Indicators of Racial and Religious Harmony: An IPS-OnePeople.sg Study

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Introduction

- IPS and OnePeople.sg created a set of indicators to gauge the state of racial and religious relations in Singapore.
- Baseline study provides important information that will allow tracking of the state of racial and religious relations over the years.
- Serves as a score-card on Singapore's progress in building harmonious racial and religious relations

Methodology

- Indicators were part of an IPS survey on race, religion and language.
- 5000 households were selected randomly based on DOS listings.
- 3128 responses (reasonable response rate)
- Sample representative of national demographics
- An additional booster sample of 489 Indians and 492 Malays were used to ensure that cross-ethnic comparisons were reasonable
- Survey company administered questionnaire using a drop-off pick up method. Surveyor led interviews for those who were not comfortable with completing surveys on their own.

Ranking	Indicator	Score
1	Absence of minority discrimination in using public services	9.75
2	Absence of inter-racial and religious tension	7.99
3	Embracing diversity	7.63
4	Absence of minority discrimination in the work place	7.56
5	Inter-racial and religious comfort in private and public spheres	7.46
6	Inter-racial and religious social trust	7.18
7	Embracing colour blindness	6.96
8	Interest in inter-cultural understanding and interaction	6.49
9	Absence of minority perception of social exclusion	6.20
10	Presence of close inter-racial friendships	4.51

Overview of Indicators

- Commitment to Diversity, Colour Blindness and Intercultural Understanding
- Freedom from Discrimination, Exclusion and Tension
- Social Trust, Acceptance and Connectedness

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, COLOUR BLINDNESS AND INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

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ATTITUDES TOWARDS DIVERSITY

This indicator assesses how positive Singaporeans are about being a multi-racial society and their sentiments about the benefits of such diversity.

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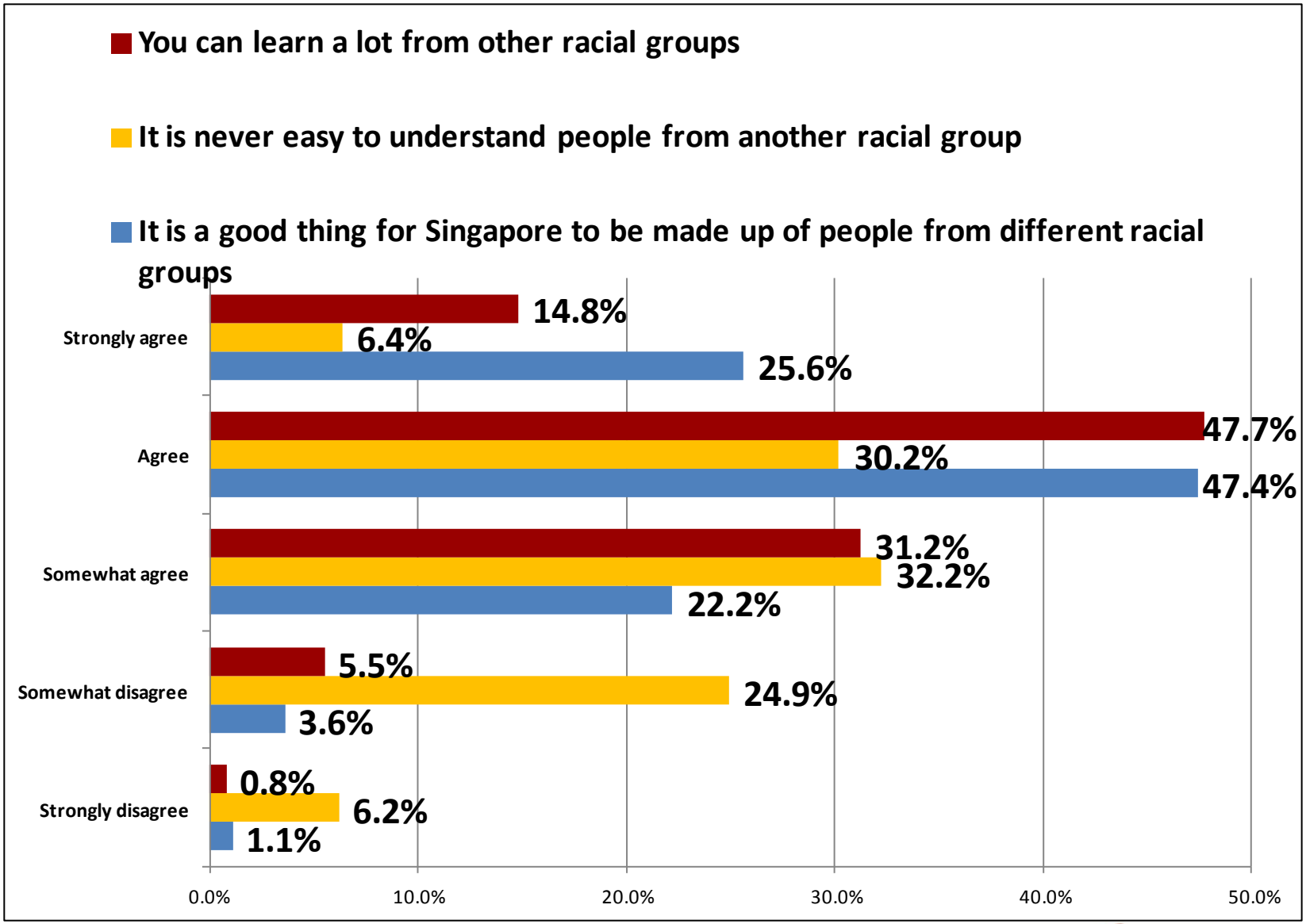
Embracing Diversity

- Around 70% believed that it was good for Singapore to be made up of different races.
- Around 60% believed you could learn a lot from other races.



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Respondents' by race and their response to "You can learn a lot from other racial groups."

Respondent race (y)/Agree(x)	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
Agree/St Agree	59%	75%	69%	69%

Respondents' by race and their response to "It is a good thing for Singapore to be made up of people from different racial groups".

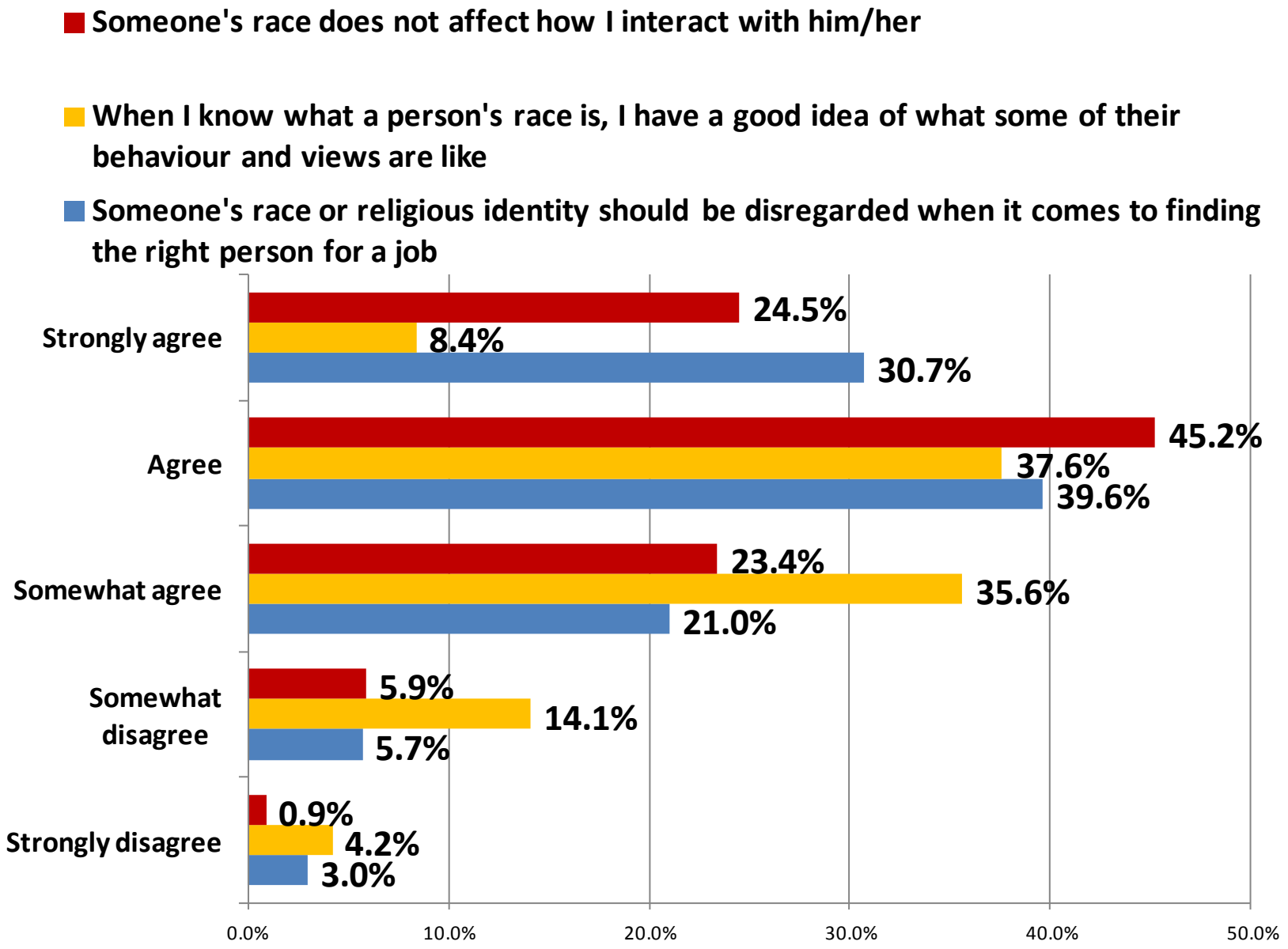
Respondent race (y)/Agree(x)	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
Agree/St Agree	71%	80%	79%	82%

‘COLOUR BLIND’ IDEOLOGY

Colour blindness entails that race or religious identity does not affect how people interact with one another. Neither do these identities have a bearing on how others presuppose an individual’s behavior or suitability for a job.

Race and Religion as Considerations for Interaction

- For about 70% of respondents, a person's race does not affect how they interact with that person.
- About 70% agreed that race and religion should be disregarded when it comes to finding the right person for the job.



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INTER-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING AND INTERACTION

This indicator examines the extent that Singaporeans are open to meeting those of different racial and religious backgrounds and their interest in understanding the beliefs and practices of different cultures. It also measures the population's perception of their understanding of other groups and their willingness to ask and share beliefs and practices.

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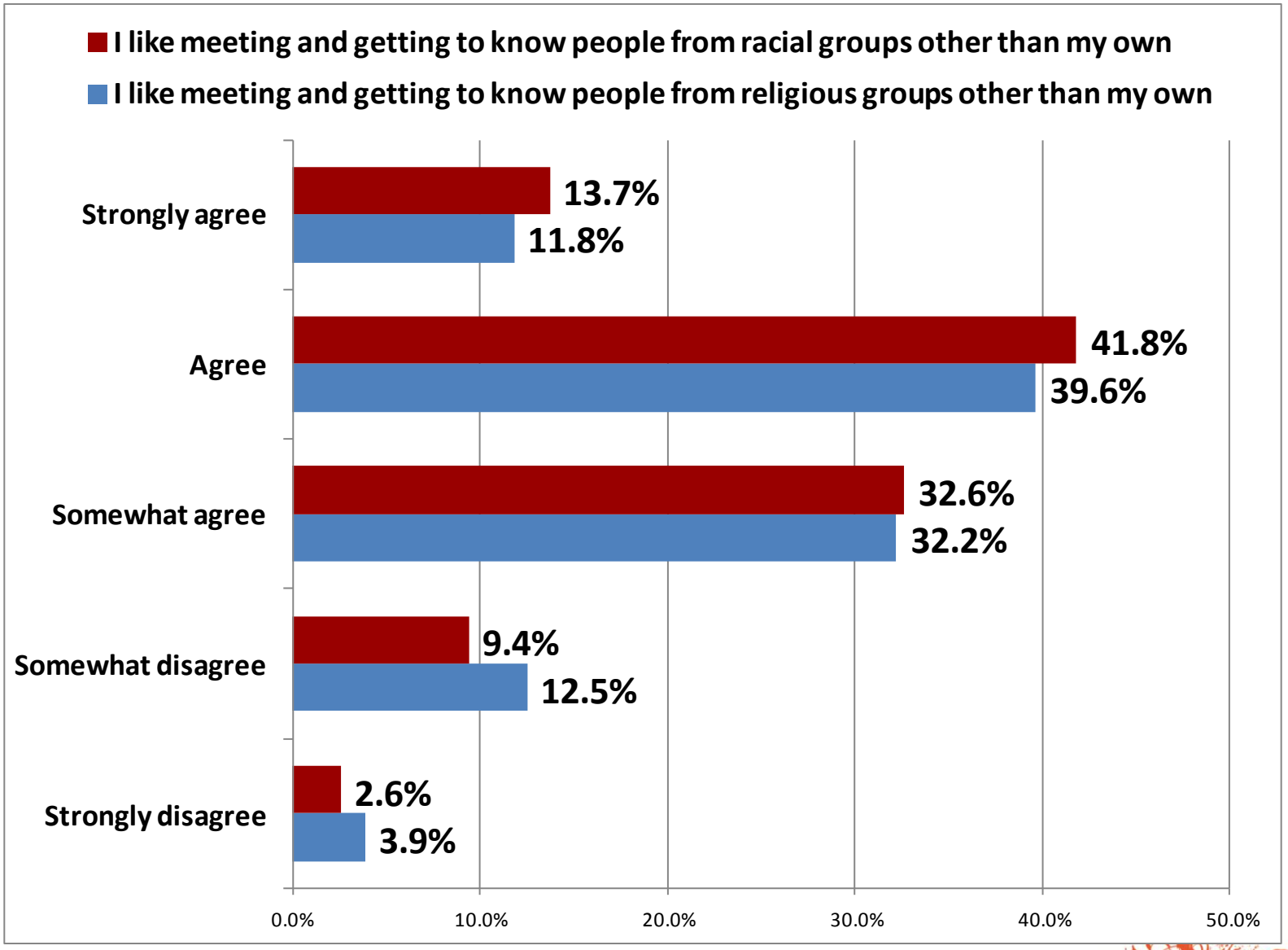
Interest in Other Races and Religions

- Around 55% were interested in meeting people of other races and religions.
- Around 50% were interested in understanding other people's customs.
- Even if there were opportunities, 16% mentioned they were not likely to try to get to know people of other cultures.



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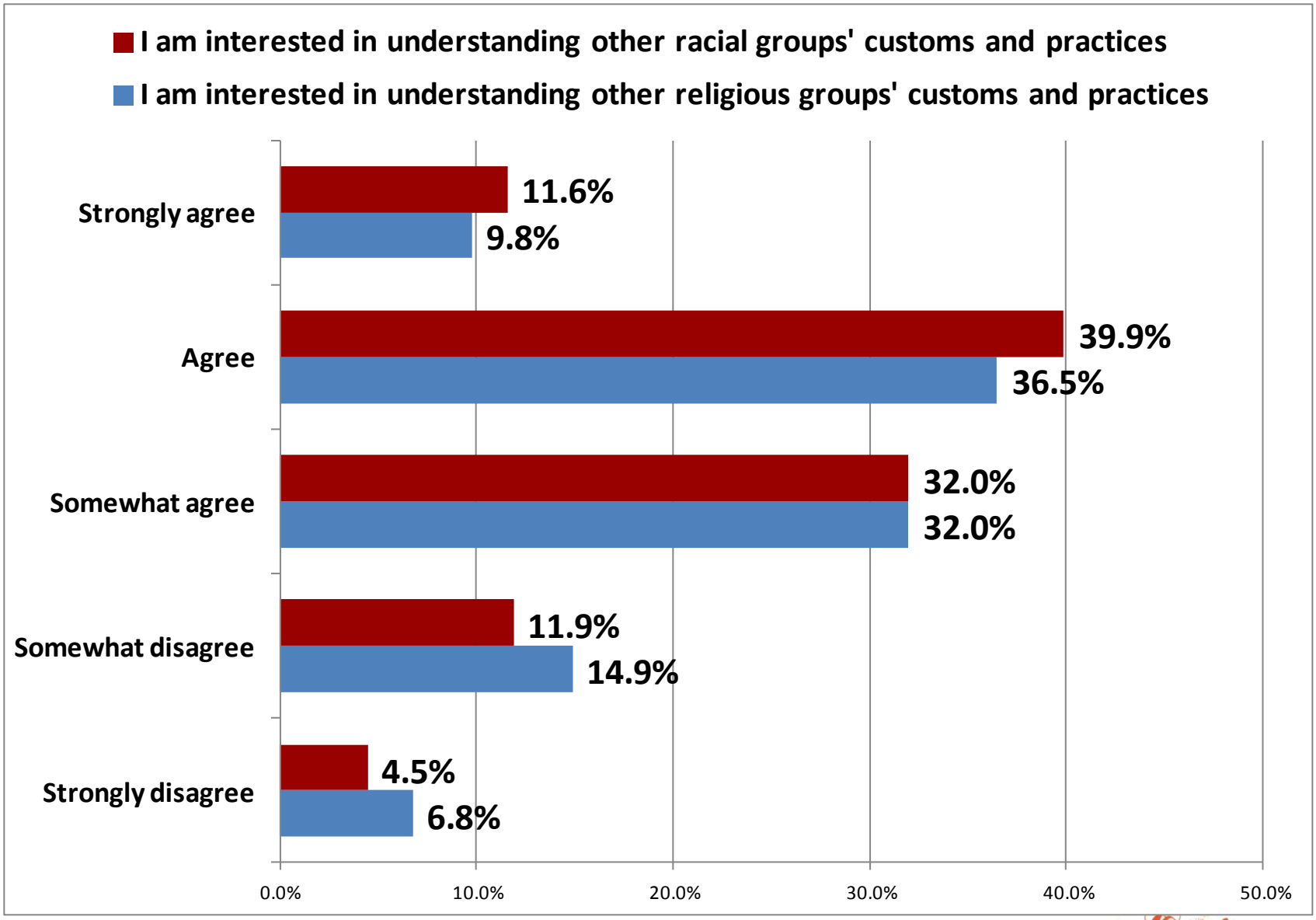

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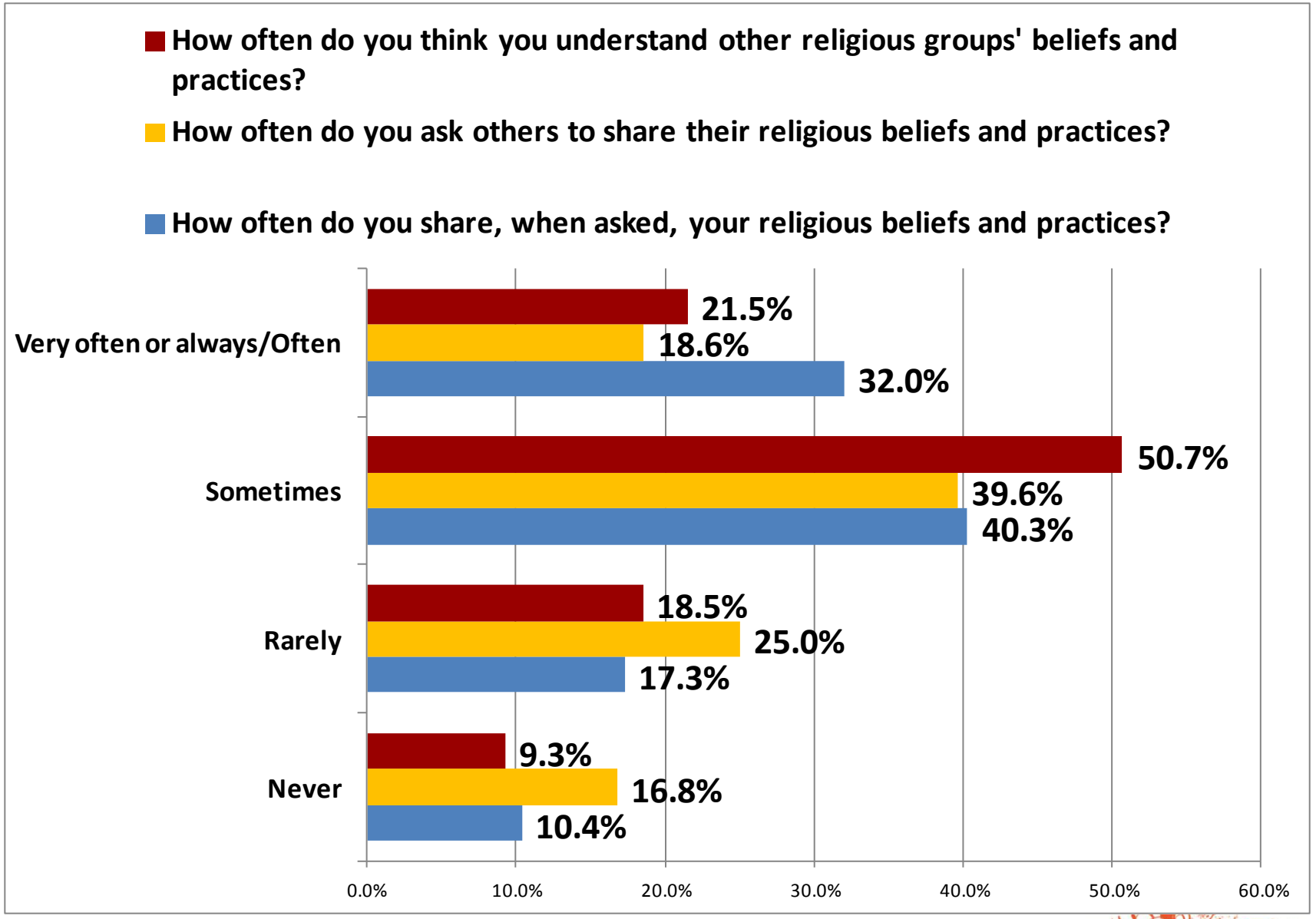

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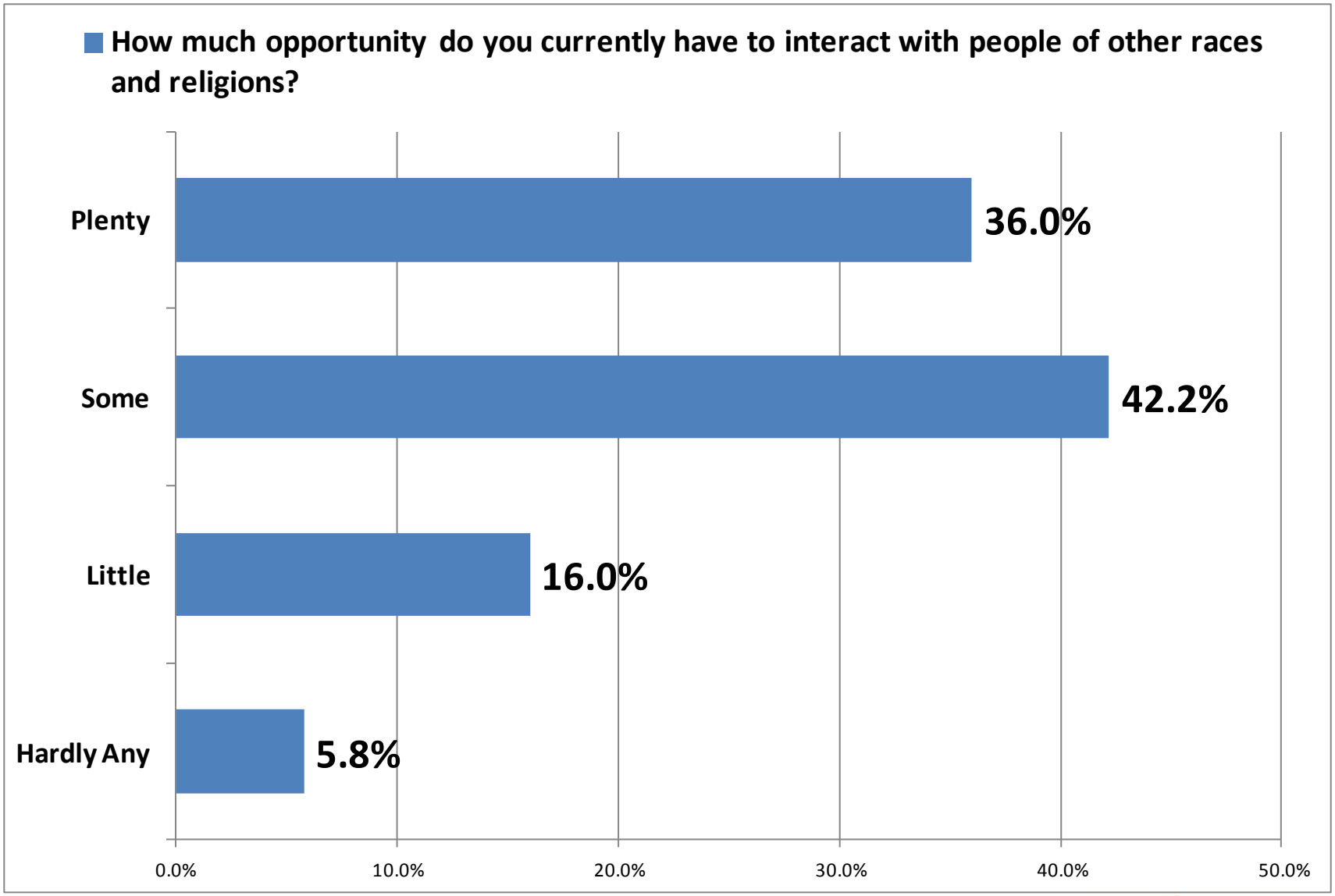

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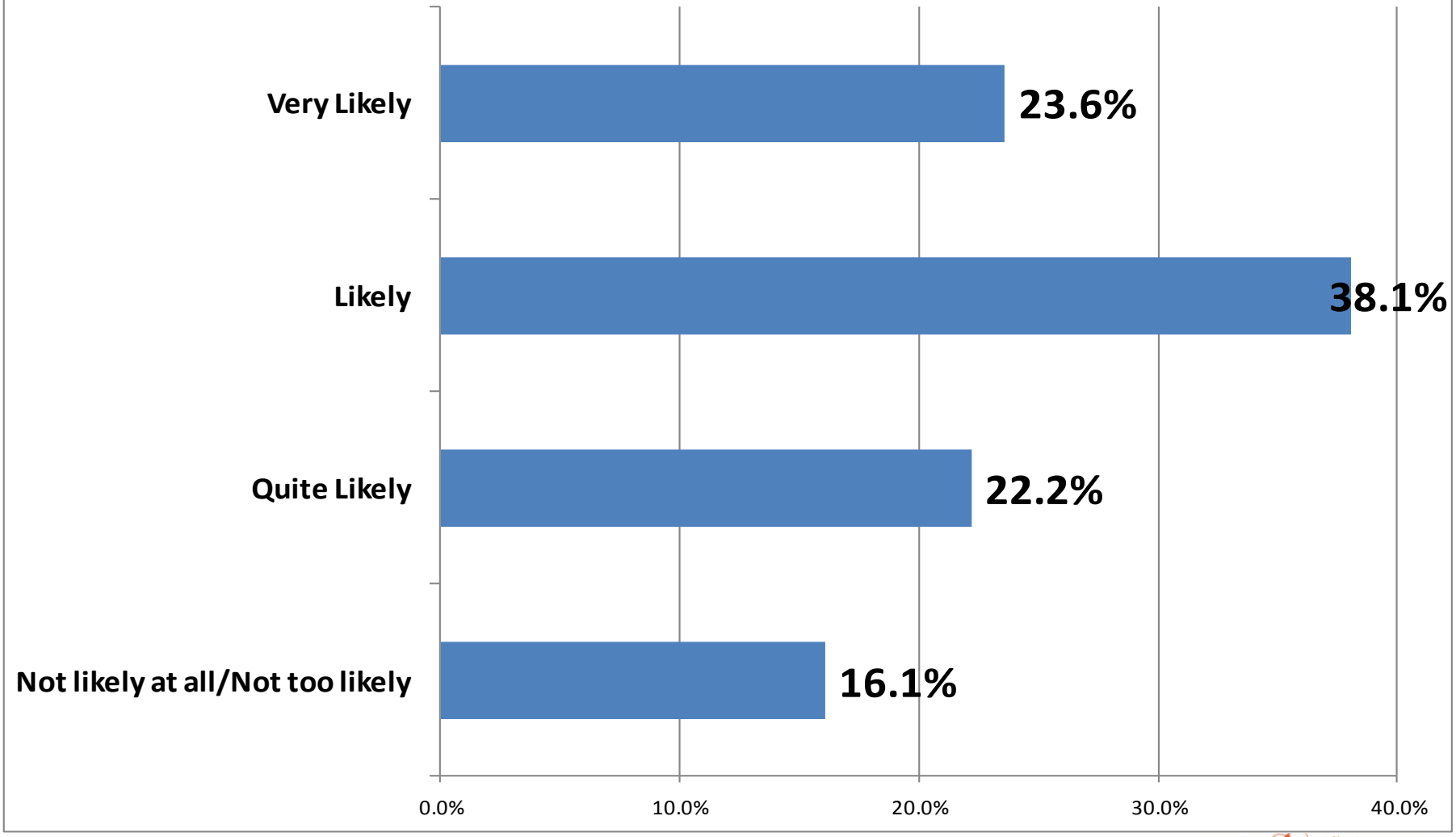
If there were opportunities, how likely are you to try to get to know people of other races and religions?



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FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION EXCLUSION AND TENSION

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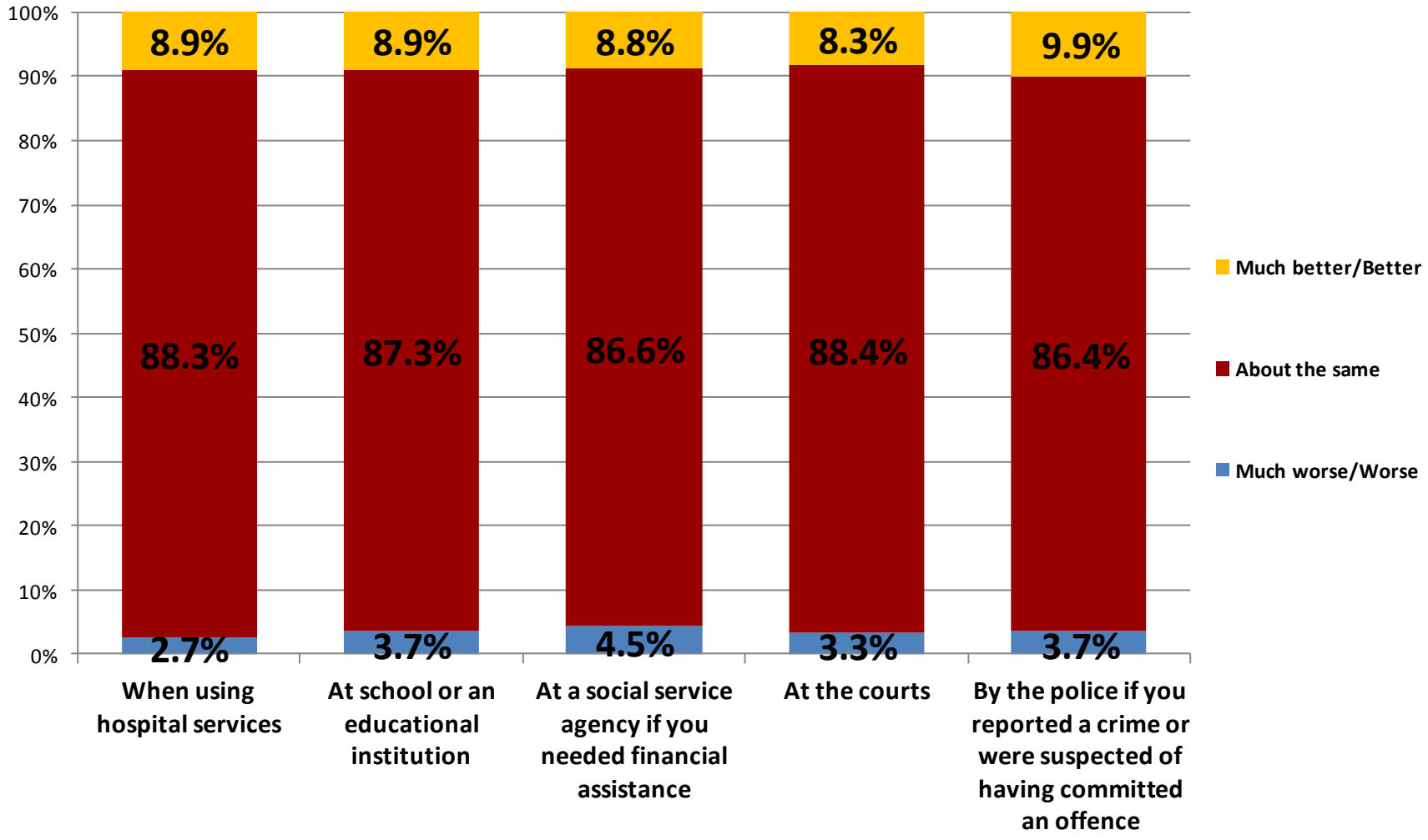
PERCEPTION OF DISCRIMINATION

This indicator measures perceived discrimination by examining whether Singaporeans feel that they receive differential treatment as a result of race in public services – such as in hospitals or at police stations – as well as in their daily lives – while using public transport or work.

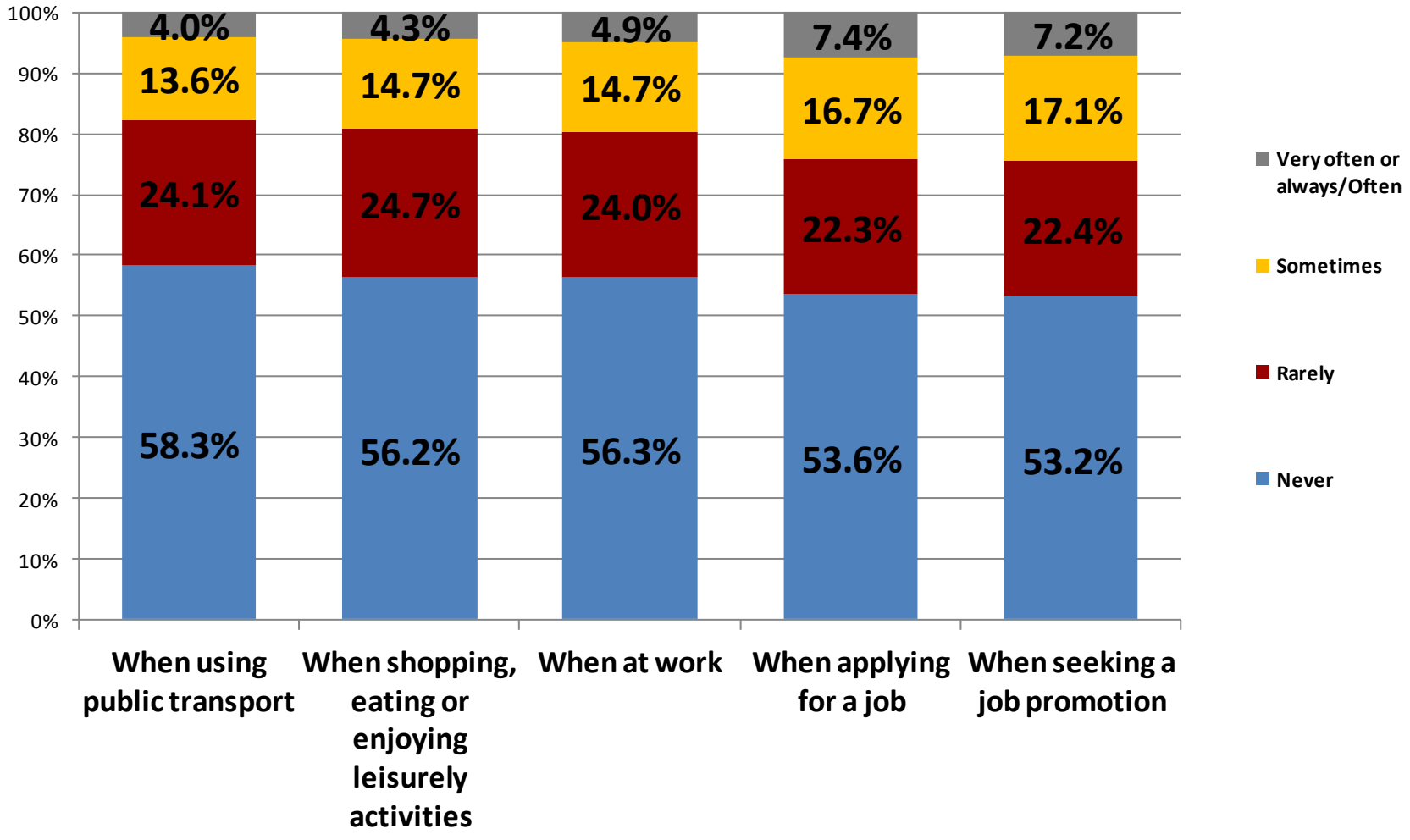
Perception of Discrimination

- Less than 10% of minorities felt they were treated worse than other races in the use of public services.
- Less than 10% of minorities often felt that they were racially discriminated in most aspects of every day life except when applying for a job or a job promotion

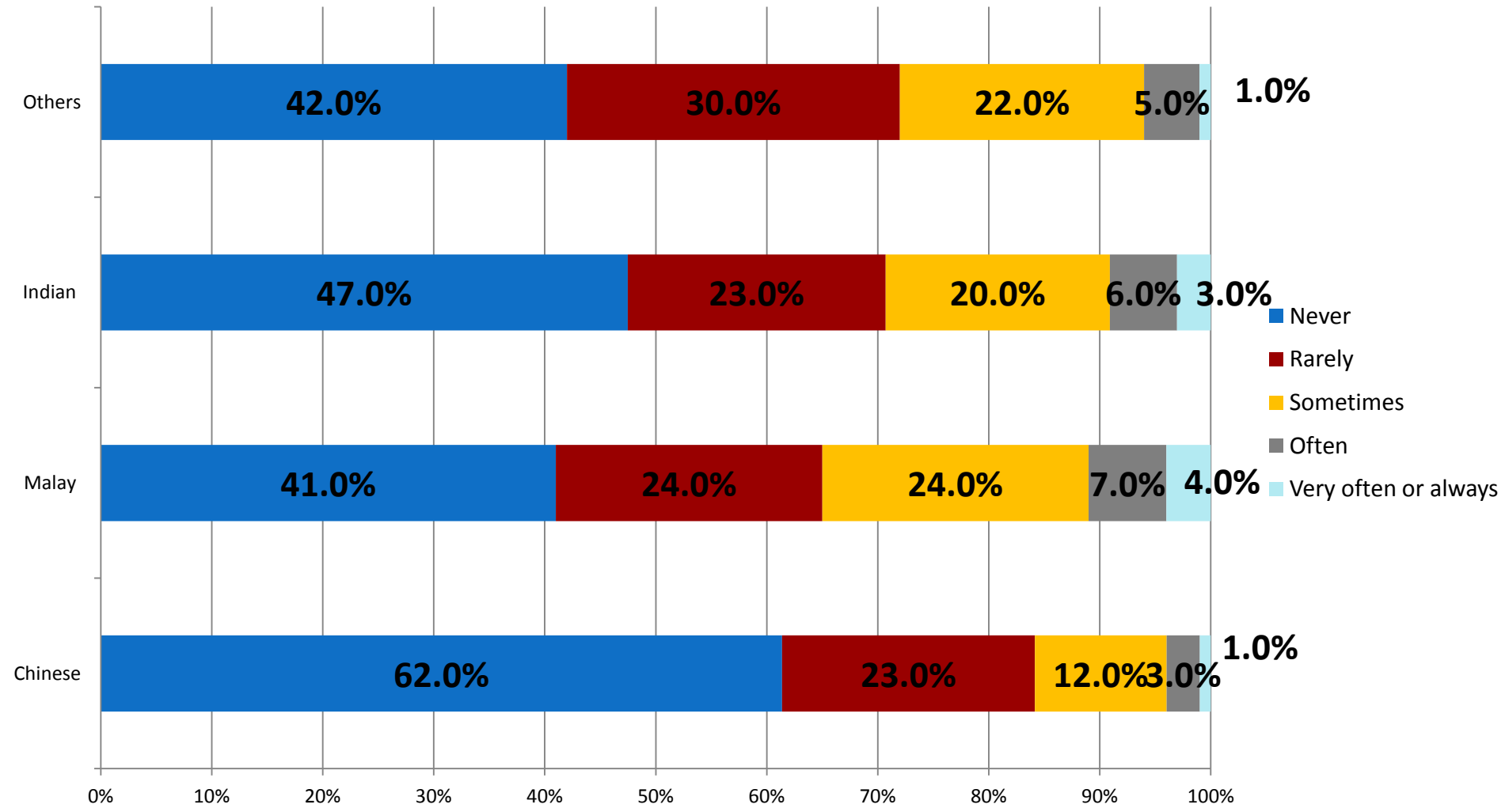
How respondents felt they are treated when using public services compared with other races



How often (ALL) respondents felt racially discriminated against in their everyday lives



How often do you feel racially discriminated in these areas of your everyday life? - When at work



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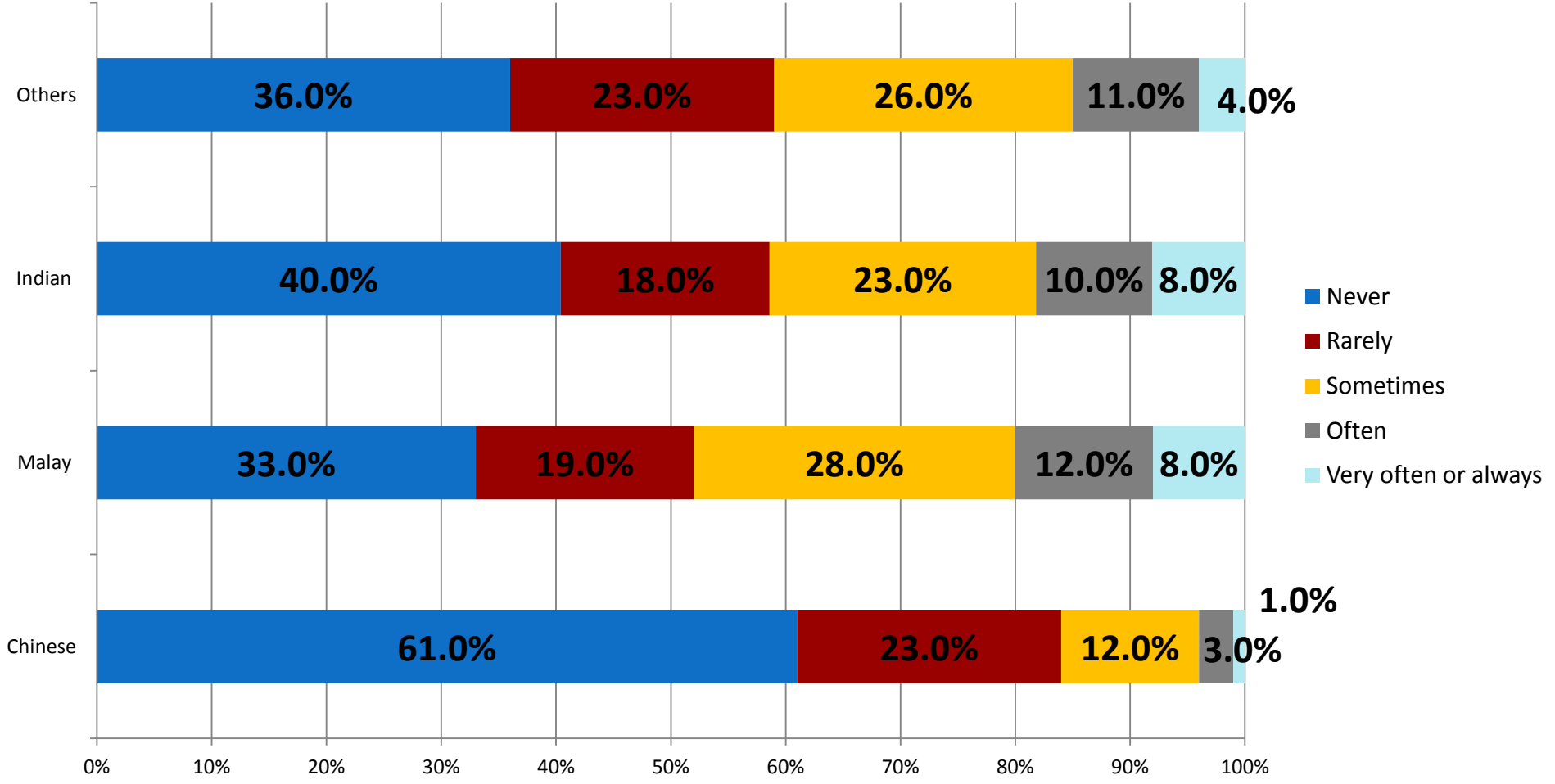
How often do you feel racially discriminated in these areas of your everyday life? - When applying for a job



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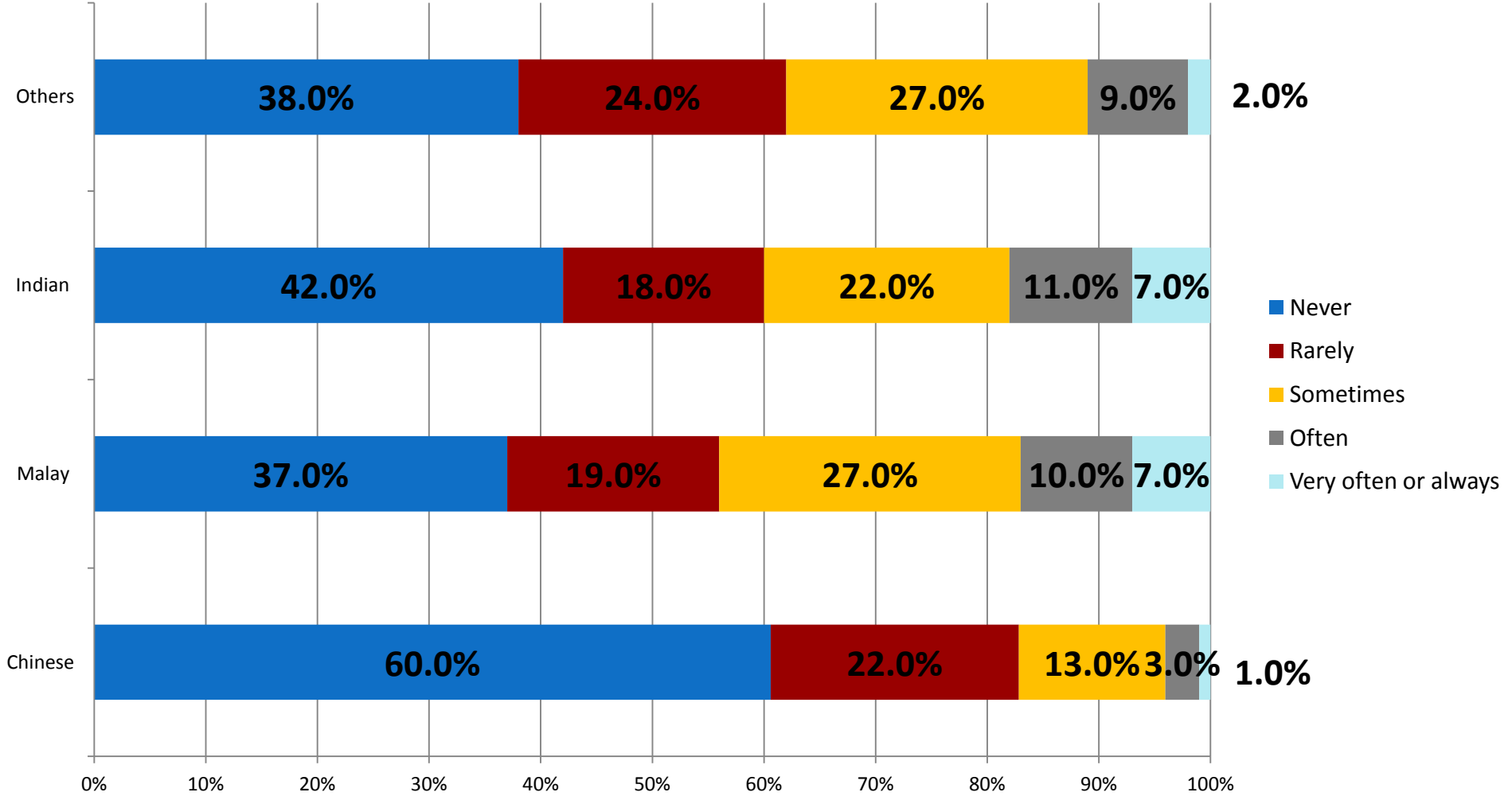
How often do you feel racially discriminated in these areas of your everyday life? - When being considered for a job promotion



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PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

This indicator serves to examine whether Singaporean's perceive that particular segments of the population have to work harder to achieve a decent life in Singapore and whether access to top positions were more difficult for them to achieve.

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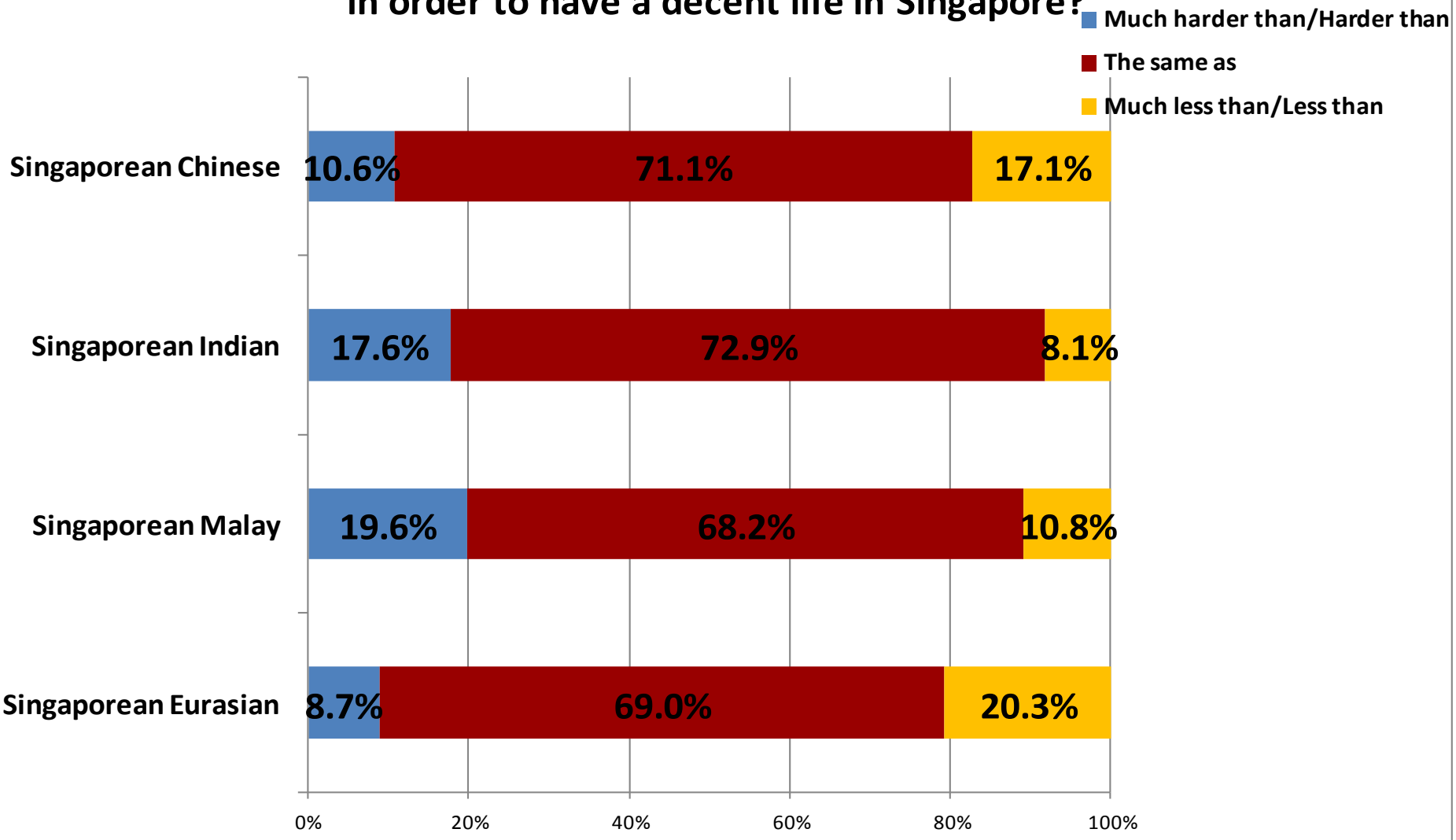
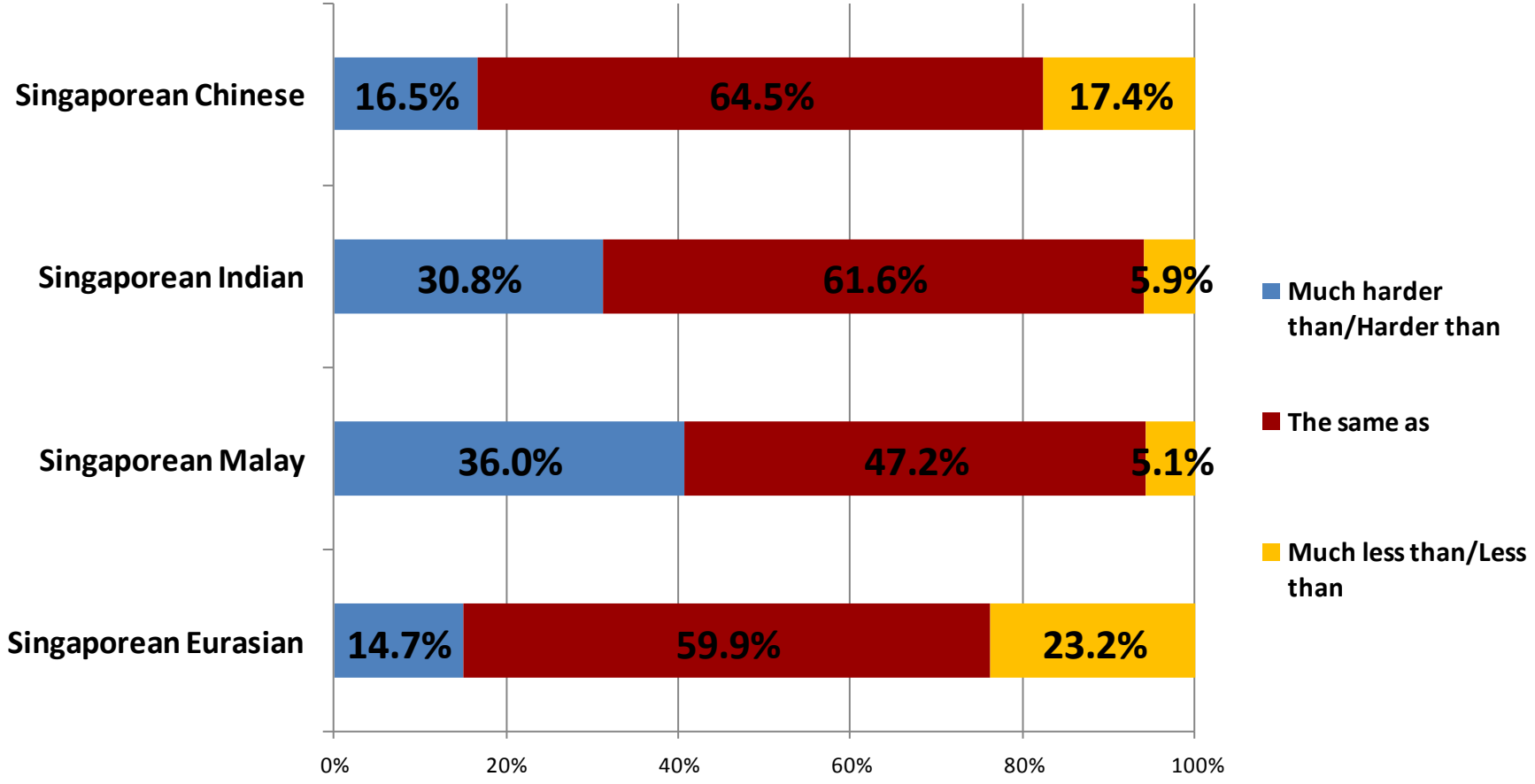
Perception of Exclusion

- Under 20% of respondents believed that Indians and Malays had to work harder compared to other races to have a basic, decent life in Singapore.
- Slightly above 30% of respondents believed that Indians and Malays had to work harder compared to other races to reach top positions in their organisations.

How hard respondents felt members of different races had to work in order to have a decent life in Singapore?



How hard respondents felt members of different races had to work in order to reach top positions in their companies/organisations?



INTERRACIAL AND RELIGIOUS TENSION

This indicator measures Singaporean sentiments on the level of racial and religious tension that exists in the country as well as whether they have been affected by such tension in their daily lives.

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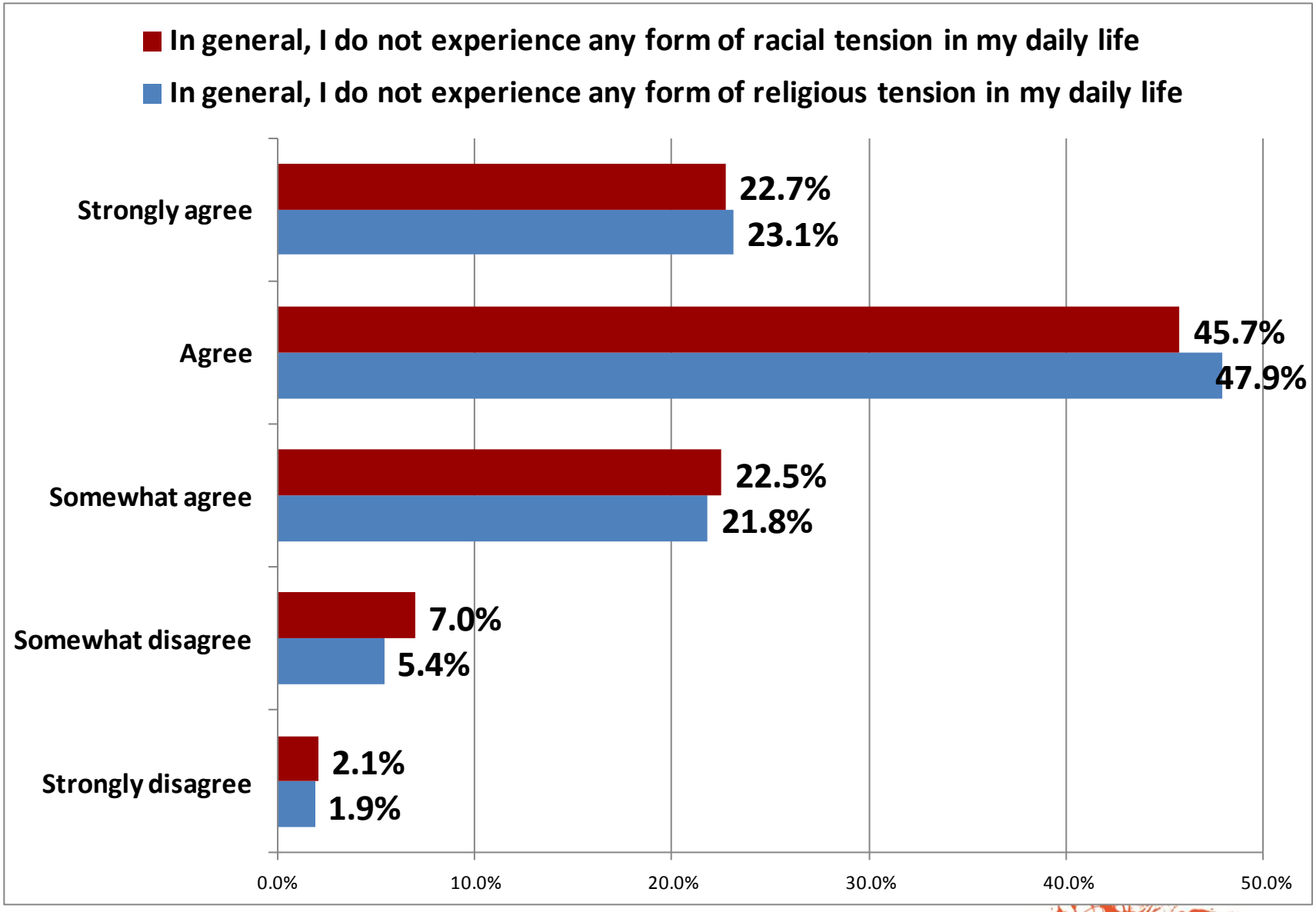
Interracial and Religious Tension

- Around 70% of respondents did not experience any racial or religious tension in their daily lives.
- About 60% believed that Singapore was free from racial or religious tension.
- Most had rarely been upset by any tension in the past two years.
- Minorities, better educated and younger tended to be more upset.



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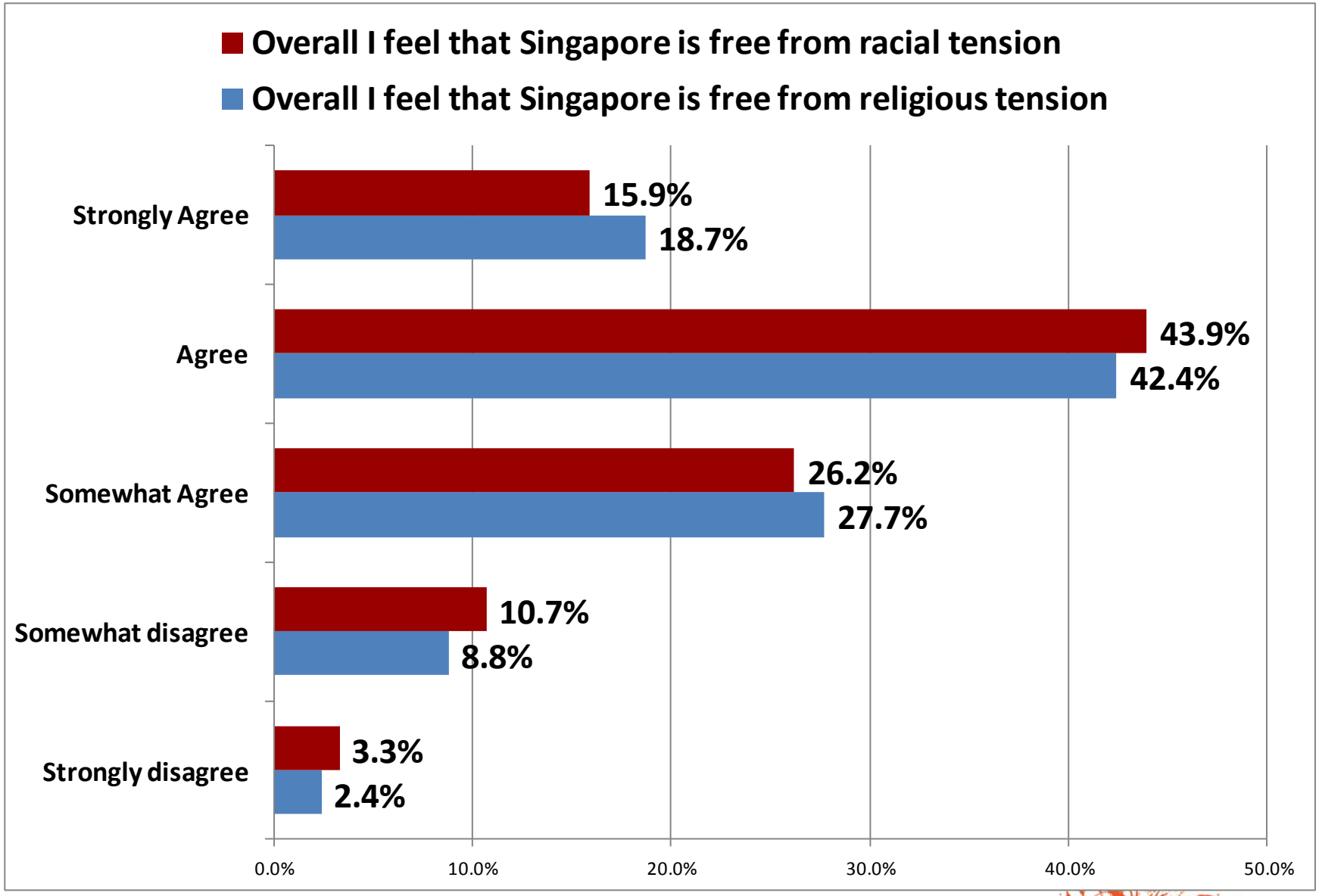

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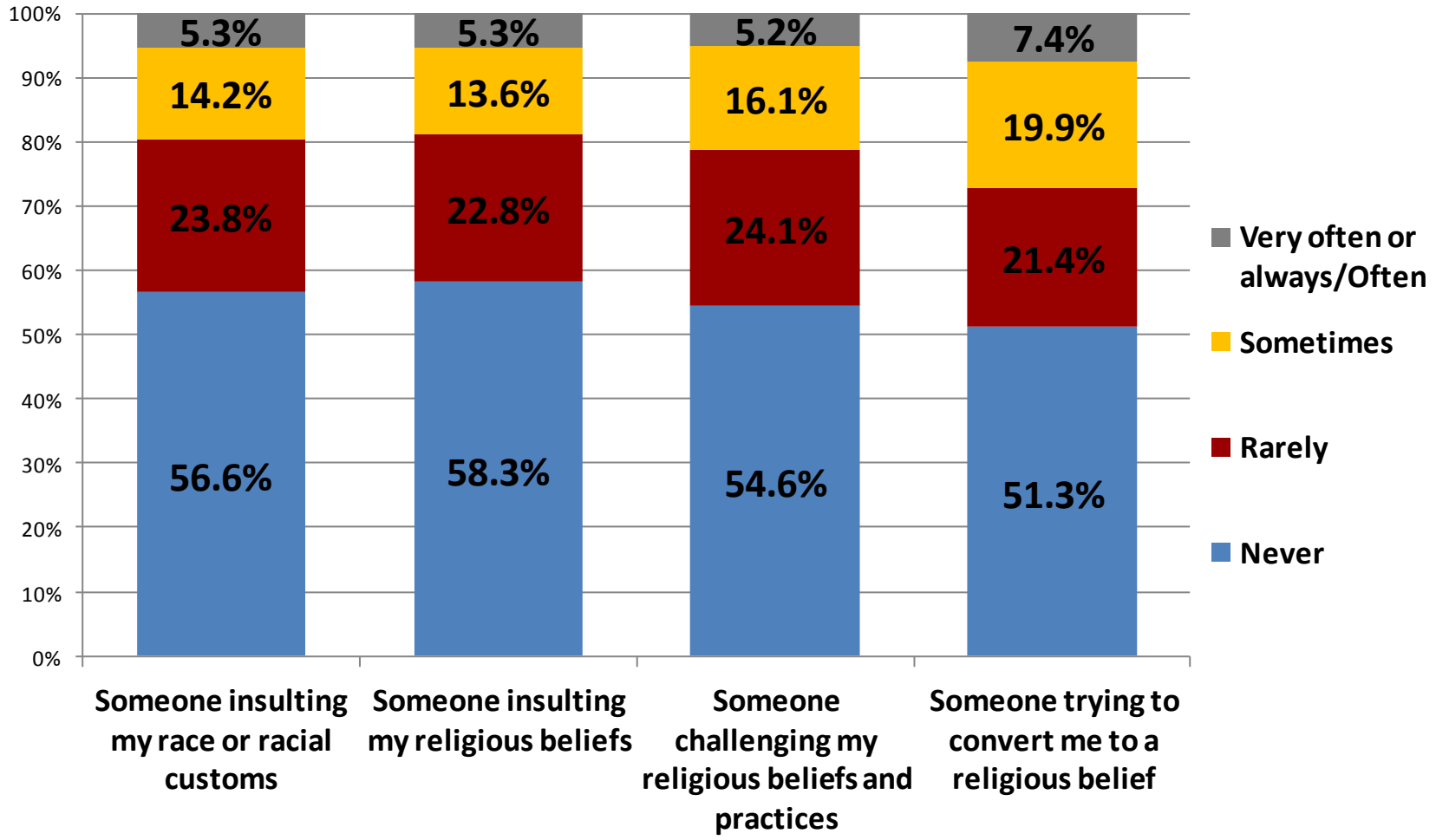
How often respondents had been upset by racial or religious tension in the last two years



SOCIAL TRUST, ACCEPTANCE AND CONNECTEDNESS

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INTERRACIAL AND RELIGIOUS SOCIAL TRUST

This indicator demonstrates Singaporean sentiments on how much they trust fellow Singaporeans from different racial and religious groups in the face of a national crisis.

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Trust in other Races and Religions

- About 63% of non-Chinese respondents believed that they could trust more than half of Singaporean Chinese to help them in a national crisis.
- Trust for minority races was slightly lower.

What proportion of people with the following race do you think can be trusted to help you if Singapore faced a national crisis (e.g. SARs)?

Race(x)/ Proportion(y)	S'pore Chinese	S'pore Indian	S'pore Malay	S'pore Eurasian
All or mostly all	32.5%	26.6%	26.9%	27.0%
More than half	30.2%	26.0%	25.8%	24.4%
About half	26.7%	26.0%	25.5%	25.3%
Less than half/ None or mostly none	10.6%	21.4%	21.8%	23.4%

What proportion of people with the following religion do you think can be trusted to help you if Singapore faced a national crisis (e.g. SARs)?

Rel(x)/ Prop (y)	Buddh-ism	Tao-ism	Islam	Christian-ity	Hindu-ism	No relig-ion	Others
All or mostly all	32.0%	32.1%	26.8%	31.6%	27.5%	28.9%	29.9%
More than half	31.9%	29.3%	24.6%	30.8%	25.6%	25.4%	14.0%
About half	26.3%	27.5%	28.8%	26.8%	28.1%	28.3%	26.6%
Less than half/ None or mostly none	9.8%	11.0%	19.9%	10.9%	18.8%	17.4%	29.4%

INTER-RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS ACCEPTANCE

Inter-racial and religious acceptance is conceptualized by how comfortable Singaporeans of different racial and religious groups are of one another, in different types of social relations. These relationships include comfort for private sphere relationships –e.g. are Singaporeans comfortable of someone of another racial or religious group marrying into their family; and in the public sphere –e.g. how comfortable Singaporeans are of someone of another cultural group being their boss.

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Inter-Racial and Religious Acceptance

- Overwhelming proportion (90%>) were comfortable with those of other races and religions for public sphere relationships.
- Respondents were less comfortable with other races and religions for private sphere relationships.
- Respondents less comfortable with New Singaporeans.

How comfortable respondents are of different racial groups (public sphere)

	Local-born Chinese	Local-born Malay	Local-born Indian	Local-born Eurasian	New Singaporean Chinese originally from China	New Singaporean Indian originally from India	New Singaporean Malay originally from the region
As your colleague in the same occupation	96.0%	92.9%	93.2%	93.5%	84.9%	85.5%	87.6%
As your boss	93.8%	83.1%	84.2%	91.1%	74.0%	73.7%	77.0%
As your employee	94.9%	90.1%	90.6%	92.8%	83.0%	83.5%	85.5%
As your next-door-neighbour	95.4%	92.7%	90.9%	93.7%	81.2%	82.1%	86.8%
As the majority of people in Singapore	91.2%	71.9%	71.3%	71.0%	51.4%	51.2%	55.2%

figures represent cross-cultural acceptance levels, whereby the responses of members of a particular racial group are excluded in calculating acceptance levels for that particular race

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How comfortable respondents are of different racial groups (private sphere)

	Local-born Chinese	Local-born Malay	Local-born Indian	Local-born Eurasian	New Singaporean Chinese originally from China	New Singaporean Indian originally from India	New Singaporean Malay originally from the region
Spouse	61.0%	35.1%	36.6%	55.5%	47.6%	32.9%	36.0%
Brother/sister-in-law	71.0%	55.1%	55.7%	69.2%	58.4%	48.7%	53.8%
Close friend	91.5%	84.7%	83.0%	85.5%	77.4%	74.6%	78.1%

figures represent cross-cultural acceptance levels, whereby the responses of members of a particular racial group are excluded in calculating acceptance levels for that particular race

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How comfortable respondents are of different religious groups (public sphere)

	Buddhist	Muslim	Christian (Catholic)	Christian (other than Catholics)	Taoist	Hindu	Sikh
As your colleague in the same occupation	96.9%	94.1%	95.2%	94.7%	94.6%	92.6%	91.3%
As your boss	96.4%	88.9%	94.7%	94.4%	93.9%	87.9%	86.9%
As your employee	96.8%	92.1%	95.2%	94.7%	91.0%	91.9%	90.3%
As your next-door-neighbour	96.7%	93.4%	95.4%	94.7%	93.8%	90.6%	89.5%
As the majority of people in Singapore	92.5%	72.6%	86.2%	85.9%	84.8%	70.9%	67.4%

figures have excluded responses of members of a particular religious group in calculating acceptance levels for that particular religious group

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How comfortable respondents are of different religious groups (private sphere)

	Buddhist	Muslim	Christian (Catholic)	Christian (other than Catholics)	Taoist	Hindu	Sikh
Spouse	73.4%	42.9%	62.9%	64.3%	63.3%	37.2%	32.4%
Son/Daughter-in-law	77.2%	49.6%	72.2%	72.2%	69.0%	44.9%	40.0%
Brother/sister-in-law	81.8%	58.1%	75.8%	75.3%	74.4%	52.8%	48.4%
Close friend	94.5%	87.1%	92.0%	91.5%	90.8%	84.6%	82.6%

figures have excluded responses of members of a particular religious group in calculating acceptance levels for that particular religious group

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SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS BETWEEN RACIAL GROUPS

This indicator measures the prevalence of close friendships that Singaporeans have with those of other races.

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Level of Social Connectedness

- Around 80% were comfortable with a close friend of another race or religion.
- However only 45% had at least 1 close friend of another race.

Chinese, Malay and Indian Respondents who have at least one close friend of another race

Friend's race (y)/Respondents race (x)	Chinese friend	Malay friend	Indian friend	Eurasian friend	Friend of 'Other' races
Chinese	95.2%	23.3%	20.1%	7.1%	9.3%
Malay	62.0%	92.1%	38.9%	14.4%	6.5%
Indian	69.4%	53.8%	87.8%	15.6%	21.4%

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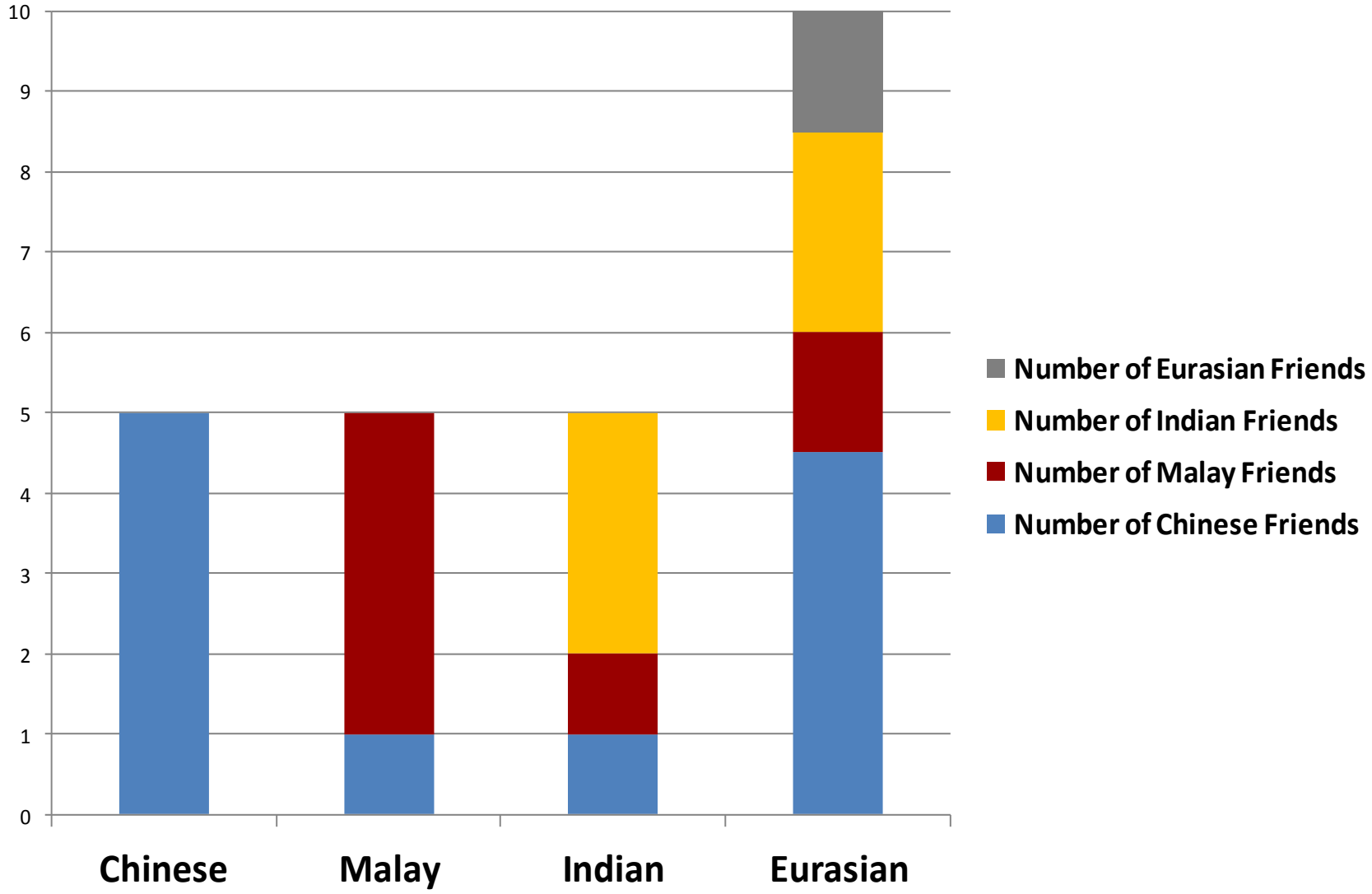
Median number of close friends from each racial group



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GENERAL TRENDS FROM DATA

EFFECT OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES ON INDICATORS

- Minority respondents compared to Chinese respondents held more positive attitudes towards embracing diversity, colour blindness, inter-cultural understanding, social acceptance and cross-racial friendships.
- This is expected since minorities are more likely to be sensitive to issues surrounding diversity.

EFFECT OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES(cont'd)

- Similarly those who were younger, better educated and were of higher socio-economic status tended to be more positive.

EFFECT OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES(cont'd)

- Discrimination was more often perceived by minorities, those who were less educated, from lower socio-economic status backgrounds and who were younger