SURVEY REPORT

MALAYSIA'S TEMPERATURE CHECK

SEPTEMBER 2020







VASE.AI





Introduction

A collaboration between Undi18, Architects of Diversity and Vase.ai, the "Malaysia's Temperature Check" report was produced in order to understand the Malaysian public opinion on contemporary social and economic issues, as well as understudied opinions. It was also intended to discover what are Malaysians agreeing and disagreeing with, in order to guide further public conversations and future policy directions. This report is also an attempt at identifying what are Malaysians undecided on, in order to facilitate discussions and better education on these particular issues. Please find the full data on the research, online, via the below links:

- Malaysia's Temperature Check Data Dashboard
- · Malaysia's Temperature Check: Research Methodology & Insights

Undi18 is a Malaysian youth movement that successfully advocated for the amendment of Article 119(1) of the Federal Constitution to reduce the minimum voting age in Malaysia from 21 to 18 years old. With the lowering of the voting age, the government estimates that 7.8 million new voters will be added to the electoral roll by the year 2023. Undi18 currently runs a number of educational initiatives to help with the transition in the voting bloc. The main aim of Undi18's programmes is to develop competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes) of Malaysian youths on how to organise and run activities that empower and educate young people about active citizenship, voter education and participation in political, economic and social life through experiential learning and simulations.

Architects of Diversity is a non-profit initiative that aims to bridge communities and identity groups among youth in Malaysia. Since 2018, AOD has organised camps and workshops for over 300 beneficiaries to address the growing segregation in education and social spaces along racial and religious lines. AOD programmes use experiential learning and create opportunities for intergroup friendship formation to foster greater understanding and the ability to navigate identity-based conflicts and inequities.

Vase.ai is the leading digital consumer research company in Malaysia. Since its inception, it has provided consumer insights to more than 100 enterprises and GLCs, and its public opinion data is frequently published in major publications.

"Every" by Vase.ai is a consumer innovation platform that enables organisations to innovate together with consumers in real-time. Every can also be used for rapid public opinion polling, with the capability to collect opinions from 1,000+ nationally representative Malaysians in hours. Organisations are using Every to build better products, brands, and public policies together with the people, for the people.

For more information please visit https://vase.ai and https://askevery.com

Methodology & Limitations

Survey questions were jointly developed by Vase.ai, Architects of Diversity and Undi18. The survey was administered from 2nd-3rd September 2020. Respondents were able to answer the survey in English, Bahasa Melayu or Mandarin. 1,027 responses were included in the final sample.

Sampling

The survey was administered to Vase.ai's online panel using an active quota sampling method, where only people contacted are allowed to participate. Respondents aged 18 years old and above were quota sampled according to census statistics by race, gender, age and region of residence. Vase.ai's online panel ensures duplicate entries are prevented by the use of unique survey links and the limitation of one entry per link. Identifying demographic information was cross-validated with Vase.ai's existing information on the survey respondent. Speed and straight line checking were also performed to exclude low quality responses.

Weighting

Weights were constructed to improve the representativeness of the survey sample. Six demographic characteristics were used to ensure consistency with the actual population and reduce bias from non-random sampling: race, gender, age, state, occupation class and household income 1 . Iterative proportional fitting (raking) - one of the most standard weighting methods was used. The maximum weight value used was set to 5 in line with recommended practices 2 . Chi-square test was used to evaluate the goodness-of-fit of the weighted data compared to actual demographic proportions. All demographic variables passed at the p=0.01 level except for age, where those 65 and above are underrepresented by 5.6%. Weights were not increased due to possible overinflation of outliers.

Limitations

Individuals aged 65 and above are underrepresented, likely due to lower rates of Internet usage among those above 60³. In addition to older individuals, non-random online panel samples may also have lower and non-equal probabilities of sampling rural populations with lower Internet connectivity. WP Labuan, WP Putrajaya and Perlis were excluded from disaggregated figures due to small sample sizes.

¹Population distributions were obtained from the 2010 Malaysian Census, Labour Force Survey and the Institute of Labour Market Information and Analysis by the Department of Statistics, Malaysia

²DeBell, Matthew and Jon A. Krosnick. 2009. "Computing Weights for American National Election Study Survey Data." Stanford University.

³Malaysian Communications and Media Commission. 2018 "Internet Users Survey".

Table 1: Summary statistics of weight construction. Chi-square test results displayed next to relevant demographic variable.

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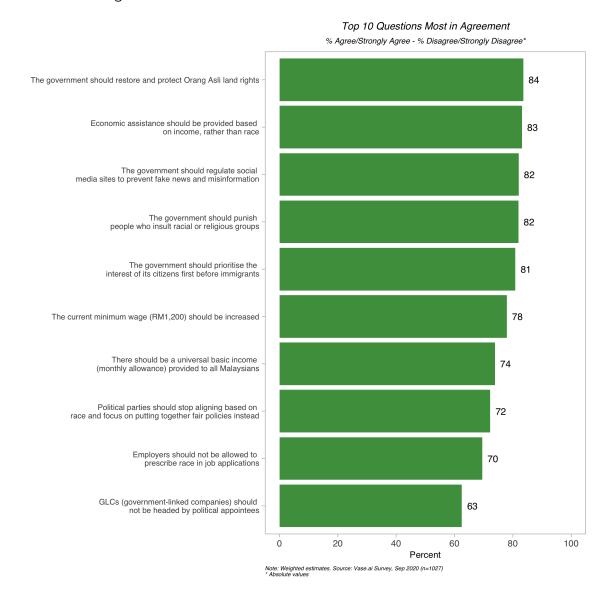
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RM9-12k	0.127	81	0.09183673	112.5646	0.1325865	0.04074975	-0.005586480
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Main Findings

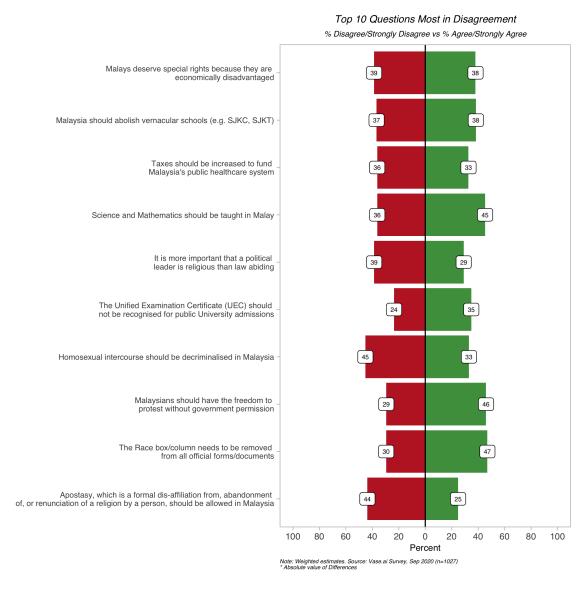
What are Malaysians Agreeing On?

- Majority of Malaysians are sympathetic towards economically disenfranchised groups. 86% support protection of Orang Asli land rights while 82% support the increase of the current federal minimum wage. Additionally, 86% support the move away from race-based economic assistance to prioritise income-based assistance. Universal basic income, a relatively new concept framed as a monthly allowance, also fared positively with 80% of Malaysians approving the idea.
- However, majority of Malaysians did not express similar support for immigrant groups, with 85% supporting the prioritisation of Malaysian citizens over immigrants. Those aged 18-30 showed lower agreement with citizen priority (74%) compared to older individuals.
- A substantial portion of the population also support speech regulations. 86% agree with social media regulation to prevent misinformation and 85% agree with punishments for racial or religious insults.



What are Malaysians Disagreeing About?

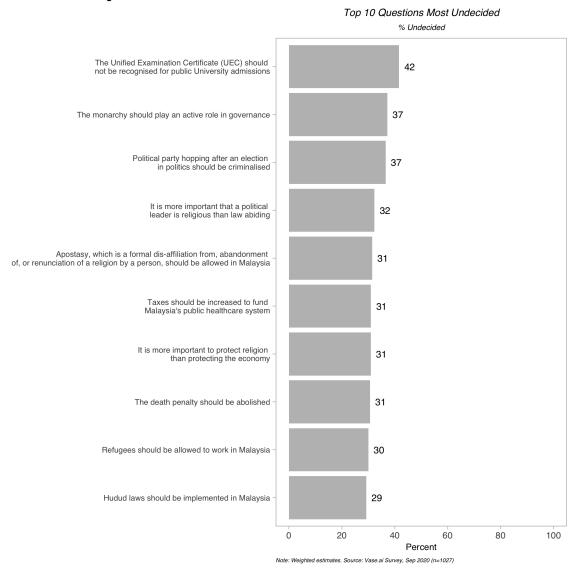
- Language-related education policies are most hotly contested. The status of vernacular schools, language of instruction for Science and Mathematics, and recognition of the Unified Examination Certificate (UEC) are central issues that split public opinion most strikingly. The majority of Malay respondents showed greater support the below statements while non-Malay respondents expressed disagreement.
- Such attitudes may be driven by contested empirical beliefs about Malay economic power.
 Malaysia is divided over support for Malay special rights motivated by economic disadvantage (38% agree versus 39% disagree), with 59% and 20% of Malays agreeing and disagreeing respectively.
- In contrast with wide-spread support for greater economic assistance, Malaysians are more reluctant to have taxes increased to fund healthcare (a social service) with only 33% supporting such a policy.



• No clear majority is observed about attitudes towards the decriminalisation of homosexual intercourse, with 45% of Malaysians in disagreement. Support for decriminalisation was

- relatively consistent across racial groups, ranging from 32% among Malays and Chinese to 40% among non-Malay Bumiputeras.
- The role of religion in shaping public life is also contested. Many agree (29%) and disagree (39%) with the preference for religious over law abiding political leaders. While most disagree with permitting apostasy (44%), a minority agree (25%) with such a policy including 14% of Malays.

What are Malaysians Undecided On?

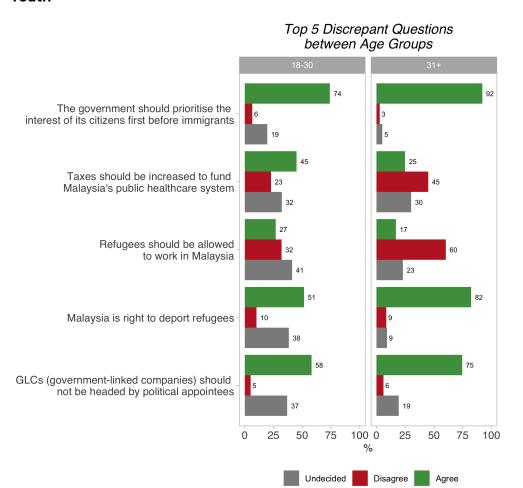


- Many hotly contested issues have a sizeable amount of fence sitters. 42% are undecided about the status of UEC in public university admissions, 31% are undecided about whether it is more important for political leaders to be religious or law abiding, and 31% are undecided about the legality of apostasy.
- A substantial portion of Malaysians are undecided about statements related to the political system. 37% are unclear on whether the monarchy should play an active role in governance, and whether party hopping should be illegal.

Malaysians may also be unclear about implications to possible changes in the penal system. 31% are undecided on whether the death penalty should be abolished and 29% are undecided about the implementation of Hudud laws.

Notable Themes

Youth

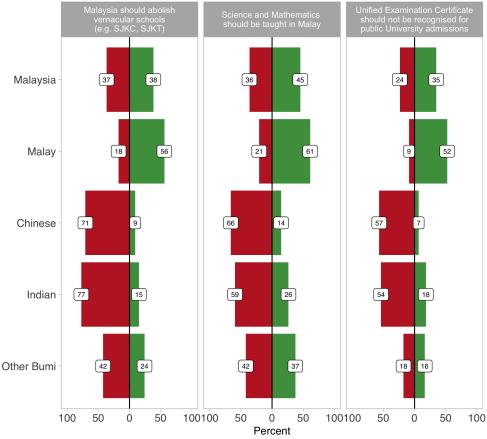


- Note: Weighted estimates. Source: Vase.ai Survey, Sep 2020 (n=1027)
- Those 18-30 years old were more supportive and undecided on refugee & immigrant issues than those 31 and above. While almost all of those 31 and above felt that the government should prioritise its citizens over immigrants (92%), those between 18 and 30 were more undecided (19%).
- Similarly, youth reported greater support for allowing refugees to work in Malaysia (27% versus 17%) while most were undecided about the issue (41%). Youth were also less decided on deportation of refugees, with only 51% supporting such a policy compared to 82% of those 31 and above.
- Most youth were also supportive of increasing taxes for public healthcare (45%) while those 31 and above mostly disagreed (45%).

Language-Related Education Policies

Language Policy Questions by Race

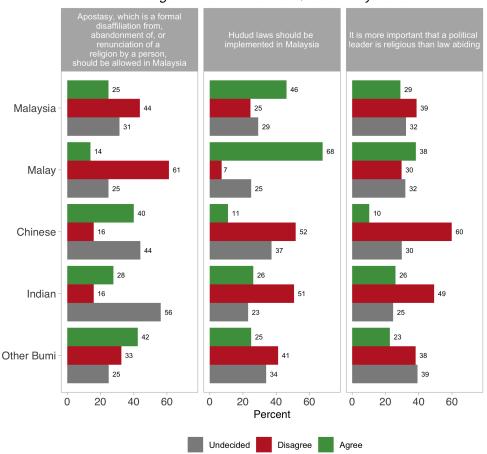
% Disagree/Strongly Disagree vs % Agree/Strongly Agree



Note: Weighted estimates. Source: Vase.ai Survey, Sep 2020 (n=1027)

- Language-related education policy disagreements were largely fueled by opinion between races.
- Chinese and Indian respondents expressed strong disagreement for the abolition of vernacular schools (71% and 77%), Science and Mathematics being taught in Malay (66% and 59%) and the refusal to recognise UEC (57% and 54%).
- Non-Malay Bumiputeras were more undecided on all three issues, but leaned against the abolition of vernacular schools as well (42%).

Religion in Law and Politics

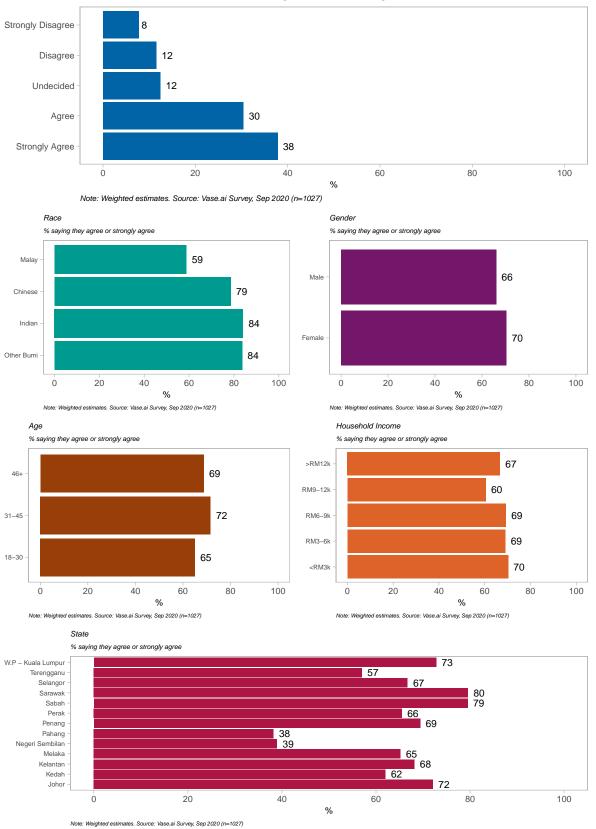


Religion in Law & Politics Questions by Race

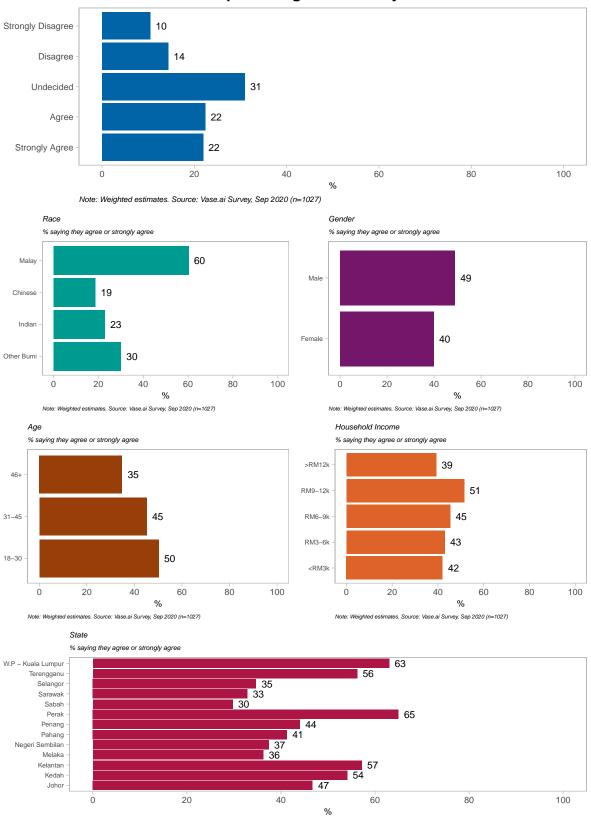
Note: Weighted estimates. Source: Vase.ai Survey, Sep 2020 (n=1027)

- While the majority of Malay respondents disagreed with allowing apostasy (61%), a sizeable minority were undecided (25%) or were in agreement (14%). Similarly, a minority were undecided (25%) or in disagreement (7%) with the implementation of Hudud laws compared to 68% who were in agreement.
- While Chinese and Indians were mostly undecided on allowing apostasy (44% and 56% respectively), most non-Malay Bumiputeras were in agreement (42%).
- Malay respondents were split over the prioritisation of religiosity or being law abiding among political leaders, while non-Malays were mostly either in disagreement (Chinese, 60% and Indians, 49%) or undecided (non-Malay Bumiputeras, 39%).

Religious practice is a private matter and should be separated from politics

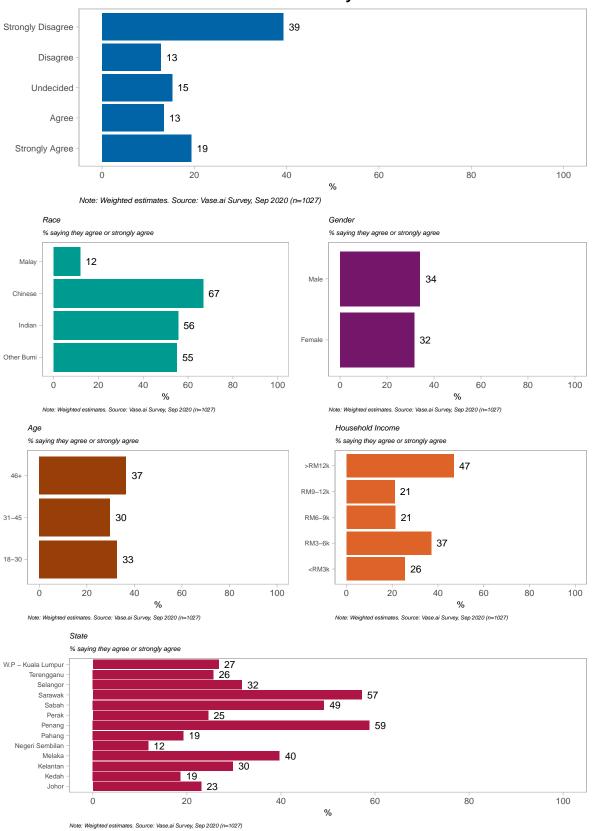


It is more important to protect religion than protecting the economy

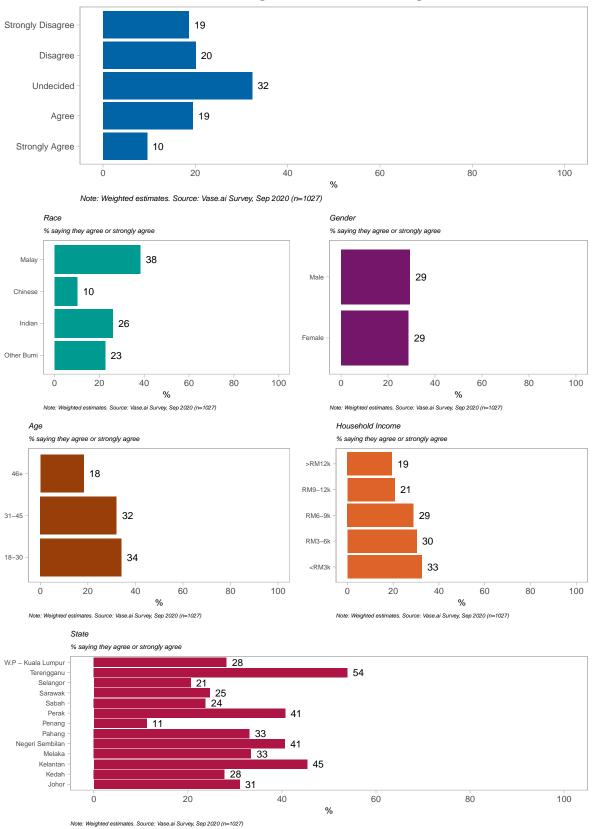


Note: Weighted estimates. Source: Vase.ai Survey, Sep 2020 (n=1027)

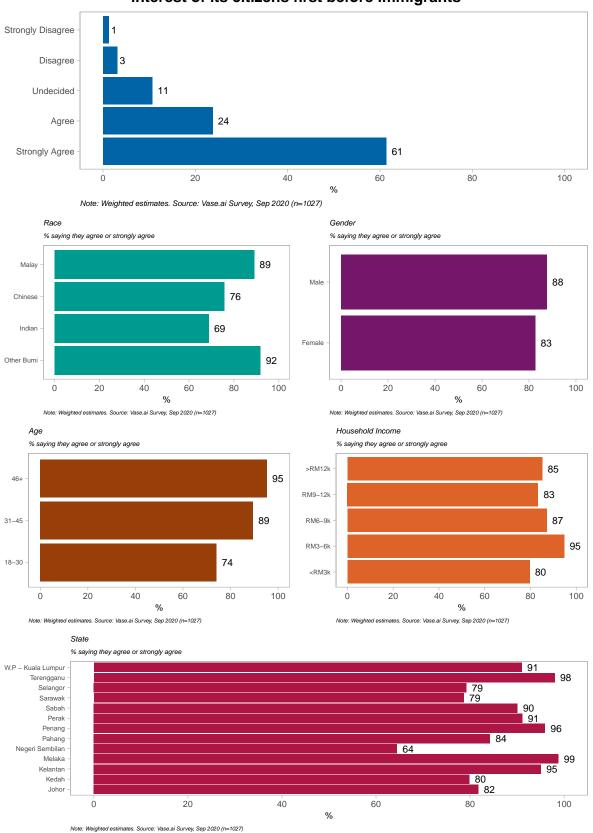
Non-Muslims should not be required to convert to Islam to marry Muslims



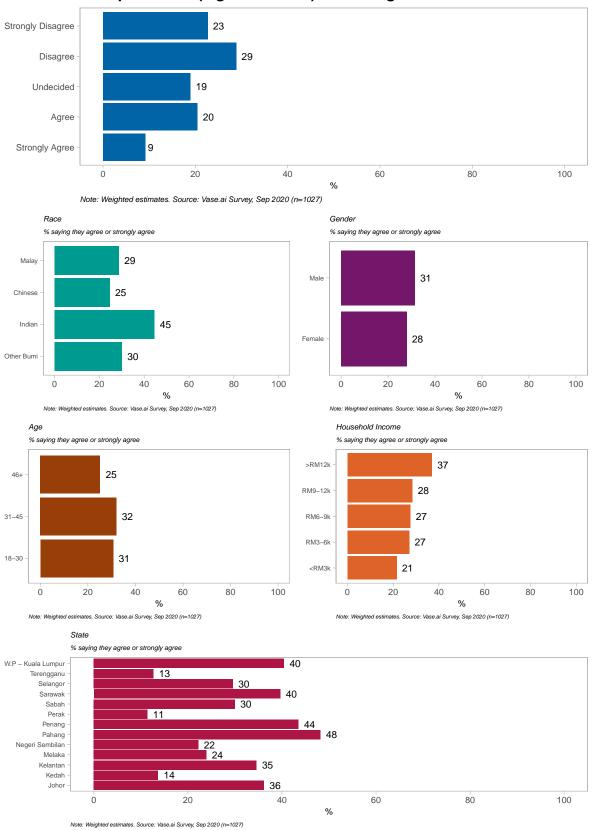
It is more important that a political leader is religious than law abiding



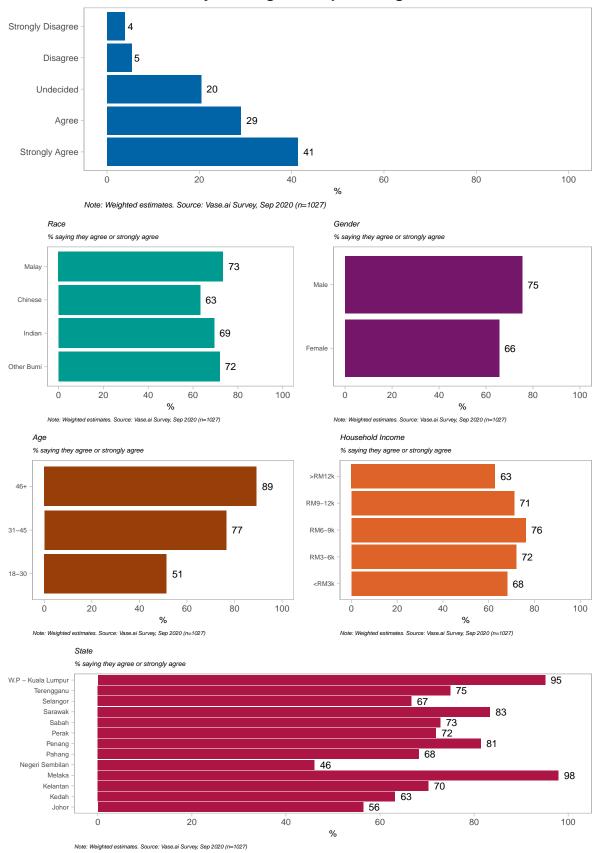
The government should prioritise the interest of its citizens first before immigrants



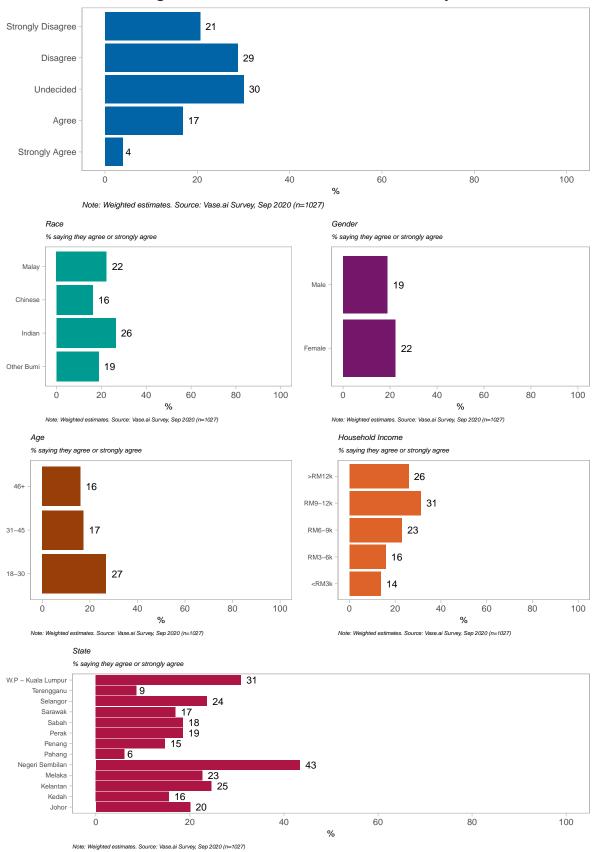
Undocumented immigrants deserve equal protection (e.g. healthcare) from the government



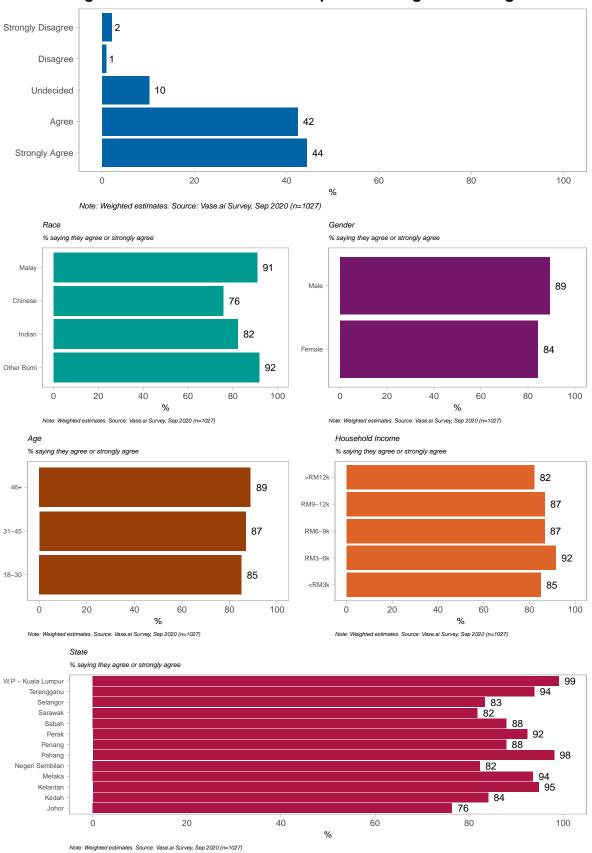
Malaysia is right to deport refugees



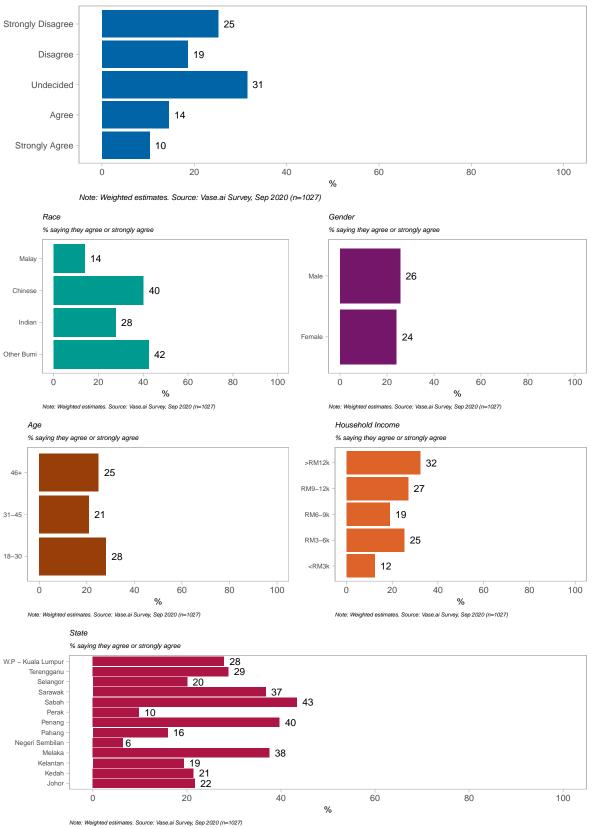
Refugees should be allowed to work in Malaysia



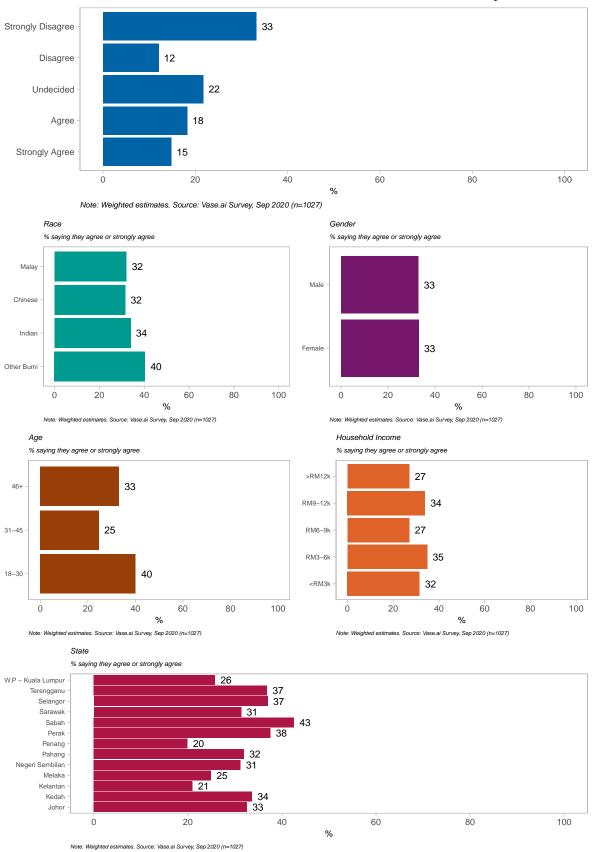
The government should restore and protect Orang Asli land rights



Apostasy, which is a formal dis-affiliation from, abandonment of, or renunciation of a religion by a person, should be allowed in Malaysia



Homosexual intercourse should be decriminalised in Malaysia



Kelantan Kedah

Johor

0

23 28

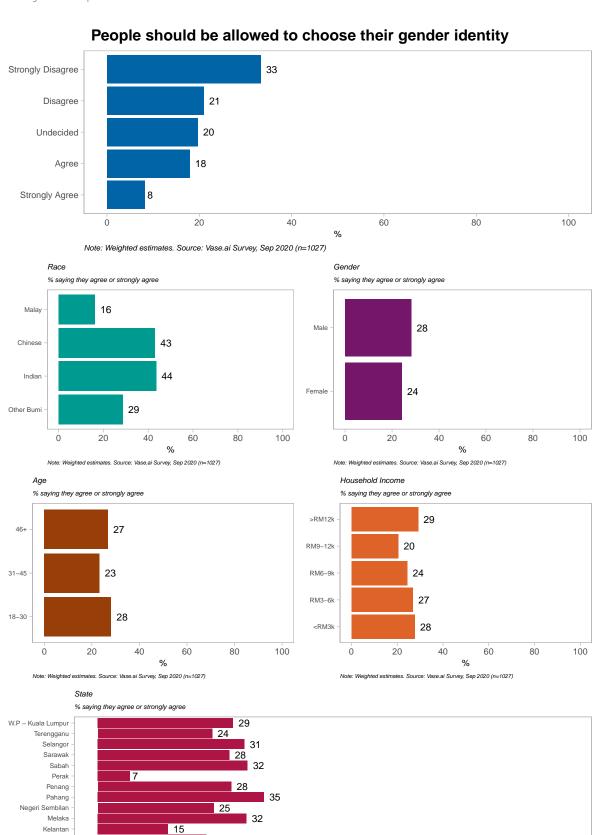
40

20

Note: Weighted estimates. Source: Vase.ai Survey, Sep 2020 (n=1027)

60

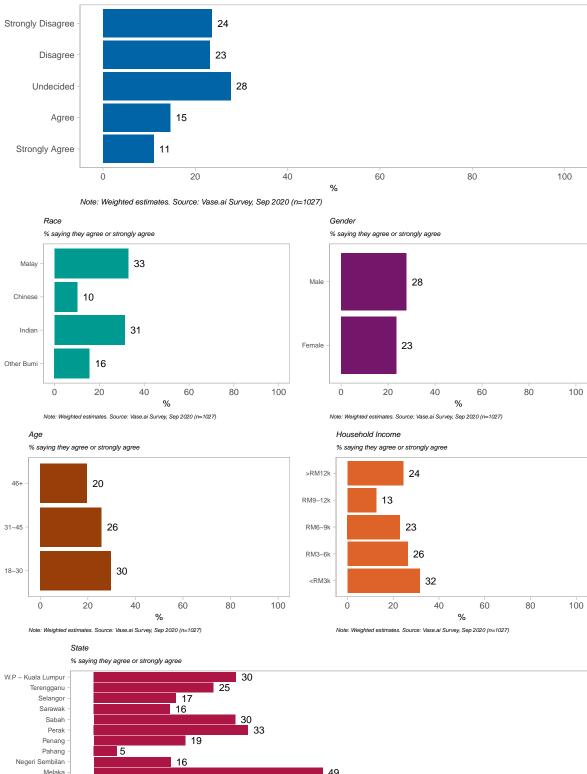
80



23

100

Racial minorities deserve less of a say in Malaysia



43

60

40

32

31

Note: Weighted estimates. Source: Vase.ai Survey, Sep 2020 (n=1027)

20

Kelantan

Kedah

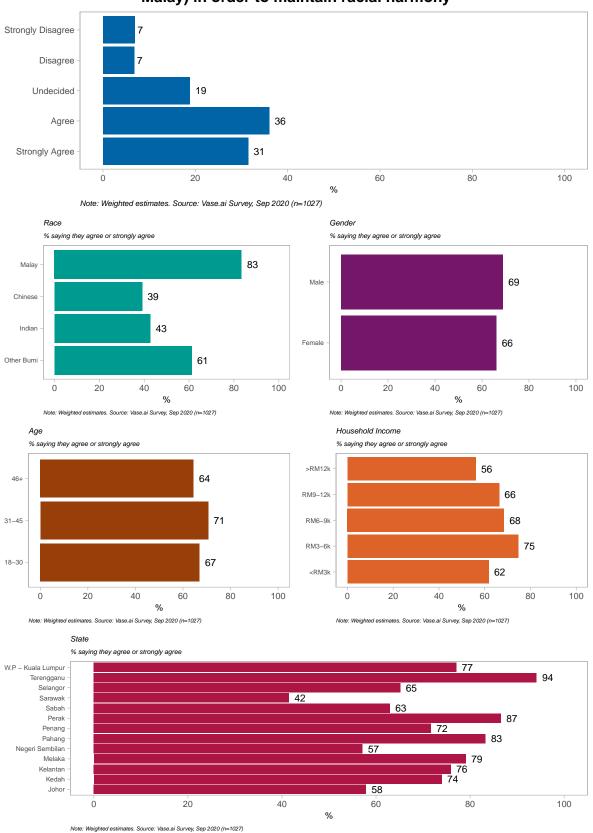
Johor

0

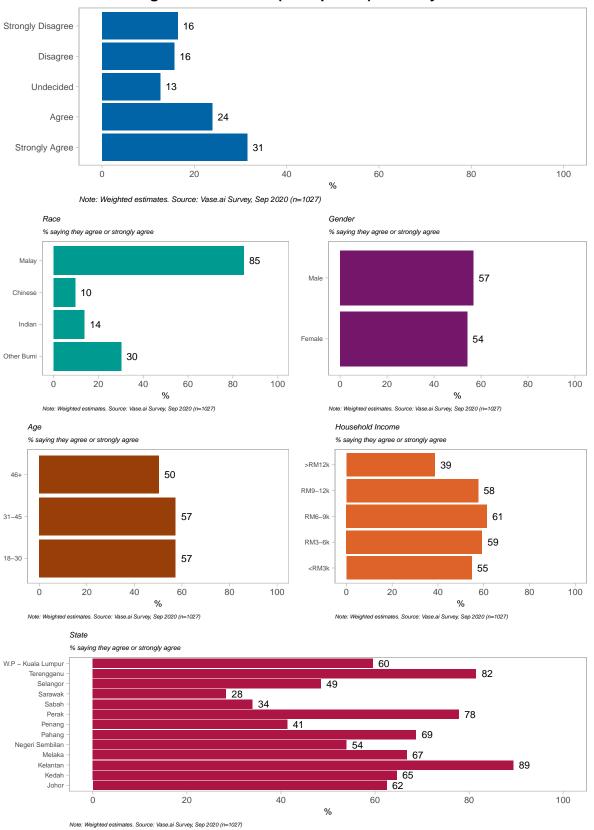
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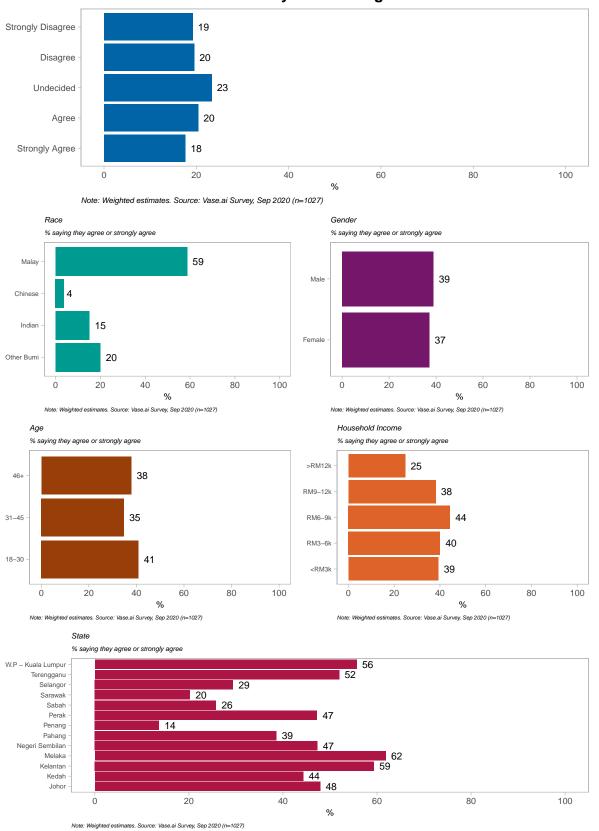
Racial minorities should learn to assimilate (e.g. be proficient in Malay) in order to maintain racial harmony



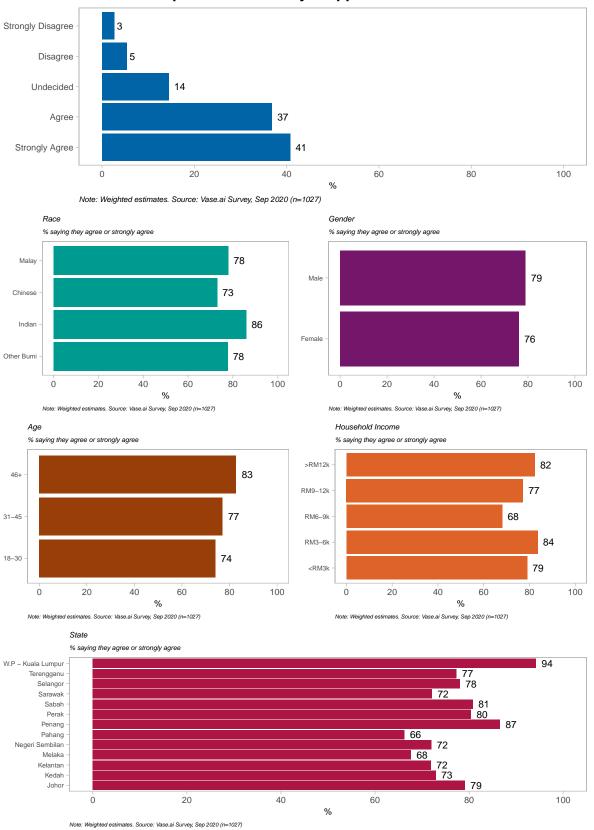
Malays deserve special rights because they are the original inhabitants (Bumiputera) of Malaysia



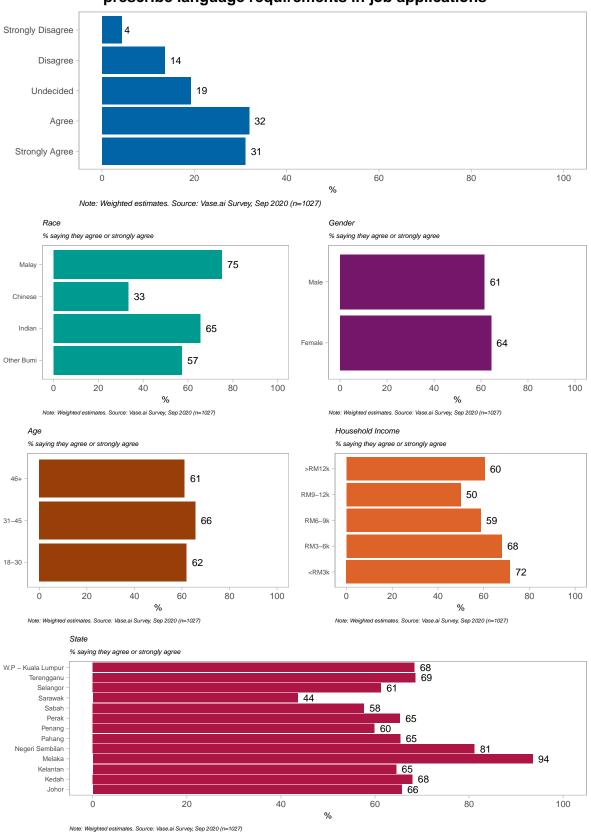
Malays deserve special rights because they are economically disadvantaged



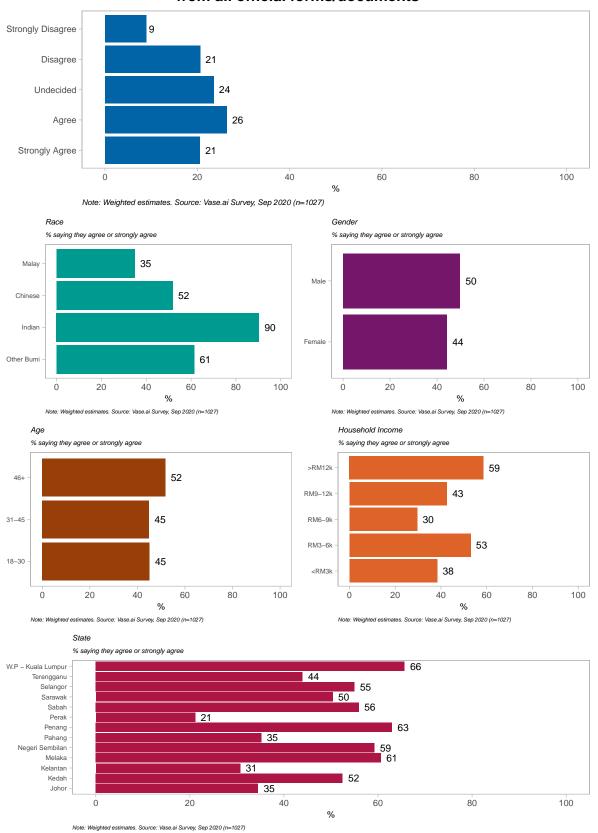
Employers should not be allowed to prescribe race in job applications



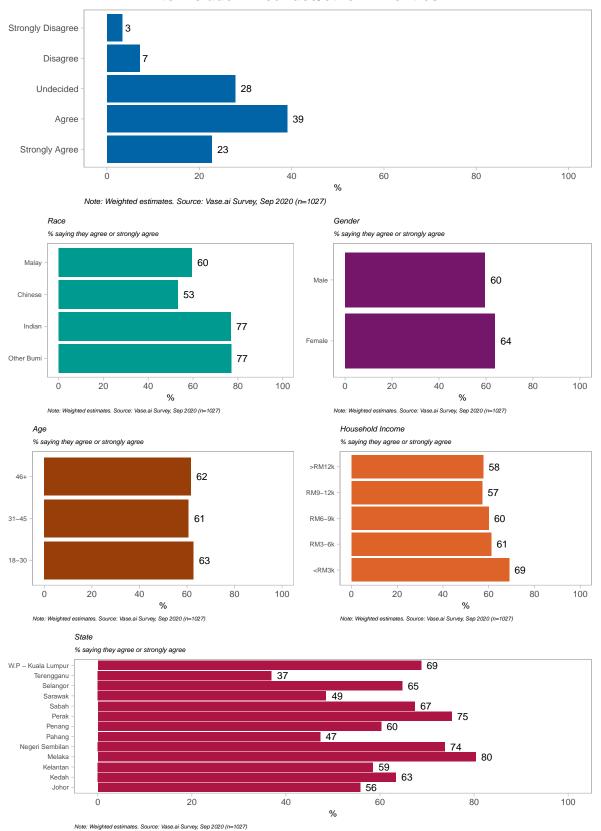
Employers should not be allowed to prescribe language requirements in job applications



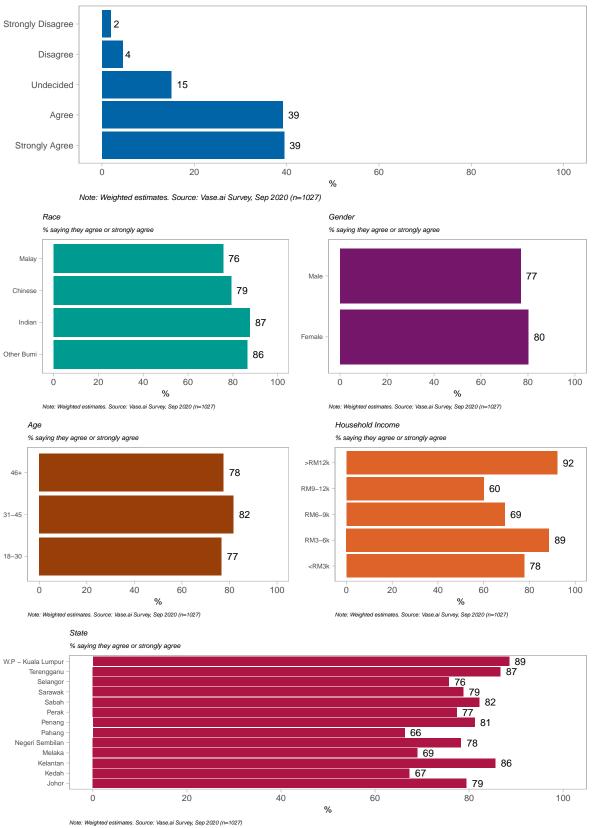
The Race box/column needs to be removed from all official forms/documents



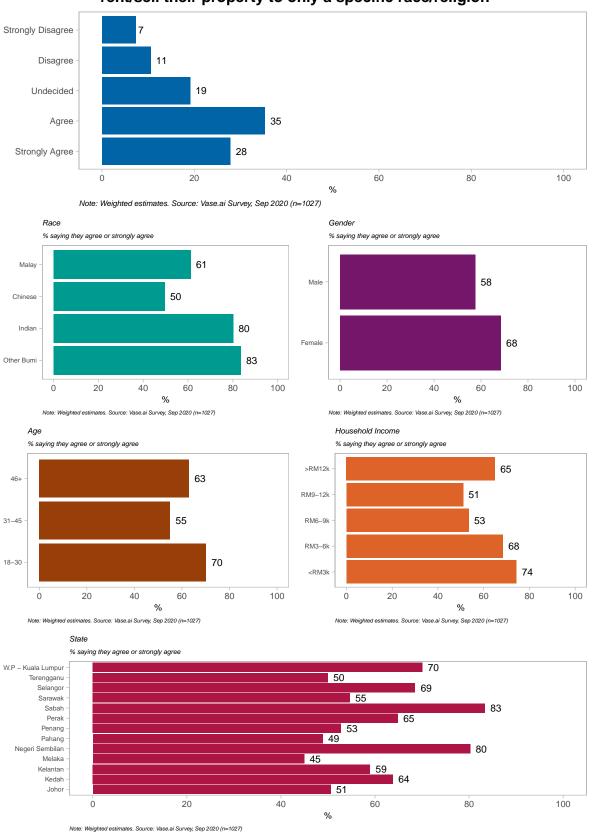
The Race box/column needs to be expanded to include mixed race/other minorities



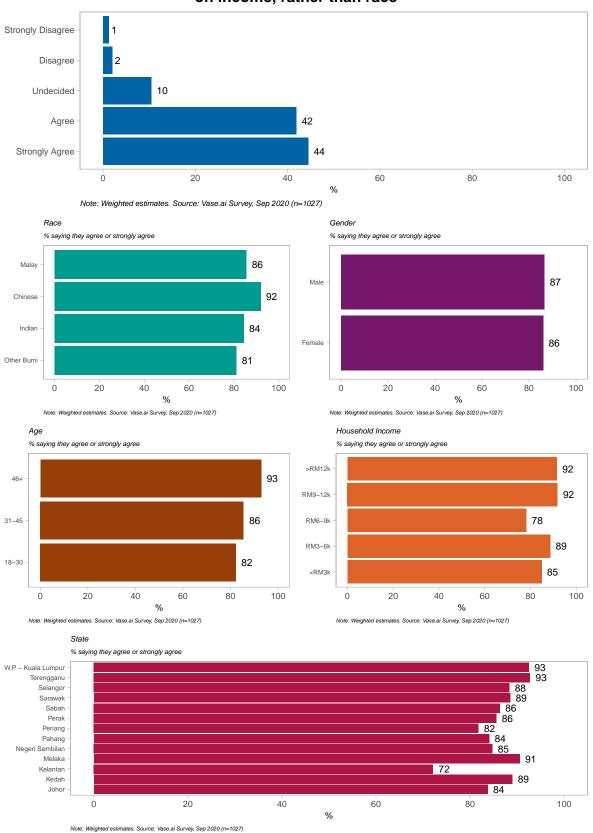
Political parties should stop aligning based on race and focus on putting together fair policies instead



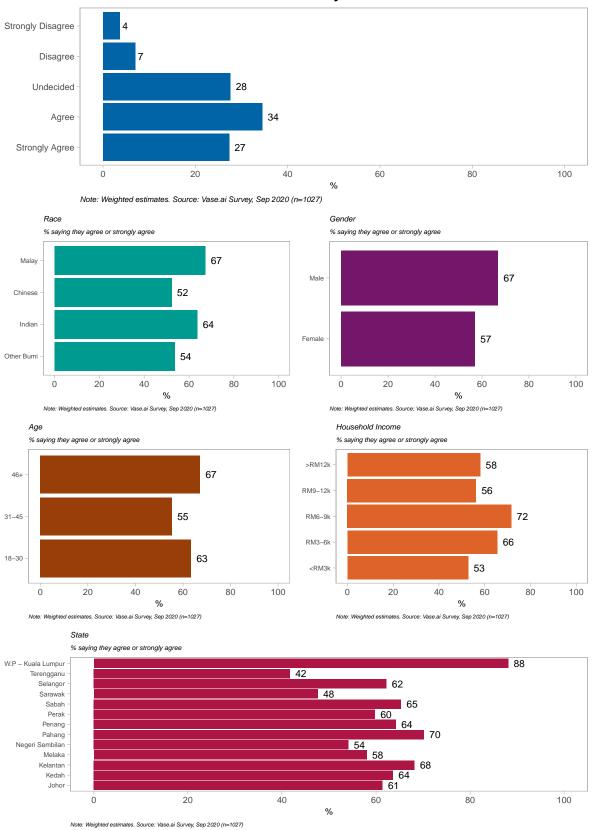
Home owners should not be allowed to rent/sell their property to only a specific race/religion

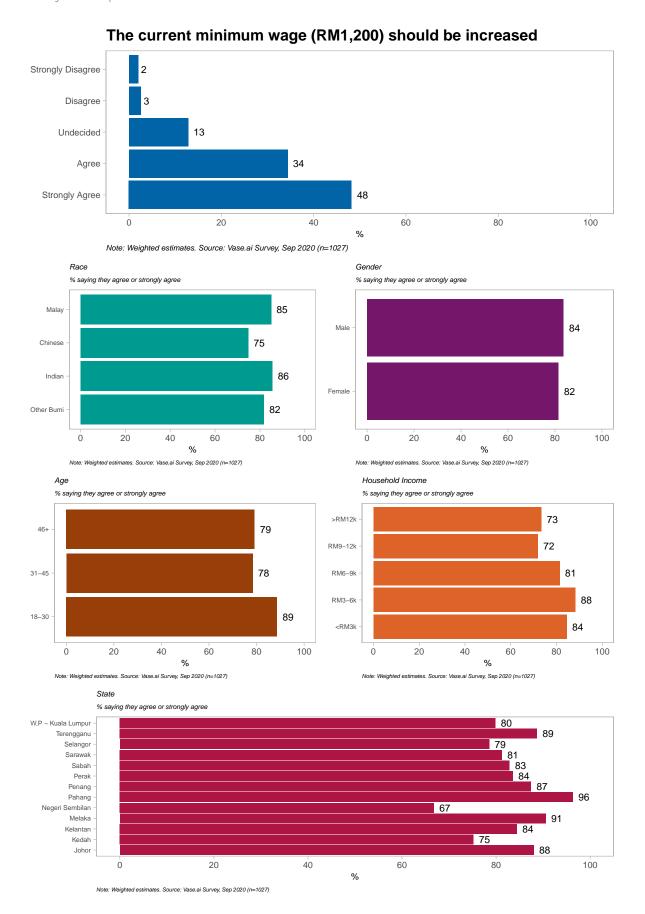


Economic assistance should be provided based on income, rather than race

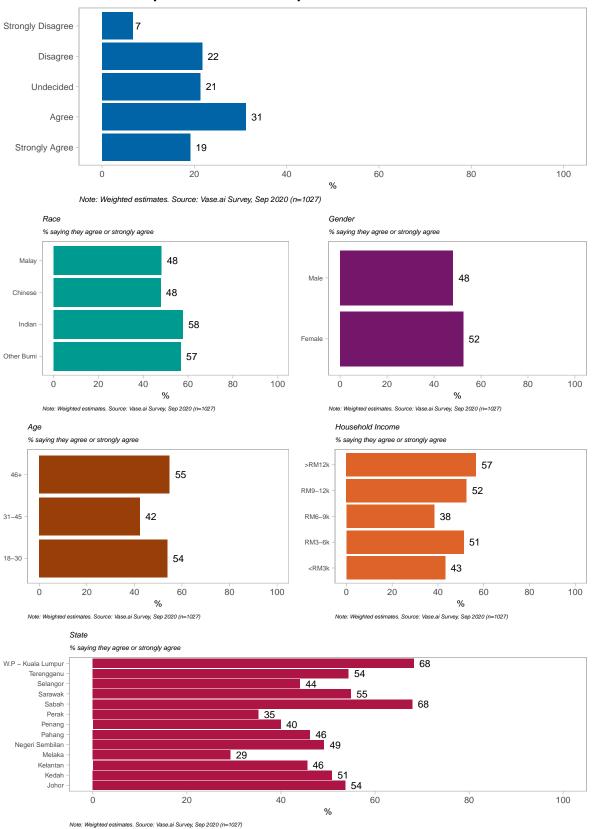


Higher income groups (e.g. T20) should be taxed more than they are now

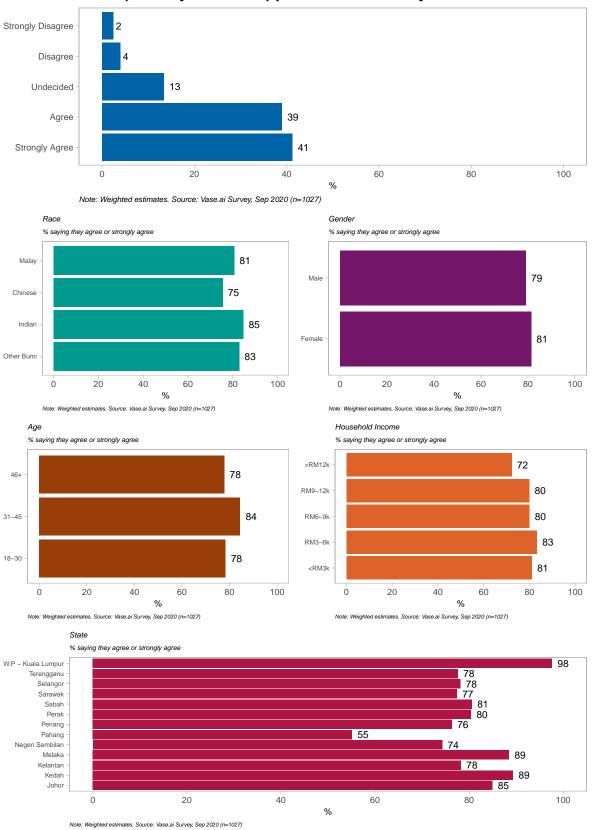




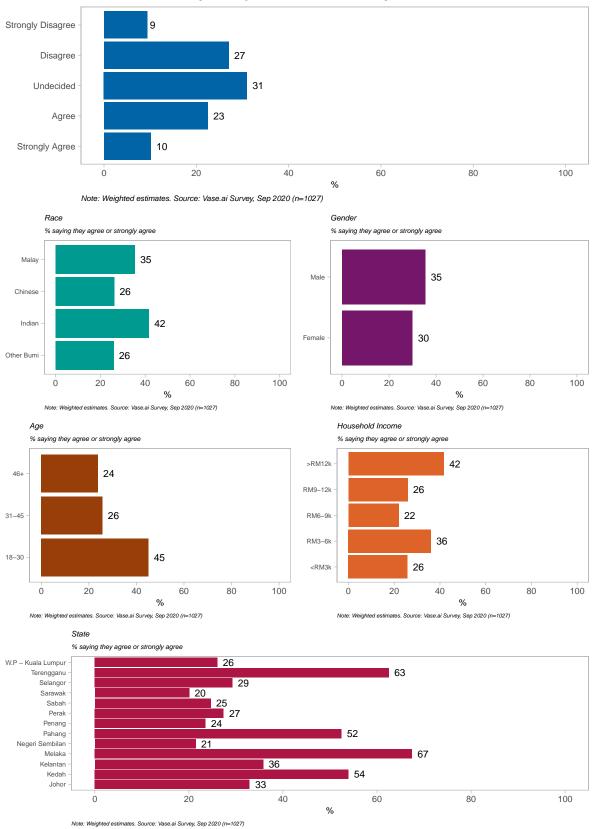
Economic development (e.g. infrastructure, agriculture) should be prioritised over the protection of the environment



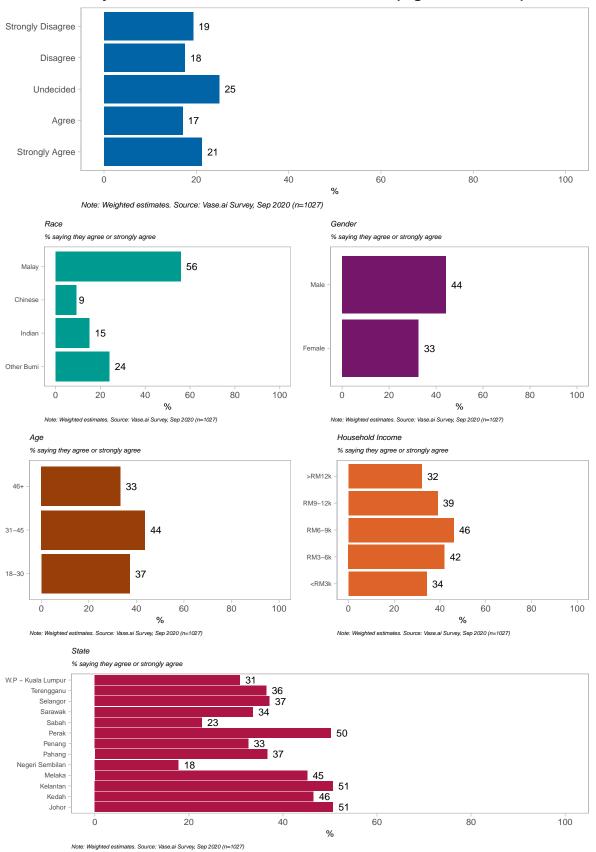
There should be a universal basic income (monthly allowance) provided to all Malaysians



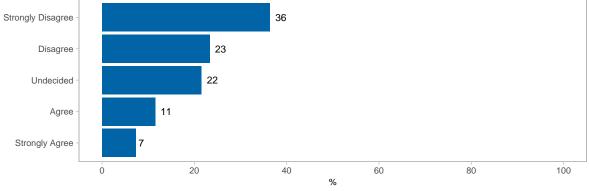
Taxes should be increased to fund Malaysia's public healthcare system



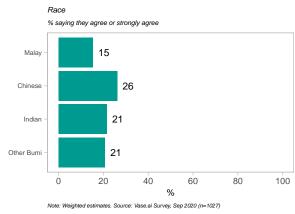
Malaysia should abolish vernacular schools (e.g. SJKC, SJKT)

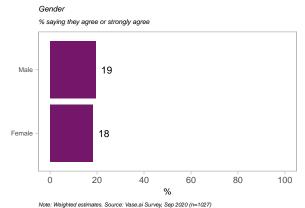


Malaysia should abolish religious schools (e.g. SK Agama)



Note: Weighted estimates. Source: Vase.ai Survey, Sep 2020 (n=1027)

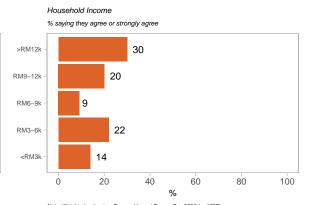




Age % saying they agree or strongly agree

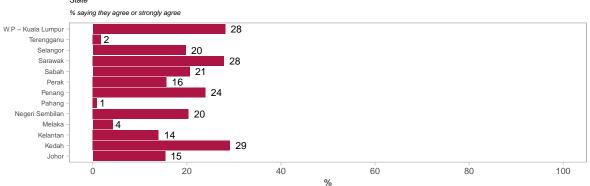
46+ - 18-30 - 19

0 20 40 60 80 100



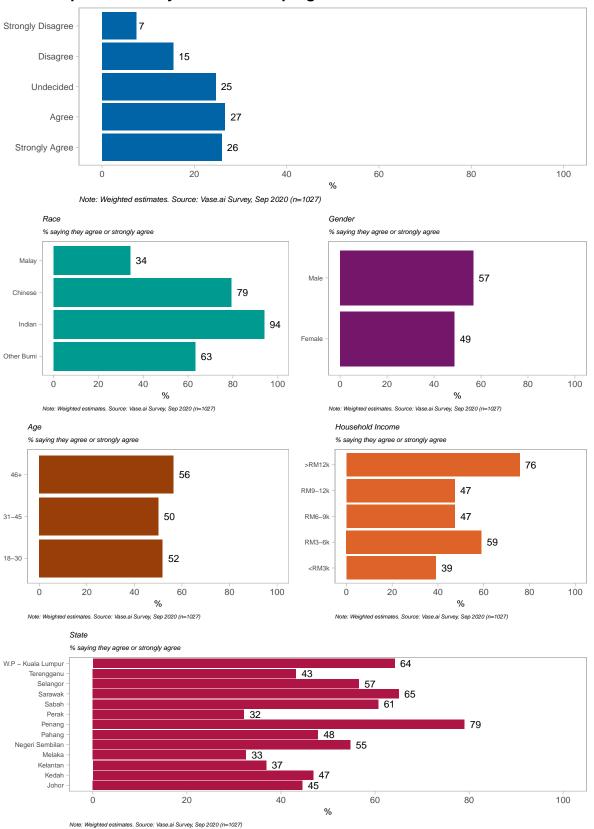
State

Note: Weighted estimates. Source: Vase.ai Survey, Sep 2020 (n=1027)

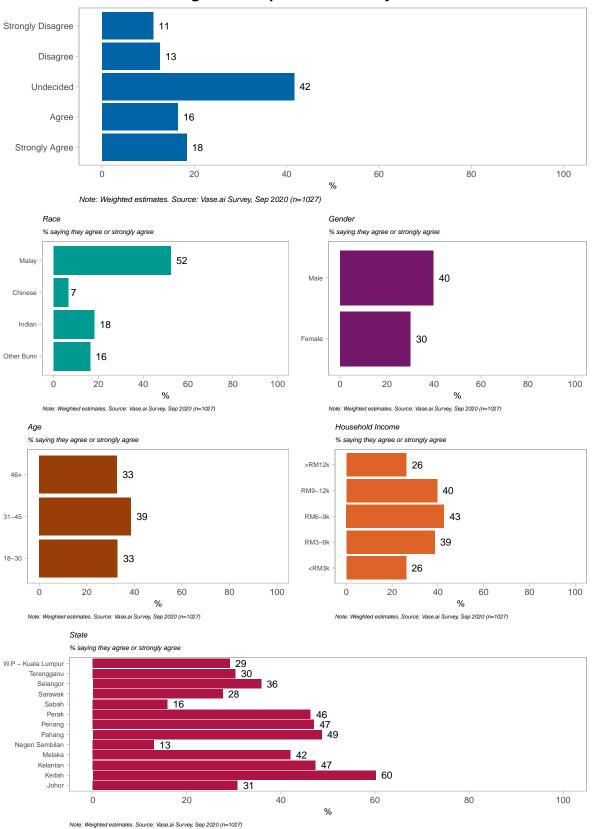


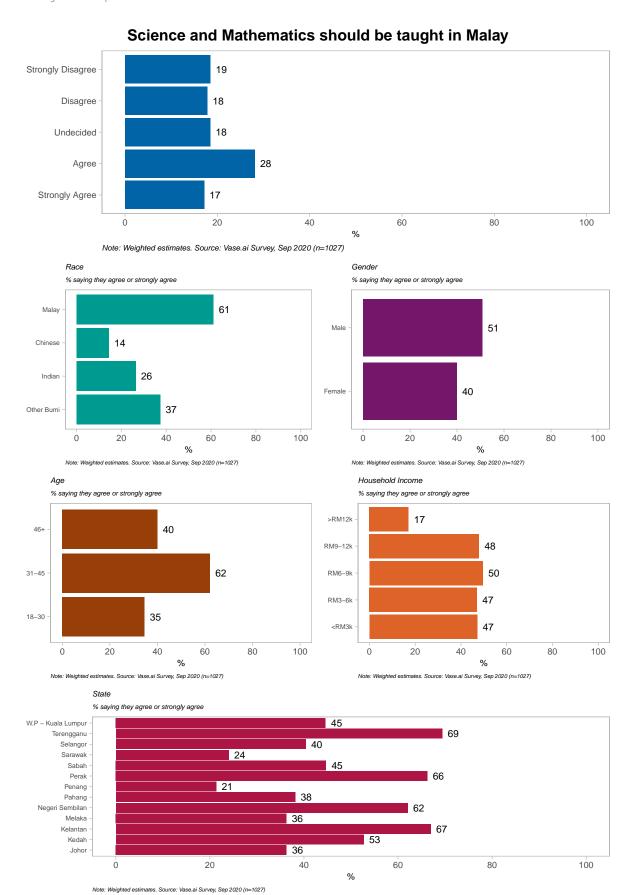
Note: Weighted estimates. Source: Vase.ai Survey, Sep 2020 (n=1027)

The quota for non-bumiputra students in the pre-university matriculation programme should be increased

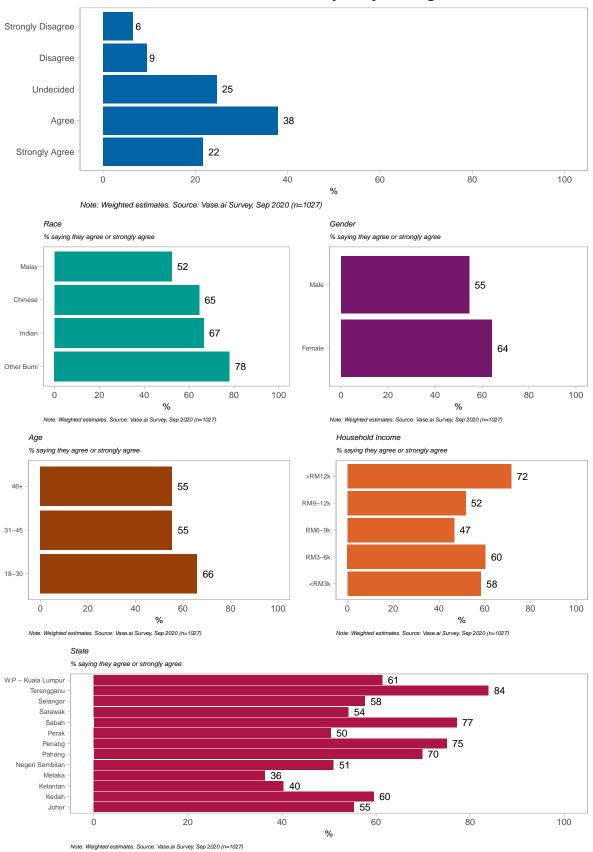


The Unified Examination Certificate (UEC) should not be recognised for public University admissions

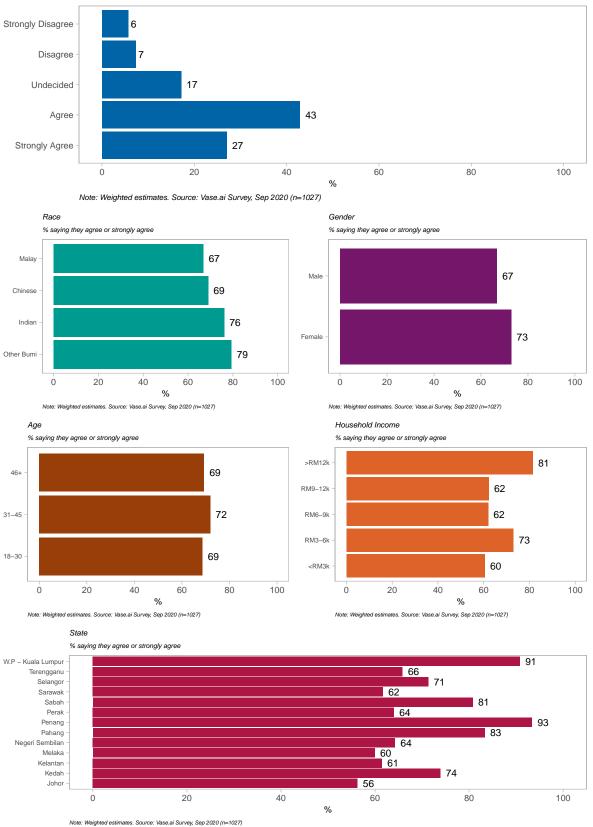




Sex Education should be a mandatory subject taught in schools



Teachers in training should be required to learn about Sex Education, to better educate youngsters



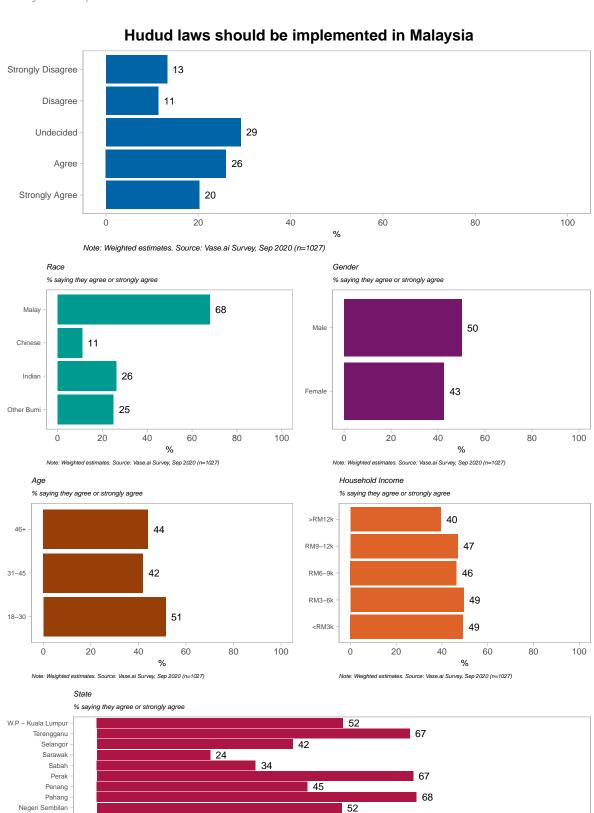
Melaka

Kelantan

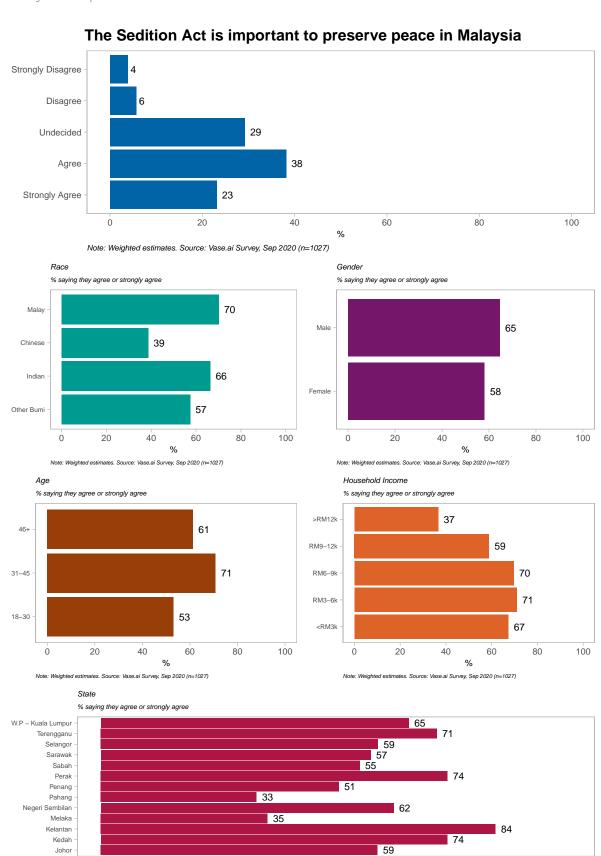
Kedah

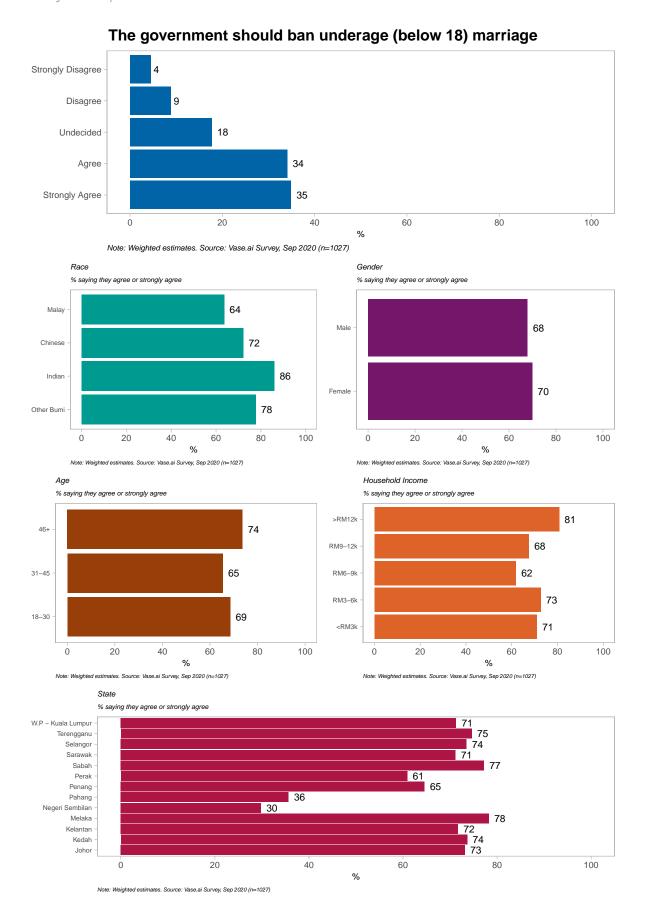
Johor

Note: Weighted estimates. Source: Vase.ai Survey, Sep 2020 (n=1027)



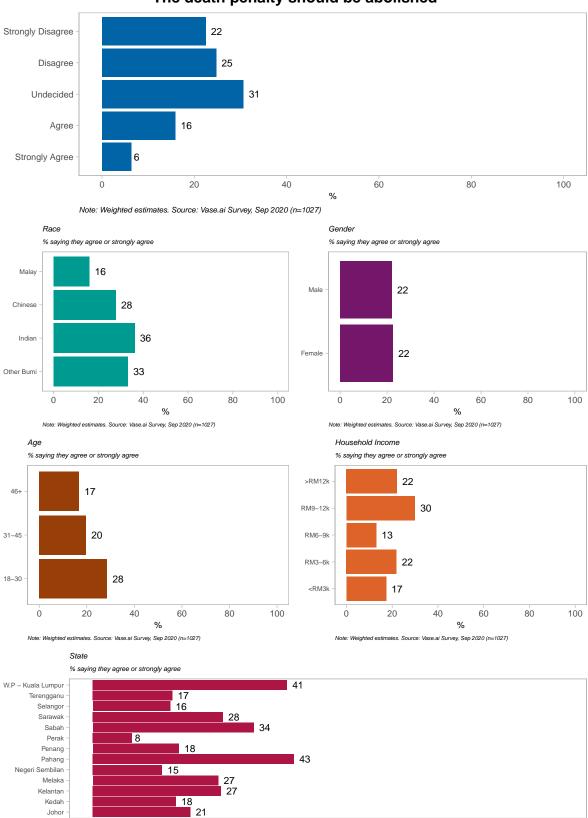
Note: Weighted estimates. Source: Vase.ai Survey, Sep 2020 (n=1027)



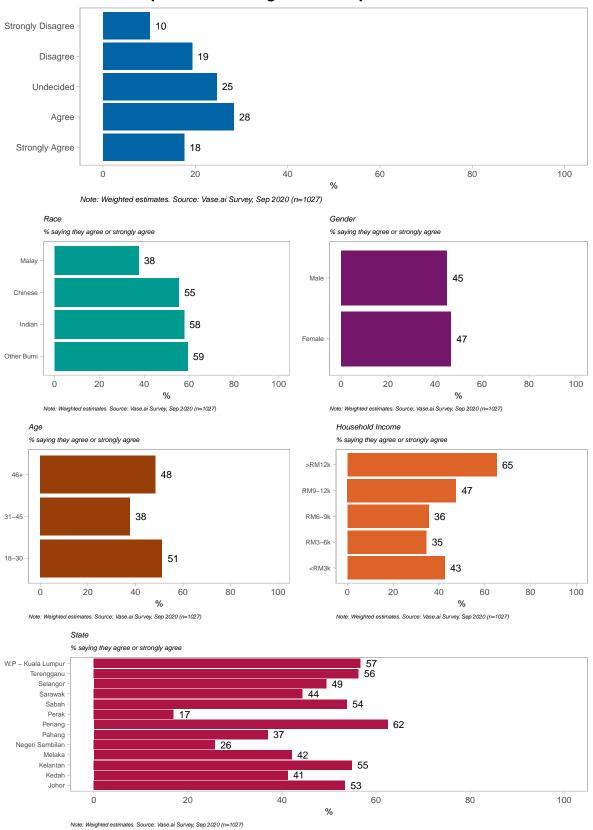


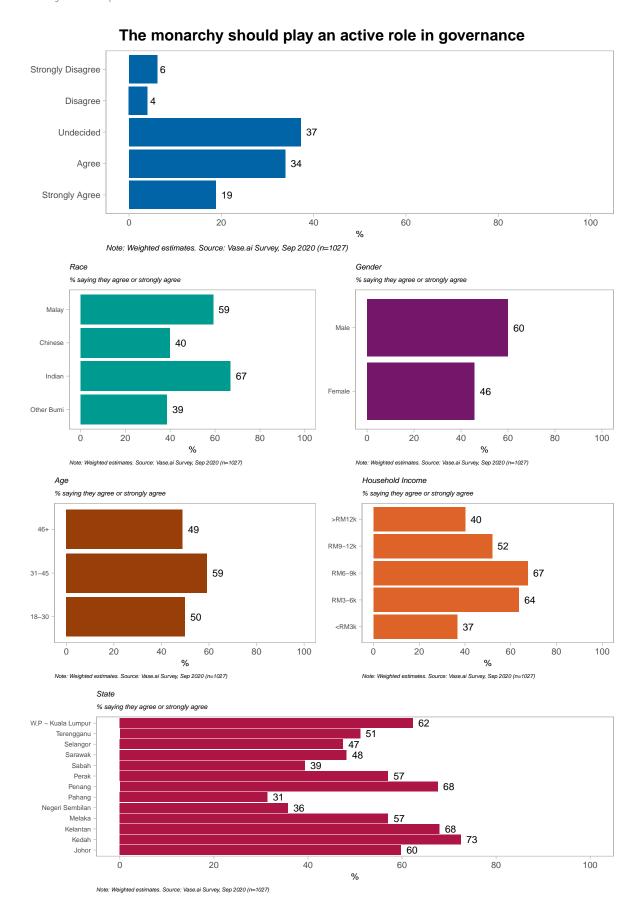
Note: Weighted estimates. Source: Vase.ai Survey, Sep 2020 (n=1027)

The death penalty should be abolished

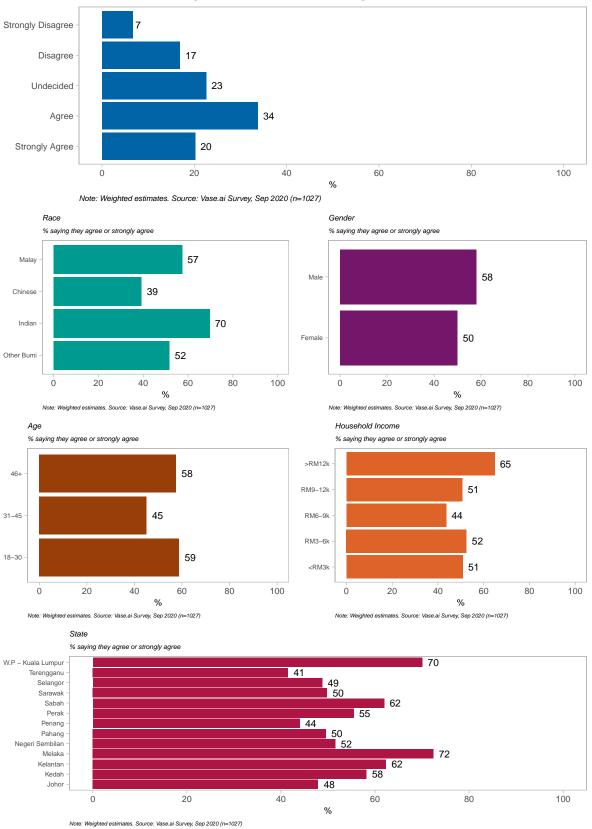


Malaysians should have the freedom to protest without government permission

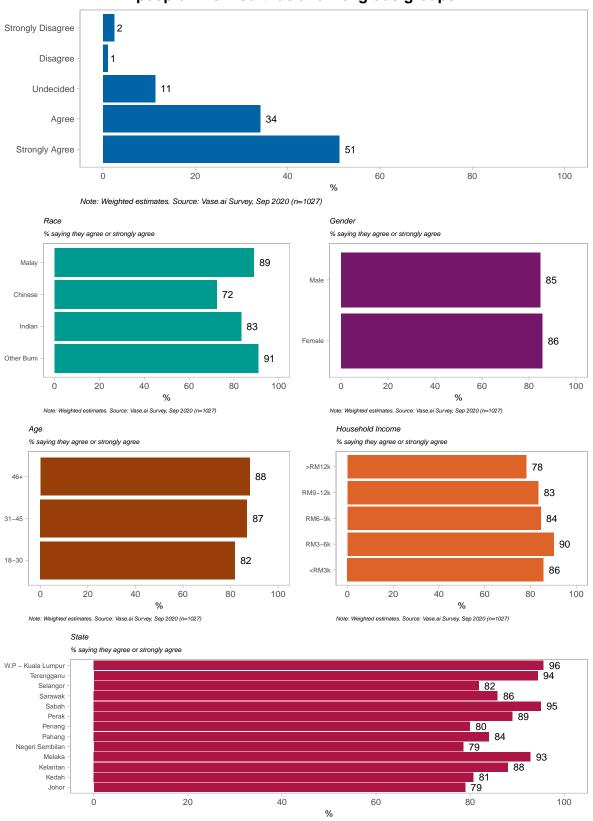




Students should be able to freely participate in politics without consequences

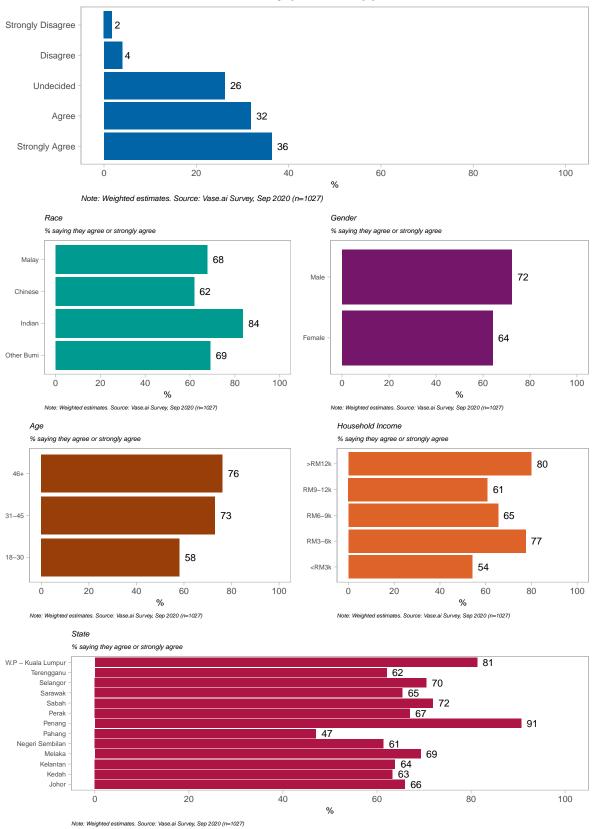


The government should punish people who insult racial or religious groups

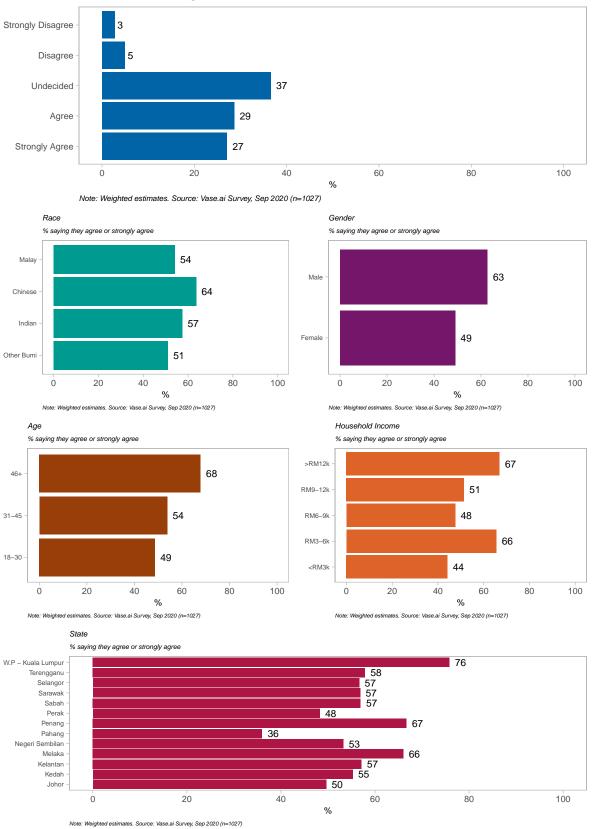


Note: Weighted estimates. Source: Vase.ai Survey, Sep 2020 (n=1027)

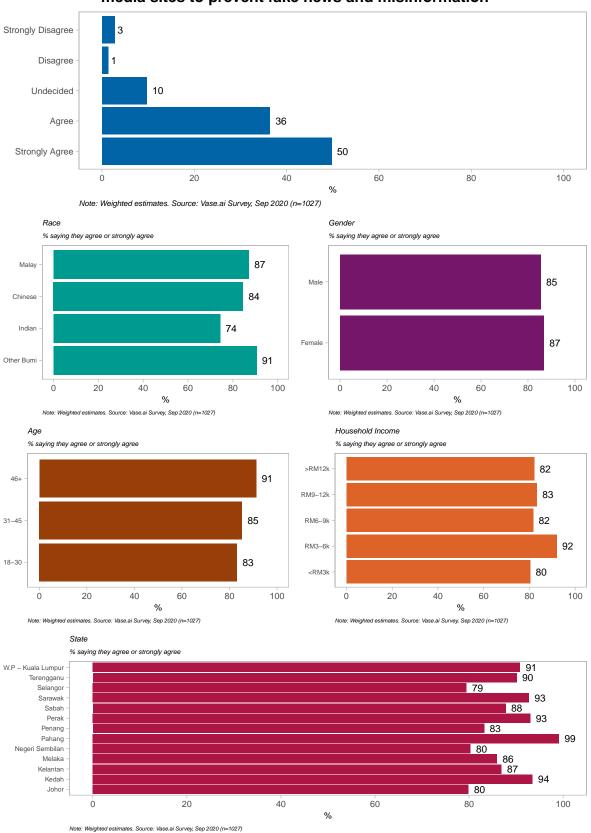
GLCs (government-linked companies) should not be headed by political appointees



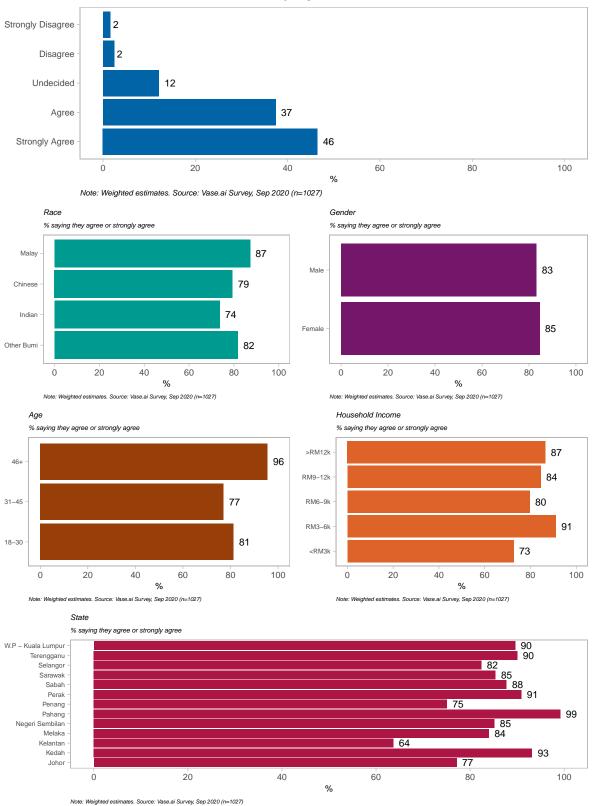
Political party hopping after an election in politics should be criminalised



The government should regulate social media sites to prevent fake news and misinformation



The government should enforce that social media companies take down all content that invokes hate, prejudice, or violence



The government should impose a penalty for inappropriate content being shared by users of social media sites (e.g content that invokes hate, prejudice or violence)

