Status Quo or Pluralism?

Dominant Party Rule and People's Preferences in Singapore

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Abstract

This article aims to examine three prevailing theories of political change—modernization theory, new structuralist theory, and value change theory—by examining the case of Singapore. This article focuses in particular on the effects of three socioeconomic and demographic attributes—education, income, and generation—on people's preferences regarding dominant party rule. Using data from post-election surveys conducted in 2011 and 2015 and employing factor analysis, this empirical examination shows that income has a significant effect—primarily that persons with lower income show stronger support for the status quo. The younger generation born into the already well-developed economy after independence supports greater pluralism, in contrast to the older generation born before the independence. Higher levels of education also enhance positive perceptions of political pluralism, but at a weak level of significance. These results are consistent with the predictions of modernization theory and value change theory, but are not directly consistent with those of new structuralist theory.

Keywords: Election, Political Party, Political Regime, Singapore

JEL classification: D72

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Introduction

What individual attributes affect attitudes towards dominant party rule? Who supports the status quo under such a rule, and who prefers greater pluralism in politics? If we identify particular attributes that are correlated with the preferences for pluralism, we can better understand the conditions for sustaining the status quo, or for fostering political change.

Modernization theory claims that economic development is the key for changing people's perceptions. Economic development enhances education and produces a middle class that holds the values of democratic society (Lipset 1959). On the other hand, a more recent school of thought, the so-called 'new structuralists,' regards income inequality as the main driver of political changes (Boix 2003, Acemoglu and Robinson 2006).[1]

Aside from education and income, changes in values caused by industrialization are another possible factor which affects individual political preferences. Such changes in values in a society can be observed as intergenerational differences (Inglehart and Welzel 2003).

These conventional arguments are about macro-level political changes. Put more simply, these theories claim that changes in the education, income and values of a nation affect the political regime of the country. In contrast, other studies address how individual preferences affect politics in a country. Such studies investigate the relationship between individual socioeconomic attributes and individual perceptions. Drawing implications from the macro-level studies, this article deals with such micro-level political preferences. In particular, the article examines whether individual socioeconomic attributes affect

[1] Iversen (2010) uses the term "new structuralist" in reference to this theory of income inequality and political institutions.

people's preference under dominant party rule.

Yet, it is not easy to ascertain individual preferences in the less liberalized societies due to limited access to information. Many countries with dominant party rule are oppressive, where political freedom and civil rights are constrained. People are not free to reveal their perceptions, especially if they are against those in power. Furthermore, authoritarian rulers often do not allow opinion surveys about their rule. This is one reason why most studies on micro-level perceptions are conducted in liberalized countries; however, this leads to selection bias.[2]

The case of Singapore mitigates such problems. Singapore has been under the dominant rule of the People's Action Party (PAP) since the first election after its independence in 1965. Major datasets in political science indicate that it has the characteristics of electoral authoritarianism.[3] However, its rule is not sustained by violence or electoral fraud. Although the government has strong influence over the media, people can still express their views relatively freely. Also, surveys are not fully banned.[4] This condition enables us to collect the information about people's perception under a

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[2] People in liberalized societies tend to assess the state of democracy more critically (Welzel and Inglehart 2017). Therefore, it is likely that people in less-liberalized societies are satisfied with simple political pluralism, which those in liberalized societies find insufficient.

[3] As of 2016, Singapore has been considered as authoritarian state on the Polity IV Project scale (polity2 = -2) (Marshall 2017). It is classified in the category of partly free in the Freedom in the World report (Puddington and Roylance 2017), but Freedom House does not consider Singapore as an electoral democracy in this dataset. The Variety of Democracy Dataset classifies Singapore as minimally democratic in terms of liberal democracy, but as electoral authoritarian in terms of electoral democracy (Coppedge, Gerring, Lindberg, Skaaning, Teorell, Altman, Bernhard, et al. 2017, Coppedge, Gerring, Lindberg, Skaaning, Teorell, Altman, Andersson, et al. 2017).

[4] Poll surveys are not banned in Singapore, but there is a blackout period for electoral surveys during the election period. In addition, the results of exit polls are not allowed to be released on the polling day. See Sections 78C and 78D, The Parliamentary Election Act. However, in practice, few surveys are conducted.

system of dominant party rule.

This article aims to identify individual attributes that affect people's political preferences about the dominant party rule in Singapore. For this purpose, I use data from the Post-Election Surveys conducted in 2011 and 2015 by the Institute of Policy Studies, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore. The surveys were conducted in important years politically for Singapore. In 2011, the PAP gained its lowest share of the popular vote in the Parliamentary General Election in history. This result gave rise to debate about the possibility of political change in the near future. In contrast, in 2015, the PAP restored a level of support from the voters more in line with previous years.

It is beyond the scope of this article to find out the causes of the changes in electoral results between the two elections. However, by dealing with these two elections, which resulted in fairly different outcomes, I expect to find consistent factors that help sustain the dominant party rule regardless short-term shifts in circumstances.

Following the arguments of modernization theory, new structuralism, and value change theory, the effects of three attributes, namely, education, income and generation, will be examined in the article.

In these examinations, by means of factor analysis, I estimate factor scores to measure people's preference for political pluralism. Then, I examine the effects of individual attributes on the scores. The results show that higher levels of education indicates greater preference for pluralism, though it is with weak significance. Income also matters. Persons with lower incomes show significant support to the status quo, whereas the higher income group supports political pluralism. Intergenerational differences, especially between persons who experienced rapid economic development

under the PAP and those who were born after this economic development, result in differences in political attitudes. The older generation born before independence prefers the status quo, but the younger generation born after independence supports greater pluralism.

In the following sections, I provide a theory about individual perceptions about political pluralism. Based on this, I propose three hypotheses. Then, I examine them through factor analysis and multiple regressions (OLS). Finally, I summarize the argument in the conclusion.

Modernization, New Structuralist and Value Change Theories

Three traditional arguments in political science—modernization theory, new structuralism, and value change theory—hint at two primary socioeconomic factors that are associated with political liberalization, education, and income (or class). Values are treated as an intermediate variable between socioeconomic changes (industrialization) and political perceptions in the value change theory.

Initially, modernization theory asserts that economic development brings about democratization (Lipset 1959). In its argument, education and the middle class are crucial factors that are interrelated with each other and are both consequences of economic development. As this theory has had a strong impact, the effects of education and income have been empirically tested (Almond and Verba 1963, Barro 1999, Przeworski et al. 2000, Glaeser, Ponzetto, and Shleifer 2007).

As for education, the argument is straightforward. Higher education fosters a value to cherish democracy. On the other hand, the arguments about income are more complicated. Initially, macroeconomic growth, rather than individual economic status,

were at the center of attention.

The emergence of the middle class in the process of modernization has also been paired with macro-level economic development. As the size of the middle class grows, the stratification structure changes. The middle class is expected to mitigate the conflict between the elite and non-elite, and bring about stable democracy. The middle class, with higher education, is also seen as holding the values of democratic rule.

In contrast, the new structuralists emphasize the income inequality of each country, rather than the level of GDP per capita, as the driver of political changes, and view the lower income class as the key player in democratization. Their argument is constructed on the game theoretic situation where different classes play strategic games over the redistribution of wealth. In its argument, democratic institutions are a tool to maintain or increase the redistribution of wealth. Democratic institutions provide non-elite veto power over policy decisions. Although they do not employ the same logic, Boix (2003) and Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) assume that the lower income class prefers democratic institutions to reduce the exploitation by the rich and to enhance redistribution.

On the other hand, Inglehart and Welzel (2005), advocating the value change theory, connect income growth with changes in values. They claim that economic development reduces existential threats facing society, which eventually gives rise to emancipative values among the people. Their argument, then, leads to intergenerational differences in values, especially in the post-industrialization stage. Those who were born after industrialization are expected to hold emancipative values, as they are free from the existential threats from which the older generation suffered.

In short, modernization theory focuses on education and the middle class, while the new structuralists emphasize the redistribution of wealth, which the lower income

class tries to maximize. Value change theory points out intergenerational differences.

Although these arguments about education and income are basically about the impacts of socioeconomic factors on macro-level political change, they assume that individual socioeconomic attributes affect individual political preferences. The argument about intergenerational differences also deal with the impact of individual demographic attributes. Therefore, it is reasonable to construct hypotheses about the impacts of individual education level, income, and generation on individual political preferences.

Welzel and Inglehart (2007) emphasize the effects of mass beliefs on political regimes at the aggregate level, claiming that a focus on individual beliefs causes "individualistic fallacy," which prevents observers from detecting the true causality. It is plausible that mass beliefs should be given much attention when we discuss macro-level political changes. Nevertheless, we also obtain useful information and clues for political changes when we look at individual perceptions and behaviors.[5]

Education, Income, and Generation in the Context of Singaporean Politics

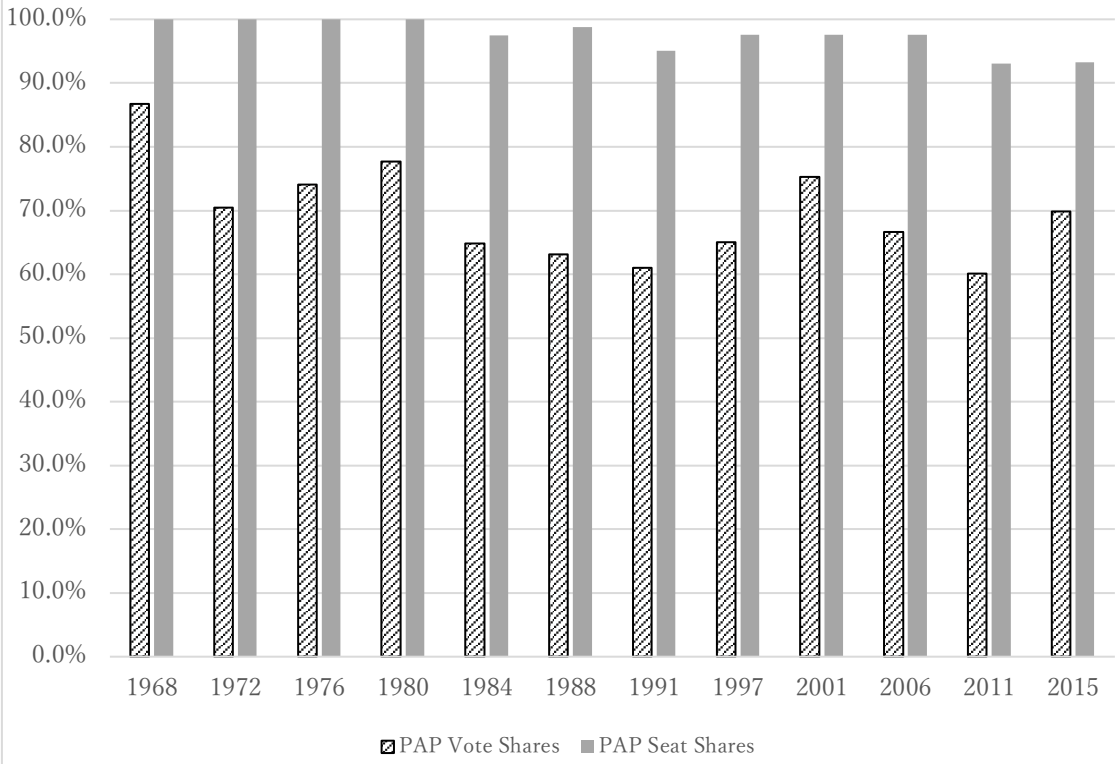
Studies on the political order in Singapore were stimulated when the share of the popular votes for the PAP declined to 60.1 percent in the 2011 Parliamentary General Election, which was the worst result for the PAP in its history. Although the PAP could still secure 93.1 percent of the elected seats in the Parliament, they received only 60.1 percent of popular votes. This is the lowest level of support received, even lower than 61.0 percent in the 1991 election.[6] This result prompted arguments as to whether the

[5] It is better to conduct multi-level analysis even to estimate the impacts of individual attributes on the individual perceptions as long as cross-national comparison is possible. But, since the scope of this article is limited to the case of Singapore, the conclusion is applicable only to Singapore.

[6] Moreover, the PAP lost one group representation constituency (Aljunied), where three

2011 election started a new political era in Singapore (Tan and Lee 2011b, Tan 2012).

Figure 1. Election Results (1968-2015)



For calculating vote shares, I exclude uncontested constituencies.
Source: The PAP vote shares and seat shares are calculated by the author based on the data from the Singapore Election Department.

There are several hypotheses to explain the decrease in support for the PAP, which are mostly based on specific issues like the opposition's mutual collaboration and their leadership changes, the diffusion of the information through internet, the increase of foreign workers and the mismanagement of public services (Tan and Lee 2011a, Tan

incumbent cabinet ministers were included as the PAP candidates. The PAP also lost one single member constituency (Hougang). Even in constituencies where the PAP won, the margins were very thin.

2011a, Lam Peng Er 2011, Tan 2012). Besides these specific issues, more general issues like intergenerational differences and income inequality also attracted attention (Tan 2011a, Lam Peng Er 2011, Welsh 2011, 2016, Tan 2012).

Intergenerational differences are about the different behaviors between younger voters and older voters. Younger voters seemed to be more critical about the status quo. These intergenerational differences, however, have been actually discussed mostly in connection with education levels, not as differences over political values as the value change theory stresses. Roughly speaking, most of the works by Singaporean scholars consider that the younger voters prefer more pluralism due to the effects of their higher education level.

Empirically, and intuitively, education seems to enhance preferences for freedom, pluralism and political participation. However, the logic about the causality is not clear. Apart from the Singaporean context, Glaeser, Ponzetto, and Shleifer (2007) asserts that education generally raises the benefits of political participation. Persons who receive higher education have better skills to interact with others and to persuade peers to join their activities and movements. However, this argument focuses on the relationship between education and political participation.[7] The logic does not directly explain the correlation between education and inclination for pluralism because the pluralism issue is different from the participation issue. A possible explanation is that persons with higher education have the skill to collect and understand information. They have more exposure to the arguments and events related to democracy in other parts of the world. Access to such information may lead highly educated people to prefer the standard type of

[7] In Singapore, voter turnout is very high because of compulsory voting and its geographic characteristics as a small island. The average turnout of the past twelve elections is 93.6 percent.

democracy with plural competition. Lam Peng Er (2011) and Tan (2012) use this logic for explaining the behavior of younger voters.

Income inequality has also been pointed out as a source of dissatisfaction with the status quo (Tan 2011a, Lam Peng Er 2011). Among resident employed households, the Gini coefficient based on household income from work before taxes and transfers was 0.42 in 1998, rose to 0.48 in 2007, but then decreased to 0.46 in 2013. I should note that the Gini coefficient of Singapore for household income before taxes and transfers is not higher than that of most OECD countries. For example, government statistics show that Singapore's Gini coefficient computed by the OECD method in 2014 (0.43) was lower than the average across all OECD countries (0.47) in the same year (Ministry of Finance 2015, p.9)[8].

Income inequality becomes a more pronounced problem when there is low social mobility (Ng 2011, 2013). With low social mobility, the lower income class is expected to be discontented with the status quo. If we follow the new structuralist theory, this situation pushes the lower income class to demand more plural politics under which their demands for redistribution and greater opportunity to climb the ladder of social hierarchy can be voiced.

However, the effects of income gaps are not straightforward. The PAP has been providing assistance to poor residents under government social welfare programs (Rodan 2016),[9] which have redistribution effects, though these efforts may not substantially

[8] Singapore's Gini index is computed based on income from work among resident employed households whereas data on OECD economies is based on household income from all sources (which includes non-work income from investments and property). To compare Singapore's Gini coefficient with those of OECD countries, the Gini coefficient here (0.43) is computed using household income from all sources based on the Household Expenditure Survey, which is conducted every 5 years.

[9] For example, the government introduced the Workfare Income Supplement Scheme in

solve income inequality. As long as there are clientelistic payments to the lower income class, the PAP has a chance to earn support from them.

In contrast with the argument that discontent of the lower income class is a driver of political change, some scholars expect that higher income levels have positive effects on political liberalization. Welsh (2016) notes that the affluent class is independent of government support, which enables them to deviate from the status quo, unlike the lower income class which relies on government support. However, at the same time, Welsh (2016) also indicates the possibility of the opposite argument that the rich benefits from the policies of the incumbent government under the PAP's dominance. The higher income class is the winner in Singapore under the PAP rule. It is hard to imagine that the winner has an incentive to deviate from the rule under which it acquired its status. If this logic holds, the higher income class will support the status quo.

Modernization theory suggests the middle class would prefer more plural politics. In Singapore, the middle class seems to prefer plural politics in order to maintain the accountability of the PAP government. The middle class is vulnerable to, and feels frustrated by, the high and rising cost of living and lower social mobility (Weiss 2014, Rodan 2016). As Tan and Lee (2011a) points out, the major frustrations of citizens towards the government concern the increased cost of housing, congestion in public transportation, and inflation, all of which disproportionately affect the living standards of the middle class. The PAP government bears responsibility for these socioeconomic problems because the society and economy are strongly managed by the government in Singapore. It is believed that political pluralism is needed to keep a check on the

2007, which provides cash and Central Provident Fund (CPF) contributions to lower income households (Rahim 2015).

government and the PAP and to pressure them to respond to the citizens' needs.

As for the intergenerational differences, they are explained by the changes in political socialization that were brought about by the fast and drastic economic development of Singapore. Singapore was not secure militarily and economically when it acquired its independence in 1965 due to lack of natural resources, domestic conflicts between the English-educated and Chinese-educated populations, and external pressures from regional powers like Indonesia and Malaysia. By the 1970s, Singapore has achieved economic growth and political stability, which were seen as the achievements of the dominant party rule of the PAP. On the other hand, those who were born after the period of Singapore's rapid economic growth do not share the same memory. As value change theory claims, younger generations who came of age after Singapore's economic development have acquired emancipative values because they are free from existential threats.

Based on the above theoretical arguments and observations on the case of Singapore, the following three hypotheses will be examined.

H1 Education: *Persons who have attained a higher level of education prefer pluralism, while those who did not are less supportive of pluralism.*

H2 Class: (a) the modernization hypothesis: *The middle class has a stronger preference for pluralism.* (b) the new structuralist hypothesis: *The lower income class prefers pluralism so that they can influence redistribution policy.*

H3 Generation: *Older voters, who have lived longer under the development process led*

by the PAP, prefer the status quo, while younger voters prefer pluralistic political competition.

Empirical Examinations

In order to examine the three hypotheses above, I use the datasets of the Post-Election Survey conducted in 2011 and 2015 by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore.[10] The IPS surveys were conducted just after the elections in these years,[11] which captured respondents' perceptions soon after they cast their votes. The surveys collected information through telephone polls of a random sample of 2,080 voters in 2011 and 2,015 voters in 2015.[12]

Institute of Policy Studies (2011, 2015) present the results of their cluster analyses on its survey, which are pioneering work in the field. Their results provide a clear picture about the major tendencies of voters' behaviors, and support some of the above-mentioned hypotheses. However, the correlations between political preferences and socioeconomic attributes are estimated without controlling for the effects of other variables. This article tries to estimate the effects of each independent variable holding other variables constant through multiple OLS regressions.

My strategy is as follows. First, factor analysis is employed to estimate the factor scores for respondents' preference for political pluralism. Then, the scores are used as the

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[10] This is the most comprehensive survey in Singapore regarding voter perceptions. Welsh (2011, 2016) also collected extensive information about the voter behaviors, which shows similar trends as the IPS surveys at the descriptive level.

[11] The IPS surveys were conducted from May 8 to 20 in 2011 (the polling day was May 7), and from September 12 to 26 in 2015 (the polling day was September 11).

[12] For additional detail on the IPS Surveys, please see http://lkyspp2.nus.edu.sg/ips/research/surveys.

dependent variable for estimating the effects of the independent variables selected based on the three hypotheses.

The advantage of factor analysis is to produce a single scale that represents the core of a set of variables. Instead of dealing with different dependent variables that are correlated with each other in different models, researchers can concentrate on estimating the effects on one dependent variable produced by factor analysis.

For estimating factor scores, the answers to three related questions, which capture respondents' perceptions about the status quo of the dominant party rule and preferences for pluralism, are used. They are:

How important are the following issues in shaping your decision on who to vote/you would have voted if you had to? (1: not important at all, 2: not so important, 3: neutral, 4: important, 5: very important)

(1) Need for checks and balances in Parliament (*Checks and Balances*)

(2) Need for different views in Parliament (*Different Views*)

Please give us your opinion on the following statements. As I read out each one, just tell me if you "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree," are "Neutral," "Agree," or "Strongly Agree" with the statement. (1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neutral, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree)

(3) It is always important to have elected opposition party members in Parliament. (*Elected Opposition*)

The question about (3) *Elected Opposition* has different implications from those

about (1) *Checks and Balances* and (2) *Different Views* in Singapore, because the Singaporean Parliament has some non-elected parliamentary members who do not enjoy full legislative rights, namely, the Non-Constituency Members of Parliament (NCMP) and the Nominated Members of Parliament (NMP). Some scholars point out that the introduction of these non-elected members provides advantages to the PAP because voters may be expected to be satisfied with merely the existence of different views in the parliament, even though their power is limited. In addition, opposition figures can be coopted by being offered parliamentary membership (Mauzy 2002, Mauzy and Milne 2002, Mutalib 2002, Tan 2011b, Tan 2016). Therefore, individual perceptions about NCMP and NMP affect the answers to (3) *Elected Opposition*. The variables for (1) *Checks and Balances*, (2) *Different Views*, and (3) *Elected Opposition* are by definition related to political pluralism as they ask about the necessity of the existence of political players who are independent of the dominant party.[13]

It is important to note that the IPS surveys avoided the word "democracy" in both questions and answer options. This provides a significant advantage. Perceptions about "democracy" have always intertwined with other elements besides political pluralism. For example, using the Asian Barometer dataset, Pietsch (2015) points out that the word "democracy" is more attached to economic development and governance in

[13] In addition, the IPS uses two more variables to classify respondents' behaviors in their analysis (IPS 2011, 2015). The electoral system is perceived as key for sustaining PAP's dominance (Mauzy 2002; Mauzy and Milne 2002; Tan 2013, 2016b). However, I do not include these two variables in my factor analysis due to two primary reasons. First, factor loadings for the two variables do not reach the standard (0.40 in absolute values) for including them in factor analysis. Second, it is not clear whether typical voters understand the effects of the electoral system on the Singaporean party system the way political scientists do.

Southeast Asia.[14] Instead, the questions on the IPS surveys deal with the issues of pluralism directly, which avoids the influence of economic performance and governance issues. Furthermore, by asking specific and concrete questions, the IPS surveys mitigate the problem of political and social correctness, which often make respondents disguise their answers to conform with social norms and hide their true perceptions.

The results of the factor analysis are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Factor Analysis for Preference for Pluralism

Variable	Factor Loadings	Uniqueness
Checks and Balances	0.68	0.53
Different Views	0.72	0.48
Elected Opposition	0.43	0.81
Eigenvalues	1.18	
Proportion	1.31	

(N=3,939, principal factors, unrotated)

Table 2. Scoring coefficients (method = regression)

Variable	Factor 1
Checks and Balance	0.37
Different Views	0.44
Elected Opposition	0.17

[14] Interestingly, more than 90 percent of Singaporean respondents perceive their country as democratic, while only half of Filipino respondents answer that their country is democratic.

The eigenvalues is over 1.00, which satisfies the condition for a potential candidate to be a measure of the preference for pluralism.[15] Additionally, all factor loadings exceed 0.40.[16] Hence, it is appropriate to use this factor as the indicator for the preference for pluralism. I named this factor *Plural* and estimated its factor scores. Descriptive statistics of *Plural* are as shown in Table 3. And Figure 2 shows the histogram.

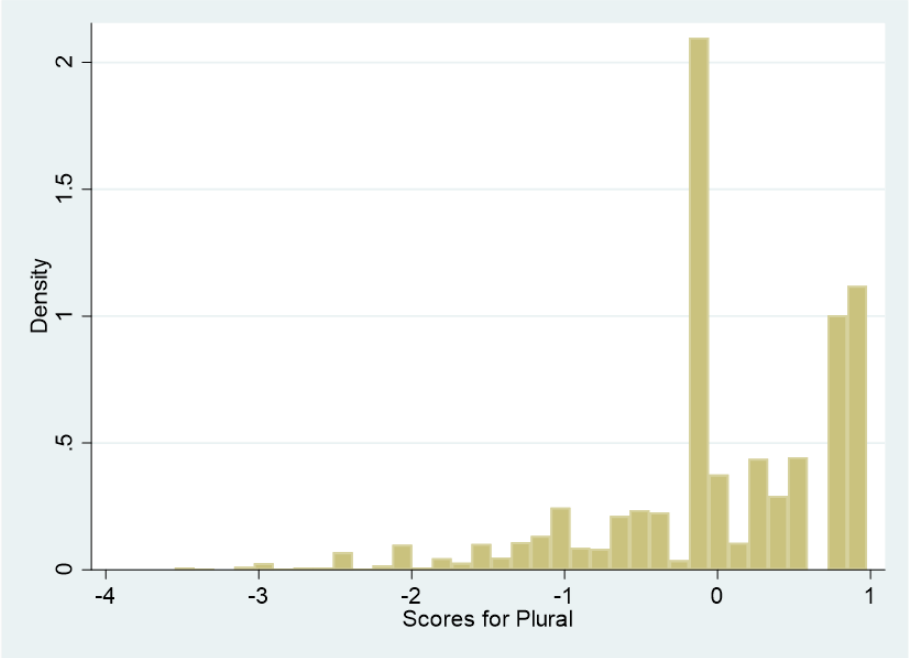
Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of "Plural"

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Plural	3,939	0.00	0.80	-3.55	0.98

Figure 2. Histogram of "Plural"

[15] Eigenvalue is an indicator that shows how much of the variance of a variable is explained by a factor. If it is larger than 1.00, it is considered as a significant factor.

[16] Factor loading shows how clusters of variables are related to a factor. A larger loading implies that it is a better indicator of the factor. Acock (2016) recommends that items with a loading value over 0.40 for a factor can be considered a good indicator of the factor.



Using these factor scores with *Plural* as the dependent variable, let us next examine the three hypotheses by multiple regressions (OLS) with education and income as fixed effects. The main specification is expressed as follows:

$$Plural=\beta_0 + \beta_1(primary) + \beta_2(secondary) + \beta_3(polytechnic\ diploma) + \beta_4(university\ or\ above) + \beta_5(lower\ income) + \beta_6(upper\ middle\ income) + \beta_7(upper\ income) + \beta_8(post\text{-}independence)+(controls) +u$$

The independent variables are as follows:

(1) *Education*:

Education levels are classified into five groups: “primary” (primary school or below), “secondary” (secondary), “post-secondary” (post-secondary), “polytechnic diploma”

(graduated from a polytechnic and arts institution), and “university or above” (university/post-graduate/other professional degree). Dummy variables were created for all categories, with “post-secondary” used as the reference category.

(2) *Income*:

Income groups were set based on the following monthly household income categories (in SGD): “lower income” ($0 to $1,999), “lower middle income” ($2,000 to $4,999), “upper middle income” ($5,000 to $6,900), and “upper income” ($7,000 or above). Dummy variables were created for all income categories, with “lower middle income” used as the reference category.

(3) *Post-independence*:

A post-independence dummy variable was created that takes a value of 1 for persons aged 21–44 years in the 2011 survey or 21–49 years in the 2015 survey and a value of 0 for older respondents. This variable indicates the new generation born after 1967 in the 2011 survey and born after 1966 in the 2015 survey. As Singapore achieved full independence in 1965 and went through political socialization with sustained economic development in the following decades, I use this variable to represent the generational gap.

To test for cohort effects within each generation (pre-independence and post-independence), cohort dummy variables were generated. In each survey, age groups are classified into nine categories: 1 (21–24 years), 2 (25–29 years), 3 (30–34 years), 4 (35–39 years), 5 (40–44 years), 6 (45–49 years), 7 (50–54 years), 8 (55–64 years), and 9 (65 years or older). The age groups of the two surveys were matched and a cohort dummy variable was created for each of them. For example, the age groups of 21-24 years in 2011

and 21-29 years in 2015 are put together and given a dummy of cohort group 1. In this manner, seven cohort groups were generated and dummy variables were created for each of them. For estimations, cohort group 2 (25-29 years in 2011 and 30-34 years in 2015) is used as the reference category.

As control variables, I use ethnicity, gender, naturalization, and year. Ethnicity is still regarded as the major cleavage in Singaporean society, as ethnic minorities seem to be dissatisfied with the status quo as a result of their group identity.[17] Gender is also included to control the effects of the gender gap. As for naturalization, persons who become naturalized citizens are expected to have a positive impression about the status quo because they acquired Singaporean citizenship by their own choice. I also control for year effects to avoid the influence of year specific events.

Ethnic Majority is a dummy variable, where a value of 1 is given if the person is ethnic Chinese; otherwise, I give the value of 0, which means the respondent belongs to a different ethnicity, such as Malay or Indian. *Male* indicates the respondent's gender, which is 1 if the person is male and 0 otherwise. For *New Citizen*, a naturalized person is given a value of 1, otherwise 0. A year dummy for 2011 is also included to control the influence of year specific events.

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[17] Ethnicity is considered an important aspect of socioeconomic identity in Singapore (Welsh 2011, 2016). A majority of residents are ethnic Chinese, accounting for 74.1 percent of Singapore's residents as of 2010. The second largest group is ethnic Malays (13.4 percent), followed by ethnic Indians (9.2 percent) and others (3.3 percent) (Singapore Department of Statistics 2011). Mauzy and Milne (2002) claim that ethnic minorities feel left behind in terms of social status. Fetzer (2008) also points out the disparities between ethnic groups. Nonetheless, he indicates that ethnic polarization between Chinese and Malays has lessened in recent years. Welsh (2011) also discusses the role of ethnic grouping.

Table 4 shows the frequency distributions of independent variables and controls, and Table 5 presents cross tabulations of three independent variables to check their correlations.

Table 4. Frequency Distributions of Independent Variables and Controls

	Total	2015	2011
Education			
primary	388	209	179
%	9.58	10.37	8.79
secondary	1,316	610	706
%	32.48	30.27	34.66
post-secondary	348	145	203
%	8.59	7.2	9.97
polytechnic diploma	865	396	469
%	21.35	19.65	23.02
university or above	1,135	655	480
%	28.01	32.51	23.56
Total	4,052	2,015	2,037
%	100.00	100.00	100.00
Income			
lower income	652	300	352
%	17.36	15.35	19.54
lower middle income	1,480	624	856
%	39.4	31.92	47.53
upper middle income	694	381	313
%	18.48	19.49	17.38
upper income	930	650	280
%	24.76	33.25	15.55
	3,756	1,955	1,801
	100.00	100.00	100.00
Post-independence			
0 (45 or above in 2011, 50 or above in 2015)	1,777	877	900
%	43.40	43.52	43.29
1 (21-44 in 2011, 21-49 in 2015)	2,317	1,138	1,179
%	56.6	56.48	56.71
Total	4,094	2,015	2,079
%	100.00	100.00	100.00

	Total	2015	2011
Cohort Groups			
21-24 in 2011, 21-29 in 2015	541	334	207
%	13.21	16.58	9.96
25-29 in 2011, 30-34 in 2015	409	184	225
%	9.99	9.13	10.82
30-34 in 2011, 35-39 in 2015	370	175	195
%	9.04	8.68	9.38
35-39 in 2011, 40-44 in 2015	452	212	240
%	11.04	10.52	11.54
40-44 in 2011, 45-49 in 2015	545	233	312
%	13.31	11.56	15.01
45-49 in 2011, 50-54 in 2015	475	244	231
%	11.60	12.11	11.11
50 or above in 2011, 55 or above in 2015	1,302	633	669
%	31.80	31.41	32.18
Total	4,094	2,015	2,079
%	100.00	100.00	100.00
Ethnic majority			
0 (non ethnic Chinese)	1,029	441	588
%	25.13	21.89	28.28
1 (ethnic Chinese)	3,065	1,574	1,491
%	74.87	78.11	71.72
Total	4,094	2,015	2,079
%	100.00	100.00	100.00
Male			
0 (female)	2,261	1,028	1,233
%	55.23	51.02	59.31
1 (male)	1,833	987	846
%	44.77	48.98	40.69
Total	4,094	2,015	2,079
%	100.00	100.00	100.00
New citizen			
0 (natural born)	3,645	1,746	1,899
%	89.03	86.65	91.34
1 (naturalized)	449	269	180
%	10.97	13.35	8.66
Total	4,094	2,015	2,079
	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 5. Cross Tabulations of Three Independent Variables

	Total	Pre-Independence	Post-Independence
Education			
primary	388	320	68
%	9.58	18.26	2.96
secondary	1,316	817	499
%	32.48	46.63	21.70
post-secondary	348	162	186
%	8.59	9.25	8.09
polytechnic diploma	865	196	669
%	21.35	11.19	29.09
university or above	1,135	257	878
%	28.01	14.67	38.17
Total	4,052	1,752	2,300
%	100.00	100.00	100.00
Income			
lower income	652	417	235
%	17.36	26.13	10.88
lower middle income	1,480	624	856
%	39.40	39.10	39.63
upper middle income	694	255	439
%	18.48	15.98	20.32
upper income	930	300	630
%	24.76	18.80	29.17
Total	3,756	1,596	2,160
%	100.00	100.00	100.00

	primary	secondary	post-secondary	polytechnic diploma	university or above	Total
lower income	191	302	44	76	34	647
%	56.18	24.84	13.88	9.37	3.21	17.29
lower middle income	119	618	145	358	236	1,476
%	35.00	50.82	45.74	44.14	22.29	39.43
upper middle income	19	173	68	178	253	691
%	5.59	14.23	21.45	21.95	23.89	18.46
upper income	11	123	60	199	536	929
%	3.24	10.12	18.93	24.54	50.61	24.82
Total	340	1,216	317	811	1,059	3,743
%	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

The post-independence generation has relatively higher levels of education and income. In addition, income and education levels are relatively correlated. These correlations fit with our intuition. The highly developed meritocratic system in Singapore based on educational attainment naturally creates a close connection between education and income. Furthermore, the post-independent generation was provided with more opportunities for education and higher income as they grew up in a more economically developed society. Hence, the effects of independent variables are expected to become weaker when all of them are included in a multiple regression (OLS). However, these correlations are not high enough to cause the problem of multicollinearity.

Results

Table 6 shows the results of multiple OLS regressions using these variables.

Table 6. Effects of Individual Attributes on Preference for Political Pluralism

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
Education (reference = post-secondary)												
primary	-0.17	***							-0.04		-0.04	
	(0.06)								(0.07)		(0.07)	
secondary	-0.04								0.01		0.01	
	(0.05)								(0.05)		(0.05)	
polytechnic diploma	0.09	*							0.11	*	0.10	*
	(0.05)								(0.05)		(0.05)	
university or above	0.10	**							0.10	*	0.10	*
	(0.05)								(0.05)		(0.05)	
Income (reference = lower middle class)												
lower income			-0.20	***					-0.16	***	-0.15	***
			(0.04)						(0.04)		(0.04)	
upper middle income			0.06						0.03		0.03	
			(0.04)						(0.04)		(0.04)	
upper income			0.07	**					0.03		0.02	
			(0.03)						(0.04)		(0.04)	
Post-Independence					0.14	***			0.08	**		
(21-44 in 2011, 21-49 in 2015)					(0.03)				(0.03)			
Cohort Groups (reference = 25-29 in 2011, 30-34 in 2015)												
21-24 in 2011, 21-29 in 2015							0.06				0.08	
							(0.05)				(0.05)	
30-34 in 2011, 35-39 in 2015							0.05				0.07	
							(0.06)				(0.06)	
35-39 in 2011, 40-44 in 2015							0.10	*			0.12	**
							(0.05)				(0.06)	
40-44 in 2011, 45-49 in 2015							0.05				0.08	
							(0.05)				(0.06)	
45-49 in 2011, 50-54 in 2015							-0.02				0.04	
							(0.05)				(0.06)	
50 or above in 2011, 55 or above in 2015							-0.11	**			-0.02	
							(0.05)				(0.05)	
Controls												
Ethnic Majority	-0.24	***	-0.25	***	-0.22	***	-0.21	***	-0.24	***	-0.24	***
	(0.03)		(0.03)		(0.03)		(0.03)		(0.03)		(0.03)	
Male	0.01		0.02		0.02		0.02		0.01		0.02	
	(0.03)		(0.03)		(0.03)		(0.03)		(0.03)		(0.03)	
New Citizen	-0.14	***	-0.12	***	-0.11	***	-0.12	***	-0.13	***	-0.14	***
	(0.04)		(0.04)		(0.04)		(0.04)		(0.04)		(0.04)	
Year 2011	0.08	***	0.09	***	0.09	***	0.09	***	0.09	***	0.09	***
	(0.03)		(0.03)		(0.03)		(0.03)		(0.03)		(0.03)	
Constant	0.12	**	0.15	***	0.04		0.12	**	0.06		0.07	
	(0.05)		(0.04)		(0.04)		(0.05)		(0.06)		(0.07)	
N	3,901		3,629		3,939		3,939		3,616		3,616	
Adjusted R^2	0.03		0.03		0.03		0.03		0.04		0.04	

Standard errors are in parentheses.

* p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01.

For Models 1 to 4, each independent variable is tested separately. Coefficients of the variables in all these models fit the predicted directions of hypotheses H1, H2(a), and H3. Furthermore, the effects are statistically significant for the most part, though some are weak.

Model 1 indicates that a lower level of education brings about a preference for the status quo. “Primary” has a significant negative coefficient, while “university or above” has a significant positive coefficient. As predicted by modernization theory, higher education is correlated with a greater preference for pluralism.

Model 2 shows a significant and strongly negative effect of “lower income”. On the other hand, “upper income” has a positive effect. This is consistent with the modernization hypothesis H2(a). Here, “upper income” is not limited to wealthy people, and also includes the upper middle class. Table 5 shows that the half of respondents with an education level of university or higher belong to the “upper income” category. Thus, these results imply that the wealthy and the upper middle class prefer greater pluralism.

Model 3 tested the effects of the intergenerational difference between those who experienced Singapore’s rapid development under the PAP and those who were born later. The results support hypothesis H3. The older generation, which has lived for many years under the development process, supports the status quo, while the younger generation, which has enjoyed economic prosperity since birth, prefers greater pluralism.

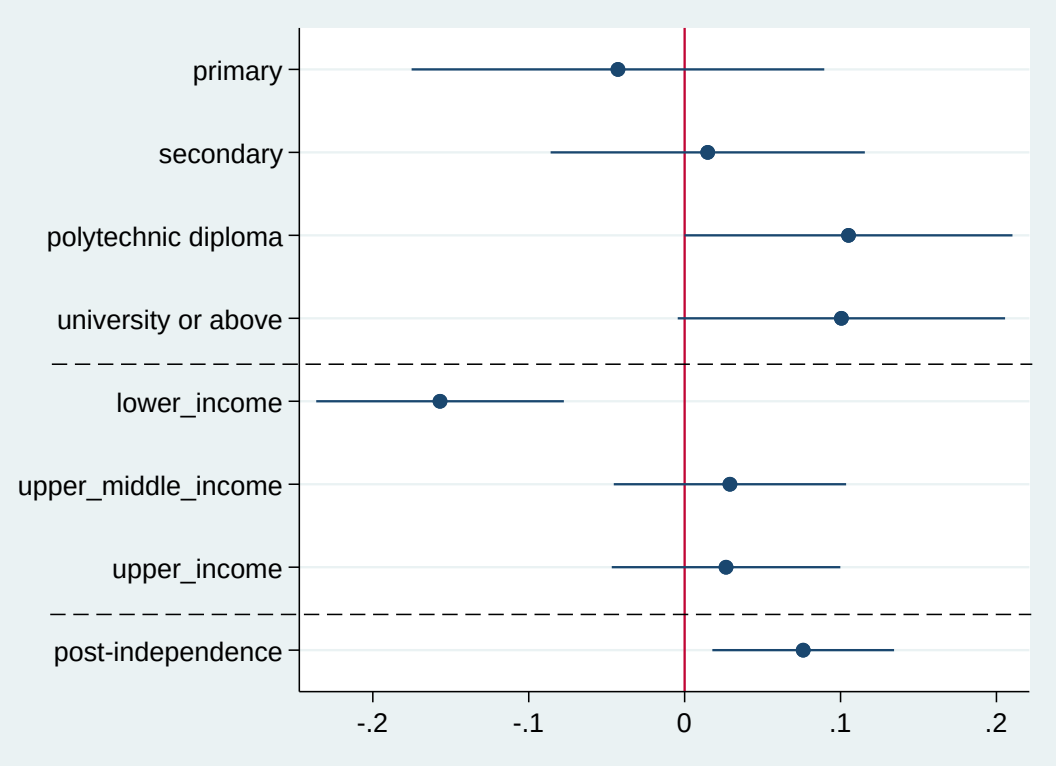
In Model 4, instead of the binary generation variable, I tested the effects of age cohorts (the second cohort is used as the reference category). The first four groups belong to the post-independence generation. The coefficients of all post-independence cohort groups are positive, and those of the two older groups are negative. These directions of coefficients support hypothesis H3, though only two cohort groups have significant effects.

Model 5 uses the main specification to test the effects of education, income, and generation. The effects of education still have the directions of coefficient as predicted by H1. A higher level of education was associated with a greater preference for pluralism, but with weak significance. Meanwhile, “lower income” remains significant with respect to support for the status quo, even after controlling for other independent variables, but the significance of “upper income” disappears. Nonetheless, the directions of income class coefficients are consistent with H2(a). Finally, the effects of intergenerational

differences remain significant in Model 5. The younger generation born after independence prefers greater pluralism.

In Model 6, "post-independence" was replaced with cohort variables. The effects of education and income remain the same. Cohort effects are also the same as those in Model 4, though the coefficient direction of cohort group 6 (age 45-49 years in 2011, 50-54 years in 2015) turns positive, and the effect of cohort group 7 (50 years or older in 2011, 55 years or above in 2015) loses its significance[18].

Figure 3. Coefficients with 95% Confidence Intervals of Model 5



[18] To test the relevance of the dummy variable (post-independence), I also applied the F-test to the estimated effects of cohort groups in Models 4 and 6. The test indicates weak significance for Model 4, though no significance was found for Model 6.

Figure 4. Coefficients of Cohort Groups with 95% Confidence Intervals of Models 4 and 6

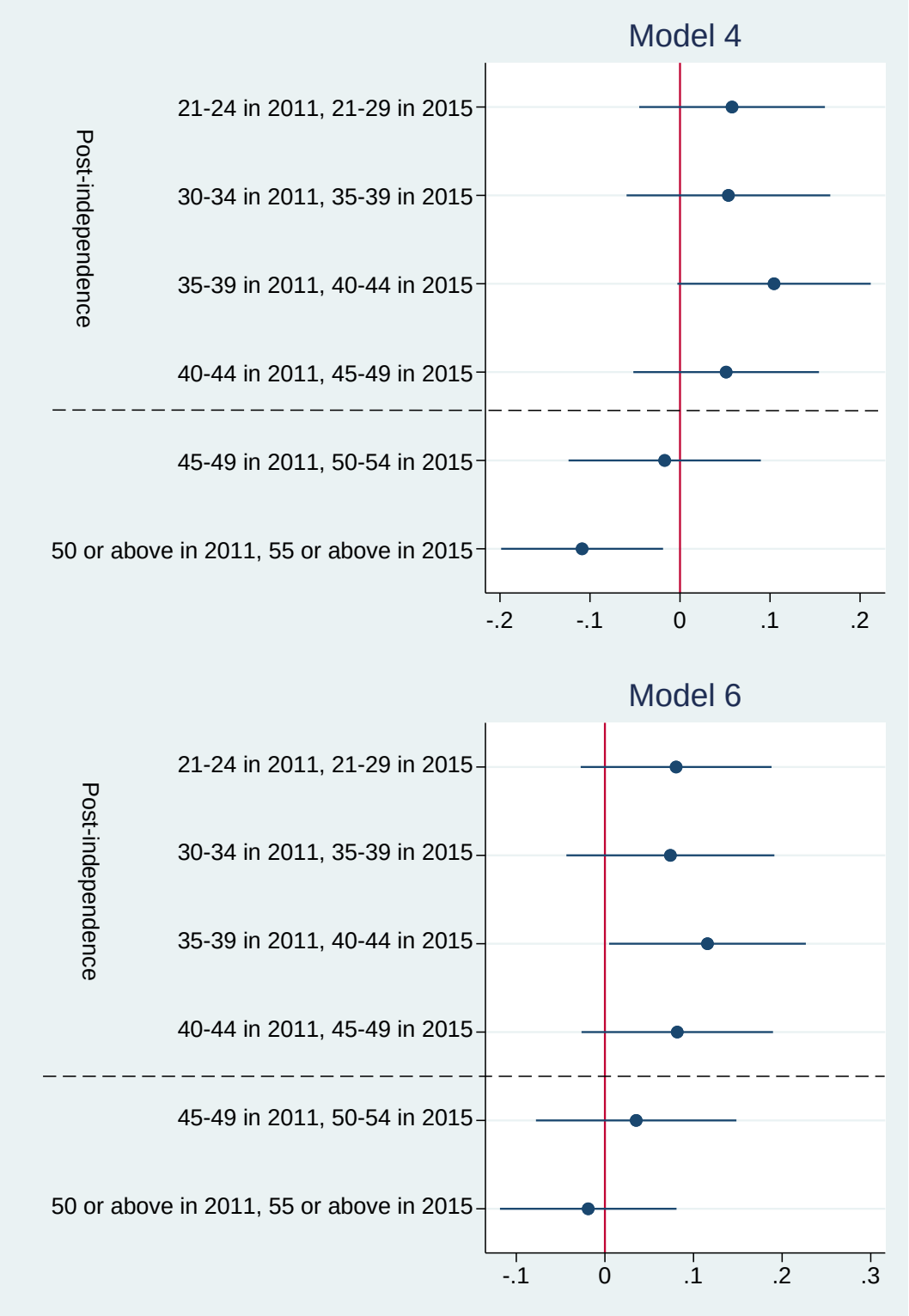


Figure 3 shows the coefficients of independent variables in Model 5, and Figure

4 shows the coefficients of cohort groups in Models 4 and 6. Figure 3 clearly shows the significant effects of “lower income” and “post-independence.” In Figure 4, although the results are only partially statistically significant, we can see differences between the pre-independence cohort groups and pre-independence ones.

The results for the examination of the three hypotheses are summarized as follows.

(1) H1 *Education*

The effect of education is statistically significant when tested without other independent variables (Model 1). In the main specification (Model 5), the results indicate that the effect is weakly significant after controlling for other variables. The coefficients indicate that higher levels of education bring about stronger preferences for pluralism. This result is consistent with H1, though the effect is not robust. Models 5 and 6 hint that the robustness of the effect of education is mediated by the strong effect of “lower income”. Although not reported in Table 6, the effect of education was also tested without controlling for income, and “primary” has a high statistically significant coefficient in that model.

(2) H2 *Class*

Income has a significant effect on preferences for pluralism. Models 2, 5, and 6 imply that the lower income class supports the status quo. These estimations support the modernization hypothesis H2(a), but not the new structuralist hypothesis H2(b). However, the middle class’s inclination toward pluralism is not robust. The coefficients of “upper middle income” and “upper income” remain at almost the same level in Models 2, 5, and 6, indicating that there is a large gap between persons with lower income and other income classes. The government’s social services provided to the lower income class very likely bring about strong support from this class. This suggests that patronage distribution plays a significant role in Singapore’s dominant party rule. In this sense, the results do not require total rejection of the new structuralist argument. Patronage distribution is one type of redistribution, so the lower income class does not need to introduce democratic institutions as long as they receive patronage.

(3) H3 *Generation*

The intergenerational difference has a significant effect in Models 3 and 5. In particular, the dichotomous variable "post-independence" has a significant effect in the main model, Model 5, even after controlling for other variables. As H3 indicates, the younger generation prefers greater pluralism, while the status quo is supported by the older generation, which lived under the development process led by the PAP. Meanwhile, Models 4 and 6 indicate that cohort effects are also consistent with such an intergenerational difference, though not all groups have significant effects.

The intergenerational differences are expected to be stronger in 2015 because the passing of Lee Kuan Yew and the 50th anniversary of Singapore's independence reminded the older generation of the early days of independence and the succeeding period. However, by pooling the data of the 2011 and the 2015 surveys and controlling for the year effects, the estimations indicate the consistent existence of intergenerational differences. Furthermore, the estimations imply that the effects of intergenerational differences are relatively independent of education and income. This hints at the possibility that the intergenerational differences are explained by differences in the political socialization of each generation, rather than by educational attainment.

The controls "ethnic majority" and "new citizen" have robust effects. These results support the argument that identity based on ethnicity is still a major political cleavage. This seems to be based on the frustration felt by the ethnic minority, though the PAP and the government promote a multi-racial and meritocratic system. Singaporean society is quite different today from what it was in the days of the Race Riots in 1960s, but the cleavage nonetheless persists. On the other hand, naturalized citizens support the status quo as expected; they chose to become Singaporean because they felt that Singapore would be a better place for them.

Conclusion

Empirical studies on political liberalizations are mostly cross-national examinations using national-level data. Although aggregated data are important to check for differences between countries, individual behavior, which is the basis of regime

changes, are not given much attention in these studies. On the other hand, studies that deal with micro-level data are often conducted in already liberalized countries because of data availability. Their implications are limited because these data provide information about the differences within a group of countries that share a similar political situation of liberalized competition.

By examining the data of Singapore, where dominant party rule has continued for several decades, we are able to obtain information about individual behavior under a political regime where political competition is controlled by the government. Through the examinations above, this article identifies at least three crucial factors that influence people's attitudes towards the dominant party rule in Singapore. These factors are education, income/class, and intergenerational differences, and seem to be related to values. The results support the validity of modernization theory and that of its modified version, value change theory, which emphasizes differences in political culture between generations. The findings imply that these arguments have explanatory power not only in liberalized countries but also in less-liberalized countries.

Nevertheless, we still do not have enough information to predict the future of Singaporean politics. The younger generation's greater preference for pluralism is expected to bring about political change eventually. However, pluralism does not necessarily mean a change in the ruling party in Singapore. Pluralism is usually interpreted as checks and balances in the Singaporean context, in which non-PAP entities monitor and correct governance as necessary.[19] It is not realistic yet for Singapore to have an alternative party to replace the PAP. Of course, it is possible that the dominant party might split. However, the data do not reveal a preference for this scenario in public opinion[20].This issue is not limited to Singapore. How to understand pluralism in the

[19] The comments of the participants of the IPS workshop in October 2018 were very helpful for this point.

[20] There are two main predictions for the future of Singaporean politics. The first is "strong state democratization" (Slater 2012). Under this scenario, the PAP will give up its status of dominant party and will become merely a ruling party that controls a simple majority in the Parliament. The second possibility is the continuation of the PAP's dominance. Voters punish the PAP if its performance does not maintain the expected standards, but they still generally prefer that the PAP remain in power. The opposition is expected to be used as a device to check the PAP's performance and to provide the PAP with a fear of a transition in power following disappointing performance. (Lam Peng Er

context of less-liberalized countries remains a challenging research topic.

At any rate, more qualitative data on the perceptions and behaviors of citizens are necessary. Such data also provide us with deeper knowledge about the causal mechanisms that result in socioeconomic changes driving political changes.

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