

“Social Realities of the Poor”

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23 August 2014

A night-time photograph of a city skyline with illuminated buildings and a body of water in the foreground. The title 'Outline of Presentation' is overlaid in large yellow text.

Outline of Presentation

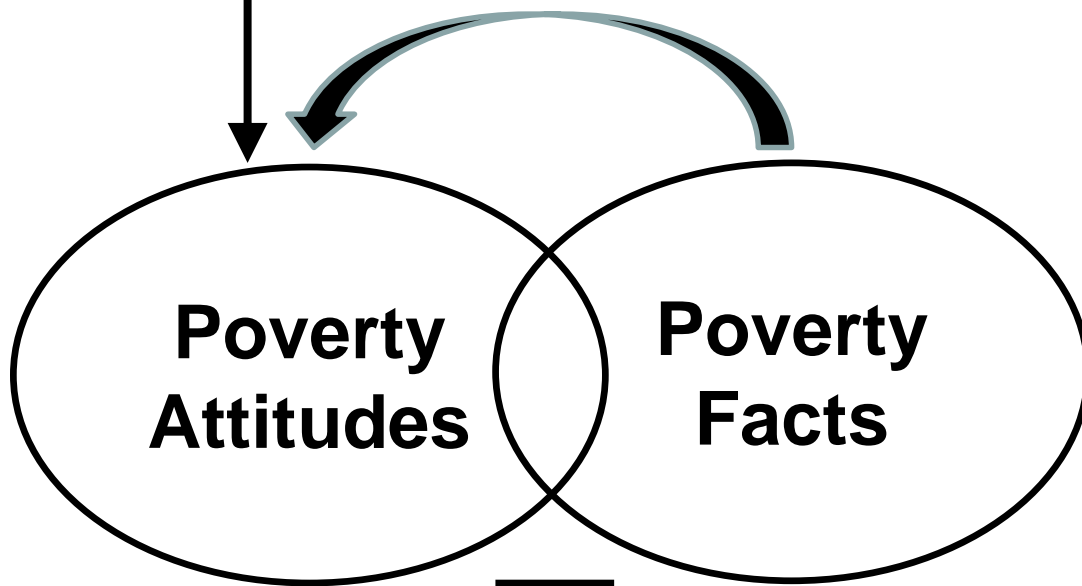
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1. Framework
2. Poverty attitudes
3. Poverty facts
4. Faith-based value proposition
5. What next? Let's discuss

Historical/political

Race/religion

Ideology/values

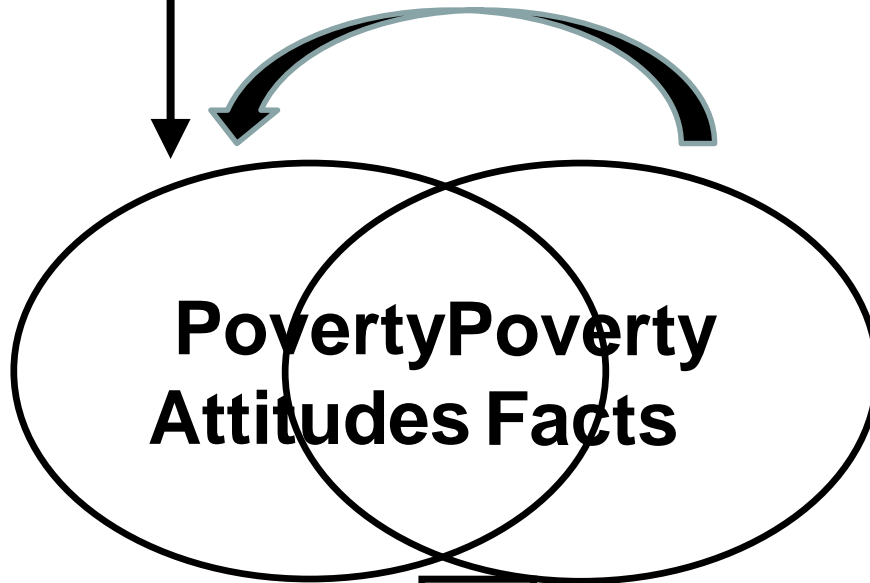


Societal Response

Historical/political

Race/religion

Ideology/values

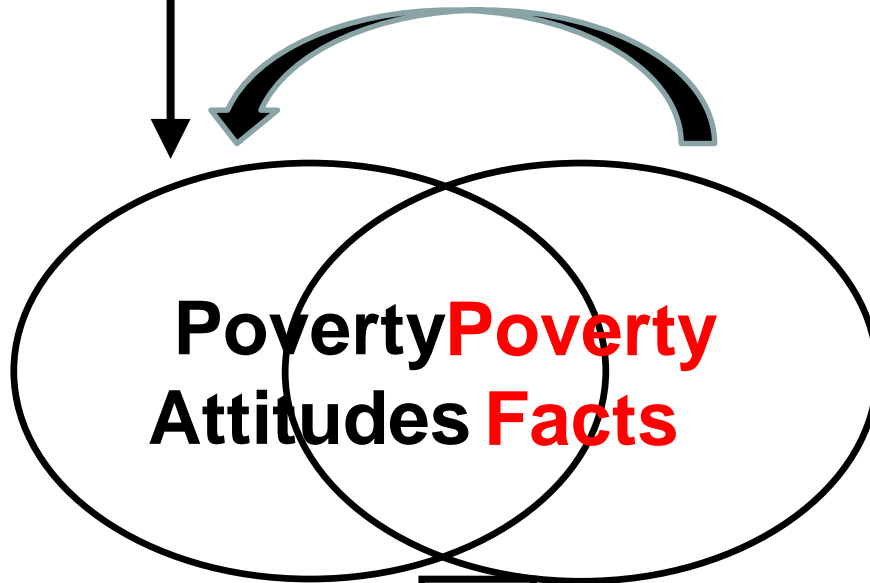


Societal Response

Historical/political

Race/**religion**

Ideology/values



Societal Response

Poverty Attitudes

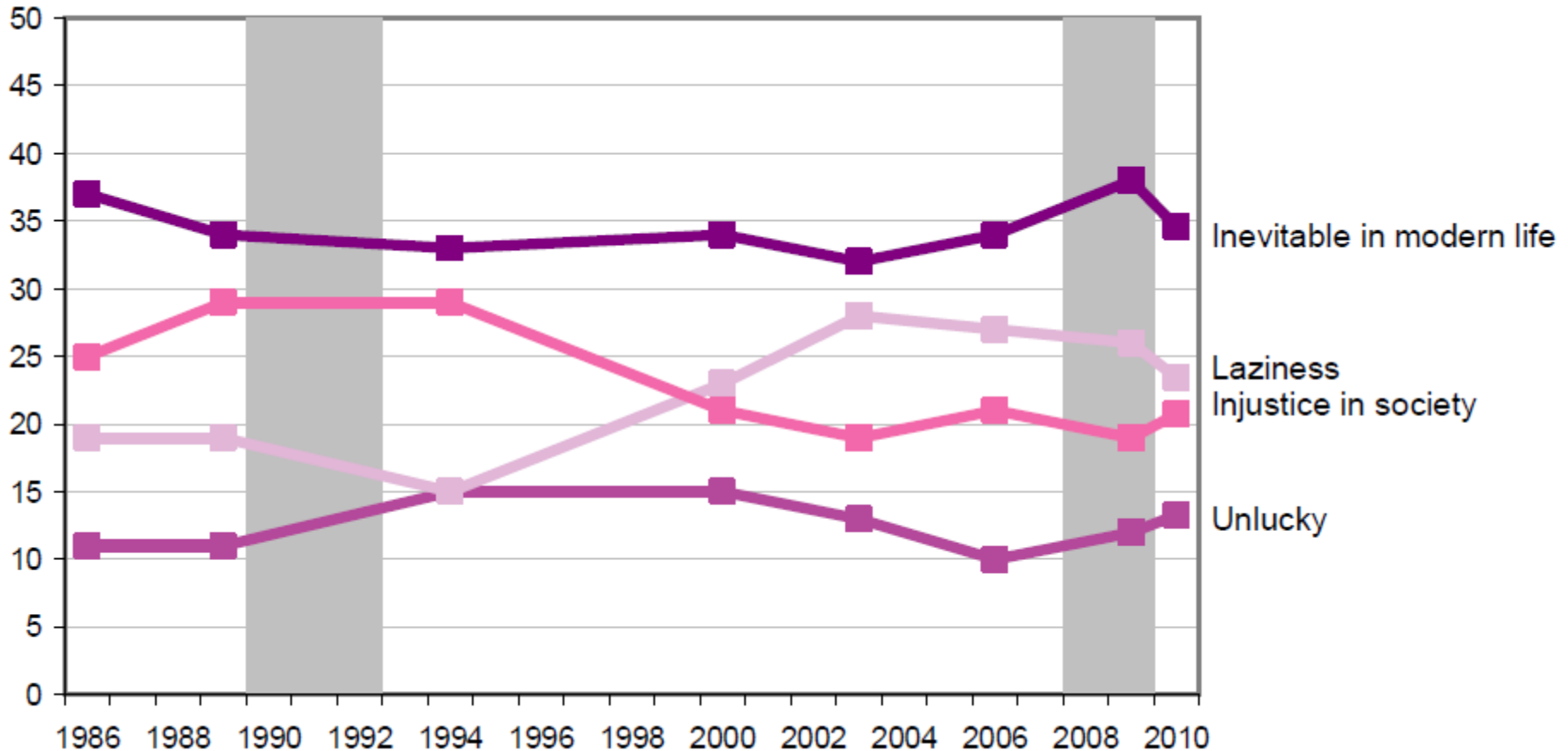
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Feagin (1974)

Individualistic	Situational	Institutional
Personal deficits	Catastrophic event	Unfavourable conditions
Lazy	Illness	Exploitation
		Lack of opportunities

Policy intervention depends on which view/set of factors dominate

British Attitudes



Increased stigmatization of the poor

Clery, E, Lee, L and Kunz, S (2013) *Public attitudes to poverty and welfare, 1983-2011: analysis using British attitudes data*. Available from

<http://www.natcen.ac.uk/media/1106142/poverty%20and%20welfare.pdf>.

Singaporean Attitudes

Survey Questions	Singapore (%) n= 440	Poor (%) n= 74	Britain (%)
Definition of poverty			
One is poor if he/she has:			
Q1: enough to buy the things they need, but not things people take for granted	17.72	33.78	22
Q2: enough to eat and live but not buy the things they need	44.27	44.59	50
Q3: not enough to eat and live without getting into debt	83.76	74.32	89

Singaporean Attitudes

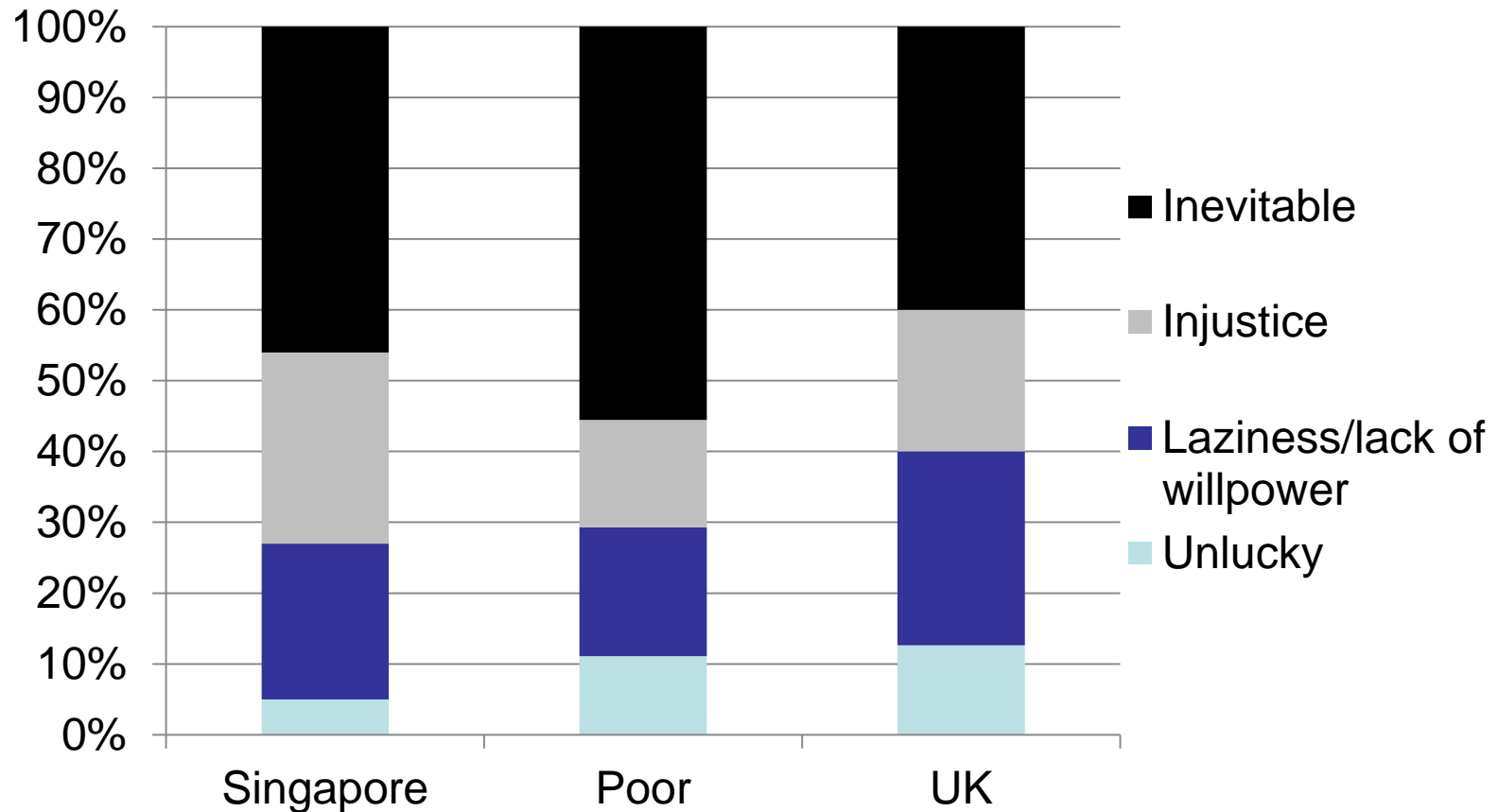
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Survey Questions	Singapore (%) n= 440	Poor (%) n= 74	Britain (%)
Q5: Poor people in Singapore			
- Very few	12.06	11.11	}
- Few	43.97	37.50	}39
- Many	43.97	51.39	58

Singaporean Attitudes

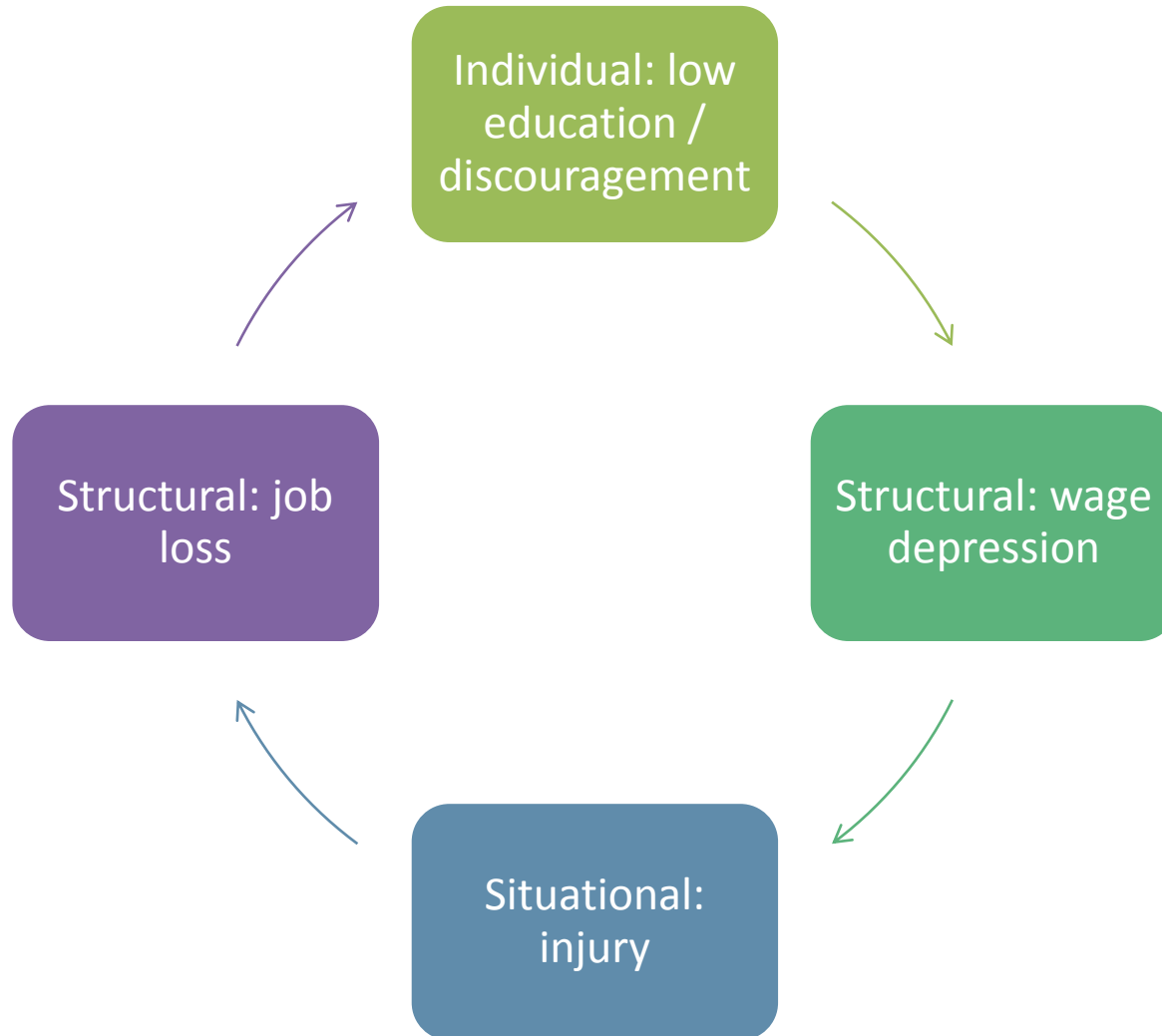
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Causes of poverty



Cycle of Poverty

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Poverty Facts

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SOURCE	REFERENCE YEAR	MEASUREMENT METHOD	POVERTY ESTIMATE
ABSOLUTE POVERTY ESTIMATES			
Yeoh Lam Keong, <i>mimeo</i> (2013)	2011	Using household income of S\$1,250 (2012 AHEBN estimate) to S\$1,500 per month as a poverty line. Estimated number of working poor + unemployed poor + retired poor households based on data from the Department of Statistics (DOS) for 2011.	10–12 per cent or 110,000–140,000 Singapore resident households
Jacqueline Loh, <i>Social Space</i> “Bottom Fifth in Singapore” (2011)	2008	Using S\$1,500 as a poverty line (the qualifying level for many ComCare schemes in 2011) and looking at the income distribution across quintiles for all households, not only “employed households.” This data is only available every five years from the Household Expenditure Survey (HES).	12–14 per cent or 130,000–150,000 Singapore resident households
BELOW SOCIAL INCLUSION LEVEL ESTIMATES			
<i>The Straits Times</i> , “Widening Wage Gap, Does it Matter?” (2010)	2008	Reports that a family of four would need S\$2,500–S\$3,000 per month to reach the social inclusion level of income. (Estimated by LCSi from 2007/2008 Household Expenditure Survey.)	23–26 per cent or 250,000–280,000 Singapore resident households with monthly incomes below S\$3,000

Donaldson et al. (2013). Measuring Poverty in Singapore: Frameworks for Consideration. *Social Space Issue 6*. Singapore Management University.

Poverty Facts

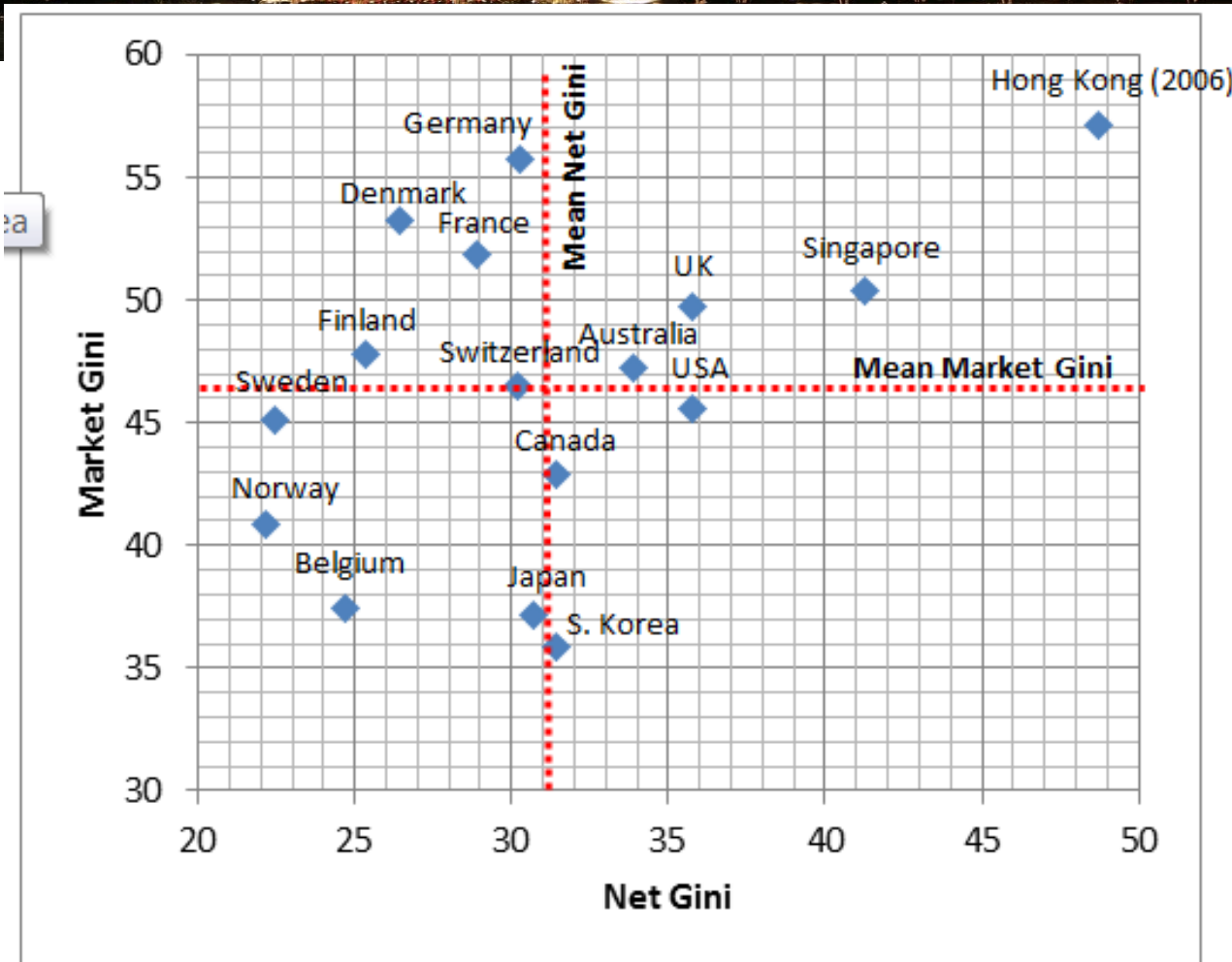
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RELATIVE POVERTY ESTIMATES			
Lien Centre analysis based on the HES 2007/08	2008	Using 50 per cent of median household income amongst resident households, relative poverty line is at S\$2,500.	20–22 per cent of all households
Asher & Nandy, "Singapore's Policy Response to Ageing, Inequality & Poverty" (2008)	2006	Measuring relative poverty through estimation of workers that are eligible for the Workfare Income Supplement (WIS) when it was first introduced in 2007. Eligibility criteria included having a monthly salary of less than S\$1,500.	26 per cent or about one out of four workers would have been potential beneficiaries of the WIS.

Table 1 – Estimates of Poverty in Singapore Using Various Monetary Measures.

Donaldson et al. (2013). Measuring Poverty in Singapore: Frameworks for Consideration. *Social Space Issue 6*. Singapore Management University.

Income Inequality in Singapore



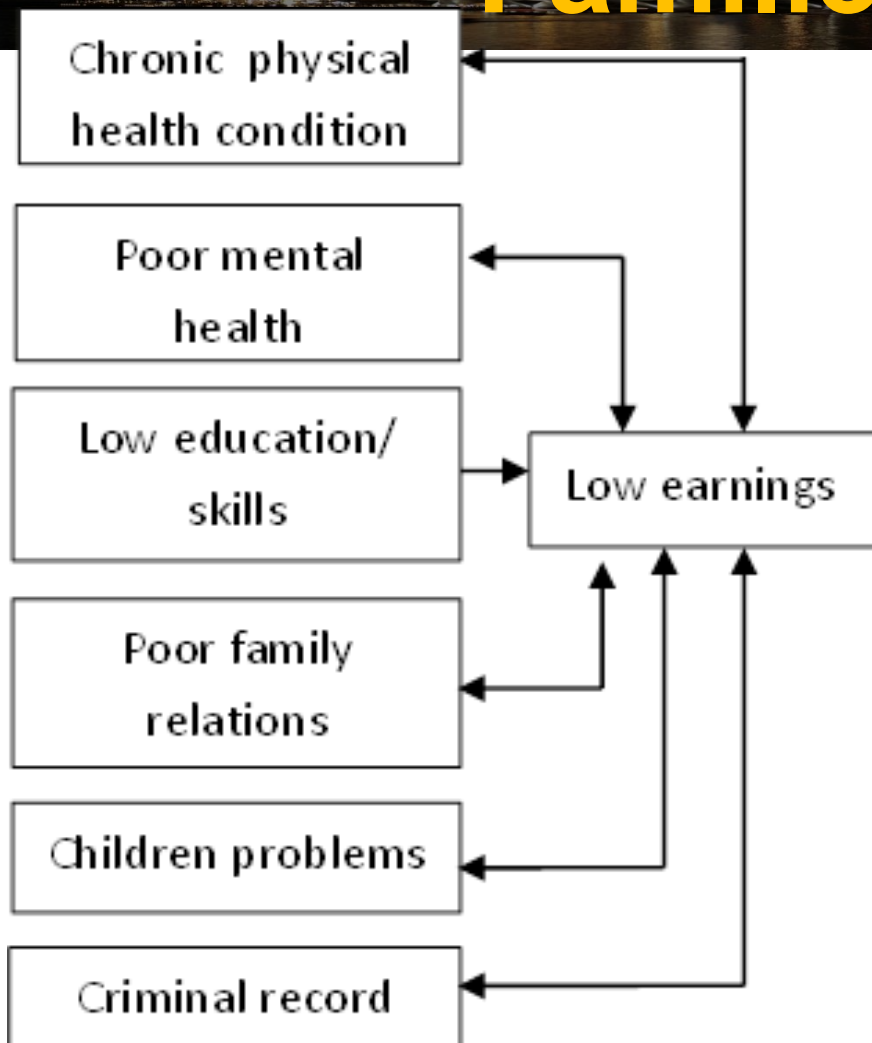
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Solt, F. (2013) *Frederick Solt Dataverse, The Standardized World Income Inequality Database*. Available:

14

<http://thedata.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/fsolt/faces/study/StudyPage.xhtml?studyId=36908&tab=files>

Multi-stressed Low-income Families



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Being Poor in Wealthy Singapore

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- Cash poor, asset rich
- Multiple barriers
 - Education & skills
 - Technology access
 - Language
 - Physical and psycho-emotional challenges
 - Family issues
- Neighbourhood-bound
- Wide media exposure

* ***RELATIVE POVERTY/INEQUALITY***

God cares about poverty, and how His children respond to poverty

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Jeremiah 5:26-29

*“ ‘Among **my people** are the wicked who lie in wait like men who snare birds*

And like those who set traps to catch people.

Like cages full of birds,

Their houses are full of deceit;

*They have **become rich and powerful***

*And have **grown fat and sleek.***

A night-time photograph of a city skyline, likely New York City, with illuminated skyscrapers and a body of water in the foreground. The sky is dark with some clouds.

God cares about poverty, and how His children respond to poverty

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Their evil deeds have no limit;

They do not seek justice.

They do not promote the case of the fatherless;

They do not defend the cause of the poor.

Should I not punish them for this?’ declares the Lord.”

Jeremiah 5:26-29

So what?

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Government

- Ensure
social
protection

Society?

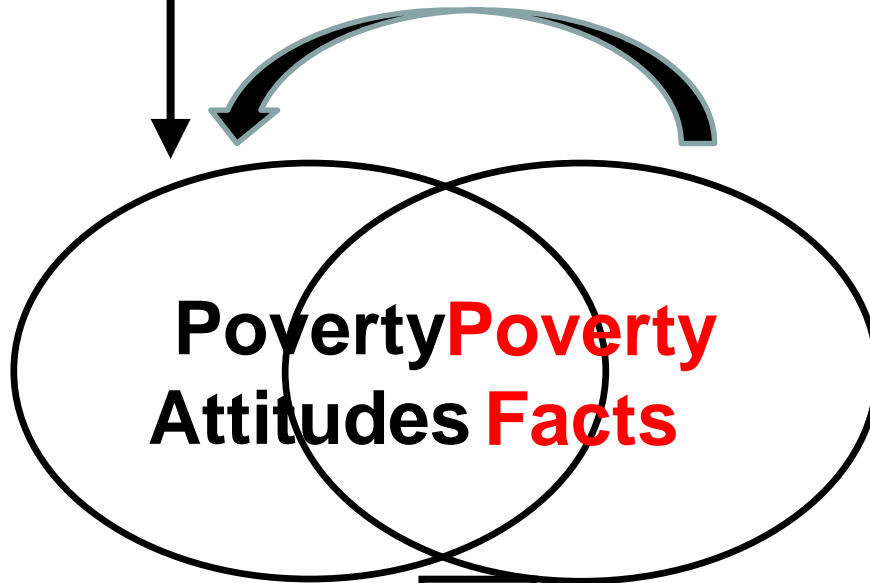
**People of
faith?**

Church?

Historical/political

Race/**religion**

Ideology/values



Societal Response

A night-time photograph of a city skyline, likely New York City, with illuminated skyscrapers and a dark sky. The text 'Value Proposition' is overlaid in large, bold, yellow letters.

Value Proposition

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People of faith have a moral and social obligation towards the poor

=> How to:

- Live in solidarity with the poor?
- Live counter-culturally in a blatantly wealth-conscious society?

A night-time photograph of a city skyline, likely New York City, with several skyscrapers illuminated against a dark sky. The lights from the buildings reflect on the water in the foreground.

God's Assurance

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“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,

*‘never will I leave you;
never will I forsake you’*

So we say with confidence,

*‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.
‘what can man do to me?’”*

Hebrews 13:5,6