CAPE

Parliament Tracker
Landmark Report

Tracking data trends of Singapore's
14th Parliament (2020 – 2024)



About CAPE's Parliament Tracker

Parliament Tracker is an independent, non-partisan civic project by the Community for Advocacy and Political Education (CAPE) that seeks to enhance citizenry understanding of and access to Singapore's Parliamentary proceedings. Our issues track and analyse data on Parliamentary Business and issues, Member of Parliament (MP) attendance, and MP engagement in Parliamentary question time.

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And finally, to **you**, the reader — thank you for picking up this report. We hope it not only leaves you more informed about the workings of Parliament, but also more equipped to ask questions, hold space for meaningful debate, and take part in shaping the kind of politics you want to see in Singapore.

With appreciation,
Yeo Q. L., Editor
on behalf of the CAPE Parliament Tracker Landmark Report Team

Chapter 1: Introduction

By Yeo Q. L.

Our Motivation for Tracking Parliament

Parliament lies at the heart of Singapore's democracy. It is the space where our representatives – the Members of Parliament (MPs) – debate policies, scrutinize government decisions, and vote on key issues that directly shape our everyday lives. Also, Parliament is a cornerstone of Singapore's democratic system of checks-and-balances, providing necessary oversight of executive power and contributing to governmental accountability through rigorous questioning, debate, and legislative scrutiny [1].

As we approach the upcoming General Election (GE), we will soon head to the polls to elect MPs who will represent us in Parliament for the next government term, potentially lasting until 2030. It is therefore crucial that we elect individuals who excel not only in constituency-level responsibilities – such as managing Town Councils, conducting regular Meet-the-People Sessions, and leading community development projects – but also possess the capability and diligence to effectively represent us within Parliament itself.

Yet, many of us find it challenging to clearly assess how actively our MPs participate in Parliament. We may rely on fragmented insights from news reports or social media snippets, but concrete data remains elusive. Plus, while live sessions, recordings, and full transcripts (via Hansard) are publicly accessible, realistically, few of us have the time or capacity to sift through such extensive resources. What we genuinely need is a concise, accessible summary of our MPs' participation in Parliament.

This independent and non-partisan report directly addresses this information gap. It examines the extent of diversity within the 14th Parliament and studies MPs' participation in key parliamentary activities, specifically focusing on (i) Parliamentary Questions (PQs), (ii) bills, (iii) motions, and (iv) ministerial statements. This analysis covers sittings of the 14th Parliament from its first sitting in August 2020 to November 2024, and encompasses all categories of MPs: elected MPs, Non-Constituency MPs (NCMPs), and Nominated MPs (NMPs).

Our analysis is based on a comprehensive database that we meticulously compiled from the parliamentary records available on Hansard. This was an extensive and labour-intensive process, involving countless hours of sifting through the order papers and sitting reports, extracting the relevant data, and systematically structuring this

information into a database suitable for meaningful analysis. In total, we compiled data on **11,216 PQs, 189 bills, 99 motions (includes debatable motions and adjournment motions), and 45 ministerial statements between August 2020 and November 2024**.

Taken together, the numbers and trends in this report reveal a Parliament that is becoming more active and more contested. The 14th Parliament convened amid the unprecedented backdrop of COVID-19, the largest opposition presence in Parliament since independence, and the introduction of Singapore's first official Leader of the Opposition. It was a term marked by political drama — including the resignations of six elected MPs and two Nominated MPs — and heightened scrutiny over issues such as foreign talent, housing affordability, and ministerial conduct. These developments signal an evolving political landscape in Singapore, where democratic norms of transparency, contestation, and meaningful debate are becoming more deeply embedded.

Key Insights by Chapter

1. Diversity in Parliament

The 14th Parliament reflects Singapore's multiracial and meritocratic society in many respects. While its composition demonstrates commendable efforts to blend experienced leadership with fresh perspectives, several critical areas require further improvement. A particularly noticeable concern is the persistent underrepresentation of women in political leadership; women constitute 51.3% of Singapore's population but account for only 29.6% of Parliament and an even lower 15.8% within the Cabinet.

Additionally, Parliament's age composition skews significantly older than the national median, with just 2% of members under the age of 35. This minimal youth representation could hinder the legislature's ability to fully address the aspirations and concerns of younger citizens.

While some progress has been made — particularly in increasing the number of first-time female MPs — these gains have not yet translated into proportional representation or leadership parity. Addressing these gaps will be important to ensuring that Parliament continues evolving in alignment with Singapore's increasingly diverse society, promoting both high governance standards and comprehensive representational inclusivity.

2. Representation of Racial Minority Interests

We explored how racial minority interests are represented through PQs. Out of the 11,216 unique questions raised in the 14th Parliament from September 2020 to

November 2024, approximately 1% – or 157 questions – specifically addressed racial minority interests. A content analysis of these questions revealed that religious life and practice, education, housing, and Halal food regulation were among the most frequently discussed topics. These findings shift the current academic focus from who represents racial minority concerns, to what issues are surfaced and debated in Parliament.

3. Parliamentary Questions (PQs)

Parliamentary Questions are a key tool for MPs to seek information, surface public concerns, and exercise oversight. From August 2020 to November 2024, a total of 11,216 unique PQs were raised in Singapore's 14th Parliament —surpassing the 8,246 PQs filed in the entire previous decade.

WP MPs and PSP NCMPs consistently asked more questions per MP per sitting than PAP MPs across the 14th Parliament. While PAP MPs averaged around 1.1 to 1.4 PQs per sitting, WP MPs maintained a higher rate between 2.1 and 2.5, and PSP NCMPs showed a sharp upward trend—from 0.6 in 2020 to a remarkable 3.9 in 2024, the highest across all groups. NMPs, meanwhile, exhibited the lowest average number of PQs per MP per sitting throughout the years, starting at 0.4 in 2021 and rising modestly to 1.0 by 2024, reflecting more limited parliamentary time and institutional resources. This suggests that despite their smaller numbers, WP and PSP MPs were comparatively more active in leveraging PQs as a tool for parliamentary scrutiny.

PQs were not distributed evenly across ministries, reflecting shifts in public concern and national priorities. The Ministry of Health (MOH) received the highest number of PQs overall—1,626 out of 11,216, or 14.5%—driven by sustained attention on pandemic management and healthcare system pressures. However, its dominance declined in later years. In 2023, the Ministry of National Development (MND) topped the list with 322 PQs (13.2%), amid rising anxiety over housing issues, while in 2024, the Ministry of Transport (MOT) led with 320 PQs (13.0%), many of which concerned the SimplyGo fare payment system and train reliability. Other consistently high-ranking ministries included the Ministry of Manpower (MOM), reflecting employment concerns, while at the opposite end, the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) received the fewest PQs—just 0.9% and 1.5%respectively—suggesting comparatively lower levels of parliamentary scrutiny in these domains.

4.Bills

A bill is a draft version of a proposed law, which must be debated and approved by Parliament before becoming legislation. The 14th Parliament introduced a total of 189 bills between Aug 2020 to November 2024, out of which 188 were successfully passed. The sole bill rejected at its second reading was introduced by Hazel Poa, seeking amendments to the Parliament (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act 1962

to give Parliament the flexibility to authorise the back payment of the allowance of a MP who has been suspended from the service of Parliament by resolution.

Of the 188 bills passed, eight involved constitutional amendments. Three of these bills recorded "noes" votes:

- Constitution of the Republic of Singapore (Amendment No 2) Bill to allow the President to exercise her discretionary powers in the appointment of the new Chief of Digital and Intelligence Service (DIS);
- Constitution of the Republic of Singapore (Amendment No 3) Bill to allow Parliament to define and protect marriage, amongst other amendments;
- Constitution of the Republic of Singapore (Amendment No 3) Bill to create frameworks for the President and Ministers to take on international appointments in their private capacities.

Among the 180 bills not concerning Constitutional amendments, three bills recorded "noes" and/or abstentions: the Foreign Interference (Countermeasures) Bill, the Penal Code (Amendment) Bill repealing Section 377A, and the Insurance (Amendment) Bill concerning the Allianz-Income Insurance acquisition. Two additional bills recorded dissent: the Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill concerning GST rate increases and the Road Traffic (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill removing mandatory minimum sentences for first-time traffic offenders.

Speaking on bills is an important aspect of an MP's legislative role, as it allows them to scrutinise proposed laws, raise constituents' concerns, and contribute to shaping national policy. On average, PAP backbenchers spoke on 18.0 bills, Workers' Party MPs spoke on 20.6 bills, PSP NCMPs spoke on 14.0 bills, and NMPs spoke on 8.3 bills. The most active MP was Louis Ng, who spoke on 122 bills, followed by Yip Hong Weng (77), Don Wee (49), Jamus Lim (40), and Murali Pillai (38).

5.Motions

Motions form a key avenue for MPs to propose actions or express positions in Parliament. During the 14th Parliament (August 2020–November 2024), a total of 28 debatable motions were tabled and discussed — 9 by Ministers and 19 by backbenchers. The outcomes of these motions often reflected the PAP's dominance: all 4 motions that were rejected were initiated by PSP NCMPs, and 10 other motions were only passed after being amended, usually by PAP MPs. These amendments frequently diluted the original intent, particularly for motions proposed by opposition MPs. Separately, 71 Adjournment Motions were raised, offering MPs an alternative avenue to surface diverse policy concerns without requiring a vote. Collectively, motions served as important tools for scrutiny, contestation, and the airing of alternative viewpoints, enriching parliamentary discourse even within the constraints of majority rule.

6.Ministerial Statements

A total of 45 Ministerial Statements were made between August 2020 and November 2024 in the 14th Parliament. A Ministerial Statement is a formal address by a Minister in Parliament on a matter of public importance, typically scheduled after Question Time. These statements serve as a key avenue for the Government to communicate directly with Parliament on urgent or significant issues.

The Ministerial Statements covered a broad range of categories. Some were issued in response to specific statements made by Members of Parliament, such as clarifications or rebuttals. Others were used to seek clarifications from MPs themselves, especially in instances where prior statements had been contested. Notably, a series of statements addressed the Ridout Road saga, involving the rental of state-owned properties by Cabinet Ministers. There were also nine statements focused on the Government's COVID-19 pandemic response, alongside others on key public matters like digital banking security, anti-money laundering, foreign manpower, and major public transport disruptions.

While debates are not typically permitted following Ministerial Statements, Members may seek clarification from the Minister. On average, PAP backbenchers sought clarifications on 4.7 Ministerial Statements. In comparison, WP MPs did so on 10.5, PSP NCMPs on 16.0, and NMPs on 1.1 Ministerial Statements. This pattern reflects a higher level of engagement from opposition MPs in scrutinising the content and implications of Ministerial Statements.

Nuances When Interpreting the Statistics

While this report primarily provides a quantitative overview of MPs' participation in Parliament — tracking activities such as Parliamentary Questions (PQs), speeches on bills, motions, and clarifications on Ministerial Statements — it is important to note that these statistics alone do not fully capture the effectiveness, influence, or substance of an MP's work.

1. Unequal Access to Resources

Not all Members of Parliament (MPs) operate with the same level of resources, and this disparity significantly shapes how they participate in Parliament [2]. Elected MPs from the ruling People's Action Party (PAP), for instance, have access to extensive institutional support, including the civil service, party research units, and grassroots networks.

In contrast, opposition MPs often face resource constraints — they lack access to government-linked grassroots organizations and must rely on limited party support and staffing. Non-Constituency MPs (NCMPs) and Nominated MPs (NMPs) face further limitations, with no constituencies, smaller allowances [3], and minimal support structures [4]. These differences mean that participation in Parliament should not be assessed purely by volume or frequency, but also by considering the unequal capacities MPs bring to the House.

2. Frequency ≠ Impact

This report does not assess the quality or impact of MPs' participation. Quantity of participation — such as the number of PQs filed or bills spoken on — does not always correlate with substantive contributions. An MP who raises fewer but well-researched, thoughtful, or policy-shaping questions may be more effective than one who speaks frequently without adding depth.

For example, questions that lead to policy shifts, budget reallocations, or new initiatives arguably have greater impact than routine clarifications. Evaluating parliamentary effectiveness thus requires a closer examination of substance — something that lies beyond the scope of this report but is crucial for comprehensive accountability.

3. Uncaptured Forms of Participation

While this report tracks key metrics of parliamentary participation — such as PQs, speeches on bills, motions, and ministerial statements — it does not capture all forms of parliamentary activity. This is largely due to limitations in data availability and collection.

For instance, we had hoped to track the number of supplementary questions — spontaneous follow-ups posed after primary PQs — asked by each MP during sittings. While these are publicly accessible in Hansard, they are embedded within the official reports, making data collection extremely labour-intensive and impractical for this report.

Moreover, much of an MP's influence takes place outside the main chamber and is therefore not publicly documented. These behind-the-scenes activities include:

- Participating in Select Committees or Government Parliamentary Committees (GPCs)
- Drafting Private Member's Bills or internal policy papers
- Engaging in closed-door consultations with ministries or civil servants
- Negotiating within party structures to influence legislative priorities

Such contributions, while less visible, are crucial to shaping policy outcomes. However, due to their private or informal nature, they are difficult to quantify and not included in this report.

4. Period of Coverage

This report captures parliamentary participation from August 2020 to November 2024, which covers nearly the full term of the 14th Parliament. However, it excludes the final months due to uncertainty around the timing of the next General Election. As such, the data may not fully reflect participation by MPs in the last few months.

Additionally, this report does not provide comparative data across multiple parliamentary terms. Future editions could benefit from longitudinal analysis, allowing for better benchmarking of trends in parliamentary participation and the evolving performance of MPs over time.

5. Changes in Composition of Parliament's Backbenchers

Several MPs resigned or transitioned into new roles during the 14th Parliament, and these changes may affect how their participation figures should be interpreted. Notable departures and role changes include:

Table 1.1: Change in composition of Parliament

No.	Name	Party	Effective Date of Change	Nature of Change
1	Raeesah Khan	WP	1 Nov 2021	Resigned from Parliament
2	Tharman Shanmugaratnam	PAP	7 Jul 2023	Resigned to contest Presidential Election
3	Tan Chuan-Jin	PAP	17 Jul 2023	Resigned from Parliament and PAP
4	Leon Perera	WP	2 Aug 2023	Resigned from Parliament and WP
5	Cheng Li Hui	PAP	3 Aug 2023	Resigned from Parliament and PAP
6	Seah Kian Peng	PAP	3 Aug 2023	Appointed Speaker of Parliament; ceased debate participation
7	S. Iswaran	PAP	16 Jan 2024	Resigned amid corruption probe
8	Raj Joshua Thomas	NMP	14 Feb 2025	Resigned before end of term
9	Syed Harun Alhabsyi	NMP	14 Feb 2025	Resigned before end of term

Additionally, Nominated MPs (NMPs) serve fixed terms and are replaced in accordance with standard appointment cycles. As such, their participation metrics reflect their limited time in office.

Table 1.2: Change in NMPs during the 14th Parliament

No.	NMPs (Term: 21 Jan 2021 – 23 Jul 2023)	NMPs (Term: From 24 Jul 2023)
1	Abdul Samad Adul Wahab	Chandradas Usha Ranee
2	Janet Ang Guat Har	Chua Tiang Choon Keith
3	Mark Chay	Mark Lee Kean Phi
4	Cheng Hsing Yao	Ong Hua Han
5	Hoon Hian Teck	Parekh Nimil Rajnikant
6	Koh Lian Pin	Joshua Thomas Raj*
7	Joshua Thomas Raj	Razwana Begum Abdul Rahim
8	Shahira Adullah	See Jinli
9	Tan Yia Swam	Syed Harun Taha Alhabsyi*

These changes are accounted for in the dataset. However, when interpreting the data, readers should consider the length of each MP's tenure, as shorter terms naturally result in lower levels of recorded participation for these MPs.

Chapter 2: Diversity in Parliament

By J. Ng

Introduction

In the heart of Singapore's political landscape lies its Parliament, a crucial institution that shapes the nation's future through legislation and governance. As Singapore continues to evolve in an increasingly complex global environment, the composition of its legislative body becomes ever more significant. The strength of a democracy often lies in its ability to represent the varied voices and experiences of its populace. By examining the diversity within Singapore's Parliament, we gain valuable insights into how the nation's leadership reflects its multicultural, multi-ethnic society.

Research Methodology

This chapter utilized data compiled from official parliamentary records, publicly available biographies, and open-source intelligence. Researchers collected information on all 98 Members of Parliament (MPs), focusing on key demographic indicators such as age, gender, race, educational background, and parliamentary experience. Where data points were incomplete or unavailable, this has been noted to ensure transparency in the analysis.

This analysis covers the 98 MPs serving as of November 2024, using demographic data from the Department of Statistics Singapore's Population Trends 2023 report for comparison. Our methodology follows the statistical frameworks established in this report, including the use of five-year age brackets in the demographic profiles. Where available, national statistics on citizens was taken, otherwise resident data was used [1].

The methodology employed a quantitative approach, aggregating and analyzing the collected data to identify patterns and trends. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the findings, with percentages and averages calculated to provide easily interpretable metrics. However, it is important to note that the relatively small sample size of 98 MPs means that small changes can have a significant impact on percentages, particularly in subgroup analyses.

Chapter Structure

Overview of the 14th Parliament: This section provides an overview of the entire 14th Parliament, offering a broad perspective on its demographic composition. It covers gender representation, age distribution, racial diversity, educational backgrounds, and parliamentary experience of all MPs where data is available.

Breakdown by Political Party: Here, we compare the diversity metrics across different political parties represented in Parliament. This analysis allows for an examination of how various parties contribute to the overall diversity of the legislative body.

Deep Dive into Cabinet: This section focuses specifically on the composition of the Cabinet, analyzing how the executive leadership reflects or differs from the broader parliamentary makeup.

Concluding Remarks: The final section discusses the findings in context, exploring potential implications for policy making, representation, and governance. It also addresses limitations of the study and suggests areas for future research.

The analysis presented in this chapter strives to offer a balanced examination of parliamentary diversity in Singapore's 14th Parliament. By highlighting both achievements and areas for potential enhancement, this overview serves as a foundation for nuanced discourse on representation and inclusivity within the nation's supreme legislative institution. The data-driven approach taken here aims to foster informed debates on the composition of Parliament and its reflection of Singapore's diverse society.

Overview of the 14th Parliament

The 14th Parliament of Singapore, convened following the 2020 general election, represents a diverse cross-section of the nation's population. This section provides a comprehensive overview of its composition, examining key demographic factors that shape the legislative body.

Types of MPs

Singapore's Parliament consists of three types of members:

Table 2.1: Composition of the 14th Parliament as of November 2024

Type of Member	Number	Percentage
Elected MPs	87	88.8%
Non-Constituency MPs (NCMPs)	2	2.0%
Nominated MPs (NMPs)	9	9.2%
Total	98	100%

The composition reflects Singapore's hybrid parliamentary system, combining elected representation with appointed members. The presence of NCMPs and NMPs (11.2% combined) provides an institutional mechanism for alternative voices while maintaining the dominance of elected representatives.

Gender Distribution

Gender diversity in the 14th Parliament shows progress towards greater female representation, though disparities remain:

- Male MPs: 69 (70.4%)
- Female MPs: 29 (29.6%)

Despite progress in female representation, a significant gender gap persists in Parliament. The current proportion of female MPs (29.6%) exceeds the global average of 26.9% (as of February 2024), but remains well below citizen population parity (50.6%), highlighting ongoing challenges in achieving gender balance in political leadership [2][3].

Age Profile

The age profile of the 14th Parliament reflects a mix of experience and fresh perspectives. The youngest MP is 31 (Ong Hua Han) and the oldest 72 (Lee Hsien Loong).

Table 2.2: Age Distribution of MPs as of November 2024

	≤34 years	35 to 64 years	≥65 years
Parliament	1 (1.0%)	88 (89.8%)	9 (9.2%)
National Demographics	*39.6%*	*41.3%*	*19.1%*

This distribution shows a stark underrepresentation of youth in Parliament, with only one MP being 34 or younger. The vast majority of MPs are in their middle years, while a significant portion are at or above 65 years of age. By comparison, Singapore's citizen population shows a different age balance: roughly 4 in 10 Singaporeans are 34 years or younger, just over 4 in 10 are between 35-64 years, and about 2 in 10 are seniors aged 65 or older [4].

Compared to Singapore's median age of 43 years, Parliament skews notably older with its median exactly a decade higher than the national median at 53 years and aforementioned concentrated representation in the middle-aged brackets. This age structure raises questions about the representation of younger voices in parliamentary decision-making, particularly given Singapore's rapidly ageing population, the significant proportion of the population below the age of 35, and the importance of intergenerational perspectives in policy-making [5].

Racial Composition

The racial composition of Parliament broadly reflects Singapore's multiracial society, albeit in the categories prescribed in the Chinese-Malay-Indian-Other (CMIO) model:

Table 2.3: Racial Composition of MPs as of November 2024

	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
Parliament	70 (71.4%)	15 (15.3%)	12 (12.2%)	1 (1.0%)
National Demographics	*75.6%*	*15.1%*	*7.5%*	*1.7%*

As apparent in the table above, the distribution closely mirrors citizen demographics, with overrepresentation of Indian MPs, and underrepresentation of the Chinese ethnic groups, all within slight margins. This alignment may reflect the effectiveness of institutional mechanisms like Group Representation Constituencies (GRCs) in maintaining multiracial representation [6].

Educational Background

The educational profile of the 14th Parliament reflects a highly educated cohort:

Table 2.4: Highest Educational Qualification of MPs as of November 2024

Qualification	Number	Percentage
University Degree	31	31.6%
Postgraduate Qualification	59	60.2%
Doctorate	7	7.1%
Data Not Available	1	1.0%

With all MPs with available academic histories holding at least a university degree, Parliament demonstrates a strong academic foundation. The high proportion of postgraduate and doctoral qualifications (67.3%) suggests substantial specialized knowledge among lawmakers.

Comparing this to the general population, the contrast is stark. Among residents aged 25 years and over in 2022 [7]:

- 36.2% had university qualifications
- 16.9% had diploma and professional qualifications
- 10.0% had post-secondary (non-tertiary) qualifications
- 16.0% had secondary qualifications
- 20.9% had below secondary qualifications

This comparison reveals that MPs are significantly more educated than the general population, with all MPs holding at least a university degree compared to just 36.2% of the general population. The disparity may highlight the high educational standards set for parliamentary representatives in Singapore, where education is arguably often perceived as a proxy for competence.

However, as noted in commentary published by the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, this reflects a broader pattern in Singapore's governance where ministers and leaders tend to be selected from a relatively small pool of those considered academically elite. While this approach aligns with Singapore's meritocratic principles, Kenneth Paul Tan notes some citizens have expressed discomfort with this system, particularly regarding how it may perpetuate existing social divides and potentially overlook other forms of talent and capability in leadership selection. The focus on academic merit as a key indicator of success may need to be reconsidered to ensure broader representation and diverse perspectives in Parliament [8].

Parliamentary Experience

The 14th Parliament combines seasoned lawmakers with newcomers, ensuring a blend of continuity and fresh perspectives:

Table 2.5: Parliamentary Experience of MPs as of November 2024

Qualification	Number	Percentage
First Term	38	38.8%
Second Term	18	18.4%
Third Term	18	18.4%
Fourth Term	14	14.3%
Fifth Term and above	10	10.2%

The composition of Singapore's 14th Parliament illustrates a careful balance between renewal and continuity, as reflected in the statistics of parliamentary experience. A significant 38.8% of MPs (38 individuals) are serving their first term, marking a substantial injection of new talent into Parliament. This level of renewal suggests a deliberate effort by political parties to rejuvenate their rosters.

At the same time, the presence of 18 second-term MPs and another 18 in their third term demonstrates that many newcomers have transitioned to more established roles over time, contributing to institutional stability.

The seasoned veterans in Parliament include 14 fourth-term MPs and 11 MPs with five or more terms under their belts. These experienced politicians, who make up about a quarter of all MPs, typically serve as senior leaders who maintain continuity and preserve institutional knowledge. This tiered distribution of parliamentary experience reflects Singapore's distinctive electoral landscape, particularly the influence of the GRC mechanism.

For the ruling PAP, GRC teams often feature an "anchor minister"—a high-profile leader, frequently a cabinet member—who strengthens the team's appeal. While this system lowers barriers to entry for new candidates and ensures multiracial representation, it has been criticized for facilitating the "parachuting" of junior candidates into Parliament. This occurs when candidates are elected not based on their personal merits, but largely due to the popularity and credibility of the team, particularly the anchor minister. This raises questions about individual accountability and the extent to which such MPs can build independent political identities [9][10].

The overview of Singapore's 14th Parliament reveals both strengths and gaps in representation. While racial diversity closely mirrors the nation's makeup, Parliament members are significantly more educated than average citizens, notably older than the general population, and still predominantly male despite improvement. The mix of newcomers and veterans raises questions about how the GRC system shapes who enters Parliament and how they develop as politicians. These patterns prompt reflection on how Parliament's composition might affect policy priorities, intergenerational dialogue, and the inclusion of diverse voices in Singapore's governance.

Party Representation Analysis

This analysis focuses on the two main parliamentary parties - the People's Action Party (PAP) and the Workers' Party (WP). While there are also two NCMPs from the Progress Singapore Party, their small number makes meaningful statistical analysis impractical. Similarly, the nine NMPs are excluded as they are appointed rather than elected and serve different constitutional functions. Therefore, this comparative analysis examines the 87 elected MPs: 79 from the PAP and 8 from the WP. National demographics are again taken from the Department of Statistics Singapore's Population Trends 2023 report [11].

Gender Distribution by Party

Table 2.6: Gender Distribution of MPs by Party Compared to National Demographics

Party	Male	Female
PAP	56 (70.9%)	23 (29.1%)
WP	6 (75%)	2 (25%)
National Demographics	*49.4%*	*50.6%*

The PAP shows higher female representation at 29.1% compared to the WP's 25%. Neither meet the overall parliamentary average (29.6%), and both remain below the citizen population ratio where females constitute 50.6% of citizens. Neither party

approaches population parity, though the PAP shows marginally higher female representation compared to the WP.

Age Profile by Party

Table 2.7: Gender Distribution of MPs by Party Compared to National Demographics

Party	≤34 years	35 to 64 years	≥65 years
PAP	0 (0.0%)	72 (91.1%)	7 (8.9%)
WP	0 (0.0%)	8 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
National Demographics	*39.6%*	*41.3%*	*19.1%*

Both parties maintain an age profile significantly older than the citizen median age of 43 years, with the PAP median at 53 and WP at 49. Nevertheless, the WP's concentration of MPs in their 40s represents a notably younger cohort than the PAP's broader distribution across age groups.

The age distribution reveals a significant underrepresentation of youth among elected representatives from both parties, with only one PAP MP, Nadia Ahmad Samdin, being 35 or younger.

Racial Composition by Party

Table 2.8: Racial Composition of MPs by Party Compared to National Demographics

Party	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
PAP	58 (73.4%)	12 (15.2%)	8 (10.1%)	1 (1.3%)
WP	6 (75.0%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0.0%)
National Demographics	*75.6%*	*15.1%*	*7.5%*	*1.7%*

Both PAP and WP closely mirror national racial demographics, with the PAP showing slightly higher representation of Indian MPs while the WP maintains marginally higher Chinese representation compared to the national population. However, meaningful analysis of the WP's racial composition is limited by their small total of just eight MPs, including only one representative each from the Malay and Indian communities.

Education Background by Party

Table 2.9: Educational Background of MPs by Party

Party	University Degrees	Post-graduate Qualifications	Doctorate
PAP	25 (31.6%)	49 (62.0%)	5 (6.3%)
WP	4 (50.0%)	3 (37.5%)	1 (12.5%)

This educational profile significantly exceeds the general population's educational attainment, where only 36.2% hold university qualifications. As in the case of Parliament at large, a reflection of Singapore's meritocratic principles is observed, but questions about diversity of experience and representation are also raised.

Parliamentary Experience by Party

The PAP maintains a graduated distribution across terms, with about one-third being first-term MPs and a small but significant group of very experienced parliamentarians

Table 2.10: Parliamentary Experience of MPs by Party

Party	First term (2020-)	Second term (2015-)	Third term (2011-)	Fourth term (2006-)	Fifth & above (2001, earlier)
PAP	25 (31.6%)	16 (20.3%)	15 (19.0%)	13 (16.5%)	10 (12.7%)
WP	3 (37.5%)	1 (12.5%)	3 (37.5%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0.0%)

Table 2.11: Longest Serving MPs by Party

PAP	WP
• Lee Hsien Loong (10 terms, since 1984) • K Shanmugam (9 terms, since 1988) • Teo Chee Hean (8 terms, since 1992)	• Sylvia Lim (4 terms, since 2006)

serving five terms or more. The WP, despite its smaller numbers, shows a similar commitment to both renewal and experience, with representation across different terms of service. However, the WP exhibits a younger parliamentary profile with half its MPs having two terms of experience or less. The numbers may be skewed due to the party's unexpected victory in Sengkang GRC in the last general election, leading to a significant crop of three out of eight WP MPs serving their first terms in the 14th Parliament. Additionally, the general uncertainty facing opposition candidates during

elections limits the WP's ability to plan for graduated experience distribution compared to the ruling party.

The parliamentary experience distribution reveals both established patterns and emerging challenges in Singapore's political leadership renewal. While the PAP maintains a graduated spread of parliamentary experience, with first-term MPs constituting 31.6% of their ranks and veteran parliamentarians with five or more terms at 12.7%, this traditional model of phased renewal faces new pressures. The presence of nearly 3 in 10 PAP MPs who have served for four terms or more arguably highlights the balance attempted between preserving experienced voices and responding to public calls for fresh perspectives.

The challenges of renewal are particularly acute given the changing political landscape. As noted in recent analyses, Singapore appears to be transitioning away from the era of one-party dominance, with voters increasingly desiring a more diverse parliament. The barriers to entry for new political candidates have also risen significantly - as Jayakumar (2021) indicates, prospective MPs must now navigate not just traditional grassroots politics but also social media scrutiny and higher public expectations for authenticity and relatability. These factors may affect both parties' ability to attract and retain talent, though the impact is potentially greater for the PAP given its larger slate of candidates and incumbent position [12].

The WP's parliamentary experience profile, while smaller in absolute numbers, demonstrates a similar balance between renewal and continuity. With 37.5% first-term MPs and representation across multiple terms up to Sylvia Lim's four terms, the party maintains both fresh perspectives and experienced leadership. Their higher proportion of first-term MPs partly reflects their recent electoral gains, particularly in Sengkang GRC, but also suggests an ability to attract new talent despite the heightened challenges of political service in the Opposition.

This evolving landscape of parliamentary experience reflects broader shifts in Singapore's political culture, where both parties must balance the traditional emphasis on experience and institutional knowledge with growing demands for new voices and perspectives in parliament.

Cabinet Composition Analysis

Singapore's Cabinet comprises 19 ministers who form the highest level of executive leadership in the government. This analysis examines their demographic characteristics, educational backgrounds, and professional qualifications to provide insight into the composition of Singapore's top decision-making body, with comparisons drawn to the earlier Parliamentary and party levels, as well as to the

Population Trends 2023 statistics [13]. Notably, racial composition has been excluded from this analysis, given the limited sample size.

Gender Distribution of Cabinet

Table 2.12: Gender Distribution of Cabinet Compared to Parliament and National Demographics

Group	Male	Female
Cabinet	16 (84.2%)	3 (15.8%)
Parliament	69 (70.4%)	29 (29.6%)
National Demographics	*49.4%*	*50.6%*

Female representation at the Cabinet level (15.8%) is notably lower than both the overall parliamentary proportion and the national population ratio, indicating the persistence of gender disparity at the highest levels of government.

Age Profile of Cabinet

Table 2.13: Age Profile of Cabinet Compared to Parliament

Group	Youth (≤35 years)	36-62	Retirement age (≥63 years)
Cabinet	0 (0.0%)	12 (63.2%)	7 (36.8%)
Parliament	2 (2.0%)	80 (81.6%)	16 (16.3%)

The Cabinet shows a notable age imbalance compared to Parliament. There is an absence of youth representation (≤34 years) in the Cabinet versus minimal representation in Parliament (1%). Middle-aged officials (35-64 years) form the majority in both bodies but are proportionally less represented in Cabinet (73.7%) than in Parliament (89.8%). Most strikingly, retirement-age members (≥65 years) are significantly overrepresented in Cabinet at 26.3% compared to just 9.2% in Parliament - more than double their parliamentary proportion. This age distribution, when further compared to the national age profile, suggests an executive body that potentially prioritizes experience and seniority over youth perspectives, which may influence policy development and decision-making processes.

Educational Background of Cabinet

The number of Ministers possessing postgraduate qualifications represents the majority in the Cabinet (73.7%), slightly higher than in the 14th Parliament as a whole (60.2%). This may represent a premium placed on more specialized education for those in higher leadership.

Table 2.14: Educational Background of Cabinet Compared to Parliament

Group	University Degrees	Post-graduate Qualifications	Doctorate	Data Not Available
Cabinet	4 (21.1%)	14 (73.7%)	1 (5.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Parliament	31 (31.6%)	59 (60.2%)	7 (7.1%)	1 (1.0%)

Table 2.15: Academic Fields of Cabinet

Academic Field	Specialization	No. of Ministers
Business and Economics	Business Administration/Management	6
	Economics	2
Public Policy and Law	Public Administration	4
	Law	4
Technical and Scientific Fields	Medicine	3
	Engineering	2
	Computer Science	1
Social Sciences	Social Work	1

*Note: The total amounts to 21 due to some ministers having multiple qualifications

This distribution reflects a Cabinet that balances business acumen and policy expertise with technical knowledge. The strong representation of business, public administration, and legal backgrounds (14 out of 19 ministers) suggests an emphasis on governance and economic management. Meanwhile, the presence of ministers with technical backgrounds, particularly in medicine and engineering, brings specialized expertise to specific portfolios.

Notable is the presence of four ministers with interdisciplinary qualifications, suggesting value placed on diverse academic perspectives. These are:

- Teo Chee Hean, with Masters in Public Administration and Computer Science
- Masagos Zulkifli, with Masters in Electrical Engineering and Business
- Lawrence Wong, with Masters in Economics and Public Administration
- Tan See Leng, with Masters in Medicine and Business Administration

Table 2.16: Pre-University Institutions Attended by Cabinet

Pre-University Institutions	No. of Ministers
Raffles Institution	9
National Junior College	6
Hwa Chong Institution	1
Victoria Junior College	1
Saint Joseph's Institution	1
First Toa Payoh Secondary School	1

Notable overseas universities of which Cabinet ministers are alumni include:

- United Kingdom (UK):
  - University of Cambridge
  - London School of Economics
  - Oxford University
  - Imperial College London
- United States of America (USA):
  - Harvard University
  - Massachusetts Institute of Technology
  - University of Chicago
  - University of California, Berkeley

The educational pathways show a concentration of ministers from Singapore's top pre-university institutions, with a subsequent trajectory toward prestigious Western universities, predominantly in the UK and USA.

Many ministers held government scholarships (at least eight known out of 19), including the President's Scholarship, indicating early identification and grooming of leadership talent. The absence of Asian institutions in the overseas education profile is noteworthy, potentially reflecting both the historical dominance of Western institutions in the era when these ministers were educated and Singapore's strategic orientation

toward Western governance and business models. This educational framework has produced a Cabinet that combines strong technical competencies with global sophistication, though it also raises questions about the potential benefits of greater educational diversity in future leadership cohorts.

Parliamentary Experience of Cabinet

Table 2.17: Parliamentary Experience of Cabinet Compared to Parliament

Group	First term (2020-)	Second term (2015-)	Third term (2011-)	Fourth term (2006-)	Fifth & above (2001, earlier)
Cabinet	1 (5.3%)	2 (10.5%)	5 (26.3%)	3 (15.8%)	8 (42.1%)
Parliament	38 (38.8%)	18 (18.4%)	18 (18.4%)	14 (14.3%)	10 (10.2%)

The current ministerial composition reveals a careful balance between experienced leadership and gradual renewal. While 42.1% of ministers have served five terms or more (since 2001 or earlier), there is a significant middle tier of third and fourth-term ministers (42.1%) who may form the core of the 4G leadership. This distribution reflects the PAP's methodical approach to leadership transition, with many key 4G leaders having entered Parliament between 2006 and 2011.

The relatively small proportion of first and second-term ministers (15.8%) suggests a deliberate emphasis on ensuring adequate parliamentary experience before assuming ministerial positions. The data shows that most current ministers, including PM Lawrence Wong and many of his 4G colleagues, have accumulated substantial parliamentary experience before taking on senior leadership roles.

This experience distribution is particularly significant given the upcoming leadership transition. As highlighted by Tan (2024), the 4G team has already been tested during the COVID-19 pandemic, and many have served in multiple ministerial portfolios. The predominance of ministers with three or more terms (84.2%) suggests a leadership core that combines both experience and relatively younger ages, with PM Wong himself being 52 years old [14].

However, the relatively small percentage of newer ministers (first and second terms) raises questions about the pipeline for future leadership renewal beyond the current 4G team. This could become particularly relevant as Singapore approaches what Tan describes as the "stern test" of the next general election, where the 4G leadership will need to secure their own mandate from voters [15].

This analysis of Singapore's Cabinet reveals a Government in careful transition, balancing institutional experience with the need for renewal. The Cabinet maintains impressive educational credentials, with the vast majority holding postgraduate qualifications and strong representation from business, public administration, and legal backgrounds. Most ministers attended Singapore's elite pre-university institutions with several later studying at prestigious Western universities, primarily in the UK and USA. Parliamentary experience is heavily weighted toward seasoned leadership. 84.2% of ministers have served three or more terms, creating a mature 4G leadership core tested during COVID-19. However, significant gaps remain in representational diversity: women comprise only 15.8% of Cabinet (versus just over half of citizens), youth representation is absent, and retirement-age members are significantly overrepresented at 26.3% (compared to 9.2% nationally). As Singapore approaches its next electoral test, these demographic figures raise important considerations about inclusive governance and leadership renewal beyond the current 4G team.

Concluding Remarks: Governance Structure and Representation in Singapore

The integrated analysis of Singapore's political leadership across Parliament, political parties, and Cabinet reveals both consistent patterns and notable variations in representation and qualifications across different governance levels. This examination provides some insight into Singapore's political leadership characteristics and evolution.

One of the most striking findings is the progressive decline in female representation as authority levels increase. While women constitute 50.6% of Singapore's population, their representation drops to 29.6% in Parliament and further decreases to just 15.8% at the Cabinet level. This pattern suggests possible structural barriers to women's advancement to the highest government levels, despite progress in overall parliamentary representation. Lyons (2005), for instance, attributes this disparity to gendered societal expectations, including family care responsibilities conflicting with political careers, and a male-dominated party elite that defines the terms of engagement for women in politics [16].

The data also reveals a strong emphasis on educational meritocracy across all governance levels. Educational qualifications increase markedly at higher leadership

levels, with Cabinet ministers typically holding multiple degrees from prestigious institutions. The predominance of business, public administration, and legal backgrounds (14 out of 19 ministers) reflects Singapore's emphasis on governance and economic management expertise. Most ministers are additionally educated at elite pre-university institutions and prestigious Western universities. However, the concentration of ministers from specific educational backgrounds prompts thought about the breadth of perspectives in decision-making.

Age and experience patterns demonstrate a clear relationship between seniority and advancement. With 84.2% of ministers serving three or more terms, and 26.3% of Cabinet members being at or beyond the age of 65 (compared to just 9.2% nationally), there is a governance structure that heavily values accumulated experience. While this ensures seasoned leadership, it also results in a noticeable dearth of youth representation (≤35 years) in Cabinet, even as Parliament as a whole faces the same challenge.

The study's findings are subject to certain limitations. The available data primarily focuses on formal qualifications rather than practical experience or leadership effectiveness. Additionally, privacy considerations and incomplete historical information constrain the depth of analysis possible for career trajectories and personal backgrounds. These limitations suggest opportunities for future research, particularly in tracking changes in representation over time and evaluating the impact of leadership diversity on policy outcomes.

Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide valuable insights into the evolution of leadership patterns and the effectiveness of diversity initiatives. Comparative analysis with other parliamentary systems might also offer useful benchmarks and alternative perspectives on leadership development.

Overall, Singapore's governance structure demonstrates a strong commitment to meritocratic principles and ethnic representation, while maintaining high standards of educational and professional qualifications. However, the analysis suggests opportunities for enhancing gender diversity and age representation, particularly at higher levels of government. The challenge moving forward will perhaps be to maintain the system's emphasis on competence and stability while broadening the diversity of experiences and perspectives in decision-making roles, particularly as the 4G leadership prepares for the next electoral test and leadership transition beyond the current team.

Chapter 3: Representation of Racial Minority Interests in Parliament

By L. Y. W.

Introduction

Discussions on racial minority representation in Singapore gained renewed attention in 2023 when the Progress Singapore Party (PSP) tabled a motion to abolish the Group Representation Constituency (GRC) [1]. Established in 1988, the GRC is a multi-member electoral division represented by a multi-racial slate of candidates, with at least one candidate belonging to a racial minority group (i.e. Malay, Indian, or Others, including Eurasians). The government introduced the GRC to ensure legislative representation of racial minorities in Singapore [2].

Those who voted in favour of abolishing the GRC during the 2023 motion cited that the GRC produced several unfavourable outcomes, like allowing weaker candidates to ride on the coattails of more established candidates, the underrepresentation of residents when GRC Members of Parliament (MPs) resign and vacancies are left unfilled, and the use of the GRC to entrench political dominance. They maintained that there are other ways to ensure minority representation in Parliament, such as the Non-Constituency Member of Parliament (NCMP) design, and a proportional representation system [1].

Political observers have previously raised similar concerns about the GRC design. For example, lawyer Priscillia Chia argues that the GRC scheme might fail to guarantee minority representation, and instead privilege incumbents, limit voter choice, and compel voters to support undesirable candidates so that other stronger candidates in the same team may be voted into Parliament [3]. Political scholar Norshahril Saat also questions the role of GRCs today. He observes that the 2015 General Election results indicate Singaporeans no longer vote along racial lines, as minority MPs have successfully led GRCs and won in Single Member Constituencies (SMCs), suggesting the original rationale for the GRC may no longer apply today [4].

On the other hand, those who voted in favour of retaining the GRC in 2023 emphasised its role in ensuring racial minority representation in Singapore's parliament while avoiding racial politicisation. For example, Minister-in-charge of the Public Service, Chan Chun Sing, highlighted that the GRC system helps ensure that Parliament reflects Singapore's racial makeup. Additionally, People's Action Party (PAP) MP Murali Pillai pointed out that the GRC design potentially reduces racial politicisation in elections and protects minority MPs from racial discrimination. He recounted his personal experience running as a minority candidate in Aljunied GRC in 2015 and later

in Bukit Batok SMC in 2020 to illustrate this point [1]. In short, the 2023 debate on the GRC scheme highlights the importance of upholding minority representation without reinforcing incumbent advantages or limiting voter choice.

Scholars studying minority representation in Parliament have largely focused on the profiles and motivations of MPs who represent minority interests. For instance, Tam found that racial minority MPs were significantly more likely than Chinese MPs to raise parliamentary questions (PQs) related to racial minorities. Additionally, opposition MPs were significantly more likely than MPs from the PAP to raise racial minority-related PQs [5]. Ng et al. also studied the motivations of MPs to represent marginal communities in Singapore (including, but not limited to, race), and found that gender and ethnic identities, prior careers, and political tenure influence MPs' motivations to represent minorities in Parliament [6].

However, less attention has been given to the specific issues raised in Parliament regarding racial minorities. While it is important to examine who represents minority interests, it is equally valuable to understand the key themes that emerge in parliamentary discussions. Identifying these themes provides insight into the concerns that receive parliamentary attention, how they are framed, and whether there are issues overlooked. This, in turn, helps to build a clearer picture of the parliamentary discourse on racial minority issues and the broader policy priorities at play. Hence, this chapter explores the types of racial minority issues represented in parliament, shifting away from the descriptive representation of race in parliament, and focusing on key themes raised.

To do so, we performed a content analysis of the 11,216 unique PQs raised in Singapore's 14th Parliament (2020 to 2024) to determine the questions that had a racial minority focus and the key issues these questions raised. We found that the majority of questions addressed religious life and practice, education, housing, and Halal food regulations.

A note on what this chapter is *not* about. Given the small sample size and short time frame of this research, this chapter does not attempt to evaluate whether the number of PQs on racial minority issues is statistically significant or sufficient. Nor does it evaluate the effectiveness of questions raised in representing minority interests. Furthermore, it does not comment on the design or effectiveness of the GRC. Finally, it does not present trends in the types of questions raised across time. Instead, this chapter provides a snapshot of PQs addressing racial minority interests in the 14th Parliament of Singapore.

In what follows, this chapter introduces the GRC and debates on racial minority representation, explains the research methodology used, and presents key findings on PQs raised in the 14th Parliament.

Background

The Group Representation Constituency (GRC)

In 1988, Singapore introduced the Group Representation Constituency (GRC) to ensure racial minority representation in Parliament. A GRC is a multi-member electoral division represented by a multiracial team from a single party, with at least one candidate from a racial minority group (Malay, Indian, or Others, including Eurasians). The President sets the size of GRCs, which typically ranges from three to six candidates [2]. During general elections, voters cast their ballot for a GRC team rather than individual candidates, and all members of the team with the highest votes in that constituency secure seats in Parliament [7].

The idea for the GRC emerged in 1982 when then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew noted that young voters often choose candidates based on personal preferences "without being sufficiently aware of the need to maintain a racially balanced party slate of candidates" [8]. He was concerned that this voting trend could lead to the underrepresentation of racial minorities in Parliament, given Singapore's Chinese-majority population. Subsequently, the Government tabled the GRC to maintain a multi-racial composition in Parliament. In the 1988 general elections, there were 13 GRCs, representing 39 out of 81 parliamentary seats [9]. The number of GRCs increased in subsequent elections, and by the 2020 election, there were 17 GRCs representing 79 out of the 93 available parliamentary seats [10].

Discussions on racial minority representation in Singapore

Since the implementation of the GRC, conversations around racial minority representation have largely focused on the design and relevance of the GRC system today. For instance, Chia argues that the GRC scheme might fail to ensure ongoing minority representation in parliament, as there is no mechanism to guarantee it between elections. She notes that under the Parliamentary Elections Act (PEA), a writ of election is only issued if *all* members of a GRC vacate their seats in Parliament. If a minority MP within the GRC vacates their seat, no by-election is required to be called to fill that vacancy, which could diminish minority representation in Parliament. By extension, if all minority MPs vacated their seats in their respective GRCs, leaving no racial minority representation in Parliament, no by-election is required to be called either. Chia points out that this requirement of calling a by-election only when *all* members of a GRC vacate their seat in parliament undermines its original purpose of

ensuring minority representation, as it only guarantees minority representation at the time of the election, not throughout the parliamentary term [3].

Moreover, having other GRC members cover for a vacant seat compromises the representation of residents' interests in Parliament. Under-representation in Parliament results in fewer parliamentary questions (PQs) filed as each MP can only file five PQs per Parliamentary session. Permitting vacancies in Parliament also means that residents will also have one less Town Councillor to manage the municipal affairs of the constituency, and disrupts the elector-to-MP ratio [3]. In short, permitting vacancies in parliament directly impacts the representation of residents' interests.

Apart from the GRC design, academics have also examined the relevance of GRCs today. Saat argues that the 2015 General Election shows Singaporeans no longer vote along racial lines, with minority MPs successfully leading GRCs and winning SMCs, suggesting that the original justification for GRCs may no longer apply. He noted that several PAP racial minority candidates led their GRCs to victory in the 2015 General Election, including Dr Yaacob Ibrahim in the Jalan Besar GRC, and K. Shanmugam in the Nee Soon GRC. In 2015, after then Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew's retirement, Yaacob became the key figure of Jalan Besar GRC, alongside Heng Chee How, Lily Neo, and Denise Phua. Although Jalan Besar had a 76.4% Chinese majority, with Malays at 7.2% and Indians at 13.7%, the PAP still won 67% of votes–a 8.4% increase from 2011–demonstrating that voters largely supported the party rather than the candidates' ethnicity. Likewise, Shanmugam, the anchor minister of the Nee Soon GRC team (comprising of himself, Kwek Hian Chuan Henry, Lee Bee Wah, Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim and Ng Kok Kwang Louis) led the PAP to win 66.8% of votes in Nee Soon, suggesting that ethnicity is not a key determinant of electoral results. Instead, there are other important factors like "party affiliation, national issues, economic stability, personality and charisma, ability to speak the local language or dialect, and local factors such as town council issues" that can influence electoral results. With these examples, Saat argues that the justification for GRCs–namely, the concern that Singaporeans will vote along ethnic lines–may no longer apply today [4].

On the other hand, then Finance Minister Lawrence Wong maintained that Singapore must still ensure a minimum number of minority legislators in Parliament, citing high profile racist incidents in 2021 as evidence that Singapore remains vulnerable to racial discrimination. He acknowledged that some believe Singaporeans would vote for the best candidates regardless of race, but emphasized the need for safeguards to protect racial minority interests [11].

This concern of racial minority representation in parliament resurfaced once more in 2023 when the PSP tabled a motion to abolish the GRC, citing the undesirable effects of the GRC on representation and electoral fairness, and highlighting other ways to ensure minority representation in parliament, such as the NCMP scheme and a proportional representation system. Those who voted against the motion cautioned the risk of voting along racial lines, the prevalence of racial discrimination, and the

importance of retaining safeguards to ensure racial minority representation in parliament [1]. In summary, these conversations around racial minority representation in Parliament often focus on the relevance and effectiveness of the GRC system, and its impact on voter choice, electoral fairness, and representation of resident's interests.

Those who examine racial minority representation in parliament beyond the GRC tend to study the profile of MPs who represent minority interests and their motivations for doing so. For instance, Tam studied whether racial minority MPs are more likely than Chinese MPs to represent the interest of racial minorities in Parliament. He conducted content analyses of the PQs raised in the 10th to 12th Parliament of Singapore (2002 to 2015) and found that racial minority MPs were significantly more likely (21.79 times) than Chinese MPs to raise PQs concerning racial minorities. Additionally, opposition MPs were also significantly more likely to raise racial-minority related questions compared to PAP MPs. He proposed two possible explanations for the latter finding: (i) that opposition MPs raised more racial minority-related questions because they use PQs as a tool to challenge and criticise PAP's policies on racial minorities, and (iii) that PAP racial minority MPs had to prioritise their party-affiliation rather than their co-ethnics [5].

Additionally, Ng et al. examined MPs' motivations for representing marginalised communities in parliament. They adopted a mixed-methods approach to analyse the representation of six marginalised communities in Singapore. Through conducting content analyses of 8246 parliamentary questions filed from 2011 to 2020, they found that in addition to gender and ethnic identities, MPs' prior careers and political tenure also influence their likelihood of representing minority communities in Parliament. Additionally, through in-depth interviews with seven MPs, they also found that shared experience, career-derived awareness, political freshness, and representative philosophies influence MPs' representation of minority interests in parliament [6].

In short, the research discussed thus far covers the institutional mechanisms that seek to ensure racial minority representation in parliament, and the actors that represent minority interests. This study shifts the focus from *how* to ensure racial minority representation and *who* represents minority interests, to *what* racial minority concerns are represented in parliament.

Data and methods

This study covers the 14th Parliament of Singapore (2020 to 2024). Prior to each parliamentary sitting, a Member may raise a question to any Minister on any matter in their portfolio or to other Members about a Bill, motion, or other public matter that the Member in question is responsible for. Each Member can file up to five questions for each sitting day, and not more than three of these questions can be filed for oral answer [12]. The first 1.5 hours of each parliamentary sitting is allocated for Question

Time, during which the relevant Minister will give a verbal reply to questions submitted for oral answers. Any Member can then raise supplementary questions. Unanswered questions at the end of Question Time can be rolled over to the next day or answered through written form. Questions that have been submitted for written answers will be answered in the Official Report [13]. All PQs and parliamentary proceedings are publicly available on the Singapore Parliament's Order Papers and Official Reports on Parliamentary Debates respectively.

With reference to the Order Paper, we built a dataset of the 11,216 unique PQs submitted during the 14th Parliament of Singapore. For each question, we recorded the date of the parliamentary sitting, the name of the MP who raised the question, the ministry which the question is directed to, and the political party of the MP.

To determine whether a question has a racial minority focus, we first established different categories of racial minorities with reference to Tam's categorisation [5]. While our study focuses on the political representation of racial minorities in Singapore, namely Malays, Indians, and Eurasians, it also examines the representation of Muslim and Hindu's interests in Parliament. This is because 99% of Malays in Singapore are Muslims and 57% of Indians are Hindus [14]. Given the high levels of intersectionality between Malays and Muslims, and Indians and Hindus, issues related to Muslims are likely to affect the interests of Malays and concerns related to Hindus are likely to affect the interests of Indians [5]. Hence, the racial minority categories used in this study are: Malay/Muslim only, Indian/Hindu only, Malay/Muslim and Indian/Hindu only, and racial minority in general.

Next, two coders identified words or phrases associated with each racial minority category by reading through the parliamentary questions and scanning the media for key racial issues raised in the 14th Parliament. The full list of associated words can be found in Table 3.1 under the appendix. They then used these words/phrases or "word tags" to filter for PQs that contain at least one of these word tags.

Thereafter, two coders independently reviewed the filtered PQs to confirm their racial minority focus. For example, Chong Kee Hiong's question below addresses the Ethnic Integration Policy (EIP), which sets racial quotas for public housing based on Singapore's racial composition [15]. The EIP limits allocations for new and rental flats once the racial quota is met, and resale transactions require both buyer and seller to be from the same ethnic group [16]. While designed to prevent racial enclaves, the policy can make it harder for racial minorities to sell their flats due to a smaller buyer pool. In such cases, the HDB offers flexibility, including more time to sell, waiving EIP limits, or buying back those units [17]. As the EIP disproportionately affects racial minorities, this question is classified as a "racial minority in general" question:

> **Chong Kee Hiong (5 October 2020):** To ask the Minister for National Development in each of the last three years (a) how many (i) Sale of Balance flats (SBF) and (ii) open booking flats remained unsold for more than two years; (b) what are the main reasons for this; and (c) whether the Ministry will consider lifting the Ethnic Integration Policy criterion for such flats [18].

Likewise, Leong Mun Wai's question on halal food stalls directly concerns Muslims, and has thus been coded as a "Malay/Muslim only" question:

> **Leong Mun Wai (11 November 2024):** To ask the Minister for National Development over the last five years (a) how many coffee shop operators received warnings or instructions to find replacement halal food stallholders within the same tenancy period; and (b) how many coffee shop operators did not have their tenancy agreement with HDB renewed as a result of not providing at least one halal food stall [19].

Pritam Singh's question on Tamil language classes in public schools directly concerns Indian students, and has thus been coded as an "Indian/Hindu only" question:

> **Pritam Singh (26 February 2024):** To ask the Minister for Education (a) what was the overall cohort size and of that the total number of students taking Tamil and Non-Tamil Indian languages (NTILs) for each year from 2013 to 2023 for (i) PSLE (ii) N-level (iii) O-level and (iv) A-level examinations respectively; and (b) what is the difference in funding, expressed as a percentage, between Tamil language as an official mother tongue language and each of the other five NTILs per student [20].

Some questions pertain to more than one group of racial minorities. For example, Leon Perera's question on food options to meet halal and vegetarian diets address the dietary needs of both Muslims and Hindus, and thus have been classified a "Malay/Muslim and Indian/Hindu only question":

> **Leon Perera (15 February 2022):** To ask the Minister for Education whether guidelines can be provided on food options in local universities to ensure that (i) an adequate mix of food options are provided to meet the diverse dietary needs of students, such as halal and vegetarian diets and (ii) places with high footfall and residential areas on campus have a minimum quota of such food options [21].

Some questions contained one or more of the identified word tags, but did not exclusively address race. For instance, He Ting Ru's question on fair employment practices addresses discrimination on the basis of several identity markers, including but not limited to race. Hence, this question was not coded as a question with a racial focus.

> **He Ting Ru (4 September 2020):** To ask the Minister for Manpower whether she can provide an update on the latest tripartite discussions relating to fair employment practices, in particular discriminatory hiring and human resource practices, including nationality, race, age and religious-based discrimination [22].

Likewise, Desmond Choo's question contained the identified word tags but addressed terrorism and racial harmony more generally. Hence it was not classified as a question with a racial minority focus.

> **Desmond Choo (16 Feb 2021):** To ask the Minister for Home Affairs in view of the recent detention of a teenager who was preparing to conduct terrorist activities in Singapore (a) whether the investigations are conclusive that he was operating as a "lone wolf"; (b) what are the current efforts to promote a better understanding of race and racial issues amongst younger Singaporeans; and (c) what further efforts are needed within the schools and youth groups [23].

Questions that clarify general demographic breakdowns were also not classified as PQs with a racial focus, such as Associate Professor Jamus Jerome Lim's question on the beneficiaries of the Job Support Scheme:

> **Associate Professor Jamus Jerome Lim (3 November 2020):** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister andMinister for Finance whether there are statistics pertaining to the ultimate beneficiaries of the Jobs Support Scheme by (i) income quintile (ii) race (iii)educational status and (iv) gender [24].

Questions that address Mother Tongue Languages for the Singapore population in general were also excluded from PQs with a racial focus:

> **He Ting Ru (3 November 2020):** To ask the Minister for Education under the SGUnited Skills programme, what provisions have been made to cater for potential applicants who are not conversant in English and whether some of the courses and training schemes can be offered in mother tongue languages [24].

Questions on the Israel-Palestine conflict, including Liang Eng Hwa's question below, were not coded as racial minority-focused PQs because concerns about this issue span across all ethnic groups in Singapore, with both majority and minority communities expressing strong views.

> **Liang Eng Hwa (6 November 2023):** To ask the Minister for Foreign Affairs (a) whether the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas has any bearing on our diplomatic position in the Middle East region; (b) what more can Singapore do to help alleviate the severe humanitarian crisis in Gaza; and

(c) how do we continue to safeguard and uphold our multi-racial and multi-religious peace and harmony amidst the conflict [25].

Finally, questions about racial and religious harmony, including Yip Hon Weng's query below, were not classified as racial minority-focused PQs because they broadly address social cohesion:

> **Yip Hon Weng (6 November 2023):** To ask the Minister for Foreign Affairs (a) what is the potential impact of the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict on Singaporeans and non-Singaporean residents of various ethnicities and religions; and (b) what lessons can we draw from this conflict to further strengthen multiculturalism and religious harmony in our society [25].

After independently reviewing the filtered set of PQs to identify those with a racial minority focus, the two coders cross-checked their findings to confirm which questions addressed racial minority interests. The two coders then separately read all the PQs that have a racial minority focus and hand-coded each question according to their themes. Thereafter, the coders cross-checked their findings to confirm the themes assigned to each question. The code frame comprising topical criteria and examples is provided in Table 3.2 of the Appendix.

Results

Of the 11,216 unique PQs raised in Singapore's 14th Parliament, approximately 1% specifically addressed racial minority interests.

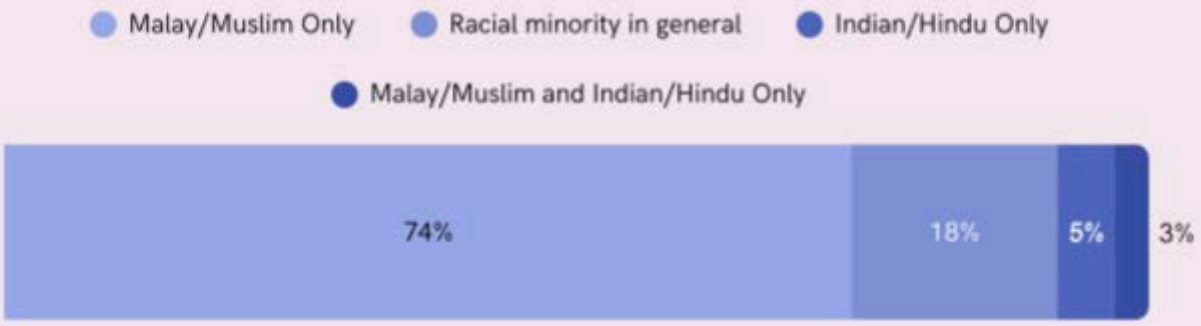
Figure 3.1: Questions raised in Singapore's 14th Parliament (Base: n=11,216)



Among questions that addressed racial minority interests, more than 7 in 10 questions addressed Malay/Muslim issues, close to 1 in 5 addressed issues about racial minorities in general, and 5.1% addressed interests related to the Indian/Hindu community in Singapore.

Figure 3.2: Breakdown of questions by racial focus

Among PQs that address racial minority interests

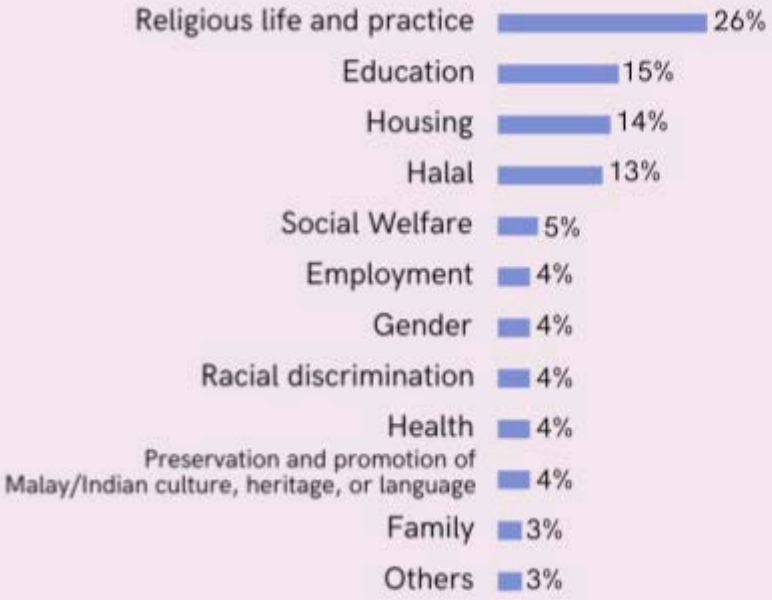


(Base: n=157)

The top topics of these questions are religious life and practice, education, housing, and Halal food regulation, each accounting for more than 10% of PQs asked.

Figure 3.3: Breakdown of questions by theme

Among PQs that address racial minority interests



(Base n=157)

When examining questions by their racial category, most questions addressing racial minority concerns focused on housing and racial discrimination. Questions addressing Malay/Muslim concerns primarily addressed religious life and practices, while those addressing Indian/Hindu concerns centered on education. Additionally, questions on both Malay/Muslim and Indian/Hindu concerns often dealt with Halal food regulation and education.

Figure 3.4: Breakdown of questions by racial category and theme

Theme	Total	Malay/Muslim only	Racial minority in general	Indian/Hindu only	Malay/Muslim and Indian/Hindu only
Religious life and practice	26%	35%	0%	0%	0%
Education	15%	14%	3%	63%	25%
Housing	14%	7%	48%	0%	0%
Halal	13%	16%	0%	0%	50%
Social Welfare	5%	7%	0%	0%	0%
Employment	4%	4%	7%	0%	0%
Gender	4%	6%	0%	0%	0%
Racial discrimination	4%	0%	21%	0%	0%
Health	4%	3%	7%	13%	0%
Preservation and promotion of Malay/ Indian culture, heritage, or language	4%	1%	10%	13%	25%
Family	3%	4%	0%	0%	0%
Others	3%	3%	3%	13%	0%
Base	157	116	29	8	4

Discussion

The analysis reveals four key themes in racial minority-related parliamentary questions during the 14th Parliament: religious life and practices, education, housing, and Halal food regulations. Each theme was shaped by significant events and ongoing policy discussions during this period.

The majority of the questions focused on religious life and practices, potentially due to multiple investigations between 2020 and 2023 regarding deviant religious teachings, alleged abuse of power, and the sexualization of female religious teachers online. For example, in November 2020, the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Muis) investigated a self-proclaimed prophet who was not a registered or qualified religious teacher under the Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS). The accused offered spiritual healing services and engaged in practices such as having "spiritual wives," gambling to help others, and claiming to be a prophet—activities that contradicted Islamic teachings [26]. In response, in April 2021, Faisal Manap raised a question in parliament to the Minister for Social and Family Development and the Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs, asking for clarification on the investigation's details and outcome [27].

Later that same month, Muis also conducted an audit of Madrasah Irsyad Zuhri Al-Islamiah to review its financial transactions and its relationship with Irsyad Trust Limited (ITL), in order to identify any fraudulent or illegal activities [28]. Faisal Manap followed up by asking several questions about the investigation process, the details of ITL, and whether any transactions took place between the Madrasah and ITL [27].

Some of these investigations into religious institutions overlap with investigations on sexual harassment, hence potentially explaining 4% of questions focused on gender too. In May 2021, police investigated an online poll that ranked female Islamic religious teachers based on their sexual attractiveness [29]. The poll sparked public outrage and was condemned by various figures, including then-President Halimah Yacob, Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs Masagos Zulkifli, Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Communications and Information Rahayu Mahzam, MP Nadia Ahmad Samdin, and several religious teachers, as well as the Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE) [30]. In response, several MPs, including Faisal Manap, Mariam Jaafar, and Zhulkarnain Rahim, along with NMP Dr. Shahirah Abdullah, raised questions in parliament regarding the progress of the investigation, the prevalence of sexual harassment, the existence of whistleblowing or reporting channels, and support systems for survivors of sexual assault in Madrasahs [31]. In short, the investigations conducted between 2020 and 2023 could have contributed to the surge in parliamentary questions focused on religious life and practice, as they raised pressing concerns about the conduct and oversight of religious institutions and individuals.

The next most frequently asked questions were related to education, particularly concerning religious schools, teachers, and Mother Tongue Language (MTL) offerings

in schools. These questions addressed key events that happened before and during the 14th Parliament, such as Madrasah Aljunied Al-Islamiah becoming the first Madrasah to offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme in 2019, with follow-up questions in 2021 on whether the programme would be extended to more Madrasahs and supporting Madrasah students' development [32]. Additionally, there were inquiries about the $1 million training initiative for Asatizah Recognition Scheme-certified religious teachers and whether the training would include non-Islamic courses like mental health and coding [32]. Questions also focused on MTL education, particularly in pre-primary schools, addressing the number of MTL educators, the certification programs for them, and the availability of MTL classes in pre-schools and kindergartens [33]. Other MPs also raised questions on the participation rates, funding, and allocation of resources for Tamil and Non-Tamil Indian languages (NTILs) in PSLE, "N", "O" and "A" level examinations from 2013 to 2023 [34].

Several questions also focused on the impact and implementation of the Ethnic Integration Policy (EIP) for HDB flats, particularly regarding its effect on the sale, purchase, and rental of flats in Singapore. Key concerns include the unsold flats under the Sale of Balance Flats (SBF) scheme, the challenges faced by racial minority sellers, and the potential need for adjustments to the EIP in response to changes in household demographics, such as increasing inter-racial marriages [35, 33, 36]. The questions also explore the support for Malay families under the Project DIAN@M3 scheme, the economic impact of EIP constraints, and how policies could be modified to alleviate the financial burden on homeowners affected by these rules [36, 37].

These questions were raised amid ongoing discussions in the media, National Budget debates, and Parliament about the challenges of the Ethnic Integration Policy (EIP). Key concerns included the financial strain on minority homeowners unable to sell their flats due to race-based quotas, as well as the effectiveness of the buyback scheme introduced by HDB [38]. While some MPs, including Sylvia Lim from the Workers' Party, called for a review of race-based policies, others defended the EIP's role in fostering racial harmony [39]. These parliamentary questions reflect the continued debate over the relevance and impact of the EIP in today's society.

Finally, several questions also focus on the regulation, certification, and monitoring of halal food practices in Singapore. They address concerns such as the progress of MUIS' investigations into halal certification practices, the use of halal labels by food operators, and MUIS's review of halal certification bodies [40]. Other questions focus on halal food availability in public spaces like HDB estates and universities, including the criteria for locating halal food stalls and the management of halal certification in the food industry [41]. Additionally, there are questions on the actions taken against food importers using false halal certificates, and measures to prevent halal certificate forgery [42].

Conclusion

This chapter found that 1% of the total number of PQs raised in Singapore's 14th Parliament addressed racial minority concerns. Majority of these questions addressed Malay/Muslim interests (74%), followed by racial minority issues in general (18%), Indian/Hindu interests (5%), and Malay/Muslim and Indian/Hindu specific interests (3%). Additionally, these questions mostly addressed concerns on religious life and practice (26%), education (15%), housing (14%), and Halal food regulation (13%).

The findings highlight the key concerns and policy discussions during the 14th Parliament. Some of the PQs reflect long-standing policy concerns, such as the EIP, which has been debated, reviewed, and revised over time to address challenges faced by racial minorities when selling flats, and to allow for more flexibility. Similarly, questions on improving access to and quality of education for racial minority students, particularly the MTL curriculum, have been consistent over time. Other themes, like gender and racial discrimination, though less frequently represented in PQs, reflect troubling societal trends, such as the rise of technology-facilitated sexual violence, online hate speech, and offline race-related incidents. These issues were discussed in parliament to address sexual harassment in religious institutions (in addition to schools and workplaces) as well as racial discrimination and online hate. The findings thus build a clearer picture on the long-standing and emerging concerns that arise in parliamentary discourse on racial minority issues.

That said, the study's findings are subject to several limitations. The study examines PQs in the 14th Parliament only, and hence does not reflect the representation of and trends in racial minority issues in Parliament across time. Additionally, given the small sample size of PQs short time frame, the findings do not inform readers whether the number of PQs on racial minority concerns raised are significant or sufficient. Rather, the findings should only be taken as indicative of the key themes present in the 14th Parliament alone. These limitations suggest opportunities for future research, particularly in tracking trends in key themes over time and evaluating the impact of PQs on policy outcomes.

Moving forward, several areas are worth exploring in future studies. First, how has the representation of racial minority interests through PQs evolved over time? Second, does the change in number of or type of racial minority-related PQs shape the formulation of public policy in Singapore? Third, how effective are PQs in advocating for racial minority interests, if at all? Addressing these questions will help us to better understand the adequacy and effectiveness of racial minority representation in parliament.

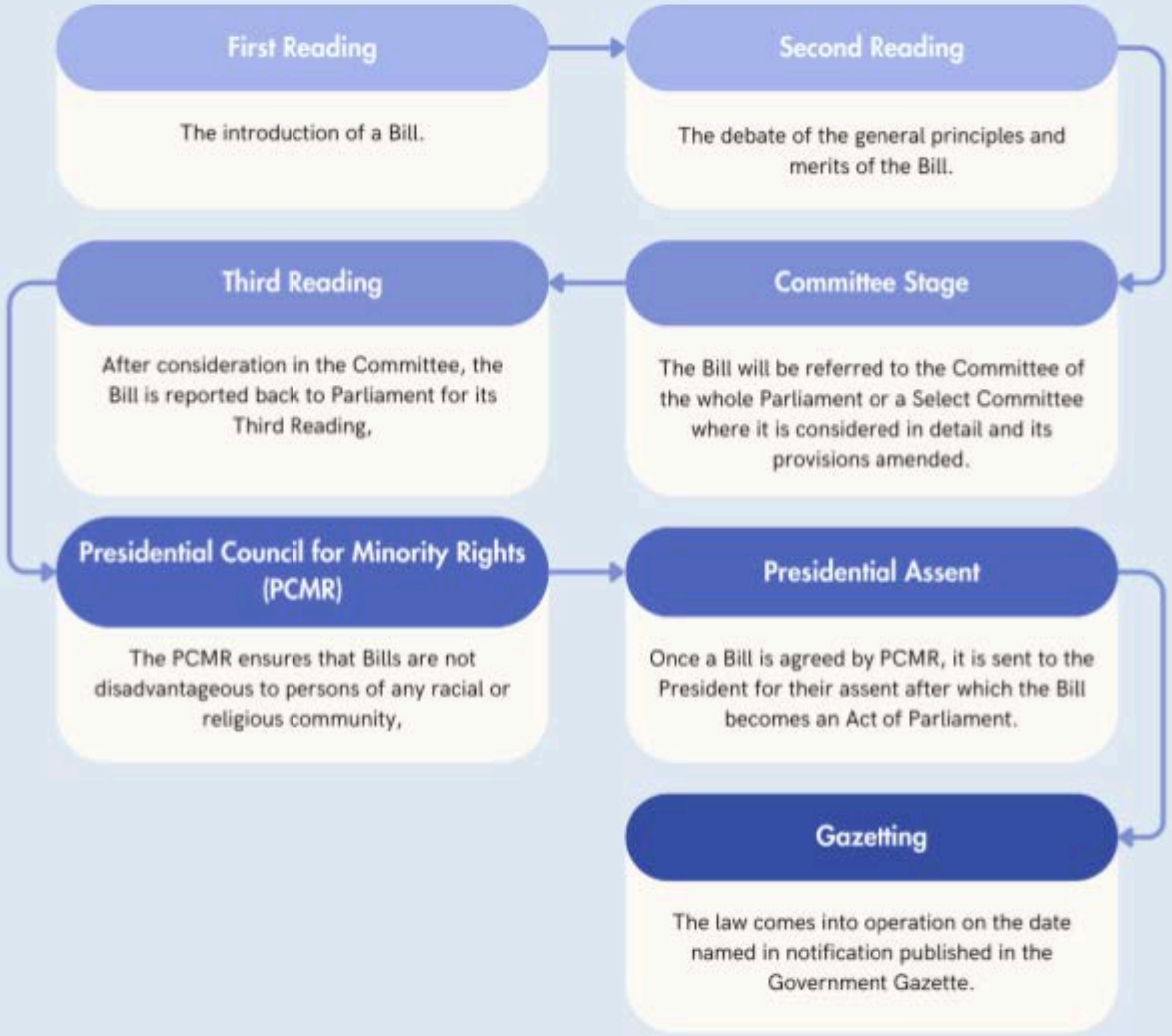
Chapter 4: Bills

By Josephine L.

Introduction

One of Parliament's main functions is to make laws for the country. Before a law is passed, it is first introduced in Parliament as a draft called a "Bill". Bills are usually introduced by a Minister on behalf of the Government. However, any Member of the House can introduce a Bill known as a Private Member's Bill. All Bills must go through three readings in Parliament and receive the President's assent to become an Act of Parliament or a law.

Figure 4.1: Principal stages in the consideration of Bills



At the first reading of a bill, there is no debate, and the title of the bill is read out. The bill is made available to members for them to do research and prepare comments. At the second reading, the bill's general merits and principles are debated before a vote is taken. If sufficient members support the Bill, the title of the Bill will be read out again, hence the term "Second Reading".

Elected Member of Parliaments (MPs), Non-Constituency Members of Parliament (NCMPs), and Nominated Members of Parliament (NMPs) can debate all bills.

All bills are voted on during the second and third reading. For bills that do not pertain to amendments to the Constitution, a simple majority is required, meaning at least 50% of the votes, in the second and third readings. However, for bills pertaining to amendments to the Constitution, at least two-thirds, i.e.,66%, of the votes are required.

MPs, NCMPs, and NMPs are eligible to vote on bills that do not involve amendments to the Constitution. However, only MPs and NCMPs have the voting privilege for bills proposing amendments to the Constitution; NMPs are not permitted to vote on such amendments.

Table 4.1: Rights of MPs, NCMPs and NMPs in the Parliament

Ability	MPs	NCMPs	NMPs
Able to introduce Private Member's Bill	Yes	Yes	Yes
Able to debate on all bills	Yes	Yes	Yes
Able to vote on all bills, except those concerning amendments to the Constitution and public funds	Yes	Yes	Yes
Able to vote on all bills, including those concerning amendments to the Constitution and public funds	Yes	Yes	No

In this chapter, we analyse:

- Bills introduced and passed; this includes bills pertaining to Constitutional amendments
- Bills that received 'noes' votes in its second and third readings
- Bills that garnered more contributions from MPs during debates
- Count of bills discussed by each group (PAP backbenchers, WP MPs, PSP NCMPs, NMPs)
- Count of bills discussed by MPs

Bills introduced and passed

In the 14th Parliament of Singapore, a total of 189 bills have been introduced (up until November 2024), with 188 bills passed at the time of writing.

Of the bills passed, two were Private Member's Bills:

1. Society of Saint Maur Incorporation (Amendment) Bill. In accordance with the Standing Order, the Bill was referred to a Select Committee before it was subsequently passed.
2. Good Samaritan Food Donation Bill. Introduced by Louis Ng (PAP), the bill aims to reduce food wastage and increase food donation.

All other bills passed were introduced by the Government and there have been no Government defeats in the passing of bills. In part, this is due to Singapore's Westminster model of parliament. In Westminster systems, the party which commands a majority in the legislature also forms the Government. This is in contrast to presidential systems such as that of the United States, where the Government and the legislature are often controlled by different parties. The practical effect of this is that in Westminster systems, the government of the day is often able to pass most legislation on their agenda. In the United Kingdom, this system has sometimes been described as an "elective dictatorship".

Despite this, however, other countries with a similar Westminster model of parliament do sometimes face Government defeats in the passing of bills, particularly where they have coalition governments or intra-party divisions within the ruling party. This includes the Westminster governments of the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia.

The lack of such Government defeats in Singapore can be attributed to two key factors. Firstly, the People's Action Party (PAP) holds a supermajority in the parliament, contributing to a dominant party system. This majority allows the PAP to pass legislation with minimal opposition, and without having to obtain the approval of any coalition partners. As highlighted above, a bill that does not pertain to amendments to

the Constitution, can be passed by a simple majority in votes. For a bill pertaining to amendments to the Constitution, it can be passed with two-thirds of the votes.

Secondly, the strict enforcement of party discipline through the party whip ensures that PAP members vote in line with the party's stance. In the current Parliament, there has been no indication that the party whip has been lifted for any readings of bills.

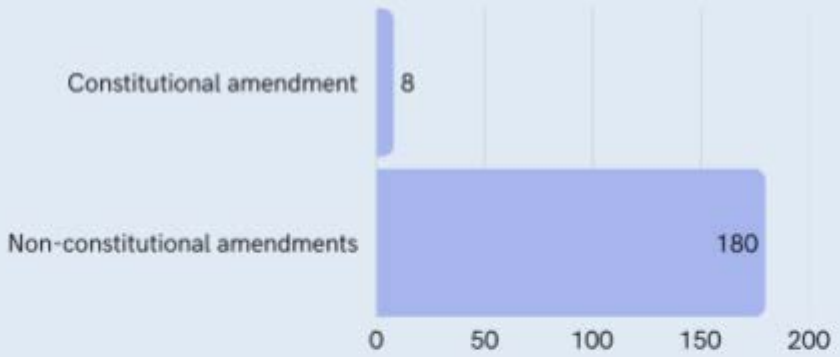
This phenomenon carries several potential implications:

- **Efficiency in policy implementation:** The ability to pass legislation with minimal opposition allows for efficiency in policy implementation, particularly crucial during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Risk of insufficient scrutiny:** Without adequate scrutiny and opposition, there is a risk that legislation which may not be in the best interest of all citizens could be passed.
- **Reduced political engagement:** The inevitability of legislative outcomes can create a sense of disenfranchisement among the public, leading to lower levels of political engagement and civic participation.

Only one private member's bill was rejected for second reading; Hazel Poa had introduced a bill to amend the Parliament (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act 1962 to give Parliament the flexibility to authorise the back payment of the allowance of a MP who has been suspended from the service of Parliament by resolution. The question to introduce this new law was vetoed.

Of the 188 bills passed, eight were related to constitutional amendments. Bills with constitutional amendments must record divisions, i.e. vote of each Member is collected and tabulated, to ascertain whether it has the support of two-thirds of the total number of Members of Parliament (excluding nominated Members).

Figure 4.2: Number of bills passed

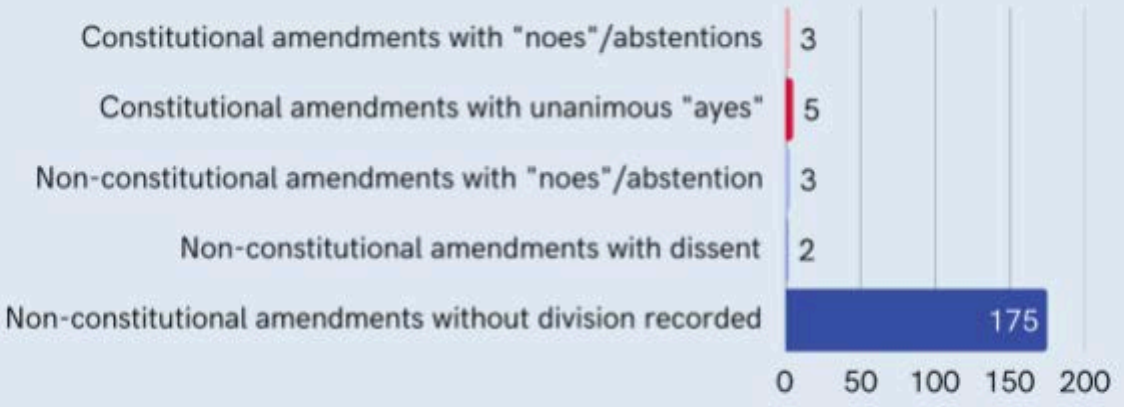


Of the eight bills relating to constitutional amendments, three recorded 'noes' votes and/or abstentions. In addition to the eight bills with constitutional amendments that

recorded divisions, three bills recorded divisions and all three received ‘noes’ votes and/or abstentions.

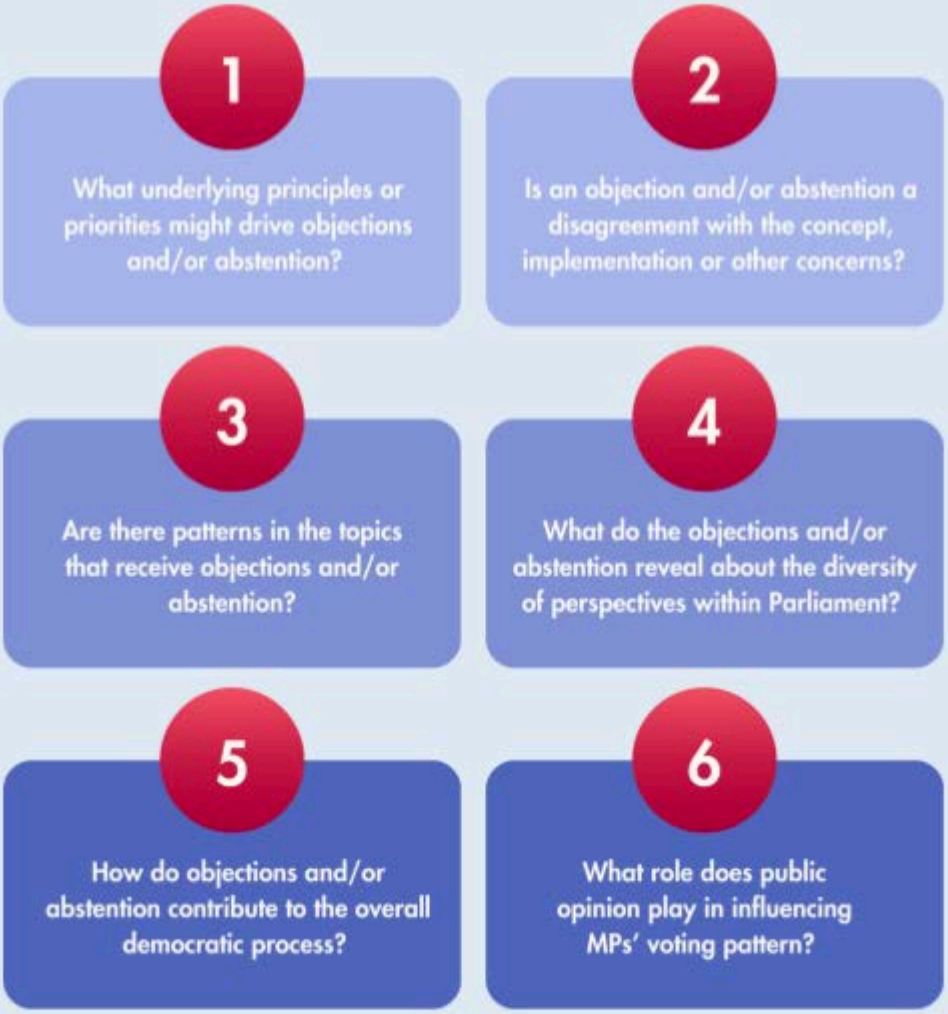
There were two bills that recorded dissents. Recoding a dissent is different from calling for a division. Where a member of parliament merely wishes to have their dissent recorded in the Votes and Proceedings and Official Report, they may do so without calling for a division by informing the Speaker or Chairman.

Figure 4.3: Breakdown of votes among Bills passed



It is uncommon for bills to receive 'noes' votes, abstention and/or request for dissent to be recorded, so such instances are highlighted as they reflect opposing views on issues that are likely more significant and/or complex than usual.

In reading such instances, these questions offer a lens to analyse the decisions, encouraging reflection on the decision-making process and its broader significance.



Bills with 'noes' votes, abstention, and/or request for dissent to be recorded

Three (3) bills concerning Constitutional amendments with 'noes' votes

#1: Constitution of the Republic of Singapore (Amendment No 2) Bill

Amendment to allow the President to exercise her discretionary powers in the appointment of the new Chief of Digital and Intelligence Service (DIS)

- SAF set up its new Digital and Intelligence Service (DIS).
- DIS' objective is to provide timely intelligence and safeguard Singapore against digital threats, including cyber attacks and electronic warfare.
- The above was approved as an amendment to the Singapore Armed Forces and Other Matters Bill.
- The amendment to the constitution allows the President to exercise her discretionary powers in the appointment of the new Chief of DIS, in the same way that the President does in the appointment of the Chiefs of the Air Force, Army and Navy.
- Pritam Singh (WP) represented that "Workers' Party has no fundamental objection to this newly established appointment and substantively support the Singapore Armed Forces and Other Matters Bill."
- However, WP voted "against the Constitution (Amendment) Bill as a matter of principle." It was explained that "WP is on record in Parliament, with regard to the prospect of a gridlock if any elected President withholds nominations to key appointments, particularly in the context of a new Government, which defeats the PAP at the General Elections."

Noes:
Louis Chua Kheng Wee (WP)
Gerald Giam Yean Song (WP)
He Ting Ru (WP)
Sylvia Lim (WP)
Muhamad Faisal Abdul Manap (WP)
Leon Perera (WP)
Pritam Singh (WP)
Dennis Tan Lip Fong (WP)

Abstention: Nil

#2: Constitution of the Republic of Singapore (Amendment No 3) Bill

Amendment to allow Parliament to define and protect marriage, amongst other amendments

- The amendment to the Constitution prevents the definition of marriage as a union between a man and a woman from being struck down by the courts based on constitutional challenge.
- During the National Day Rally in 2022, then Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong had said that such issues should be decided by Parliament, where there can be full debate that accounts for different perspectives and considerations, and is not tied to a binary (win-lose) decision like in the courts.
- The PSP voted against the move, preferring that the issue be decided by a national referendum rather than by Parliament to "allow the many Singaporeans who have expressed concerns to have a say in this matter".
- He Ting Ru (WP) and Sylvia Lim (WP) abstained from the vote, arguing that the amendment immunises any law or executive action based on a heterosexual definition of marriage from judicial scrutiny. In other words, Parliament can define marriage however it wants, and if that definition violates your constitutional rights, you can no longer challenge it in court.

Noes:
Leong Mun Wai (PSP)
Hazel Poa (PSP)

Abstention:
He Ting Ru (WP)
Sylvia Lim (WP)

#3: Constitution of the Republic of Singapore (Amendment No 3) Bill

Amendment to create frameworks for the President and Ministers to take on international appointments in their private capacities

- Then Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Wong explained there is value in having the President represented on certain international bodies. However, "such an arrangement is currently not clearly provided for by the Constitution. And that is why constitutional amendments are needed to enable the President to take on roles where he acts independently in his private capacity."
- This was backdated to 14 September 2023, when President Tharman assumed office.
- Gerald Giam (WP) represented that "Singaporeans justifiably expect [Tharman Shanmugaratnam] to wholeheartedly dedicate his time and energy to fulfil his national responsibilities. Allowing the President to take up external appointments in his private capacity could detract from his substantial public duties. For this reason, the WP will vote against this Bill."
- Leong Mun Wai (PSP) raised that "the speed with which these constitutional amendments are being enacted, as well as the fact that they are being backdated, have created unnecessary unease among Singaporeans. A segment of Singaporeans now perceives that the Constitution is being specially amended to enable President Tharman to continue serving in international organisations despite taking up his new office as President of Singapore."

Noes:
Louis Chua Kheng Wee (WP)
Gerald Giam Yean Song (WP)
Leong Mun Wai (PSP)
Jamus Jerome Lim (WP)
Sylvia Lim (WP)
Muhamad Faisal Abdul Manap (WP)
Pritam Singh (WP)
Dennis Tan Lip Fong (WP)

Abstention:
Nil

There were three other bills not concerning Constitutional amendments where division was recorded with 'noes' votes and/or abstention for second and third readings:

Two (2) bills not concerning Constitutional amendments with 'noes' votes

#1: Foreign Interference (Countermeasures) Bill

(1) Dealing with Online Hostile Information Campaigns - HICs - conducted by foreign parties
(2) Dealing with foreign interference through local proxies

- FICA was passed in Parliament to strengthen the Government's ability to prevent, detect, and disrupt foreign interference in domestic politics conducted through (a) hostile information campaigns ("HICs") and (b) the use of local proxies. [1]
- Critics raised concerns that FICA's broad definitions of "foreign interference" and "public interest" could lead to overreach, possibly restricting legitimate activities like academic collaborations, civil society work, and media reporting/ commentary. [2]
- There were also questions about lack of robust judicial oversight, as appeals against directions issued under FICA go to the Home Affairs Minister first before an advisory tribunal, rather than the courts. [2]
- The Bill was introduced on 20 October 2022 and second reading was held on 29 November 2022. Louis Ng (PAP) questioned the "interval between the First and Second Readings of the Bill." and highlighted that "some felt that the interval was too short". This is despite the government stating that "this topic has been extensively discussed and debated for over three years."

Pritam Singh called for a division

Noes:
Louis Chua Kheng Wee (WP)
Gerald Giam Yean Song (WP)
He Ting Ru (WP)
Leong Mun Wai (PSP)
Jamus Jerome Lim (WP)
Sylvia Lim (WP)
Muhamad Faisal Abdul Manap (WP)
Leon Perera (WP)
Pritam Singh (WP)
Raeesah Khan (WP)
Dennis Tan Lip Fong (WP)

Abstention:
Shahira Abdullah (NMP)
Tan Yia Swam (NMP)

#2: Penal Code (Amendment) Bill

- This amendment repealed 377A of the Penal Code, which criminalised acts of gross indecency between males, whether in public or private.
- PAP did not lift its whip, which meant its MPs had to vote according to the party's position.
- On the other hand, WP lifted its party whip and Pritam Singh explained he had lifted the whip for the WP MPs, to allow those not in favour of the repeal of Section 377A to "vote freely". [3]
- Dennis Tan (WP) and Gerald Giam (WP) voted against the appeal, guided by their own faith and beliefs. Dennis Tan further called 377A a "symbolic social marker", the removal of which "may make it difficult for parents in setting down their family and social values at home".
- Hoon Hian Teck (NMP) voted against the repeal, believing that it "services to provide an important marker to preserve the present structure of the family and its supporting institution".

Janil Puthucheary called for a division

Noes:
Gerald Giam Yean Song (WP)
Hoon Hian Teck (NMP)
Dennis Tan Lip Fong (WP)

Abstention: Nil

One (1) bill not concerning Constitutional amendments with abstention recorded

#3: Insurance (Amendment) Bill

- German insurer Allianz launched a bid for a majority share in Income Insurance. Whilst Income Insurance is no longer a co-operative, its social mission remains.
- On the same day the Bill was first read, the Government blocked Allianz's planned offer in its current form, due to concerns over the deal structure and Income's ability to continue its social mission. [4]
- The bill amendment paves the way for the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) to consider the views of the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) when an application for regulatory approval involves an insurer that is either a cooperative or linked to one.
- MPs raised concerns about the urgency to pass the Bill, with members of the Workers' Party abstaining from voting.
- Jamus Lim (WP) expressed concern about the lack of coordinated discussion between MAS and MCCY regarding the proposed deal. He said, "There appears to have been multiple breakdowns of communication between different governmental entities in the exchange of pertinent information over the transaction."
- He Ting Ru (WP) noted the bill may be seen as "retrospective", and should not be taken lightly. "This is especially so when it adversely affects the rights and interests of persons, and has the potential to hurt Singapore's reputation for certainty, stability and predictability of our commercial laws," she said.

Sylvia Lim requested for abstention to be recorded

Noes: Nil

Abstention:
Louis Chua Kheng Wee (WP)
Gerald Giam Yean Song (WP)
He Ting Ru (WP)
Jamus Jerome Lim (WP)
Sylvia Lim (WP)
Muhamad Faisal Abdul Manap (WP)
Dennis Tan Lip Fong (WP)

Two (2) bills with dissent recorded

#1: Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill

(1) Dealing with Online Hostile Information Campaigns - HICs - conducted by foreign parties
(2) Dealing with foreign interference through local proxies

- Amongst other changes, proposed to increase the GST rate from 7% to 8% from 1 January 2023, and from 8% to 9% from 1 January 2024.
- Opposition MPs questioned the timing of the GST rate increase, highlighting inflationary pressures faced by Singapore in recent months and stressed that there were alternative revenue options available.
- PAP MPs raised concerns on the impact of a GST hike on the "sandwiched" class of workers.

The following MPs requested for their dissent to be recorded:

Louis Chua Kheng Wee (WP)
Gerald Giam Yean Song (WP)
He Ting Ru (WP)
Jamus Jerome Lim (WP)
Sylvia Lim (WP)
Muhamad Faisal Bin Abdul Manap (WP)
Leon Perera (WP)
Pritam Singh (WP)
Dennis Tan Lip Fong (WP)
Hazel Poa (PSP)
Leong Mun Wai (PSP)

#2: Road Traffic (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill

• Bill removes mandatory minimum sentences for first-time traffic offenders who commit dangerous driving offences that cause grievous hurt or death, in a bid to prevent them from being overly punished. • In objecting the Bill, Hazel Poa explained: "We support the other amendments in the Bill, which include, streamlining the commencement dates of disqualification periods and strengthening the Traffic Police's suspension powers. However, PSP cannot support the amendment to remove mandatory minimum sentence and mandatory minimum disqualification periods for first-time offenders at a time of rising traffic fatalities and fatal speeding accidents."	The following MPs requested for their dissent to be recorded: Hazel Poa (PSP) Leong Mun Wai (PSP)

Other Key Bills

Among the bills that have been passed, a total of 18 bills are identified for analysis, guided by pre-defined criteria:

Criteria	Basis
Bills concerning Constitutional amendments	Impact fundamental changes to Singapore's legal framework and governance structure
Bills with recorded 'Noes' votes, abstention and/or dissent	Indicate (1) opposing views taken by MPs and/or political parties, (2) potentially stronger and/or broader implications compared to bills without recorded divisions and/or dissent
Bills with the highest number of speakers, excluding those already identified based on the above two criteria, limited to five in total	Indicate more complex and/or important issues are being debated

Of these 18 bills, those with 'Noes' votes, abstention and/or dissent recorded (total of eight (8) bills) are described and analysed prior to this section. The remaining 10 bills are analysed in this section.

Five (5) bills concerning Constitutional amendments without 'noes' votes

#1: Constitution of the Republic of Singapore (Amendment) Bill

Restructure Singapore Legal Service:
(a) establish a separate Judicial Service, overseen by a new Judicial Service Commission (JSC); and
(b) make consequential changes to the Legal Service, which will be overseen by a reconstituted Legal Service Commission (LSC)

- Parliament approved the creation of the Judicial Service Commission (JSC).
- JSC oversees judicial officers such as State Courts judges and assistant registrars in the Supreme Court.
- Previously, a single Legal Service Commission (LSC) oversaw officers deployed to both the judicial and legal branches.
- The LSC was reconstituted to oversee legal service officers such as prosecutors, law drafters and government legal advisers.
- Edwin Tong explained that this "shift to a specialist model is not so much to address the problems of today, but really a matter of forward planning, preparing for the challenges of the future."

#2: Constitution of the Republic of Singapore (Amendment) Bill

(1) amends Article 45 of the Constitution relating to the disqualification criteria for a Member of Parliament,
(2) amends Articles 37E and 72 of the Constitution relating to the disqualification criteria for members of the Council of Presidential Advisers,; and the Presidential Council for Minority Rights

- An MP will be disqualified from his position if he is fined at least S$10,000, up from the current S$2,000, among other changes to the legislation.
- The Bill was introduced about two months after a parliamentary committee investigating former Workers' Party (WP) MP Raeesah Khan delivered its final report to Parliament.
- The report proposed that Ms Raeesah be fined S$35,000 and that WP chief Pritam Singh and party vice-chairman Faisal Manap be referred to the Public Prosecutor to consider criminal proceedings for their conduct before the committee. Parliament approved the proposals.
- Lim Biow Chuan (PAP) and Murali Pillai (PAP) suggested specifying types of offences that would disqualify an MP.

#3: Constitution of the Republic of Singapore (Amendment) Bill

- Amendments to the Misuse of Drugs Act and the Constitution introduced a new legislative framework for psychoactive substances, by criminalising the trafficking, manufacture, import, export, possession and consumption of such substances.
- Any substance that is abused for a high is now defined as a psychoactive substance. This excludes substances such as alcohol, caffeine, tobacco, food additives and health products.
- The amendments also increased the penalties for drug possession.
- MPs raised questions during the debate, but all stood in support of the Bills.

#4: Constitution of the Republic of Singapore (Amendment No 2) Bill

- The amendments allow certain oaths to be taken via a live video link or live television link created using a remote communication technology.

#5: Constitution of the Republic of Singapore (Amendment) Bill

- Linked to the Platform Workers Bill 2024, which aims to strengthen protections for platform workers providing platform services, in the areas of housing and retirement adequacy, financial protection in the case of work injury and representation.
- The above required consequential amendments to the Constitution, through the Constitution of the Republic of Singapore (Amendment) Bill, to prohibit members of any platform work association or of any body or association affiliated to platform work associations from being a member of the Public Service Commission, Public Service personnel boards, Judicial Service Commission and Legal Service Commission.

(Limited to) Five (5) bills with the highest number of speakers, excluding those already identified based on the first two criteria

#1: Platform Workers Bill

- Platform workers refer to those who provide ride-hailing or delivery services for an online platform, and are subject to the platform's control.
- The Bill proposes to increase the amount of contributions paid into the Central Provident Fund (CPF) accounts of platform workers born after Jan 1, 1995, and older workers who opt in. [5]
- It also proposes a standardised work injury compensation regime for these workers, with the same level of coverage as employees.
- Additionally, platform workers will be able to bargain collectively through union-like representative bodies. [6]

#2: Retirement and re-employment (Amendment) Bill

- Amendments allow the Minister for Manpower to prescribe a retirement age and re-employment age of up to 65 and 70 respectively.
- Minister for Manpower stated "raising the retirement and re-employment ages provides the flexibility for older workers to work longer, but does not compel them to do so. Those who do not wish to continue working need not do so, and can enjoy their retirement." [7]
- Some of the suggestions/ concerns raised by MPs include: short-term salary support to assist mature professionals, measures implemented to keep workers employable, measures to counter age discrimination. [8]
- The Workers' Party MPs proposed to abolish the retirement age to let workers choose to work for as long as they are willing and able to. One of the reasons is to prevent discrimination against older workers who may have a shorter runway before forced retirement. [8]

#3: Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill

- The amendments aim to improve road safety. One of the proposals introduced a theory test for the use of power-assisted bicycles (PABs) on roads.
- MPs raised clarifications on the test to assess its impact on food delivery riders. He Ting Ru (WP) stated that she hopes it is ensured "the certification process is simple enough so that it remains accessible to all of our residents and that they do not end up being unnecessarily tripped up by red tape."
- Gan Thiam Poh (PAP) and Darryl David (PAP) enquired if the test can be taken in other languages, and whether there will be options for illiterate riders or those unable to sit for a test. [9]
- The amendments included a proposal to empower police officers and other authorised persons to perform security searches on people using the public transport system, as part of Singapore's stepped-up counter-terrorism efforts. [9]
- Sylvia Lim (WP) questioned if it is appropriate to enable non-SPF actors to conduct frisk searches by force, and if they have the requisite training to perform the physical act of search.

#4: Community Disputes Resolution (Amendment) Bill

- The amendments aim to better resolve neighbourly disputes.This includes a new government unit, Community Relations Unit (CRU) that will be given powers to investigate and order individuals to stop making noise that disturbs their neighbours.
- As part of their powers, Community Relations Officers (CROs) will be able to deploy technology, such as noise sensors, to collect evidence.
- Additionally, the Director-General of Community Relations will be able to make an application to the Community Disputes Resolution Tribunals (CDRT) to issue a Mandatory Treatment Order (MTO) in the cases of individuals with mental health conditions. The CDRT can issue an MTO if it believes that the individual's acts of unreasonable interference stem from an underlying psychiatric condition.
- MPs raised concerns over citizens' privacy and autonomy, and on the implementation details such as the plan to roll out CRU nationwide.

#5: Mental Capacity (Amendment) Bill

- To make an LPA, it was initially done offline with hard copies. Changes to this Act allowed people to make an LPA online through a government portal. This is possible through a new electronic transaction system, OPG Online (OPGO).
- The Bill also aims to protect donors against fraud. If the Public Guardian has reason to suspect that fraud or undue pressure has been used to induce a donor to execute an LPA or appoint a particular person as his donee, the Public Guardian may disclose to the donor the number of LPAs which have appointed the person as donee.
- In 2024, MSF announced that approximately 87,000 electronic LPA documents that were certified online between Nov 14, 2022 and Jan 4, 2024 had left out an important line required under the law. A Bill was tabled in Parliament to make clear that these LPA documents certified online remain valid.

Whilst the following bills did not meet the criteria above, they have been identified for their significance and importance:

Other Bills

Criminal Law (Temporary Provisions) Act 1955

- The law allows for detention without trial for offences such as secret society activities and was renewed to be extended for another 5 years. It was the 15th time it has been extended since it was enacted in 1955.
- Associate Professor Faishal (Minister of State for the Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of National Development) explained there are still active secret societies in Singapore, and they are a menace to law and order, public safety and security. He noted that 123 people were dealt with under the CLTPA between October 2019 and December 2023. The law has also been used against organised crime such as unlicensed moneylending.
- Dennis Tan (WP) stated that the Workers' Party cautiously supported the Bill but maintained its objections to amendments to the Act made in 2018, when it voted against the extension.
- PSP stressed the need for more safeguards against potential abuse of power. Leong Mun Wai (PSP) highlighted: "A balance has to be struck between personal liberty and public peace and order. Have we struck the right balance with this proposed extension?"

MPs Speaking on Bills

PAP backbenchers make up 69% of Parliament (excluding Ministers and other title holders), and they represent 69% of the speakers during the second reading across all bills. This figure was calculated by determining the proportion of PAP backbenchers who spoke during the second reading of all bills.

In comparison, WP MPs, NCMPs, and NMPs make up 13%, 3%, and 15% of Parliament, respectively. When it comes to speaking on the second reading of bills, these groups contributed 18%, 2%, and 11%, respectively.

Figure 4.4: Comparison Between % of Seat Share and Bills Spoken On Per Party

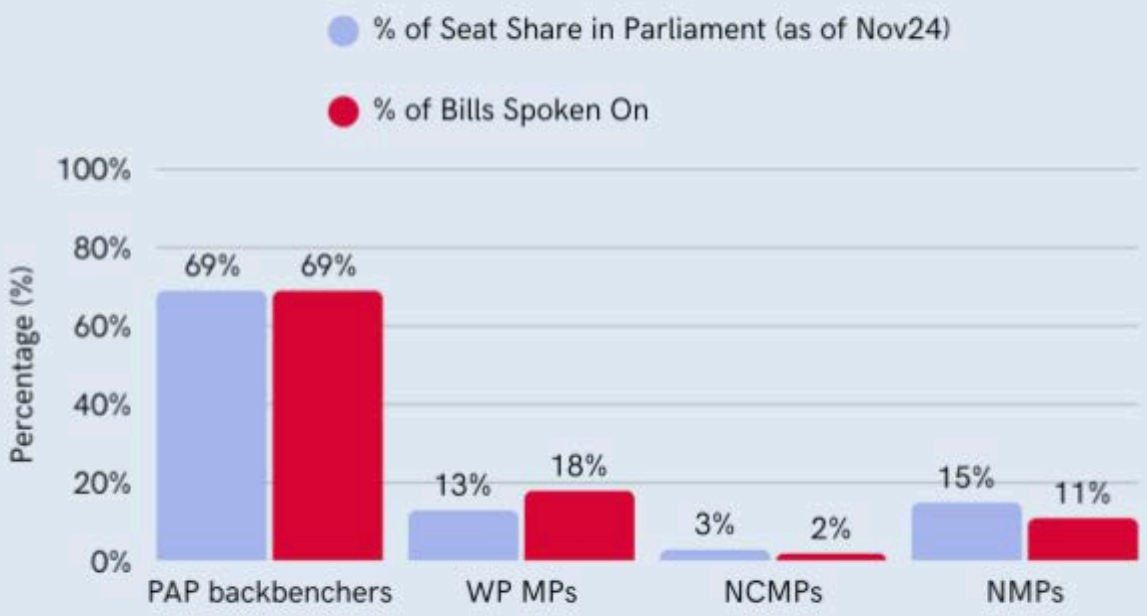


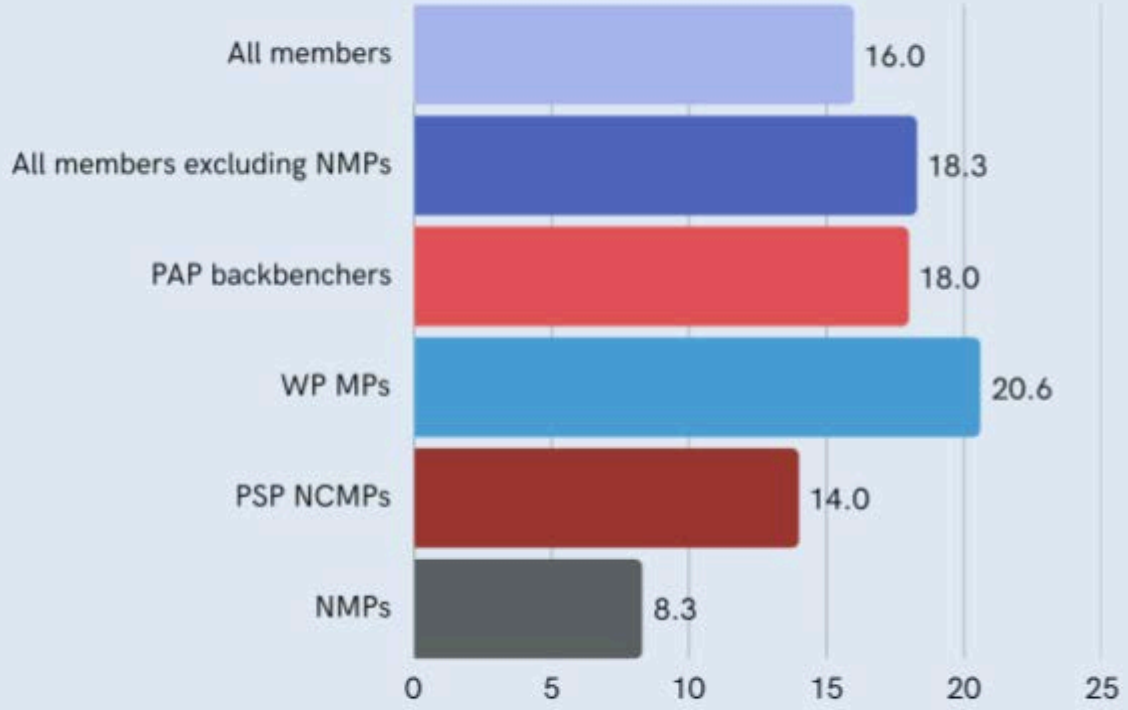
Table 4.2: Percentage of Participation in Second Reading per Party

Party	Participation in Second Reading across all MPs and Bills (count)	% of total
PAP backbencher	809	69.0%
WP	206	17.6%
PSP	28	2.4%
NMP	134	11.4%
Total	**1173**	**100%**

During its second reading, a typical member of the House spoke on approximately 16.0 bills. However, when excluding NMPs, who serve limited two-and-a-half-year terms, the average member spoke on around 18.3 bills in its second reading.

On average, PAP backbenchers spoke on 18.0 bills, WP MPs spoke on 20.6 bills, PSP NCMPs spoke on 14.0 bills, and NMPs spoke on 8.3 bills. In reading these figures, it is important to note the changes in the composition of the parliament as elaborated in the Introduction.

Figure 4.5: Average number of bills spoken on



Louis Ng spoke on the largest number of bills (122), followed by Yip Hong Weng (77), Don Wee (49), Jamus Lim (40), and Murali Pillai (38).

The following members did not speak on any bills: Chong Kee Hiong (PAP MP), Cheng Li Hui (PAP MP; left starting 3 August 2023), and Koh Lian Pin (NMP). It is noteworthy that MPs have other roles to fulfil, as elaborated in the Introduction.

Figure 4.6: Number of Bills spoken on



Limitations

Whilst the frequency with which MPs speak on bills can be used as a measure of their engagement and effectiveness, this metric alone does not account for the quality of their contributions. Assessing the value of an MP's speech can involve considering various criteria, including its relevance to the bill in question, use of evidence-based arguments, and logical coherence, among other factors.

This report does not include a qualitative analysis of the MPs' speeches on bills, which may result in a more holistic understanding of an MP's contribution to the legislative process.

An area the team was keen to analyse was public consultations that were conducted for each non-private member's bill. This was not performed with the following considerations:

- Parliament.gov.sg does not have a specific function to search for public consultations conducted for each bill. While a Minister may mention any previous public consultations conducted before the bill's introduction, the absence of the reference does not necessarily indicate that no public consultations were undertaken.
    - Example of reference made: In the second reading of Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Bill, Alvin Tan (Minister of State for Culture, Community and Youth) highlighted that the Ministry "conducted a three-week long public consultation on these proposed amendments" and shared how the feedback were processed (https://sprs.parl.gov.sg/search/#/sprs3topic?reportid=bill-689).

- Information regarding public consultations conducted on a bill may sometimes be available on the websites of government bodies overseeing the legislation. However, the absence of such information does not necessarily indicate that no public consultations were undertaken.
    - Examples of government bodies hosting information on public consultations: https://www.mof.gov.sg/news-publications/public-consultations and https://www.mti.gov.sg/Newsroom/Public-Consultations

- REACH (Reaching Everyone for Active Citizenry @ Home), a department under the Ministry of Communication and Information, provides information on public consultations that are currently being conducted or have already been completed (https://www.reach.gov.sg/Participate/Public-Consultation). However, analysis is required to assess if the list is exhaustive.

As a result, the team did not determine if public consultations were conducted before the introduction and reading of each non-private member's bill.

The following table highlights examples of public consultations conducted by different Ministries/ agencies.

Ministry of Finance	
Public Consultation on Proposed Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2023	**Summary of Responses to Public Consultation on the Draft Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2023**
6 June 2023 • Introduction • Scope of consultation • Other proposed amendments • Guidelines for submission • Period of consultation • Feedback channel (submit comments using the prescribed template, through email) • Summary of response • Documents to download [10]	8 September 2023 • MOF's responses to key feedback on the draft Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2023 [11]
Ministry of Law and IPOS	
Public Consultation on the Proposed Copyright Bill	**Response to Comments Received from the Public Consultation on the Proposed Copyright Bill**
5 February 2021 • Background • Purpose of consultation • Structure of public consultation • Providing feedback (via FormSG) [12]	6 July 2021 • Summary of the key changes made in response to the feedback received [13]

Chapter 5: Parliamentary Questions

By M. Chin and Teo K. T.

Introduction

What do Members of Parliament (MPs) *really* do in Parliament? Beyond the big speeches and headline-grabbing debates, much of their substantive work involves asking questions—formally, systematically, and on the record. These are known as **Parliamentary Questions (PQs)**.

PQs are formal queries that Members of Parliament submit to Ministers in advance of each sitting, seeking information, clarification, or explanations about government decisions and policies. Under the Standing Orders of Parliament, questions can be for oral or written reply. Each MP is allowed to file up to five PQs per sitting, of which a maximum of three may be for oral reply. [1] During each sitting, Parliament allocates up to 90 minutes of Question Time—where Ministers must respond to oral PQs, and MPs may follow up with supplementary questions. [2] Written PQs are answered in writing but not debated. All PQs and their answers are published in the official Hansard, forming part of Parliament's public record.

The value of PQs goes far beyond bureaucracy. In Singapore's Parliament - where the ruling party holds a supermajority and legislation is rarely blocked or amended - PQs are one of the few formal instruments for legislative oversight. They compel Ministers to justify decisions, release data, and explain policy trade-offs in full public view. Importantly too, PQs give voice to citizens. They provide a channel for MPs to raise concerns from the ground - from lift breakdowns to cost of living pressures. In surfacing such issues, PQs connect lived experience with national policymaking. They may not lead to policy changes, but they help ensure that citizen concerns are formally acknowledged and addressed in Parliament. In this way, PQs are a vital mechanism of representation in Singapore's democracy.

This chapter explores how MPs in the 14th Parliament made use of PQs from Aug 2020 to November 2024 - a term marked by pandemic disruptions, economic stress, and a Parliament with a stronger opposition presence than ever before. We ask:

- What *types* of PQs were asked?
- Which *parties and MPs* asked more or fewer?
- Which *ministries* were most frequently targeted?
- And what do these patterns tell us about Parliament's evolving role?

A record-breaking **11,216 PQs** were filed between August 2020 and November 2024 — well above the 8,246 PQs filed across the previous two terms (2011–2020). WPs MPs and PSP NCMPs consistently asked more questions per MP per sitting on average than PAP MPs. While PAP MPs averaged around 1.1 to 1.4 PQs per sitting, WP MPs maintained a higher rate between 2.1 and 2.5, and PSP NCMPs showed a sharp upward trend—from 0.6 in 2020

to a remarkable 3.9 in 2024, the highest across all groups. NMPs, meanwhile, exhibited the lowest average number of PQs per MP per sitting throughout the years, starting at 0.4 in 2021 and rising modestly to 1.0 by 2024, reflecting more limited parliamentary time and institutional resources.

Ministries also saw uneven distribution of PQs, with the Ministry of Health (MOH) receiving the most questions, accounting for approximately 14.5% of the total PQs filed, while the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) received the fewest, with only 103 PQs (0.9%).

It is important to note the limitations of this analysis. This chapter focuses on the *quantity* of PQs as a measurable form of parliamentary participation. It does not assess the substance, quality, or policy impact of each question. A well-crafted PQ can have far more impact than several superficial ones. We also excluded supplementary questions, which are often spontaneous and probing follow-ups asked during oral Question Time. These Q&A interactions often yield important information and debate-like discussion, but they fall outside our scope.

Here, we concentrate on "who asked how many questions to whom," as a measurable facet of parliamentary oversight. This approach provides a useful, if not complete, gauge of MPs' parliamentary activity. We acknowledge that PQ counts are an imperfect proxy – they tell a story of engagement, but must be interpreted in context. With these caveats in mind, we turn to a closer look at PQs in the 14th Parliament, beginning with the different purposes these questions serve.

Typology of PQs

Not all Parliamentary Questions are alike – MPs employ PQs for varied purposes. Based on intent, we can broadly classify PQs in the 14th Parliament into four categories: **information-seeking**, **oversight/critical**, **policy advocacy**, and **constituency-focused** questions. The table below outlines these typologies, with definitions and real examples from the 14th Parliament:

Table 5.1: Typology of PQs

No.	Type of PQ	Description (Intent)	Example from 14th Parliament
1	**Information-Seeking**	Requests for facts, data or status updates. These questions aim to obtain information or clarification from the government without an overtly critical tone. Often used to gather statistics, understand implementation progress, or get details on programs.	Mr Leong Mun Wai asked the Minister for National Development since 2021 (a) what percentage of HDB blocks have reached the Non-Citizen Quota for renting out of flats; and (b) which neighbourhood have reached the Non-Citizen Quota for renting out of flats.

No.	Type of PQ	Description (Intent)	Example from 14th Parliament
2	**Oversight**	Questions that scrutinize or challenge government decisions, actions, or lapses. MPs use these to hold the executive accountable, often highlighting potential problems, conflicts of interest, or failures. Such questions may be pointed or loaded, prompting the government to explain or justify itself.	Mr Chua Kheng Wee Louis asked the Minister for Communications and Information (a) whether the Government specifies restrictions in the use of the $180 million annual funding to SPH Media Trust (SMT), such as on transactions involving Mergers and Acquisitions; (b) whether the Government has information on the price paid by SMT in its acquisition of independent technology media company Tech In Asia; and (c) what measures are put in place to prevent agglomeration risks in the local media industry.
3	**Policy Advocacy**	Questions used to push for a policy change or proposal. An MP may float an idea or press the government to consider adopting a certain measure. These PQs often start with "whether the Ministry will consider..." and serve to put new policy options or the MP's party proposals on the official agenda.	Ms See Jinli Jean asked the Minister for Law (a) whether the Ministry will consider simplifying the process of enforcing awards ordered by the (i) Small Claims Tribunal and (ii) Employment Claims Tribunal on companies; and (b) whether the Ministry will consider amending the law to impose criminal consequences on companies that fail to comply with the awards ordered by the Small Claims Tribunal and Employment Claims Tribunal.
4	**Constituency -Focused**	Questions arising from local issues or resident feedback. These are typically filed by MPs to seek remedies or attention for problems specific to their constituency or town council, though the answer often has broader relevance. They demonstrate an MP's representation of their constituents' interests.	Mr Murali Pillai asked the Minister for Sustainability and the Environment whether an update may be provided on the expected start and completion dates for building the Bukit Batok Hawker Centre that will be co-located with the assisted living residential flats pilot in Bukit Batok Town as announced during the Committee of Supply debates in 2019.

These examples illustrate the range of ways MPs use PQs to fulfill their roles. An **information-seeking** question is straightforward and factual, essentially asking "Tell us what's happening/what the numbers are." All MPs, whether from the ruling party or opposition, use such questions to stay informed or to obtain official data that might not be publicly available otherwise.

An **oversight question** carries an implicit challenge: *"Are you doing the right thing?"* These PQs press for accountability, spotlight governance lapses, and scrutinise controversial decisions. For instance:

- *Keppel Offshore & Marine corruption case in January 2023:* MPs from both sides questioned the decision to issue stern warnings instead of prosecutions, pressing the Government to explain its rationale and maintain public confidence in Singapore's anti-corruption stance.
- *SPH Media Trust circulation scandal in February 2023:* Both opposition and PAP MPs filed questions - probing the Government's awareness of the inflated figures, the internal investigations, and whether public funding would be affected.
- *Ridout Road property issue in July 2023:* MPs across the aisle asked whether proper procedures and conflict-of-interest safeguards were followed in the rental of state-owned properties to Ministers. In each case, oversight PQs brought contentious matters into the open and reinforced Parliament's role in demanding accountability.
- *Proposed Allianz-Income deal in October 2024:* This matter sparked PQs over the Government's decision to block the foreign investment and its potential implications for Singapore's standing as a financial hub.

Policy advocacy questions allow MPs to proactively shape the policy agenda by introducing ideas. Opposition MPs often do this to promote their alternative policy proposals (for example, WP MPs have used PQs to advocate for social support schemes or public transport reforms), and NMPs – who often represent specific professional or community interests – might champion causes like environmental sustainability or arts funding through their questions. Some PAP backbenchers also use advocacy-type PQs to suggest improvements (sometimes aligning with government priorities, such as proposals to enhance support for families or businesses).

Lastly, **constituency-focused** questions ground parliamentary work in everyday local realities. They are a staple of elected MPs from PAP and WP, who frequently raise municipal concerns (estate infrastructure, local crime or nuisance issues, municipal services) in Parliament to get ministries to attend to these matters.

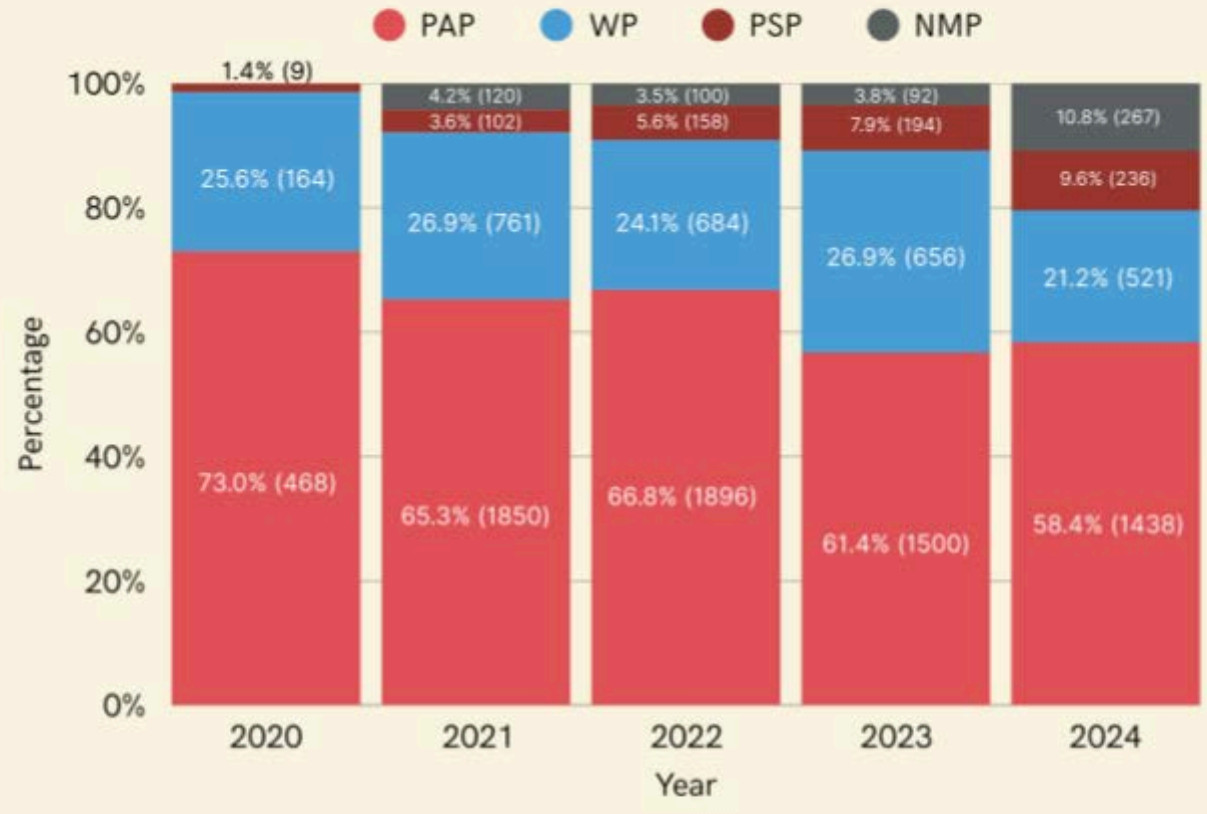
It's worth noting that these categories can overlap. A single PQ can serve multiple purposes – for instance, an MP might ask for information in a way that also scrutinizes the government's actions, thus blending data-seeking with oversight. For example, on

18 September 2023, Mr Kwek Hian Chuan Henry asked the Minister for National Development (a) what is the Ministry's outlook for the pricing level of the home rental market; and (b) what more can the Ministry do to moderate or reverse escalating rental cost to help tenants manage their cost of living. [3] Nonetheless, thinking in terms of typologies helps clarify the purpose behind PQs. Through this mix of types, PQs served as a tool for critical inquiry and constructive suggestions, as well as a channel to address citizens' day-to-day concerns.

Trends by Party

Proportion of PQs asked by Party

Figure 5.1: Proportion of PQs Asked by Party



Note: Percentages are calculated by dividing the number of Parliamentary Questions (PQs) filed by each party or group by the total number of PQs filed in the respective year i.e. Percentage = (No. of PQ by party / Total PQs that year) x 100

Between September 2020 and November 2024, a total of **11,216 Parliamentary Questions** were filed across 132 parliamentary sittings. This volume of questions is unprecedented – it far exceeds the roughly 8,246 PQs filed over the nine-year period from 2011 to 2020. The surge underscores a more active questioning culture in the 14th Parliament. To understand who drove this, we examine PQ activity by party affiliation.

As the ruling party with a supermajority of seats, **the PAP unsurprisingly filed the largest absolute number of PQs,** contributing 63.8% of all questions (7,152 out of 11,216). Over the years, the PAP's share of PQs **declined** from **73.0% in 2020** (468 out of 641) to 58.4% in 2024 (1,438 out of 2,462). This downward trend in PAP's percentage of questions reflects two dynamics: one, opposition MPs raising comparatively more questions, and two, a slight reduction in PAP backbench numbers toward the end of the term (PAP had 45 MPs eligible to file PQs initially, dropping to 41 by mid-2024 due to resignations and promotions to political office.)

The **Workers' Party (WP) - as the main opposition party - consistently ranked second in the number of PQs filed**, accounting for 24.8% (2,786 out of 11,216) over the five-year period. Their contributions remained steady throughout the years, ranging between 21.2% and 26.9%, with a slight dip in 2024 (521 out of 2,462 PQs).

The **Progress Singapore Party (**PSP) entered the 14th Parliament with *two* Non-Constituency MP (NCMP) seats (having no elected seats but eligible to take up compensatory seats as the best-performing losing opposition party in GE2020). Despite their small numbers, PSP members made a steadily growing contribution to PQs. Starting with just 1.4% of PQs in 2020 (9 out of 641), their proportion rose steadily to 9.6% in 2024 (236 out of 2,462), reflecting growing involvement in parliamentary discourse over time.

Nominated Members of Parliament (NMPs) also became more active during this period. Although they did not file any PQs in 2020 – as they were only appointed from 21 January 2021 – their participation grew in the following years. This culminated in their highest contribution in 2024, when NMPs filed 267 PQs, making up 10.8% of the year's total (267 of 2,462).

Overall, while the PAP continues to dominate in terms of PQs filed, the data highlights a trend toward greater diversity in parliamentary participation. The consistent activity from WP, alongside the rising contributions from both PSP and NMPs, points to a more active and pluralistic legislative environment in the 14th Parliament.

Difference in % of PQs asked and seat share

Figure 5.2: Difference in % of PQs asked and seat share

Year	PAP			WP			PSP			NMP		
	% of PQs Asked	% Seat Share	%PQ - %Seat Share	% of PQs Asked	% Seat Share	%PQ - %Seat Share	% of PQs Asked	% Seat Share	%PQ - %Seat Share	% of PQs Asked	% Seat Share	%PQ - %Seat Share
2020	73.0%	68.1%	+4.8%	25.6%	15.2%	+10.4%	1.4%	3.0%	-1.63%	-*		
2021	65.3%	68.2%	-2.9%	26.9%	15.2%	+11.7%	3.6%	3.0%	+0.57%	4.2%	13.6%	-9.4%
2022#	66.8%	69.2%	-2.4%	24.1%	13.9%	+10.3%	5.6%	3.0%	+2.49%	3.5%	13.9%	-10.3%
2023^	61.4%	69.3%	-7.9%	26.9%	13.5%	+13.4%	8.0%	3.1%	+4.82%	3.8%	14.1%	-10.3%
2024^^	61.2%	68.9%	-7.6%	20.8%	13.1%	+7.7%	9.4%	3.3%	+6.07%	8.5%	14.7%	-6.2%

**Not applicable as NMPs were only appointed for their term starting on 21 January 2021.*

#Change in % Seat Share is due to the resignation of WP MP Raeesah Khan in December 2021, reducing WP's backbencher MPs from 10 to 9, and the total number of backbencher MPs in the 14th Parliament from 65 to 64.

^Change in percentage seat share is due to the resignations of PAP MP Cheng Li Hui and WP MP Leon Perera, as well as the appointment of Seah Kian Peng as Speaker of Parliament. Tan Chuan-Jin, who also resigned, was not included in the count as he was already serving as Speaker and did not participate in asking PQs. As a result, the number of backbencher PAP MPs has been reduced to 43 out of 62. (Note: The Speaker of Parliament does not participate in asking PQs).

^Change in % Seat Share is due to the promotion of PAP backbenchers Shawn Huang to Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Education and Finance and Murali Pillai to Minister of State for Law and Transport. As political officeholders, they no longer participate in asking PQs. Other promotions – such as Low Yen Ling, Desmond Tan, and Rahayu Mahzam – do not affect the count of eligible MPs, as they were already holding political office and thus were not included in the backbencher MP count.

PAP began in 2020 with a strong positive margin, asking 73.01% of PQs compared to its 68.18% seat share (+4.83%). However, this relative contribution steadily declined in subsequent years, turning negative from 2021 onwards. By 2024, PAP MPs asked only 61.28% of PQs, falling short of their 68.89% seat share by -7.61%. This downward trend suggests a reduced relative participation in PQs despite holding a parliamentary majority.

WP has consistently asked a significantly higher proportion of Parliamentary Questions (PQs) relative to its seat share. From 2020 to 2024, WP maintained a strong positive difference between the percentage of PQs asked and their seat share, peaking at a +13.35% difference in 2023. Although this margin narrowed slightly to +7.73% in 2024, WP continues to demonstrate high levels of parliamentary engagement relative to its seat share.

Similarly, PSP has shown a clear upward trend in PQ activity. Starting in 2020 with only 1.40% of PQs asked (a -1.63% difference from their 3.03% seat share), PSP recorded a

positive difference in 2021. By 2024, PSP MPs asked 9.35% of PQs – exceeding their 3.28% seat share by +6.07%. This consistent rise highlights a growing engagement in parliamentary scrutiny despite holding a small number of seats.

NMPs have consistently asked fewer PQs than their seat share would suggest, recording a negative difference across all years analyzed. Their PQ contribution ranged from 3.52% to 8.54%, despite holding 13–14% of total seats.

Average number of PQs per MP per sitting (out of a maximum of 5)

Figure 5.3: Average no. of PQs per MP per sitting



Note: 2020 not applicable for NMPs, as they were only appointed for their term starting on 21 January 2021. Refer to Table 5.1 in Annex for the methodology.

The PAP maintained a relatively steady pattern in the average number of Parliamentary Questions (PQs) per MP per sitting between 2020 and 2024. Beginning at 1.3 PQs per MP in 2020, PAP saw a slight increase to 1.4 in 2021, followed by gradual decreases to 1.2 in 2022 and 1.1 in 2023. The figure then slightly increased again to 1.2 in 2024.

WP's average number of PQs per MP per sitting remained stable throughout the five-year period. WP started at 2.1 PQs per MP in 2020, rose to a peak of 2.5 in 2021, and subsequently experienced minor fluctuations, reaching 2.2 in 2022, increasing slightly to 2.3 in 2023, and returning to 2.2 in 2024.

In contrast, PSP showed a notable upward trajectory, consistently increasing their average number of PQs per MP per sitting. PSP began with a relatively low average of 0.6 in 2020 but quickly rose to 1.7 in 2021 and continued increasing to 2.3 in 2022. PSP's activity significantly spiked to 2.9 in 2023, culminating at 3.9 PQs per MP in 2024, clearly positioning them as the most active party in filing PQs during this period.

NMPs exhibited the lowest average number of PQs per MP throughout these years. NMPs exhibited the lowest average number of PQs per MP throughout these years. No data is available for 2020, as NMPs were only appointed for their term starting on 21 January 2021. Their activity began at 0.4 PQs per MP in 2021, and then gradually declined to 0.3 in both 2022 and 2023. However, NMP activity notably increased to 1.0 PQ per MP in 2024, although it remained consistently lower compared to other parties.

Although NMPs tended to pose fewer PQs than elected MPs on average, it can perhaps be noted that NMPs continue to bring a degree of intellectual diversity to Parliament [4]. An examination of the natures of the different questions posed by NMPs reveals that questions from NMPs are cross-cutting and pertain to the diversity of identities, interests, and areas of expertise that NMPs draw from.

NMP Dr Shahira Abdullah, for instance, a medical doctor by vocation, has used her seat to pose PQs pertaining to her medical background, but also to champion Muslim issues. Dr Abdullah posed PQs pertaining to the Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, support for healthcare workers [5], the mental wellness of foreign workers, but also questions with more moral and normative underpinnings that perhaps allude to her religious identity, like outlawing lewd websites like OnlyFans in Singapore [6], and questions to the Minister-in-Charge of Muslim Affairs.

Trends by MP

Drilling down to the individual level, we find significant disparities in how actively MPs engaged with PQs. On average, each MP (across all parties, including NMPs) asked about 1.2 questions per sitting over the 14th Parliament. However, this average masks a skewed distribution: a relatively small group of MPs filed a very large number of questions, while a majority asked very few. Indeed, 59% of MPs averaged fewer than one question per sitting, whereas a select few averaged multiple questions each sitting.

Table 5.2: Range of Average Numbers of PQs per Party per Sitting

Average No. of PQs per Sitting	PAP	WP	PSP	NMP	Total Number of MPs	Percentage of Total
4-5	1	0	0	0	1	1.4%
3-4	1	2	0	0	3	4.1%
2-3	5	4	1	1	11	14.9%
1-2	9	1	1	4	15	20.3%
0-1	29	3	0	12	44	59.5%
Total	**45**	**10**	**2**	**17**	**74**	**100%**

Quantitative data offers further insight into the ministries to which MPs field their PQs. MPs generally advocate for particular interests or causes, which are reflected in the nature of PQs fielded. Although it may be an overgeneralization, the number of questions fielded by an MP to the different ministries offers some insight into these particular interests.

Similar to what was noted above on the nature of PQs posed by NMPs, constituency and non-constituency MPs also generally come into Parliament with a range of personal and professional experiences which often also serve to influence the interests that they use their Parliamentary seats to advocate for, but these interests are generally also mediated by their specific roles within the institution.

Mr Louis Ng, for instance, has been observed to have posed the most questions to MOM, MSF, and MND, which are broadly in line with his emphasis on social equity concerns. As Chief Executive of the Animal Concerns Research and Education Society (ACRES), he is also a strong proponent for matters pertaining to animal welfare and sustainability, but his roles within the Animal Welfare Legislation Review Committee and the Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration Committee have likely conferred him with privileged access to information that does not require him to attain clarifications from fielding PQs in Question Time.

Table 5.3: MPs' Average Numbers of PQs per Sitting (Descending Order)

S/N	MP	Political Party	Average No. of Questions per Sitting (2 d.p.)
1	Mr Louis Ng Kok Kwang	People's Action Party	4.37
2	Mr Leon Perera	Workers' Party	3.66
3	Mr Yip Hon Weng	People's Action Party	3.61
4	Mr Chua Kheng Wee Louis	Workers' Party	3.01
5	Mr Gerald Giam Yean Song	Workers' Party	2.99
6	Ms He Ting Ru	Workers' Party	2.9
7	Mr Leong Mun Wai	Progress Singapore Party	2.79
8	Ms See Jinli Jean	NMP	2.69
9	Assoc Prof Jamus Jerome Lim	Workers' Party	2.63
10	Mr Melvin Yong Yik Chye	People's Action Party	2.37
11	Dr Tan Wu Meng	People's Action Party	2.35
12	Mr Murali Pillai	People's Action Party	2.33
13	Mr Dennis Tan Lip Fong	Workers' Party	2.27
14	Mr Zhulkarnain Abdul Rahim	People's Action Party	2.2
15	Mr Christopher de Souza	People's Action Party	2.06
16	Ms Hazel Poa	Progress Singapore Party	1.97
17	Mr Gan Thiam Poh	People's Action Party	1.79
18	Mr Ong Hua Han	NMP	1.72
19	Ms Joan Pereira	People's Action Party	1.66
20	Mr Saktiandi Supaat	People's Action Party	1.52
21	Assoc Prof Razwana Begum Abdul Rahim	NMP	1.38
22	Mr Desmond Choo	People's Action Party	1.36
23	Dr Wan Rizal	People's Action Party	1.33
24	Ms Raeesah Khan	Workers' Party	1.33
25	Mr Liang Eng Hwa	People's Action Party	1.31
26	Ms Usha Chandradas	NMP	1.15
27	Ms Mariam Jaafar	People's Action Party	1.08
28	Mr Don Wee	People's Action Party	1.08

S/N	MP	Political Party	Average No. of Questions per Sitting (2 d.p.)
29	Dr Shahira Abdullah	NMP	1.04
30	Ms Nadia Ahmad Samdin	People's Action Party	1.01
31	Mr Shawn Huang Wei Zhong	People's Action Party	0.97
32	Mr Patrick Tay Teck Guan	People's Action Party	0.93
33	Miss Cheryl Chan Wei Ling	People's Action Party	0.9
34	Mr Lim Biow Chuan	People's Action Party	0.88
35	Ms Carrie Tan	People's Action Party	0.88
36	Mr Ang Wei Neng	People's Action Party	0.88
37	Mr Neil Parekh Nimil Rajnikant	NMP	0.87
38	Ms Sylvia Lim	Workers' Party	0.87
39	Ms Hany Soh	People's Action Party	0.82
40	Ms Yeo Wan Ling	People's Action Party	0.82
41	Mr Edward Chia Bing Hui	People's Action Party	0.81
42	Mr Sharael Taha	People's Action Party	0.78
43	Dr Lim Wee Kiak	People's Action Party	0.76
44	Miss Rachel Ong	People's Action Party	0.76
45	Mr Pritam Singh	Workers' Party	0.71
46	Miss Cheng Li Hui	People's Action Party	0.71
47	Ms Foo Mee Har	People's Action Party	0.66
48	Ms Ng Ling Ling	People's Action Party	0.64
49	Mr Darryl David	People's Action Party	0.57
50	Mr Seah Kian Peng	People's Action Party	0.54
51	Mr Muhamad Faisal Abdul Manap	Workers' Party	0.5
52	Mr Abdul Samad	NMP	0.48
53	Ms Tin Pei Ling	People's Action Party	0.44
54	Dr Syed Harun Alhabsyi	NMP	0.44
55	Mr Alex Yam Ziming	People's Action Party	0.41
56	Ms Poh Li San	People's Action Party	0.41

S/N	MP	Political Party	Average No. of Questions per Sitting (2 d.p.)
57	Mr Kwek Hian Chuan Henry	People's Action Party	0.4
58	Mr Sitoh Yih Pin	People's Action Party	0.39
59	Mr Mohd Fahmi Bin Aliman	People's Action Party	0.37
60	Mr Chong Kee Hiong	People's Action Party	0.35
61	Ms Denise Phua Lay Peng	People's Action Party	0.33
62	Mr Derrick Goh	People's Action Party	0.3
63	Ms Jessica Tan Soon Neo	People's Action Party	0.29
64	Mr Keith Chua	NMP	0.28
65	Dr Tan Yia Swam	NMP	0.28
66	Mr Xie Yao Quan	People's Action Party	0.26
67	Mr Raj Joshua Thomas	NMP	0.24
68	Mr Mark Lee	NMP	0.23
69	Mr Mark Chay	NMP	0.16
70	Mr Vikram Nair	People's Action Party	0.15
71	Prof Koh Lian Pin	NMP	0.13
72	Ms Janet Ang	NMP	0.05
73	Mr Cheng Hsing Yao	NMP	0.03
74	Prof Hoon Hian Teck	NMP	0.02

Trends by Ministry

Another revealing dimension of PQ activity is which government ministries were most frequently questioned. This indicates the areas of governance that drew the most parliamentary attention (and possibly public concern) during the 14th Parliament. The distribution of the 11,216 questions across ministries was not even; it closely mirrored the pressing issues of the day, with some ministries fielding far more questions than others.

Table 5.4: Breakdown of PQs Per Ministry

Ministry	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
MOH	89	544	416	286	291	**1,626**
MND	70	361	388	322	286	**1,427**
MOM	67	366	294	256	197	**1,180**
MOT	68	207	220	207	320	**1,022**
MHA	36	203	202	242	213	**896**
MOE	57	215	187	119	235	**813**
PMO	51	126	234	229	74	**714**
MSE	42	172	172	128	180	**694**
MSF	53	179	173	157	130	**692**
MTI	38	180	198	138	116	**670**
MDDI	22	61	85	84	102	**354**
MOF	12	64	82	66	128	**352**
MCCY	8	55	82	70	97	**312**
MINLAW	19	45	44	61	25	**194**
MFA	1	39	30	57	40	**167**
MINDEF	8	16	31	20	28	**103**
Total	**641**	**2,833**	**2,838**	**2,442**	**2,462**	**11,216**

Between September 2020 and November 2024, **the Ministry of Health (MOH) received the highest number of PQs**, accounting for approximately 14.5% of the total (ie. 1,626 out of 11,216 filed). MOH consistently ranked first in PQs received each year, except in:

- 2023, when the Ministry of National Development (MND) received the highest number of PQs, with 322 out of 2,442 filed (13.2%).
- 2024, when the Ministry of Transport (MOT) topped the list, with 320 out of 2,462 PQs (13.0%).

The large proportion of PQs directed to the Ministry of Health (MOH) can largely be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, 258 out of 544 PQs (47.5%) were directly related to the pandemic. These questions covered a range of issues, such as the COVID-19 vaccination rollout and the impact of the pandemic on healthcare workers. Some examples include:

- In January 2021, PAP MP Foo Mee Har asked the Minister for Health about the details of the COVID-19 vaccination rollout, including how the Ministry determines the safety and effectiveness of vaccines. She also inquired whether vaccinated individuals would receive a vaccination card for identification purposes [7].
- In November 2021, WP MP Ms. He Ting Ru raised a PQ about the resignation rates of healthcare workers since the start of the pandemic, including a breakdown of resignations by position, as well as how these rates compared to pre-pandemic levels [8].

Across all five years, **MOH, MND, and the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) consistently ranked among the top three ministries receiving the most PQs**. Notable exceptions include:

- In 2020, MOT ranked third with 68 out of 641 PQs (10.6%).
- In 2024, MOT ranked first, receiving 320 out of 2,462 PQs (13.0%).

In 2024, a notable portion of the PQs directed at the Ministry of Transport (MOT) centered on service reliability and train disruptions, with 9.06% (29 out of 320) questions addressing these concerns. For example, in October 2024, PAP MP Mr Liang Eng Hwa raised a question regarding the causes and findings behind a train failure on the East-West MRT Line. He also asked whether there would be a review of and potential changes to the train and rail maintenance regime [9].

Additionally, 5.94% (19 out of 320) of the questions were related to the SimplyGo system. An example came from PSP MP Hazel Poa in February 2024, who queried the Minister for Transport about the $40 million cost required to renew the existing card-based ticketing system, asking whether running both systems concurrently would entail one-off or recurring expenses [10].

At the other end of the spectrum, **the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) received the fewest PQs over the five-year period**, with just 103 out of 11,216 (0.9%), followed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), which received 167 PQs (1.5%).

Breakdown of PQs Filed to Top 3 Ministries by Political Party

Table 5.5: Breakdown of PQs Filed to Top 3 Ministries by Political Party

Year	NMP	PAP	PSP	WP
2020	-*	MOH (61)	MOH (3)	MOH (25)
		MND (56)	MHA/MINLAW/MOM/MOT/MTI/PMO (1)	MOT (22)
		MOM/MOT/MOE (45)		MOM (21)
2021	MOH (26)	MOH (362)	MOM (32)	MOH (137)
	MOE (16)	MND (267)	MOH (19)	MOM (78)
	MHA/MOM/MSF (10)	MOM (246)	MTI (10)	MOT (68)
2022	MOM (17)	MOH (277)	MOM (42)	MOH (115)
	MSE/MOH (13)	MND (264)	MND (33)	MND (84)
	MOE (12)	MOM (168)	MOF (17)	MOM (67)
2023	MOH (115)	MOH (202)	PMO (44)	MND (98)
	MND (84)	MND (200)	MOM (27)	PMO (76)
	MOM (67)	MOM (167)	MND (17)	MOT (62)
2024	MCCY (38)	MOH (196)	MOT (38)	MOT/MND (81)
	MOE (36)	MOT (183)	MOE (32)	MOH (50)
	MOH (33)	MND (166)	MND (25)	MOE (47)

* No PQs were filed by NMPs in 2020, as NMPs for the 14th Parliament were only appointed for a term of 2.5 years commencing from 21 January 2021.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) consistently ranks among the top three ministries across all political parties over the five-year period, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, in 2020, PQs directed at MOH accounted for:

- 13.0% for PAP (61 out of 468 PQs).
- 33.3% for PSP (3 out of 9 PQs).
- 15.2% for WP (25 out of 164 PQs).

While the prominence of MOH was especially marked in 2020 and 2021, public health issues continued to be a priority in subsequent years. In 2024, MOH remained among the top three ministries for all parties, except for WP.

The ministries that are most queried in Parliamentary Questions (PQs) show some variation across political parties. However, ministries such as MOH, the Ministry of Manpower (MOM), and the Ministry of National Development (MND) consistently appear in the top ranks.

For PAP: MOH, MOM, and MND frequently rank in the top three, although their exact positions can vary each year. Notable exceptions include:

- In 2024, the Ministry of Transport (MOT) received the highest number of PQs for the year, accounting for 12.7% (183 out of 1,438 PQs). Of these, 8.2% (15 out of 183) were related to the SimplyGo rollout plan and the subsequent changes in the decision regarding the ticketing system.
- In 2020, MOT accounted for 9.6% of PQs (45 out of 468), similar to the Ministry of Education (MOE), which received a comparable number.

For PSP: The rankings show more diversity across ministries, though MOH remained in the top three in 2020 and 2021 before seeing a decline. From 2022 to 2024, MND consistently ranked in the top three. Other trends include:

- In 2023, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) accounted for 22.7% of the PQs (44 out of 194), the highest for PSP that year. Notably, 15.9% of these PQs (7 out of 44) were related to the corruption case involving Keppel Offshore and Marine Limited, as well as investigations by the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB).
- In 2024, MOE ranked second, with 13.6% of the PQs (32 out of 236).

For WP: MOH and MOM dominated the top three rankings until 2023 and 2024, when MND emerged as the most queried ministry. Notable points include:

- In 2023, PMO received 11.6% of the PQs (76 out of 656), making it the second-highest number for WP that year. Of these, 21.0% (16 out of 76) were related to the Keppel corruption case and investigations by CPIB.
- In 2024, MOE ranked second with 9.0% of the PQs (47 out of 521).

For NMPs: MOH consistently ranked in the top three ministries over all five years. However, NMPs also demonstrated a more diverse range of ministries, with the Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment (MSE) and the Ministry of Education (MOE) also making appearances in the top three. Notably:

- In 2024, the Ministry of Culture, Community, and Youth (MCCY) received 14.2% of the PQs (38 out of 267), marking the highest number for NMPs that year. This was the first time MCCY appeared in the top three ministries across all four parties (PAP, WP, PSP, NMP).
- In 2024, MOE ranked second with 13.5% of the PQs (36 out of 267).

Conclusion

The 14th Parliament demonstrated the vital role Parliamentary Questions (PQs) play in Singapore's democracy. Far from being mere formalities, PQs were a key avenue through which MPs sought answers, clarifications, and accountability on behalf of the people. Over 2020–2024, PQs compelled ministers to explain policies on pandemic control, account for MRT disruptions, debate the merits of proposed welfare schemes, and detail plans to tackle bread-and-butter concerns like housing and inflation. This process enriched the public record and equipped citizens with more information about how they are governed.

The trends we've detailed show a Parliament that was more active, diverse, and issue-focused than in previous terms. WP MPs and PSP NCMPs made significant use of PQs to raise concerns and advance policy ideas. The presence of an official Leader of the Opposition (a first in the 14th Parliament) likely reinforced this, giving the opposition more resources and formal standing to hold the Government to account [11]. Meanwhile, the ruling PAP's backbenchers also utilized PQs to voice local issues and seek improvements, though to a lesser extent per person on average. The net result was a Question Time agenda packed with topics reflecting citizen priorities – health, housing, jobs, transport – aligned with what Singaporeans talked about around their dinner tables.

Yet participation varied widely across MPs. A core group filed the majority of questions, while many others contributed only occasionally. This unevenness raises questions about how MPs prioritise their roles—between legislative scrutiny, constituency work, and behind-the-scenes contributions such as committee work or informal lobbying. There is no single model of a "good MP," but PQ activity is one visible and measurable indicator.

The PQ trends of the 14th Parliament highlight how Parliament can function as an active platform for inquiry and representation. Sustaining or enhancing this level of questioning in future terms would signal an ongoing commitment to legislative responsiveness and accountability, regardless of political composition.

Each question asked is a small but meaningful act of representation and accountability. The trends observed in this chapter reflect an evolving parliamentary culture—one where diverse perspectives and public concerns are increasingly brought into national discussion. By making participation patterns visible, this analysis contributes to a broader understanding of how Parliament functions—and how it can continue to serve the people it represents.

Chapter 6: Motions

By Khai and Yeo Q. L.

Introduction

Motions are an essential element of parliamentary procedure, and at its broadest level, refers to any proposal for the House to express an opinion or commit to an action. All Members of Parliament (MPs) are entitled to propose motions in Parliament, either as individuals or as a cluster. The member who moves the motion makes the first speech to explain the rationale behind the proposal. This is typically followed by debate, and concluded when MPs vote on the motion at the end of the debate. Motions require a simple majority to pass.

Motions can either be moved by a member of the Executive Branch (e.g. Ministers) or by backbencher MPs. An interesting feature of these motions is the ability for MPs to propose amendments to the original motion, potentially making notable alterations to the tenor and direction of the original motion. Amendments require a majority to pass. In this way, debate about amendments might also reflect significant differences of opinion within the House. For instance, a parliamentarian belonging to a small party of opinion might see their Motion being amended in a manner that does not align with their original vision of the Motion, if a majority of Members amend the motion as such.

While most motions are followed by debate on the floor and a vote, a particular type of motion known as the **Adjournment Motion** operates differently. A particular kind of motion that is delivered at the end of the parliamentary session of the day, it allows an MP the chance to offer an opinion on an issue of interest. A parliamentary representative of the relevant Ministry will respond to this MP's speech, and this exchange between typically only these two individuals marks the end of the parliamentary session. Only one adjournment session can be had at the end of a parliamentary session. Adjournment motions do not get amended, and typically involves an exchange between the MP who delivers the Adjournment Motion and the representative of the Executive Branch. For this reason, we will look at Adjournment Motions separately.

In this chapter, we analyse how MPs in the 14th Parliament made use of motions and what patterns emerged from August 2020 to November 2024. Of the **28 motions debated**, the outcomes often reflected the ruling party's dominance: all 4 motions that were rejected came from PSP NCMPs, and 10 other motions were only passed after being substantially amended (frequently by PAP MPs). In addition, **71 adjournment**

motions were raised, providing a platform for a wide array of issues to be aired without requiring a vote.

Debatable Motions

We analysed motions that underwent debate and discussion in the house, totalling up to **28** motions between August 2020 to November 2024. Of these, 9 were tabled by Ministers, while 19 were brought forward by backbenchers. Among the backbenchers, PSP NCMPs accounted for the highest number of motions (9), followed by PAP MPs (5), WP MPs (4), and NMPs (1).

Table 6.1: Breakdown of debatable motions

	Backbenchers	Ministers	Total
PAP	5	9	14
WP	4	N/A	4
PSP	9	N/A	9
NMP	1	N/A	1
Grand Total	**19**	**9**	**28**

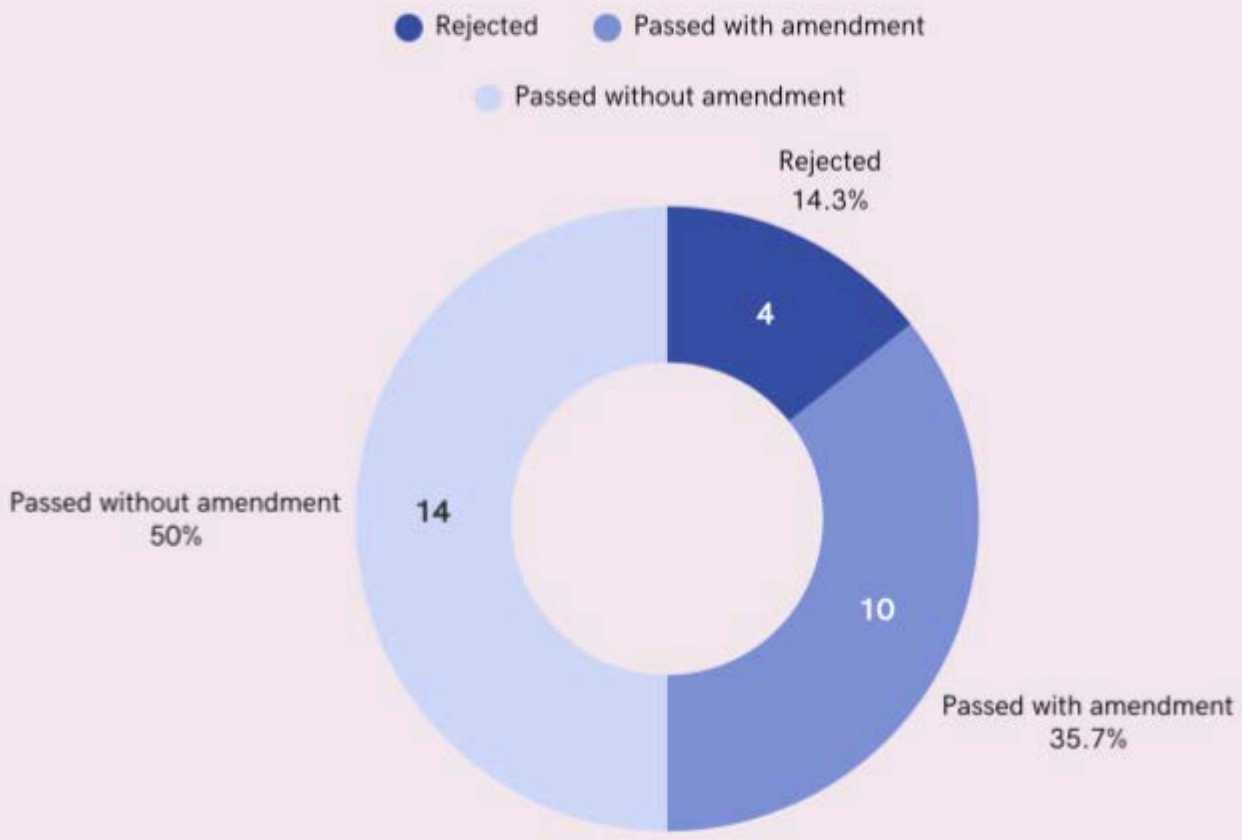
MPs often raise motions jointly with their party colleagues. Among individual MPs, Leong Mun Wai raised the highest number of motions (7), followed by Hazel Poa (5). A group of MPs - Don Wee, Gan Thiam Poh, Hany Soh, He Ting Ru, Louis Ng, Poh Li San - each raised 2 motions. Other MPs raised either one motion or none.

Table 6.2: No. of debatable motions raised per backbencher

No. of debatable motions raised	Backbenchers	
7	Leong Mun Wai (PSP)	
5	Hazel Poa (PSP)	
2	Don Wee (PAP) Gan Thiam Poh (PAP) Hany Soh (PAP) He Ting Ru (WP) Louis Ng (PAP) Poh Li San (PAP)	
1	Abdul Samad (NMP) Alex Tan (PAP) Alex Yam (PAP) Cheryl Chan (PAP) Christopher de Souza (PAP) Edward Chia Bing Hui (PAP) Faisal Manap (WP) Hany Soh (PAP) Jamus Lim (WP) Jessica Tan (PAP) Leon Perera (WP) Louis Chua (WP) Mariam Jaafar (PAP) Murali Pillai (PAP)	Nadia Samdin (PAP) Patrick Tay (PAP) Pritam Singh (WP) Shahira Abdullah (NMP) Sharael Taha (PAP) Sylvia Lim (WP) Tan Wu Meng (PAP) Tan Yia Swam (NMP) Tin Pei Ling (PAP) Vikram Nair (PAP) Wan Rizal (PAP) Yip Hon Weng (PAP) Zhulkarnain Abdul Rahim (PAP)

While many motions were considered by Parliament, we sieved out particular types of motions which generated significant divergence of opinion. These included the **four motions that were rejected** by Parliament, as well as the **10 motions that were amended**. These motions, in their original form, were unable to muster support from a majority of parliamentarians. At the same time, they reflected divergences in opinion between different political parties represented in Parliament.

Figure 6.1: Breakdown of votes on debatable motions



(Base: n=28)

Rejected Motions

Of the motions that were rejected,

- All **4** rejected motions were proposed by the Progress Singapore Party (PSP) – a reflection of the uphill battle faced by opposition-sponsored motions in a Parliament dominated by the PAP.
- Rejected motions were often debated simultaneously with a Motion introduced by a PAP parliamentarian that dealt on a similar topic. This PAP motion would often be passed after the debate, unlike the opposition motion. This suggests a strategy by the majority to introduce an alternative framing of the issue and rally support around it, thereby supplanting the original motion put forth by the opposition.

4 rejected motions (all proposed by PSP)

#1: That this Parliament calls upon the Government to take urgent and concrete action to address the widespread anxiety among Singaporeans on jobs and livelihoods caused by the foreign talent policy and the provisions on Movement of Natural Persons in some free trade agreements like the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement

by Leong Mun Wai (PSP), 14 September 2021

This was debated alongside a motion introduced by **Lawrence Wong**, PAP that was subsequently passed:

That this House:

(a) acknowledges Singaporeans' anxieties about jobs and competition in a globalised and fast-changing economy;

(b) affirms Singapore's need to stay open and connected to the world in order to grow and prosper;

(c) supports Government actions to manage the population of foreign manpower, ensure fair treatment by employers, and invest in education and upskilling, to create more good jobs for Singaporeans;

(d) calls on the Government to continue to update and improve its policies to secure the well-being and livelihoods of Singaporeans in an uncertain post-pandemic world; and

(e) deplores attempts to spread misinformation about free trade agreements like the Singapore-India Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), stir up racism and xenophobia, and cause fear and anxiety amongst Singaporeans."

#2: That this House calls upon the Government to review its public housing policies in order to deliver affordable and accessible HDB flats to all Singaporeans, strengthen the owner-occupation intent of public housing, protect retirement adequacy and keep public housing inclusive for every Singaporean of each generation

by Leong Mun Wai (PSP), 07 Feburary 2023

This was debated simultaneously with a Motion introduced by **Desmond Lee,** PAP which was subsequently passed:

That this House affirms the importance of keeping public housing affordable and accessible while protecting the interests of current and future generations of Singaporeans, and endorses the commitment of the Government to these twin goals.

#3: That this House calls for the abolition of Group Representative Constituencies

by Hazel Poa (PSP), 05 July 2023

#4: That this House suspends Mr S Iswaran from the service of Parliament for the remainder of the current session of the 14th Parliament

by Hazel Poa (PSP), 19 September 2023

Amended Motions

Before being passed by a majority of the house, a significant number of motions were amended during the debate, typically by parliamentarians on the other side of the aisle of the original Proposer. Of these amended motions,

- All motions raised by the PSP or WP were amended by PAP backbenchers. These amendments often altered the emphasis or direction of the motion, at times deemphasising critique and a call for action.
- After having their motions amended by the PAP, the WP or PSP would often record dissent or vote against the amended motions that they had initially proposed.
- Attempts to amend motions raised by the PAP by WP parliamentarians had mixed results: in one instance for a motion involving climate change, the amendment was accepted while an attempt to amend a motion related to financial matters was rejected.

- There were few instances when PAP motions were amended by PAP parliamentarians. In these cases, the amendments had been agreed on beforehand.

No.	Original Motion	Amended Motion	Proposer and Amender
1	That this House affirms that fairness, access and independence are cornerstones of Singapore's justice system and **calls on the Government to recognise and remedy its shortcomings in order to enhance justice for all, regardless of means or social status, including facilitating a review of the justice system."** **(**4 Nov 2020**)**	That this House recognises that fairness, access and independence are cornerstones of Singapore's justice system and **affirms the Government's continuous efforts since Independence to build a fair and just society and remedy any shortcoming in order to enhance justice for all, regardless of race, language, religion, economic means or social status."**	Passed, with recorded dissent by members of the WP and PSP Proposer: **Sylvia Lim** and **He Ting Ru, WP** Amender: **Murali Pillai, PAP**
2	That this House **calls on the Government, in partnership with the private sector and the people of Singapore**, to deepen and accelerate efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and to embrace sustainability in the development of Singapore". (1 Feb 2021)	That this House acknowledges that climate change **is a global emergency and a threat to mankind** and calls on the Government, in partnership with the private sector, **civil society** and the people of Singapore, to deepen and accelerate efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and to embrace sustainability in the development of Singapore."	Passed Proposer: **Louis Ng, Cheryl Chan, Gan Thiam Poh, Poh Li San, Hany Soh, Don Wee, PAP** Amenders: **Dennis Tan**, WP **Cheryl Chan** PAP
3	That this House affirms that gender equality requires a whole of society effort to remove all barriers in order to empower every woman to freely realise her full potential and participation in society. (3 Aug 2021)	That this House affirms that gender equality requires a whole of society effort to remove all barriers in order to empower every woman to freely realise her full potential and participation in society **and looks forward to action plans in the upcoming Government White Paper arising out of the Conversations on Singapore Women's Development**	Passed Proposers: **He Ting Ru, Leon Perera,** WP Amenders: **Vikram Nair, PAP**
4	That this House affirms the importance of keeping public housing affordable and		Passed with Noes from WP and PSP

	accessible while protecting the interests of current and future generations of Singaporeans, and endorses the commitment of the Government to these twin goals. (7 Feb 2023)		members after division **Pritam Singh, WP** attempts unsuccessfully to Change "endorse the commitment of the Government" to "**calls on** the Government to intensify its efforts to meet"
5	That this House celebrates the accomplishments of our athletes and para-athletes at the 32nd Southeast Asian Games and the 12th ASEAN Para Games in Cambodia, and calls on the Government to **undertake a thorough evaluation** of the areas of improvement in Singapore's sporting ecosystem, and commit to realising clear, achievable goals for sporting success over the coming decade (6 Jul 2023)	That this House celebrates the accomplishment of our athletes and para-athletes, **including** at the 32nd Southeast Asian Games and the 12th ASEAN Para games in Cambodia and calls on the Government to **continue its** thorough evaluation of the areas of improvement in Singapore's sporting ecosystem, and commit to realising **our goals in sports** over the coming decades."	Passed, with recorded dissent by WP members and Leong Mun Wai (PSP) Proposers: **Jamus Lim** and **Faisal Manap, WP** Amender: **Darryl David, PAP**
6	That this House reaffirms its commitment to the need for the Speaker of Parliament **to be independent and impartial** and for Parliament to be a fair arena for all." (2 August 2023)	"That this House reaffirms its commitment (a) to the need for the Speaker of Parliament to **discharge his duties independently and impartially and for Parliament** to be a fair arena for all and (b) to uphold the **Standing Orders of Parliament** and the obligations under the Parliament (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act 1962."	Passed, with recorded dissent by PSP members Proposer: **Hazel Poa** and **Leong Mun Wai** Amender: **Vikram Nair, PAP**
7	That this House, having regard to the terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israel and	That this House, having regard to the terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israel and the deepening	Passed Proposer:

	the deepening humanitarian crisis arising from Israel's military operations in the Gaza strip: (a) Expresses its deepest condolences to all innocent victims and civilian casualties; **(b) Supports UN Resolution ES-10/21 which calls for an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities;** (c) Advocates the urgent delivery of humanitarian aid to the civilian population in Gaza and unhindered access to United Nations' humanitarian agencies, the International Red Cross and other humanitarian organisations; (d) Condemns those responsible for the terrorist acts and violations of international law; (e) Calls on all parties to comply fully with international humanitarian law, including to ensure the safety and security of civilians, release all hostages and minimise the effects of combat on the civilian population; (f) Reiterates Singapore's long-standing commitment to a negotiated two-state solution consistent with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions; and (g) Urges all Singaporeans to safeguard and uphold our multiracial and multi-religious peace and harmony." (6 Nov 2023)	humanitarian crisis arising from Israel's military operations in the Gaza strip: (a) expresses its deepest condolences to all innocent victims and civilian casualties; (b) advocates the urgent delivery of humanitarian aid to the civilian population in Gaza; (c) condemns those responsible for the terrorist acts and violations of international law; (d) calls for all parties to ensure the safety and security of civilians, including the release of all hostages; **(e) reiterates Singapore's long-standing commitment to a negotiated two-state solution consistent with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions; and** (f) urges all Singaporeans to safeguard and uphold our multiracial and multi-religious peace and harmony."	**Vikram Nair, Alex Yam, Zhulkarnain Abdul Rahim, PAP** Amender: **Alex Yam, PAP**
8	That this House calls on the Government **to review its**	That this House **acknowledges that cost of living is a global concern,**	Passed, with recorded

	policies so as to lower cost of living pressures on Singaporeans and their families (7 Nov 2023)	**and calls on the Government to continue pursuing policies** that together lower cost of living pressures on Singaporeans and their families, without undermining our fiscal sustainability and burdening future generations of Singaporeans	dissent by WP and PSP members Proposer: **Pritam Singh** and **Louis Chua, WP** Amender: **Liang Eng Hwa, PAP**
9	That this House calls on the Government **to review its current budget** and reserve accumulation policies in order to help present-day Singaporeans reduce their financial burdens and improve their quality of life, while continuing to save for future generations of Singaporeans. (7 Feb 2024)	That this House calls on the Government **to ensure its budget and reserve accumulation** policies always stay fiscally responsible and sustainable in order to help present-day Singaporeans reduce their financial burdens and improve their quality of life, while planning and providing for future generations of Singaporeans."	Passed, with recorded dissent by WP and PSP members Proposer: **Hazel Poa** and **Leong Mun Wai, PSP** Amender: **Liang Eng Hwa, PAP**
10	That this House calls on the Government to **review its policies relating to hawkers** and the management of hawker centres to provide better support for hawkers to sustain and grow our Singapore's hawker culture so that Singaporeans can continue to enjoy good and affordable hawker food." (13 Nov 2024)	That this House calls on the Government to **continue its support for hawkers** by regularly reviewing its policies relating to hawkers and the management of hawker centres, which will help to sustain and grow Singapore's hawker culture so that Singaporeans can continue to enjoy good and affordable hawker food while enabling hawkers to earn a fair livelihood.	Passed Proposer: **Leong Mun Wai, PSP** Amender: **Edward Chia, PAP**

Participating in Motions (when not the proposer)

Beyond the MPs who proposed motions, many others actively participated in motion debates as contributors to the discussion. Our analysis shows that a range of MPs across party lines frequently spoke during these debates, even when they were not the original movers. Workers' Party (WP) MPs and Progress Singapore Party (PSP) NCMPs were particularly prominent among the most frequent speakers, although a wide spread of People's Action Party (PAP) and Nominated Members of Parliament (NMPs) also engaged actively.

Jamus Lim (WP) participated the most, speaking in **19** motion debates, followed by **Gerald Giam** (WP) with **15**. Other highly active MPs included **Hazel Poa** (PSP) and **Pritam Singh** (WP), both of whom spoke during **11** motion debates.

Table 6.3: No. of debatable motions spoken on per backbencher MP

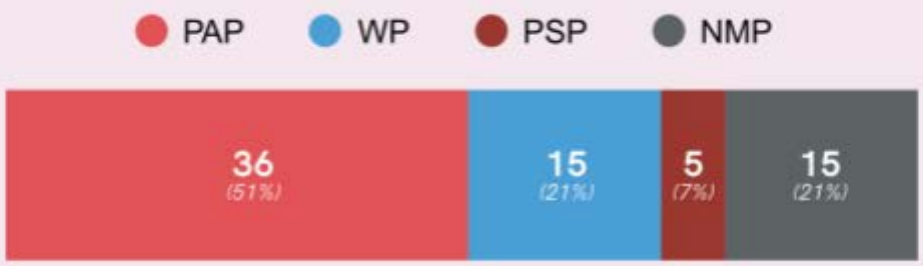
No.of debatable motions spoken on	Backbenchers	
19	Jamus Lim (WP)	
15	Gerald Giam (WP)	
11	Hazel Poa (NCMP) Pritam SIngh (WP)	
9	He Ting Ru (WP) Vikram Nair (PAP)	
8	Leon Perera (WP) Leong Mun Wai (NCMP) Raj Joshua Thomas (NMP) Sylvia Lim (WP)	
7	Dennis Tan (WP) Janet Ang (NMP) Louis Chua (WP) Mariam Jaafar (PAP)	Poh Li San (PAP) Wan Rizal (PAP) Xie Yao Quan (PAP) Yip Hon Weng (PAP)
6	Carrie Tan (PAP) Denise Phua (PAP) Liang Eng Hwa (PAP) Mark Chay (NMP) Melvin Yong (PAP)	Nadia Samdin (PAP) Ng Ling Ling (PAP) Rachel Ong (PAP) Saktiandi Supaat (PAP) Sharael Taha (PAP)

No.of debatable motions spoken on	Backbenchers	
5	Edward Chia (PAP) Lim Biow Chuan (PAP) Murali Pillai (PAP) Sitoh Yih Pin (PAP) Tan Wu Meng (PAP) Yeo Wan Ling (PAP)	
4	Abdul Samad (NMP) Cheng Li Hui (PAP) Darryl David (PAP) Gan Thiam Poh (PAP) Henry Kwek (PAP)	Keith Chua (NMP) Mark Lee (NMP) Razwana Begum (NMP) Seah Kian Peng (PAP) Tin Pei Ling (PAP)
3	Desmond Choo (PAP) Hany Soh (PAP) Hoon Hian Teck (NMP) Jean See (NMP) Jessica Tan (PAP) Joan Pereira (PAP)	Koh Lian Pin (NMP) Louis Ng (PAP) Ong Hua Han (NMP) Shahira Abdullah (NMP) Shawn Huang (PAP) Usha Chandradas (NMP)
2	Ang Wei Neng (PAP) Cheng Hsing Yao (NMP) Christopher de Souza (PAP) Syed Harun Alhabsyi (NMP) Tan Yia Swam (NMP) Zhulkarnain Abdul Rahim (PAP)	
1	Cheryl Chan (PAP) Chong Kee Hiong (PAP) Derrick Goh (PAP) Faisal Manap (WP) Foo Mee Har (PAP)	Lim Wee Kiak (PAP) Neil Parekh Nimil Rajnikant (NMP) Patrick Tay (PAP) Raeesah Khan (WP)

Adjournment Motions

A total of **71** Adjournment Motions were raised between August 2020 to November 2024., soliciting responses from various Ministries. The breakdown by party affiliation is as follows:

Figure 6.2: Breakdown of Adjournment Motions by Parties



(Base: n=71)

Adjournment Motions offer MPs an opportunity to raise specific issues of concern at the end of a sitting day, without requiring a vote. Unlike regular motions, only **one adjournment motion** is typically allowed per sitting, and MPs must apply in advance to secure a speaking slot. If more than one MP submits a request, a ballot is conducted to determine who gets to speak. This limited availability means that securing multiple adjournment slots often reflects an MP's persistence in filing motions, their prioritisation of key issues, and sometimes the relative demand for adjournment slots during certain periods.

In this term of Parliament, several MPs consistently made use of adjournment motions to highlight a wide range of policy and constituency matters.

Louis Ng (PAP) was the most prolific user of adjournment motions, raising **10 motions** on issues ranging from workplace protections for breastfeeding mothers to safeguarding marine spaces and supporting low-wage migrant workers. **Murali Pillai** (PAP) followed with **5 motions**, often focusing on legal and community issues such as estate management models and road safety.

Among non-PAP MPs, **Leong Mun Wai** (PSP NCMP) and **Razwana Begum** (NMP) were notable, each raising **4 adjournment motions**. Leong Mun Wai's motions covered public expenditure oversight, parliamentary reforms, and urban planning issues, while Razwana Begum championed gender equality, child safety, and education. Similarly, **Syed Harun Alhabsyi** (NMP) also raised **4 motions**, addressing a range of topics from social cohesion to foreign policy.

Other MPs who frequently raised adjournment motions included **Jamus Lim** (WP), **Leon Perera** (WP), **Louis Chua** (WP), and **Nadia Samdin** (PAP), each securing **3 motions**. Their topics ranged from economic policies and housing affordability to community well-being and sustainable development.

The ability of these MPs to consistently secure adjournment motion slots speaks to both their active legislative engagement and their commitment to spotlighting specific societal concerns within the limited avenues available in Parliament.

Table 6.4: No. of adjournment motions raised per backbencher

No. of adjournment motions raised	Backbenchers	
10	Louis Ng (PAP)	
5	Murali Pillai (PAP)	
4	Leong Mun Wai (NCMP) Razwana Begum (NMP) Syed Harun Alhabsyi (NMP)	
3	Jamus Lim (WP) Leon Perera (WP) Louis Chua (WP)	Nadia Samdin (PAP) Raj Joshua Thomas (NMP)
2	Carrie Tan (PAP) Christopher de Souza (PAP) Gerald Giam (WP) Melvin Yong (PAP) Patrick Tay (PAP)	Poh Li San (PAP) Saktiandi Supaat (PAP) Tin Pei Ling (PAP) Usha Chandradas (NMP) Wan Rizal (PAP)
1	Abdul Samad (NMP) Cheryl Chan (PAP) Denise Phua (PAP) Edward Chia (PAP) Faisal Manap (WP) Hany Soh (PAP) Hazel Poa (NCMP) He Ting Ru (WP) Jessica Tan (PAP)	Joan Pereira (PAP) Keith Chua (NMP) Lim Biow Chuan (PAP) Ng Ling Ling (PAP) Raeesah Khan (WP) Sylvia Lim (WP) Tan Wu Meng (PAP) Yip Hon Weng (PAP)

Conclusion

The analysis of motions between August 2020 to November 2024 in the 14th Parliament reveals a clear pattern: while MPs actively leveraged motions to raise a range of issues, outcomes were often shaped by the dominant PAP. Motions originating from opposition MPs faced significant hurdles — all motions that were ultimately rejected were proposed by PSP NCMPs, and many others were substantially amended before passage. Through amendments and competing motions, the ruling party exercised its numerical strength to set the final terms of parliamentary resolutions.

Despite these dynamics, motion debates provided an important platform for vigorous engagement. MPs across party lines actively participated in these debates, contributing to a more vibrant and diverse parliamentary discourse. Opposition MPs in particular made frequent use of the opportunities available to voice alternative perspectives, even when their motions did not prevail. The extensive use of adjournment motions further reflected MPs' efforts to surface a broad range of policy and societal issues, beyond the formal legislative agenda.

Taken together, the trends in this chapter suggest that while the formal influence of opposition MPs and NMPs remains constrained by the realities of majority rule, the motions process nonetheless plays a vital role in Singapore's parliamentary democracy. It provides a structured avenue for contestation, scrutiny, and the airing of diverse viewpoints — enriching the public debate and strengthening the foundations of representative governance.

Chapter 7: Ministerial Statements

By Josephine L.

Introduction

A ministerial statement, as defined under Standing Order 23, is a statement that may be made by a Minister in Parliament on a matter of public importance. Members may seek clarification on the statement, but no debate shall be allowed thereon. However, the Minister may move a Motion under Standing Order 44 for a debate to take place after the delivery of the statement.

Ministerial Statements are scheduled to be made after Question Time and a Minister may defer the answering of some Questions for Oral Answer during Question Time and provide answer(s) in the Ministerial Statement.

After making the Ministerial Statement, the Minister responds to questions and clarifications from the Members of Parliament (MPs).

In this chapter, we analyse:

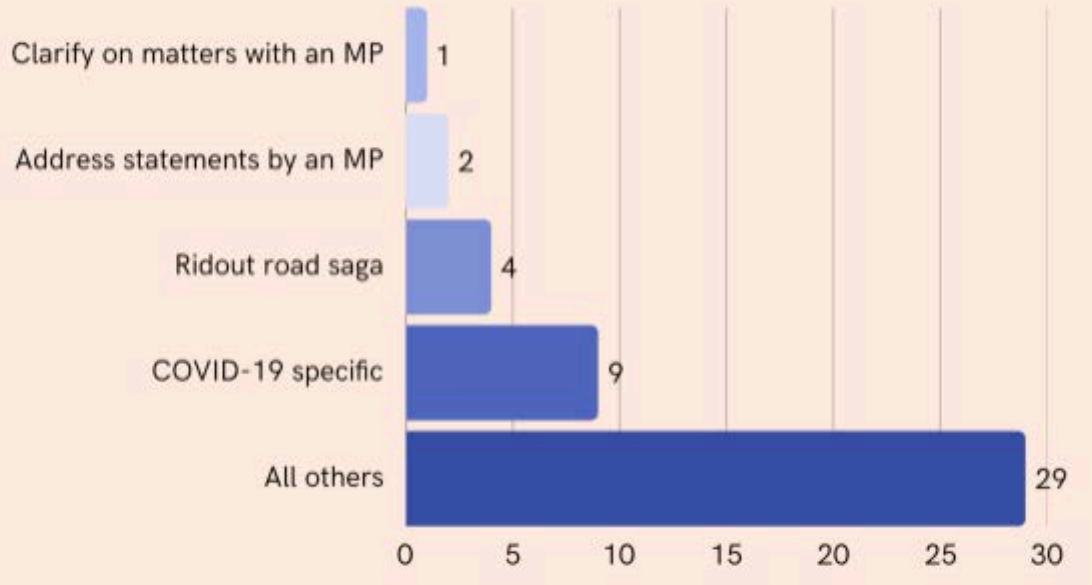
- Ministerial Statements made and their categories
- Ministers that issued Ministerial Statements
- Count of Ministerial Statements that received questions from each group (PAP backbenchers, WP MPs, PSP NCMPs, NMPs)
- Count of Ministerial Statements that received questions from MPs

Ministerial Statements by Office Holders

Breakdown of Types of Ministerial Statements

In the 14th Parliament of Singapore, a total of 45 Ministerial Statements have been made.

Figure 7.1: Categories of Ministerial Statements



As highlighted in the introduction, a ministerial statement is a statement that may be made by a Minister in Parliament on a matter of public importance. The graph above includes a breakdown of the different categories of ministerial statements that have been made.

It was observed that ministerial statements were also made to address statements by an MP and to clarify on matters with an MP. Details and examples of each of the categories are included in the table below.

Ministerial statements used to clarify on matters with an MP
1. Clarification sought by Minister for Home Affairs (K Shanmugam) for a speech made by Raeesah Khan.

Ministerial statements used to address statements by an MP

1. Statement by Minister for Home Affairs and Law (K Shanmugam) to address matters arising from Minister's answer to Leong Mun Wai's PQ on 20 March 2023, including a Facebook post made by Leong Mun Wai.

2. Statement by Minister of Defence (Ng Eng Hen) to clarify on a statement by Leong Mun Wai on citizens by registration not fulfilling serving NS.

In Ministerial Statement 1, the Minister had asked for Leong Mun Wai's responses and there were exchanges between both parties.

In Ministerial Statement 2, the Minister had made a statement and Leong Mun Wai made clarifications, after being reminded that speeches and statements are not to be made as per the standing order.

It is worth questioning if it is appropriate to comment on another member when this platform is exclusively accessible to Ministers to make statements, especially since Ministerial Statements usually do not permit debates.

Ministerial Statements relating to Ridout road saga

1. Minister of Law (K Shanmugam) made a statement on rental of 26 Ridout Road, a state-owned property rented by the Minister.

2. Minister for Foreign Affairs (Vivian Balakrishnan) made a statement on rental of 31 Ridout Road, a state-owned property rented by the Minister.

3. Second Minister for Law (Edwin Tong) made a statement on rentals of state properties.

4. Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security (Teo Chee Hean) made a statement on the review of rentals of state properties at 26 and 31 Ridout Road.

COVID-19 specific Ministerial Statements

Nine (9) statements made on the COVID-19 pandemic, including updates on Whole-of-Government response to COVID-19 and support measures for the different phases.

Ministerial statements excluding the other categories

All other ministerial statements delivered on matters of public importance. At the time of writing, the most recent Ministerial Statement made was by the Minister for Transport (Chee Hong Tat) on A Safe, Reliable, and Resilient Rail System addressing the East-West Line disruption that occurred from 25 to 30 September 2024.

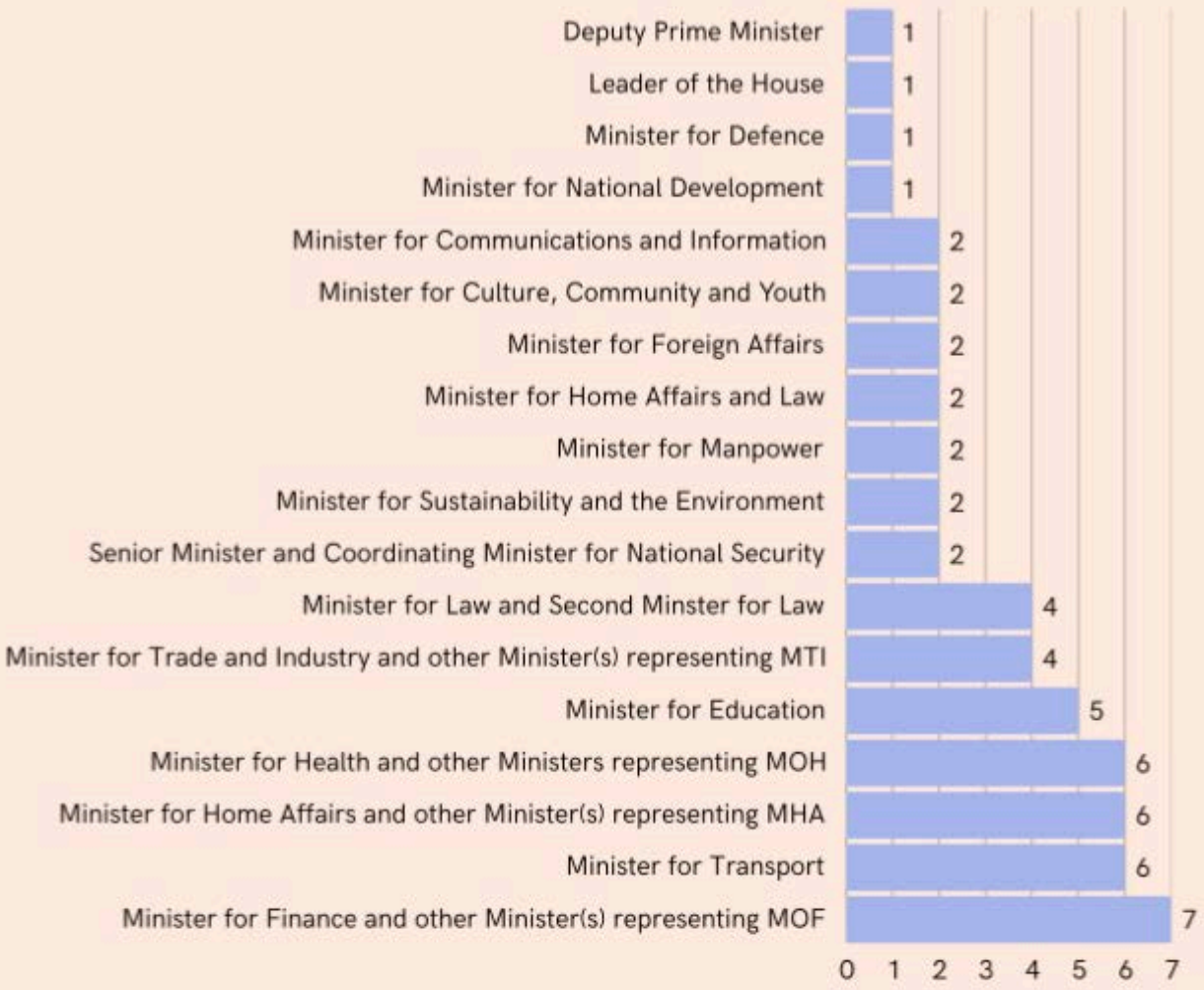
Other examples include ministerial statements issued on:

- Singapore's Anti-Money Laundering Regime by Second Minister of Home Affairs, Minister of State for Trade and Industry, Second Minister for Finance and National Development
- Free Trade Agreements and Foreign Manpower by Minister for Health and Minister for Manpower

Number of Ministerial Statements by Speakers

The graph below summarises the speakers that made Ministerial Statements.

Figure 7.2: Number of Ministerial Statements by Speakers



A Minister for Finance and other Minister(s) representing the Ministry of Finance had made the highest number of Ministerial Statements (7); this includes a statement on bolstering the security of digital banking, and support measures for the different circuit breaker phases during COVID-19 pandemic.

This is followed by a Minister for Health (6), Minister for Home Affairs and other Minister(s) representing the Ministry of Home Affairs (6) and minister for Transport (6). The Minister or representing Minister appears to issue statements based on the significance of national topics at a given time.

A Ministerial Statement can be delivered by more than one Minister, and the total sum in the graph above does not equate to the total number of Ministerial Statements made. Furthermore, a Minister may make a statement on matters related to their previous portfolio. For example, Minister for Education Chan Chun Sing clarified in 2023 that his 2021 statements on land clearing at Kranji—made when he was Minister

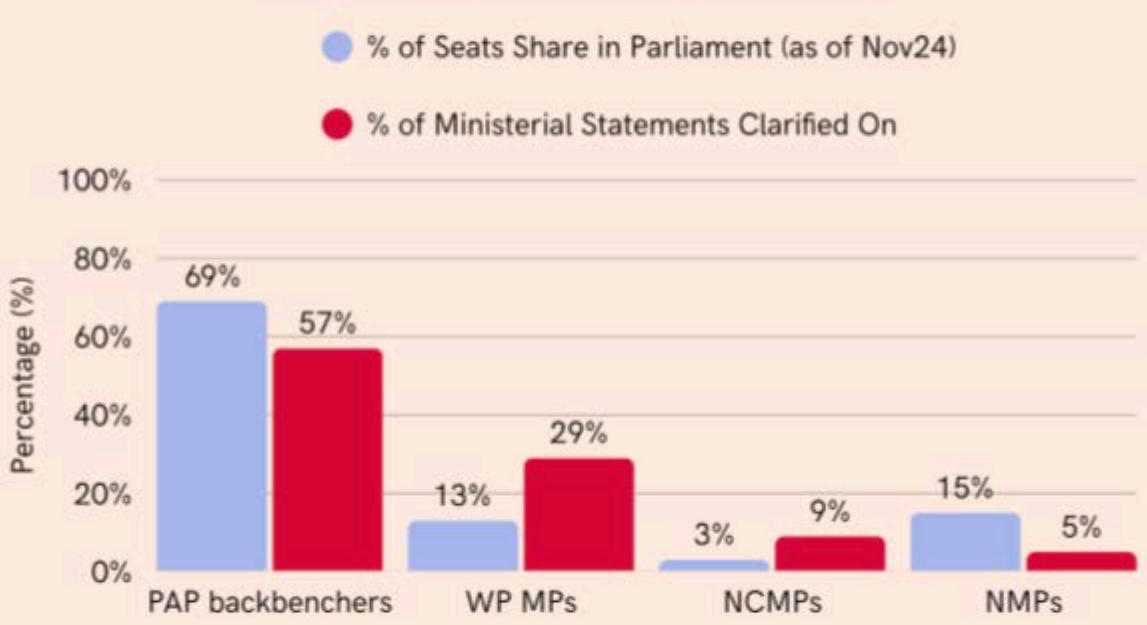
for Trade and Industry—were based on inaccurate information provided by two JTC officers.

MPs Speaking on Ministerial Statements

Difference in % of Ministerial Statements Clarified On and Seat Share

PAP backbenchers make up 69% of Parliament (excluding Ministers and other title holders), and they represent 57% of the speakers that clarified on Ministerial Statements. This figure was calculated by determining the proportion of PAP backbenchers who clarified on Ministerial Statements.

Figure 7.3: Comparison Between % of Seat Share and Ministerial Statements Clarified On Per Party



In comparison, WP MPs, NCMPs, and NMPs make up 13%, 3%, and 15% of Parliament, respectively. When it comes to clarifying Ministerial Statements, these groups contributed 29%, 9%, and 5%, respectively.

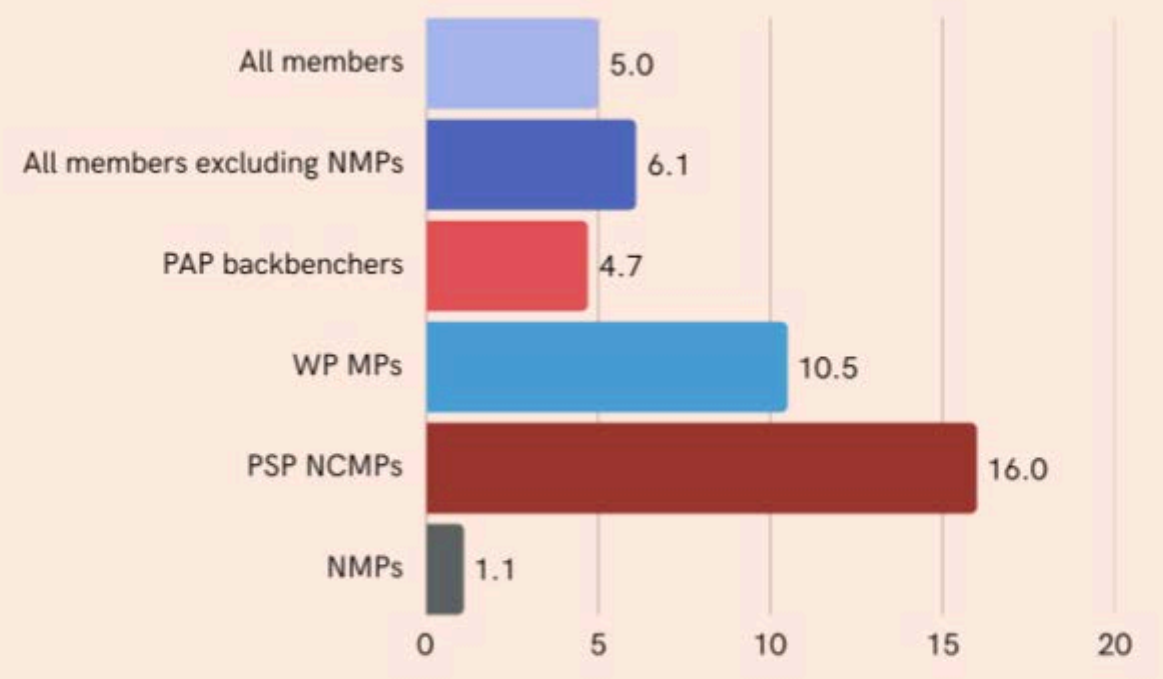
Table 7.1: Percentage of Ministerial Statements Clarified On Per Party

Party	Clarifications on Ministerial Statements across MPs (count)	% of Total Clarifications
PAP backbencher	211	57.5%
WP	105	28.6%
PSP	32	8.7%
NMP	19	5.2%
Total	**367**	**100%**

A typical member of the House asked questions on approximately 5.0 Ministerial Statements. However, when excluding NMPs, who serve limited two-and-a-half-year terms, the average member asked questions on around 6.1 Ministerial Statements.

On average, PAP backbenchers clarified on 4.7 Ministerial Statements, WP MPs clarified on 10.5 Ministerial Statements, PSP MPs clarified on 16.0 Ministerial Statements, and NMPs clarified on 1.1 Ministerial Statements. In reading these figures, it is important to note the changes in the composition of the parliament as elaborated in the Introduction.

Figure 7.4: Average Number of Ministerial Statements Clarified On



Gerald Giam clarified on the largest number of Ministerial Statements (22), followed by Pritam Singh (18), Leong Mun Wai (18), Hazel Poa (14) and Liang Eng Hwa (14).

The following members did not clarify on any Ministerial Statements: Mohamad Faisal Manap (WP), Chong Kee Hiong (PAP), Henry Kwek (PAP), Cheng Li Hui (PAP), Razwana Begum (NMP), Syed Harun Tahad Alhabsyi (NMP), See Jinli (NMP), Ong Hua Han (NMP), Koh Lian Pin (NMP), Keith Choon (NMP).

It is noteworthy that MPs have other roles to fulfil, as elaborated in the Introduction.

Figure 7.5: Number of Ministerial Statements Clarified On



A study of ministerial statements in other Westminster parliamentary systems would provide valuable comparative insights. Such an analysis would examine whether these statements in jurisdictions like the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand are similar in delivery and scope to Singapore. The analysis would contextualise the practice in Singapore and identify norms and variations.

Appendix

Chapter 3: Representation of Racial Minority Interests in Parliament

Table 3.1: Racial minority categories and their associated word tags

Category	Word tags
Malay/Muslim Only	Malay Muslim MUIS MENDAKI Halal Tudung Madrasah asatizahs Islam Zakat Pergas
Indian/Hindu Only	
Eurasian only	Eurasian
Malay/Muslim and Indian/Hindu only	Racial minority Minority ethnic groups Ethnic minorities Ethnicity Ethnicities
Racial minority in general	Racial Multi-racial Self-Help Group Language Dialect Different groups Communities GRC Mother tongue Tradition Assimilation Festival Interfaith Temple Ethnic Integration Policy (EIP) Race

Table 3.2: Code frame

No.	Code name	Code definition	Examples
1	Education	Inquiries on funding, curriculum, mental health, educational outcomes, and employment in secular schools and Madrasahs.	E.g. To ask the Minister for Social and Family Development (a) what is the number of pre-schools that currently offer (i) only Chinese Language as a mother tongue language (MTL) (ii) only Chinese and Malay Languages and (iii) only Chinese and Tamil Languages; (b) whether there are targets to ensure that each neighbourhood has at least one pre-school which offers Malay or Tamil Language to better cater to the learning and developmental needs of minority children before they are enrolled in primary school; and (c) if no, whether the Ministry will consider doing so. E.g. To ask the Minister for Social and Family Development and Minister-in-charge for Muslim Affairs whether the $1 million injection in training credits by MUIS will cover non-Islamic courses such as mental health, coding and programming, financial management and media literacy. E.g. To ask the Minister for Social and Family Development and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs (a) whether there are proportional statistics of those in the Madrasah student cohorts who pursuethe "secular" or non-religious academic pathways in their postsecondary/tertiary education; (b) of these, how many successfully graduate from our local secular tertiary institutions; and (c) whether there are support structures for Madrasah students who wish to transition from religious to secular schooling.
2	Employment	Queries on workplace discrimination, salary guidelines, and career trajectories.	E.g. To ask the Minister for Social and Family Development and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs whether there are studies on (i)the career trajectories of local Madrasah graduates from previous and existing cohorts and (ii) what kind of jobs the graduates pursue and in which industries. E.g. To ask the Minister for Social and Family Development and Minister-in-charge ofMuslim Affairs how many asatizahs who are university graduates and currently working in Singaporeearn (i) less than $2,000 monthly (ii)

			between $2,001 to $3,000 monthly (iii) between $3,001 to $4,000monthly and (iv) from $4,001 and above respectively.
3	Family	The questions examine divorce statistics and processes within the Muslim community, focusing on classifications, reasons, custody outcomes, and case durations in the Syariah Court.	E.g. To ask the Minister for Social and Family Development and Minister-in-charge ofMuslim Affairs for divorce cases handled by the Syariah Court that have been concluded in the last two years, what is the median and average case duration from the time the case is registered to the time the divorce is finalised. E.g. To ask the Minister for Social andFamily Development and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs (a) from 2011 to 2020, how many cases of Muslim divorce are classified under (i) talak rajie(ii) talak bain (iii) taklik (iv) fasakh and (v) khuluk; (b) how many of these divorce cases have been pronounced by hakam; and (c) how many cases are presented to the second set of hakam
4	Gender	The questions address sex education, staff training on sexual harassment, gender equality promotion, and support mechanisms in Madrasahs and Mosques.	E.g. To ask the Minister for Social and Family Development and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs (a) what form of sex education and youth engagement is conducted in madrasahs and mosques; (b) what form of training is provided to the staff on how to handle allegations and incidents of sexual harassment and counsel victims of such incidents; and (c) what is being done to promote gender equality in the mosque and madrasah communities.
			E.g. To ask the Minister for Social and FamilyDevelopment and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs in respect of sexualharassment or violence cases involving any staff, student or asatizah in MUIS,mosques, madrasahs or other religious institutions under MUIS, whether MUIS has (i) whistleblowing and reporting procedures for such cases (ii) training and education efforts to increase awareness of the legal protection framework for victims and (iii) a network of trained professionals to provide psychological,emotional and spiritual support for victims.
5	Health	Inquiries on social determinants of health and the current state of mental health	E.g. To ask the Minister for Health whether the Working Group on Health for Ethnic Minorities will collect data to examine the association between poorer health and other social determinants of health to accurately identify

		within racial minority communities, including the prevalence of mental health issues, strategies to promote awareness and address mental health stigma, as well as providing adequate support to individuals in need.	the root causes of poor health in such communities E.g. To ask the Minister for Social and Family Developmentwhat are the current efforts by the Ministry to support social service agencies to provide more suicide prevention support, particularly to the higher riskgroups such as men, and specifically Indian men who have a disproportionately higher rate of suicide than other demographic groups.
6	Housing	Inquiries on EIP, HDB homeownership, and rental discrimination. EIP - These questions explore various aspects of the EIP, including its necessity, impact on resale prices, potential revisions, and minority seller challenges. Homeownership - These questions ask about data on flat ownership, assistance for buying and selling flats (e.g., effectiveness of Project Dian@M3).	E.g. To ask the Minister for National Development (a) since the inception of Project Dian@M³ on 17 June 2021,how many Malay households have managed to attain home ownership under this scheme; and (b) whether a breakdown can be provided on the number of these Malay households according to the zones of Geylang Serai, Bedok andJalan Besar respectively. E.g. To ask the Minister for National Development(a) whether the Ministry collects data on the number of complaints received on residential rental discrimination by age or race; (b) if so, what has been the annual number for the last five years; and (c) what are the avenues of recourse for Singaporeans and non-Singaporeans when they encounter rental discrimination. E.g. To ask the Minister for National Development with regard to the Ethnic Integration Policy (EIP) (a) whether the Ministry will consider introducing a discount to the fixed resale levy payable by non-Chinesehomeowners selling at lower prices in Chinese-constrained transactions as away to reduce the economic impact of the EIP on minorities; and (b) if so,what may be a suitable price benchmark to determine such a discount.

7	Preservation and promotion of Malay/Indian culture, heritage, or language	These questions explore government support for the development and promotion of Malay and Tamil languages, as well as the Malay arts scene in Singapore.	E.g. To ask the Minister for Education (a)how many local researchers and experts are employed or hired by NUS Infant and Child Language Centre to conduct research and development programmes for Malay and Tamil languages; (b) whether the Centre will recruit locals as part of the plan to expand and enhance its capabilities; (c)whether the Centre has conducted any collaborations and inter-agency work or deployment with other institutions and agencies such as Yayasan Mendaki and the Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA); and (d)whether there are plans for other local universities to establish similar research centres in the coming years. E.g. To ask the Minister for Culture, Community and Youth (a) what are the current funding and resources allocated to support the Malay arts scene in Singapore; (b) how has theMinistry ensured that these resources are accessible to both emerging and established Malay artists; (c)what initiatives provide Malay artists with a platform to showcase their work locally and internationally;and (d) how is the Ministry promoting cultural education and engagement of the Malay arts scene among the broader Singaporean population.
8	Social welfare	Inquiries about social welfare assistance provided by government and non-governmental organizations for low-income families, students, incarcerated individuals, and their families.	E.g. To ask the Minister for Social and Family Development andMinister-in-charge for Muslim Affairs what are the types of assistance made available to Singaporean students who are studying Islamic studies abroad during this pandemic. E.g. To ask the Minister for Culture, Community and Youthwhether the Government assesses there to be a need to raise the respective contribution amounts by employees to Self-Help Groups, namely, theChinese Development Assistance Council Fund, Eurasian Community Fund,Mosque Building and Mendaki Fund and Singapore Indian DevelopmentAssociation Fund, particularly for those earning high incomes. E.g. To ask the Minister for Social andFamily Development and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs with regard to the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore's (MUIS)

			financial assistance scheme (a) when was the eligibility income threshold last reviewed; and (b)whether there are plans to review again, in light of the inflation in costs of living.
9	Halal	Inquiries on investigations and regulations surrounding halal certification, as well as availability of halal food options.	E.g. To ask the Minister for Social andFamily Development and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs what is the progress of investigations into allegations of questionable halal certification practices by MUIS's Halal Certification Strategic Unit. E.g. To ask the Minister for Social and FamilyDevelopment and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs what are the plans ofMUIS to regulate or educate food and beverage (F&B) operators on the use of labels depicting Islamic phrases or Muslim-owned businesses status inorder to avoid confusion amongst the public of the halal status of F&B establishments and potential dilution of the MUIS halal certification mark. E.g. To ask the Minister for Social and FamilyDevelopment and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs following the announcement that MUIS is conducting a comprehensive review to further strengthen the foreign halal certification bodies (FHCBs) recognition framework by end-2021, whether MUIS will open a public consultation were members of the public and stakeholders can provide their feedback and suggestions.
10	Religious life and practice	These questions focus on various aspects of Singapore's Muslim community and religious affairs. They cover topics such as places of worship, religious practices during COVID restrictions, Hajj pilgrimage, zakat collection and distribution, religious education, financial support for mosques, and	E.g. To ask the Minister for Social and Family Development andMinister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs (a) whether an update can be provided on the haj pilgrimage for 2022; (b) how will MUIS allocate the haj places to the pilgrims; (c) whether there will be concessions for those registered in the system but are turning 65 years old; and (d) how will MUIS handle appeals cases for the allocation of places for the pilgrimage. E.g. To ask the Minister for Social and Family Development and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs with the online collection of zakat, how does MUIS determine the appointment of Amils (zakat administrators). E.g. To ask the Minister for Social and Family Development and Ministerin-charge of Muslim

		investigations into deviant teachings.	Affairs (a) what role can religious teachers and mosques play to support the localMuslim community spiritually and emotionally, in understanding the conflict and humanitarian crisis inGaza and the rest of the Palestinian Territories; and (b) what steps can be taken to raise public awareness to verify that donations for such humanitarian causes go to legitimate sources. E.g. To ask the Minister for Social and Family Development and Minister-in-charge ofMuslim Affairs (a) based on the recent haj season, what is the number of Singapore pilgrims requiring wheelchair assistance or medical support; (b) how does this number compare to previous seasons; and (c)what additional medical and mobility support services are being planned for future haj seasons to cater to such needs.
11	Racial discrimination	These questions focus on how Singapore investigates and addresses racist sentiments and incidents, and seeks to promote racial and religious harmony in Singapore.	E.g. To ask the Minister for Home Affairs (a) whether the investigation into the tragic death of a police officer and the concerns raised regarding racial discrimination will involve external experts and reviewers beyond the Singapore Police Force (SPF); (b) whether a process invoking theInquiries Act (2007) will facilitate such external review and help retain confidence in the SPF; and (c)what mechanisms exist for SPF officers to highlight racial discrimination whether against themselves or fellow officers.
12	Others	The questions primarily seek clarifications on various investigations into cases of deviant teachings and allegations of improper conduct or abuse of power (e.g., Irsyad Trust Limited).	E.g. To ask the Minister for Social andFamily Development and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs (a) whether there is an internal investigation conducted in 2019/2020 on allegations of abuse of power in Madrasah Irsyad Zuhri Al-Islamiah by the former SeniorDirector of Madrasah in MUIS who was also the CEO of Irsyad TrustLimited since 2014; (b) if so, what is the outcome of that internal investigation; and (c) whether there is an out-of-court settlement betweenMUIS and Irsyad Trust Limited on monies and intellectual property rights belonging to Madrasah Irsyad Zuhri Al-Islamiah being wrongfully used to profit Irsyad Trust Limited.

			E.g. To ask the Minister for Social andFamily Development and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs whether theMinistry will make public the findings of the police investigation into an individual allegedly promulgating deviant teachings, upon its completion
		Inquiries regarding financial and estate planning programmes for Malays and Muslims.	E.g. To ask the Minister for Social and FamilyDevelopment and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs (a) what is the current take-up rate by Malay/Muslims of the national financial and estate planning programmes available; (b) what are the current initiatives available to educate Malay/Muslims on permissible methods of investments and estate planning;and (c) what are the avenues for them to seek clarification or enquire about such financial or estate planning methods.

Chapter 5: Parliamentary Questions

Table 5.1: Average number of PQs per MP per sitting

2020 (8 Sittings)*				
	No. of Backbencher MPs	Total PQs	Average PQs per Sitting	Average PQs per MP
NMP	9	0	0.00	0.00
PAP	45	468	58.50	1.30
PSP	2	9	1.13	0.56
WP	10	164	20.50	2.05

2021 (30 Sittings)				
	No. of Backbencher MPs	Total PQs	Average PQs per Sitting	Average PQs per MP per Sitting
NMP	9	120	4.00	0.44
PAP	45	1850	61.67	1.37

PSP	2	102	3.40	1.70
WP	10	761	25.37	2.54

2022 (35 Sittings)				
	No. of Backbencher MPs	**Total PQs**	**Average PQs per Sitting**	**Average PQs per MP per Sitting**
NMP	9	100	2.86	0.32
PAP	45	1896	54.17	1.20
PSP	2	158	4.51	2.26
WP	9	684	19.54	2.17

Jan 2023 - Jul 2023 (25 Sittings)*				
	No. of Backbencher MPs	**Total PQs**	**Average PQs per Sitting**	**Average PQs per MP per Sitting**
NMP	9	17	0.68	0.08
PAP	45	857	34.28	0.76
PSP	2	111	4.44	2.22
WP	9	443	17.72	1.97

**The number of sittings excludes those in which no PQs were filed— 25 out of 30 sittings. No PQs were filed on 10, 17, 18, 19, and 20 April 2023.*

Aug 2023 - Dec 2023 (9 Sittings)				
	No. of Backbencher MPs	**Total PQs**	**Average PQs per Sitting**	**Average PQs per MP per Sitting**
NMP	9	75	8.33	0.93
PAP	43	643	71.44	1.66
PSP	2	83	9.22	4.61
WP	8	213	23.67	2.96

Jan 2024 - Jun 2024 (19 Sittings)				
	No. of Backbencher MPs	Total PQs	Average PQs per Sitting	Average PQs per MP per Sitting
NMP	9	119	6.26	0.7
PAP	43	727	38.26	0.89
PSP	2	129	6.79	3.39
WP	8	254	13.37	1.67

Jul 2024 - Nov 2024 (11 Sittings)				
	No. of Backbencher MPs	Total PQs	Average PQs per Sitting	Average PQs per MP per Sitting
NMP	9	148	13.45	1.49
PAP	41	711	64.64	1.58
PSP	2	107	9.73	4.86
WP	8	267	24.27	3.03

Note: In 2023 and 2024, a **weighted average** was calculated to more accurately represent the average PQs per MP. This was necessary because the number of backbencher MPs varied across different months within each year, which would affect the overall average. The weighted average is calculated using the formula:

Weighted Average = (Average in Period 1 × (PQs in Period 1 ÷ Total PQs)) + (Average in Period 2 × (PQs in Period 2 ÷ Total PQs))

For example, for PAP in 2023:

- Jan-Jul 2023:
  - Average PQs per MP per Sitting = 0.76
  - Total PQs = 857
- Aug–Dec 2023:
  - Average PQs per MP per Sitting = 1.66
  - Total PQs = 643
- **Total PQs for PAP in 2023 = 857 + 643 = 1500**

Weighted Average
= (0.76 × (857 ÷ 1500)) + (1.66 × (643 ÷ 1500))
≈ 1.1

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