



OUR SINGAPORE CONVERSATION SURVEY

FINAL REPORT

Introduction

1 This survey was conducted as part of the Our Singapore Conversation (OSC) process and was completed by 4,000 Singaporeans. It was designed to ascertain the Singapore that Singaporeans hope to see in 2030 and their key priorities for today. The survey also asked Singaporeans about the values they feel are important for achieving the 2030 vision as well as the preferences they lean towards on key issues.

2 The survey was conducted via face-to-face interview. The sample is demographically representative of the national population in terms of age, gender and ethnicity. The data were collected from 1 December 2012 to 31 January 2013.

Section 1: Hopes and Priorities

3 The survey found that Singaporeans were generally optimistic that the next five years would be better than today, and that today was better than five years ago (see [Figure 1](#)). The majority were satisfied with life and hopeful about the future. But the data suggest that some respondents expect challenges ahead.

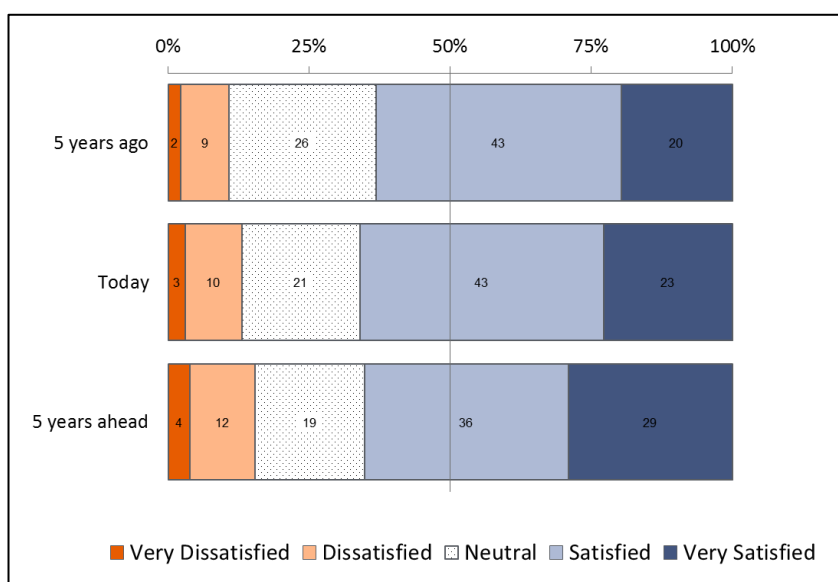


Figure 1: Life satisfaction of Singaporeans past, present, and future

4 Respondents were invited to think about the kind of Singapore they want to see in 20 years' time as well as their priorities for today. **Job security, healthcare, and housing** emerged as the priorities most frequently ranked in the Top 3 (see [Figure 2](#) below). This was followed by safety and security as well as having a caring government.

Qualitative responses:
"The current environment is relatively safe but I do not take it for granted. Government has to continue to maintain this safety [sic] environment for the people."
"Jobs are hard to find and it is a competitive society."
"Should make it easier for elderly [sic] to withdraw from CPF to pay for medical expenses."

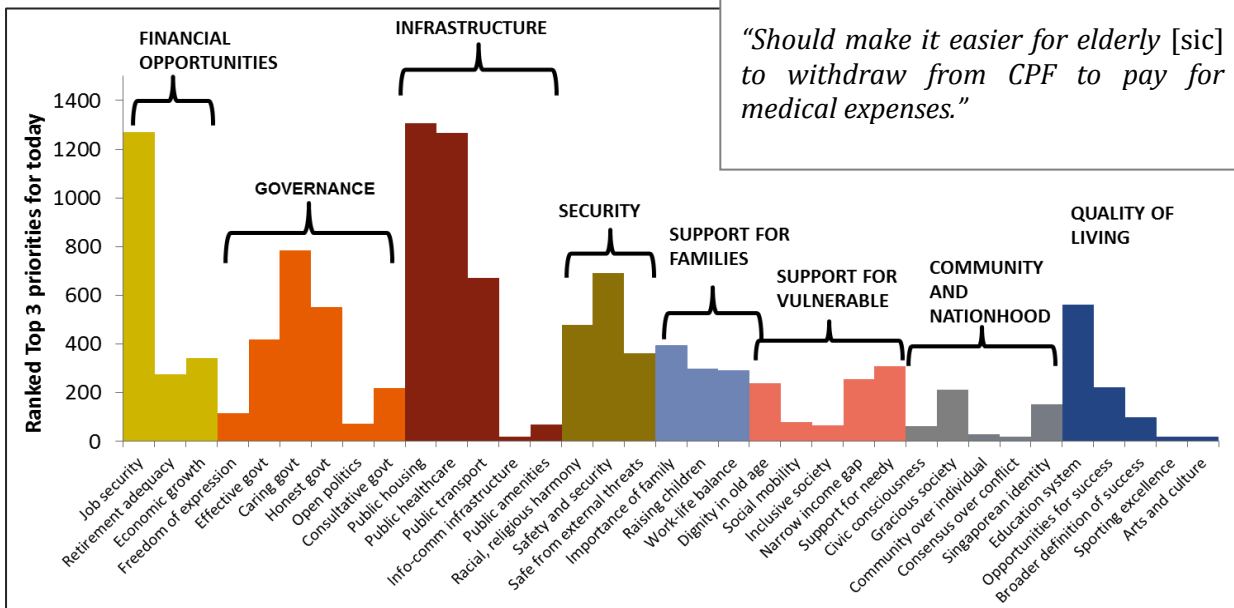


Figure 2: Top Priorities of Singaporeans for today

5 Delving deeper, the data showed that respondents' priorities varied by income (see [Table 1](#)). While healthcare, housing and jobs were generally a consistent theme across almost all income groups, public housing did not emerge as a top priority for those earning above \$7,000.

Qualitative responses:
"Need better training to upgrade so we can match up with the higher paying jobs."
"Public housing - too expensive now - takes a lifetime to repay the loan. No cash flow."
"The government should have more engagements with us to show that they care for the citizens so we can know what's going on in our country and future."
"Government needs to explain and discuss more with people before any policies go to parliament to be passed."

6 Public transport emerged as a key priority for those earning less than \$3,000; while a holistic education was a greater priority for those earning above \$7,000.

7 Singaporeans valued good governance. Those earning less than \$7,000 placed greater emphasis on having a caring government while those earning more than \$7,000 gave greater priority to having an honest government.

Category (Individual income)	Top	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
<\$1,000	Public housing	Public healthcare	Caring government	Job security	Public transport
\$1,000 - \$2,999	Public housing	Public healthcare	Job security	Public transport	Caring government
\$3,000-\$4,999	Public housing	Public healthcare	Job security	Safe and secure environment	Caring government
\$5,000-\$6,999	Public healthcare	Public housing	Job security	Safe and secure environment	Caring government
\$7,000 - \$9,999	Public healthcare	Job security	Safe and secure environment	Holistic education	Honest government
≥\$10,000	Public healthcare	Job security	Safe and secure environment	Holistic education	Honest government

Table 1: Breakdown of priorities by Income

8 When asked more specifically about different facets of governance, a sizeable majority indicated that the Government was forward-looking and managing the country well (See [Figure 3](#)). There were relatively lower levels of agreement on whether the Government understands the concerns of the people or did a good job explaining policies.

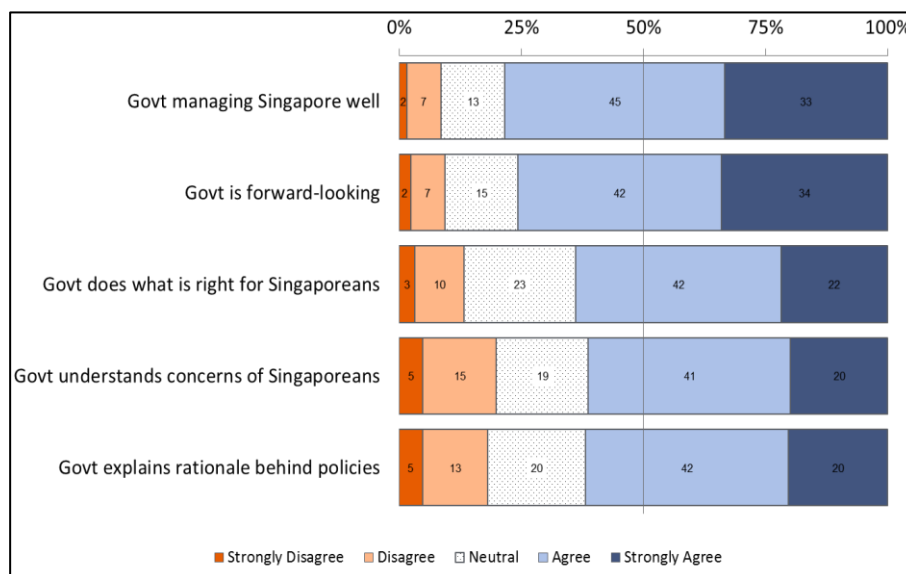


Figure 3: Singaporeans' views on governance

Section 2: Values Important to Singaporeans

9 The next section of the survey examined the kinds of values and attributes Singaporeans felt were important. The relative importance of each value was plotted on a “heat map” with the warmer colours indicating that a particular value was more important,

and cooler colours indicating that the value was relatively less important, i.e., dark red connote more important values; while dark blue connote less important values.

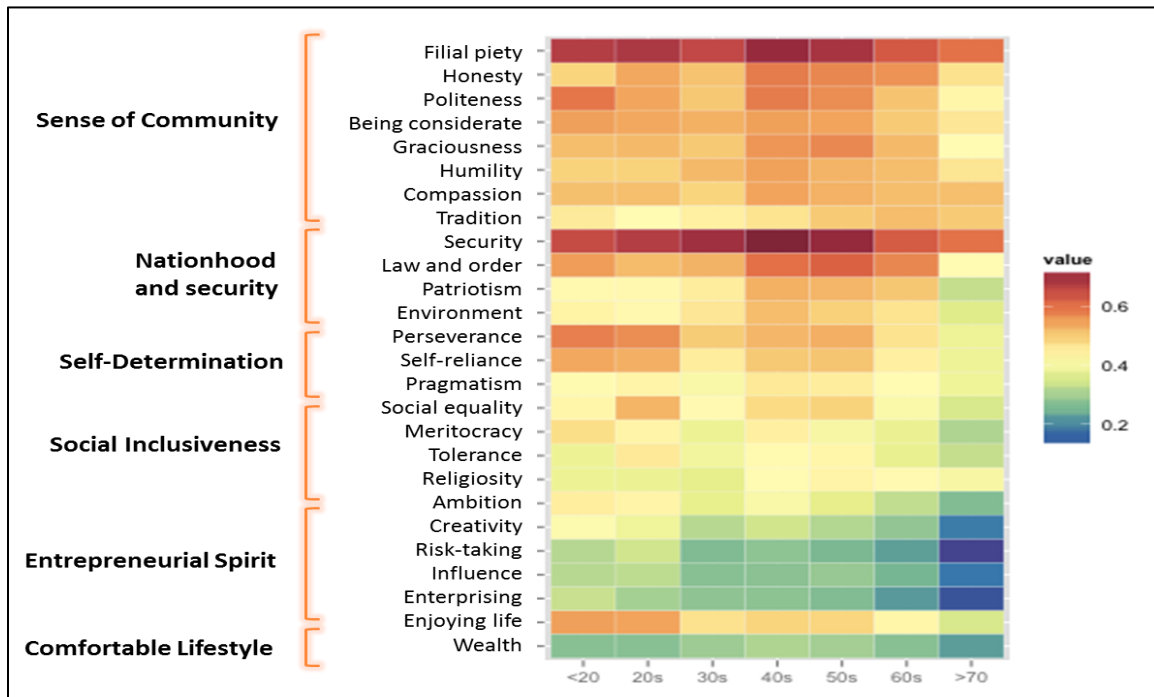


Figure 4: Value preferences across age groups

10 In general, values relating to a **sense of community, nationhood and security** resonated most strongly with Singaporeans (see [Figure 4](#)). Across age groups, filial piety and safety and security for their families were regarded the most important. Singaporeans generally placed less emphasis on accumulating wealth. Singaporean youth seem to place greater emphasis on perseverance and self-reliance compared to older Singaporeans. The young also had a greater appetite for risk-taking, enjoying life to the fullest, and being more entrepreneurial.

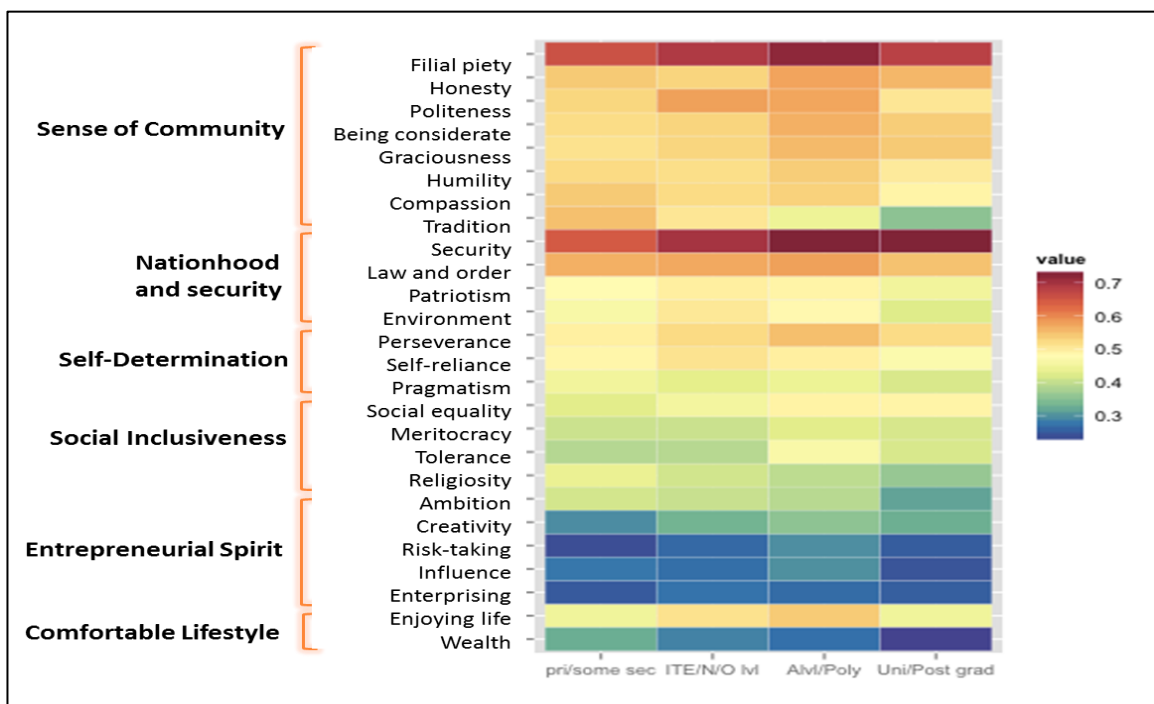


Figure 5: Value preferences across education levels

11 An examination of the findings by education level showed consensus in the value Singaporeans place on community and security. As [Figure 5](#) demonstrates, across all education groups, values such as filial piety, honesty, politeness, safety and security of my family, and law and order were considered very important.

Section 3: Singaporeans' Preferences on Key Issues

12 The survey also sought to provide insight into the preferences of Singaporeans on various issues and policies. Respondents were asked to indicate where they would lean towards when given two preferences representing different ends of a spectrum.

Competing Land-Use Challenges

13 Respondents were generally in consensus that eldercare facilities should be located in their neighbourhoods to provide greater convenience to the elderly and their caregivers (see [Figure 6](#)). Support was generally strong regardless of the dwelling type in which respondents lived.

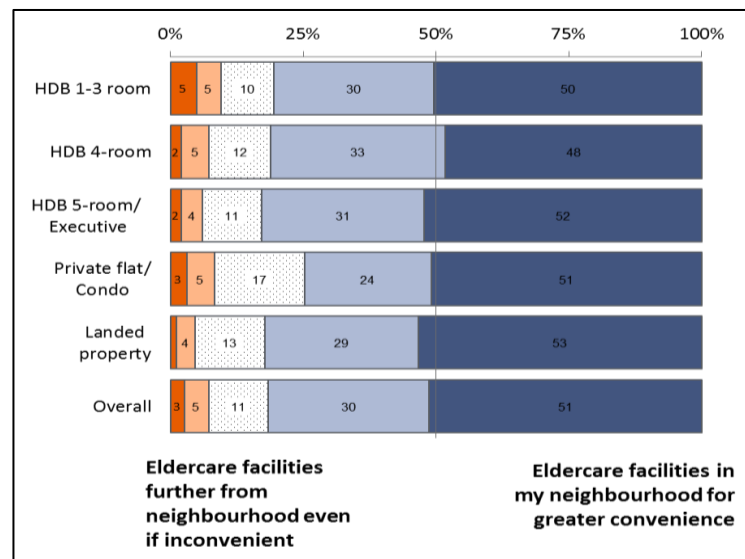


Figure 6: Preference for eldercare facilities further from neighbourhood vs in neighbourhood

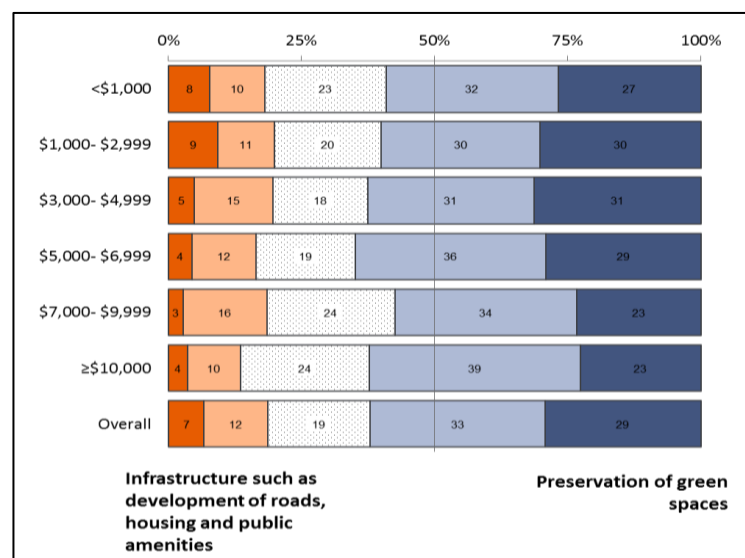


Figure 7: Preference for infrastructural development vs. preservation of green spaces

14 Findings also show that green spaces are important to all Singaporeans. As [Figure 7](#) indicates, support for preserving green spaces exceeded 50% across all income bands.

15 Similarly, Singaporeans looked for heritage spaces to be preserved as far as possible. However, there was wider support for the preservation of green spaces over infrastructural development, compared to heritage spaces over infrastructural development (see [Figure 8](#)).

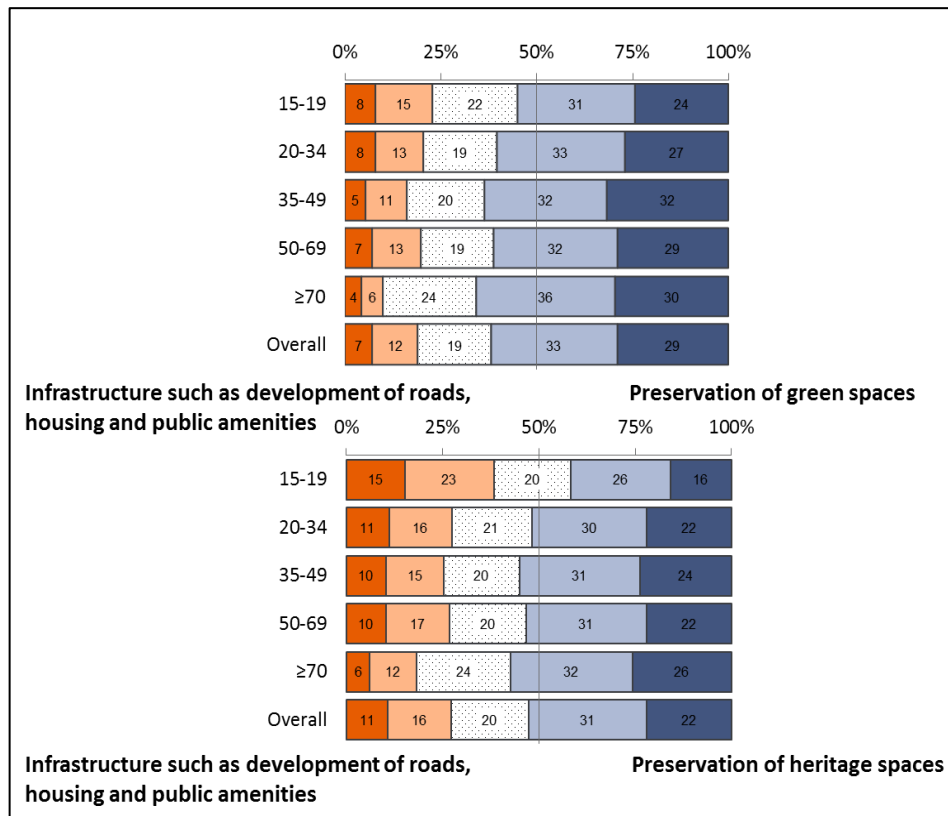


Figure 8: Comparing the preference heritage spaces with green spaces

Opportunities and Pace of Life

16 Overall, the data suggest that Singaporeans were looking for the right balance that would allow them to have more time for their families, as well as stay competitive.

17 When presented with a choice between career advancement and a more comfortable pace of life, Singaporeans generally saw pace of life as a more important preference relative to career pursuits. Singaporeans between the ages of 35- 69, and those who are married with children, were most likely to choose this preference (see [Figure 9](#)). This result is consistent with findings in the Values section which showed that both ‘filial piety’ and ‘ensuring safety and security for my family’ are values Singaporeans deem to be very important.

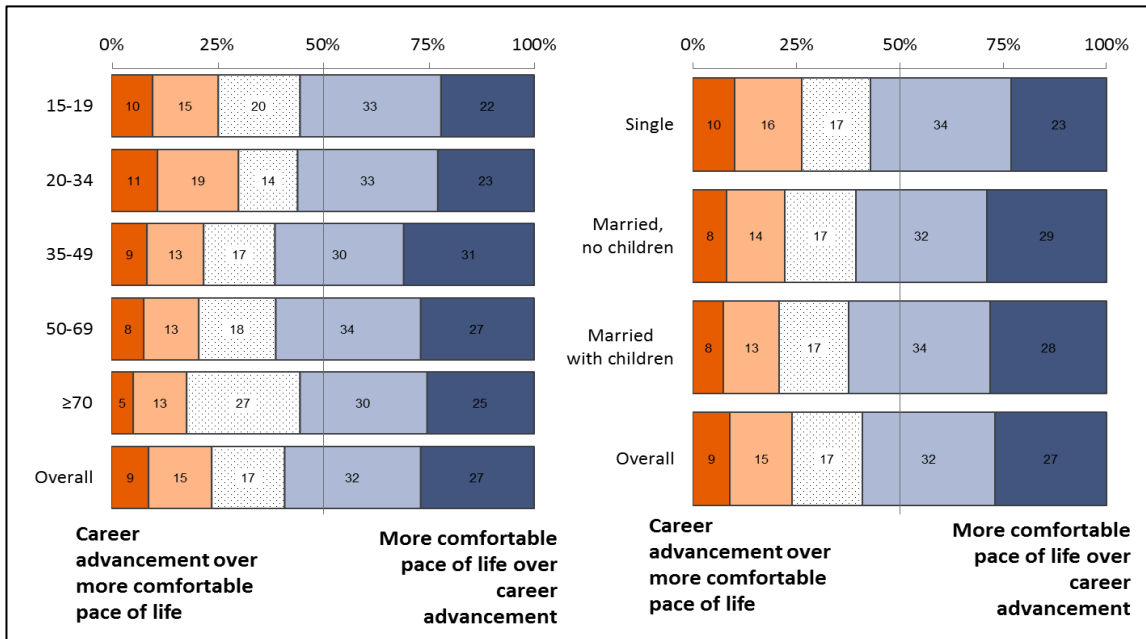


Figure 9: Preference for career advancement vs a more comfortable pace of life

18 More Singaporeans preferred reducing the inflow of foreigners even if it translated to slower growth and jobs. [Figure 10](#) suggests that lower income groups are more inclined towards reducing the inflow of foreigners, which may be a reflection of the competition for jobs at that level.

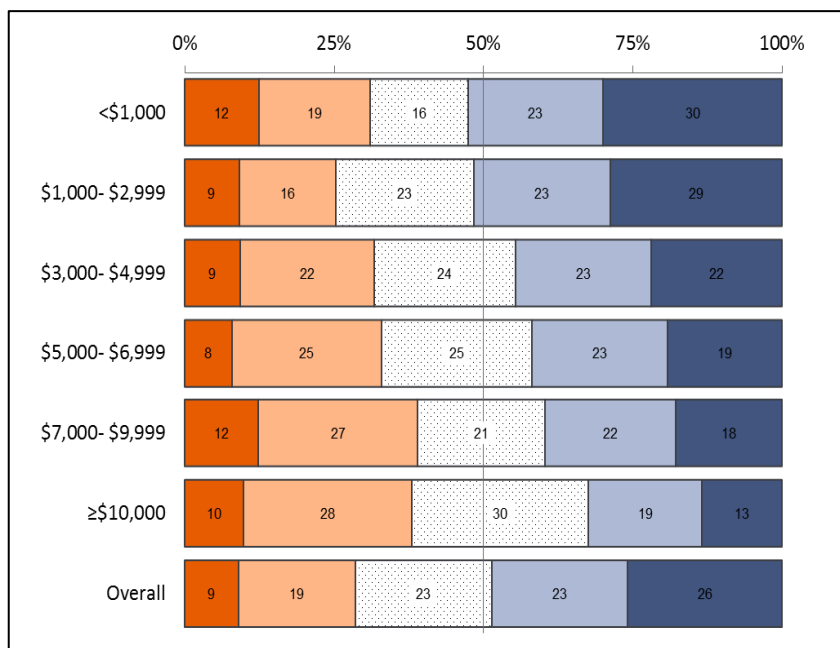


Figure 10: Preference for supporting foreign inflow vs reducing foreign inflow

19 In the area of education, the findings show that Singaporeans generally preferred a more holistic and less competitive education system. Given a choice between a system that is globally competitive and academically rigorous and one that is less competitive and more holistic, more than 50% of respondents indicated that they would prefer the latter.

Relatively more respondents from the lower and middle income groups preferred a more holistic and less competitive education system (see [Figure 11](#)).

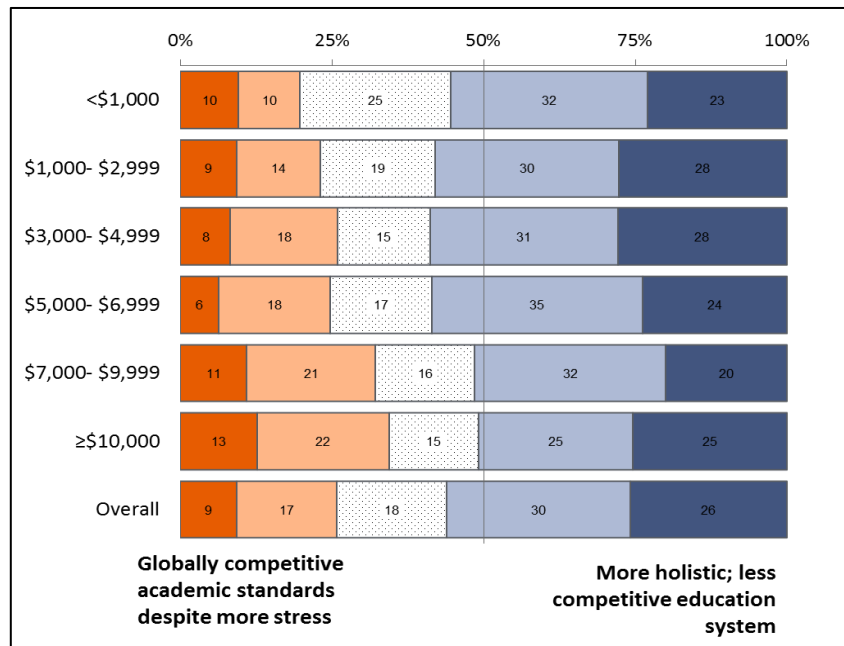


Figure 11: Preference for globally competitive education system vs a more holistic education system

20 Singaporeans also appeared to prefer a more inclusive education system. Between students learning together with others of similar abilities and backgrounds versus students learning with others of different abilities and backgrounds, Singaporeans were generally more inclined towards the latter. Respondents with a higher education level tended to prefer a more inclusive education system (see [Figure 12](#)).

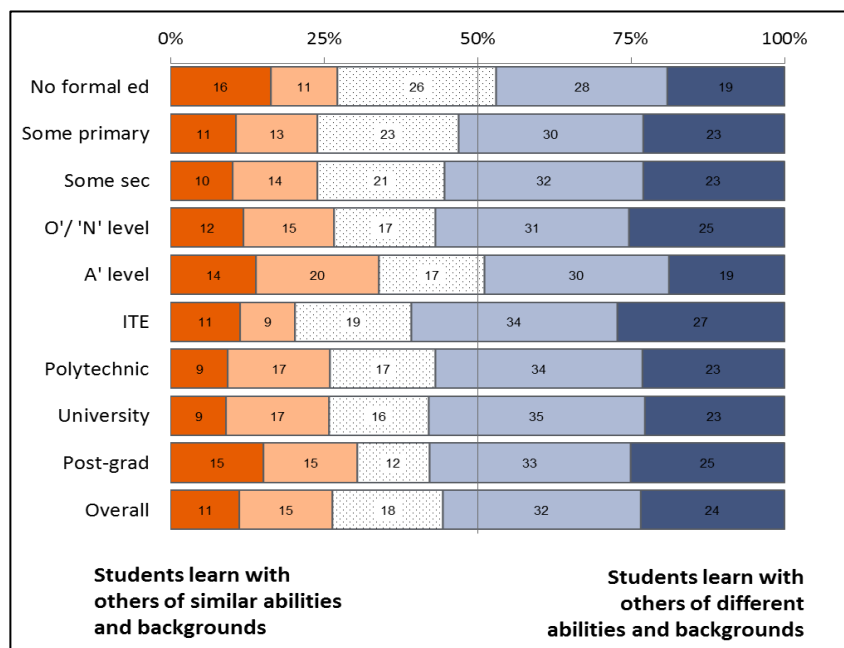


Figure 12: Preference for students learning with others of similar abilities vs learning with others of different abilities

Social Values

21 On the issue of freedom of expression and censorship, results indicate that Singaporeans had differing views on the right balance between complete freedom of expression on the one hand and preventing social tensions on the other. As [Figure 13](#) shows, there was no clear consensus one way or another across all age groups. However, older Singaporeans seemed to place more value in censorship as a means of protecting public interest.

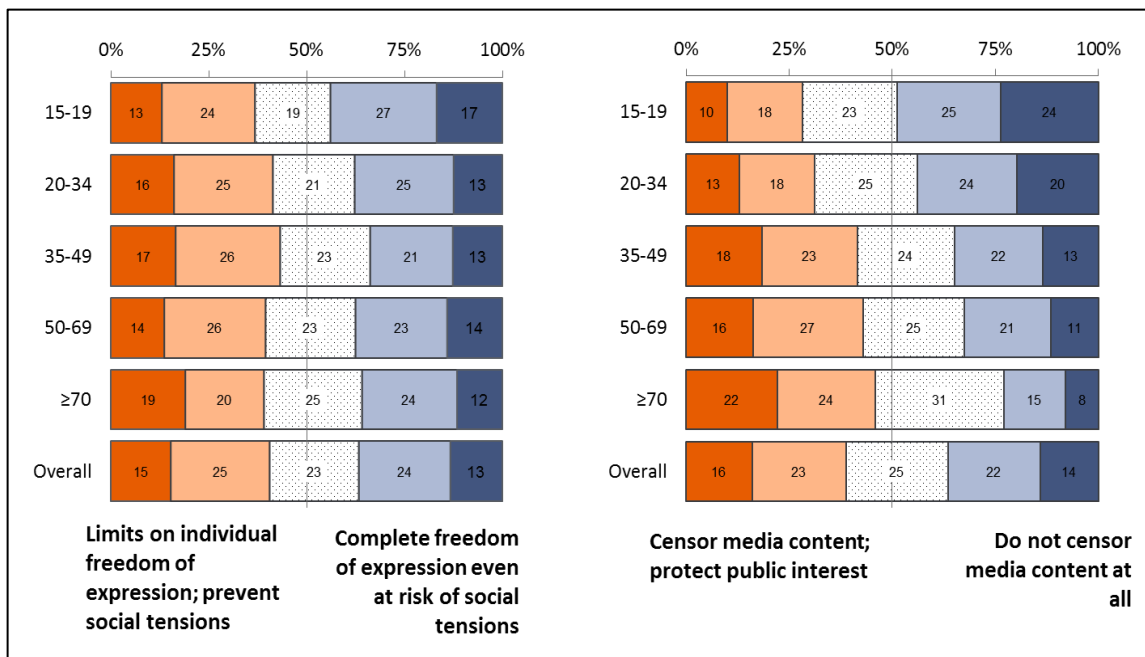


Figure 13: Comparing preferences for limits to individual freedom of expression and censorship

22 The survey also found that society in general did not accept gay lifestyles. Views differed across age groups and education levels - with the younger and more educated segments of the population being relatively more accepting of gay lifestyles.

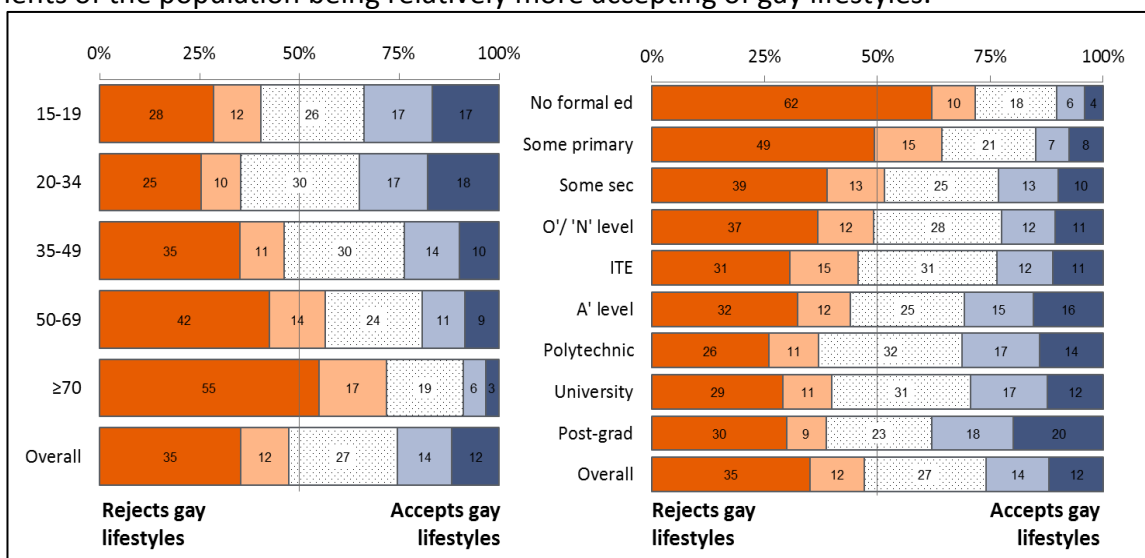


Figure 14: Preference between rejecting vs accepting gay lifestyles

23 In general, society was even less supportive of same-sex marriage. The majority of respondents across almost all educational profiles rejected same-sex marriage.

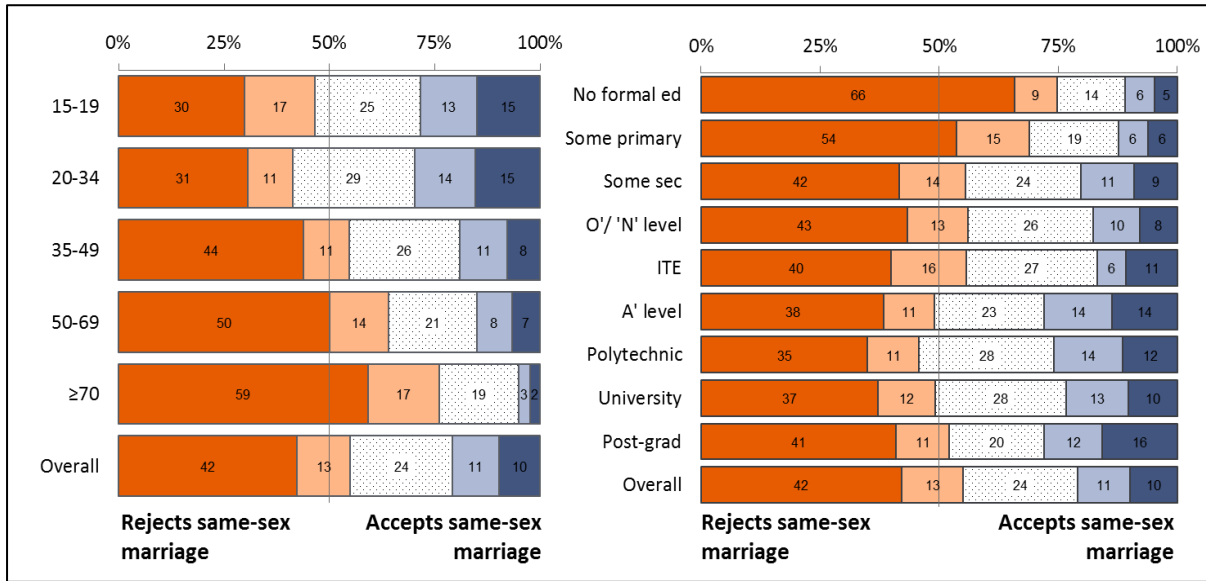


Figure 15: Preference between rejecting vs accepting same-sex marriage

Governance and Social Support

24 Respondents had diverse views on the right balance between Government taking responsibility to provide for the people, and people taking more responsibility to provide for themselves. The majority of respondents above the age of 50 and those who earned less than \$1,000 tended to favour that Government take more responsibility to provide for the people.

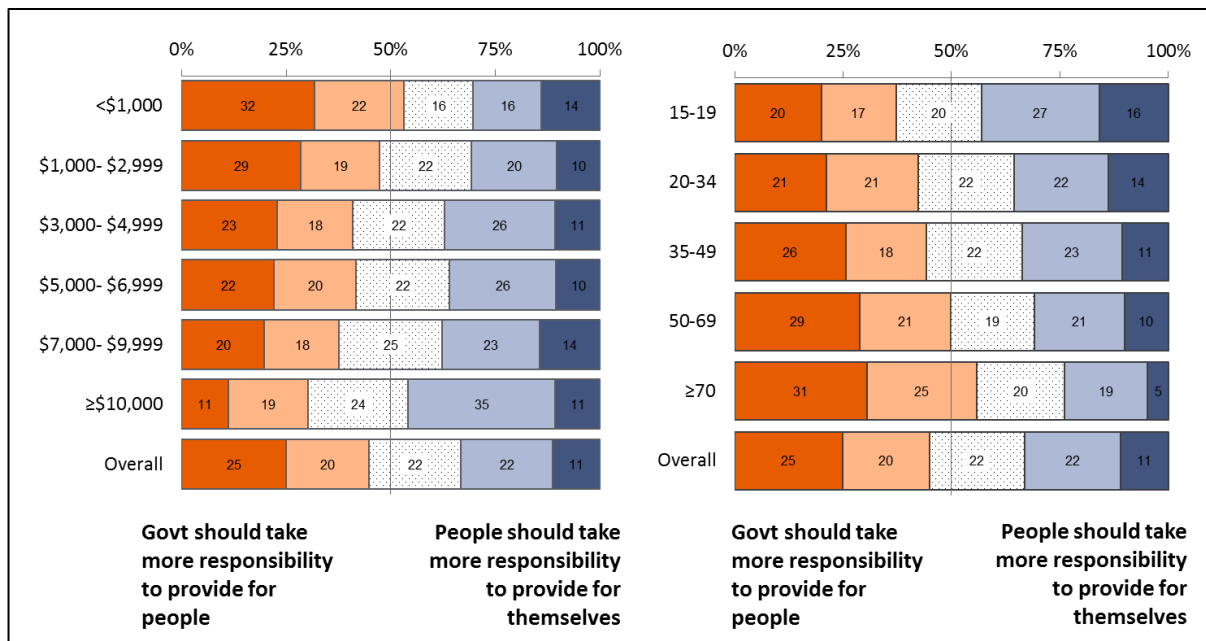


Figure 16: Preference between greater govt responsibility vs people taking more responsibility for providing for themselves

25 On the issue of taxation, more Singaporeans preferred to keep taxes low. However, more affluent Singaporeans, i.e. those living in private property or earning above \$7,000 a month, seemed more willing to pay higher taxes to support the needy (see [Figure 17](#)). Support dipped slightly for those earning \$10,000 or more a month.

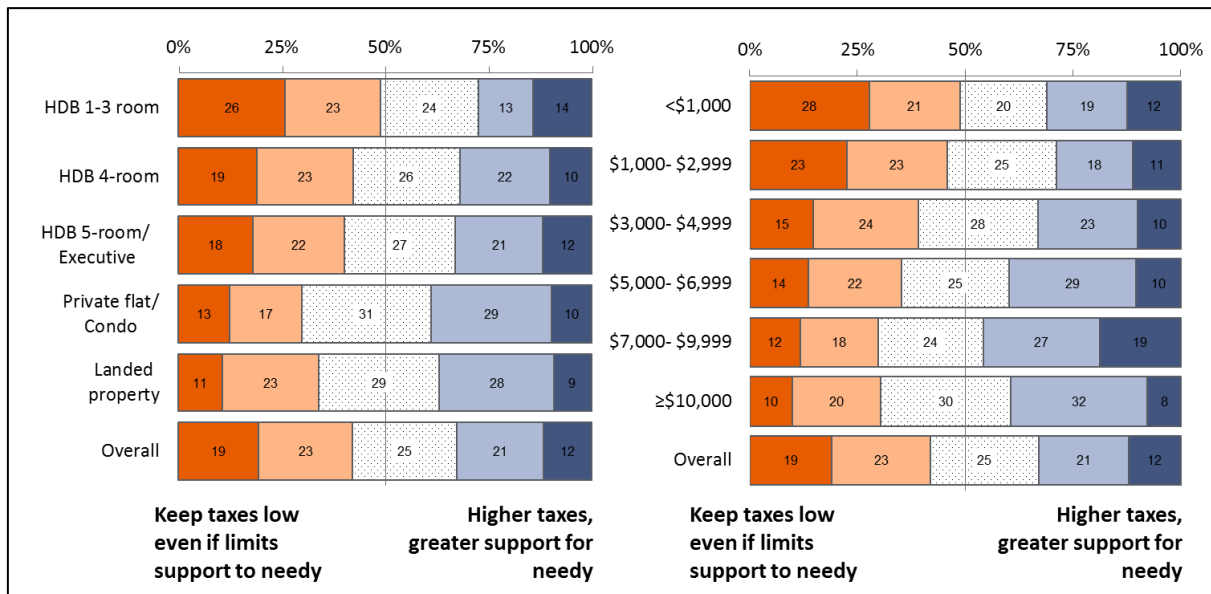


Figure 17: Preference between keeping taxes low vs higher taxes to support the needy