2 very different groups to vote for first time

Young voters and new citizens have different takes on first-world S’pore

By LEE W-WEN

When they cast their votes this month, the young and new citizens will be the first in Singapore’s history to vote as a first-world country. The new dynamics in the electorate is due to the government’s relaxation of rules governing foreign citizens’ ability to vote. There are two groups who have been affected by this change: the young and the new citizens. The former are those who have grown up in a first-world country, while the latter are those who have grown up in a third-world country.

Political observers say that the first-time voters, given their size in numbers and their present state of mind, will play a crucial role in determining the fate of the various constituencies that they live in. Young voters, who have experienced living in a first-world country, are more demanding of life, more ambitious and, perhaps crucially, not able to relate to the hardships that their elders went through during Singapore’s formative years. The young voters are estimated to be between the ages of 21 and 35.

Then there are the large numbers of new citizens – people who have sunk their roots here in large numbers over the years – who, perhaps inevitably, compare their current quality of life in Singapore with the various countries they have left behind. Asst Prof Koh, a senior research fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies, said that the new citizens would be more inclined towards the ruling party, while new citizens would have been born into the Singapore story, and they are likely to be more concerned about the status quo. They would also be more inclined towards the ruling party, he said.

Political commentator Gillian Koh noted how the government had loosened up on some of the rules regarding the use of social media when it came to elections. For instance, political party comments and videos, which were banned for the 2006 GE, will be allowed this time. The PAP, who have grown up in a first-world country, are more likely to be impressed and confident about the ruling party.

It could be a different issue with new citizens, many of whom have moved from third-world countries to first-world Singapore. Most new citizens have been born in the Singapore story, and they are likely to be more concerned about the status quo. They would also be more inclined towards the ruling party, he said. Asst Prof Koh, a senior research fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies, said that the new citizens would be more inclined towards the ruling party.

The growing role of the social media realm, too, could play a part in this election. The government has amended the constitution to guarantee a minimum of nine opposition members – elected or non-constituency ones – in the next term of Parliament. Together with the nine nominated MPs, the House will have a minimum of 18 non-PAP voices. The government has amended the constitution to guarantee a minimum of nine opposition members – elected or non-constituency ones – in the next term of Parliament. Together with the nine nominated MPs, the House will have a minimum of 18 non-PAP voices. The government has amended the constitution to guarantee a minimum of nine opposition members – elected or non-constituency ones – in the next term of Parliament. Together with the nine nominated MPs, the House will have a minimum of 18 non-PAP voices.