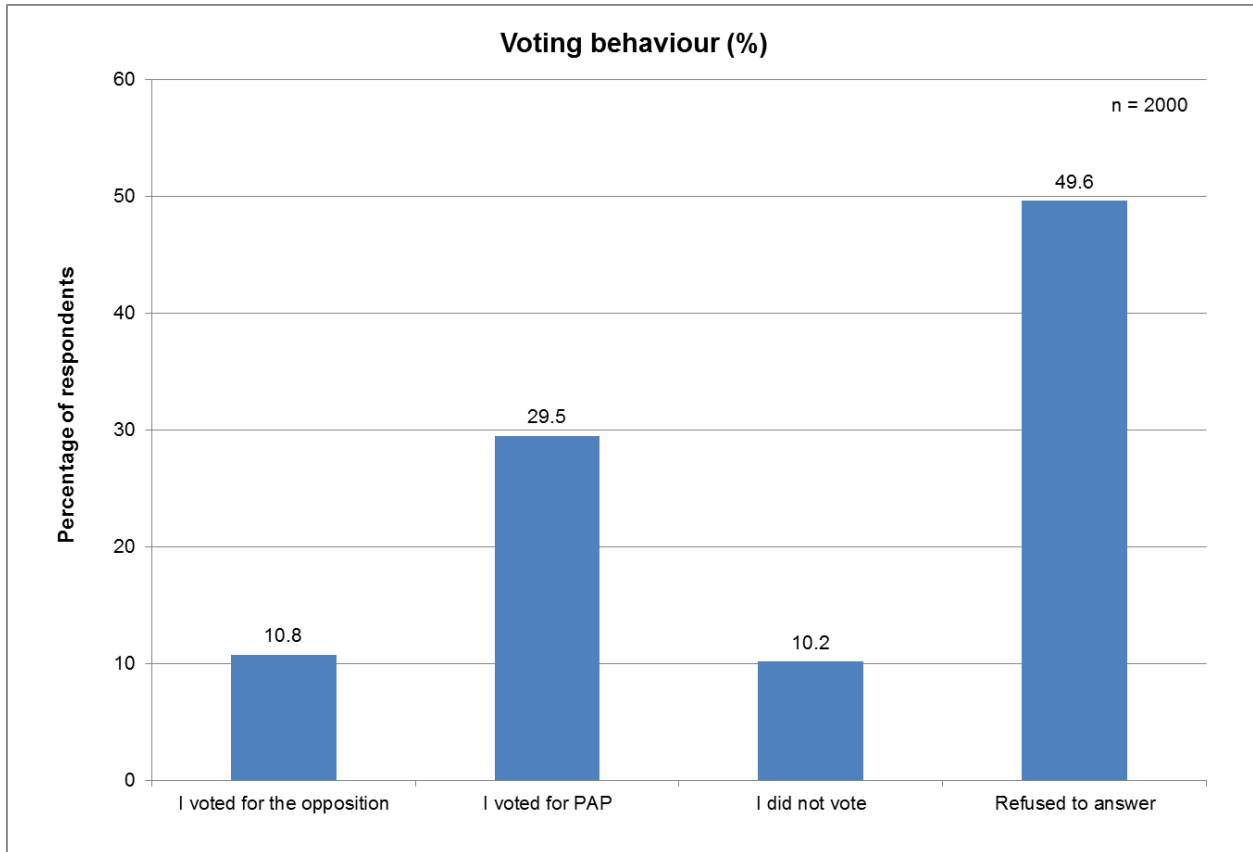
R3: I took part in an event for a good cause, for example, a walkathon, a flag day or other charity event

R5: I wrote to the newspapers, the government, or a member of Parliament

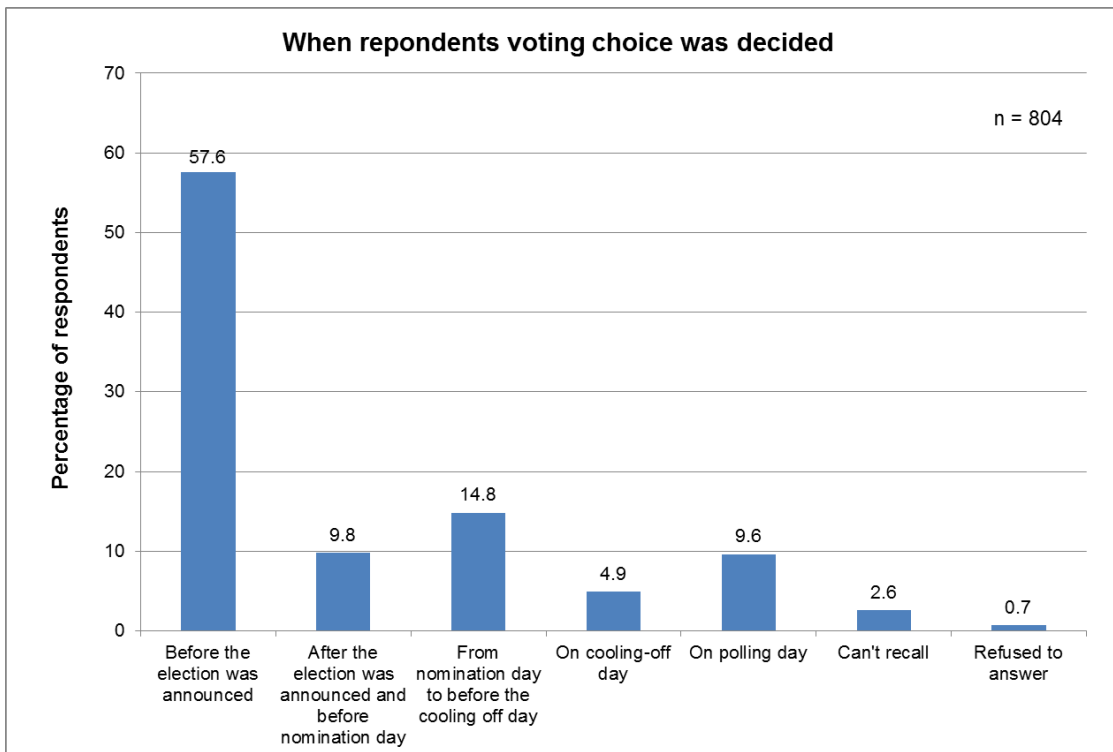


3.3. Voting behavior

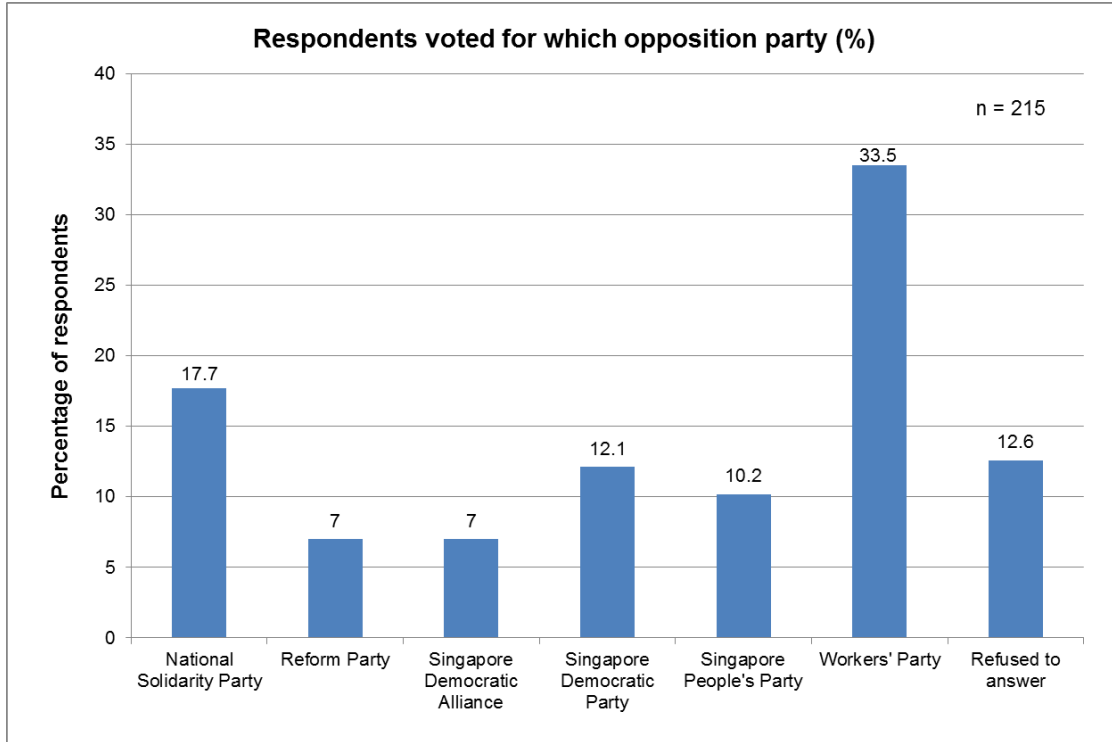
Q42: In talking to many people about election, we often find that a lot of people were not able to vote, because they were not registered, they were sick, or they just did not have time. Which one of the following applies to you in the recent election?



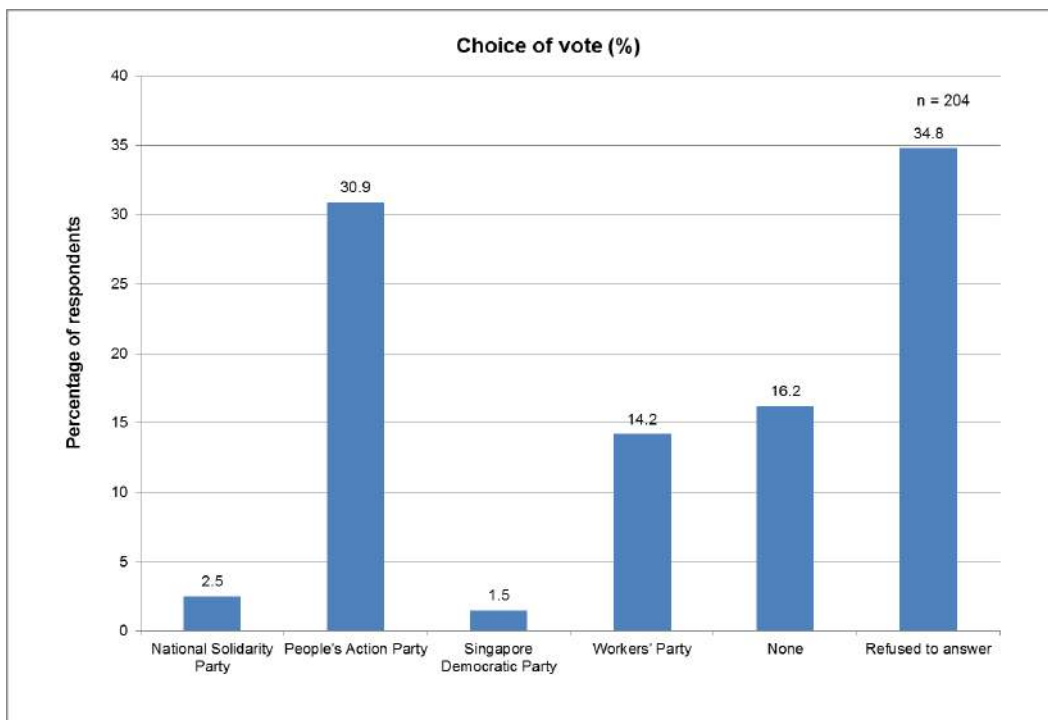
Q43: When did you make up your mind about who to vote for?



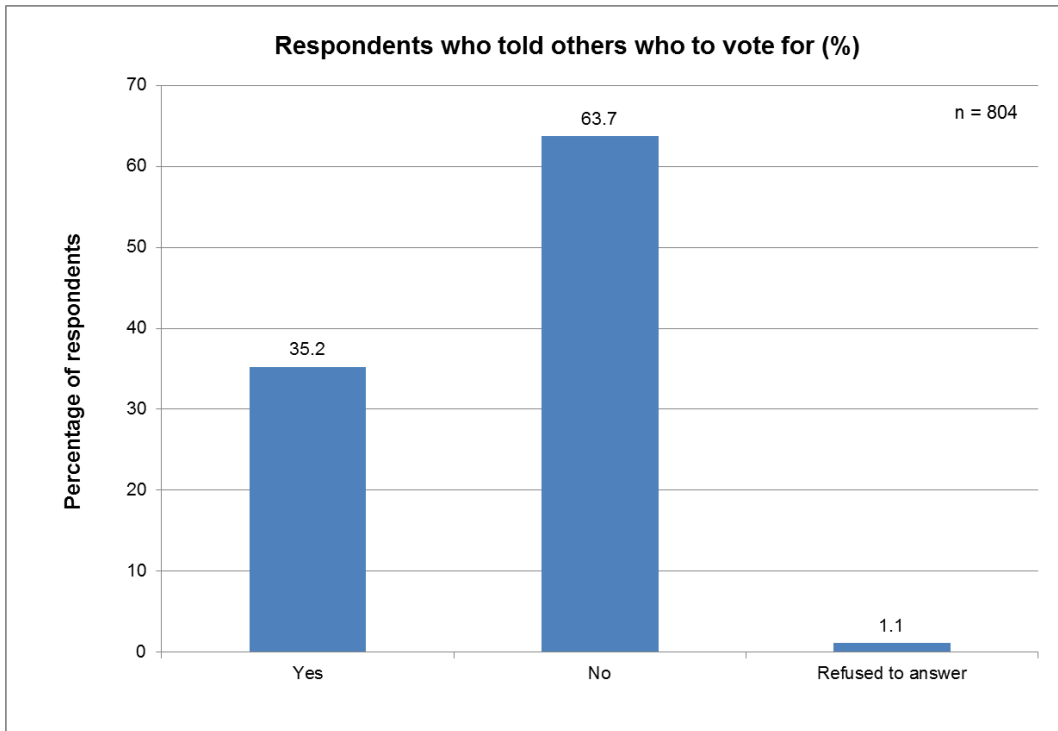
Q44 (for respondents who voted opposition): Which party did you vote for in the recent election?



Q45 (for respondents who did not vote in the recent election): If given a chance to vote, which party would you have voted for in the recent election?



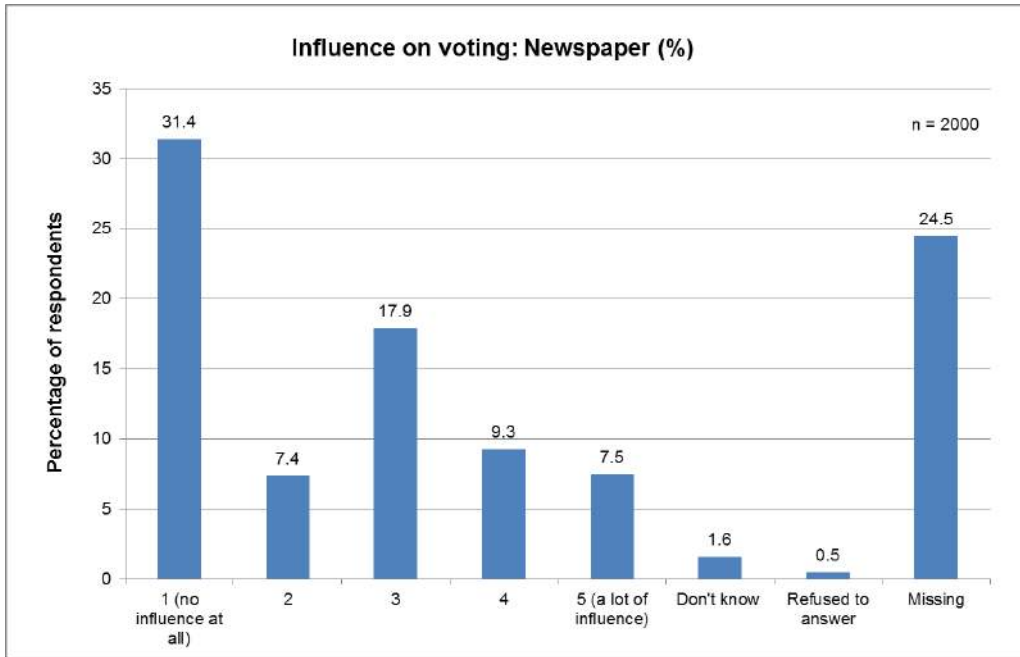
Q46: Did you tell anyone who to vote for?



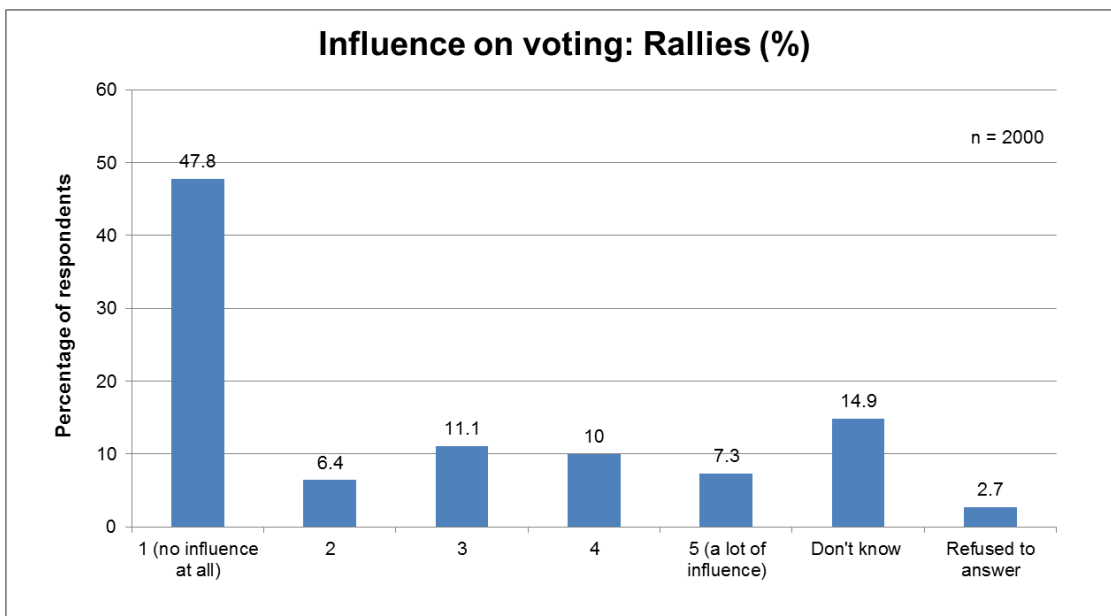
3.3.1. Media influence on voting

Q33 R1 – R11: During the election, how much did the following influence how you decided to vote?

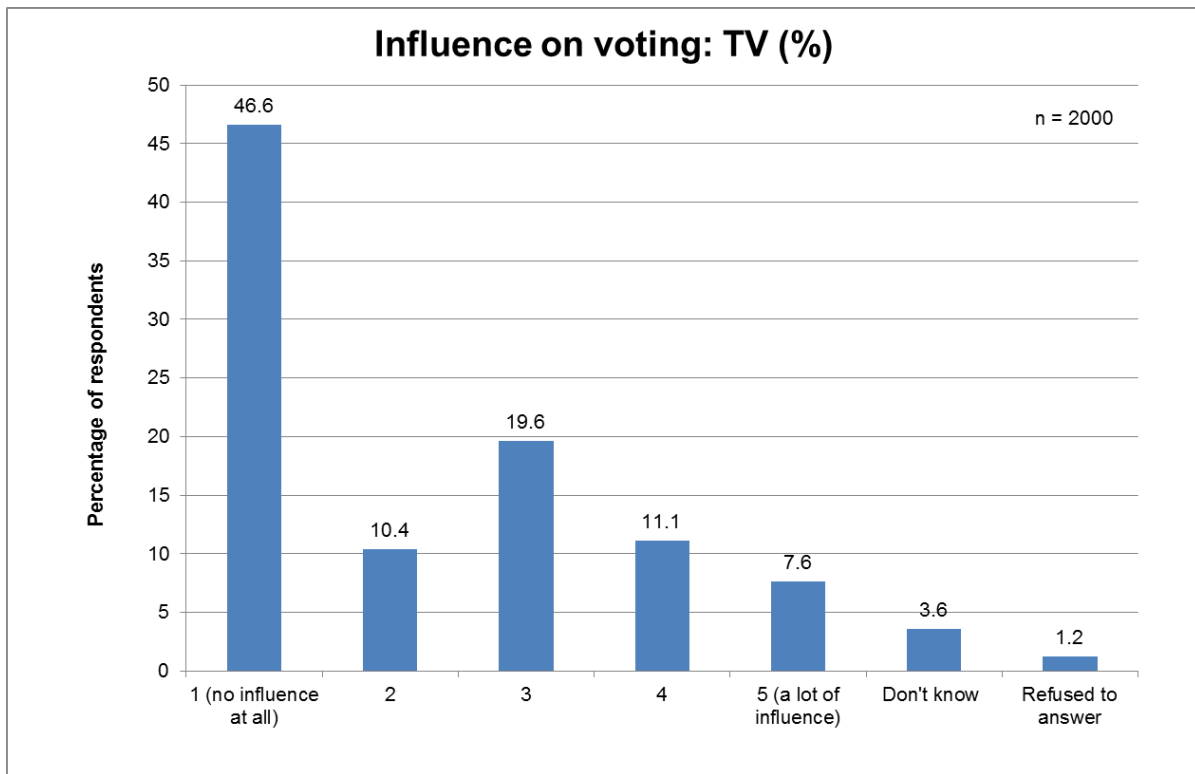
R1: What I read in the newspapers



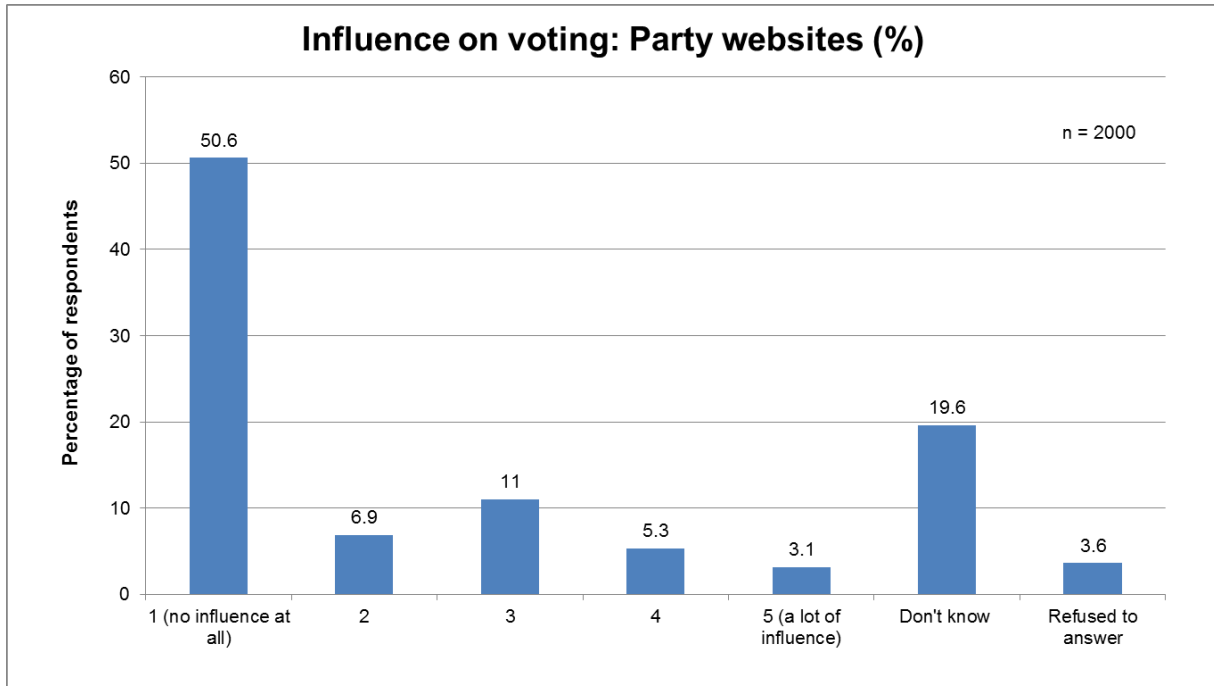
R2: What I heard at the rallies



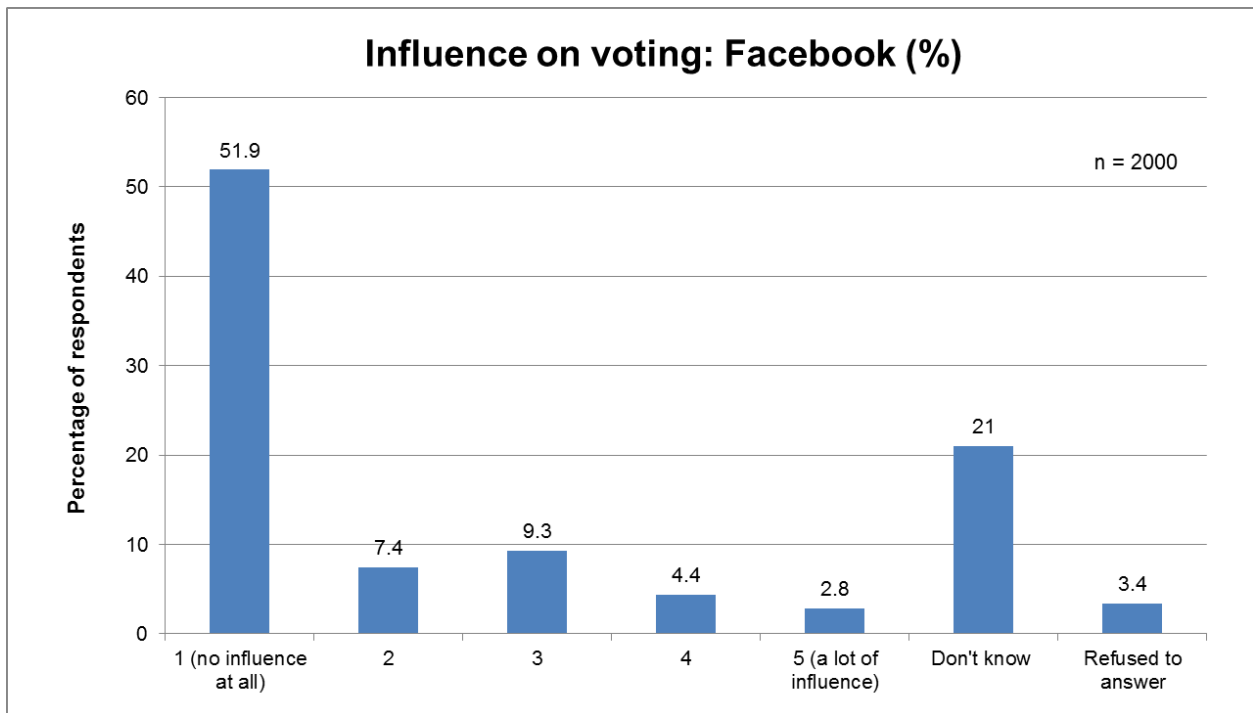
R3: What I saw on television



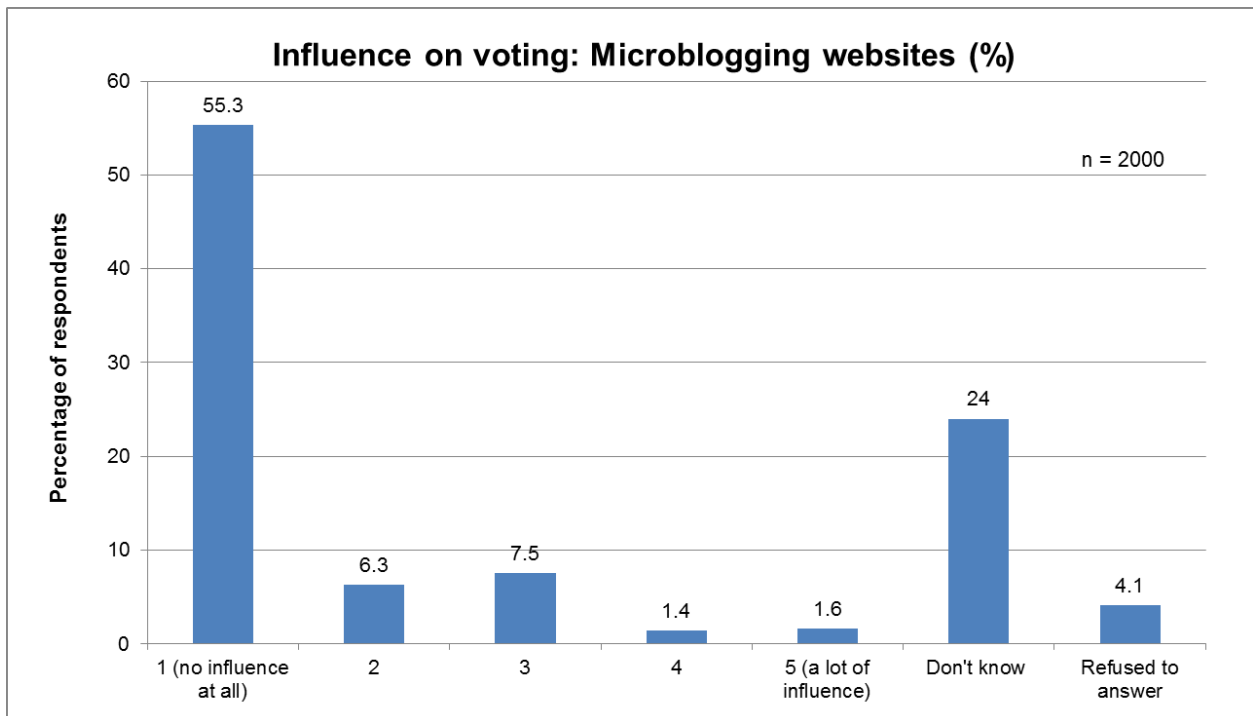
R4: What I read on party websites



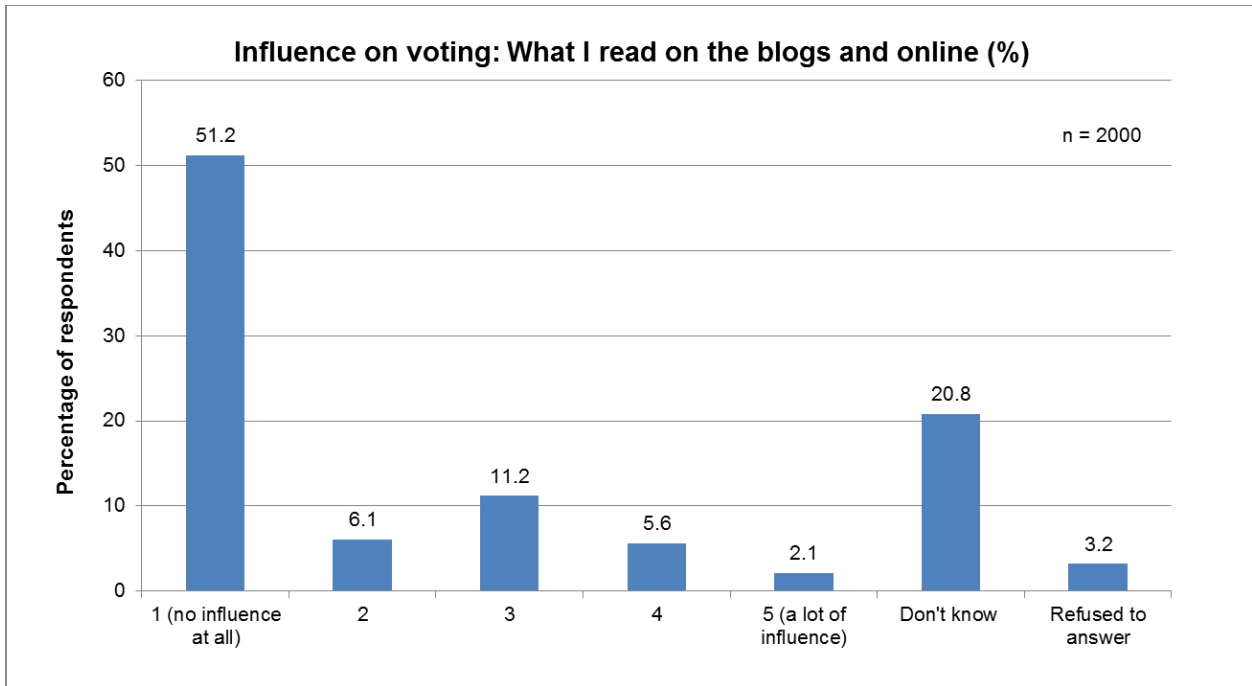
R5: What I read on Facebook



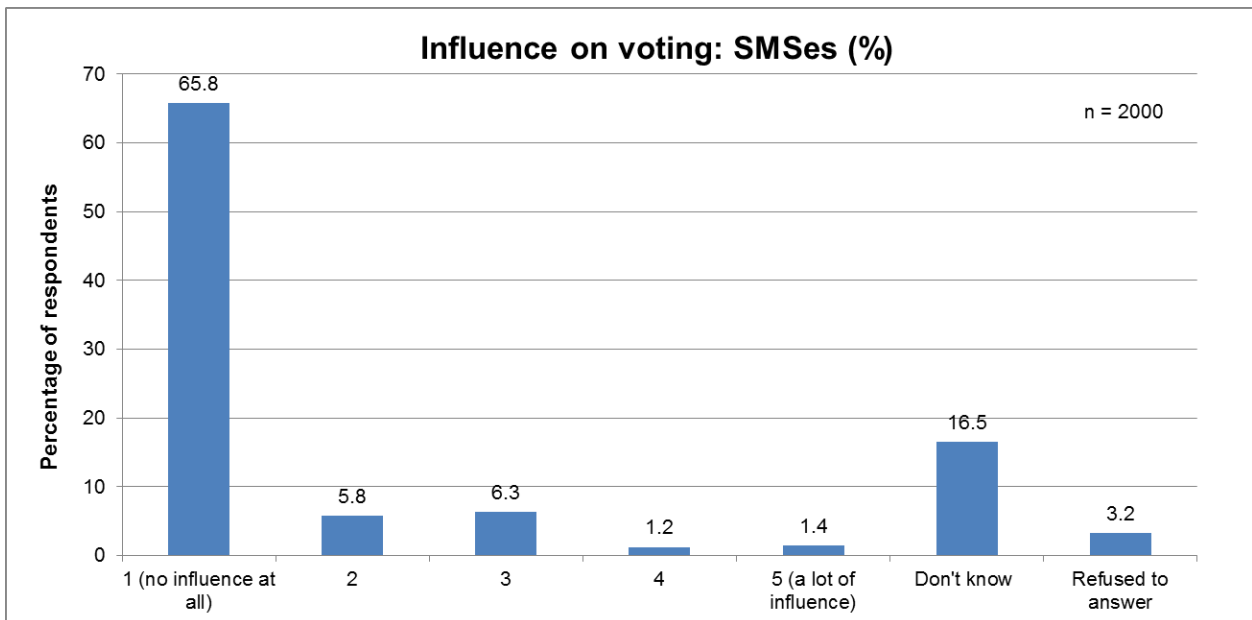
R6: What I read on Twitter, Weibo, Plurk and other microblogging websites



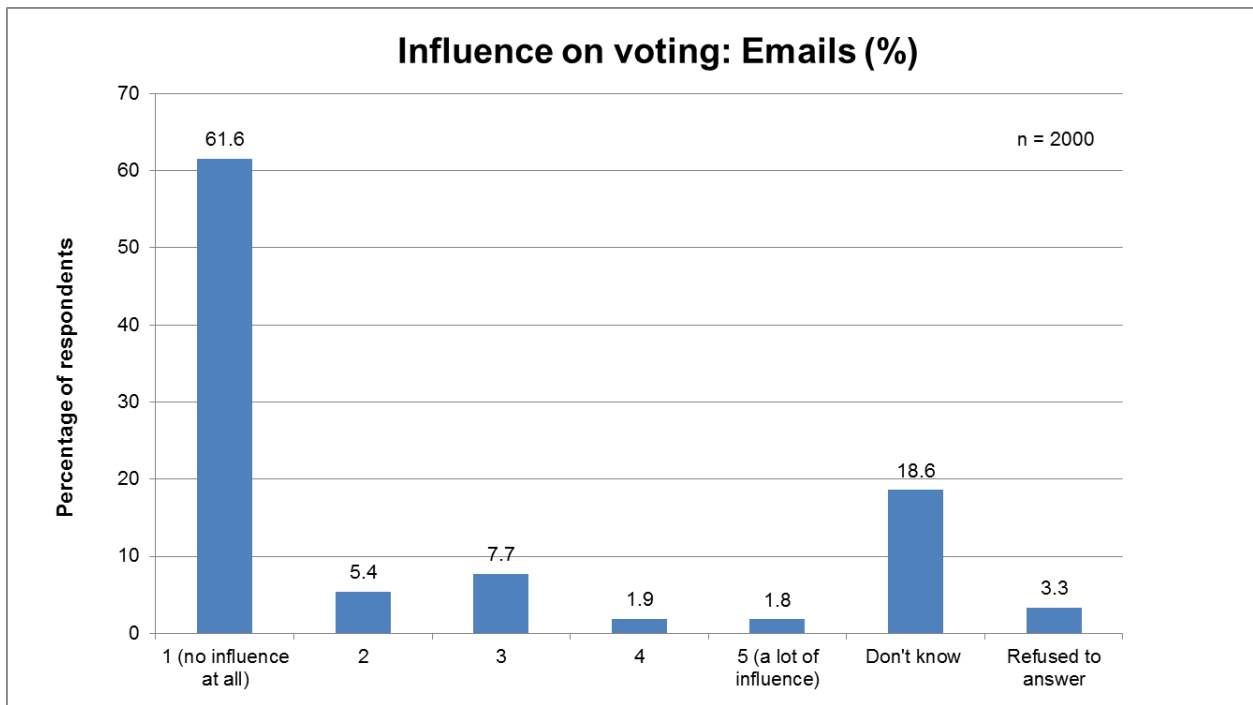
R7: What I read on the blogs and online- only news websites such as The Online Citizen, Yawning Bread and Temasek Reviews



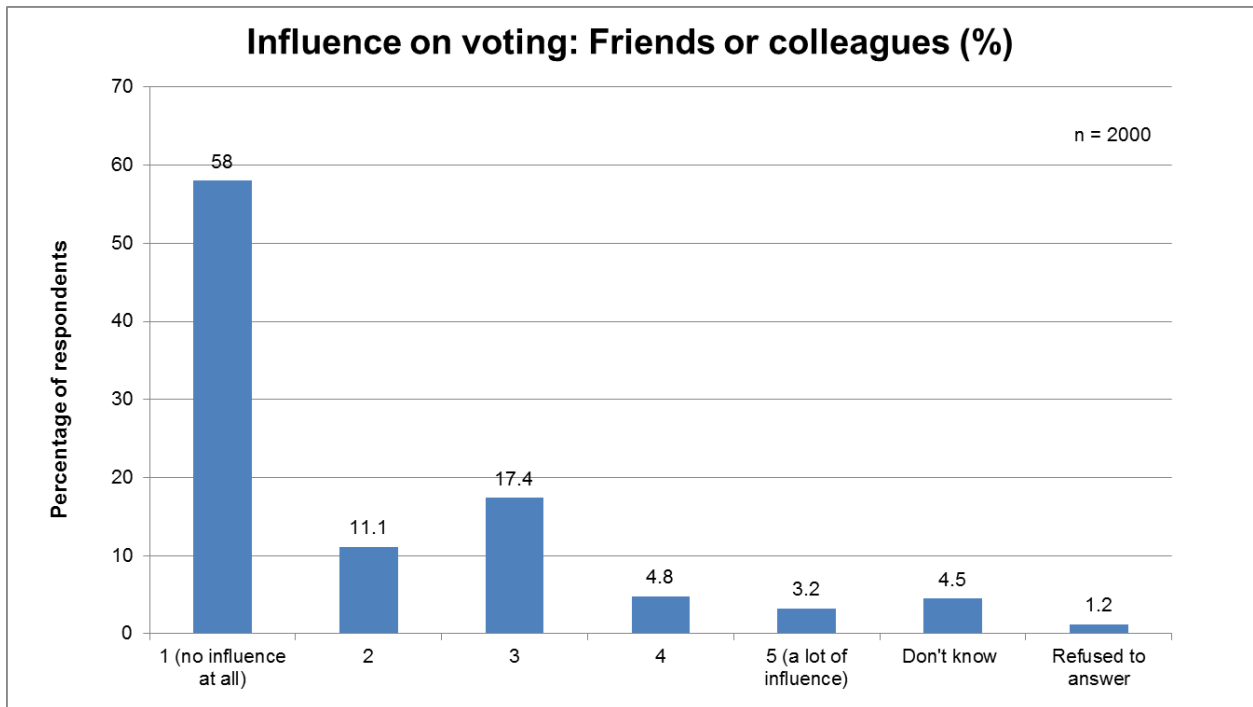
R8: What I read in my SMSes



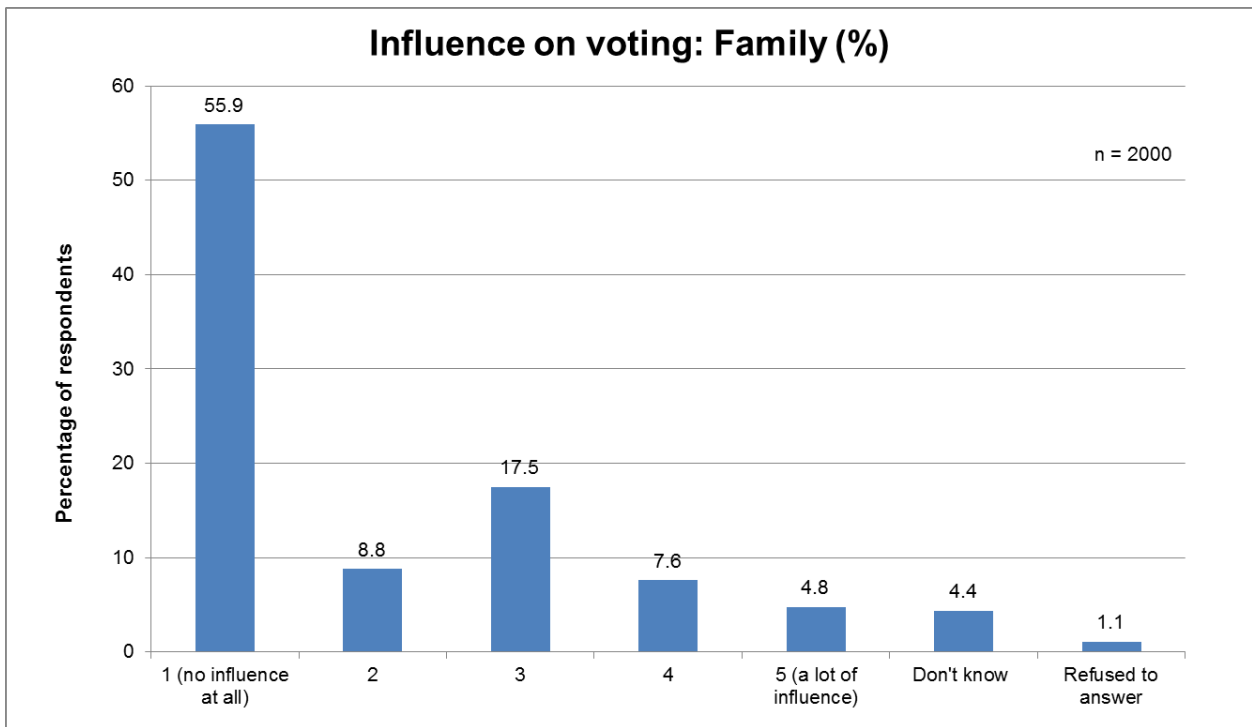
R9: What I read in my emails



R10: What my friends or colleagues told me



R11: What family told me



4. Media consumption

4.1. Duration

Q25 R1 – R7: How many minutes do you usually spend a day reading/listening/watching election news during the period of the election.

R1: Reading print newspapers

R2: Radio

R3: Watching television

R4: Reading online websites of Singapore mass media such as The Straits Times, Today, The New Paper, Zaobao or Channel News Asia.

R5: Reading foreign news websites such as the BBC, CNN or the New York Times

R6: Learning about this topic on Facebook

R7: Reading Internet-only Singapore blogs or new websites such as The Online Citizen, Yawning Bread, Temasek Review

Q25 R1 Reading newspapers		
Min./Day	Frequency	Percent
None	488	24.7
5	179	9.1
10	232	11.7
15	171	8.7
20	126	6.4
25	9	0.5
30	433	21.9
35	3	0.2
40	5	0.3
45	26	1.3
50	1	0.1
60	205	10.4
75	1	0.1
80	1	0.1
90	23	1.2
100	1	0.1
120	48	2.4
160	1	0.1
180	14	0.7
240	3	0.2
300	2	0.1
360	1	0.1
420	1	0.1
600	1	0.1
Total	1975	100.0
Mean	24.7	

Q25 R2 Listening to radio		
Min./Day	Frequency	Percent
None	1370	70.0
5	116	5.9
10	109	5.6
15	72	3.7
20	41	2.1
25	1	0.1
30	127	6.5
40	2	0.1
45	4	0.2
60	54	2.8
90	9	0.5
100	1	0.1
120	19	1.0
150	1	0.1
180	13	0.7
240	1	0.1
280	1	0.1
300	4	0.2
360	4	0.2
420	1	0.1
480	1	0.1
600	1	0.1
720	5	0.3
Total	1957	100.0
Mean	12.7	

Q25 R3 Watching Television		
Min./Day	Frequency	Percent
None	429	21.8
5	111	5.6
10	165	8.4
15	98	5.0
20	83	4.2
25	3	0.2
30	722	36.7
40	1	0.1
45	13	0.7
60	212	10.8
70	1	0.1
80	1	0.1
90	16	0.8
120	56	2.8
150	2	0.1
160	1	0.1
180	20	1.0
200	1	0.1

240	16	0.8
300	3	0.2
320	1	0.1
360	7	0.4
420	1	0.1
480	1	0.1
600	1	0.1
630	1	0.1
720	1	0.1
Total	1967	100.0
Mean	32.24	

Q25 R4 Reading Singapore websites		
Min./Day	Frequency	Percent
None	1328	67.0
5	58	2.9
10	89	4.5
15	97	4.9
20	58	2.9
25	1	0.1
30	168	8.5
40	2	0.1
45	8	0.4
60	112	5.7
80	1	0.1
90	10	0.5
100	1	0.1
120	33	1.7
180	10	0.5
200	1	0.1
240	2	0.1
300	1	0.1
360	2	0.1
Total	1982	100.0
Mean	12.4	

Q25 R5 Reading foreign news websites		
Min./Day	Frequency	Percent
None	1729	87.1
5	50	2.5
10	43	2.2
15	41	2.1
20	13	0.7
25	1	0.1
30	65	3.3
40	1	0.1
45	2	0.1

50	1	0.1
60	28	1.4
90	3	0.2
120	4	0.2
180	3	0.2
240	1	0.1
360	1	0.1
Total	1986	100.0
Mean	3.7	

Q25 R6 Learning about this topic on Facebook		
Min./Day	Frequency	Percent
None	1550	78.0
5	61	3.1
10	93	4.7
15	50	2.5
20	36	1.8
30	85	4.3
40	1	0.1
45	6	0.3
50	2	0.1
60	62	3.1
90	4	0.2
120	27	1.4
180	5	0.3
240	3	0.2
300	2	0.1
360	1	0.1
Total	1988	100.0
Mean	7.83	

Q25 R7 Reading Internet only Singapore blogs or news websites such as The Online Citizen, Yawning Bread, Temasek Review		
Min./Day	Frequency	Percent
None	1564	78.6
5	54	2.7
10	79	4.0
12	1	0.1
15	71	3.6
20	29	1.5
30	101	5.1
35	1	0.1
40	4	0.2
45	9	0.5
50	1	0.1
60	52	2.6
90	5	0.3

120	14	0.7
180	1	0.1
200	1	0.1
240	1	0.1
360	1	0.1
Total	1989	100.0
Mean	6.35	

4.2. Viral content

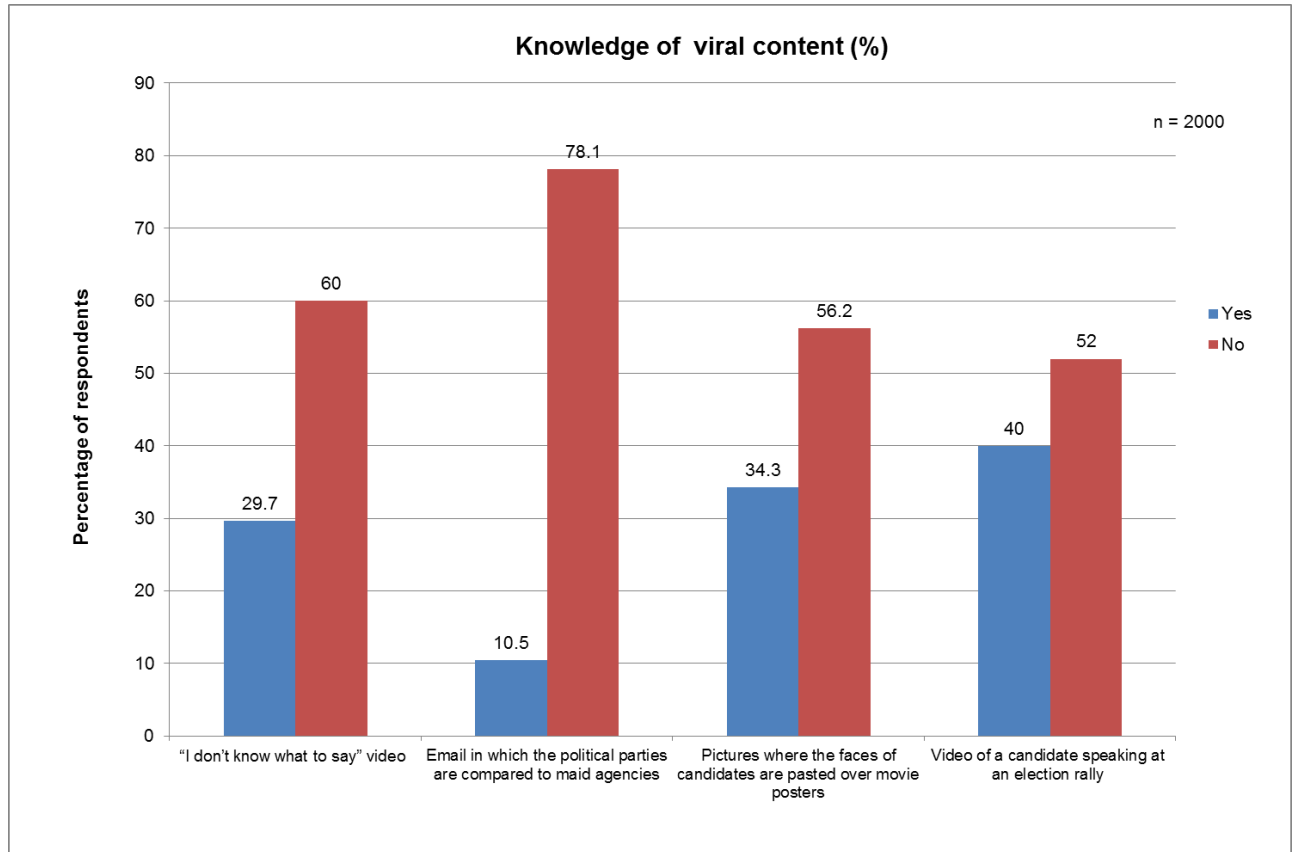
Q28 R1 – R4: Did you see or read the following during the recent election?

R1: The “I don’t know what to say” video of Tin Pei Ling

R2: The email in which the political parties are compared to maid agencies

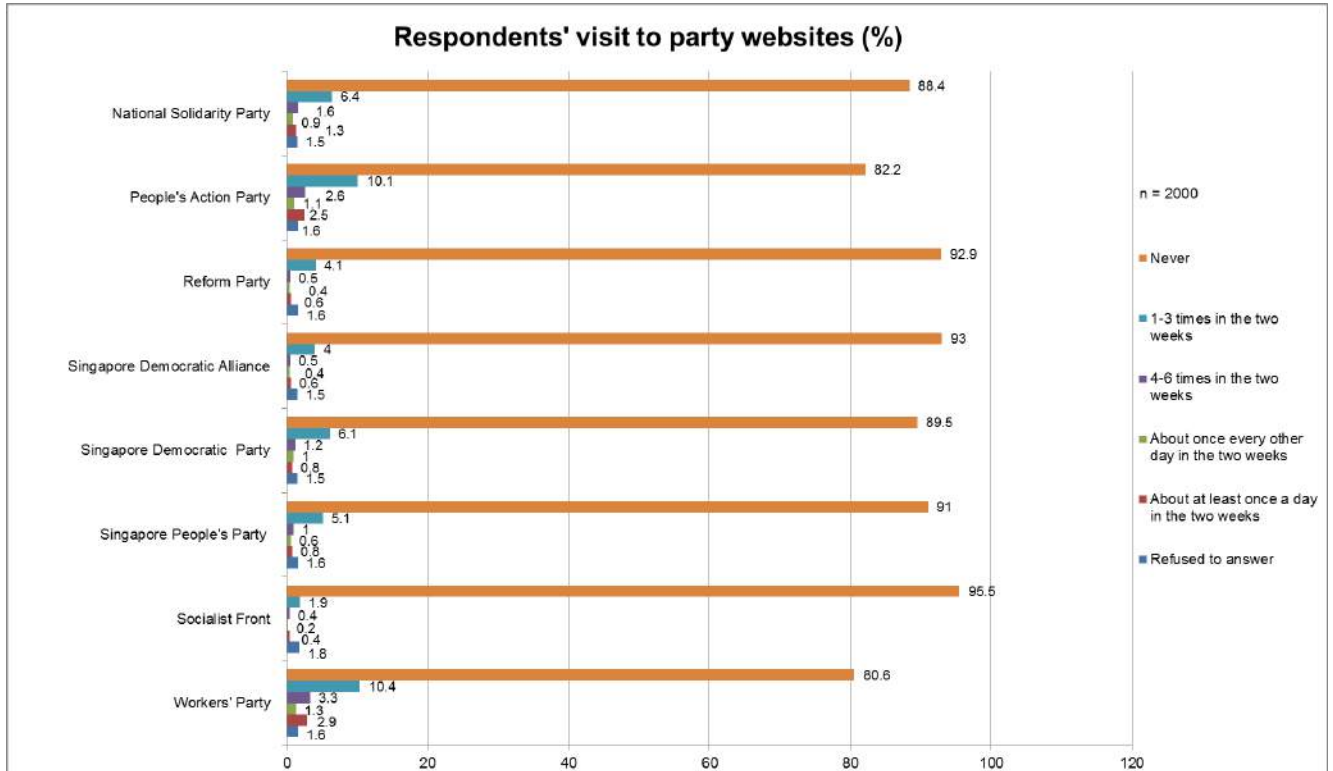
R3: Pictures where the faces of candidates are pasted over movie posters

R4: Video of a candidate speaking at an election rally



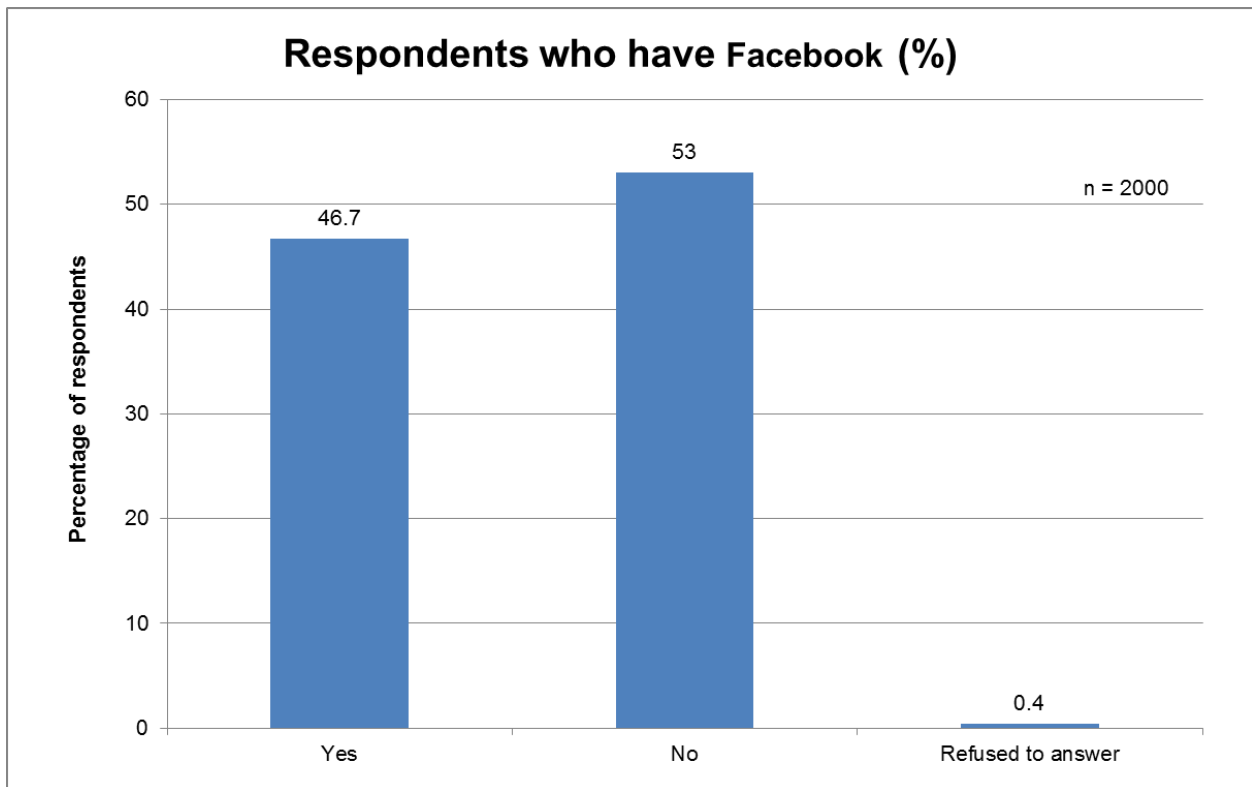
4.3. Party websites/Facebook pages

Q29: During the election, how many times did you visit websites or Facebook pages of the following political parties?



4.4. Facebook usage

Q34: Do you have a Facebook account?



4.4.1. Importance of Facebook

Q35 R1 – R5 (for those who have Facebook account): How much would you agree with the following statements?

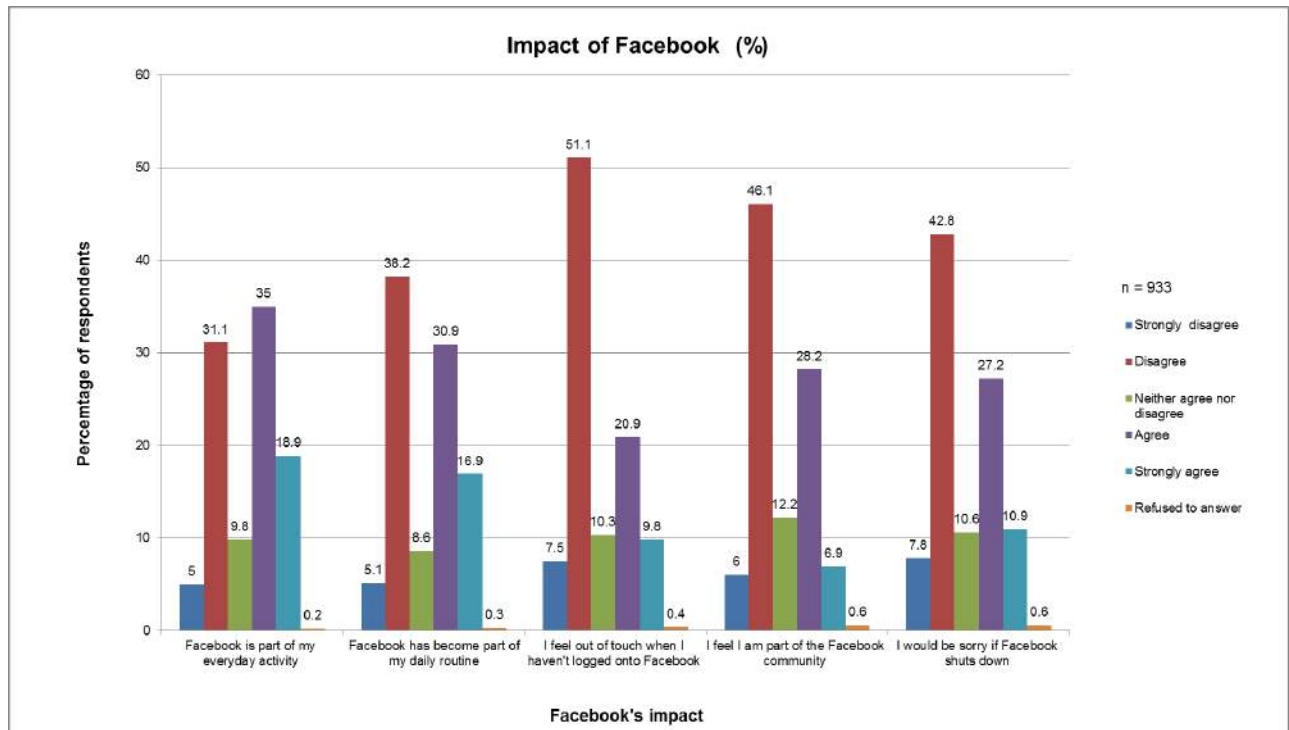
R1: Facebook is part of my everyday activity

R2: Facebook has become part of my daily routine

R3: I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto Facebook

R4: I feel I am part of the Facebook community

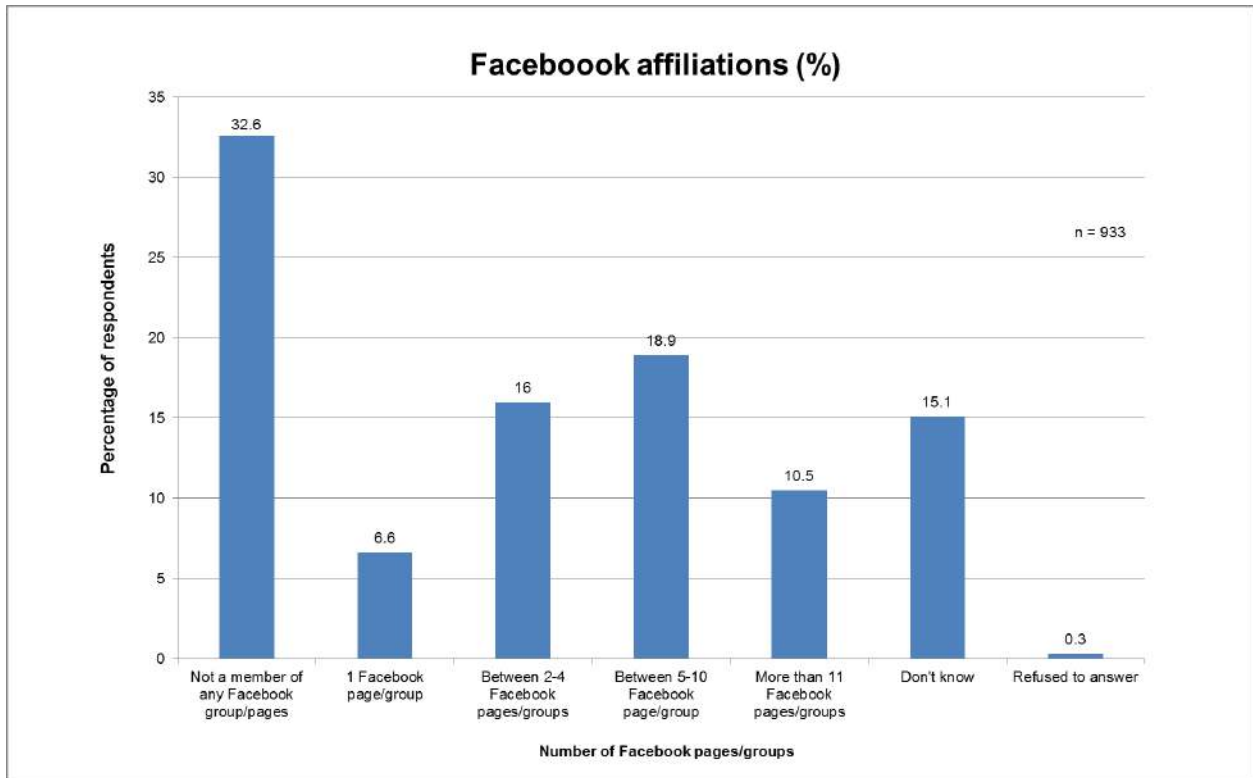
R5: I would be sorry if Facebook shuts down



4.4.2. Usage details

Q36 R1 – R4 (for those who have Facebook account): The following questions ask about the use of a Facebook account in the past four weeks

R1: Approximately how many Facebook groups and pages are you a member of?



R2: How many of these Facebook groups and pages are related to political and public affairs issues?

Q36R2 Facebook groups and pages related to political and public affairs issues		
No.	Frequency	Percent
0	685	73.4
1	44	4.7
2	39	4.2
3	27	2.9
4	10	1.1
5	27	2.9
6	2	0.2
7	3	0.3
8	3	0.3
9	1	0.1
10	10	1.1
20	1	0.1
25	1	0.1
Don't know	77	8.3
Refused to answer	2	0.2
Total	932	99.9
Missing System	1	0.1
Total	933	100.0

R3: How often did you visit Facebook groups and pages and read postings on a Wall/discussion board?

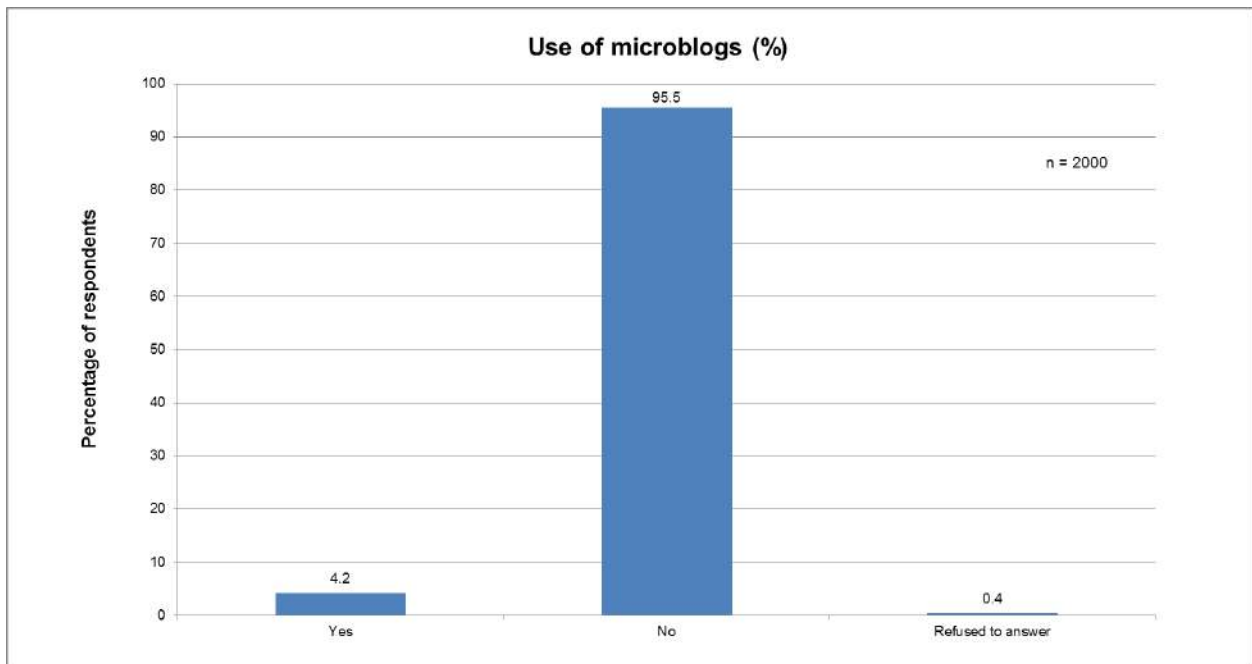
Q36 R3 Frequency of visit Facebook groups and pages and read postings		
No.	Frequency	Percent
0	432	46.3
1	53	5.7
2	54	5.8
3	33	3.5
4	66	7.1
5	27	2.9
6	5	0.5
7	8	0.9
8	20	2.1
10	27	2.9
11	1	0.1
12	15	1.6
14	4	0.4
15	1	0.1
16	7	0.8
20	25	2.7
24	1	0.1
25	2	0.2
28	73	7.8
30	7	0.8
40	1	0.1
50	2	0.2
60	1	0.1
88	2	0.2
100	1	0.1
112	1	0.1
Don't know	63	6.8
Refused to answer	1	0.1
Total	933	100.0

R4: How often did you visit Facebook groups and pages and write on a Wall/discussion board?

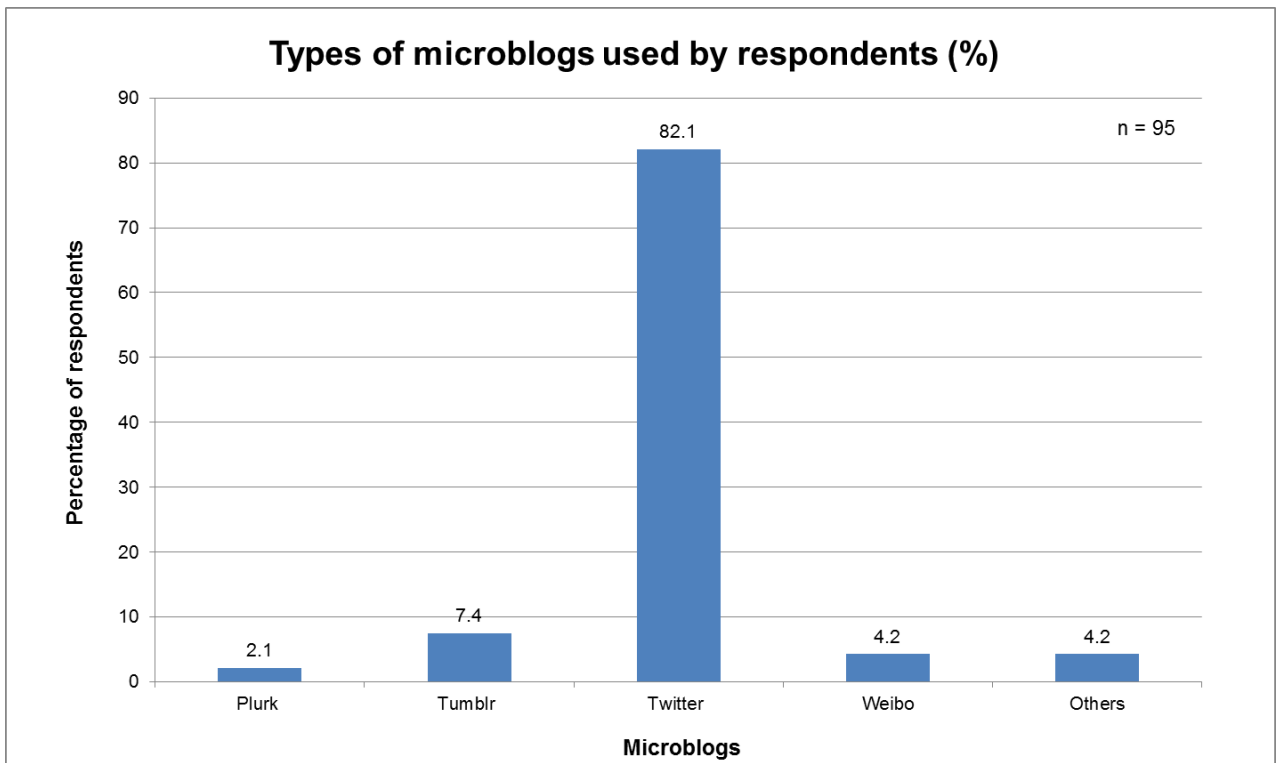
Q36 R4How often you write on Facebook groups and pages and write on a Wall/discussion board		
No.	Frequency	Percent
0	633	67.8
1	44	4.7
2	26	2.8
3	14	1.5
4	49	5.3
5	15	1.6
6	2	0.2
7	5	0.5
8	15	1.6
9	1	0.1
10	16	1.7
12	7	0.8
14	4	0.4
15	2	0.2
16	6	0.6
20	9	1.0
21	1	0.1
24	1	0.1
28	18	1.9
30	3	0.3
32	1	0.1
40	1	0.1
50	1	0.1
88	1	0.1
101	1	0.1
Don't know	56	6.0
Refused to answer	1	0.1
Total	933	100.0

4.5. Microblogs

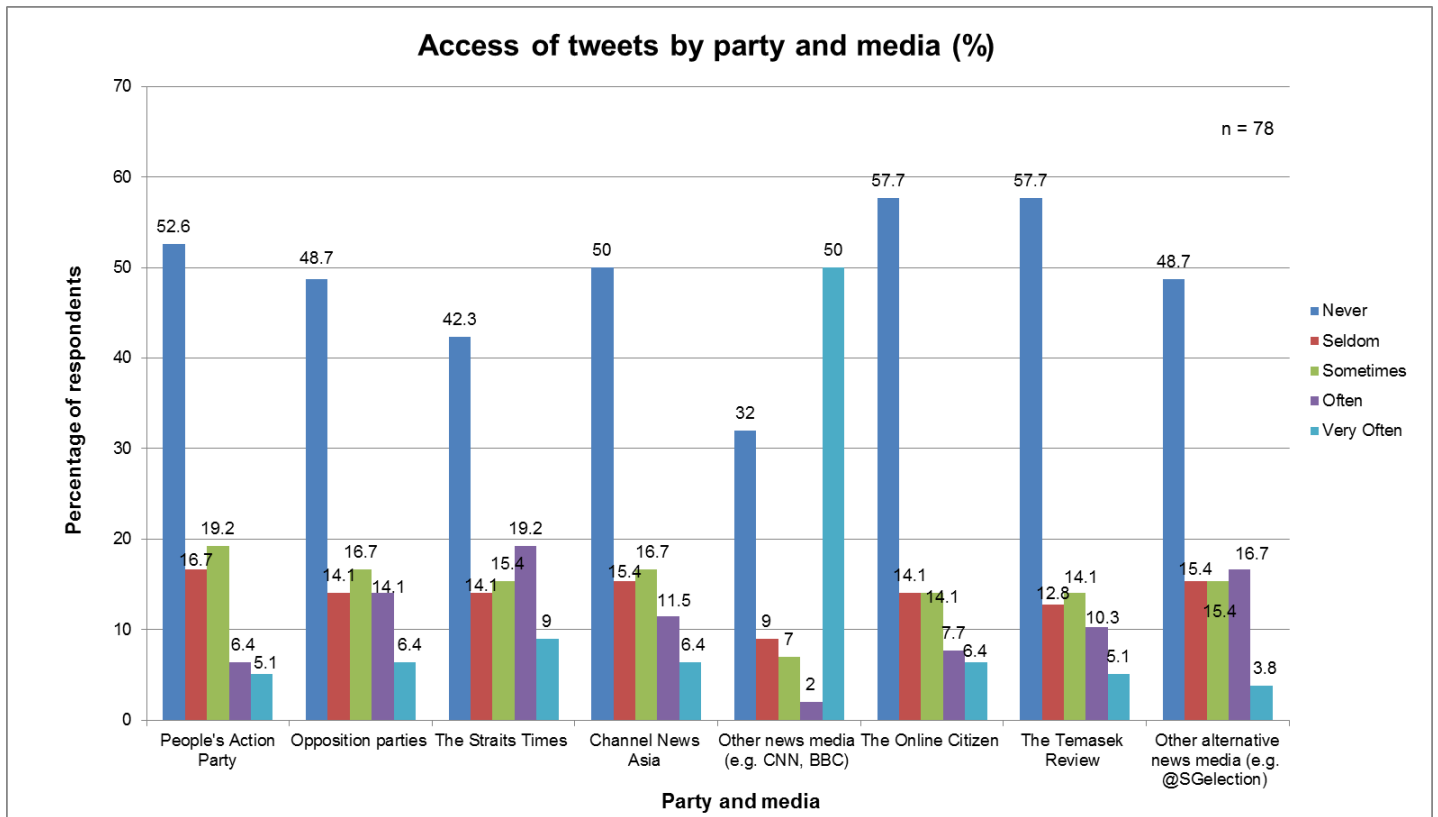
Q37: Did you use microblogs (e.g. Twitter, Plurk or Weibo) to follow the recent election?



Q38: What type of microblog (e.g. Twitter, Plurk or Weibo) are you using?



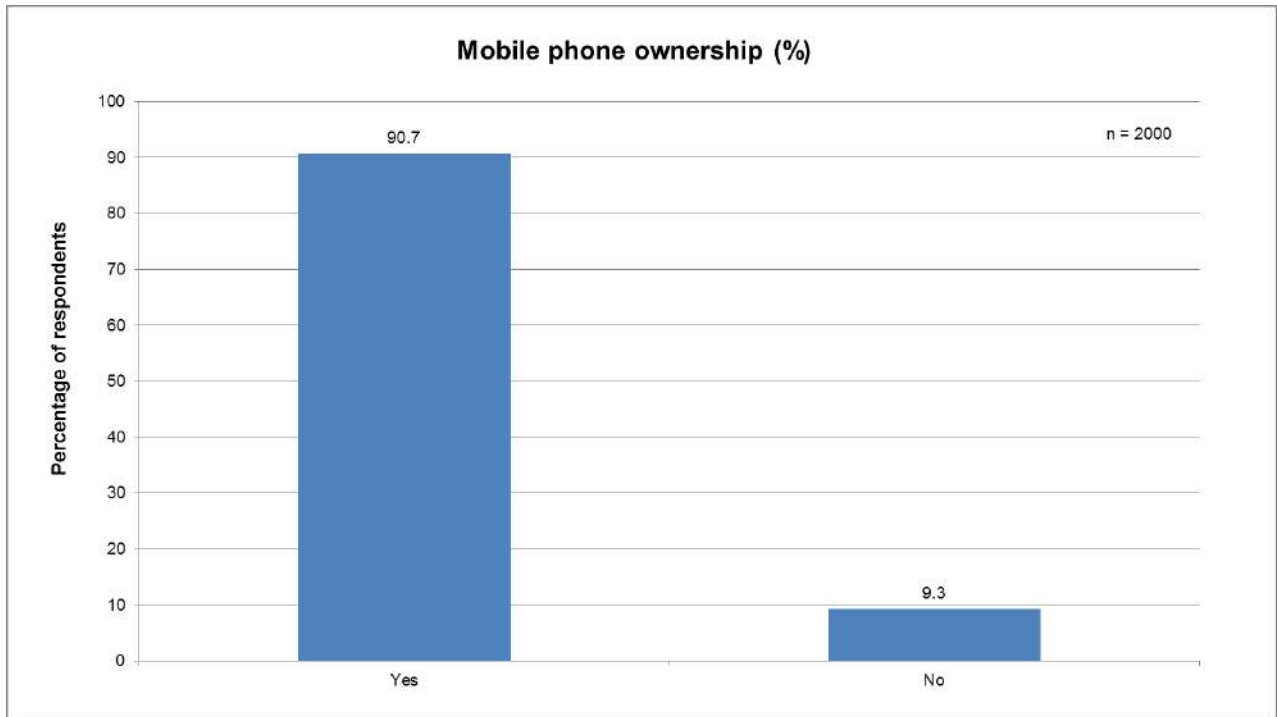
Q39 R1 – R8 (for those who use Twitter): How often did you read the tweets by the following during the recent election?



4.6. Mobile phone

4.6.1. Ownership

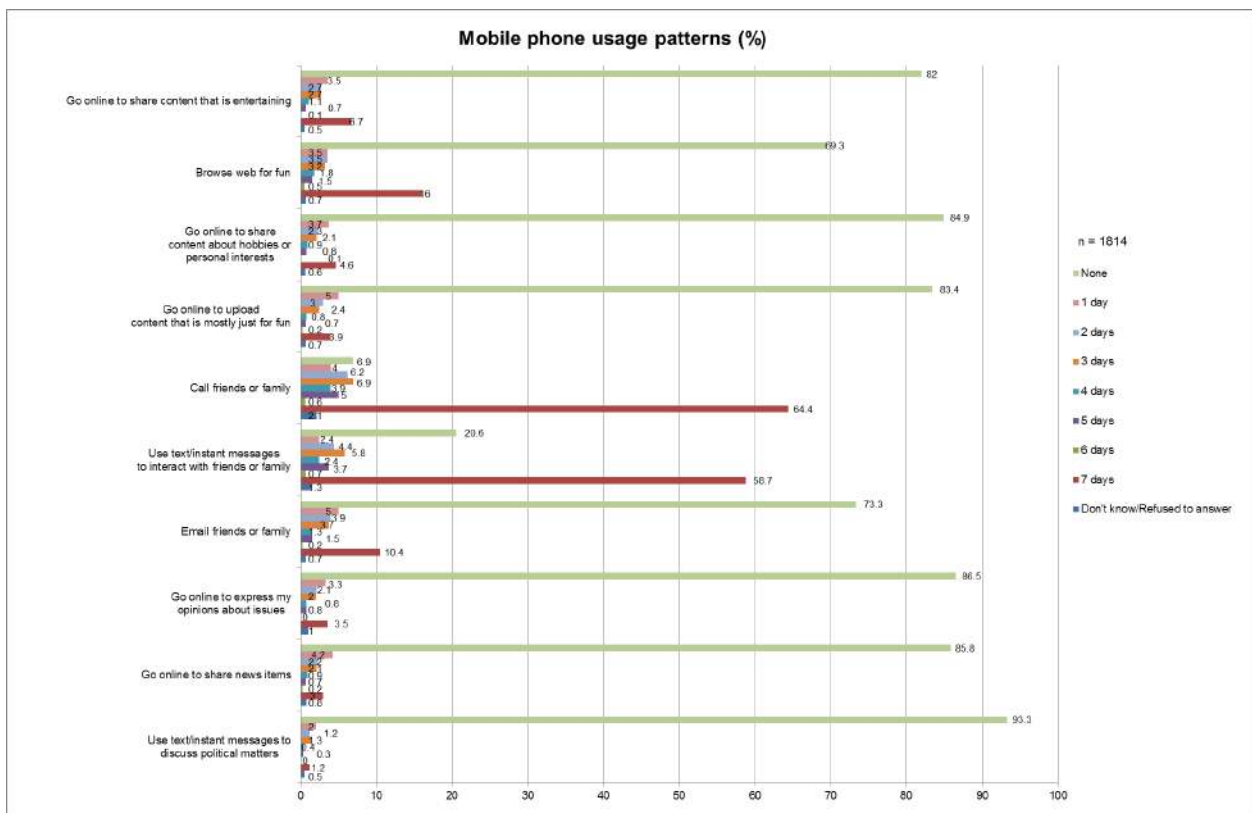
Q40: Do you have a mobile phone?



4.6.2. Type of use

Q41 R1 – R10 (for those with mobile phone): How many days in a typical week do you use mobile phone to...

- R1: Go online to share content that is entertaining
- R2: Browse web just for fun
- R3: Go online to share content about hobbies or personal interest
- R4: Go online to upload content that is mostly just for fun
- R5: Call friends or family
- R6: Use text/instant messages to interact with friends or family
- R7: Email friends or family
- R8: Go online to express my opinions about issues
- R9: Go online to share news items
- R10: Use text/instant messages to discuss political matters



5. Attitude towards Media

5.1. Importance of different media

Q26 R1 –12: How important do you think each of the following was for you as a source of information about the recent election?

R1: Singapore TV stations and their websites

R2: Radio

R3: Singapore newspapers and their websites

R4: Political party websites

R5: Political party brochures

R6: Going to political party election rallies

R7: Facebook

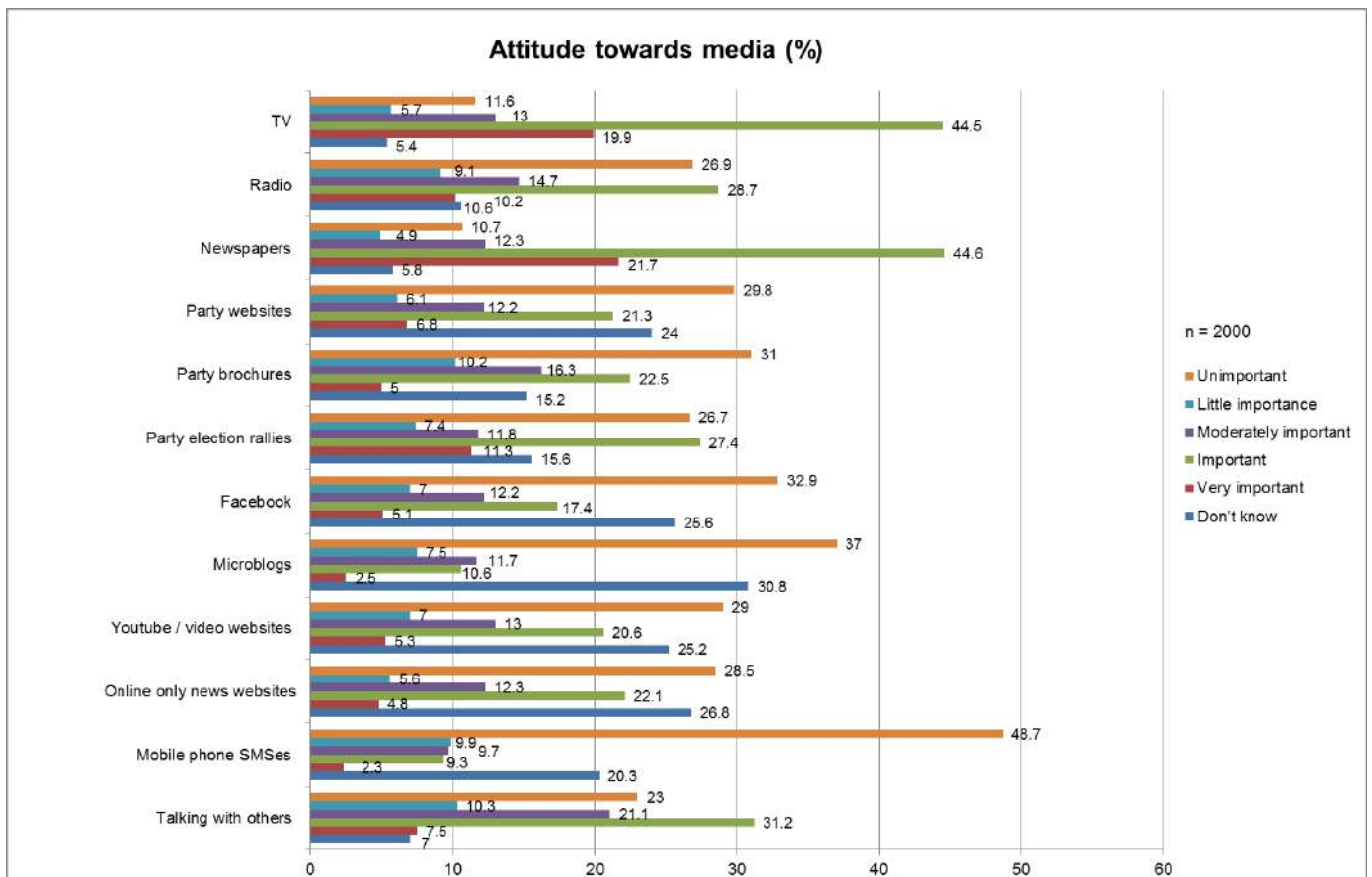
R8: Microblogs such as Twitter, Weibo and Plurk

R9: Youtube and other video websites

R10: Online-only news websites and blogs such as The Online Citizen, Yawning Bread and Temasek Review

R11: Mobile Phone SMSes

R12: Talking with others



5.2. Trust of different media

Q27 R1 – R12: Then, how trustworthy was each of the following for you as a source of information about the election?

R1: Singapore TV stations and their websites

R2: Radio

R3: Singapore newspapers and their websites

R4: Political party websites

R5: Political party brochures

R6: Going to political party election rallies

R7: Facebook

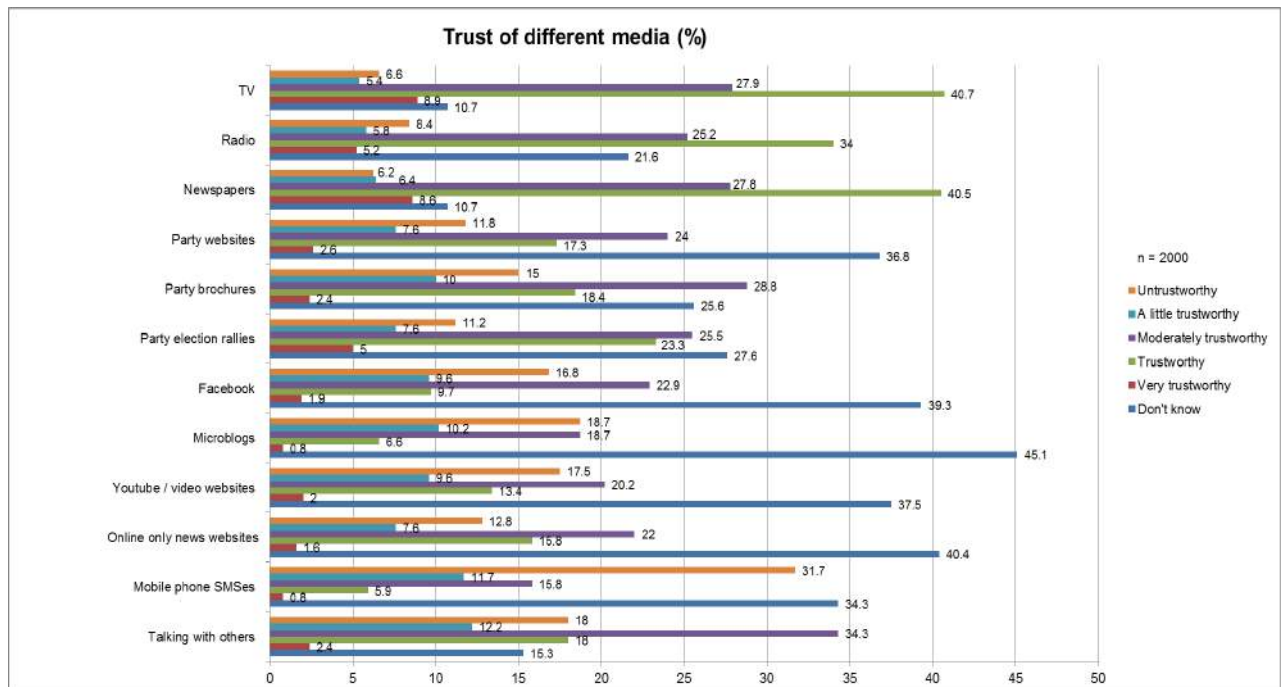
R8: Microblogs such as Twitter, Weibo and Plurk

R9: Youtube and other video websites

R10: Online-only news websites and blogs such as The Online Citizen, Yawning Bread and Temasek Review

R11: Mobile Phone SMSes

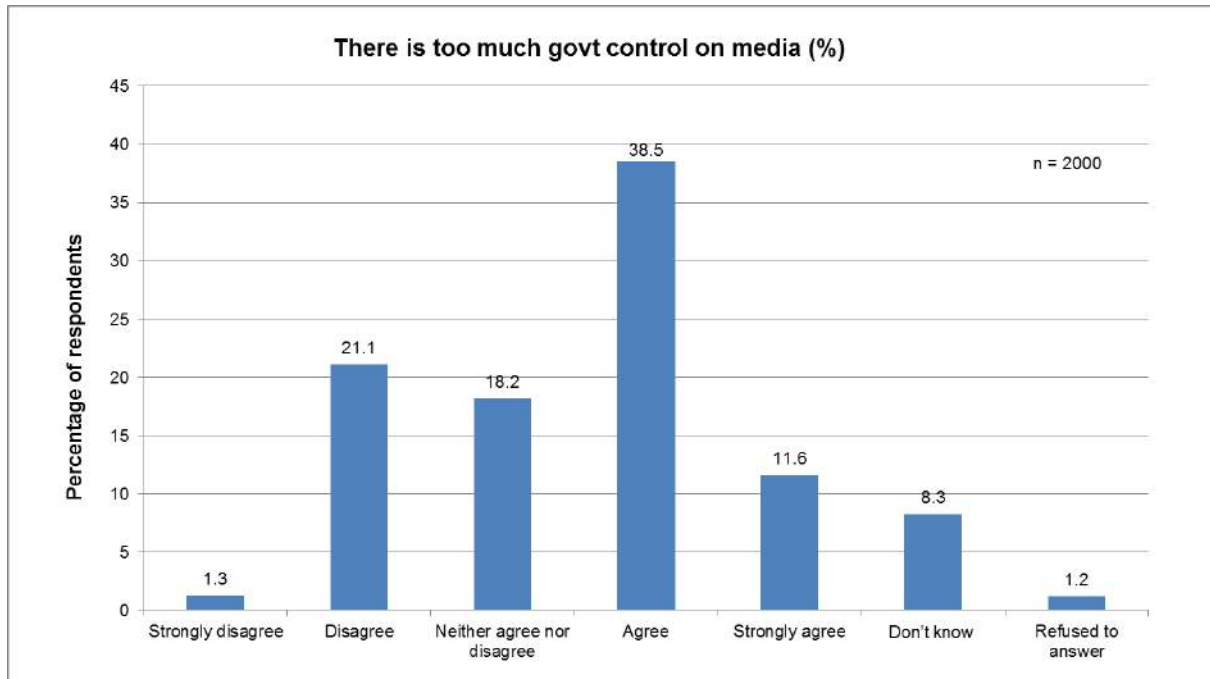
R12: Talking with others



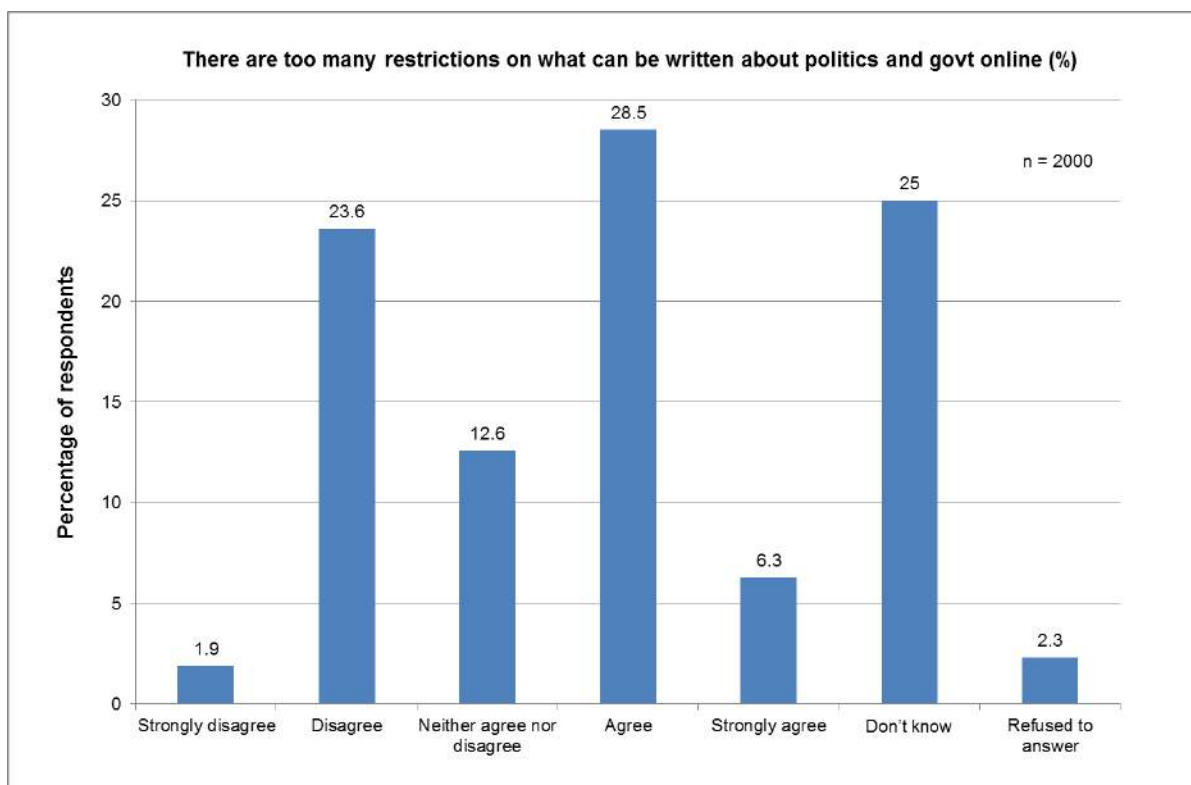
5.3. Media control

Q20 R3 – R5: How much would you agree with the following statements?

R3: There is too much Government control of newspapers and television.



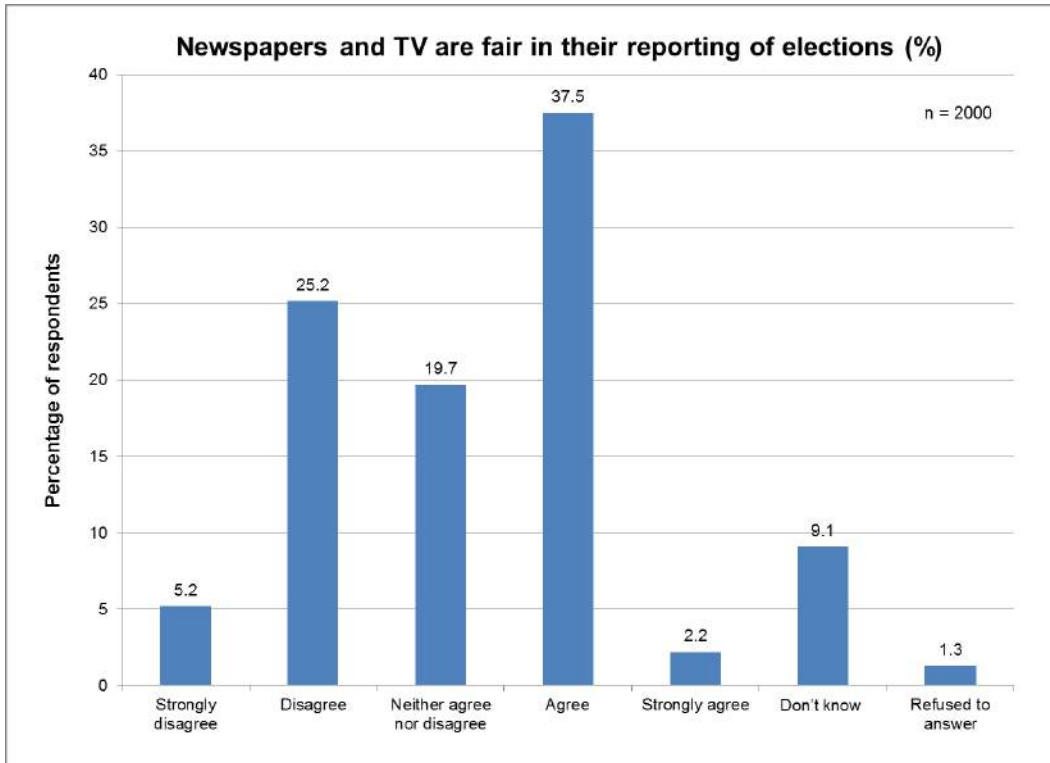
R5: There are too many restrictions on what people can write about politics and government online, including on the blogs, Facebook, and Twitter.



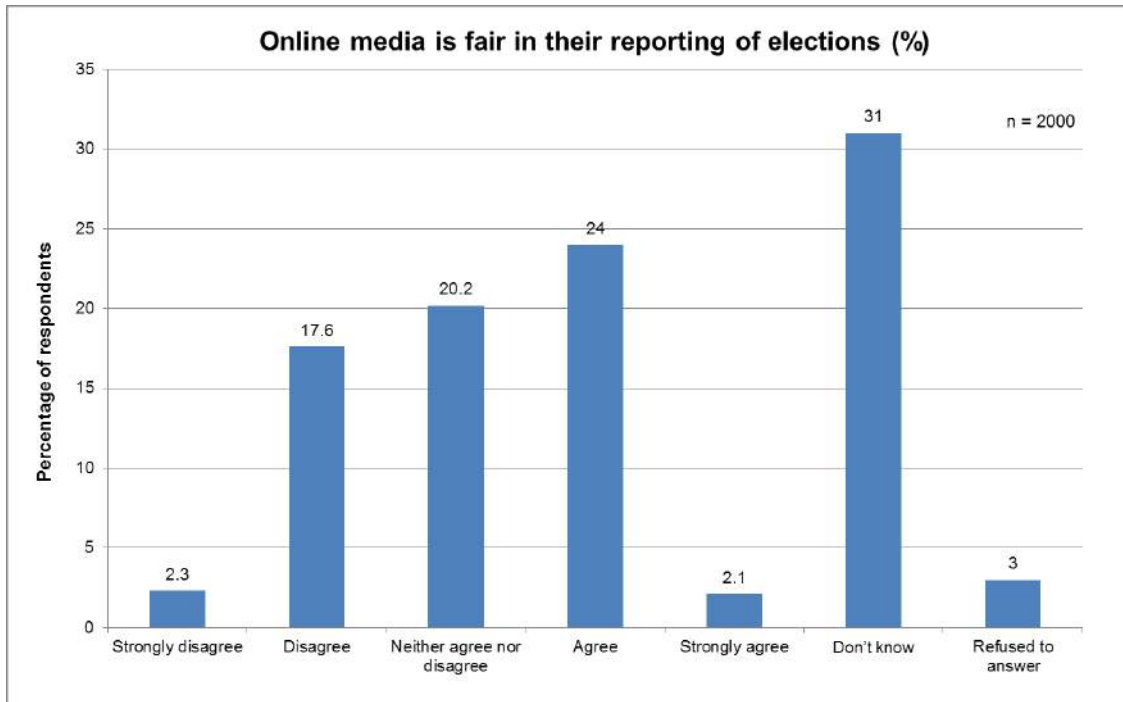
5.4. Bias/fairness of media

Q 20 R4 and R6: How much would you agree with the following statements?

R4: Newspapers and television are fair when they report on Singapore politics, political parties and elections.



R6: Online materials found on blogs, Facebook pages and Twitter are fair when they talk about Singapore politics, political parties and elections.



6. Appendix

6.1. Methodology

The survey aimed to find out the use of media for information about the 2011 General Election. Two thousand Singaporeans aged 21 and above were interviewed between 24 May (two weeks after Polling Day) to 17 July 2011. Random stratified sampling was used. The sample satisfied quotas for race, age, and gender according to the 2010 population census. The interviews were conducted in English, Chinese, and Malay.

The interviews were conducted using Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) by a commercial survey company. Each interview was about 25 minutes.

The 50 questions in the survey asked about demographics; use of offline and online media, and mainstream and alternative media; attitudes towards media and media control; political traits; political participation; and voting behaviour:

1. Demographics:
 - a. Age
 - b. Gender
 - c. Race
 - d. Education
 - e. Housing
 - f. Family income
 - g. Constituency where respondent lived

2. Political traits
 - a. Political interest
 - b. Political knowledge
 - c. Political talk
 - d. Political orientation
 - e. Political efficacy
 - f. Political cynicism

3. Political participation
 - a. Online participation
 - b. Offline participation

4. Voting behaviour
 - a. Voting preference
 - b. Media influence on voting
 - c. Revealing candidate choice
 - d. When decided who to vote for

5. Media consumption
(Radio, Newspapers, Television, Online main stream media, Foreign news websites, Facebook pages of political parties, alternative online news websites/blogs in Singapore)
 - a. Duration
 - b. Viral content
 - c. Party websites/Facebook pages

6. Attitudes towards media
 - a. Importance of media
 - b. Trust in media
 - c. Media control
 - d. Bias/fairness of media

7. Exposure to conflicting information
 - a. Incidence of encounters
 - b. Types of media with conflicting information

8. Facebook
 - a. Importance
 - b. Usage

9. Microblogs
 - a. Type used
 - b. Frequency of usage

10. Mobile phone
 - a. Ownership
 - b. Type of use

11. Youths
 - a. Party parents voted for
 - b. Education level of parents

The survey questionnaire can be accessed at <http://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/ips/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2012/05/IPS-Post-election-survey-Questionnaire.pdf>

Breakdown of the survey data

Age Group		
	Total	Percentage (%)
21–29	334	16.7
30–39	324	16.2
40-49	495	24.75
50+	847	42.35
Total	2,000	100

Gender		
	Total	Percentage (%)
Male	945	47.25
Female	1,055	52.75
Total	2,000	100

Education		
	Total	Percentage (%)
Primary or lower	400	20
Secondary (Upper/Lower secondary)	863	43.15
Polytechnic/Diploma	340	17
University	397	19.85
Total	2,000	100

Housing Type		
	Total	Percentage (%)
1–3 room	375	18.75
4 room	713	35.65
5 room and exec flats / HUDC / Others	597	29.85
Condo/Private flats/Landed property	299	14.95
Refused to answer	16	0.8
Total	2,000	100

6.3 About the authors

Tan Tarn How is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies.

Nanditha Das is a former Research Associate with the Institute of Policy Studies.

Nadzirah Samsudin is a Research Assistant with the Institute of Policy Studies.

Shawn Goh is an NUS undergraduate and a former intern with the Institute of Policy Studies.