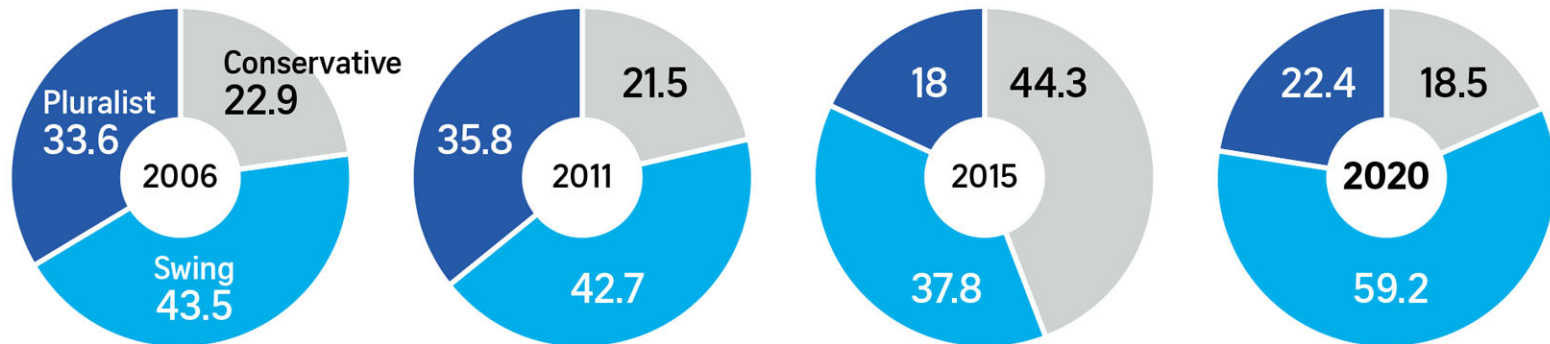


Political inclinations



NOTE: All numbers are in percentages.
Percentages may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding off.

Source: INSTITUTE OF POLICY STUDIES STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

Fewer conservative voters and more swing voters

Conservatives are on the decline. Compared with five years ago, the proportion of Singaporeans labelled as politically conservative has shrunk by more than half: from 44.3 per cent to 18.5 per cent.

This category of voters is described in the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) post-GE2020 survey, whose findings were released yesterday, as those who disagree with the need for change in the electoral system, checks and balances, and different voices in Parliament.

On the other hand, the proportion in the swing category – defined as being mixed in their views compared with the pluralists and conservatives – has shot up by more than 20 points to 59.2 per cent.

Pluralists, or those who desire more political diversity, rose slightly by 4.4 percentage points to 22.4 per cent.

Dr Teo Kay Key said the surge in the swing category is surprising, given that most would expect stronger growth in the proportion of pluralists amid calls for more opposition presence in Parliament.

“Perhaps people want some kind of representation and some checks and balances, but not all the way to the pluralist end,” said Dr Teo, a postdoctoral fellow at the IPS Social Lab who is also on the survey team. “(Pluralist) demands may have been tempered by other governance issues such as the need for efficient government, which is one of the top three issues shaping voting decisions among all three categories.”

The IPS team stressed that the survey results reflect the respondents’ concerns and political preferences, but do not tell exactly which party they voted for in GE2020.

In the preceding three general elections, pluralists had always been younger – especially those aged 21 to 29 – and university-educated, as well as more well-off.

But what stood out in GE2020 was the increase in their proportion among the lowest-income households earning less than \$2,000 a month, and those with non-tertiary post-secondary qualifications.

IPS said this points to two effects taking place. First, the consistent trend of those in the higher socio-economic class supporting political pluralism. Second, the effects of bread-and-butter issues at the other end of the socio-economic spectrum, such that voters felt there was a need for political opposition in Parliament.

Grace Ho

Internet most important in shaping voting decisions

In the light of the absence of physical rallies owing to the coronavirus pandemic, the general election held this year can rightly be considered Singapore’s first true Internet election.

A post-GE2020 survey has found that the Internet was the most important communication platform for Singaporeans’ voting decisions.

It was followed, in declining order of importance, by local television, newspapers and e-rallies, plus

friends, family and colleagues.

These were among the key findings on the Internet and the influence of information sources in the survey by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS). They were presented at an online IPS forum yesterday.

In contrast, the most influential communication channel in GE2015 was local television, followed by both print newspapers and the Internet in second place.

The Internet in GE2020 was par-

ticularly important for two groups of voters: Those born after 1965 and the PMETs, or professionals, managers, executives and technicians.

As for e-rallies, three groups found them an especially important information source – voters born after 1965, people whose monthly household incomes range between \$5,000 and \$6,999, and those with at least post-secondary educational qualifications.

Meanwhile, mainstream media sources such as TV and print newspapers were especially important for voters born before 1965, the less-educated and those whose monthly household income is below \$2,000.

Yuen Sin