

ISSN 0219-3213

2014 #08

Trends in
Southeast Asia

JOHOR SURVEY: ATTITUDES TOWARDS
GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMY,
ISKANDAR MALAYSIA, AND SINGAPORE

TERENCE CHONG



ISEAS Publishing

INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

Trends in Southeast Asia

*The **Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS)** was established in 1968. It is an autonomous regional research centre for scholars and specialists concerned with modern Southeast Asia. The Institute's research is structured under Regional Economic Studies (RES), Regional Social and Cultural Studies (RSCS) and Regional Strategic and Political Studies (RSPS), and through country-based programmes. It also houses the ASEAN Studies Centre (ASC), Singapore's APEC Study Centre, as well as the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre (NSC) and its Archaeology Unit.*

2014 #08

Trends in
Southeast Asia

JOHOR SURVEY: ATTITUDES TOWARDS
GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMY,
ISKANDAR MALAYSIA, AND SINGAPORE

TERENCE CHONG



ISEAS Publishing

INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

Published by: ISEAS Publishing
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
30 Heng Mui Keng Terrace
Pasir Panjang, Singapore 119614
publish@iseas.edu.sg <http://bookshop.iseas.edu.sg>

© 2014 Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission.

The author is wholly responsible for the views expressed in this book which do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.

ISEAS Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Chong, Terence.

Johor Survey : Attitudes towards Governance and Economy, Iskandar Malaysia, and Singapore.

(Trends in Southeast Asia, 0219-3213 ; TRS 8/14)

1. Public opinion—Malaysia—Johor.
2. Ethnicity—Malaysia—Johor.
3. Johor—Politics and government.
4. Johor—Economic policy.
5. Iskandar Malaysia—Public opinion.
6. Investments, Singaporean—Malaysia—Johor—Public opinion.

I. Title.

II. Attitudes towards Governance and Economy, Iskandar Malaysia, and Singapore

III. Series: Trends in Southeast Asia ; TRS 8/14.

DS501 I59T no. 8(2014)

2014

ISBN 978-981-4620-18-5 (soft cover)

ISBN 978-981-4620-19-2 (e-book, PDF)

Typeset by Superskill Graphics Pte Ltd

Printed in Singapore by Mainland Press Pte Ltd

FOREWORD

The economic, political, strategic and cultural dynamism in Southeast Asia has gained added relevance in recent years with the spectacular rise of giant economies in East and South Asia. This has drawn greater attention to the region and to the enhanced role it now plays in international relations and global economics.

The sustained effort made by Southeast Asian nations since 1967 towards a peaceful and gradual integration of their economies has had indubitable success, and perhaps as a consequence of this, most of these countries are undergoing deep political and social changes domestically and are constructing innovative solutions to meet new international challenges. Big Power tensions continue to be played out in the neighbourhood despite the tradition of neutrality exercised by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The **Trends in Southeast Asia** series acts as a platform for serious analyses by selected authors who are experts in their fields. It is aimed at encouraging policy makers and scholars to contemplate the diversity and dynamism of this exciting region.

THE EDITORS

Series Chairman:

Tan Chin Tiong

Series Editors:

Ooi Kee Beng

Terence Chong

Editorial Committee:

Francis E. Hutchinson

Daljit Singh

Johor Survey: Attitudes towards Governance and Economy, Iskandar Malaysia, and Singapore

By Terence Chong

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- These are selected findings from a survey on Johor residents commissioned by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS). The survey was conducted with 2,009 respondents between October and November 2013.
- The big picture painted by the findings is one of interethnic dissonance,¹ especially between ethnic Malays and Chinese in the state of Johor. More than income or education, ethnicity seemed to be the key determinant of how certain questions were answered in this survey.
- With regard to satisfaction with the performance of state and federal government, ethnic Chinese respondents were more likely to be dissatisfied with the government's performance to date compared with their Malay and Indian counterparts.
- Interethnic dissonance is also evident in the political and economic outlook of respondents. Indian and Malay respondents were more optimistic over the state's political, economic and social conditions while Chinese respondents, the higher educated, and those from higher income households were more likely to be pessimistic.

¹ Interethnic dissonance is defined here as the differences in opinions, attitudes and experiences of social reality between ethnic groups or communities. These differences may have been determined by the varying lifeworlds of different ethnic communities that have been shaped by historical circumstances or contemporary politics.

- With regard to Iskandar Malaysia, although the majority of all respondents said they were satisfied with its developments, Chinese respondents were the least likely to say so. The majority of Chinese and Indian respondents were satisfied with the influx of Singaporean investors into Iskandar Malaysia, while Malay respondents tended to be less receptive.
- Chinese and Indian respondents were more likely to have a favourable opinion of Singapore and were more open to visiting and working in the city-state. Chinese respondents were most likely to have visited Singapore; followed by Indian respondents; and lastly Malay respondents.
- In terms of ethnic affinity across the Causeway, Malay, Chinese, and Indian respondents in Johor did not see similarities between themselves and their ethnic counterparts in Singapore. This suggests that despite geographical proximity, nationality and national development have resulted in divergent self-perceptions and an exclusive sense of identity on the part of Johor respondents.
- However, while the majority of Chinese and Indian respondents did not believe that Malaysians and Singaporeans of the same ethnic group were similar, Malay respondents reportedly believe that Chinese Malaysians and Chinese Singaporeans were *similar to each other*; and also Indian Malaysians and Indian Singaporeans were similar to each other. This may hint at a lack of trust or familiarity on the part of Malay respondents with regard to their fellow Chinese and Indian citizens.

Johor Survey: Attitudes towards Governance and Economy, Iskandar Malaysia, and Singapore

By Terence Chong²

INTRODUCTION

These are selected findings from a survey on Johor residents commissioned by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS). Johor is made up of 10 districts and is one of Malaysia's most developed states. It has a population of 3.2 million residents with ethnic Malays comprising 1.7 million of these, ethnic Chinese 1 million, and ethnic Indians about 210,000 residents.³ Johor also has a relatively young population with 601,000 residents between 10 and 19 years of age; 630,000 between 20 and 29 years of age; and 478,000 between 30 and 39 years of age.⁴

The survey had three objectives, namely, to gain a better understanding of the attitudes of Johor residents towards:

- a. Government and Economy;
- b. Iskandar Malaysia and its Importance; and
- c. Singapore and Singaporeans.

GOVERNMENT AND ECONOMY

One of the striking trends of Malaysia's 2013 General Elections was that over 81 per cent of the Chinese vote went to the opposition. This loss of

² Terence Chong is Senior Fellow and Coordinator of the Regional Social and Cultural Studies Programme at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore. Special thanks to Research Assistant, Callista Hang.

³ Source: Malaysian Census 2010.

⁴ Ibid.

Chinese votes was quickly dubbed the ‘Chinese tsunami’ by the ruling coalition, the Barisan Nasional (BN). This label proved erroneous as the BN actually received a lower share of the vote from Malay and Indian voters as well.⁵ According to studies elsewhere, the Chinese vote in the state of Johor dipped from 52.7 per cent in 2008 for the BN to 21.3 per cent in 2013 while the Malay vote for the BN in the state saw a slight increase from 81.1 per cent in 2008 to 81.9 per cent in 2013.⁶

Among the host of electoral issues were rising property prices,⁷ corruption and transparency in government,⁸ as well as a cleanup of the electoral roll.⁹ Meanwhile the BN’s loss of support from urban voters was attributed to the three ‘C’s, namely, “corruption, cost of living, and crime”.¹⁰

These issues form the background for this objective. Selected findings on the attitudes of Johor residents towards state and federal government, towards a variety of issues ranging from municipal matters like water

⁵ *Malaysian Insider*. 8 July 2013. “It wasn’t a Chinese tsunami, study shows”. By Md Izwan. <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/it-wasnt-a-chinese-tsunami> (accessed 19 April 2014).

⁶ Merdeka Centre. 4 September 2013. “13th Malaysian General Election Results Parliamentary Level Analysis along Regional, Ethnic and Age Cohort Voting Patterns”. Presentation at ISEAS. http://www.iseas.edu.sg/ISEAS/upload/files/analysis_of_general_election13results.pdf (accessed 19 April 2014).

⁷ *The Straits Times*. 12 December 2012. “Penang’s soaring property prices a hot election issue”. By Carolyn Hong. <http://www.straitstimes.com/the-big-story/asia-report/malaysia-elections/features/story/penangs-soaring-property-prices-hot-elec> (accessed 19 April 2014).

⁸ Low, Olivia and Green, Russell A. 23 May 2013. “Malaysia: At election time, corruption remains a central issue”. <http://blog.chron.com/bakerblog/2013/05/malaysia-at-election-time-corruption-remains-a-central-issue/> (accessed 19 April 2014)

⁹ Merdeka Centre. 25 May 2012. “92% of voters want electoral roll to be cleaned up before GE-13 is held”. <http://merdeka.org/media/245-250512.html> (accessed 19 April 2014).

¹⁰ *The Straits Times*. 23 December 2013. “Playing Islam card won’t help UMNO”. S. Jayasankaran. <http://news.asiaone.com/news/asian-opinions/playing-islam-card-wont-help-umno> (accessed 19 April 2014).

management and socio-political concerns such as fighting corruption will be presented. Similarly, levels of optimism reported by Johor residents with regard to economic outlook, as well as the sources from which respondents glean news and information, will be explored.

ISKANDAR MALAYSIA AND ITS IMPORTANCE

Iskandar Malaysia was established on 30 July 2006 as an economic development zone in the state of Johor. The plan is for it to be a hub for finance and business, medicine and education, as well as a site for luxury private housing, and electronic and industrial facilities. In total, Iskandar Malaysia covers an area of over 2,000 square kilometers. Some eight years after its establishment, Iskandar Malaysia has attracted a total of S\$51 billion in investments.¹¹ According to official Malaysian statistics, Singapore is by far the lead investor to date with RM9.1 billion, followed by Spain at RM4.1 billion, and in third place Japan at RM3.7 billion.¹²

It has, however, not always been smooth sailing. The Iskandar Regional Development Authority (IRDA) has admitted that it needs to win over the “hearts and minds” of Johor residents, not to mention “be more attuned to the needs of local residents” and to “counter the perception that Iskandar Malaysia only served the interests of foreign investors”.¹³ More recently, IRDA has had to refute claims that the inflow

¹¹ *Channel News Asia*. 9 April 2014. “Singapore manufacturing firms see good performance in Iskandar”. <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/business/singapore-manufacturing/1064692.html> (accessed 13 April 2014).

¹² The rest of the top ten investors are U.S (RM3.2 billion); Netherlands (RM2.8 billion); UAE (RM1.8 billion); Australia (RM1.8 billion); Lebanon (RM1.7 billion); France (RM1.6 billion); and China (RM1.5 billion). <http://www.mycorridor.malaysia.gov.my/Documents/IRDA%20-%20ISKANDAR%20MALAYSIA%20%E2%80%93%20INVESTMENT%20CHALLENGES%20STRATEGIES.pdf> (accessed 14 April 2014).

¹³ *New Straits Times*. 23 April 2009. “Iskandar Projects ‘for the people’s benefit’”. <http://news.asiaone.com/News/AsiaOne+News/Malaysia/Story/A1Story20090423-136939.html> (accessed 13 April 2014).

of foreign investments into Iskandar Malaysia has “marginalised Malays in Johor”.¹⁴ Furthermore, on-the-ground observers have suggested that rising property prices and costs of living are key concerns among locals, made more acute by the presence of Iskandar, the benefits of which have not been perceived by the locals.¹⁵

Iskandar Malaysia is also a site for political contention. The opposition has warned that only UMNO (United Malay National Organisation) “cronies and companies” will benefit.¹⁶ The Islamic political party PAS also distributed 100,000 booklets entitled *IDR, Antara Impian and Realiti (IDR, Between Dreams and Reality)* warning of how the project would not benefit Malays.¹⁷ Not to be outdone, former Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad has also raised the spectre of race by suggesting that if the Malaysian “government allows Singapore Chinese to occupy the IDR (through business, employment and property purchase) to a larger extent than the Malays, the IDR would be dominated by Singapore Chinese because the Malays cannot afford to buy homes there”.¹⁸

Meanwhile in Singapore, elder statesman and former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew cautioned against over-enthusiastic investment and called for a ‘wait and see approach’.¹⁹ Lee also opined “It is one thing for the Opposition Party PAS to knock the prime minister down, but when

¹⁴ *Straits Times*. 17 January 2013. “Iskandar benefits locals too, says chief exec”. By Teo Cheng Wee.

¹⁵ <http://www.getitright-iskandar.com/?q=node/112> (accessed 13 April 2014).

¹⁶ *Free Malaysia Today*. 18 January 2013. “Peanuts for landowners, millions for cronies”. By Chua Jui Meng. <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/opinion/2013/01/18/peanuts-for-landowners-millions-for-cronies/> (accessed 17 April 2014).

¹⁷ *The Star*. 20 November 2007. “A political ploy by PAS, says Johor MB”. <http://www.thestar.com.my/story.aspx/?file=%2f2007%2f11%2f20%2fnation%2f19508836&sec=nation> (accessed 17 April 2014).

¹⁸ *The Straits Times*. 5 September 2007. “Beware the IDR falling into S’pore hands”. <http://news.asiaone.com/print/News/The%2BStraits%2BTimes/Story/%2527Beware%2Bthe%2BIDR%2Bfalling%2Binto%2BS%2527pore%2527s%2Bhands%2527.html> (accessed: 17 April 2014).

¹⁹ Lee, Kuan Yew. 2013. *One Man’s View of the World*. Singapore: Straits Times Press.

UMNO leaders, especially from Johor, hit out in the same vein, potential investors from Singapore must seriously ask themselves when these attitudes will change, and how welcome their investments will be”.²⁰ In light of these concerns, this survey seeks to understand the attitudes of Johor residents towards Iskandar Malaysia. Most recently, it was reported that Iskandar Malaysia’s intended shift from low-cost centre to high value-added manufacturing, as well as rising land and labour cost, is reducing the comparative advantage it has to offer Singapore-based companies.²¹

SINGAPORE AND SINGAPOREANS

The geographical proximity of Johor residents to Singapore endows them with a unique insight into Singapore and Singaporeans. There are approximately 205,000 Malaysians working in Singapore,²² while the number of Malaysians commuting to Singapore daily is estimated to be between 80,000²³ and 120,000.²⁴ Many of these are Malaysians from other parts of the country who have domiciled themselves in Johor to make daily trips to work or study in Singapore.

²⁰ *Business Times*. 2 July 2007. “Malaysia’s IDR a ‘win-win’ arrangement for S’pore: MM Lee”. By Pauline Ng.

²¹ *ODAY*. 23 April 2014. “Iskandar to move from being low-cost centre”. By Wong Wei Han.

²² *The Business Times*. 29 August 2007. “Rafidah highlights opportunities for Singapore business”. By Nande Khin. <http://news.asiaone.com/News/The+Business+Times/Story/Rafidah+highlights+opportunities+for+Singapore+business.html> (accessed 14 April 2014).

²³ Ye, Junjia. 2011. “Reproducing Class in a Global Labour Force: The Case of Singapore’s Division of Labour”. Unpublished PhD thesis. Faculty of Graduate Studies (Geography). University of British Columbia. https://circle.ubc.ca/bitstream/handle/2429/37743/ubc_2011_fall_ye_junjia.pdf?sequence=1 (accessed 30 March 2014); see also Abdullah, Kamarulnizan. 2009. Johor in Malaysia-Singapore Relations. *Across the Causeway: A Multi-dimensional Study of Malaysia-Singapore Relations*, ed. Takashi Shirashi. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

²⁴ *The Business Times*. 29 August 2007.

Conversely, an estimated 130,000 Singaporeans travel to Malaysia on a daily basis.²⁵ According to 2006 figures, Johor received about 23,500 Singaporean visitors per day.²⁶ Over 85 per cent of visitors passing through Johor checkpoints are Singaporeans.²⁷ Meanwhile, some 100 students from Singapore travel to Johor's Iskandar Educity for school. They include Singaporeans as well as children of expatriates based in Singapore.²⁸ Clearly, as a cross-border region, the state of Johor is unique to the rest of the country.

Methodology

The survey was conducted between October and November 2013. The 2,009 respondents interviewed via fixed-line and mobile phones consisted of Malaysian citizens aged 18 and above who resided in Johor. They were selected on the basis of random stratified sampling across district of residence, controlled by quota for ethnicity, age and gender. A 'Johor resident' is defined as one who is registered as a voter in the state.

There were 1,248 ethnic Malay respondents, 624 ethnic Chinese respondents, and 137 ethnic Indian respondents. The survey sample was segregated along four principal segments or geographic areas as follows:

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ *Reuters*. 20 March 2007. Singapore and Malaysia's Johor -- so near, yet so far". By Clarence Fernandez. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2007/03/20/us-malaysia-johor-idUSKLR29136120070320> (accessed 14 April 2014).

²⁷ <http://www.iskandarmalaysia.com.my/pdf/im-sme/IM-Corridor-City-Lab-overview-SME.pdf> (accessed 14 April 2014).

²⁸ *The Sunday Times*. 16 September 2012. "These students need passports to go to school". <http://www.straitstimes.com/breaking-news/singapore/story/these-students-need-passports-go-school-20120916>. (accessed 14 April 2014).

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents

Location	Composition	No. of Respondents	Estimated Margin of Error
Entire State of Johor	All ten districts of the state	1,002	± 3.10
Iskandar Region	Comprising areas such as Johor Baharu, Pulai, Gelang Patah, Tebrau, Pasir Gudang and Kulai	403	± 4.88
North West Johor	Comprising Districts of Segamat, Batu Pahat and Muar	302	± 5.64
Eastern Johor	Comprising districts of Mersing and Kota Tinggi	302	± 5.64

SELECTED FINDINGS

A. GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMY

Performance of State Government and Leadership

Interethnic dissonance — differences in opinions, attitudes and experiences of social reality between ethnic groups or communities — can be seen in the strong correlation between ethnicity and satisfaction with government which runs through the survey. When asked about state government and leadership, ethnic Chinese respondents were more likely to be dissatisfied with the government's performance to date compared with their Malay and Indian counterparts. For example, while the Johor state government's handling of water management and municipal issues saw high levels of satisfaction, Chinese respondents were less likely to be satisfied with its handling of land acquisition, housing development, and religious harmony. Furthermore, the higher the household income, the higher the level of dissatisfaction with the state government's performance, suggesting possible middle and upper-middle class discontent.

Performance of Johor State Government

For example, when asked if they were satisfied with the performance of the Johor state government in managing the state, Malay and Indian respondents were more likely to be positive with 31.0 per cent and 37.2 per cent, respectively, indicating satisfaction (Figure 1.1A). However, it must be noted that more Malays (49.9 per cent) and Indians (43.4 per cent) answered 'neutral'. This suggests that they had no opinion or did not want to venture an opinion. The Chinese respondents, on the other hand, were more unambiguous with 49.1 per cent stating that they were 'very dissatisfied' or 'somewhat dissatisfied' with the state government's performance to date.

Interestingly, when cross-tabulated by household income, levels of dissatisfaction rose in tandem with income (Figure 1.1B). 19.2 per

cent of respondents with monthly household incomes of RM1,500 and below were either ‘very dissatisfied’ or ‘somewhat dissatisfied’ with the state government. This figure rose to 37.4 per cent with respondents with household incomes of RM5,000 and above. This finding is largely in keeping with broader national trends. For example, BN also saw an erosion of support from urban voters who were more likely to be from higher income groups.²⁹

Religious Harmony and Interests: Ethnic Divide

Malay and Indian respondents were overwhelmingly positive about the state government’s handling of religious harmony and interests (Figure 1.6A). 83.9 per cent and 82.7 per cent of Malay and Indian respondents, respectively, were either ‘very satisfied’ or ‘somewhat satisfied’. However, 36.8 per cent of Chinese respondents were either ‘very dissatisfied’ or ‘somewhat dissatisfied’.

Performance of Federal Government and Leadership

Ethnicity and incomes were correlated with satisfaction with the federal government. Over a variety of issues from the handling of public safety and crime prevention, the creation of employment opportunities, to efforts in fighting corruption, Chinese respondents and higher income households were more likely to be dissatisfied with the federal government’s response. These findings are in keeping with the thrust of the 2013 General Election results where the BN saw a loss of Chinese and urban votes.³⁰

²⁹ MSN. 6 May 2013. “GE13: Triumphant BN seen losing popular vote”. By Clara Chooi. <http://news.malaysia.msn.com/elections/ge13-triumphant-bn-seen-losing-popular-vote> (accessed 19 April 2014).

³⁰ <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-05-07/najib-s-win-may-mask-biggest-test-after-malaysian-chinese-exodus.html> (accessed 2 April 2014).

Public Safety and Crime Prevention

When asked about public safety and crime prevention there was a sharp disparity in response according to ethnicity (Figure 2.1A). Malay and Indian respondents were most likely to be either ‘very satisfied’ or ‘somewhat satisfied’ with the federal government’s handling of public safety and crime prevention at 66.7 per cent and 63.4 per cent, respectively. Meanwhile, Chinese respondents were most likely to be either ‘very dissatisfied’ or ‘somewhat dissatisfied’ with an overwhelming 82.2 per cent expressing this sentiment.

When cross-tabulated according to household income, it became clear that higher household income groups were less satisfied (Figure 2.1B). 29.1 per cent of households earning RM1,500 and below were either ‘very dissatisfied’ or ‘somewhat dissatisfied’. This figure grew to 65.0 per cent for households earning more than RM5,000. In other words, the higher the income group, the less satisfied the respondent is with the federal government’s handling of crime and safety.

Government Job Creation

With regard to job creation, Malay and Indian respondents were more likely to be satisfied with the federal government’s efforts in creating employment opportunities at 63.7 per cent and 63.1 per cent, respectively (Figures 2.2A). Conversely, the majority of Chinese respondents, at 52.7 per cent, were ‘very dissatisfied’ or ‘somewhat dissatisfied’ with the federal government’s efforts to create employment opportunities. It was also found that the higher the household income, the more likely the respondent would be dissatisfied with the federal government’s efforts to create employment opportunities (Figure 2.2B).

Fighting Corruption

Levels of dissatisfaction with the federal government’s efforts in fighting corruption were generally high. Chinese respondents were most likely to be ‘very dissatisfied’ or ‘somewhat dissatisfied’ with the federal government’s fight against corruption with 88.8 per cent indicating dissatisfaction (Figure 2.3A). They were followed by Malay respondents

at 50.3 per cent, and Indian respondents at 40.0 per cent. Again there was a correlation between higher income households and dissatisfaction with the government's efforts (Figure 2.3B).

Economic Situation and Outlook

As in the previous section, there was interethnic dissonance in optimism over economic outlook. Indian and Malay respondents were more optimistic over the state's political, economic and social conditions. Chinese respondents, the higher educated, and those from higher income households were more likely to be pessimistic. This trend is broadly repeated with questions concerning the state of the national economy.

Has the Malaysian Economy Improved or Declined in the Last Five Years?

When asked if the Malaysian economy had improved or declined in the *last* five years, most respondents feel that the Malaysian economy has improved in the last five years, except for Chinese and higher income groups. In keeping with patterns above, Malay and Indian respondents seem to be more positive with their replies. Malay and Indian respondents reported seeing improvement in the national economy in the last five years (65.6 per cent and 61.7 per cent, respectively), with Chinese respondents the least likely to perceive an improvement with only 16.0 per cent saying so (Figure 3.2A). Meanwhile, 33.7 per cent of households earning RM1,500 and below saw a decline in the national economy, with the figure rising to 47.6 per cent for households earning RM5,000 and above (Figure 3.2B).

Will the Malaysian Economy Improve or Decline in the Next Five Years?

When asked if the Malaysian economy will improve or decline in the *next* five years, most Malay and Indian respondents believe that the national economy would improve in the next five years, with 71.7 per cent and 66.8 per cent, respectively, expressing this optimism (Figure

3.3A). Indian and Malay respondents were, again, most positive with 71.7 per cent and 66.8 per cent, respectively, believing that the national economy would improve. Chinese respondents were the least likely to believe so, at 20.3 per cent. Higher household income respondents were also least likely to believe there would be improvements in the near future (Figure 3.3B).

Personal Household Economic Situation

Moving from state and national economy, the survey turned to the respondent's own household situation (Figure 3.4A). While Malay and Indian respondents were more likely to have seen improvements in their own household economic situation (56.5 per cent and 47.4 per cent, respectively), relatively large numbers reported to have seen a decline (34.8 per cent for Indian respondents and 31.1 per cent for Malay respondents).

Meanwhile, 40.8 per cent of Chinese respondents saw a decline in their household's finances from a year ago. This may explain why they are least likely to anticipate improvement a year from now.

For a change, the higher the household income, the more likely the respondent was to see improvements (Figure 3.4B). 47.9 per cent of respondents from households earning RM1,500 and less reported to have seen improvements to their household financial situation, compared to 53.5 per cent of those from households with RM5,000 and above.

Sources of Information and News

More research should be conducted on consumption of information and news in Johor. While newspapers appear to remain the top source of information and news, it is important to understand if accessibility equates to influence. The use of the internet among the younger, better educated and higher income households also needs to be further investigated. Does the internet serve as a complement to newspapers or an alternative news source? Does the internet suggest a more politically critical readership or merely indicative of greater entertainment and leisure consumption?

Newspapers Top News Source

Respondents were asked to name their top sources of information and news from a list which included ‘newspapers’, ‘TV’, ‘internet’, ‘radio’, and ‘others’. 65.2 per cent of respondents across the board reported that they received their information and news from newspapers, followed by TV (19.9 per cent) and, in third place, the internet (11.9 per cent) (Figure 4.1A).

When broken down according to ethnicity, it was found that the top three sources of information and news for Malay respondents were newspapers (59.1 per cent), followed by TV (26.1 per cent), and the internet (11.8 per cent). For Chinese respondents there was some variation with newspapers first (79.1 per cent), followed by the internet (11.9 per cent), and then TV (6.4 per cent). For Indian respondents, it was newspapers (59.8 per cent), followed by TV (23.5 per cent), and finally the internet (13.6 per cent) (Figure 4.1B).

Internet: Younger and Higher Income Respondents

Unsurprisingly, the internet was more frequently used by respondents in younger age groups (Figure 4.1C). Those between 18 and 30 years of age were most likely to use the internet (22.2 per cent), followed by those between 31 and 50 years of age (12.3 per cent). Respondents 51 years old and above were least likely to go online. Likewise, higher educated respondents were more likely to go online (21.3 per cent) and less likely to rely on TV for news (15.8 per cent), while less educated respondents were more likely to use TV for news (22 per cent) and less likely to rely on the internet (7.2 per cent) (Figure 4.1D).

B. ISKANDAR MALAYSIA AND ITS IMPORTANCE

Familiarity with Iskandar Malaysia

Interethnic dissonance is also evident where familiarity with Iskandar Malaysia is concerned. Whereas the majority of Malay and Indian respondents claimed familiarity with the project, Chinese respondents were more likely to say they were unfamiliar than familiar. Although the majority of all respondents said they were satisfied with the developments in Iskandar Malaysia, the Chinese were the least likely to say so. However, they were not more likely to be dissatisfied than Malay respondents, with a notable proportion expressing neutrality on the issue.

Weakening of Transethnic Solidarities?

Respondents were asked about their familiarity with developments in Iskandar Malaysia. Malay and Indian respondents were most likely to say they were ‘somewhat familiar’ or ‘very familiar’ with the developments in the economic zone at 66.8 per cent and 65.6 per cent, respectively (Figure 5.1A). Conversely, Chinese respondents were most likely to say they were unfamiliar, with 57.9 per cent indicating being ‘somewhat unfamiliar’ or ‘very unfamiliar’. The contrast between the Malay and Indian respondents’ response to that of the Chinese respondents is striking.

While it is prudent not to over-interpret the data, the interethnic dissonance found throughout this survey supports scholarly observations that ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ have been key factors in the way national politics and state-sponsored mega-projects are perceived in Malaysia. As such, because official history and development are tied to the interest of the Malay-based ruling UMNO, while non-Malay political participation may only take place via an alliance (Barisan Nasional) with UMNO, historical ‘transethnic solidarities’ have been eliminated or weakened over time.³¹ Such forms of ‘unfamiliarity’ with state projects may be

³¹ Mandal, Sumit K. 2004. Transethnic solidarities, racialisation and social equality. *The State of Malaysia: Ethnicity, Equity and Reform*, ed. Terence Gomez. London: Routledge

the long term result of these weakened inter-ethnic ties, and perhaps of alienation of the Chinese community from state matters.

Perceived Beneficiaries of Iskandar Malaysia

In general, the majority of respondents believed that Iskandar Malaysia benefited them, albeit less so compared to other perceived beneficiaries such as corporations and property developers. This observation was most pronounced among Chinese respondents, who were least likely to see benefits for themselves.

Respondents were also more likely to agree that Singaporean investors benefited from Iskandar Malaysia, compared to non-Singaporean foreign companies. This is consistent with the observation in the subsequent section that respondents across the board believed Singapore to be the largest investor in Iskandar Malaysia.

Malaysian Corporations and Property Developers Biggest Beneficiaries

When asked about the beneficiaries of Iskandar Malaysia (Figure 6.1A), respondents believed that ‘big Malaysian corporations’ and ‘property developers’ benefited most. 82.3 per cent ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘somewhat agreed’ that ‘big Malaysian corporations’ benefited from the project while 82.1 per cent ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘somewhat agreed’ that ‘property developers’ were a beneficiary.

The perception of corporations and property developers as beneficiaries may stem from the prominence and visibility of residential and commercial developments associated with Iskandar Malaysia. 79.1 per cent agreed that the economic zone benefited government servants and 74.3 per cent perceived politicians to be benefiting from the project as well.

Ordinary Citizens Benefit but Fear Little Employment Trickle-down to Local Residents

The majority also agreed that ordinary citizens would gain from Iskandar Malaysia, although at 65.2 per cent, this was only larger than the proportion of respondents who agreed that ‘non-Johorean Malaysians’ (52.9 per cent) and ‘foreign property buyers’ (61.4 per cent) benefited

from Iskandar Malaysia. Meanwhile, 69.4 per cent of respondents agreed that Singaporean investors benefited from the economic zone.

In other words, these findings support existing reports which opine that many Johor residents fear that the fruits of Iskandar Malaysia will flow out of the state, with very little economic or employment trickledown to local residents.

Majority Believe Government Servants and Politicians are Beneficiaries

The vast majority of respondents across ethnic groups viewed government servants as beneficiaries of Iskandar Malaysia, with 83.5 per cent of Indian respondents, 80.9 per cent of Chinese respondents, and 77.9 per cent of Malay respondents agreeing (Figure 6.1H).

The majority of respondents across ethnic groups also viewed politicians as a group benefiting from Iskandar. Indian respondents were most likely to believe so with 80.2 per cent agreeing, followed closely by Chinese respondents of whom 79.7 per cent agreed. Malay respondents were the least likely to agree (71.1 per cent) and also the most likely to disagree (23.4 per cent) (Figure 6.1J).

Majority Believe Singaporean Investors are Beneficiaries

The majority of all ethnic groups believed that Singaporean investors benefited from Iskandar Malaysia, with Chinese respondents being most likely to agree with this (86.2 per cent), followed by Indian respondents (76.4 per cent) (Figure 6.1O). Malay respondents were the least likely to agree that investors from Singapore benefited from Iskandar Malaysia (60.5 per cent), and were also most likely to disagree with this (35.1 per cent).

Chinese Residents: More Relaxed Entry Requirements for Singaporeans into Iskandar Malaysia

Respondents were asked if Malaysia should relax entry requirements for Singaporeans into Iskandar Malaysia (Figure 6.3A). This question was posed in response to the IRDA's announcement that "the Governments

of Malaysia and Singapore are currently working on a simplified immigration procedure”.³²

Malay respondents were most likely to disagree at 65.7 per cent, while Chinese respondents were most likely to agree at 74.8 per cent. The sharp contrast in the response of Malay and Chinese respondents bears explanation. As will be explained below, Malay respondents are more likely to be unfamiliar with Singapore, more likely to see the city-state as arrogant, as well as an economic threat and competitor than Chinese or Indian respondents. In light of these findings, it is little surprise that Malay respondents are the least enthusiastic about relaxing entry requirements for Singaporeans into Iskandar Malaysia.

Investment in Iskandar Malaysia

Singapore featured prominently in the minds of Johor respondents as the top investor in Iskandar Malaysia, with the majority across all groups believing the republic to be the largest investor. Ethnicity was correlated with receptiveness of Singaporean investors in Iskandar Malaysia. Although the majority of respondents appeared favourable towards the influx of investors from Singapore, Malays reported being the least satisfied and were the most likely to express dissatisfaction. This suggests some ambivalence towards the issue, and may reflect a desire for investment to boost the local economy on the one hand, and concerns relating to competition and impact of foreign investment on cost of living on the other.

Singapore Believed to be Largest Investor

Respondents were asked which country they thought was the largest investor in Iskandar Malaysia (Figure 7.1A). The majority of respondents (54.8 per cent) ranked Singapore as the largest investor in Iskandar Malaysia, and this was true for all groups when cross-tabulated by ethnicity, age, education, income and region.

³² <http://www.iskandarmalaysia.com.my/faqs> (accessed 15 April 2014).

Interestingly, while official figures say that China is only the tenth biggest investor in Iskandar Malaysia with RM1.5 billion, it is perceived by respondents as the second largest investor. One possible explanation for this (mis)perception is that China is actually the top real estate investor in the whole of Malaysia, pouring in US\$1.9 billion in 2013, superseding the US\$1.8 billion and US\$867 million from Singapore and Hong Kong, respectively.³³

China's foray into Iskandar Malaysia has also received publicity in the Malaysian media.³⁴ Chinese developers have reportedly been organising subsidised tours to Malaysia for potential buyers from Guangzhou, Hong Kong, and Macau.³⁵ It has also been reported that an increasing number of Chinese nationals are seeking a second home in Malaysia, with Chinese nationals constituting the largest number of participants in Malaysia's foreign residency scheme.³⁶

Majority Satisfied with Influx of Singaporean Investors

A large majority of Chinese and Indian respondents — 66.9 per cent and 68.4 per cent respectively — reported being 'very satisfied' or 'somewhat satisfied' with the influx of Singaporean investors into Iskandar Malaysia (Figure 7.2A). Malay respondents were the least receptive (47.9 per cent), and concomitantly most likely to be dissatisfied with the influx of Singaporean investors into Iskandar Malaysia (44.4 per cent).

³³ *Reuters*. 11 March 2014. "Chinese developers bet on Malaysia as investors turn cold on Hong Kong, Singapore". By Clare Jim. http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/11/us-china-property-malaysia-idUSBREA2A1UX20140311?_ga=1.141260018.175109580.1397646617 (accessed 17 April 2014).

³⁴ *Business Times*. 10 March 2014. "Chinese investors filling Arab void in Iskandar". <http://www.nst.com.my/business/nation/chinese-investors-filling-arab-void-in-iskandar-1.504866> (accessed 17 April 2014).

³⁵ *Reuters*. 11 March 2014. "Chinese developers bet on Malaysia as investors turn cold on Hong Kong, Singapore".

³⁶ *Quartz*. 15 April 2014. "Why Chinese families will keep moving to Malaysia despite their anger over MH370". By Lily Kuo and Wang Yuan. <http://qz.com/196492/why-chinese-families-will-keep-moving-to-malaysia-despite-their-anger-over-mh370/> (accessed 17 April 2014).

C. SINGAPORE AND SINGAPOREANS

Visiting and Working in Singapore

Chinese and Indian respondents are more likely to have a favourable opinion of Singapore and are more open to visiting and working in the city-state. Nevertheless, it would be premature to assume that the desire to work in Singapore equates with fondness for the city-state. Other sources have suggested that the majority of Malaysians working in Singapore do so because of favourable economic conditions, and have no desire to settle permanently in the city-state.³⁷ Furthermore, it would be wrong to suppose that ethnic affinity with Singaporeans alone is the cause of their favourable responses as later findings suggest that there are differences in self-perception.

Singapore 'Second Most Favourable' Country Overall

Singapore was rated overall second most 'favourable' country behind Japan and just before China and Australia (Figure 8.1A). The top six countries for Johor residents are outside ASEAN, with the exception of Singapore where close proximity and historical ties have enhanced familiarity and favourableness. The high overall rank for Japan and China may be because of the perceived roles they have played in investment in Johor.³⁸ Australia remains a popular destination for work and play for many Malaysians.

Conversely, the overall 'least favourable' countries are all from ASEAN, namely the Philippines, Myanmar, and Thailand. This suggests that ASEAN's rhetoric of regional unity and identity remains firmly insulated within small elite circles, enjoying little, if any, currency with ordinary people.

³⁷ *Yahoo Finance*. 2 January 2014. "Chinese Press: Malaysians prefer to work in Singapore rather than migrate". <https://sg.finance.yahoo.com/news/chinese-press-malaysians-prefer-singapore-091004258.html> (accessed 12 April 2014).

³⁸ The order of countries may differ if the survey was conducted again. China may not be ranked so highly in the aftermath of the disappearance of flight MH370.

Favourable Countries According to Ethnicity

However, when cross-tabulated by ethnicity, different countries emerged at the top (Figure 8.1B). For Malay respondents, the top three most favourable countries were Japan; the Gulf countries; and China. The affinity for Gulf countries may be due to religious ties between Malays and the Middle East, as well as the increasing number of Malay professionals seeking employment there. For Chinese respondents, the top three countries were Singapore; Australia; and Japan. Finally, for Indian respondents the top three countries were Japan; Singapore; and Australia.³⁹

Singapore may have been ranked most favourable among Chinese and Indian respondents because of a variety of factors such as the consumption of Singaporean Chinese-language and Tamil-language television programmes, employment opportunities and constant visits to the city-state.

How Many Times Have You Visited Singapore in the Last Five Years?

Chinese respondents were most likely to have visited Singapore more than 10 times in the last five years at 50.3 per cent; followed by Indian respondents at 33.6 per cent; and lastly Malay respondents at only 8.5 per cent (Figure 8.2A). Conversely, Malay respondents were most likely not to have visited Singapore in the last five years at 65.2 per cent. This shows a strong correlation between ethnicity and frequency of visits to Singapore.

The high frequency of visits by Chinese respondents is in keeping with broader tourism trends. Malaysian tourists form the third largest group of visitors to Singapore, after those from Indonesia and China. There were slightly over 1 million and 1.2 million Malaysian tourists in Singapore in 2011 and 2012, respectively.⁴⁰

³⁹ There was no significant difference when cross-tabulated by income, age or education.

⁴⁰ *Annual Report on Tourism Statistics 2012*. https://www.stbtrc.com.sg/images/links/X1AnnualReportTourismStatistics_2012.pdf (accessed 28 March 2014).

Do You Have an Immediate Family Member Working in Singapore?

Chinese respondents were most likely to have an immediate family member working in Singapore at 63.8 per cent; followed by Indian respondents at 57.7 per cent; and finally Malay respondents at 37.8 per cent (Figure 8.3A).⁴¹ This finding is in keeping with the fact that Malaysia is a traditional source of immigrant labour for Singapore, with Malaysians facing fewer work permit restrictions than other ‘non-traditional source countries’.⁴²

Have You Ever Considered Finding Employment in Singapore?

The majority of respondents purportedly *never considered* finding employment in Singapore (Figure 8.4A). Nevertheless, there is a correlation between ethnicity and response, with a significant percentage of respondents having considered a move to the city-state. The ethnic group most likely to have considered doing so is Chinese respondents at 45.0 per cent; followed by Indian respondents at 42.3 per cent; and finally Malay respondents at 24.7 per cent.⁴³

Again this is in keeping with Malaysia as a traditional source country for immigrant labour in Singapore, as well as anecdotal evidence that Malaysia workers in Singapore are largely of Chinese descent.

Have You Ever Tried to Find Employment or Business Opportunities in Singapore?

Likewise the majority of respondents have *never tried* to find employment or business opportunities in Singapore (Figure 8.5A). However, as above, there is a significant percentage of respondents who have tried to

⁴¹ There was no significant difference when cross-tabulated by income, age or education.

⁴² <http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/pdf/10.1596/1813-9450-2053> (accessed 27 March 2014).

⁴³ There was no significant difference when cross-tabulated by income, age or education.

do so. The ethnic group most likely to have tried doing so is the Chinese respondents at 45.2 per cent; followed by Indian respondents at 37.2 per cent; and finally Malay respondents at 16.1 per cent.⁴⁴

Impressions of Singapore and Singaporeans

Singapore was most associated with positive traits such as ‘anti-corruption and transparency’ across all ethnic groups.

However, when Johor Malays, Chinese and Indian respondents were asked if they were similar to their ethnic counterparts in Singapore, the answers were largely negative. The perceived lack of similarity between ethnic groups across the Causeway suggests that despite geographical proximity, nationality and national development have resulted in divergent self-perceptions and an exclusive sense of identity on the part of Johor respondents. Despite the cultural and linguistic similarities shared by ethnic groups, as well as cultural consumption of Singaporean TV drama serials and news, the national and economic divide seems to hold sway between perceptions of the self and of Singaporeans.

Standing out is the finding that Malay respondents in Johor are more likely to perceive their fellow Chinese and Indian citizens as being similar to their ethnic counterparts in Singapore. This suggests a trust and/or familiarity deficit between Malay respondents and their non-Malay respondents. This is in keeping with broader observations of the lack of trust between Malaysian Malays and non-Malays.⁴⁵

Which Traits or Characteristics Do You Most Associate with Singapore?

The top three characteristics most associated with Singapore were ‘anti-corruption and transparency’ (15.3 per cent of respondents); ‘arrogance’

⁴⁴ There was no significant difference when cross-tabulated by income, age or education.

⁴⁵ <http://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/Policy-Politics/Malaysias-ethnic-tensions-rise-as-its-economy-declines> (accessed 28 March 2014).

(11.3 per cent); and ‘efficiency’ (11.1 per cent) (Figure 9.1A).⁴⁶ Interestingly, when cross-tabulated according to *ethnicity*, different traits emerged at the top.

For Malay respondents, the top three traits most associated with Singapore were ‘arrogance’ (15.8 per cent of all Malay respondents); ‘anti-corruption and transparency’ (14.4 per cent), followed by ‘business and employment opportunities’ (11.5 per cent).

For Chinese respondents, the top three traits were ‘efficiency’ (16.9 per cent of all Chinese respondents), ‘anti-corruption and transparency’ (16.5 per cent), followed by ‘low crime rates’ (14.8 per cent).

For Indian respondents, ‘anti-corruption and transparency’ and ‘business and employment opportunities’ were most associated with Singapore (18.2 per cent of all Indian respondents); followed by ‘low crime rates’, ‘legalism’, and ‘good public transport’ (11.8 per cent). More qualitative research may be needed to understand the relationship, if any, between ethnicity, domestic politics and perceptions of Singapore.

Interestingly, Singapore is ranked low for leisure and entertainment (4.7 per cent). However, this is in contradiction to the fact that Malaysian tourists form the third largest group of visitors to Singapore, after Indonesia and China.⁴⁷ There are two possible explanations for this. First, Malaysians begrudgingly choose to come to Singapore only because it is cheaper to travel to than to other far-off exotic destinations. Secondly, there is cognitive dissonance where the popular perception of Singapore as strait-laced, sterile and boring is in contradiction to the action and behaviour patterns of Malaysian tourists.

Are Malay, Chinese and Indian Malaysians Similar to Malay, Chinese, and Indian Singaporeans?

Respondents were asked if they saw any similarities between themselves and Singaporeans of the same ethnic group. All three ethnic groups did not

⁴⁶ There was no significant difference when cross-tabulated by income, age or education.

⁴⁷ *Annual Report on Tourism Statistics 2012*.

see similarities between themselves and their counterparts in Singapore (Figures 9.2A; 9.3A; 9.4A). This suggests that self-perception across the three ethnic groups was consistently differentiated from counterparts in Singapore.

However, when asked about perceptions of other ethnic groups, an interesting finding was revealed. While the majority of Chinese and Indian respondents did not believe that Malaysians and Singaporeans of the same ethnic group were similar (Figures 9.2A; 9.3A; 9.4A), Malay respondents showed a different pattern.

Half of Malay respondents (49.4 per cent) believed that Chinese Malaysians and Chinese Singaporeans were *similar* to each other (Figure 9.3A). When asked about Indian Malaysians and Indian Singaporeans, almost 60 per cent of Malay respondents believed they were *similar* to each other (Figure 9.4A). This is typical of interethnic dissonance and hints at a lack of trust or familiarity on the part of Malay respondents with regard to their fellow Chinese and Indian citizens.

Furthermore, the survey found that the main reason for perceptions of dissimilarities stemmed from impressions arising from the different socio-economic developments of the two countries. For example when asked what the differences were:

1. 75 per cent of Malay respondents saw Malay Singaporeans as different because of “different attitudes towards life”, the latter being “more matured” and “leading more modern lives”.
2. 69 per cent of Chinese respondents saw Chinese Singaporeans as different because of “different attitudes”, the latter’s “modern living”, “better education system” in Singapore; and Singapore’s “strong economy”.
3. 66 per cent of Indian respondents saw Indian Singaporeans as different because the latter are “better educated”; have “different attitudes/more matured”; and enjoy “modern facilities”.

Perceptions of Singaporean Impact on Cost of Living and Development in Johor

Given Singapore’s status as a global city it is not surprising that the majority of respondents feel that the city-state has had a large impact

on the local economy. 80 per cent of *all* respondents feel that Singapore has had a large economic impact on Johor. Naturally, the majority of respondents felt that Singaporeans who travelled to Johor have had an impact on the cost of living there with 74 per cent of all respondents believing so. This figure fell slightly, to 71 per cent, among respondents who lived in the Iskandar region.

Such findings are not uncommon in the cross-border regions literature. Singapore's economic impact on Johor may be characterised as the "metropolitan spill-over" effect.⁴⁸ Here, the metropolis's good infrastructure, high skills, strong industry sectors, not to mention tourists, spill over into the adjacent hinterland, thus raising the cost of living in the border region of the hinterland.

As part of the Singapore-Johor-Riau Islands (SIJORI) growth triangle, the relationship between Singapore and Johor may be typical of a core-periphery one. This core-periphery relationship has been argued elsewhere to be one where Johor becomes dependent on Singapore, with consequences such as the uneven concentration of foreign investment and uneven distribution of national resources from the federal government.⁴⁹

How Much Impact Do Singapore and Singaporeans Have on the Cost of Living in Johor

The majority of respondents across ethnic groups believed that Singaporeans had either a 'fair amount' or 'great deal' of impact on the cost of living in Johor (Figure 10.1A). The views among Malay respondents were the most unequivocal as can be seen from the sharp contrast between the first two and latter two bars. This suggests that Malay Johor respondents are more unambiguous than any other ethnic group in their belief that Singaporeans have an impact on the cost of living. For the Chinese Johor respondents, the bars have a steadier

⁴⁸ Chia, Siow Yue and Lee Tsao Yuan. 1993. Subregional Economic Zones: A New Motive Force in Asia-Pacific Development. In *Pacific Dynamism and the International Economic System*, ed. C. Fred Bergsten and Marcus Noland. Institute for International Economics: Washington DC.

⁴⁹ Yeung, Yue-man. 2000. *Globalisation and Networked Societies: Urban-Regional Change in Pacific Asia*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

incline. This suggests that their views are more graduated and mixed, although the majority agree with their Malay counterparts.⁵⁰

How Much Impact Does Singapore Have on Economic Development in Johor?

When asked about the impact Singapore has on economic development in Johor the views across the three ethnic groups are unequivocal (Figure 10.2A). The vast majority of Johor respondents believe strongly that Singapore has a fair or large impact on the Johor economy.⁵¹

Who Benefits More from Economic Investments in Johor — Malaysians or Singaporeans?

Respondents were asked, when it came to economic investment in Johor, if ‘Singaporeans benefited more than Malaysians’; ‘Both benefited equally’; or if ‘Malaysians benefitted more than Singaporeans’ (Figure 10.3A).

Chinese Johor respondents are more likely to believe that ‘Singaporeans benefit more than Malaysians’ (51.1 per cent), followed by Malay respondents (42.3 per cent); and finally Indian respondents (36.7 per cent). One possible explanation for the high negativity of Chinese respondents could be that they believe that Malaysian Chinese vis-à-vis Malaysian Malays, in general, are less likely to benefit from any economic investment in the country.

And while the perceptions of mutual benefit vary across the ethnic groups, all three ethnic groups are equally unlikely to believe that ‘Malaysians benefit more than Singaporeans’.

⁵⁰ There was no significant difference when cross-tabulated by income, age or education.

⁵¹ There was no significant difference when cross-tabulated by income, age or education.

Interestingly, when cross-tabulated by monthly household income, a different pattern emerges (Figure 10.3B). The higher the respondent's monthly household income, the more likely the respondent believes that 'Singaporeans benefit more than Malaysians'. Similarly, the higher the monthly household income, the less likely the respondent believes that 'both benefit equally' and that 'Malaysians benefit more than Singaporeans'. Further qualitative research may be needed to understand this pattern.

Perceptions of Bilateral Relations

As above, on this issue, there are signs of correlation between responses and ethnicity. Chinese respondents were more likely to hold positive attitudes towards the economic relationship between Johor and Singapore. However, the survey did not reveal any significant hostility among Malay respondents.

Nevertheless, the positive attitudes come with a few caveats. These caveats include concerns over the inflationary impact of Singaporean in the local economy and Singaporean access to the local housing market. There is also clear indication that when it came to purchasing property over RM500,000, the current water agreement, and relaxed entry into Iskandar, Malay respondents were more likely to give a negative response.

Singaporean Interests Promoted over Malaysian's

In terms of business and politics, respondents were asked if they thought Singapore and Singaporeans prefer a situation where (a) both countries prosper and benefit together; (b) Singaporean interests are promoted over Malaysian interests; (c) Malaysian interests are promoted over Singaporean interests (Figure 11.1A).

The majority of respondents across all ethnic groups believed that Singaporeans preferred a situation where Singaporean business and political interests were promoted over Malaysian interests. 64.8 per cent of Chinese respondents believed so, followed by 57.7 per cent of Malay respondents, and finally 55.8 per cent of Indian respondents.

Desired Strengthening of Bilateral Relations

Respondents were asked if political and diplomatic relations between Singapore and Malaysia should be (a) reduced or weakened; (b) kept the same; (c) further strengthened (Figure 11.2A). The majority of respondents opted for a further strengthening with Chinese respondents at 79.1 per cent, followed by Indian respondents at 57.9 per cent, and finally, Malay respondents at 57.4 per cent.⁵²

Singapore is an Economic Threat to Malaysia

When asked if they believed that Singapore was an economic threat to Malaysia (Figure 11.3A), Malay respondents were most likely to believe so (52.5 per cent), followed by Indian respondents (44.3 per cent), and finally, Chinese respondents (42.1 per cent).⁵³

This pattern is consistent with the rest of the survey which demonstrates correlation between Malay respondents and less positive perceptions and familiarity with Singapore. A possible explanation for this is the history of racial politics between the two countries, especially during the 1963-65 merger, which gave rise to ethnic-based suspicions between Malaysia and Singapore.

Singapore is a Competitor to Malaysia

Respondents were asked if they believed Singapore was a competitor to Malaysia (Figure 11.4A). The majority agreed, with Indian respondents most likely to do so (77.3 per cent), followed by Malay respondents (76.1 per cent), and finally Chinese respondents (54.4 per cent).⁵⁴

⁵² There was no significant difference when cross-tabulated by income, age or education.

⁵³ There was no significant difference when cross-tabulated by income, age or education.

⁵⁴ There was no significant difference when cross-tabulated by income, age or education.

Singapore Tourists and Visitors Welcomed

The overwhelming majority of respondents said that Singaporean tourists and visitors are welcomed to Johor (Figure 11.5A). Indian respondents were most likely to say this (95.6 per cent), followed by Chinese respondents (93.7 per cent); and finally, Malay respondents (80.3 per cent).

Nevertheless, a relatively high percentage of Malay respondents — at 16.5 per cent — disagreed that Singaporeans were welcomed. This is consistent with the metropolitan spill-over” effect where there is acknowledgement of the benefits and advantages that capital and visitors from the metropolitan bring, despite the obvious drawbacks.

Not Acceptable for Singaporeans to Purchase Property over RM500,000

When asked if it was acceptable for Singaporeans to purchase properties worth more than RM500,000 in Johor, there was a split between Malay and Chinese respondents in opinions (Figure 11.6A). Malay respondents were by far the most likely to disagree (83.3 per cent), followed by Indian respondents (58.9 per cent); and finally, Chinese respondents (28.3 per cent).⁵⁵

Conversely Chinese respondents were most in favour of Singaporeans purchasing properties over RM500,000 at 64.2 per cent. The overwhelmingly negative Malay response to the question is not surprising in light of the *bumiputera* (sons of the soil) status of Malays in Malaysia and their perceived connection to the land. This suggests an underlying protectionist sentiment linked to issues of sovereignty among the Malay community and should be further researched.

⁵⁵ There was no significant difference when cross-tabulated by income, age or education.

Singaporeans Inflate Price of Consumer Goods and Services

When asked if visitors from Singapore inflated the price of consumer goods and services in Johor the vast majority across ethnic groups agreed (Figure 11.7A). Malay respondents were most likely to agree at 78.6 per cent, followed by Chinese respondents at 77.2 per cent, and finally, Indian respondents at 74.2 per cent. Again, this is consistent with the metropolitan ‘spill-over’ effect.

Singaporeans Making Private Property Unaffordable for Locals

The vast majority of respondents across ethnic groups agreed that Singaporean buyers were making private property unaffordable for locals (Figure 11.8A). 85.9 per cent of Malay respondents agreed, followed by 81.2 per cent of Indian respondents, and finally, 80.4 per cent of Chinese respondents.

Johor Government Should Limit Sale of Property and Land to Singaporeans

When asked if it was necessary for the Johor government to limit the sale of property and land to Singaporeans, the vast majority across ethnic groups agreed (Figure 11.9A). As with the patterns above, Malay respondents were most likely to agree at 90.2 per cent, followed by Indian respondents at 84.6 per cent, and finally Chinese respondents at 76.1 per cent.

The Chinese response here is inconsistent with that in Figure 4.6A where 64.2 per cent of Chinese agreed that Singaporeans should be allowed to buy property worth above RM500,000. Why did 64.2 per cent agree to allow Singaporeans to buy property worth more than RM500,000 when 76.1 per cent agree that the government should limit the sale of land and property to Singaporeans? There are two possible explanations for this. Firstly, Chinese respondents may agree, on the principle of market supply and demand, that Singaporeans should be allowed to buy Malaysian property but, in reality, feel that the government should control such sales. In other words they display a dilemma between market rationale and national sentiments. Secondly, perhaps Chinese

respondents feel that property worth above RM500,000 is generally out of their reach and thus feel that they have less of a stake in expensive real estate. Malay respondents were, however, more consistent in their negative response.

High Speed Rail Should Be Built

The majority of respondents were in agreement that a high speed rail between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur should be built (Figure 11.10A). Chinese respondents were most in favour of it at 90.5 per cent, followed by Indian respondents at 87.0 per cent, and finally, Malay respondents at 69.4 per cent.

Conversely, over a quarter of Malay respondents were most likely to disagree with the high speed rail at 27.6 per cent.

Current Water Agreement Unfair to Malaysia

When asked if the current Johor-Singapore water agreement was fair to Malaysia (Figure 11.11A), Malay respondents were mostly likely to disagree at 75.7 per cent, followed by Chinese respondents at 52.6 per cent, and finally, Indian respondents at 41.7 per cent. This is one of the few instances when Chinese respondents unveiled some negative sentiments towards Singapore.

Like land, water is a natural resource which arouses notions of sovereignty and birth right. Johor respondents may perceive the water agreement to be unfair because, under the federal constitution, natural resources such as land and water still come under the purview of the state government. This suggests a view that the federal government needs to consult the state government over the price mechanism when supplying water to Singapore.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Abdullah, Kamarulnizan. 2009. Johor in Malaysia-Singapore Relations. *Across the Causeway: A Multi-dimensional Study of Malaysia-Singapore Relations*, ed. Takashi Shirashi. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

A SMRT Line Should Be Built Between Singapore and Johor

Respondents were asked if they supported the building of a SMRT (Singapore Mass Rapid Transit) service between Johor and Singapore (Figure 11.12A). Not surprisingly the overwhelming majority of respondents were supportive. Indian and Chinese respondents were most likely to be supportive at 94.7 per cent and 93.8 per cent, respectively. Nevertheless, over a quarter of Malay respondents, at 26.8 per cent, were not supportive.

FIGURES

Performance of State Government and Leadership

Question 1.1: How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the performance of the Johor state government in managing Johor today?

Figure 1.1A: Performance of Johor state government according to ethnicity (percentage)

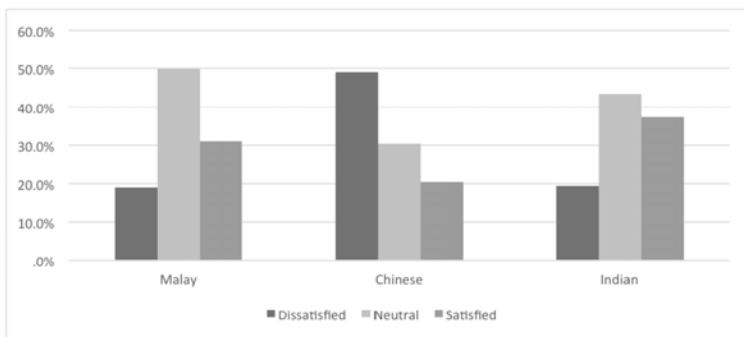
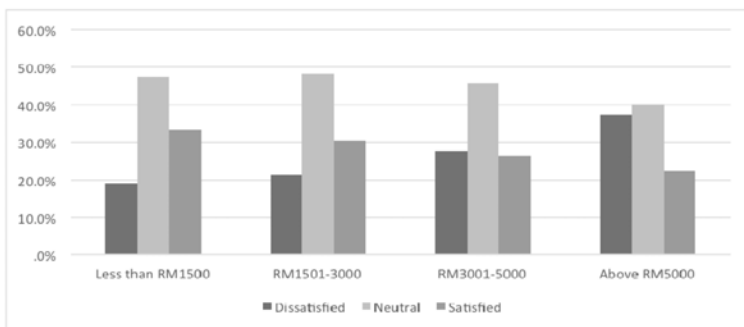


Figure 1.1B: Performance of Johor state government according to income (percentage)



Question 1.2: How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the Johor state government's handling of various issues?

Figure 1.2A: Satisfaction with Johor state government according to various issues (percentage)

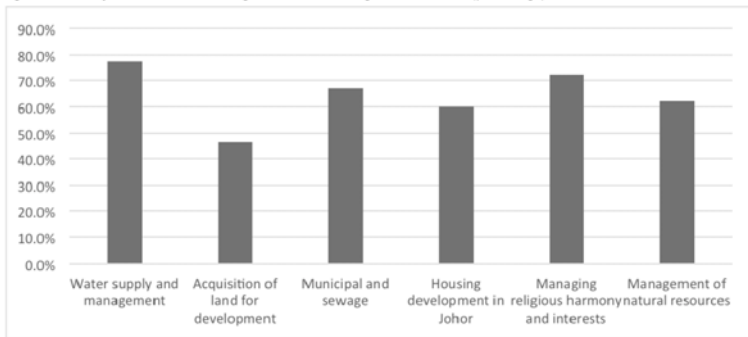
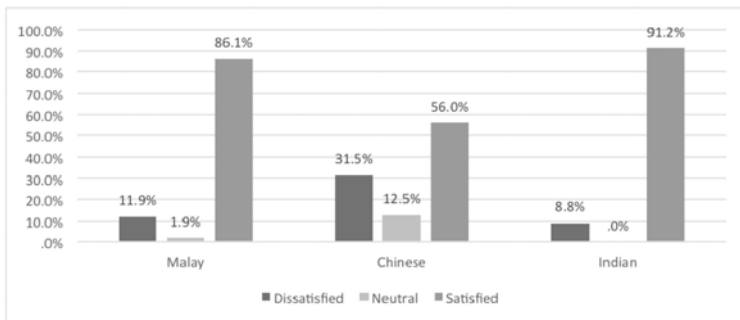


Figure 1.2B: Johor state government's handling of water supply and management according to ethnicity (percentage)



Question 1.3: How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the Johor state government's handling of the acquisition of land for development?

Figure 1.3A: Johor state government's handling of the acquisition of land for development according to ethnicity (percentage)

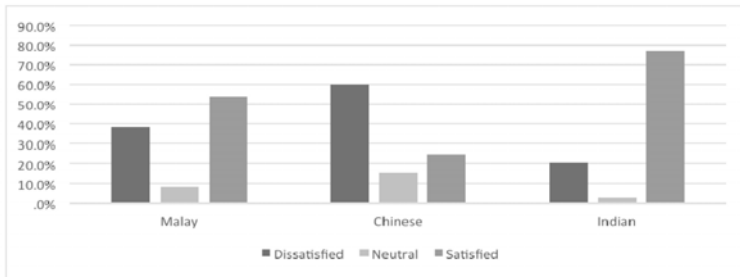


Figure 1.3B: Johor state government's handling of the acquisition of land for development according to education (percentage)

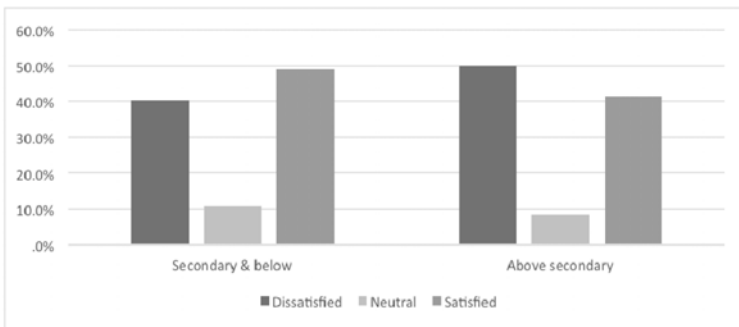
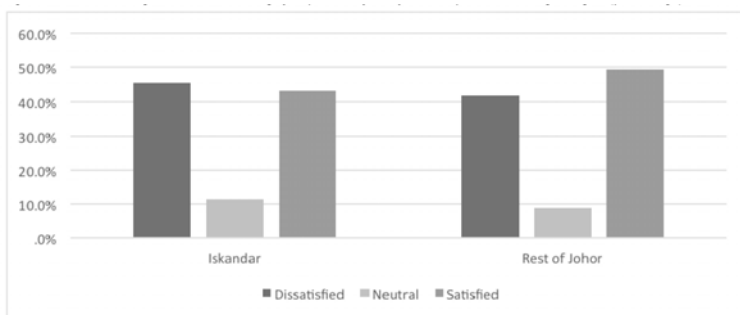
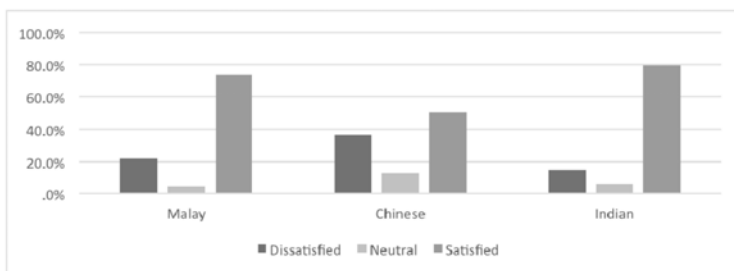


Figure 1.3C: Johor state government's handling of acquisition of land for development according to region (percentage)



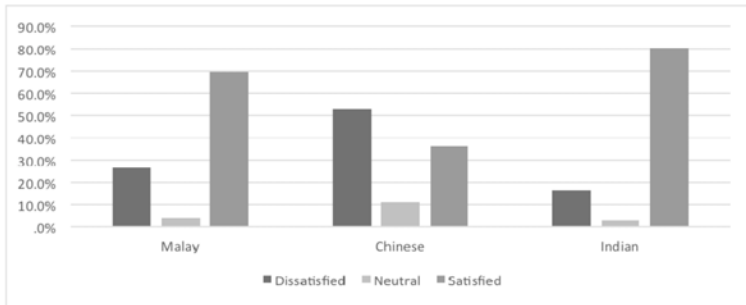
Question 1.4: How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the Johor state government's handling of municipal issues?

Figure 1.4A: Johor state government's handling of municipal issues according to ethnicity (percentage)



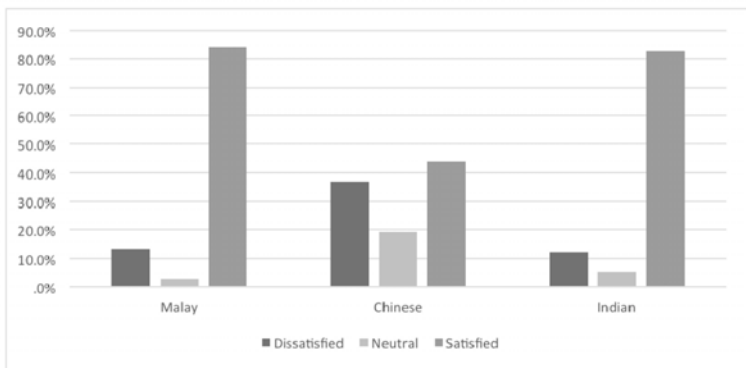
Question 1.5: How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the Johor state government's handling of housing development?

Figure 1.5A: Johor state government's handling of housing development according to ethnicity (percentage)



Question 1.6: How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the Johor state government's management of religious harmony and interests?

Figure 1.6A: Johor state government's management of religious harmony and interests according to ethnicity (percentage)



Performance of Federal Government and Leadership

Question 2.1: How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the Federal Government's management of public safety and crime prevention?

Figure 2.1A: Federal Government's management of public safety and crime prevention according to ethnicity (percentage)

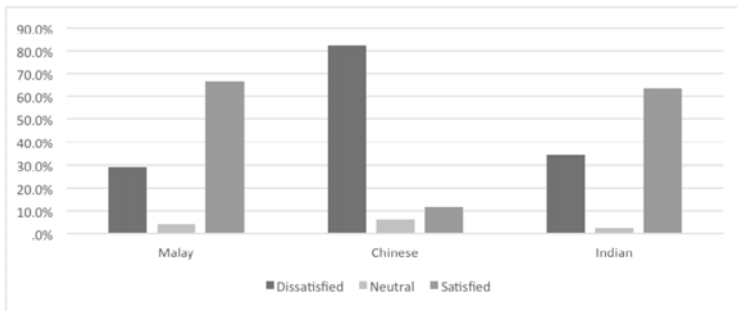
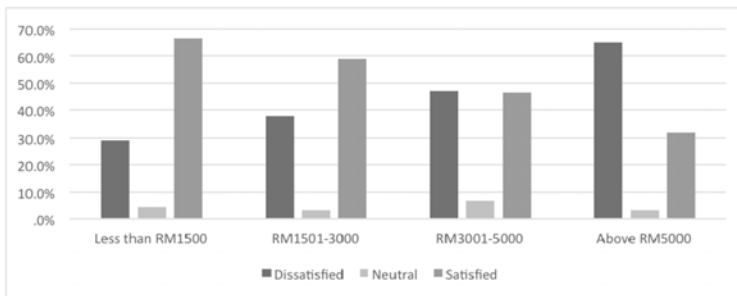


Figure 2.1B: Federal Government's management of public safety and crime prevention according to household income (percentage)



Question 2.2: How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the Federal Government's efforts in creating employment opportunities?

Figure 2.2A: Federal Government's efforts in creating employment opportunities according to ethnicity (percentage)

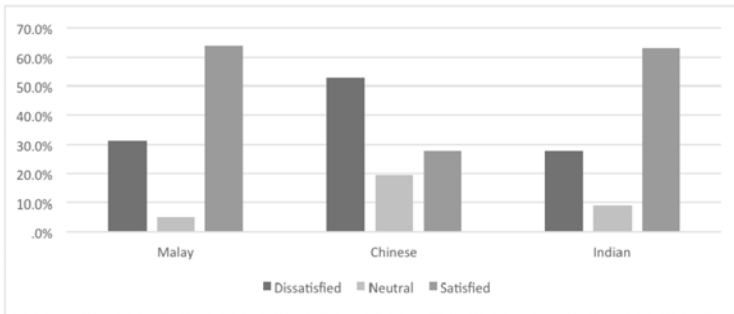
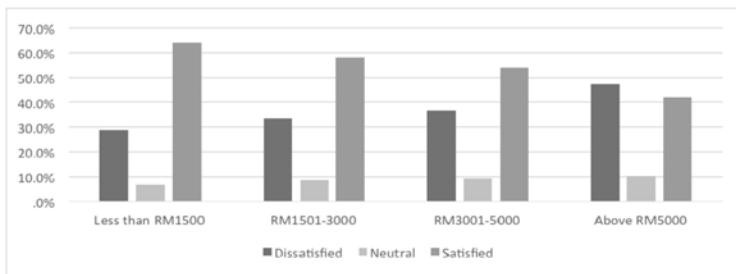


Figure 2.2B: Federal Government's efforts in creating employment opportunities according to household income (percentage)



Question 2.3: How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the Federal Government's efforts in fighting corruption?

Figure 2.3A: Federal Government's efforts in fighting corruption according to ethnicity (percentage)

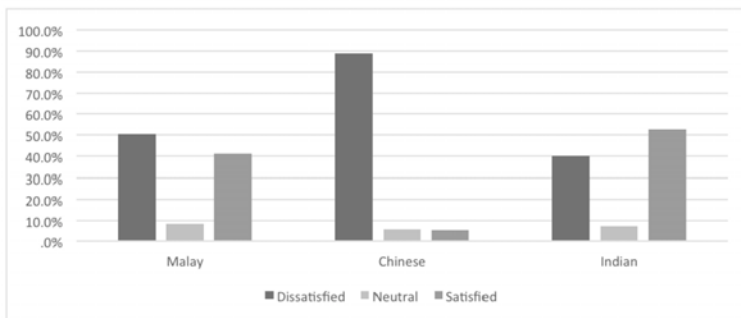
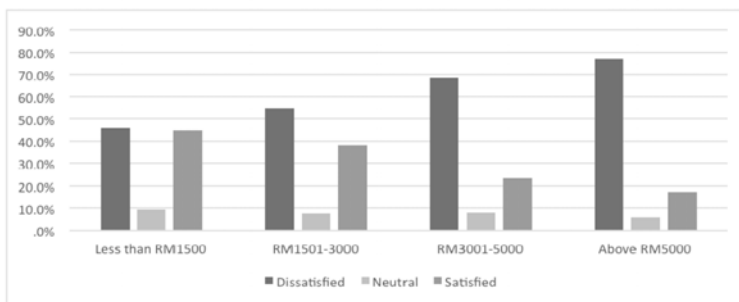


Figure 2.3B: Federal Government's efforts in fighting corruption according to household income (percentage)



Question 2.4: How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the Federal Government's management of housing development and prices in Johor?

Figure 2.4A: Federal Government's management of housing development and prices in Johor according to ethnicity (percentage)

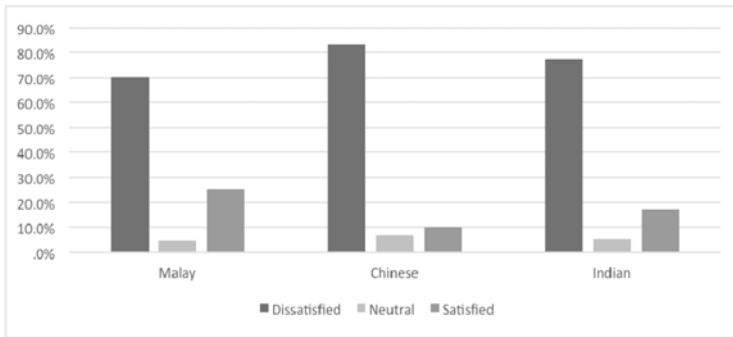
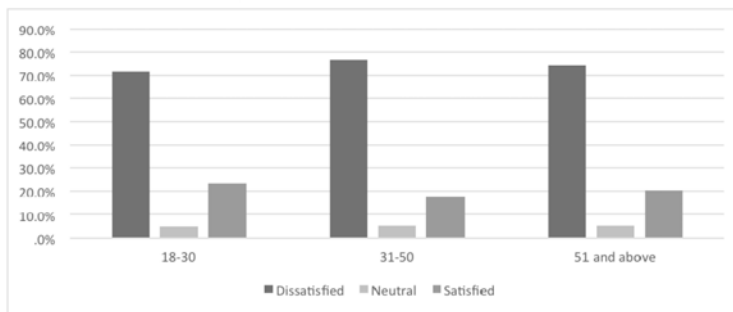


Figure 2.4B: Federal Government's management of housing development and prices in Johor according to age group (percentage)



Economic Situation and Outlook

Question 3.1: How optimistic are you with general political, economic and social conditions in Johor today?

Figure 3.1A: Optimism over political, economic and social conditions in Johor according to ethnicity (percentage)

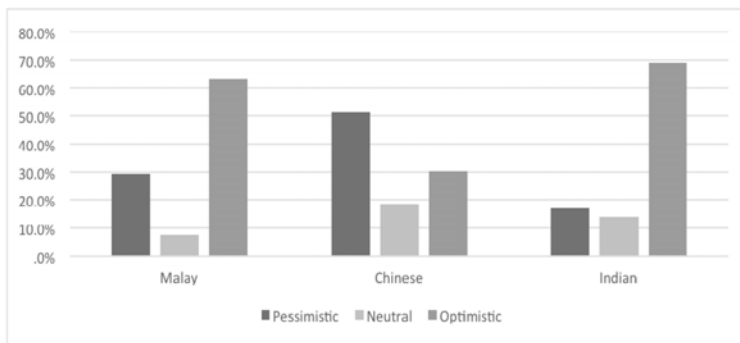


Figure 3.1B: Optimism over political, economic and social conditions in Johor according to education (percentage)

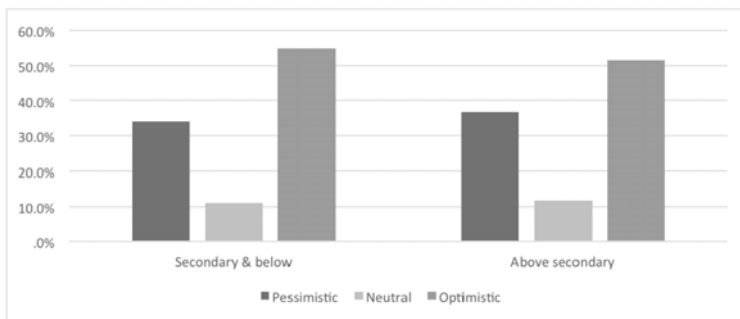
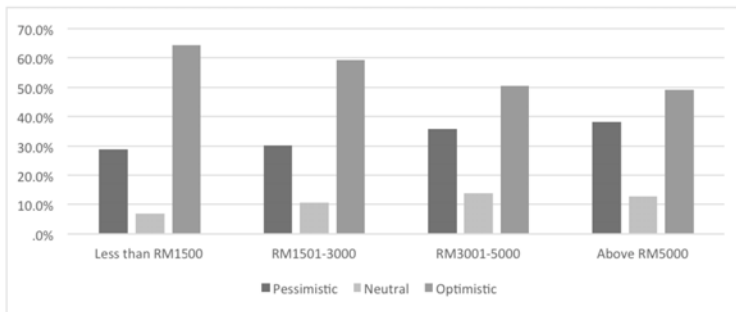


Figure 3.1C: Optimism over political, economic and social conditions in Johor according to household income (percentage)



Question 3.2: Do you think the Malaysian economy has declined/improved in the LAST five years?

Figure 3.2A: Malaysian economy in the last five years according to ethnicity (percentage)

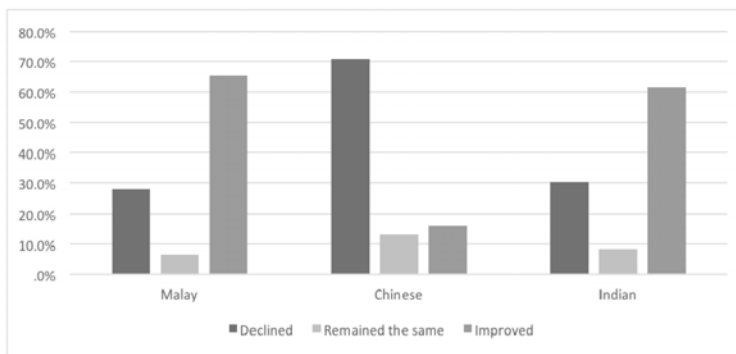
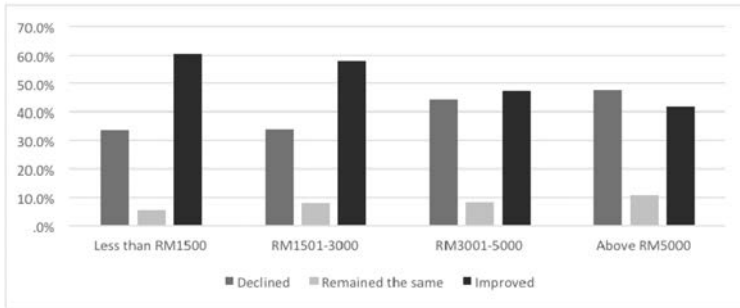


Figure 3.2B: Malaysian economy in the last five years according to household income (percentage)



Question 3.3: Do you think the Malaysian economy will decline/improve in the NEXT five years?

Figure 3.3A: Malaysian economy in the next five years according to ethnicity (percentage)

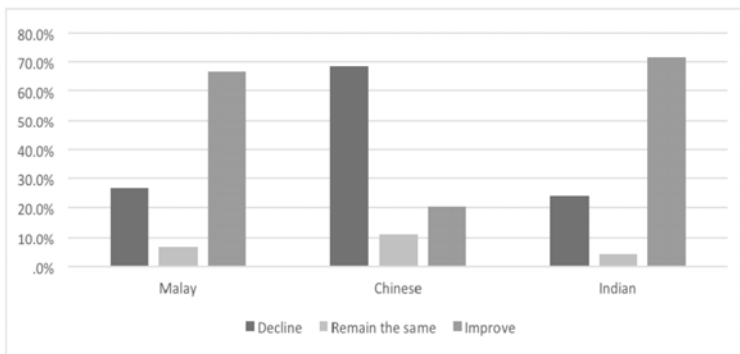
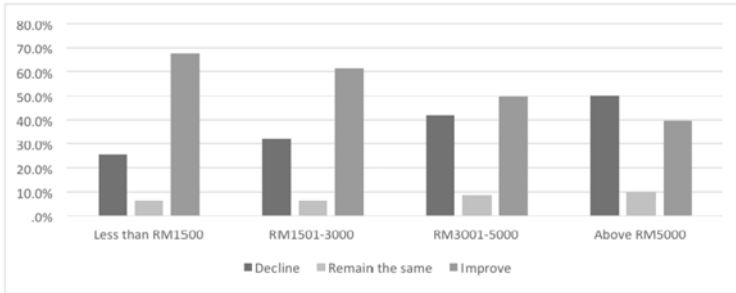


Figure 3.3B: Malaysian economy in the next five years according to household income (percentage)



Question 3.4: Has the financial situation of your household improved/declined compared to what it was ONE year ago?

Figure 3.4A: Financial situation of household compared to ONE year ago according to ethnicity (percentage)

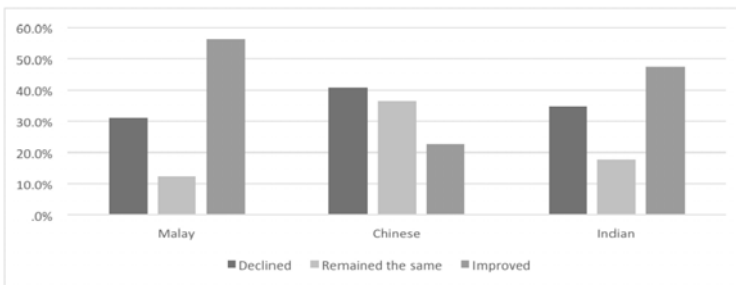
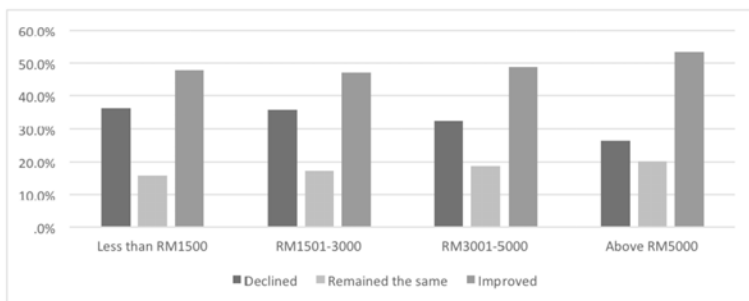


Figure 3.4B: Financial situation of household compared to ONE year ago according to household income (percentage)



Question 3.5: Will the financial situation of your household improve/decline ONE year from now?

Figure 3.5A: Financial situation of household ONE year from now according to ethnicity (percentage)

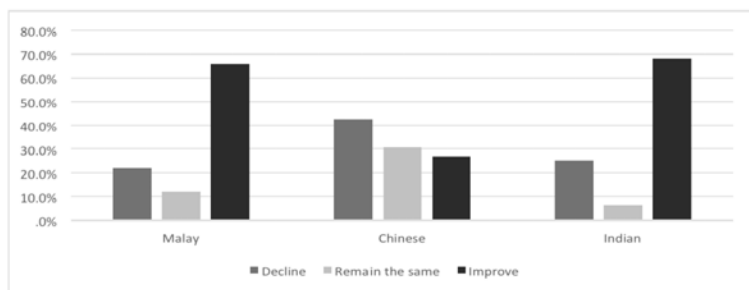
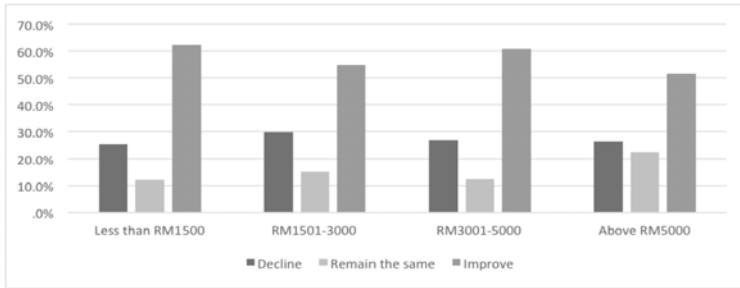


Figure 3.5B: Financial situation of household ONE year from now according to household income (percentage)



Sources of Information and News

Question 4.1: What are the main sources of your information and news?

Figure 4.1A: Main sources of information and news (percentage)

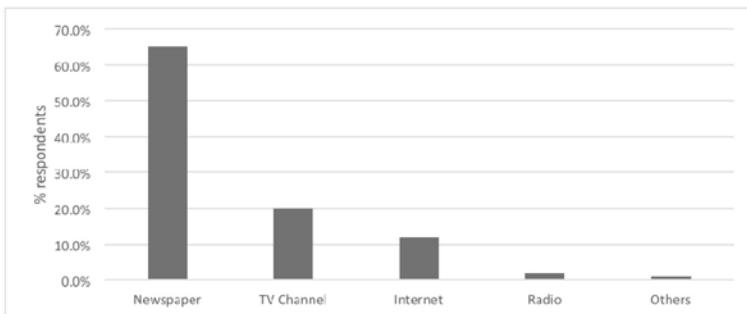


Figure 4.1B: Main sources of information and news according to ethnicity (percentage)

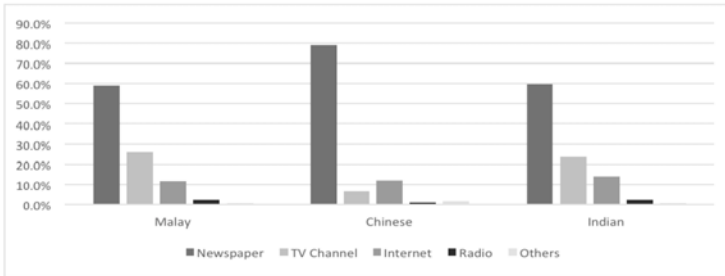


Figure 4.1C: Main sources of information and news according to age group (percentage)

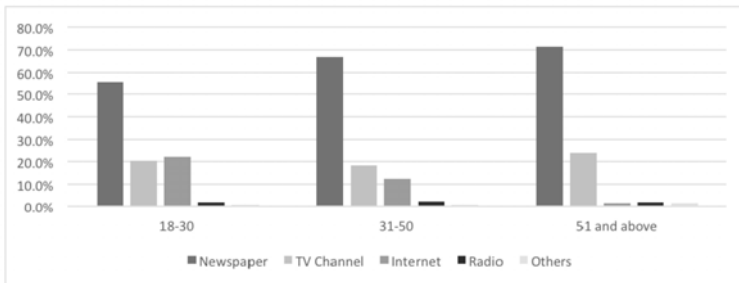


Figure 4.1D: Main sources of information and news according to education (percentage)

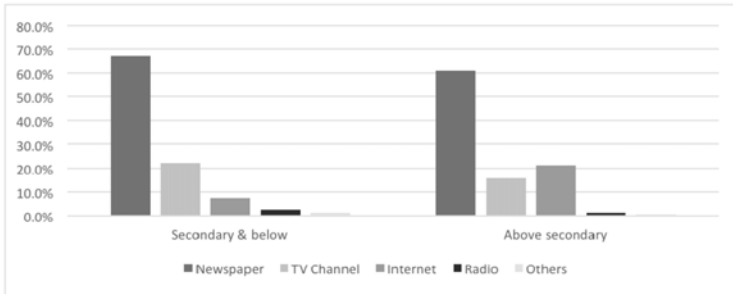
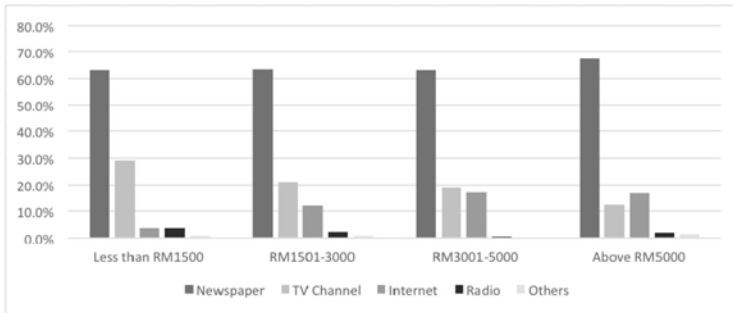


Figure 4.1E: Main sources of information and news according to household income (percentage)



Familiarity with Iskandar Malaysia

Question 5.1: How familiar are you with the developments in Iskandar Malaysia?

Figure 5.1A: Familiarity with developments in Iskandar Malaysia according to ethnicity (percentage)

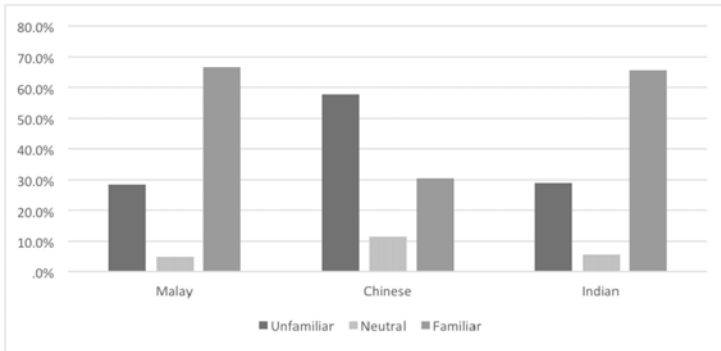
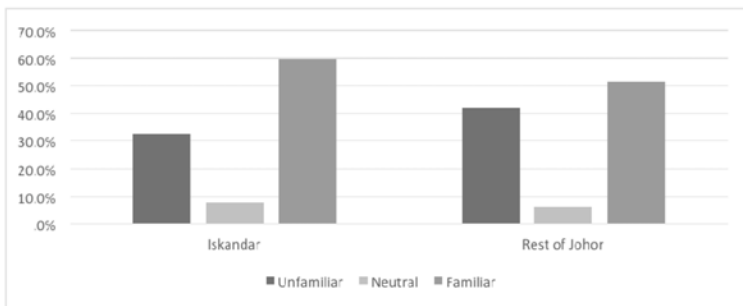


Figure 5.1B: Familiarity with developments in Iskandar Malaysia according to region (percentage)



Question 5.2: How satisfied are you with the developments taking place in the Iskandar region?

Figure 5.2A: Satisfaction with developments in Iskandar according ethnicity (percentage)

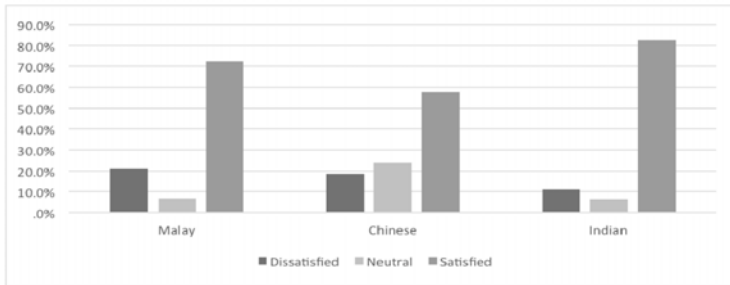
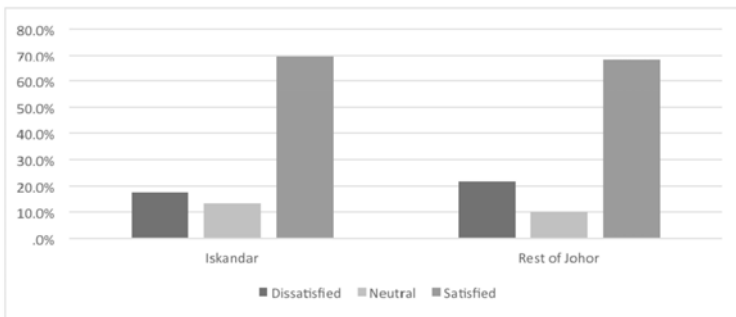


Figure 5.2B: Satisfaction with developments in Iskandar according region (percentage)



Beneficiaries of Iskandar Malaysia

Question 6.1: Do you agree that the following groups benefit from Iskandar Malaysia?

Figure 6.1A: Perceived beneficiaries of the Iskandar Malaysia (percentage)

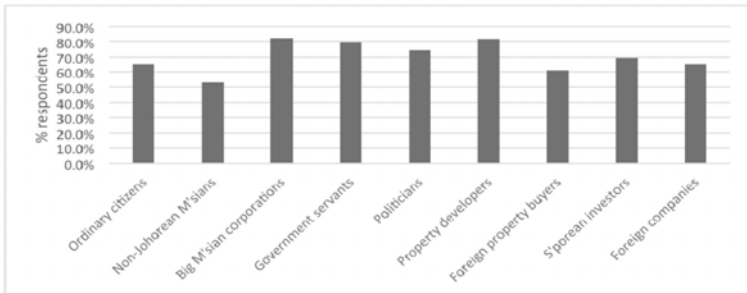


Figure 6.1B: Ordinary citizens as beneficiary of Iskandar Malaysia according to ethnicity (percentage)

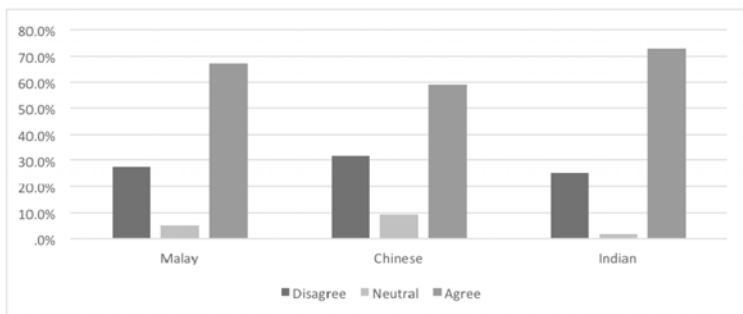


Figure 6.1D: Non-Johor Malaysians as beneficiary of Iskandar according to ethnicity (percentage)

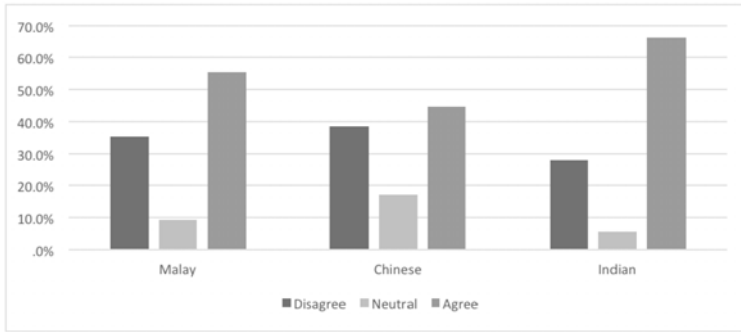


Figure 6.1F: Perception of big Malaysian corporations as beneficiary of Iskandar according to ethnicity (percentage)

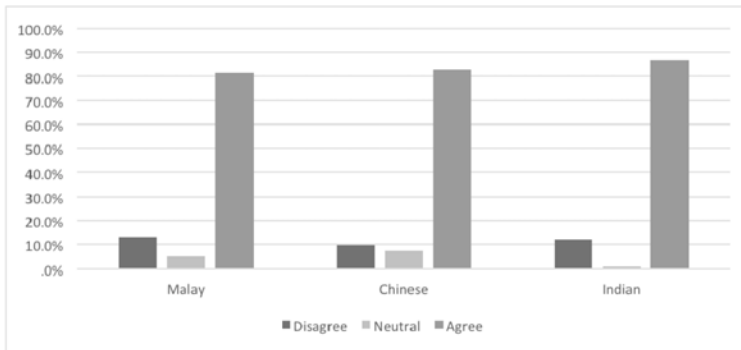


Figure 6.1H: Perception of government servants as beneficiary of Iskandar according to ethnicity (percentage)

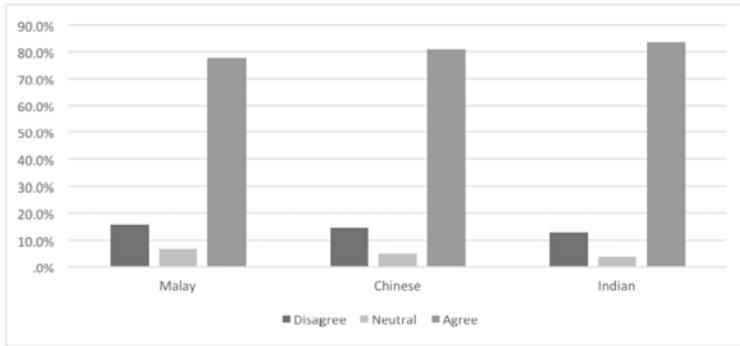


Figure 6.1J: Perception of politicians as beneficiary of Iskandar according to ethnicity (percentage)

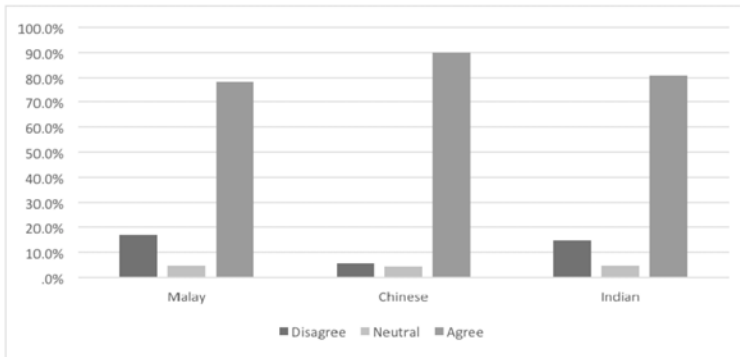


Figure 6.1L: Perception of property developers as beneficiary of Iskandar Malaysia according to ethnicity (percentage)

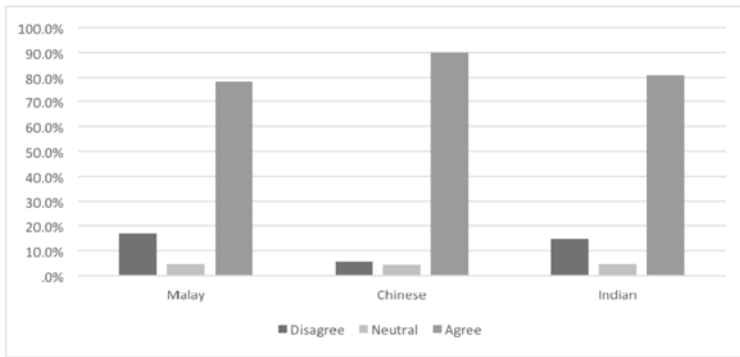


Figure 6.1M: Perception of property developers as beneficiary of Iskandar Malaysia according to ethnicity (percentage)

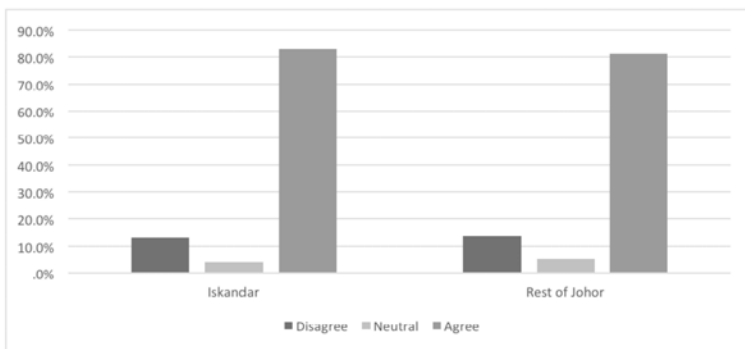


Figure 6.1N: Perception of foreign property buyers as beneficiary of Iskandar Malaysia according to ethnicity (percentage)

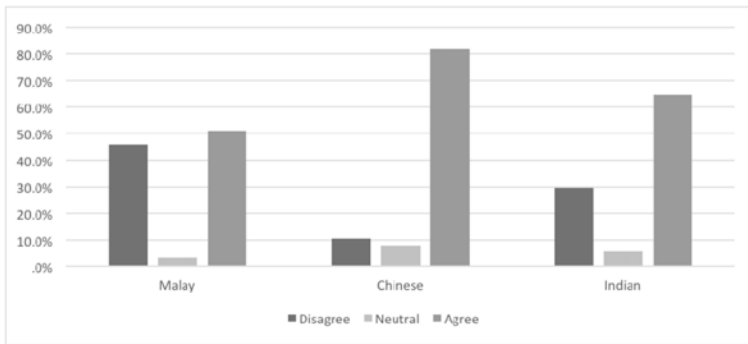


Figure 6.1O: Perception of Singaporean investors as beneficiary of Iskandar Malaysia according to ethnicity (percentage)

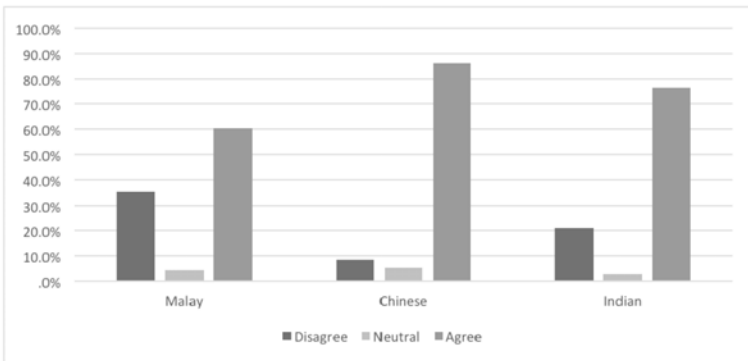
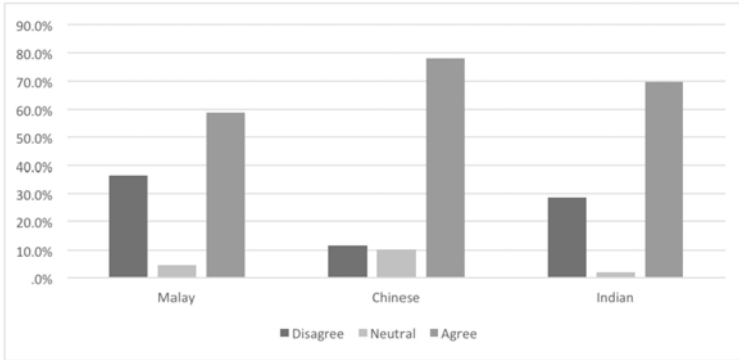
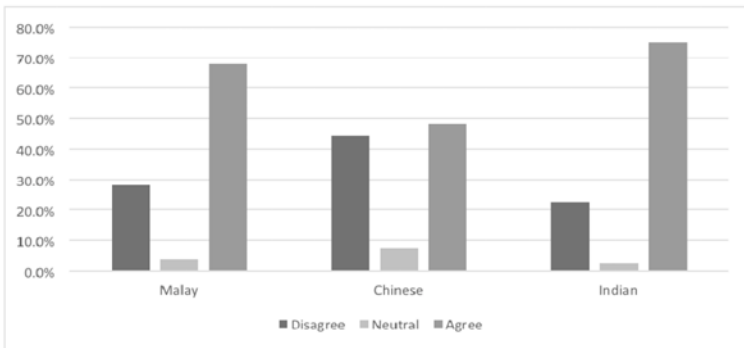


Figure 6.1Q: Perception of foreign companies as beneficiary of Iskandar Malaysia according to ethnicity (percentage)



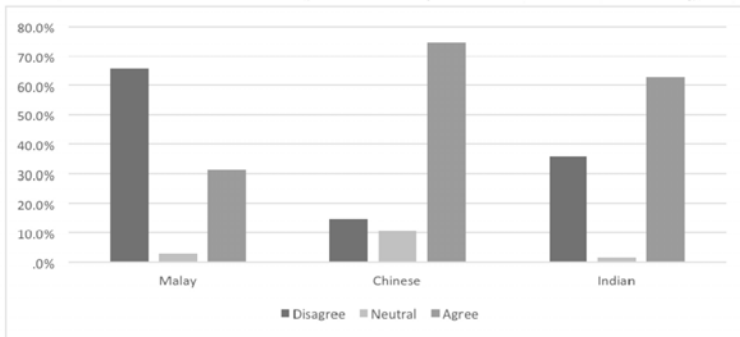
Question 6.2: Do you agree that ordinary Malaysians like yourself benefit economically from Iskandar Malaysia?

Figure 6.2A: Perception of ordinary Malaysians benefiting economically from Iskandar Malaysia by ethnicity (percentage)



Question 6.3: Malaysia should relax entry requirements for Singaporeans into Iskandar Malaysia

Figure 6.3A: Malaysia should relax entry requirements for Singaporeans into Iskandar Malaysia according to ethnicity (percentage)



Investment in Iskandar Malaysia

Question 7.1: Which country do you think is the largest investor in Iskandar Malaysia?

Figure 7.1A: Perception of largest investor in Iskandar Malaysia (percentage)

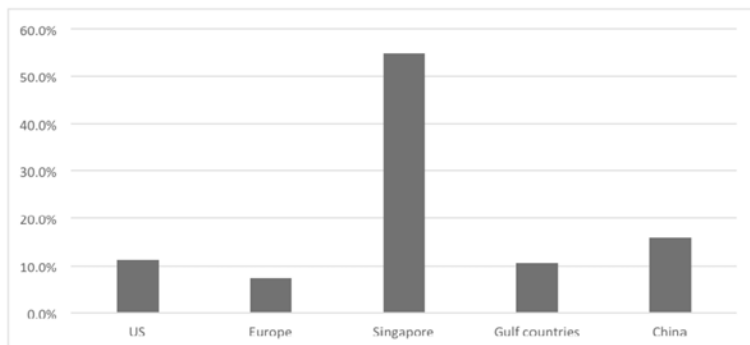
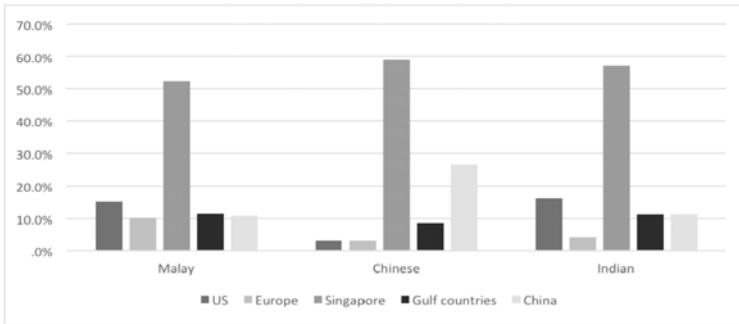
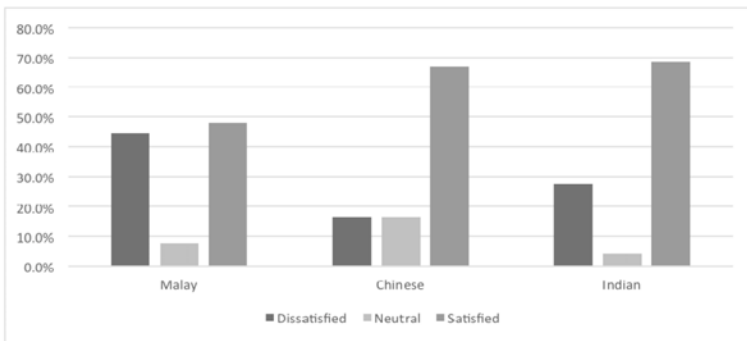


Figure 7.1B: Perception of largest investor in Iskandar Malaysia by ethnicity (percentage)



Question 7.2: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the influx of Singapore investors into Iskandar Malaysia?

Figure 7.2A: Satisfaction with influx of Singaporean investors into Iskandar Malaysia by ethnicity (percentage)



Visiting and Working in Singapore

Question 8.1: Which countries are the most and least favourable to you?

Figure 8.1A: Overall country ratings (mean score)

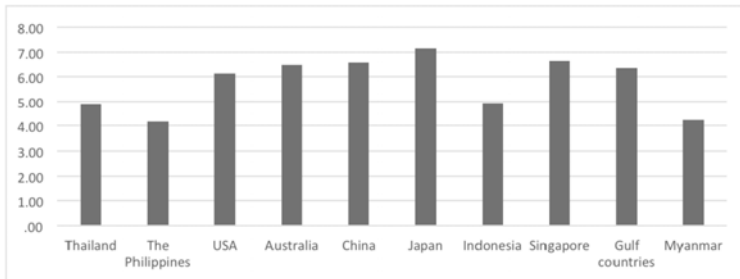
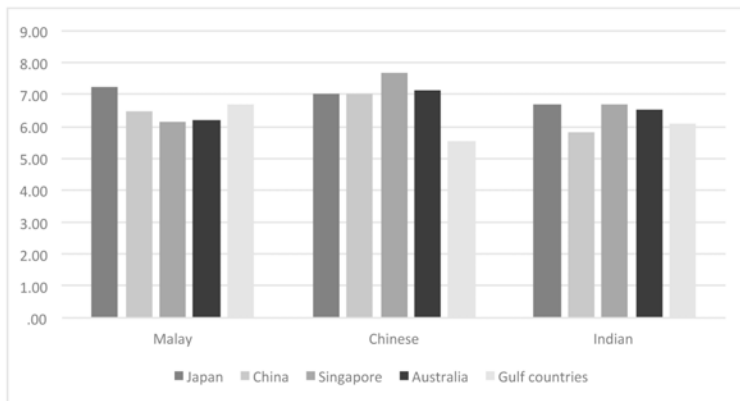
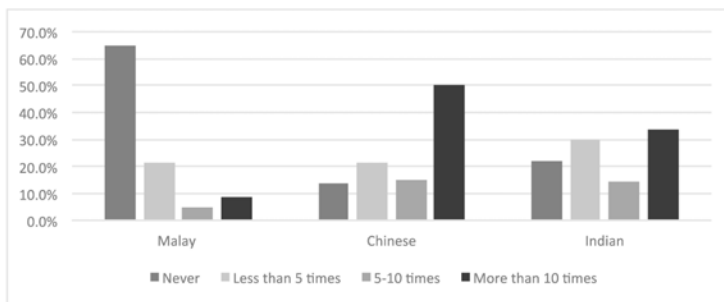


Figure 8.1B: Selected country ratings according to ethnicity (mean score)



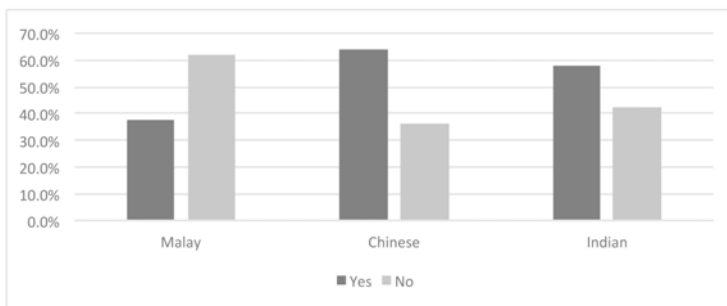
Question 8.2: How many times have you visited Singapore in the last five (5) years?

Figure 8.2A: Frequency of visits to Singapore in last 5 years according to ethnicity (percentage)



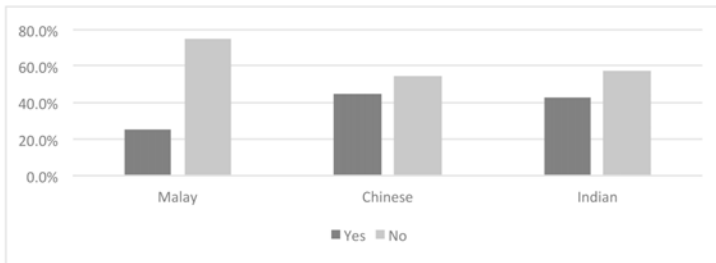
Question 8.3: Do you currently have an immediate family member who is working in Singapore?

Figure 8.3A: Immediate family member working in Singapore according to ethnic group (percentage)



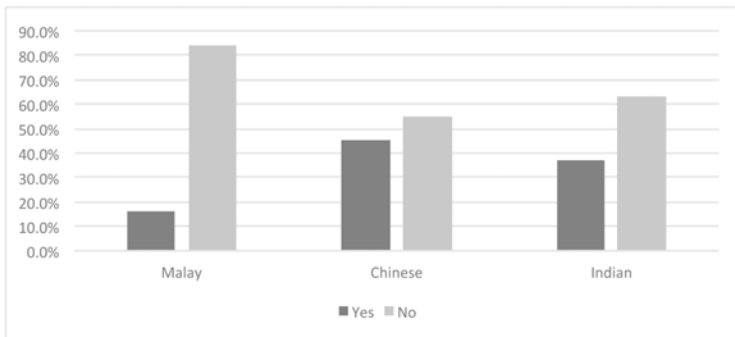
Question 8.4: Have you ever CONSIDERED finding employment in Singapore?

Figure 8.4A: Considered finding employment in Singapore according to ethnicity (percentage)



Question 8.5: Have you ever TRIED to find employment or business opportunities in Singapore?

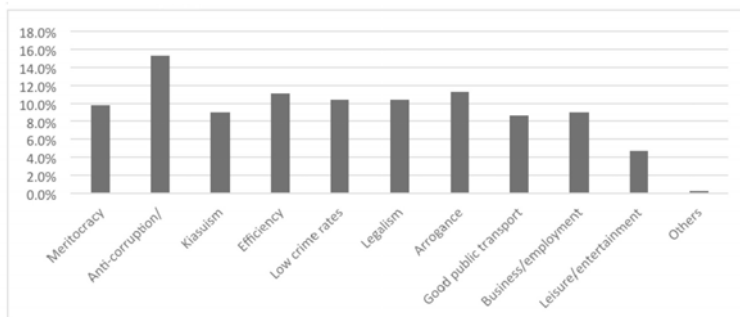
Figure 8.5A: Tried to find employment or business opportunities in Singapore according to ethnicity (percentage)



Impressions of Singapore and Singaporeans

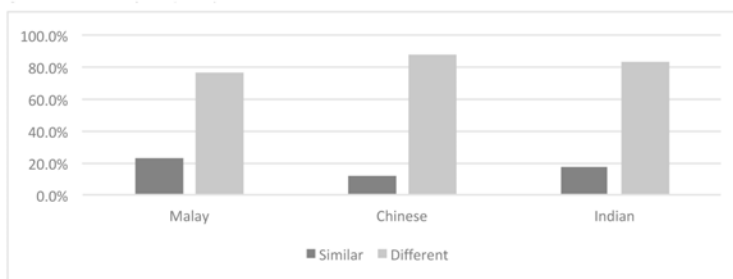
Question 9.1: Which traits or characteristics do you most associate with Singapore?

Figure 9.1A: Characteristics most associated with Singapore (percentage)



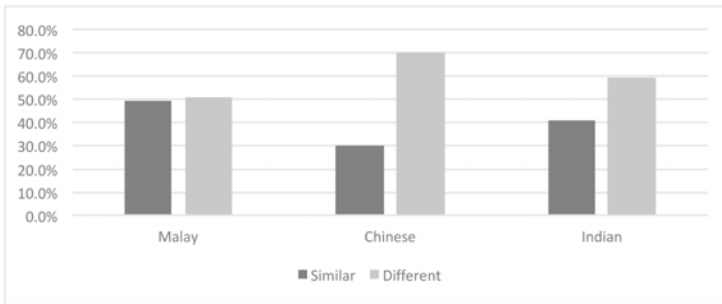
Question 9.2: In your view, are Malay Malaysians SIMILAR to Malay Singaporeans?

Figure 9.2A: Similarity of Malay Malaysians to Malay Singaporeans according to ethnicity (percentage)



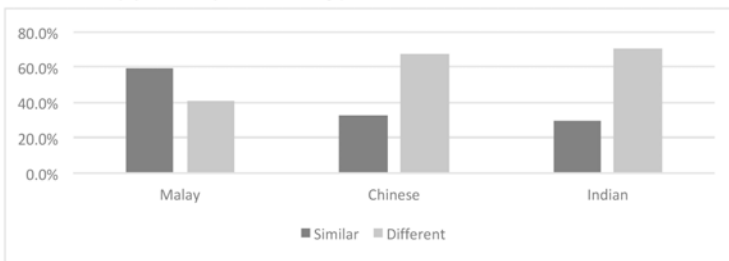
Question 9.3: In your view, are Chinese Malaysians SIMILAR to Chinese Singaporeans?

Figure 9.3A: Similarity of Chinese Malaysians to Chinese Singaporeans according to ethnicity (percentage)



Question 9.4: In your view, are Indian Malaysians SIMILAR to Indian Singaporeans?

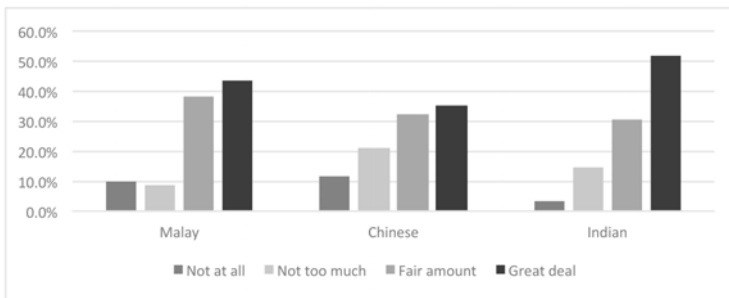
Figure 9.4A: Similarity of Indian Malaysians to Indian Singaporeans according to ethnicity (percentage)



Perceptions of Singaporean Impact on Cost of Living and Development

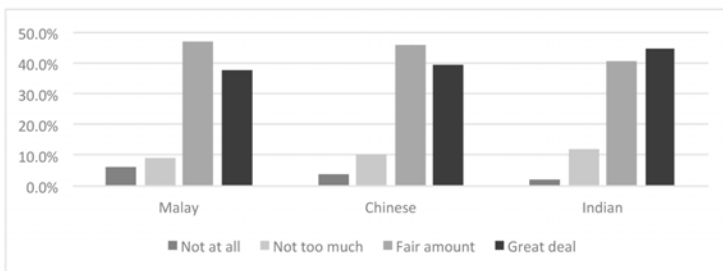
Question 10.1: How much impact does Singapore and Singaporeans have on the cost of living in Johor

Figure: 10.1A: Impact of Singapore and Singaporeans on cost of living in Johor according to ethnicity (percentage)



Question 10.2: How much impact does Singapore have on economic development in Johor?

Figure 10.2A: Impact of Singapore on economic development in Johor according to ethnicity (percentage)



Question 10.3: In recent years there has been increased Singaporean economic investment in Johor. Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Figure 10.3A: Attitudes towards Singaporean economic investment according to ethnicity (percentage)

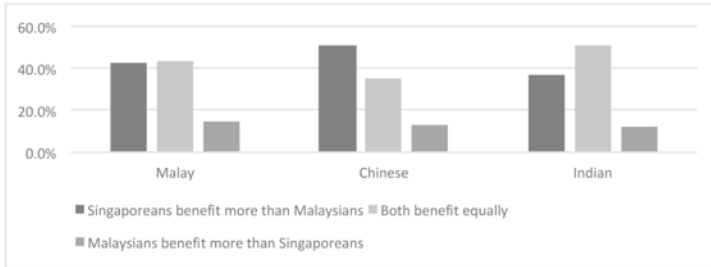
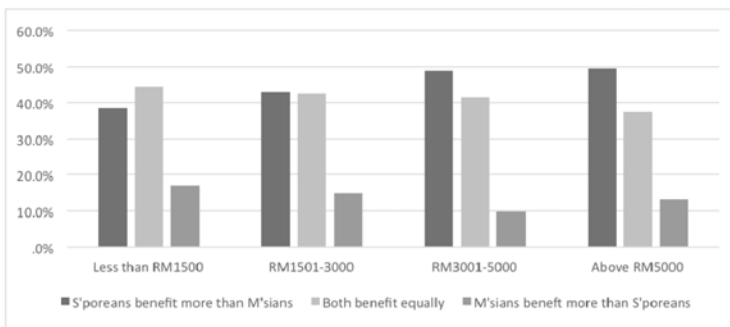


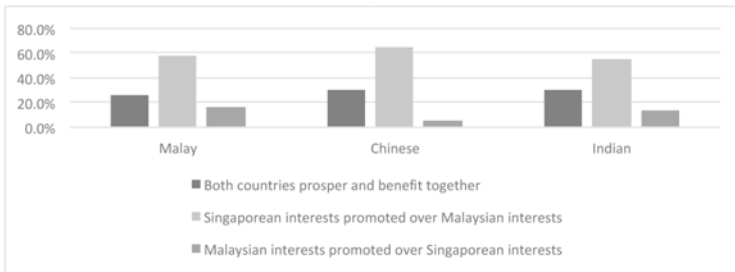
Figure 10.3B: Statements on Singaporean economic investment according to monthly household income (percentage)



Perceptions of Bilateral Relations

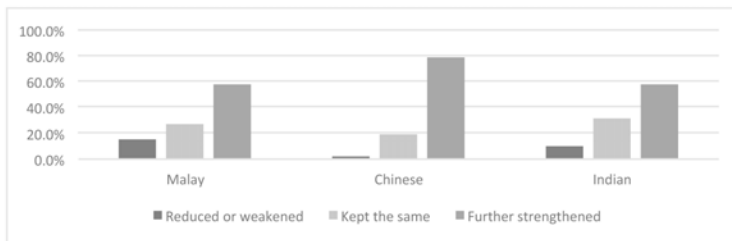
Question 11.1: In terms of business and politics, do you think Singapore and Singaporeans prefer a situation where (a) both countries prosper and benefit together; (b) Singaporean interests promoted over Malaysian interests; (c) Malaysian interests promoted over Singaporean interests.

Figure 11.1A: Perceptions of Singapore's and Singaporeans' preference in business and politics according to ethnicity (percentage)



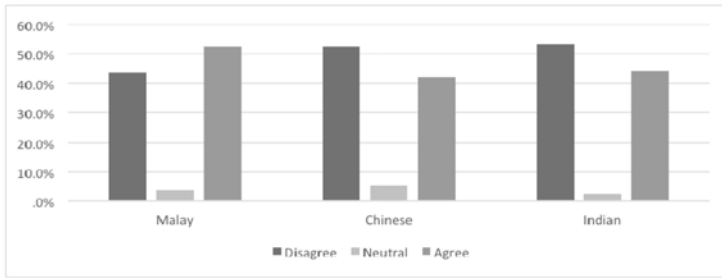
Question 11.2: Do you think political and diplomatic relations between Singapore and Malaysia should be (a) reduced or weakened; (b) kept the same; or (c) further strengthened?

Figure 11.2A: Perceptions over political and diplomatic relations between Singapore and Malaysia according to ethnicity (percentage)



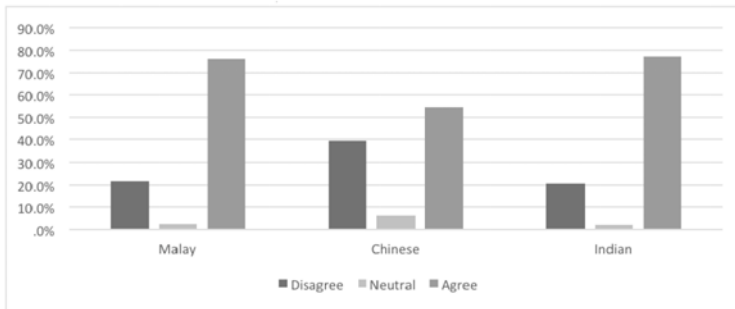
Question 11.3: Is Singapore an economic threat to Malaysia?

Figure 11.3A: Singapore an economic threat to Malaysia according to ethnicity (percentage)



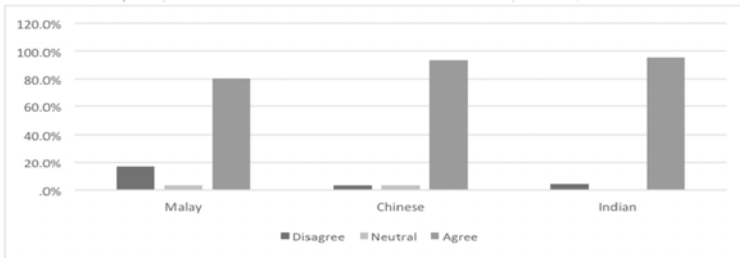
Question 11.4: Do you agree that Singapore is a competitor of Malaysia

Figure 11.4A: Singapore is a competitor to Malaysia according to ethnicity (percentage)



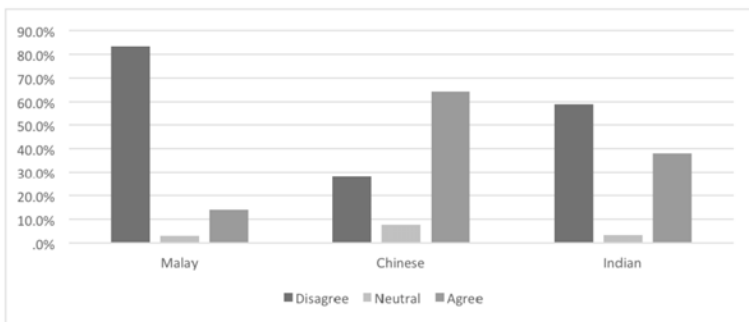
Question 11.5: I welcome the influx of Singaporean tourists and visitors into Johor

Figure 11.5A: Influx of Singaporean tourists and visitors into Johor according to ethnicity (percentage)



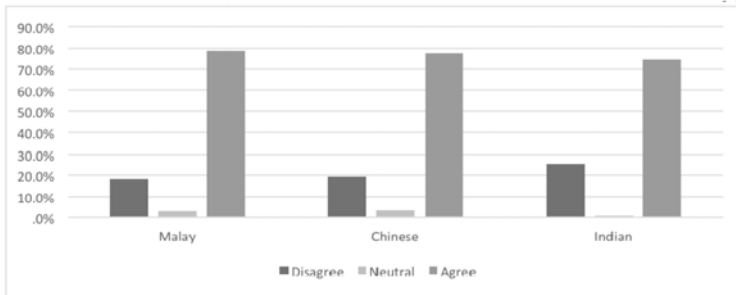
Question 11.6: It is acceptable for Singaporeans to be permitted to purchase properties worth more than RM500,000 in Johor

Figure 11.6A: Singaporeans to be permitted to purchase properties worth more than RM500,000 in Johor according to ethnicity (percentage)



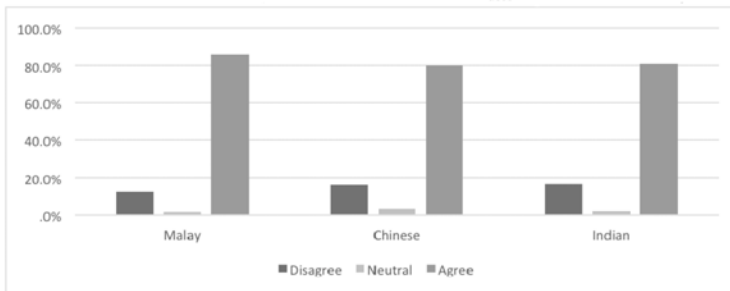
Question 11.7: Visitors from Singapore inflate the price of consumer goods and services in Johor

Figure 11.7A: Visitors from Singapore inflate the price of consumer goods and services in Johor according to ethnicity (percentage)



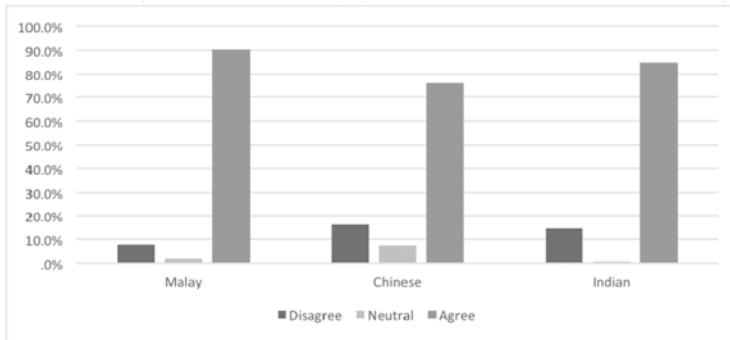
Question 11.8: Singaporean investors are making private property unaffordable for locals

Figure 11.8A: Singapore investors are making private property unaffordable for locals according to ethnicity (percentage)



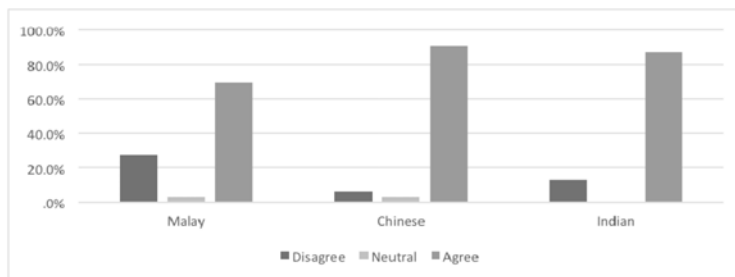
Question 11.9: The Johor government should limit the sale of property and land to Singaporeans

Figure 11.9A: The Johor government should limit the sale of property and land to Singaporeans according to ethnicity (percentage)



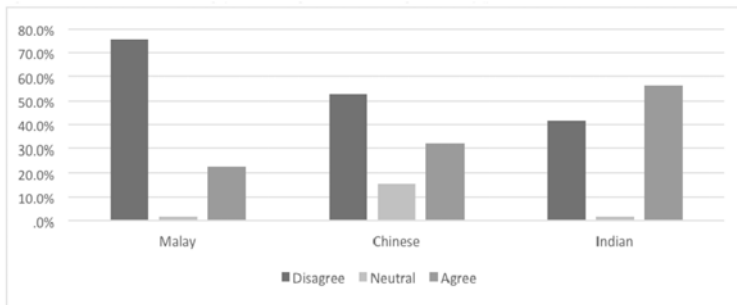
Question 11.10: A high speed rail between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur should be built

Figure 11.10A: high speed rail between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur should be built according to ethnicity (percentage)



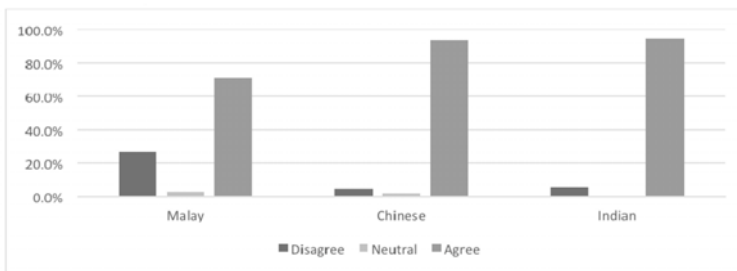
Question 11.11: The current Johor-Singapore water agreement is fair to Malaysia

Figure 11.11A: The current Johor-Singapore water agreement according to ethnicity (percentage)



Question 11.12: Johor and Singapore should be linked by an MRT service

Figure 11.12A: Johor-Singapore MRT service according to ethnicity (percentage)



TRS8/14

ISBN 978-981-4620-18-5



9 789814 620185