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ATTITUDES, ACTIONS AND ASPIRATIONS: KEY FINDINGS FROM THE CNA-IPS SURVEY ON RACE RELATIONS 2021

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Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2021 wave of the CNA-IPS Survey on Race Relations re-examines issues of race that were initially probed in the 2016 edition of the survey. It also asks new questions on race-related topics that have become more prominent since then. The key findings of the study are summarised below.

Attitudes to privilege and meritocracy

Most respondents believe that meritocracy in Singapore is not contingent on race. Over 80 per cent feel that everyone can become rich or successful, regardless of their race. This has been consistent since 2016. Respondents are also optimistic about meritocracy in the future, with 97 per cent feeling that minorities will continue to be judged by merit rather than race, or that things will improve further.

However, respondents are evenly divided on whether there is majority privilege in Singapore, with 53.9 per cent feeling that being of the majority race is an advantage. This is on par with the findings in 2016, when 52.7 per cent felt this way. Racial minorities and younger respondents are generally more likely to feel that majority privilege exists.

There is another split in views on whether racism remains an important problem today. About 56.2 per cent feel that it is, an increase from 46.3 per cent in 2016. Those who feel that racism is an important problem tend to be younger and more highly educated. Looking to the future, respondents are broadly optimistic that there will be less racism, although there is some concern about online hatred becoming more prevalent. About 23.1 per cent expected online comments attacking other races to worsen. This is much higher than the 9.3 per cent who expect workplace discrimination based on race to worsen, and 9.4 per cent who expect housing rental discrimination based on race to worsen.

Most respondents (88.8 per cent) feel it is important for political leaders to talk openly about racism. However, 58.6 per cent also feel that public discourse could cause unnecessary tension. They may feel that political leaders taking the lead in such discussions can avert some of the potential tension. Meanwhile, views on minority sensitivity about race have held steady across all races since 2016.

The survey also asked respondents about which cultures they feel are more privileged. Most (70.2 per cent) do not believe that the majority race's culture is privileged, but racial minorities are more likely to feel the converse is true. They are also more likely to perceive that Chinese people can go about their lives without much knowledge of minority cultures — 56.5 per cent of Malays and 57.2 per cent of Indians, compared to 47.1 per cent of Chinese. As for the next five years, most respondents of all races expect intercultural knowledge and willingness to accommodate differences to stay the same or even improve.

Relatedly, about three-quarters of all respondents do not believe that any race has been getting too demanding in its push for cultural rights, and think that all races' needs should be given equal priority. Accommodating different cultural needs is also seen as compatible with a strong Singaporean identity, with 71.6 per cent feeling that doing so has not impinged on

national identity. Virtually all respondents, 92 per cent, expect the level of national unity to increase or at least stay the same in the next five years.

Racial prejudices and biases

There is no consensus on the age at which people become aware of racial differences and develop racial biases. However, 26.7 per cent of respondents believe it happens between 7 and 17 years, while another 18.3 per cent believe it happens slightly later, between 18 and 35 years. Older respondents are more likely to think that racial biases never develop.

Respondents have become more likely to see themselves, their family and their close friends as hardly or not at all racist. For example, 83.6 per cent now perceive themselves this way, up from 73.6 per cent in 2016. Chinese and Malay respondents have become more likely to see themselves as not racist, while Indian respondents' self-perception has held steady in the last five years.

At the same time, respondents generally see others in society as more racist than their close circle. Chinese respondents are more likely to perceive most Singaporean Chinese as hardly racist or not racist at all, with 63.6 per cent of them feeling this way, compared to 52.8 per cent of Indian respondents and 57.5 per cent of Malay respondents. In other words, members of the majority race tend to perceive their own race as less racist than how racial minorities view them. The same trend is not observed for Malays' and Indians' perceptions of people of their own racial groups.

Respondents were queried about how acceptable different behaviours were, and whether they regarded those behaviours as racist. About three-quarters of all respondents view racial humour in public as unacceptable and racist. Over two-thirds think the same about insults based on racial stereotypes — but only half indicated so for backhanded compliments based on racial stereotypes. This indicates a grey area when it comes to perceptions of the acceptability and racism of stereotyped remarks.

Most respondents feel that dressing up in another race's ethnic costume is acceptable and not racist, possibly due to this practice being prevalent during occasions such as Racial Harmony Day. Another action broadly agreed to be not racist is offering food without considering dietary restrictions. However, 89.1 per cent of respondents felt that this is never or only sometimes acceptable, likely as it would be inconsiderate even though not racist.

Surprisingly, only a slight majority of around six in 10 respondents feel that it is racist and unacceptable for an employer not to hire someone due to their race. Since 2016, respondents have become more forgiving of this type of discrimination in hiring. Whereas 79 per cent of people surveyed in 2016 thought it racist to discriminate by race in hiring, only 61.4 per cent thought so in 2021.

Apart from professional relationships, respondents were also asked about personal ones. Having racially-exclusive social circles was viewed as not racist by about six in 10 respondents. This includes not having friends of other races, and disapproving of your children or grandchildren dating someone of another race.

Respondents were also asked about their racial preferences for people occupying different roles. Over nine in 10 would welcome a Singaporean Chinese person as a new family

member. The acceptance level of Singaporean Malays and Indians in the same role has also increased since 2016. There has also been a rise in comfort levels to have professional relationships with Singaporean Malays and Indians, although the preference for Singaporean Chinese remains high. Generally, new citizens of any origin are less preferred.

Respondents have grown more open to the idea of a non-Chinese Prime Minister or President since 2016. A larger majority of respondents are now accepting of Singaporean Malays (82.2 per cent) or Indians (82 per cent) as the President. These figures mark an increase from 2016, when they were 65.5 per cent and 70.6 per cent respectively. This can possibly be attributed to the presence of a Malay President since 2017. Most are accepting of Malays or Indians as the Prime Minister too, but the proportions are lower, at 69.6 per cent and 70.5 per cent respectively. There is still some in-group preference for these roles. Overall, new citizens of any origin are not welcome in these positions.

Meanwhile, nearly nine in 10 would rent rooms to Singaporean Chinese, but only half would accept Malay or Indian tenants. Respondents are more comfortable renting to tenants of the same race as themselves. Asked about behavioural and other factors to make them reconsider, around one-third of the respondents who were uncomfortable renting to at least one racial group said that nothing would change their minds.

Policies

Racial Harmony Day is the most well-received policy, while SAP schools are the least so. Eight in 10 respondents feel that Racial Harmony Day preserves racial harmony, while only four in 10 feel this way about SAP schools. Minority race respondents, particularly those who are younger, are more likely to feel that SAP schools do not preserve racial harmony.

Most respondents (63 per cent) feel that the CMIO system is effective in preserving racial harmony, but a lower proportion (38.6 per cent) feel that it safeguards minority rights. While two-thirds of Chinese respondents want to retain CMIO as it currently exists, less than half of Malay and Indian respondents say the same. Older respondents are generally more supportive of keeping the policy. The other overarching policy, double-barrelled race classification, is also broadly viewed positively.

Over three-quarters are satisfied with the ability of legislation on race, including the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act (MRHA) and the Sedition Act, to preserve racial harmony. However, they are less certain about these acts safeguarding minority rights, with 46.9 per cent and 54.6 per cent indicating so, respectively. Chinese respondents are more positive about the MRHA and Sedition Act than minority races.

More than seven in 10 respondents believe that the Ethnic Integration Policy (EIP) and ethnic self-help groups help to preserve racial harmony. Six in 10 want to retain these policies as they are. Chinese respondents are more likely than minorities to believe the EIP preserves racial harmony — 81.3 per cent compared to about two-thirds. Minority race respondents of lower socioeconomic status feel more positively about ethnic self-help groups than those of higher socioeconomic status.

When comparing policies related to politics, the Group Representation Constituency (GRC) system is slightly better received than the Reserved Presidency. About 77.1 per cent feel that

the GRC preserves racial harmony, while 70.4 per cent feel this way about the Reserved Presidency. Despite this disparity, about six in 10 respondents want to retain both policies.

Lived Experiences

Racial discrimination at work and in the housing market were experienced by only a small proportion of respondents (less than 9 per cent and 3 per cent, respectively). Minorities are more affected by such discrimination than Chinese. Respondents often felt sad, resigned or angry in response to such unfair or discriminatory treatment.

Much of the population (41 per cent) say they have not been affected by race-related incidents highlighted in the news. There seems to be a moderate level of apathy towards these incidents, especially among older respondents. Again, minorities are more likely to have been affected. The most common impacts are becoming more cautious when talking to someone of a different race (24.1 per cent), and paying more attention to such stories in the news (18.8 per cent).

Respondents, especially minorities and younger respondents, generally approve of making police reports after encountering racism. While 61.9 per cent of Chinese respondents feel that people should file reports, the proportions are 73.3 per cent for Malays and 69.3 per cent for Indians. Older respondents tend to be more ambivalent about this issue.

Regardless of their race, respondents are unlikely to call out racism via any means. Fewer than half of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that people should directly criticise people who have made a racist comment or carried out a racist act, or write a post calling out racist incidents they have observed or personally experienced. Respondents especially disapprove of doxing. In terms of different contexts, they are most likely to call out racist behaviour when it occurs in private conversation or in the workplace, and least likely to do so on social media. The top reasons for not speaking up about racism are: that respondents feel they cannot be certain of the context behind the behaviour they witnessed (67.3 per cent) and that it is a matter between the two parties (50.9 per cent).

Presented with a hypothetical situation where a colleague has felt racially discriminated in the workplace, there was no consensus about what to do. That is, no response was selected by a large majority of respondents. They are, however, quite likely to justify the experience as the result of other factors besides the colleague's race (58.1 per cent). The other actions asked about generally involve making a report, avoiding the colleague, and mediation. Respondents are more likely to file a report with the company than with external authorities, and more likely to mediate in a civil fashion than to scold the offender. They showed a preference for limited, rather than drastic, avoidance strategies — for example, avoiding the colleague, rather than looking for a new job.

Most respondents think it would benefit minorities if members of the majority race empathise with minorities who had been discriminated, and find out about their cultural celebrations. Minorities were much more likely to think it would be helpful for the Chinese to support them after racist incidents occur. While 39.5 per cent of Chinese feel this would be helpful, 51.9 per cent of Malays and 56.4 per cent of Indians do. The same goes for views on Chinese people supporting policy changes that affect minorities, and participating actively in discussions on racism.

A slight majority of respondents, 57.6 per cent, are tired of talking about issues of race and racism, while the rest are conversely looking forward to more public dialogue. Older respondents are more likely to be tired of such discussions. More highly educated respondents, especially minorities, are more likely to be looking forward to them.

Aspirations

Many respondents are indifferent about potential future developments to do with race in Singapore. The proportions who indicated that a given development would make no difference ranged from 40 to 55 per cent. However, one development that is highly welcomed is greater intercultural understanding. About 62.9 per cent feel this would be good or very good for Singapore society.

There are mixed sentiments about discussions regarding racial issues. About half thought it would be good or very good if people felt able to speak up freely about their ethnic identity not being properly respected or about problems with different ethnic cultures. Most of the rest felt it would make no difference.

A little less than half, 48.9 per cent of respondents, think it would be good or very good for Singapore to officially recognise other cultures apart from Chinese, Malay, Indians and Eurasians. Although not a majority, this is a relatively large proportion, given that about half of all respondents thought developments to do with acknowledging more racial diversity would make no difference. However, only about three in 10 felt that it would be beneficial to remove CMIO categorisation from identity documents.

Although more than half of all respondents think it would be beneficial for people to identify as Singaporeans rather than Singaporean-Chinese, Singaporean-Malay, Singapore-Indian or others, they are less supportive of policies also moving in a race-blind direction. This refers to racial quotas in housing, immigration law, Parliamentary representation and national celebrations. Still, around four in 10 felt that national celebrations can rise above race.

Finally, over a third of all respondents (33.7 per cent) felt that Singapore is already “regardless of race, language or religion”, but another 19.8 per cent conversely felt that this will never be achieved. The others believed some time will be needed — anywhere from under 10 years, to more than 50. These findings are generally consistent across respondents of different races. However, younger minority race respondents are more likely to think Singapore will never be regardless of race.

Chapter 1

Introduction

CHAPTER 1 | INTRODUCTION

1.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

In the 2021 National Day Rally, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong addressed three major societal fault lines, one of which was the management of race and religion in Singapore (Singapore. Prime Minister's Office, 2021). As a diverse nation, race has always been a dominant socio-political issue, which has been tracked, analysed, and debated. A substantial portion of literature on race relations in Singapore has sought to explain and analyse race issues in relation to the overarching state ideology of multiculturalism (Ortiga, 2015; Lian, 2015). To meaningfully evaluate these related ideologies and race-related phenomena, the attitudes and perceptions of the public are an important source of understanding.

While there has been substantial commentary on multiculturalism in Singapore, there has been a paucity of generalisable, large-scale empirical investigations focused on this subject. The two most prominent recent attempts have been the IPS-OnePeople.sg Indicators of Racial and Religious Harmony (Mathew et al., 2019a) which was based on two waves of the IPS Survey on Race, Religion & Language. In each wave, 2012/2013 and 2018/2019, the views of about 4,000 Singaporeans and Permanent Residents were captured. This survey covered a comprehensive set of indicators ranging from attitudes to diversity, interest in intercultural understanding, inter-racial and religious acceptance and trust, inter-racial friendships as well as measures on discrimination, exclusion and racial tension. The study notes that public perceptions on indicators such as public trust and social networks between racial groups has improved, though minorities increasingly perceive discrimination at work. The larger IPS Survey also captured public perceptions related to the management of race relations, including the government’s role in this, how concerned Singaporeans were about mismanagement of race relations and the use of affirmative action and other policies to achieve racial harmony (Mathew et al., 2019b).

The CNA-IPS Survey on Race Relations, which surveyed 2,000 Singaporean citizens and permanent residents in 2016, focused on racism, examining prejudiced attitudes, perceived cultural and majority privilege and what the public believed constituted racism. It was popularised when it was cited by the government during debates on the need for a restricted election to obtain a Malay Elected President. It has also subsequently been referenced when questions have been asked if Singapore is ready for a non-Chinese Prime Minister.

This publication focuses on the latest version of the CNA-IPS survey, conducted in 2021. In the following sections, we will briefly discuss the survey methodology employed and respondents' demographic profiles, before venturing into the survey results and analyses. We begin in Chapter 2 by discussing the attitudes of Singaporeans with respect to race issues, with their prejudices and biases explored in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 goes on to examine respondents’ perceptions and preferences for race-related policies. Chapter 5 looks at lived experiences related to race, including thoughts on call-out culture. The sixth chapter highlights the aspirations that respondents have about racial harmony in Singapore while the Chapter 7 presents an attempt to profile respondents to the survey based on their consciousness of racial inequality and their interest to bring about change through amending or removing policy

as well as individual action to deal with racism. We discuss the key findings and their implications in the concluding chapter.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

Data for this report is primarily derived from the 2021 CNA-IPS Survey on Race Relations. The survey was previously conducted in 2016. This iteration follows up on the 2016 survey, and also examines key issues that have surfaced recently on race relations in Singapore. Data collection for this instalment took place from November 2021 to January 2022, and was conducted by Media Research Consultants (MRC). In total, 2,007 Singaporean residents participated in the survey.

At the outset, a sampling frame comprising a list of 3,000 randomly generated household addresses and associated contact details was obtained from the Singapore Department of Statistics (DoS). There was a reasonable response rate, with approximately two-thirds of those eligible to complete the study doing so. To ensure that minorities are well-represented in the survey, the sampling frame was constructed such that there was an over-representation of Malay and Indian respondents by twice their national proportions.

MRC surveyors approached the pre-determined prospective households to recruit Singaporeans and Permanent Residents (PRs) aged 21 years and above. They identified eligible respondents using a set of criteria (including gender and age) to ensure demographic proportionality, briefed the respondent about the study, and invited the respondent to participate in the survey using an NUS Participant Information Sheet. If they agreed, the surveyor passed the participant a tablet which was used to capture their responses. The questionnaire was administered in one of the four official languages — English, Mandarin Chinese, Malay or Tamil. Respondents who completed the survey were given a $10 grocery shopping voucher.

We chose not to conduct a face-to-face survey where respondents provided their answers to the interviewer verbally, since we cannot exclude the role of social desirability. Such bias might be accentuated when respondents are asked sensitive questions such as the acceptability of different racial groups for various social roles. The self-administered nature of the current survey reduced the likelihood of socially desirable answers since respondents did not have to provide their answers directly to the interviewer.

1.3 DEMOGRAPHICS AND REPRESENTATION

The overall responses for each question reported in the ensuing chapters are weighted to ensure that demographic proportions of the survey sample closely approximate those of the national population in terms of age cohort, gender, and race. This enables us to effectively compare results across different iterations of the survey, and provide a general gauge of the overall population's perceptions of race relations. For all the results reported in this paper, the overall breakdowns of responses are weighted to reflect the racial proportions in the population. However, further breakdowns of the results into more specific groups are not

weighted to provide a more accurate representation of response patterns. The “Others” race category across all analyses are generally omitted due to (1) low sample sizes which impact the representativeness of the findings and (2) significant socio-cultural differences of individuals racially classified as “Others”.

In the next two subsections, we explore some key demographic breakdowns of the sample both in relation to the general Singapore resident population, as well as each other.

1.3.1 Sample demographics largely mirror the Singapore resident population

The table below provides an overview of the profile of respondents compared with the national average, which is based on the report published by the Department of Statistics in June 2021 (Singapore. Department of Statistics Singapore, 2021). The CNA-IPS Singapore sample was quite similar to the national resident population in terms of age, gender and citizenship status (see Table 1.1 below).

Table 1.1: Profile of respondents compared with national average

	National resident population* **(**as of **June 2021)**	**CNA-IPS sample**
Median age	41.8 years	46.0 years
Proportion of males	49.0%	47.5%
Proportion of citizens	87.7%	90.2%

**National resident population includes Singapore citizens and Permanent Residents (PRs).*

As a result of the over-sampling of minorities which is necessary for more robust analysis, the racial and gender make-up of the CNA-IPS sample were quite different from that of the national resident population (see Figure 1.1 below). Weights were applied to the sample accordingly so that the final proportions better mirror the population (see Table 1.2).

Figure 1.1: Breakdown of sample and national resident population, by race

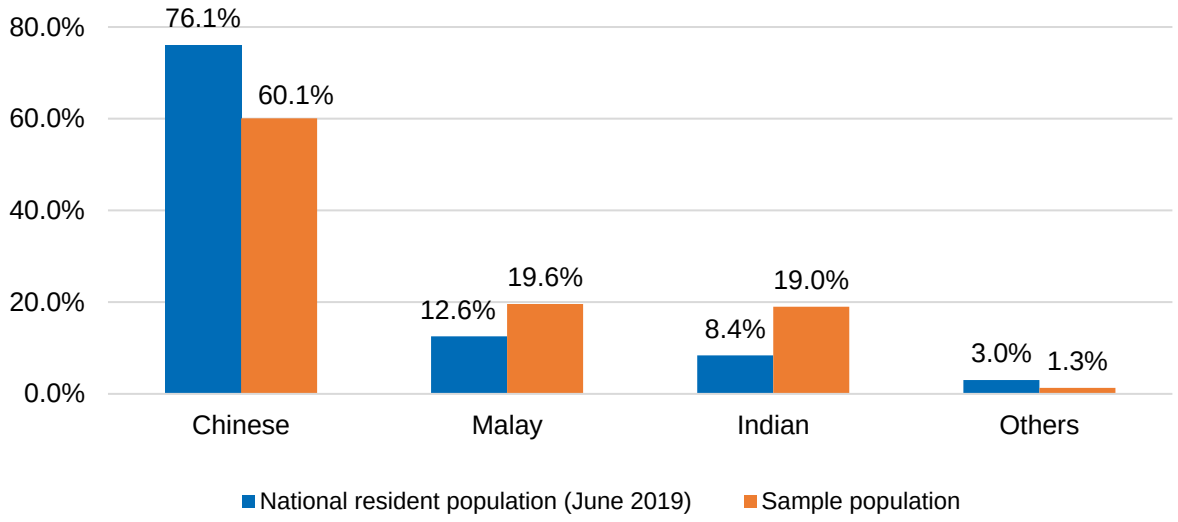
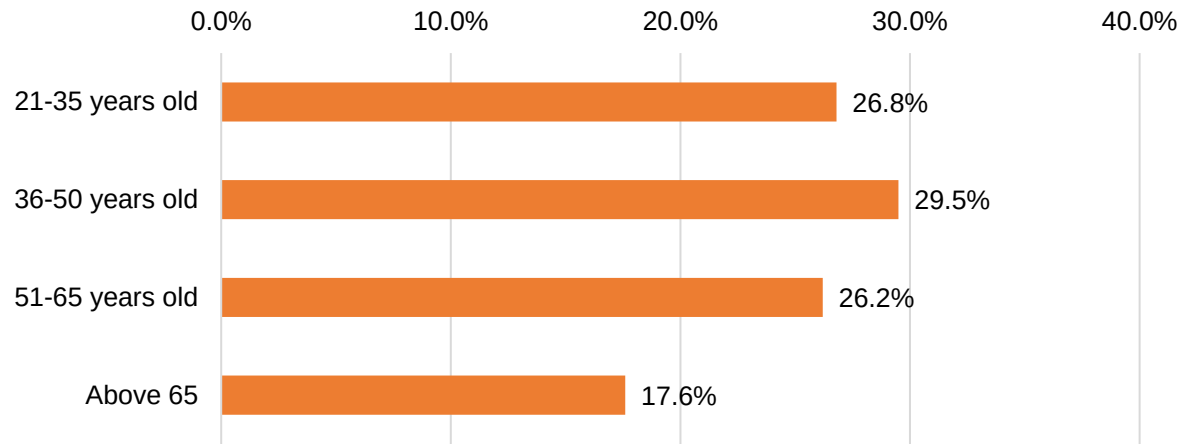


Table 1.2: Weighting of sample by race

Race	*N*	Sample %	National % (as of June 2021)	Weight factor (National % / Sample %)
Chinese	1206	60.09%	76.05%	1.2655
Malay	393	19.58%	12.56%	0.6414
Indian	381	18.98%	8.40%	0.4423
Others	27	1.35%	3.00%	2.2291
Total	2007	100%	100%	

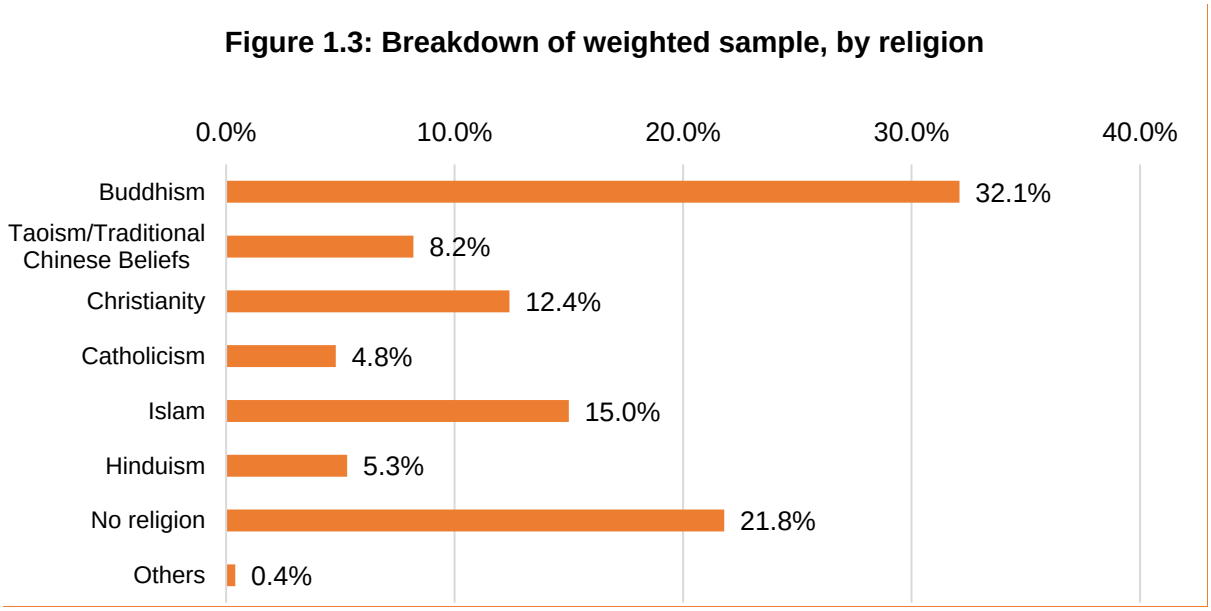
The following figures provide further breakdowns of the CNA-IPS sample by age cohort, religion, housing type and education levels after weights have been applied. The age profile of the sample population was relatively evenly spread; when broken down in 15-year blocks, there were similar proportions of the sample aged between 21-35, 36-50 and 51-65 years old; with a slightly smaller proportion aged above 65 years old (see Figure 1.2 below).

Figure 1.2: Breakdown of weighted sample, by age cohort



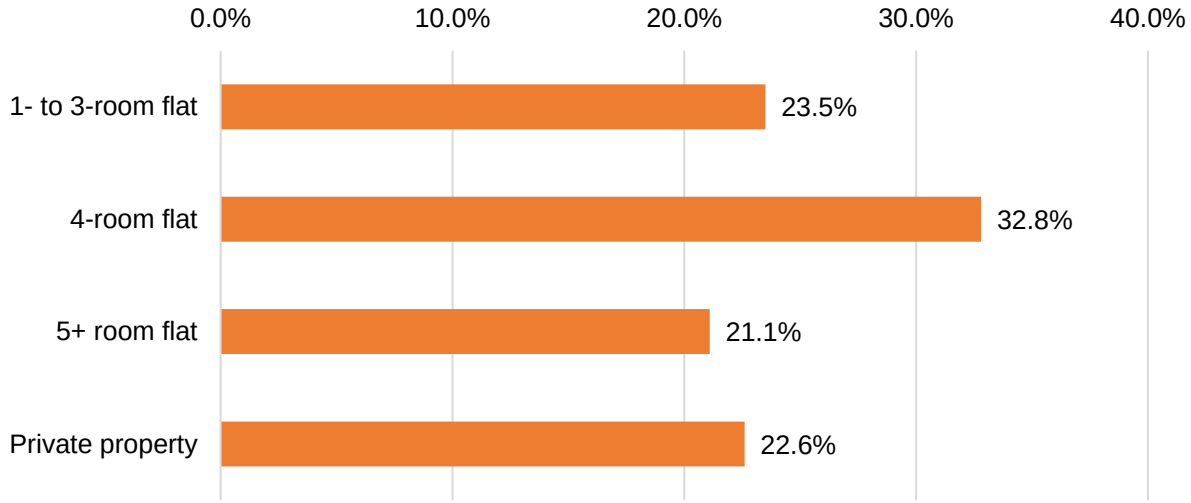
Around one-third of respondents identified as Buddhist. The next largest group was those who had no religious affiliation (21.8 per cent). Meanwhile, over one in 10 were Christians or Muslims (see Figure 1.3 below).

Figure 1.3: Breakdown of weighted sample, by religion



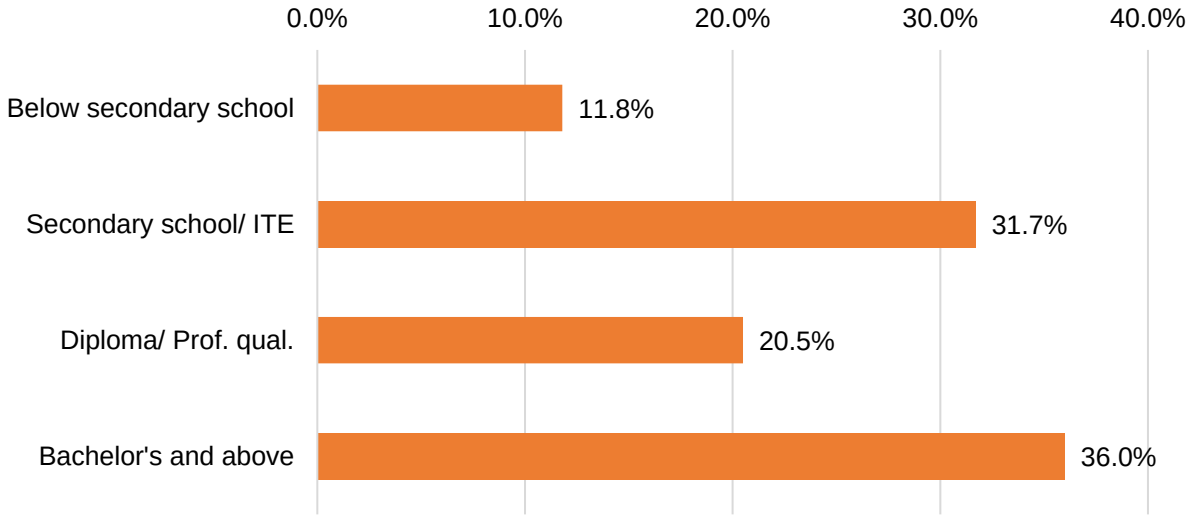
The sample had a good distribution of respondents residing across the various housing types, as well as with differing education levels. The majority of respondents lived in public housing, with 22.6 per cent staying in private apartments or landed properties. For concision, we will refer to these housing types as "private property". Within public housing flats, 23.5 per cent stayed in 1 to 3-room flats; 32.8 per cent stayed in 4-room flats; while 21.1 per cent stayed in 5-room or larger flats (see Figure 1.4 below).

Figure 1.4: Breakdown of weighted sample, by housing type (%)



Meanwhile, 11.8 per cent of the sample population had below secondary school level education; 31.7 per cent graduated from either secondary school or the Institute of Technical Education (ITE); and slightly over half of the respondents had tertiary education — a fifth obtained diplomas or professional qualifications, while over a third indicated possessing a degree (see Figure 1.5 below).

Figure 1.5: Breakdown of weighted sample, by education level (%)



There were some age differences in educational qualifications obtained by respondents. As Singapore post-independence mandates compulsory education for citizens, a large majority of the younger population have at least completed secondary school or possess ITE qualifications. In contrast, over one-third of the respondents aged above 65 years old have below secondary education (see Table 1.3 below).

Table 1.3: Breakdown of weighed sample, by age cohort and education level

Age cohort	Education level			
	Below secondary	Secondary / ITE	Diploma / Prof. qual.	Bachelor's and above
21–35 years old	1.3%	16.0%	27.0%	55.7%
36–50 years old	3.4%	20.2%	26.4%	50.0%
51–65 years old	15.6%	50.7%	15.2%	18.5%
Above 65 years old	35.9%	46.6%	8.5%	9.0%

1.3.2 Sample demographics by race

The distribution of the races in the sample across age groups as well as socio-economic factors including income, education and housing types was also examined in relation to each other. In general, Malay and Indian respondents were younger on average compared to their Chinese counterparts (see Table 1.4 below).

Table 1.4: Breakdown of sample, by age cohort and race

Racial group	Age cohort			
	21–35 years old	36–50 years old	51–65 years old	Above 65 years old
Chinese	26.7%	28.4%	25.6%	19.3%
Malay	31.7%	26.6%	31.3%	10.3%
Indian	24.4%	38.7%	24.4%	12.5%
Others	14.8%	41.0%	26.2%	18.0%
Overall	**25.8%**	**29.4%**	**26.2%**	**17.6%**

When considering socio-economic characteristics in tandem with race, Chinese respondents were more likely to reside in larger housing types, while Indian respondents were more likely to have university education. In contrast, there were lower proportions of Malay respondents living in private properties and having a degree qualification (see Tables 1.5 and 1.6 below).

Table 1.5: Breakdown of weighted sample, by housing type and race

Racial group	Housing type			
	1- to 3-room HDB	4-room HDB	5+-room HDB	Private property
Chinese	21.0%	31.3%	21.2%	26.5%
Malay	36.5%	40.1%	19.0%	4.4%
Indian	26.2%	37.5%	23.2%	13.1%
Others	26.2%	26.2%	18.0%	29.5%
Overall	**23.5%**	**32.8%**	**21.0%**	**22.7%**

Table 1.6: Breakdown of weighted sample, by education level and race

Racial group	Education Level			
	Below secondary	Secondary / ITE	Diploma / Prof. qual.	Bachelor's and above
Chinese	12.1%	28.8%	20.6%	38.5%
Malay	13.5%	52.8%	23.4%	10.3%
Indian	7.8%	34.1%	16.8%	41.3%
Others	6.7%	11.7%	15.0%	66.7%
Overall	**11.8%**	**31.7%**	**20.5%**	**36.0%**

Chapter 2

Attitudes to privilege and meritocracy

CHAPTER 2 | ATTITUDES TO PRIVILEGE AND MERITOCRACY

2.1 OVERALL FINDINGS

This chapter examines respondents' attitudes on various issues relating to race, especially the broad concepts of privilege and meritocracy. Respondents generally agreed that meritocracy exists in Singapore, and were divided over the issue of privilege. They were also asked about aspects of Singapore's multiculturalism, such as whether they felt the cultural needs of different races were catered to, and how this intersects with national unity.

The concept of "White privilege" has particularly dominated racial discourse following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis in 2020. However, the concept is not new in ethnic studies. In 1989, McIntosh published an article explaining the idea of "white privilege" by likening it to the claim that men are granted undeserved advantages over women. In her article, white privilege refers to "an invisible package of unearned assets" that a white person has over people of colour. The study of white privilege and racism has continually received academic attention over the years (Jensen, 2005; Adams et al., 2007; Wallis, 2016).

In Singapore, the issue of racism in connection to privilege of a particular racial group has gained salience in recent years — both in mainstream media and academia (Thanapal, 2015; Sai, 2021).

Goh and Chong (2020), for example, published a paper challenging Zainal and Abdullah's (2019) claim that Chinese privilege exists in Singapore and is perpetuated by the political hegemony of the People's Action Party (PAP). They further argued that the concept of Chinese privilege is not a useful one for understanding politics in Singapore. The heightened interest and debate was noted and addressed by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, who said at the 2021 National Day Rally that it is "entirely baseless" to claim that Chinese privilege exists in Singapore (Tang, 2021).

Compared to the concept of privilege, the links between meritocracy and racism are arguably less contested. Meritocracy has often been related closely with racism in its role of deciding whether race or merit is a factor in one's success in life. Research by Poteat and Spanierman (2012) found positive relationships between beliefs in meritocracy and racism. This echoes an earlier argument by Wallerstein (1991) who postulated that racism is not only not an obstacle to meritocracy, but is "the magic formula" that gives stability to capitalism by justifying the exploitation of certain groups of the workforce. As a result of these links between meritocracy and discrimination, the latter has increasingly been subjected to critical analyses. The phrase 'myth of meritocracy' has particularly gained salience in recent years, where authors argue that social inequalities are not mediated by meritocracy, but the latter covers and justifies the reality of inequality (Sandel, 2020; Bloodworth, 2016).

In Singapore's context, Lim (2012) has pointed out and explained the inherent paradoxes and contradictions between the state's ideals of meritocracy and multiracialism, where both inevitably invoke different conceptions of fairness. In a newspaper article titled "Race, racism and racial privilege in Singapore", distinguished sociologist Chua Beng Huat (2021) discussed different interpretations of the concept of Chinese privilege in relation to meritocracy. Chua also recognised the shortcomings of the concept of meritocracy, concluding with highlighting the trade-offs of possible solutions to the problem.

Nonetheless, most literature on this issue has been less sympathetic and mainly critical of the idea of meritocracy and its supposed successes (Lim & Tan, 2018; Talib, 2021). Chew (2021) for example, criticises the endorsement of meritocracy as encouraging Singaporeans to explain racial disparities using racial stereotypes.

These challenges to the paradigm of meritocracy have not been confined to theoretical debates. Through analyses of media material and interviews in elite independent schools in Singapore, Koh (2014) has argued that the idea of meritocracy is a deeply entrenched dogma in the education system. His paper also touches on the "politics of elitism and race" and how minority races are often under-represented in elite schools. Teo (2019)'s research among Singaporean polytechnic students explores how the idea of meritocracy has been negotiated and interpreted by Singapore youths. Her interviews noted that racial discrimination had been recognised among the youths she spoke to as being a normal in a multiracial society.

2.1.1 Most respondents of all races believe that success in Singapore is not contingent on race

There is strong support that there is meritocracy in Singapore, regardless of race. When asked whether race is important in determining who is successful, 72.7 per cent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that it was important (see Table 2.1). A still higher proportion, 82.5 per cent, felt that everyone who works hard can become successful, regardless of their race. The disparity in the two figures may reflect a belief that while race can be a factor in one's chances for success, any racial disadvantage can be overcome through hard work.

Most respondents, or 81.5 per cent, agreed or strongly agreed that everyone who works hard can become rich, regardless of their race, a slight drop from 88.5 per cent in the 2016 survey. This proportion is similar to those who believe that race does not affect one's chances of success. This is to be expected, as being rich may be seen as one aspect of being conventionally successful.

Table 2.1: Respondents' beliefs about success and race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave, where available)

Here are some statements about race in Singapore. How much do you agree or disagree with them?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not.	26.2% (33.4%)	46.5% (39.9%)	22.4% (19.3%)	4.9% (7.3%)
Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become successful.	6.3%	11.2%	43.7%	38.8%
Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich.	4.9% (4.2%)	13.6% (7.3%)	44.8% (46.2%)	36.7% (42.3%)

2.1.2 Respondents of different races had steady or increased levels of belief in meritocracy over the two waves, though eight in 10 minorities now disagree that race affects one's chances of becoming rich, compared to nine in 10 five years ago

As shown in Tables 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4, sentiments on meritocracy do not vary greatly by respondents' race. There have, however, been a few changes over time. While the vast majority still believe in meritocracy, in the last five years, minorities have become marginally more likely to feel that race affects one's chances of becoming rich. The proportion of Malays who agreed or strongly agreed that race does not affect one's chances of becoming rich if one works hard, has fallen from 88.2 per cent to 79.9 per cent (see Table 2.4). Likewise, 83.1 per cent of Indians felt this way in 2016; now, the figure has fallen to 77.2 per cent.

At the same time, Malays have become more likely to feel that race is not important in determining who is successful. Nearly three-quarters, or 74.1 per cent of them, expressed this sentiment in 2021, up from 65.5 per cent in 2016 (see Table 2.2). This figure has held steady for Indian and Chinese respondents.

Table 2.2: Importance of race in determining success, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	26.6% (32.1%)	45.3% (43.0%)	23.7% (19.2%)	4.4% (5.7%)
Malay	22.4% (36.5%)	51.7% (29.0%)	18.8% (20.7%)	7.1% (13.8%)
Indian	27.0% (41.7%)	45.9% (32.7%)	21.0% (17.4%)	6.0% (8.1%)
Others	29.6% (30.6%)	59.3% (34.4%)	7.4% (17.5%)	3.7% (17.6%)

Table 2.3: Impact of race on chance of becoming successful, by respondents' race

Racial group	Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become successful.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	7.0%	9.6%	42.9%	40.5%
Malay	4.3%	14.5%	47.8%	33.3%
Indian	3.4%	17.6%	49.1%	29.9%
Others	7.4%	18.5%	33.3%	40.7%

Table 2.4: Impact of race on chance of becoming rich, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	4.8% (4.0%)	12.4% (6.8%)	44.3% (49.1%)	38.6% (40.2%)
Malay	2.5% (3.6%)	17.6% (8.2%)	47.8% (43.6%)	32.1% (44.6%)
Indian	6.6% (7.8%)	16.3% (9.1%)	49.6% (32.8%)	27.6% (50.3%)
Others	11.1% (3.5%)	22.2% (6.1%)	33.3% (34.4%)	33.3% (56.0%)

2.1.3 Chinese with diploma qualifications, minorities with the highest and lowest levels of education had the strongest belief that success is not determined by race

Among Chinese respondents, those with diploma qualifications were least likely to consider race important in determining who is successful while those with secondary or ITE qualifications were most likely to do so. About 38.4 per cent of the latter group agreed or strongly agreed with this statement (see Table 2.5). This is a substantially higher proportion than the 25.4 per cent of Chinese with below secondary education, 19.7 per cent of Chinese with diplomas or professional qualifications and 25.8 per cent of Chinese university graduates who felt the same way.

Malays with below secondary education were slightly more likely than more highly educated Malays to believe that race is not important in determining who is successful. A large majority of them, 81.2 per cent, indicated this. By comparison, 72.5 per cent of Malays with secondary or ITE qualifications and 72.8 per cent of Malays with diplomas or professional qualifications, felt this way. The proportion of Malays with at least a bachelor's degree who concurred was 75.6 per cent. This most highly educated group may perceive their race as unimportant in determining success because they have not encountered, or have been able to overcome, any disadvantages they experience as a result of it.

For Indian respondents, too, those with the lowest and highest education levels have the greatest belief that race is unimportant in determining success. About 79 per cent of Indian university graduates and 75.8 per cent of Indians with below secondary education disagreed or strongly disagreed that race is important in this regard. This is compared to 66.2 per cent of Indians with secondary or ITE qualifications, and 71.9 per cent of Indians with diplomas or professional qualifications.

Table 2.5: Importance of race in determining success, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not.			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**Below secondary**	15.1%	59.6%	24.0%	1.4%
	Secondary / ITE	15.6%	46.1%	32.9%	5.5%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	33.3%	47.0%	14.5%	5.2%
	Bachelor's and above	34.9%	39.2%	21.8%	4.1%
Malay	**Below secondary**	18.9%	62.3%	13.2%	5.7%
	Secondary / ITE	18.4%	54.1%	19.3%	8.2%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	30.4%	42.4%	21.7%	5.4%
	Bachelor's and above	29.3%	46.3%	17.1%	7.3%
Indian	**Below secondary**	24.1%	51.7%	20.7%	3.4%
	Secondary / ITE	23.1%	43.1%	25.4%	8.5%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	18.8%	53.1%	20.3%	7.8%
	Bachelor's and above	34.4%	44.6%	17.2%	3.8%

2.1.4 Reverse educational trends observed across races when it comes to sentiments about whether meritocracy is race-blind

Malays with a bachelor's degree or above were much less likely than lower-educated Malays to believe that everyone who works hard has an equal chance at success, no matter what race they are (see Table 2.6). Only 61 per cent of Malay university graduates agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, compared to 73.6 per cent of Malays with below secondary education, 87.4 per cent of Malays with secondary or ITE qualifications and 80.5 per cent of Malays with diplomas or professional qualifications.

A similar disparity in views between Malays with a bachelor's degree and those of lower education levels is observed when it comes to chances of becoming rich (see Table 2.7). These differences may have arisen because those with the highest level of education are more aware of factors besides race, such as socioeconomic status, that can disadvantage people in becoming successful or rich.

The reverse trend is true for Indians. The lowest educated group has the lowest level of belief that everyone who works hard has an equal chance to become successful, regardless of their race. Whereas 80.8 per cent of Indians with secondary or ITE qualifications, 82.8 per cent of Indians with diplomas or professional qualifications and 77.7 per cent of Indian university graduates agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, only 68.9 per cent of those with below secondary education did. This is still a majority, but it is a substantially lower proportion. A similar trend is evident for views on the chances of becoming rich (see Table 2.7).

The level of education does not seem to affect Chinese respondents' views on whether race impacts one's chances of becoming rich or successful.

Table 2.6: Impact of race on chance of becoming successful, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become successful.			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	Below secondary	8.2%	7.5%	54.1%	30.1%
	Secondary / ITE	4.3%	10.4%	55.3%	30.0%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	8.0%	8.0%	32.5%	51.4%
	Bachelor's and above	8.0%	10.6%	35.6%	45.9%
Malay	Below secondary	9.4%	17.0%	58.5%	15.1%
	Secondary / ITE	3.4%	9.2%	50.2%	37.2%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	4.3%	15.2%	43.5%	37.0%
	Bachelor's and above	2.4%	36.6%	31.7%	29.3%
Indian	Below secondary	10.3%	20.7%	51.7%	17.2%
	Secondary / ITE	1.5%	17.7%	56.2%	24.6%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	1.6%	15.6%	53.1%	29.7%
	Bachelor's and above	4.5%	17.8%	40.8%	36.9%

Table 2.7: Impact of race on chance of becoming rich, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich.			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	Below secondary	4.8%	11.0%	52.7%	31.5%
	Secondary / ITE	4.3%	12.1%	57.1%	26.5%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	5.6%	9.2%	36.9%	48.2%
	Bachelor's and above	4.7%	14.7%	36.0%	44.6%
Malay	Below secondary	3.8%	18.9%	60.4%	17.0%
	Secondary / ITE	2.4%	12.6%	49.8%	35.3%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	2.2%	16.3%	46.7%	34.8%
	Bachelor's and above	2.4%	43.9%	24.4%	29.3%
Indian	Below secondary	13.8%	17.2%	51.7%	17.2%
	Secondary / ITE	8.5%	16.2%	51.5%	23.8%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	3.1%	18.8%	51.6%	26.6%
	Bachelor's and above	5.1%	15.3%	46.5%	33.1%

2.1.5 Most are optimistic about the future of meritocracy for minorities

Views on meritocracy in the future, specifically as it applies to minorities, are optimistic (see Table 2.8). An overwhelming majority of respondents, 97 per cent, expect things in this regard

to either stay the same or improve in the future. While respondents of all races seemed optimistic about this, Malays may be slightly less so (see Table 2.9). About 28.2 per cent of Malays thought things would improve, whereas a higher proportion of Indians (37.5 per cent) and Chinese (35.4 per cent) did.

Table 2.8: Respondents' views on meritocracy in the future

In terms of the following aspects, do you think things will improve, stay the same, or worsen in the next five years in Singapore?	Worsen	Stay the same	Improve
Minorities being viewed based on merit rather than race	3.0%	62.6%	34.4%

Table 2.9: Views on future of meritocracy, by respondents' race

Racial group	Minorities being viewed based on merit rather than race		
	Worsen	Stay the same	Improve
Chinese	2.1%	62.5%	35.4%
Malay	5.6%	66.2%	28.2%
Indian	8.7%	53.8%	37.5%
Others	0.0%	74.1%	25.9%

2.2 Respondents are divided on the issue of whether there is majority privilege in Singapore

While belief in meritocracy is high, there is less consensus that everyone starts on a level playing field. About half, or 53.9 per cent, of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that being of the majority race is an advantage in Singapore society (see Table 2.10). This is on par with the findings in 2016, when 52.7 per cent agreed or strongly agreed.

Respondents were similarly divided on the issue of whether the majority race has more resources and opportunities than other races, with 52.2 per cent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that this is the case. Interestingly, a majority of 65.2 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed that racial minorities do not have the same resources and opportunities as the majority race. If all respondents had understood this statement to mean that minorities have fewer resources and opportunities than the majority race, then the proportion who broadly disagreed would be expected to be similar to the proportion who broadly agreed that the majority race has more resources and opportunities. Therefore, the disparity between these two figures may have resulted from some respondents feeling that racial minorities actually have more resources and opportunities than the majority race.

General sentiments were clearer in response to the question of whether people of the majority race have it easier in life than minorities, with 77.2 per cent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this statement. This may have been because the clause "even if they are poor" controls for socioeconomic factors and leaves only racial ones to be considered.

Another question sought to probe respondents on whether social assistance schemes make up for possible majority privilege by helping minorities of lower socioeconomic status. The majority of respondents, about 80.9 per cent, disagreed or strongly disagreed that among those who are poor, those of minority races have it easier than those of the majority race.

Table 2.10: Respondents' beliefs about majority privilege (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave, where available)

Here are some statements about race in Singapore. How much do you agree or disagree with them?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Being of the majority race is an advantage in Singapore society.	11.9% (8.8%)	34.2% (38.6%)	48.5% (43.4%)	5.4% (9.3%)
Racial minorities do not have the same resources and opportunities as the majority race.	17.6%	47.6%	30.5%	4.4%
The majority race generally has more resources and opportunities than the other races.	14.4%	37.8%	42.8%	5.0%
Those of the majority race, even if they are poor, have it easier in life than minorities.	19.6%	57.6%	21.0%	1.8%
If you are poor, you have it easier if you are of a minority race rather than the majority race.	18.6%	62.3%	17.6%	1.5%

2.2.1 Sentiments about majority privilege differ across respondents of different races

Minority race respondents tend to hold different views on majority privilege than respondents of the majority race. While Chinese respondents were equally split on whether being of the majority race is an advantage, 67.9 per cent of Malay respondents and 63.3 per cent of Indian respondents agreed or strongly agreed that this is the case (see Table 2.11). This is roughly consistent with the findings in 2016.

Table 2.11: Views on majority privilege, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Being of the majority race is an advantage in Singapore society.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	13.5% (8.4%)	36.4% (42.6%)	47.2% (41.7%)	2.9% (7.3%)
Malay	4.3% (9.5%)	27.7% (27.7%)	52.9% (49.1%)	15.0% (13.7%)
Indian	8.9% (9.0%)	27.8% (28.8%)	47.8% (49.1%)	15.5% (13.1%)
Others	11.1% (10.7%)	22.2% (17.2%)	66.7% (58.3%)	0.0% (13.7%)

Most Malay (66.9 per cent) and Indian (60.6 per cent) respondents agreed or strongly agreed that members of the majority race generally have more resources and opportunities than other races, compared to just 42.6 per cent of Chinese respondents (see Table 2.13). Additionally, while most Chinese respondents, 71.8 per cent, felt that racial minorities have the same resources and opportunities as the majority race, only 37.7 per cent of Malays and 46.4 per cent of Indians concurred (see Table 2.12).

Table 2.12: Racial minorities' resources and opportunities, by respondents' race

Racial group	Racial minorities do not have the same resources and opportunities as the majority race.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	20.6%	51.2%	24.9%	3.3%
Malay	5.6%	32.1%	53.4%	8.9%
Indian	9.7%	36.7%	44.6%	8.9%
Others	11.1%	51.9%	37.0%	0.0%

Table 2.13: Majority race's resources and opportunities, by respondents' race

Racial group	The majority race generally has more resources and opportunities than the other races.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	16.4%	41.0%	39.1%	3.5%
Malay	5.1%	28.0%	56.2%	10.7%
Indian	11.3%	28.1%	48.8%	11.8%
Others	11.1%	25.9%	63.0%	0.0%

While most respondents did not feel that those of the majority race have it easier in life, minority race respondents were more likely to feel that this is, in fact, the case. Over one-third of Malay respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the majority race have it easier. This is almost twice the proportion of Chinese respondents (19.7 per cent). Slightly less than a third (31.2 per cent) of Indian respondents concurred.

There was no substantial difference by respondents' race for the perceived ease of life of minority races who are poor (see Table 2.15).

Table 2.14: Perceived ease of life for majority race, by respondents' race

Racial group	Those of the majority race, even if they are poor, have it easier in life than minorities.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	22.6%	57.7%	18.5%	1.2%
Malay	6.9%	56.0%	33.1%	4.1%
Indian	10.5%	58.3%	26.2%	5.0%
Others	22.2%	59.3%	18.5%	0.0%

Table 2.15: Perceived ease of life for minority races, by respondents' race

Racial group	If you are poor, you have it easier if you are of a minority race rather than the majority race.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	19.9%	61.9%	16.7%	1.5%
Malay	12.5%	62.8%	22.9%	1.8%
Indian	16.3%	65.1%	16.8%	1.8%
Others	18.5%	63.0%	18.5%	0.0%

2.2.2 Sentiments about the existence of majority and minority privilege differed across age groups

Younger respondents were more likely to feel that majority privilege exists (see Table 2.16). A majority (63 per cent) of those between 21 and 35 years old felt this way, compared to 45.8 per cent of those above 65 years old. There has been an increase in the proportion of respondents in the youngest age cohort who feel that majority privilege exists, from 54 per cent in 2016. The figures for all the other age cohorts have held steady.

Table 2.16: Views on majority privilege, by respondents' age (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Age cohort	Being of the majority race is an advantage in Singapore society.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
21-35 years old	9.6% (8.7%)	27.4% (37.3%)	52.8% (45.0%)	10.2% (9.0%)
36-50 years old	13.2% (8.4%)	35.7% (38.3%)	46.0% (42.3%)	5.2% (11.0%)
51-65 years old	11.8% (9.1%)	34.9% (41.4%)	50.5% (42.9%)	2.8% (6.6%)
Above 65 years old	13.4% (9.0%)	40.9% (41.9%)	43.5% (38.6%)	2.3% (10.5%)

Young Malays and Indians were more likely than young Chinese to feel that majority privilege exists (see Table 2.17). Most Malays and Indians between the ages of 21 and 35 years old (77.4 per cent and 81.8 per cent respectively) agreed or strongly agreed that being of the majority race is an advantage in Singapore society. Respondents in this age cohort were the most likely among Chinese respondents to feel the same, with about 58.1 per cent indicating this, compared to less than half for every other age cohort of Chinese respondents.

While older Malays and Indians were less likely than their younger counterparts to believe that majority privilege exists, the proportions were still higher than the corresponding age cohorts of Chinese respondents. For example, 61.8 per cent of Malays between 51 and 65 years old felt this way, compared to 49 per cent of Chinese in this age cohort.

Table 2.17: Views on majority privilege, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		Being of the majority race is an advantage in Singapore society.			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	11.5%	30.4%	52.2%	5.9%
	36–50 years old	15.2%	37.3%	45.5%	2.0%
	51–65 years old	13.6%	37.3%	47.4%	1.6%
	Above 65 years old	13.7%	42.1%	42.5%	1.7%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	1.6%	21.0%	53.2%	24.2%
	36–50 years old	3.8%	26.7%	50.5%	19.0%
	51–65 years old	6.5%	31.7%	56.1%	5.7%
	Above 65 years old	7.3%	39.0%	48.8%	4.9%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	8.6%	9.7%	53.8%	28.0%
	36–50 years old	11.5%	33.8%	41.2%	13.5%
	51–65 years old	8.7%	31.5%	50.0%	9.8%
	Above 65 years old	2.1%	37.5%	52.1%	8.3%

Among respondents of each racial group, younger respondents were generally more likely to feel that racial minorities do not have the same resources and opportunities as the majority race, with the effect stronger among minority race respondents (see Table 2.18). Chinese respondents aged from 21 to 35 years old had the highest level of agreement with this statement, but the proportion was still only 35.1 per cent. This is not much higher than the figure for Chinese above 65 years old, which is 28.8 per cent. By comparison, 43.9 per cent of Malays above 65 years old agreed or strongly agreed, and the figure is 69.4 per cent for Malays between 21 and 35 years old.

Malay and Indian youths between 21 and 35 years old were especially likely to feel that the majority race has more resources and opportunities than other races; 73.4 per cent and 69.9

per cent of them feel this way, respectively (see Table 2.19). Less than half, or 44.7 per cent, of Chinese youth agreed.

Table 2.18: Racial minorities' resources and opportunities, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		Racial minorities do not have the same resources and opportunities as the majority race.			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	19.9%	45.0%	30.1%	5.0%
	36–50 years old	23.9%	49.0%	24.8%	2.3%
	51–65 years old	19.5%	58.8%	19.5%	2.3%
	Above 65 years old	18.5%	52.8%	24.9%	3.9%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	1.6%	29.0%	58.1%	11.3%
	36–50 years old	7.6%	27.6%	54.3%	10.5%
	51–65 years old	6.5%	34.1%	52.8%	6.5%
	Above 65 years old	9.8%	46.3%	39.0%	4.9%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	9.7%	26.9%	48.4%	15.1%
	36–50 years old	12.2%	42.6%	39.2%	6.1%
	51–65 years old	5.4%	40.2%	50.0%	4.3%
	Above 65 years old	10.4%	31.3%	43.8%	14.6%

Table 2.19: Majority race's resources and opportunities, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		The majority race generally has more resources and opportunities than the other races.			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	17.7%	37.6%	37.9%	6.8%
	36–50 years old	18.1%	44.6%	35.6%	1.7%
	51–65 years old	14.3%	42.9%	40.3%	2.6%
	Above 65 years old	15.0%	37.8%	44.6%	2.6%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	1.6%	25.0%	58.1%	15.3%
	36–50 years old	4.8%	28.6%	52.4%	14.3%
	51–65 years old	8.1%	27.6%	58.5%	5.7%
	Above 65 years old	7.3%	36.6%	53.7%	2.4%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	8.6%	21.5%	52.7%	17.2%
	36–50 years old	12.2%	33.8%	44.6%	9.5%
	51–65 years old	9.8%	23.9%	56.5%	9.8%
	Above 65 years old	16.7%	31.3%	39.6%	12.5%

There was no substantial age effect for Chinese and Malay respondents' views on the ease of life for members of the majority race (see Table 2.20). Meanwhile, older Indian respondents were much more likely than younger Indians to feel that those of the majority race do not have it easier in life than minorities. Three-quarters of those between 36 and 50 years old felt this way, compared to 58.1 per cent of Indians between 21 and 35 years old.

Table 2.20: Perceived ease of life for majority race, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		Those of the majority race, even if they are poor, have it easier in life than minorities.			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	28.3%	50.0%	20.5%	1.2%
	36–50 years old	25.7%	58.9%	15.2%	0.3%
	51–65 years old	16.9%	64.6%	17.2%	1.3%
	Above 65 years old	18.0%	57.5%	22.3%	2.1%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	8.1%	54.8%	32.3%	4.8%
	36–50 years old	5.7%	59.0%	27.6%	7.6%
	51–65 years old	6.5%	55.3%	36.6%	1.6%
	Above 65 years old	7.3%	53.7%	39.0%	0.0%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	9.7%	48.4%	33.3%	8.6%
	36–50 years old	12.8%	62.2%	23.0%	2.0%
	51–65 years old	6.5%	62.0%	27.2%	4.3%
	Above 65 years old	12.5%	58.3%	20.8%	8.3%

Indian respondents above 65 years old, were substantially less likely to feel that poor minorities have it easier than poor Chinese people (see Table 2.21). Only 68.8 per cent of them felt this way, compared to around 80 per cent or more for all other age cohorts of Indian respondents. Similarly, older Chinese respondents were slightly more likely to feel that it is no better to be a poor minority than a poor Chinese person.

Table 2.21: Perceived ease of life for minority races, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		If you are poor, you have it easier if you are of a minority race rather than the majority race.			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	27.6%	54.7%	16.8%	0.9%
	36–50 years old	24.2%	60.1%	13.7%	2.0%
	51–65 years old	14.0%	67.5%	17.9%	0.6%
	Above 65 years old	10.7%	67.0%	19.7%	2.6%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	15.3%	64.5%	18.5%	1.6%
	36–50 years old	11.4%	65.7%	20.0%	2.9%
	51–65 years old	9.8%	61.0%	28.5%	0.8%
	Above 65 years old	14.6%	56.1%	26.8%	2.4%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	19.4%	64.5%	12.9%	3.2%
	36–50 years old	19.6%	65.5%	14.9%	0.0%
	51–65 years old	9.8%	69.6%	19.6%	1.1%
	Above 65 years old	12.5%	56.3%	25.0%	6.3%

2.2.3 Chinese respondents of high socioeconomic status were more likely to feel that the majority race does not have advantages over minority races

Malay respondents of higher socioeconomic status, as indicated by housing type, were more likely to feel that being of the majority race is an advantage (see Table 2.22). A large majority, 76.4 per cent, of Malays who lived in private housing agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, compared to 60.4 per cent of Malays who lived in 1-, 2- or 3-room HDB flats. Since education and income are closely correlated, this effect may be driven by better educated Malays being more informed about notions of privilege.

Meanwhile, there was no apparent effect of housing type on Chinese or Indian respondents' views about majority privilege.

Table 2.22: Views on majority privilege, by respondents' race and housing type

Racial group and housing type		Being of the majority race is an advantage in Singapore society.			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**1-3 room HDB**	7.5%	41.1%	49.0%	2.4%
	4-room HDB	17.7%	33.6%	45.8%	2.9%
	5-room HDB	12.5%	39.1%	43.4%	5.1%
	Private	14.1%	33.9%	50.5%	1.6%
Malay	**1-3 room HDB**	8.3%	31.3%	49.3%	11.1%
	4-room HDB	1.9%	28.7%	54.1%	15.3%
	5-room HDB	0.0%	22.7%	56.0%	21.3%
	Private	11.8%	11.8%	58.8%	17.6%
Indian	**1-3 room HDB**	7.0%	31.0%	48.0%	14.0%
	4-room HDB	7.7%	28.2%	50.7%	13.4%
	5-room HDB	11.2%	23.6%	46.1%	19.1%
	Private	12.0%	28.0%	42.0%	18.0%

Chinese respondents who lived in private housing were substantially more likely than Chinese respondents living in public housing to feel that the majority race does not have more resources and opportunities than other races (see Table 2.23). Almost two-thirds of them, 65.9 per cent, disagreed or strongly disagreed. Comparatively, the proportions are 51 per cent for residents of 1-3 room HDB flats, 56 per cent for residents of 4-room HDB flats, and 55.1 per cent for residents of 5-room HDB flats, executive flats, or maisonettes.

Among minority respondents, the sentiment that the majority race does not have more resources and opportunities tended to be highest among those living in private housing — or in 1-3 room HDB flats. Still, fewer than half felt this way.

Table 2.23: Majority race's resources and opportunities, by respondents' race and housing type

Racial group and housing type		The majority race generally has more resources and opportunities than the other races.			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**1-3 room HDB**	11.5%	39.5%	45.5%	3.6%
	4-room HDB	16.1%	39.9%	39.4%	4.5%
	5-room HDB	14.5%	40.6%	41.8%	3.1%
	Private	22.3%	43.6%	31.7%	2.5%
Malay	**1-3 room HDB**	9.0%	35.4%	48.6%	6.9%
	4-room HDB	2.5%	24.2%	59.2%	14.0%
	5-room HDB	1.3%	21.3%	65.3%	12.0%
	Private	11.8%	29.4%	52.9%	5.9%
Indian	**1-3 room HDB**	16.0%	27.0%	44.0%	13.0%
	4-room HDB	6.3%	31.7%	52.8%	9.2%
	5-room HDB	11.2%	21.3%	51.7%	15.7%
	Private	16.0%	32.0%	42.0%	10.0%

Table 2.24: Racial minorities' resources and opportunities, by respondents' race and housing type

Racial group and housing type		Racial minorities do not have the same resources and opportunities as the majority race.			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**1-3 room HDB**	13.4%	53.0%	28.1%	5.5%
	4-room HDB	18.0%	52.9%	25.9%	3.2%
	5-room HDB	24.6%	45.7%	26.2%	3.5%
	Private	26.3%	52.0%	20.1%	1.6%
Malay	**1-3 room HDB**	11.1%	34.7%	49.3%	4.9%
	4-room HDB	1.9%	32.5%	52.9%	12.7%
	5-room HDB	4.0%	24.0%	62.7%	9.3%
	Private	0.0%	41.2%	52.9%	5.9%
Indian	**1-3 room HDB**	10.0%	41.0%	40.0%	9.0%
	4-room HDB	9.2%	33.1%	48.6%	9.2%
	5-room HDB	10.1%	31.5%	49.4%	9.0%
	Private	10.0%	48.0%	34.0%	8.0%

Chinese private property residents were also the most likely to believe that members of the majority race do not have it easier in life than minorities even if they are poor. Most of them, 85.9 per cent, felt this way (see Table 2.25). Minority race respondents with the same housing type also tended to hold this sentiment, but with slightly lower proportions: 76.4 per cent for Malays and 80 per cent for Indians.

Table 2.25: Perceived ease of life for majority race, by respondents' race and housing type

Racial group and housing type		Those of the majority race, even if they are poor, have it easier in life than minorities.			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**1-3 room HDB**	15.8%	62.5%	20.2%	1.6%
	4-room HDB	22.8%	56.3%	19.0%	1.9%
	5-room HDB	19.9%	57.4%	21.9%	0.8%
	Private	30.1%	55.8%	13.8%	0.3%
Malay	**1-3 room HDB**	9.0%	54.2%	33.3%	3.5%
	4-room HDB	3.2%	54.8%	35.7%	6.4%
	5-room HDB	8.0%	61.3%	29.3%	1.3%
	Private	17.6%	58.8%	23.5%	0.0%
Indian	**1-3 room HDB**	11.0%	63.0%	19.0%	7.0%
	4-room HDB	6.3%	57.7%	31.7%	4.2%
	5-room HDB	13.5%	50.6%	30.3%	5.6%
	Private	16.0%	64.0%	18.0%	2.0%

Among Chinese and Indian respondents, those who lived in 1-3 room HDB flats were slightly more likely to feel that it is easier to be a poor minority than a poor Chinese (see Table 2.26). Compared to the 11.6 per cent of Chinese private property residents who felt this way, 22.2 per cent of Chinese who lived in 1-3 room HDB flats did. For Indians, the figures are 6 per cent and 15 per cent respectively. There was no apparent housing effect for Malays.

Table 2.26: Perceived ease of life for minority races, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and housing type		If you are poor, you have it easier if you are of a minority race rather than the majority race.			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**1-3 room HDB**	12.3%	65.6%	19.4%	2.8%
	4-room HDB	19.3%	57.1%	22.2%	1.3%
	5-room HDB	16.0%	69.1%	13.7%	1.2%
	Private	29.8%	58.6%	10.7%	0.9%
Malay	**1-3 room HDB**	15.3%	61.1%	22.2%	1.4%
	4-room HDB	7.6%	61.1%	28.7%	2.5%
	5-room HDB	14.7%	70.7%	13.3%	1.3%
	Private	23.5%	58.8%	17.6%	0.0%
Indian	**1-3 room HDB**	19.0%	66.0%	13.0%	2.0%
	4-room HDB	12.0%	66.2%	21.1%	0.7%
	5-room HDB	18.0%	57.3%	20.2%	4.5%
	Private	20.0%	74.0%	6.0%	0.0%

2.2.4 No overall educational trend found for Chinese respondents when it comes to opinions about majority privilege; opposite educational trends found for Malay and Indian respondents

Chinese respondents of all education levels were equally split when it came to the issue on majority privilege.

Meanwhile, the higher the education level for Malay respondents, the more likely they were to feel that majority privilege exists (see Table 2.27). Whereas 56.6 per cent of Malays with below secondary education agreed or strongly agreed that being of the majority race is an advantage, 90.2 per cent of Malay degree holders felt this way. Those with higher education levels may have been exposed to the ideas of privilege more.

But the same did not hold true for Indian respondents. Indian degree holders actually had the lowest proportion agreeing or strongly agreeing that being of the majority race is an advantage: 55.4 per cent. This is substantially lower than the proportion of Indians with diplomas or professional qualifications (71.9 per cent) or secondary and ITE qualifications (69.2 per cent) who felt the same way.

Table 2.27: Views on majority privilege, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		Being of the majority race is an advantage in Singapore society.			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**Below secondary**	9.6%	35.6%	54.8%	0.0%
	Secondary / ITE	8.9%	41.8%	47.6%	1.7%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	18.9%	35.7%	43.4%	2.0%
	Bachelor's and above	15.3%	33.0%	46.6%	5.2%
Malay	**Below secondary**	3.8%	39.6%	50.9%	5.7%
	Secondary / ITE	4.8%	29.5%	52.7%	13.0%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	4.3%	26.1%	53.3%	16.3%
	Bachelor's and above	2.4%	7.3%	56.1%	34.1%
Indian	**Below secondary**	3.4%	37.9%	58.6%	0.0%
	Secondary / ITE	4.6%	26.2%	57.7%	11.5%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	4.7%	23.4%	53.1%	18.8%
	Bachelor's and above	15.3%	29.3%	35.0%	20.4%

As with their views on majority privilege, Malay respondents of higher education level were more likely to believe that the majority race has more resources and opportunities than minority races (see Table 2.28). Most Malay degree holders (83 per cent) felt this way, much higher than the 51 per cent of Malays with below secondary education who did. Meanwhile, most Malay graduates (78 per cent) felt that racial minorities do not have the same resources and opportunities as the majority race, compared to 47.2 per cent of Malays with below secondary education (see Table 2.29).

Indian degree holders were the least likely to believe that the majority race has more resources and opportunities.

Meanwhile, lower-educated Chinese respondents were slightly more likely to feel that the majority race has more resources and opportunities compared to higher-educated Chinese. Half of those with below secondary education thought so, compared to 41.1 per cent of Chinese respondents with degrees or above.

Table 2.28: Majority race's resources and opportunities, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		The majority race generally has more resources and opportunities than the other races.			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	Below secondary	11.6%	38.4%	48.6%	1.4%
	Secondary / ITE	11.5%	42.4%	43.5%	2.6%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	21.3%	42.6%	32.5%	3.6%
	Bachelor's and above	19.0%	39.9%	36.4%	4.7%
Malay	Below secondary	7.5%	41.5%	45.3%	5.7%
	Secondary / ITE	5.3%	28.5%	57.5%	8.7%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	2.2%	27.2%	57.6%	13.0%
	Bachelor's and above	7.3%	9.8%	61.0%	22.0%
Indian	Below secondary	17.2%	20.7%	58.6%	3.4%
	Secondary / ITE	12.3%	23.8%	56.2%	7.7%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	6.3%	26.6%	53.1%	14.1%
	Bachelor's and above	11.5%	33.1%	39.5%	15.9%

Table 2.29: Racial minorities' resources and opportunities, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		Racial minorities do not have the same resources and opportunities as the majority race.			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	Below secondary	14.4%	65.1%	17.8%	2.7%
	Secondary / ITE	13.3%	55.9%	28.2%	2.6%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	27.3%	49.4%	20.5%	2.8%
	Bachelor's and above	24.6%	44.2%	26.9%	4.3%
Malay	Below secondary	11.3%	41.5%	41.5%	5.7%
	Secondary / ITE	5.3%	31.9%	53.6%	9.2%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	3.3%	33.7%	55.4%	7.6%
	Bachelor's and above	4.9%	17.1%	63.4%	14.6%
Indian	Below secondary	17.2%	34.5%	44.8%	3.4%
	Secondary / ITE	8.5%	29.2%	54.6%	7.7%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	6.3%	35.9%	45.3%	12.5%
	Bachelor's and above	10.8%	43.9%	35.7%	9.6%

Malay graduates and those with secondary school education were more likely to feel that those of the majority race have it easier in life than minorities, even if they are poor. About 36.5 per cent of graduates and 42.9 per cent of those with secondary education agreed or strongly agreed that this was the case, compared to 24.5 per cent of Malays with below secondary education (see Table 2.30). There was no obvious difference by education level for Chinese and Indian respondents.

Malays with below secondary education were more likely to think it is easier to be poor if one is a racial minority than Chinese. Over a quarter of them, 26.4 per cent, think so, which is more than double the 12.2 per cent of Malay graduates who feel the same way (see Table 2.31). Again, there are no obvious trends for Chinese and Indian respondents by education level.

Table 2.30: Perceived ease of life for majority race, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		Those of the majority race, even if they are poor, have it easier in life than minorities.			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**Below secondary**	13.7%	63.7%	21.2%	1.4%
	Secondary / ITE	10.7%	64.3%	23.6%	1.4%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	30.5%	52.2%	16.1%	1.2%
	Bachelor's and above	30.2%	53.9%	15.1%	0.9%
Malay	**Below secondary**	11.3%	64.2%	22.6%	1.9%
	Secondary / ITE	4.8%	52.2%	38.6%	4.3%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	7.6%	60.9%	26.1%	5.4%
	Bachelor's and above	9.8%	53.7%	34.1%	2.4%
Indian	**Below secondary**	6.9%	65.5%	27.6%	0.0%
	Secondary / ITE	9.2%	56.2%	29.2%	5.4%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	4.7%	57.8%	34.4%	3.1%
	Bachelor's and above	14.6%	58.6%	20.4%	6.4%

Table 2.31: Perceived ease of life for minority races, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		If you are poor, you have it easier if you are of a minority race rather than the majority race.			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**Below secondary**	9.6%	73.3%	15.8%	1.4%
	Secondary / ITE	11.2%	65.4%	21.9%	1.4%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	28.5%	55.8%	13.7%	2.0%
	Bachelor's and above	25.0%	58.8%	14.9%	1.3%
Malay	**Below secondary**	11.3%	62.3%	24.5%	1.9%
	Secondary / ITE	11.1%	58.5%	28.5%	1.9%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	12.0%	71.7%	14.1%	2.2%
	Bachelor's and above	22.0%	65.9%	12.2%	0.0%
Indian	**Below secondary**	24.1%	58.6%	17.2%	0.0%
	Secondary / ITE	12.3%	62.3%	21.5%	3.8%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	9.4%	68.8%	21.9%	0.0%
	Bachelor's and above	21.0%	66.9%	10.8%	1.3%

2.3 Seven in 10 respondents do not believe that the majority race's culture is privileged in Singapore

Respondents generally do not believe that the culture of the majority race is privileged in Singapore. Most of them, or 70.2 per cent, disagreed or strongly disagreed that the cultural characteristics of the majority race are more valued than those of minority races (see Table 2.32). This hints at generally favourable perceptions of multiculturalism as practised in Singapore.

When asked if people of the majority race can go about their lives without much knowledge of minority cultures, 51 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed. Respondents were also divided over the opposite question of whether minorities can go about their lives without much knowledge of the majority race's culture, with 54.4 per cent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

Table 2.32: Respondents' beliefs about cultural privilege

Here are some statements about race in Singapore. How much do you agree or disagree with them?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The cultural characteristics of the majority race are more valued than those of the minorities.	17.3%	52.9%	26.0%	3.8%
Those of the majority race can go about their lives without much knowledge of minority cultures.	16.1%	34.9%	43.0%	6.1%
Minorities can go about their lives without much knowledge of the majority race's culture.	14.4%	40.0%	43.6%	2.1%

2.3.1 While most respondents believe that there is no cultural privilege, opinions about whether people can go about their lives without learning about other cultures are divided

There are differences in how minority races, as opposed to Chinese respondents, regard the valuation of the cultural characteristics of the majority race. Whereas 75 per cent of Chinese respondents disagree or strongly disagree that their cultural characteristics are more valued than those of minorities, the proportion is much lower for Malays and Indians, at 54.2 per cent and 57.5 per cent respectively (see Table 2.33).

Table 2.33: Value of majority race's cultural characteristics, by respondents' race

Racial group	The cultural characteristics of the majority race are more valued than those of the minorities.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	19.9%	55.1%	22.7%	2.3%
Malay	6.9%	47.3%	38.4%	7.4%
Indian	10.5%	47.2%	31.0%	11.3%
Others	14.8%	37.0%	44.4%	3.7%

Compared to the 47.1 per cent of Chinese respondents who felt those from the majority race could go about their lives without much knowledge of minority cultures, there was a slight majority of Malays (56.5 per cent) and Indians (57.2 per cent) who felt the same (see Table 2.34). Meanwhile, respondents of all races were quite divided about the necessity of minority races' knowledge of the majority race's culture (see Table 2.35).

These sentiments indicate the differences in living experiences for members of the majority race compared to those from the minority races. However, the findings overall suggest that about half of the respondents do not believe that there is a pressing need to gain knowledge about other cultures to live in Singapore, regardless of the racial group they belong to. This can be a potential source of concern for a society as diverse as Singapore where inter-cultural negotiations is to be expected.

Table 2.34: Need for majority race to know minority cultures, by respondents' race

Racial group	Those of the majority race can go about their lives without much knowledge of minority cultures.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	18.1%	34.8%	42.3%	4.8%
Malay	8.9%	34.6%	47.1%	9.4%
Indian	7.6%	35.2%	43.8%	13.4%
Others	18.5%	37.0%	40.7%	3.7%

Table 2.35: Need for minority races to know majority culture, by respondents' race

Racial group	Minorities can go about their lives without much knowledge of the majority race's culture.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	15.8%	37.3%	44.9%	2.1%
Malay	6.6%	48.9%	42.7%	1.8%
Indian	11.8%	49.1%	35.7%	3.4%
Others	18.5%	44.4%	37.0%	0.0%

2.3.2 Most respondents, regardless of their race, expect inter-racial understandings and tolerance levels to improve

When respondents were asked about a variety of potential future developments in Singapore's race relations, the greatest optimism was evident in aspects related to multiculturalism. Improvements were expected by 42.3 per cent of respondents in knowledge of other people's cultures, and by 41.7 per cent in willingness to accommodate differences (see Table 2.36). For these two aspects, the majority of the remaining respondents thought things would stay the same. Only a small proportion expected that they would worsen.

Table 2.36: Respondents' views on future of multiculturalism

In terms of the following aspects, do you think things will improve, stay the same, or worsen in the next five years in Singapore?	Worsen	Stay the same	Improve
Knowledge of other people's cultures	5.2%	52.5%	42.3%
Willingness to accommodate differences	5.4%	52.9%	41.7%

Optimism about knowledge of other people's cultures was consistent across respondents of all races (see Table 2.37).

Table 2.37: Views on future of knowing others' cultures, by respondents' race

Racial group	Knowledge of other people's cultures		
	Worsen	Stay the same	Improve
Chinese	4.4%	53.2%	42.5%
Malay	6.9%	54.2%	38.9%
Indian	10.2%	42.8%	47.0%
Others	3.7%	55.6%	40.7%

While most respondents across all races felt that people's willingness to accommodate differences would either stay the same or improve, Indians were slightly less likely to feel this

way (see Table 2.38). About 87.6 per cent of them indicated this, compared to 95.4 per cent of Chinese and 94.1 per cent of Malays.

Table 2.38: Views on future of accommodating differences, by respondents' race

Racial group	Willingness to accommodate differences		
	Worsen	Stay the same	Improve
Chinese	4.6%	53.1%	42.3%
Malay	5.9%	56.2%	37.9%
Indian	12.3%	49.3%	38.3%
Others	3.7%	44.4%	51.9%

2.4 Most respondents do not believe that any race has been getting too demanding in their push for cultural rights

Only one quarter of all respondents feel that minority races have been getting too demanding in pushing for their racial and cultural rights (see Table 2.39). A similar proportion, or 20.8 per cent, feel this way about the majority race's push for their rights. While the figure for minority races has held steady from 2016, that for the Chinese has fallen slightly from 30.3 per cent.

There has been some commentary about the Chinese having had to give up many of their racial/cultural practices and privileges as Singapore forged ahead with nation building. Examples that are often cited include the shutting down of Nanyang University (Nantah) and Chinese medium schools, as well as the fact that Chinese festivities and language were not given much more prominence than other vernaculars. In light of such public discussions, it is noteworthy that most respondents, or 69.5 per cent, disagreed or strongly disagreed that the Chinese community has given up many of their racial or cultural practices and privileges. Perhaps few respondents are familiar with the significance of those early concessions made locally by the Chinese community.

Table 2.39: Respondents' beliefs about cultural rights
(figures in brackets are from 2016 wave, where available)

Here are some statements about race in Singapore. How much do you agree or disagree with them?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The majority race has been getting too demanding in their push for their racial/cultural rights.	18.7% (11.7%)	60.5% (58.0%)	18.7% (25.2%)	2.1% (5.1%)
Minority races are getting too demanding in their push for their racial/cultural rights.	16.6% (11.1%)	58.4% (60.2%)	22.1% (25.0%)	2.9% (3.7%)
The Chinese community in Singapore has given up many of their racial/cultural practices and privileges.	17.5%	52.0%	28.0%	2.5%

2.4.1 Chinese respondents more likely to indicate that the majority race has been tempered when it comes to racial and cultural rights

Chinese respondents feel much more strongly than minority race respondents that the majority race has not been getting too demanding in their push for racial and cultural rights. Some 84.3 per cent of them disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, compared to just 59.1 per cent of Malays and 63.5 per cent of Indians (see Table 2.40). Notably, 22.4 per cent of Chinese respondents strongly disagreed — a high proportion compared to the 5.9 per cent of Malays and 7.6 per cent of Indians. It is possible that they either do not feel they have been particularly pushing for rights, or that they have been doing so justifiably and therefore the actions do not qualify as being excessively demanding.

Meanwhile, views on minorities' push for their racial and cultural rights do not seem to vary substantially by respondents' race (see Table 2.41). Chinese respondents are neither more nor less likely than minority races to feel that minorities are getting too demanding. This has held true since the 2016 survey.

Table 2.40: Views on the push for majority rights, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	The majority race has been getting too demanding in their push for their racial/cultural rights.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	22.4% (13.2%)	61.9% (61.2%)	14.8% (22.8%)	0.9% (2.8%)
Malay	5.9% (5.7%)	53.2% (48.9%)	33.6% (33.3%)	7.4% (12.1%)
Indian	7.6% (9.7%)	55.9% (55.2%)	31.0% (28.1%)	5.5% (7.0%)
Others	11.1% (10.7%)	66.7% (34.4%)	22.2% (33.7%)	0.0% (21.3%)

Table 2.41: Views on the push for minority rights, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Minority races are getting too demanding in their push for their racial/cultural rights.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	17.8% (10.5%)	56.6% (60.7%)	22.4% (25.6%)	3.2% (3.2%)
Malay	11.5% (12.6%)	64.4% (58.1%)	21.4% (23.7%)	2.8% (5.6%)
Indian	15.5% (15.1%)	62.7% (59.8%)	20.2% (20.5%)	1.6% (4.6%)
Others	11.1% (10.4%)	66.7% (52.9%)	22.2% (26.8%)	0.0% (9.9%)

2.4.2 Mandarin-speaking Chinese respondents were slightly more concerned about the Chinese giving up their cultural practices

The consensus that the Chinese have not given up many of their cultural practices was consistent across respondents of all races (see Table 2.42). Among Chinese respondents, those who most commonly spoke Mandarin were slightly more likely to feel that the Chinese had given up many practices (see Table 2.43). About 35.1 per cent of them felt this way, compared to 27.9 per cent of primarily English-speaking Chinese respondents.

It may also be worth noting that an unusually high proportion, 26.6 per cent, of English-speaking Chinese respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. This demographic may place less emphasis themselves on Chinese cultural practices, and thus may not be as earnest about preserving them.

Table 2.42: Views on Chinese giving up cultural practices, by respondents' race

Racial group	The Chinese community in Singapore has given up many of their racial/cultural practices and privileges.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	18.2%	50.5%	28.5%	2.7%
Malay	14.8%	57.5%	26.2%	1.5%
Indian	15.7%	57.2%	23.9%	3.1%
Others	14.8%	51.9%	33.3%	0.0%

Table 2.43: Views on Chinese giving up cultural practices, by Chinese respondents' most commonly spoken language

Racial group and language		The Chinese community in Singapore has given up many of their racial/cultural practices and privileges.			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**English**	26.6%	45.5%	25.1%	2.8%
	Mandarin	8.3%	56.6%	32.3%	2.8%
	Others	4.4%	57.4%	36.8%	1.5%

2.4.3 Respondents of all races were optimistic about maintaining Chinese culture in the future

Overall, respondents also expect the majority race to be able to maintain and preserve their way of life in the future (see Table 2.44). Almost all of them (96.8 per cent) feel that things will stay the same or improve in this regard. This was consistent across respondents of all races (see Table 2.45).

Table 2.44: Respondents' views on majority's way of life in the future

In terms of the following aspects, do you think things will improve, stay the same, or worsen in the next five years in Singapore?	Worsen	Stay the same	Improve
The ability of the majority race to maintain and preserve their way of life in Singapore	3.2%	69.9%	26.9%

Table 2.45: Views on future of majority culture, by respondents' race

Racial group	The ability of the majority race to maintain and preserve their way of life in Singapore		
	Worsen	Stay the same	Improve
Chinese	2.4%	70.6%	27.0%
Malay	4.3%	71.2%	24.4%
Indian	7.6%	60.4%	32.0%
Others	7.4%	74.1%	18.5%

Despite Mandarin-speaking Chinese respondents' greater concern about giving up many cultural practices, this group was no more likely than English-speaking Chinese respondents to fear for their community's ability to maintain their way of life in the future (see Table 2.46). They are slightly less likely to believe that things will improve in this regard, given that only 23.5 per cent of Mandarin speakers think so, compared to 31.2 per cent of English speakers. However, both groups are very unlikely to think things will worsen.

Table 2.46: Views on Chinese giving up cultural practices, by Chinese respondents' most commonly spoken language

Racial group and language		The ability of the majority race to maintain and preserve their way of life in Singapore		
		Worsen	Stay the same	Improve
Chinese	**English**	3.0%	65.8%	31.2%
	Mandarin	1.7%	74.8%	23.5%
	Others	1.5%	88.2%	10.3%

2.5 Most respondents think all races' needs should be given equal priority, and this is compatible with a strong Singaporean identity

There was strong support for national identity and unity at the same time as racial and cultural differences are acknowledged, with most respondents (71.6 per cent) disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement that society has given in too much to different races' needs and thus cannot build a strong Singaporean identity (see Table 2.47).

Alongside this, 78.4 per cent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the needs of the majority race should be looked after first before those of the minority races. Since 2016, support for the idea that the interests of the Chinese should be looked after before those of the minority races has fallen. In 2016, about a third or 32.7 per cent of all respondents felt this way, compared to 21.6 per cent five years on. This bodes well for national unity existing alongside a multicultural respect for differences.

Table 2.47: Respondents' beliefs about race and national unity (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave, where available)

Here are some statements about race in Singapore. How much do you agree or disagree with them?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
It is only natural that the needs of the majority race should be looked after first before the needs of the minority races.	24.0% (22.0%)	54.4% (45.3%)	20.0% (27.6%)	1.6% (5.1%)
As a society, we have given in too much to the needs of the different races, such that we cannot build a strong national identity as Singaporeans.	17.1%	54.5%	24.8%	3.5%

2.5.1 Respondents from different races have grown more sensitive towards the needs of other races compared to 2016

Views were consistent across respondents of different races for the questions of whether the needs of the majority race should naturally be prioritised (see Table 2.48), and on race and national identity (see Table 2.49).

Since 2016, Chinese respondents have become slightly less likely to believe that their race's needs should be looked after first (see Table 2.48). The proportion who indicated this has

dropped from 34.1 per cent to 26.8 per cent. Chinese respondents may be becoming more sensitive to minorities' experiences in multicultural Singapore, with the rise of public discourse on race.

Meanwhile, minority respondents are now slightly more likely than the Chinese to feel that the needs of the majority race should be looked after first, with 34.1 per cent of Malays and 33 per cent of Indians feeling this way. This figure marks an increase for Indians, from 25.5 per cent in 2016.

Table 2.48: Views on prioritising majority needs, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	It is only natural that the needs of the majority race should be looked after first before the needs of the minority races.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	18.8% (18.6%)	54.3% (47.3%)	23.2% (29.7%)	3.6% (4.4%)
Malay	9.2% (29.2%)	56.7% (39.9%)	31.6% (24.7%)	2.5% (6.2%)
Indian	13.1% (37.2%)	53.8% (37.3%)	29.1% (19.3%)	3.9% (6.2%)
Others	18.5% (26.6%)	51.9% (30.6%)	25.9% (26.2%)	3.7% (16.6%)

Table 2.49: Views on racial needs and national identity, by respondents' race

Racial group	As a society, we have given in too much to the needs of the different races, such that we cannot build a strong national identity as Singaporeans.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	18.8%	54.3%	23.2%	3.6%
Malay	9.2%	56.7%	31.6%	2.5%
Indian	13.1%	53.8%	29.1%	3.9%
Others	18.5%	51.9%	25.9%	3.7%

2.5.2 Over nine in 10 respondents expect national unity to stay the same or improve

Most respondents are optimistic about national unity in the future, with 92 per cent of them expecting things to stay the same or improve (see Table 2.50). This was consistent across respondents of all races, although Indian respondents may be slightly more optimistic than other races (see Table 2.51). Whereas 36.1 per cent of Chinese, 32.6 per cent of Malays and 45.1 per cent of Indians expect the level national unity to improve.

Table 2.50: Respondents' views on national unity

In terms of the following aspects, do you think things will improve, stay the same, or worsen in the next five years in Singapore?	Worsen	Stay the same	Improve
The level of national unity	8.0%	55.6%	36.4%

Table 2.51: Views on future of national unity, by respondents' race

Racial group	The level of national unity		
	Worsen	Stay the same	Improve
Chinese	7.6%	56.3%	36.1%
Malay	9.9%	57.5%	32.6%
Indian	9.4%	45.4%	45.1%
Others	3.7%	59.3%	37.0%

2.6 Nearly six in 10 believe that racism is an important problem today

A slight majority of 56.2 per cent broadly felt that racism is an important problem today, although it may have been a problem in the past (see Table 2.52). This figure has risen from 46.3 per cent in 2016. The sentiment is consistent across respondents of different races (see Table 2.53). The increase in the proportion of people who feel this way is also evident across all races.

Table 2.52: Respondents' views on the persistence of racism (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Here are some statements about race in Singapore. How much do you agree or disagree with them?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today.	16.7% (10.6%)	39.5% (35.7%)	40.1% (43.4%)	3.7% (10.4%)

Table 2.53: Views on the persistence of racism, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	16.5% (9.7%)	39.6% (36.9%)	40.1% (43.7%)	3.8% (9.7%)
Malay	20.1% (12.5%)	34.6% (33.4%)	42.7% (46.3%)	2.5% (7.7%)
Indian	16.8% (13.2%)	37.0% (33.8%)	40.7% (40.2%)	5.5% (12.8%)
Others	7.4% (19.1%)	66.7% (28.5%)	25.9% (30.9%)	0.0% (21.5%)

2.6.1 Younger respondents were more likely to feel that racism is an important problem today

Younger respondents were much more likely than older respondents to feel that racism is an important problem today. Around 63 per cent of those between 21 and 50 years old felt this way (see Table 2.54). The figure drops to 46.8 per cent for respondents between 51 and 65 years old, and 47.4 per cent for those above 65 years old. The stronger focus on racism among younger respondents may be due to their greater exposure to commentary about race issues on social media, where woke and cancel culture encourage minorities in particular to call out examples of casual racism. Older respondents tend to have lower levels of engagement with online media. At the same time, some older respondents may have personally lived through the years of racial riots. With this context, the cases of everyday racism and other race-related incidents that are highlighted in news media may seem like less of an important problem as, while hurtful to those involved, they do not necessarily threaten the social fabric at large.

Since 2016, there has been an increase in the proportion of respondents between 21 and 35 years old who feel that racism is an important problem, from 49.5 per cent to 63.7 per cent. A still larger rise, from 44.8 per cent to 63.2 per cent, is evident for those between 36 and 50 years old. Meanwhile, the figures for the other two, older, age cohorts have held steady in the last five years. Again, younger respondents may be more sensitive to the problem of racism because of theories and discourses to which they are exposed online.

Table 2.54: Views on the problem of racism, by respondents' age (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Age cohort	Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
21–35 years old	27.2% (12.8%)	36.5% (36.7%)	32.1% (40.1%)	4.2% (10.4%)
36–50 years old	17.1% (9.8%)	46.1% (35.0%)	32.5% (45.1%)	4.3% (10.0%)
51–65 years old	11.5% (9.2%)	35.3% (35.4%)	50.1% (44.4%)	3.1% (11.0%)
Above 65 years old	7.8% (6.2%)	39.6% (34.6%)	50.0% (53.0%)	2.6% (6.2%)

The age effect described above is true of Chinese respondents. For minorities, there is some variation, as shown in Table 2.55. Still, the youngest Malay respondents were the most likely among their racial group to feel that racism is an important problem (65.3 per cent), while the oldest Indian respondents were the least likely among their racial group to feel that it is not (54.1 per cent).

Table 2.55: Views on the problem of racism, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today.			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	26.7%	37.0%	32.0%	4.3%
	36–50 years old	18.4%	46.4%	30.9%	4.4%
	51–65 years old	11.7%	34.4%	50.3%	3.6%
	Above 65 years old	6.0%	39.9%	51.5%	2.6%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	29.0%	36.3%	32.3%	2.4%
	36–50 years old	19.0%	37.1%	39.0%	4.8%
	51–65 years old	13.0%	30.9%	54.5%	1.6%
	Above 65 years old	17.1%	34.1%	48.8%	0.0%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	23.7%	34.4%	34.4%	7.5%
	36–50 years old	13.5%	39.9%	41.9%	4.7%
	51–65 years old	10.9%	43.5%	42.4%	3.3%
	Above 65 years old	25.0%	20.8%	45.8%	8.3%

2.6.2 Higher-educated respondents more concerned about racism

Higher-educated Chinese respondents were more likely to think that racism is an important problem. For instance, while 68.3 per cent of Chinese degree holders felt this way, only 34.2 per cent of Chinese respondents with below secondary education concurred (see Table 2.56). The difference is also pronounced among Malay respondents, with 85.4 per cent of Malay graduates believing racism to be an important problem. This is substantially higher than the figure for Malays with below secondary education: 50.9 per cent.

Meanwhile, education only appears to have a slight effect on Indian respondents' views on this issue. Compared to the 51.7 per cent of Indians with below secondary education who thought that racism is a problem, 63 per cent of Indian graduates felt this way.

Table 2.56: Views on the problem of racism, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today.			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**Below secondary**	8.9%	25.3%	63.0%	2.7%
	Secondary / ITE	7.8%	36.3%	53.0%	2.9%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	20.5%	42.2%	32.5%	4.8%
	Bachelor's and above	23.3%	45.0%	27.4%	4.3%
Malay	**Below secondary**	15.1%	35.8%	47.2%	1.9%
	Secondary / ITE	15.9%	31.9%	50.2%	1.9%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	22.8%	35.9%	37.0%	4.3%
	Bachelor's and above	41.5%	43.9%	12.2%	2.4%
Indian	**Below secondary**	17.2%	34.5%	44.8%	3.4%
	Secondary / ITE	20.0%	22.3%	53.8%	3.8%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	12.5%	42.2%	39.1%	6.3%
	Bachelor's and above	15.9%	47.1%	29.9%	7.0%

2.6.3 Between two and three in 10 respondents are optimistic that there will be less racism in different contexts in the future; however, two in 10 are concerned about online hatred

About two-thirds of respondents, or 65.5 per cent, expect racism to remain just as prevalent as it currently is, while 25.9 per cent think it will become less common (see Table 2.57).

Nearly a quarter, or 23.1 per cent, of respondents expected online comments attacking other races to worsen in the future. This is more than twice the proportion of respondents who thought things would worsen for any other aspect of race relations in the future that was asked about. Still, most respondents, or 76.9 per cent, think online hate will stay the same or improve.

Respondents seem more optimistic about racial discrimination becoming less prevalent in the workplace compared to the housing rental market, as 33.4 per cent expect the state of workplace discrimination to improve, while 21.7 per cent expect housing rental discrimination to improve. That said, the difference largely comprises respondents who believe housing rental discrimination will stay the same as it is currently, not respondents who believe it will worsen.

Table 2.57: Respondents' views on racism and discrimination in the future

In terms of the following aspects, do you think things will improve, stay the same, or worsen in the next five years in Singapore?	Worsen	Stay the same	Improve
The prevalence of racism	8.6%	65.5%	25.9%
Online comments attacking other races	23.1%	49.7%	27.2%
Workplace discrimination based on race	9.3%	57.4%	33.4%
Housing rental discrimination based on race (e.g. certain races find it more difficult to rent a room or place)	9.4%	69.0%	21.7%

2.6.4 General optimism found across racial groups regarding racism and specific forms of discrimination, though minorities were slightly more concerned

Minority races were marginally less optimistic compared to Chinese respondents about the prevalence of racism in the future (see Table 2.58). While 7.3 per cent of Chinese thought racism would worsen, 12.5 per cent of Malays and 15 per cent of Indians thought this would happen. However, it should be noted that at least 85 per cent of all three major races felt that racism would stay the same or improve. Three in 10 Indian respondents thought racism would become less prevalent, while 21.1 per cent of Malays and 26.6 per cent of Chinese concurred. Overall, people of all races were generally quite positive about this aspect of race relations in Singapore in the next five years.

Table 2.58: Views on future of racism, by respondents' race

Racial group	The prevalence of racism		
	Worsen	Stay the same	Improve
Chinese	7.3%	66.1%	26.6%
Malay	12.5%	66.4%	21.1%
Indian	15.0%	54.3%	30.7%
Others	7.4%	77.8%	14.8%

While 78.4 per cent of Chinese and 74 per cent of Malays feel that things will stay the same or improve in online racial hate, a lesser majority of Indians, 66.7 per cent, concurred (see Table 2.59).

Table 2.59: Views on future of online racial hatred, by respondents' race

Racial group	Online comments attacking other races		
	Worsen	Stay the same	Improve
Chinese	21.6%	50.3%	28.1%
Malay	26.0%	52.9%	21.1%
Indian	33.3%	37.8%	28.9%
Others	22.2%	51.9%	25.9%

Chinese and Indian respondents were more optimistic about workplace discrimination improving in the future. Over 33 per cent of these two groups indicated thus, while 23.7 per cent of Malays said the same.

As for rental discrimination, Malays were twice as likely as Chinese to think things would worsen, with 14.8 per cent of Malays stating so compared to 7.2 per cent of Chinese (see Table 2.61). The proportion of Indians who concurred is more than three times the figure for Chinese respondents, at 22.8 per cent. Overall, however, respondents are still likely to think that racial discrimination in these aspects will stay the same or improve.

Table 2.60: Views on future of workplace racial discrimination, by respondents' race

Racial group	Workplace discrimination based on race		
	Worsen	Stay the same	Improve
Chinese	6.8%	58.2%	35.0%
Malay	16.5%	59.8%	23.7%
Indian	17.6%	49.3%	33.1%
Others	18.5%	48.1%	33.3%

Table 2.61: Views on future of housing rental discrimination, by respondents' race

Racial group	Housing rental discrimination based on race (e.g. certain races find it more difficult to rent a room or place)		
	Worsen	Stay the same	Improve
Chinese	7.2%	71.1%	21.6%
Malay	14.8%	64.6%	20.6%
Indian	22.8%	52.8%	24.4%
Others	3.7%	77.8%	18.5%

2.6.5 Chinese and Indian respondents from higher SES backgrounds, Malays from lower SES backgrounds more optimistic about racism in five years' time

Chinese respondents living in 5-room flats and private properties were more optimistic about racism in the next five years than those in smaller HDB housing. A similar trend was found for Indian respondents – over 30 per cent of those living in 4-room flats or larger housing types felt that things would improve, compared to 17.2 per cent of those living in 1- to 3-room flats. Meanwhile, Malays who live in private residences were much more likely to think that racism would become more prevalent in the next five years. Almost a third (31.7 per cent) of them felt this way, much higher than the figures for Malay respondents of other housing types (see Table 2.62).

Table 2.62: Views on future of racism, by respondents' race and housing type

Racial group and housing type		The prevalence of racism		
		Worsen	Stay the same	Improve
Chinese	**1-3 room HDB**	0.7%	84.9%	14.4%
	4-room HDB	4.9%	72.6%	22.5%
	5-room HDB	8.4%	57.8%	33.7%
	Private	10.6%	59.7%	29.7%
Malay	**1-3 room HDB**	3.8%	64.2%	32.1%
	4-room HDB	10.6%	69.1%	20.3%
	5-room HDB	13.0%	67.4%	19.6%
	Private	31.7%	53.7%	14.6%
Indian	**1-3 room HDB**	3.4%	79.3%	17.2%
	4-room HDB	11.5%	56.9%	31.5%
	5-room HDB	20.3%	43.8%	35.9%
	Private	17.8%	51.6%	30.6%

2.6.6 Chinese and Malay private property residents generally more optimistic about future online interactions as well as workplace and rental discrimination

For views on online racial hatred in the future, Chinese and Malay respondents living in larger public housing were more likely to think that things would worsen, while Chinese and Malay private property dwellers were much more likely to think things would stay the same. Meanwhile, the higher Indian respondents' socioeconomic status was (as indicated by housing type), the more likely they were to think things would worsen (see Table 2.63).

Table 2.63: Views on future of online racial hatred, by respondents' race and housing type

Racial group and housing type		Online comments attacking other races		
		Worsen	Stay the same	Improve
Chinese	**1-3 room HDB**	19.0%	54.5%	26.5%
	4-room HDB	22.2%	49.5%	28.3%
	5-room HDB	27.0%	50.4%	22.7%
	Private	18.5%	48.0%	33.5%
Malay	**1-3 room HDB**	26.4%	53.5%	20.1%
	4-room HDB	25.5%	50.3%	24.2%
	5-room HDB	30.7%	50.7%	18.7%
	Private	5.9%	82.4%	11.8%
Indian	**1-3 room HDB**	23.0%	55.0%	22.0%
	4-room HDB	32.4%	33.1%	34.5%
	5-room HDB	38.2%	31.5%	30.3%
	Private	48.0%	28.0%	24.0%

For workplace discrimination, Chinese and Indian respondents living in larger public housing flats were generally more likely to think things would worsen in the next five years, while the opposite trend was observed for Malay respondents (see Table 2.64). Chinese and Malay private property dwellers, meanwhile, were more positive compared to those in public housing, with higher proportions believing that things will improve in the next five years. Among Indian respondents, those living in 1- to 3-room flats as well as private property were more likely to think things would stay the same, while those in 4-room flats were more likely to believe that things would improve.

For housing rental discrimination, Chinese respondents living in larger housing types were more likely to say things would improve, while Malay respondents with larger housing types were more likely to say things would stay the same. In contrast, Indian respondents living in larger housing were more likely to say that thing would worsen in the next five years (see Table 2.65).

Table 2.64: Views on future of workplace racial discrimination, by respondents' race and housing type

Racial group and housing type		Workplace discrimination based on race		
		Worsen	Stay the same	Improve
Chinese	**1-3 room HDB**	7.9%	60.9%	31.2%
	4-room HDB	6.6%	60.1%	33.3%
	5-room HDB	10.2%	58.2%	31.6%
	Private	3.4%	53.9%	42.6%
Malay	**1-3 room HDB**	18.8%	61.8%	19.4%
	4-room HDB	17.8%	56.1%	26.1%
	5-room HDB	13.3%	62.7%	24.0%
	Private	0.0%	64.7%	35.3%
Indian	**1-3 room HDB**	15.0%	59.0%	26.0%
	4-room HDB	14.8%	45.1%	40.1%
	5-room HDB	22.5%	43.8%	33.7%
	Private	22.0%	52.0%	26.0%

Table 2.65: Views on future of housing rental discrimination, by respondents' race and housing type

Racial group and housing type		Housing rental discrimination based on race (e.g. certain races find it more difficult to rent a room or place)		
		Worsen	Stay the same	Improve
Chinese	**1-3 room HDB**	7.1%	76.3%	16.6%
	4-room HDB	8.5%	69.3%	22.2%
	5-room HDB	7.8%	75.4%	16.8%
	Private	5.3%	65.8%	28.8%
Malay	**1-3 room HDB**	12.5%	70.1%	17.4%
	4-room HDB	17.2%	57.3%	25.5%
	5-room HDB	17.3%	65.3%	17.3%
	Private	0.0%	82.4%	17.6%
Indian	**1-3 room HDB**	14.0%	67.0%	19.0%
	4-room HDB	19.7%	50.7%	29.6%
	5-room HDB	29.2%	41.6%	29.2%
	Private	38.0%	50.0%	12.0%

2.7 Nearly nine in 10 Singaporeans want political leaders to talk openly about racism; but under six in 10 feel that public discourse about racial issues could cause unnecessary tension

The majority of respondents (88.8 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed that it is important for political leaders to talk openly about racism to work through or solve societal problems (see Table 2.66). This is consistent across respondents of different races (see Table 2.67).

However, 58.6 per cent of respondents feel that talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension, and this was also consistent across races (see Table 2.68). It may be the case that some Singaporeans want public discourse on race, but would prefer political leaders to take the lead, as they think that this will avoid causing a rise in racial tensions. In any case, people are now slightly less concerned about discussions causing tensions, as the proportion has fallen from 66.1 per cent in 2016.

Respondents were divided over whether minorities are getting too sensitive when people talk about racial issues, with 52.6 per cent of them agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement, and the rest disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. This was consistent from 2016 to 2021.

Table 2.66: Respondents' views on racial discourse (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Here are some statements about race in Singapore. How much do you agree or disagree with them?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
It is important for political leaders to talk openly about racism to help work through or solve society's problems.	2.2%	8.9%	59.2%	29.6%
Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.	7.2% (5.0%)	34.2% (28.9%)	47.2% (53.4%)	11.4% (12.7%)
Minorities are getting too sensitive when people talk about racial issues.	12.0% (8.0%)	35.5% (41.5%)	45.2% (42.1%)	7.4% (8.4%)

Table 2.67: Views on political leaders talking about racism, by respondents' race

Racial group	It is important for political leaders to talk openly about racism to help work through or solve society's problems.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	1.7%	8.9%	59.8%	29.7%
Malay	4.3%	8.4%	58.0%	29.3%
Indian	2.6%	12.1%	57.0%	28.3%
Others	7.4%	3.7%	55.6%	33.3%

Table 2.68: Views on racial discourse causing tension, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	6.5% (5.0%)	32.8% (30.2%)	48.0% (53.3%)	12.8% (11.5%)
Malay	9.4% (4.2%)	36.1% (25.7%)	46.6% (52.3%)	7.9% (17.8%)
Indian	10.5% (5.1%)	38.8% (26.9%)	43.6% (50.9%)	7.1% (17.1%)
Others	7.4% (10.2%)	48.1% (24.3%)	40.7% (53.5%)	3.7% (12.0%)

2.7.1 Respondents' opinions on minority sensitivity remained similar to those expressed in 2016

Chinese and Malay respondents were quite evenly split over whether minorities are getting overly sensitive when talking about race. Meanwhile, 57.2 per cent of Indians disagreed or strongly disagreed that minorities are too sensitive (see Table 2.69). Views on minority sensitivity about race have held steady across all races since 2016.

Table 2.69: Views on minority sensitivity about race, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Minorities are getting too sensitive when people talk about racial issues.			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	11.7% (7.0%)	33.4% (43.8%)	46.4% (42.0%)	8.5% (7.3%)
Malay	12.5% (14.5%)	39.7% (35.4%)	42.7% (39.5%)	5.1% (10.6%)
Indian	14.2% (8.6%)	43.0% (42.0%)	38.8% (40.5%)	3.9% (8.9%)
Others	11.1% (8.5%)	48.1% (25.1%)	40.7% (44.1%)	0.0% (22.2%)

Chapter 3

Racial prejudices and biases

CHAPTER 3 | RACIAL PREJUDICES AND BIASES

3.1 OVERALL FINDINGS

This chapter examines how racial prejudices and biases may affect the way people view the world, including their comfort levels towards people of different racial groups taking up different roles, what behaviours they consider to be racist, and how these attitudes may translate to the workplace. It is divided into five sections: (A) perception of age when racial biases develop; (B) perception of prevalence of racism; (C) perception of whether certain behaviours are racist and unacceptable; (D) racial preferences for different roles and (E) racial factors in the workplace.

There was no consensus about when racial biases may develop in individuals. Interestingly, respondents had a more positive perception of themselves compared to 2016 when asked about how racist they are. At the same time, they tend to perceive other people in society as more racist than their close circle.

Respondents were less likely compared to 2016 to indicate that various actions were racist or unacceptable. However, jokes based upon making fun of another race were seen as racist and unacceptable by a majority of respondents. Interestingly, keeping to racially-exclusive social circles was not viewed as racist by most respondents.

Meanwhile, respondents were more likely to be comfortable with their in-group members taking up various roles in the public and private spheres. However, the way in-group members are defined appears to vary according to the role. There was a higher preference for one's own race for roles that relate more to personal relationships or personal space; there was a preference for fellow Singaporeans over new citizens for national representatives like Prime Minister and President. Preferences differed across the range of professional relationships.

Across the board, Singaporean Chinese were the most accepted group for all roles. Around 90 per cent of all respondents, or even more, were comfortable with Singaporean Chinese in any role. In comparison, respondents were more comfortable with Singaporean Malays and Indians taking on roles that were more public and less intimate. Comfort levels for Malays and Indians as co-workers, for example, were higher than for roles in the private sphere, such as marrying into one's family or renting a spare room in one's home. Generally, respondents preferred Singaporeans (whether Chinese, Malay, or Indian) over new citizens of any origin. However, the comfort gap between Singaporeans and new citizens in various roles has narrowed in the last five years as many have become more accepting of the latter. Acceptance levels of all groups have increased compared to 2016.

The idea of racial preferences has been widely discussed recently. In Singapore, the controversy on racial preferences in people's social lives has been picked up by media platforms. An online series 'Mothership Hits The Street' by alternative media Mothership for example, conducted a street interview to ask Singaporeans if "it's okay to have a racial preference when dating". The video posted on Facebook drew about 41,000 views (Mothership, 2021). More substantial findings can be found in Ang et al. (2021)'s study which found that the Chinese majority are considered more desirable, at least among Grindr users.

The issue of racial preferences in people's political representation has also sparked discussions, particularly after the uproar against the comment that Singaporeans are "not

ready for a non-Chinese PM" (Wong, 2019). The comment was made based on the 2016 CNA-IPS study (Mathew, 2016), which found that the choices of Prime Minister and President are subject to race-based preferences.

The more salient and fundamental question that arises from these debates is whether having racial preferences constitutes racism. Within the social science literature, maintaining racial preferences can easily lead to race-based discrimination. Home Affairs and Law Minister K. Shanmugam, in offering his opinion, states that when racial preferences are brought into the public sphere and imposed upon others, that crosses the line and is considered racism (Tham, 2021).

Nonetheless, even when conceding that racial preferences do not necessarily mean that it is racism, it is generally agreed that racial preferences are still unjustifiable and harmful. In fact, Lim (2021), in an article on Academia.SG, argues that racial preferences are simply bad for the business and economy.

There has been an increase in media coverage on the forms of discriminatory experiences that people encounter in both private and public spheres. Online news media at least occasionally discuss social media posts on individuals' experiences of discrimination which have gone viral. An article published on AsiaOne, for example, reported on a social media posting by an online user who called out Carousell listings indicating that only certain races were welcome to rent their flats (Rashid, 2021).

The broad issue of race and workplace discrimination in Singapore has also received some attention. The large-scale survey, part of the IPS-OnePeople.sg Indicators of Racial and Religious Harmony has noted an increase over a five-year period in the proportion of minorities who claim that they have been discriminated at work, when finding a job or when seeking a promotion (Mathew et al., 2019a). Smaller qualitative studies such as Zainal's (2021), based on interviews with 25 ethnic minority professionals also reveal their experiences of racism in multicultural workplaces and highlights issues of Chinese privilege and microaggressions. The issue has certainly been of concern for the state. In the 2021 National Day Rally, the Prime Minister addressed plans for anti-workplace discrimination laws that would target bias at work on the grounds of race, age, religion, disability or other demographic characteristics (Hussain, 2021).

A) Perception of age when racial bias develops

3.1.1 No consensus on when racial biases develop; around one-quarter believe it happens between 7 and 17 years, nearly two in 10 believe it happens between 18 and 35 years

When respondents were asked at what age they believe most people become aware of racial differences and develop biases, there was no majority consensus. Respondents were given a free response field in which to give their answer.

Almost a third (30.1 per cent) stated simply that they did not know while another 17.6 per cent said it never happens. Aside from this, 26.7 per cent of respondents guessed that developing racial biases may happen between the ages of 7 and 17. Another 18.3 per cent thought it

happened a bit later, from 18 to 35 years old (see Table 3.1 below). These opinions were consistent across respondents of different races (see Table 3.2 below).

Table 3.1: Views on age of developing racial biases

Age when most people become aware of racial differences and develop biases	Percentage
Never	17.6%
I don't know	30.1%
0-6 years	5.7%
7-17 years	26.7%
18-35 years	18.3%
36 years and above	1.5%
Depends on situation	0.1%
From young	0.1%

Table 3.2: Views on age of developing racial biases, by respondents' race*

Age when most people become aware of racial differences and develop biases	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
Never	18.4%	15.3%	14.4%	14.8%
I don't know	29.9%	30.3%	32.3%	25.9%
0-6 years	5.1%	4.3%	8.7%	18.5%
7-17 years	26.9%	28.8%	23.9%	22.2%
18-35 years	18.4%	19.1%	16.3%	18.5%

**Only the more popular options are presented due to low N for the others*

3.1.2 Younger respondents more likely to believe racial biases develop in adolescence; older respondents more likely to think they never develop

Younger respondents were more likely to feel that racial biases develop in adolescence. The proportion of those between 21 and 35 years old who felt this way was 39.1 per cent. This falls to 29.1 per cent for those who are 36 to 50 years old, 20.7 per cent for those who are 51 to 65 years old and 13 per cent for those above 65 years old.

Older respondents were more likely to believe that most people never develop racial biases, with 29.6 per cent of those above 65 years old indicating this, compared to just 12.2 per cent of those between the ages of 21 and 35 years old (see Table 3.3 below).

Table 3.3: Views on age of developing racial biases, by respondents' age*

Age when most people become aware of racial differences and develop biases	21-35 years old	36-50 years old	51-65 years old	Above 65 years old
Never	12.2%	12.8%	20.3%	29.6%
I don't know	26.3%	33.1%	27.9%	33.9%
0-6 years	6.5%	6.9%	5.3%	2.9%
7-17 years	39.1%	29.1%	20.7%	13.0%
18-35 years	15.2%	16.9%	23.4%	17.9%
36 years and above	0.4%	0.9%	2.3%	2.8%

**Only the more popular options are presented due to low N for the others*

B) Perception of prevalence of racism

3.2 Respondents in 2021 are more likely to see themselves, family, and close friends as hardly or not at all racist compared to 2016; but see others in society as more racist than themselves and their close circle

Most respondents perceived themselves as hardly racist or not racist at all. The same goes for most of their family and close friends, although the proportion was highest for perceptions of the self, at 83.6 per cent. More people now consider themselves not racist at all, compared to 2016, when 73.6 per cent of respondents said this.

Generally, respondents were slightly more likely to perceive racial groups in society as at least mildly racist, compared to their close circle. For example, while 20.6 per cent of respondents felt that most of their close friends were mildly, moderately or very racist, 38.7 per cent felt this way about most Singaporean Chinese. The figures are 39.2 per cent for most Singaporean Malays, 37 per cent for most Singaporean Indians, and 32.1 per cent for most Singaporean Eurasians.

That said, compared to 2016, fewer people now perceive racial groups in society to be at least mildly racist on the whole — 38.7 per cent of respondents felt that most Singaporean Chinese are mildly, moderately, or very racist, down from 56.3 per cent in 2016. The figures for Singaporean Malays and Indians have also fallen, although by slightly less (see Table 3.4 below).

Table 3.4: Perceived racism of self and others (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

How much of a racist are…?	Very racist	Moderately racist	Mildly racist	Hardly racist	Not racist at all
You	0.7% (1.3%)	3.0% (4.3%)	12.7% (20.8%)	27.7% (40.3%)	55.9% (33.3%)
Most of your family	0.5% (1.5%)	3.5% (5.5%)	16.6% (24.1%)	25.2% (40.3%)	54.3% (28.5%)
Most of your close friends	0.4% (1.6%)	3.3% (6.8%)	16.9% (30.4%)	31.1% (39.7%)	48.3% (21.6%)
Most Singaporean Chinese	2.3% (3.3%)	9.9% (15.0%)	26.5% (38.0%)	30.5% (27.4%)	30.9% (16.4%)
Most Singaporean Malays	2.0% (2.9%)	8.2% (14.5%)	29.0% (36.0%)	36.4% (30.0%)	24.4% (16.6%)
Most Singaporean Indians	1.5% (2.1%)	7.7% (10.9%)	27.8% (36.4%)	38.7% (33.0%)	24.3% (17.6%)
Most Singaporean Eurasians	2.0%	6.4%	23.7%	41.5%	26.4%

3.2.1 Perceptions of own level of racism vary by respondents' race and socioeconomic status, as well as over time

Chinese and Malay respondents have become more likely to regard themselves as hardly racist or not racist at all. In 2016, 71.6 per cent of Chinese respondents felt this way, while in 2021, the figure is 83.3 per cent. Likewise, the proportion of Malay respondents who regarded themselves as hardly racist or not racist at all has increased from 75.7 per cent to 85.5 per cent. Meanwhile, there has been negligible change in Indian respondents' perceptions of the level of racism of themselves from 2016 to 2021 (see Table 3.5 below).

Table 3.5: Perceived racism of self, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	You				
	Very racist	Moderately racist	Mildly racist	Hardly racist	Not racist at all
Chinese	0.6% (1.5%)	2.8% (4.3%)	13.3% (22.6%)	27.8% (42.5%)	55.5% (29.1%)
Malay	1.0% (0.9%)	3.1% (6.2%)	10.4% (17.2%)	26.7% (36.9%)	58.8% (38.8%)
Indian	1.6% (0.5%)	3.4% (3.4%)	12.9% (12.2%)	24.1% (30.4%)	58.0% (53.5%)
Others	0.0% (2.6%)	7.4% (1.3%)	3.7% (20.7%)	40.7% (32.9%)	48.1% (42.5%)

When divided across socioeconomic backgrounds, it appears that Chinese respondents living in larger housing types are more likely to have a more positive perception of themselves. In particular, 90 per cent of Chinese private property dwellers see themselves as hardly or not racist, whereas about 80 per cent of Chinese respondents of other housing types feel this way (see Table 3.6 below). Meanwhile, Malays (92.3 per cent) and Indians (91 per cent) living in 1-, 2- or 3-room flats were the most likely to see themselves as hardly or not racist.

Table 3.6: Perceived racism of self, by respondents' race and housing type (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group and housing type		You				
		Very racist	Moderately racist	Mildly racist	Hardly racist	Not racist at all
Chinese	**1-3 room HDB**	1.6%	3.2%	11.5%	29.2%	54.5%
	4-room HDB	0.3%	2.6%	17.5%	30.2%	49.5%
	5-room HDB	0.4%	5.1%	14.8%	32.0%	47.7%
	Private	0.3%	0.9%	8.8%	20.4%	69.6%
Malay	**1-3 room HDB**	0.7%	0.7%	6.3%	20.8%	71.5%
	4-room HDB	1.3%	3.2%	11.5%	33.1%	51.0%
	5-room HDB	0.0%	6.7%	17.3%	29.3%	46.7%
	Private	5.9%	5.9%	5.9%	5.9%	76.5%
Indian	**1-3 room HDB**	1.0%	3.0%	5.0%	18.0%	73.0%
	4-room HDB	2.8%	4.2%	11.3%	22.5%	59.2%
	5-room HDB	1.1%	3.4%	23.6%	23.6%	48.3%
	Private	0%	2.0%	14.0%	42.0%	42.0%

3.2.2 Nearly eight in 10 Chinese respondents believe their family members are not very racist

Most Chinese respondents (78.1 per cent) currently feel that their family members are hardly racist or not racist at all, up from 66.5 per cent five years ago. In the same period, the proportion of Malays who feel this way about their family members' level of racism has increased from 72.1 per cent to 83.7 per cent. Meanwhile, there has been negligible change in Indian respondents' perceptions of the level of racism of most of their family from 2016 to 2021 (see Table 3.7 below).

Table 3.7: Perceived racism of family, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Most of your family				
	Very racist	Moderately racist	Mildly racist	Hardly racist	Not racist at all
Chinese	0.4% (1.6%)	3.6% (5.7%)	17.8% (26.2%)	24.6% (42.3%)	53.5% (24.2%)
Malay	0.3% (1.5%)	3.1% (5.7%)	13.0% (20.6%)	26.2% (35.1%)	57.5% (37.0%)
Indian	0.5% (0.5%)	2.4% (5.7%)	12.6% (10.9%)	25.5% (35.9%)	59.1% (47.0%)
Others	3.7% (2.6%)	3.7% (2.2%)	11.1% (30.4%)	33.3% (23.9%)	48.1% (40.9%)

3.2.3 Around eight in 10 Chinese and Malay respondents believe they have non-racist close friends

The same trend can be observed for the perceived racism of most of one's close friends, with 79.1 per cent of Chinese respondents feeling that most of them are hardly racist or not racist at all, compared to 58.4 per cent in 2016. Similarly, 80.5 per cent of Malays felt this way, up from 66.4 per cent five years ago. Meanwhile, there has been negligible change in Indian respondents' perceptions of the level of racism of most of their close friends from 2016 to 2021 (see Table 3.8 below).

Table 3.8: Perceived racism of close friends, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Most of your close friends				
	Very racist	Moderately racist	Mildly racist	Hardly racist	Not racist at all
Chinese	0.3% (1.8%)	3.1% (7.3%)	17.5% (32.5%)	31.4% (40.9%)	47.7% (17.5%)
Malay	0.5% (1.3%)	4.3% (7.4%)	14.8% (24.8%)	28.8% (35.6%)	51.7% (30.8%)
Indian	0.8% (0.3%)	3.9% (3.3%)	15.0% (19.2%)	29.9% (37.5%)	50.4% (39.7%)
Others	0.0% (1.3%)	3.7% (6.6%)	14.8% (29.0%)	37.0% (39.4%)	44.4% (23.6%)

3.2.4 Sentiments about each racial group's racist levels differ by respondents' race

Chinese respondents were more likely to perceive most Singaporean Chinese as hardly racist or not racist at all. Almost two-thirds of the Chinese respondents, or 63.6 per cent, feel this way, compared to 52.8 per cent of Indians and 57.5 per cent of Malays. In addition, the proportion of Chinese respondents who see most Singaporean Chinese as hardly racist or not racist at all has increased from 43.4 per cent in 2016 to 63.6 per cent in 2021. Malays have also increasingly come to perceive most Singaporean Chinese this way, although the rise has been more muted, from 45.9 per cent to 57.5 per cent (see Table 3.9 below).

Malay respondents were no more likely than Chinese or Indians to perceive most Singaporean Malays as hardly racist or not racist at all. Over time, Chinese respondents have become more likely to see most Singaporean Malays this way, with the figure increasing from 44.6 per cent in 2016 to 60.5 per cent in 2021. The proportion of Malays and Indians who see most Singaporean Malays as hardly or not at all racist have also increased, but to a smaller degree (see Table 3.10 below).

Indian respondents were also no more likely than Chinese or Malays to perceive most Singaporean Indians as hardly racist or not racist at all. Chinese respondents have become more likely to feel this way, with the figure rising from 49.5 per cent in 2016 to 63.1 per cent in 2021. A similar rise is evident in Malay respondents, from 53.5 per cent to 63.3 per cent. Finally, the perceived racism of Singaporean Eurasians was consistent across respondents of all races (see Tables 3.11 to 3.12 below).

Overall, racial minorities seem to have a closer perception than Chinese respondents of the level of racism of their own racial group. In contrast, members of the majority race tend to perceive their own race as less racist than minority race respondents do.

Table 3.9: Perceived racism of most Singaporean Chinese, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Most Singaporean Chinese				
	Very racist	Moderately racist	Mildly racist	Hardly racist	Not racist at all
Chinese	1.2% (2.2%)	8.5% (14.6%)	26.7% (39.8%)	30.6% (29.1%)	33.0% (14.3%)
Malay	5.1% (6.2%)	12.7% (16.8%)	24.7% (31.3%)	31.8% (25.4%)	25.7% (20.5%)
Indian	6.8% (8.0%)	16.5% (16.5%)	23.9% (28.5%)	30.2% (21.7%)	22.6% (25.3%)
Others	3.7% (4.5%)	14.8% (15.3%)	37.0% (46.7%)	22.2% (14.4%)	22.2% (19.2%)

Table 3.10: Perceived racism of most Singaporean Malays, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Most Singaporean Malays				
	Very racist	Moderately racist	Mildly racist	Hardly racist	Not racist at all
Chinese	2.0% (3.2%)	7.8% (14.6%)	29.7% (37.7%)	36.5% (30.5%)	24.0% (14.1%)
Malay	1.8% (1.1%)	8.1% (12.3%)	26.7% (32.7%)	36.6% (30.7%)	26.7% (23.1%)
Indian	3.4% (3.2%)	9.7% (18.5%)	25.5% (24.5%)	37.5% (27.5%)	23.9% (26.3%)
Others	0.0% (3.6%)	14.8% (12.6%)	29.6% (45.0%)	29.6% (19.5%)	25.9% (19.2%)

Table 3.11: Perceived racism of most Singaporean Indians, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Most Singaporean Indians				
	Very racist	Moderately racist	Mildly racist	Hardly racist	Not racist at all
Chinese	1.6% (2.1%)	8.0% (10.3%)	27.4% (38.1%)	39.1% (34.3%)	24.0% (15.2%)
Malay	1.8% (2.2%)	6.6% (14.6%)	28.2% (29.7%)	37.9% (31.7%)	25.4% (21.8%)
Indian	0.8% (1.8%)	6.6% (9.7%)	28.3% (28.4%)	39.6% (30.5%)	24.7% (29.6%)
Others	0.0% (4.1%)	7.4% (13.9%)	37.0% (46.0%)	29.6% (18.2%)	25.9% (17.8%)

Table 3.12: Perceived racism of most Singaporean Eurasians, by respondents' race

Racial group	Most Singaporean Eurasians				
	Very racist	Moderately racist	Mildly racist	Hardly racist	Not racist at all
Chinese	1.7%	5.8%	24.0%	42.0%	26.5%
Malay	4.1%	7.9%	22.9%	38.9%	26.2%
Indian	2.1%	7.6%	25.2%	39.6%	25.5%
Others	0.0%	11.1%	14.8%	44.4%	29.6%

C) Perception of whether certain behaviours are racist and/or unacceptable

3.3 Most respondents view racial humour as unacceptable and racist, while dressing up in another race's ethnic costume is acceptable and not racist

Most respondents agreed that it is never acceptable to make jokes about another race in public. A majority of respondents found this racist (72.7 per cent) and unacceptable (78.3 per cent). When it comes to making jokes about another race in the company of friends, however, a lower proportion of 64.8 per cent find this unacceptable, while 64.5 per cent think it is racist. In fact, the five actions deemed the most racist were all related to pointing out perceived racial characteristics or differences in a negative manner.

There is also a high level of consensus that it is never acceptable (77.7 per cent) and racist (72.6 per cent) to make an advertisement in which people are invited to laugh at a person of a particular race by making fun of some characteristic associated with their background. Similarly, 62.6 per cent of respondents felt that it is never acceptable to make fun of the language associated with another race, while 59.2 per cent felt that doing so would be racist. Taken together, all these figures suggest that Singaporeans are aware that jokes about race can be offensive. When it comes to humour, respondents were quite firm about what they consider racist and unacceptable. In contrast, respondents were less definitive about aspects like hiring based on one's race, language-related stereotypes or actions, and having a more racially-selective social circle.

Meanwhile, the clearest consensus among respondents is that it is not racist to dress up in the traditional ethnic costume of people of another ethnic background, with 85.9 per cent feeling this way. This is likely because it is common to see people wear the ethnic costumes of other races during festive celebrations or events like Racial Harmony Day. Therefore, such an action is less likely to be perceived as the type of cultural appropriation that triggers criticism in other societies.

For each behaviour asked about in the survey, the proportion of respondents who considered it to be never acceptable was generally similar to the proportion who considered it to be racist. The exception is the act of offering food to members of another race without considering whether they have dietary restrictions. While 57 per cent of respondents thought this was never acceptable, only 31.7 per cent thought it was racist. Further analysis shows that 32.7 per cent of all respondents thought this behaviour was never acceptable even though it is not racist. This is substantially higher than the proportions of respondents who thought any other behaviour was never acceptable and not racist. It is likely that these respondents found this action unacceptable for other reasons, such as it being impolite or inconsiderate. This constitutes a shift from 2016, when 41.2 per cent considered this act racist and 49.2 per cent found it never acceptable. Thus, people have become more likely to note and accommodate cultural differences in diet, while also gaining clarity on the line between cultural insensitivity and racism per se.

Table 3.13: Views on what constitutes racist and unacceptable behaviour (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave, where available)

	Racist	Not Racist	Always Acceptable	Sometimes Acceptable	Never Acceptable
Making jokes about another race in public	72.7% (78.1%)	27.3% (21.9%)	1.1% (3.4%)	20.6% (20.0%)	78.3% (76.6%)
Making an advertisement where people are invited to laugh at a person of a particular race by making fun of some characteristic associated with their background	72.6%	27.4%	1.7%	20.6%	77.7%
Remarking that people of a particular racial group are normally dirty, lazy, or too money-minded	67.0% (73.0%)	33.0% (27.0%)	2.3% (4.0%)	30.3% (29.6%)	67.3% (66.4%)
Posting on social media that one racial group has more privileges than another	64.6%	35.4%	2.8%	29.0%	68.2%
Making jokes about another race in the company of friends	64.5% (65.9%)	35.5% (34.1%)	2.7% (5.7%)	32.5% (36.0%)	64.8% (58.4%)
Criticising on social media the racial group of a person of another race by whom you have been wrongly treated	62.3%	37.7%	10.4%	21.8%	67.9%
An employer not hiring someone because of their race	61.4% (79.0%)	38.6% (21.0%)	7.4% (4.2%)	33.1% (22.4%)	59.6% (73.4%)
Telling your followers on social media that people of a race that discriminated against you are oppressors	61.1%	38.9%	10.9%	22.1%	67.1%
An employer not hiring someone because of attire that identifies them with a particular religion (e.g., a cross, a head scarf)	60.9% (78.5%)	39.1% (21.5%)	7.1% (3.7%)	31.1% (20.8%)	61.9% (75.6%)
Making fun of the language associated with another race	59.2% (64.4%)	40.8% (35.6%)	4.1% (5.2%)	33.4% (33.4%)	62.6% (61.4%)
Commenting to someone that their ability is an exception among members of their race	50.3% (64.3%)	49.7% (35.7%)	12.7% (5.4%)	33.8% (32.9%)	53.6% (61.7%)
Not sharing a seat with/sitting beside a person of another race	46.4% (65.3%)	53.6% (34.7%)	25.5% (14.0%)	23.2% (28.5%)	51.3% (57.5%)
Disapproving of your children/grandchildren dating people of another race	37.0%	63.0%	12.8%	49.0%	38.2%
Not having friends of other races	35.3% (48.0%)	64.7% (52.0%)	13.1% (12.0%)	47.2% (40.8%)	39.7% (47.2%)
Offering food to members of another race without considering whether they have dietary restrictions	31.7% (41.2%)	68.3% (58.8%)	11.0% (6.9%)	32.1% (43.9%)	57.0% (49.2%)
Speaking with a person of a different race in a language they may not be familiar with instead of in English	31.7% (36.5%)	68.3% (63.5%)	7.2% (16.4%)	55.7% (46.3%)	37.1% (37.3%)

Dressing up in the traditional ethnic costume of people of another ethnic background	14.1%	85.9%	57.6%	31.6%	10.8%

3.3.1 No marked racial differences in attitudes about making racial jokes, speaking in an unfamiliar language, or dressing up in another race's ethnic costume

There were no strong differences by respondents' race in views on whether it is racist to make jokes about another race in the company of friends or in public, as well as in views on racial humour in advertisements. Similarly, respondents of different races were in agreement about the degree of acceptability of speaking to someone of another race in a language other than English when they may not be familiar with that language, as well as dressing up in another race's traditional ethnic costume (see Tables 3.14 to 3.18 below).

Table 3.14: Views on racial jokes among friends, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Making jokes about another race in the company of friends				
	Always Acceptable	Sometimes Acceptable	Never Acceptable	Racist	Not Racist
Chinese	2.5% (5.7%)	34.1% (37.7%)	63.4% (56.7%)	63.8% (66.3%)	36.2% (33.7%)
Malay	2.3% (5.7%)	29.8% (33.1%)	67.9% (61.3%)	65.9% (64.9%)	34.1% (35.1%)
Indian	3.4% (4.1%)	24.4% (26.3%)	72.2% (69.6%)	68.5% (70.2%)	31.5% (29.8%)
Others	7.4% (7.0%)	25.9% (39.7%)	66.7% (53.3%)	63.0% (51.1%)	37.0% (48.9%)

Table 3.15: Views on racial jokes in public, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Making jokes about another race in public				
	Always Acceptable	Sometimes Acceptable	Never Acceptable	Racist	Not Racist
Chinese	1.2% (3.3%)	21.0% (20.5%)	77.9% (76.2%)	72.4% (79.5%)	27.6% (20.5%)
Malay	0.3% (3.8%)	20.6% (17.7%)	79.1% (78.5%)	74.3% (72.0%)	25.7% (28.0%)
Indian	1.8% (1.6%)	17.1% (16.0%)	81.1% (82.4%)	74.5% (82.5%)	25.5% (17.5%)
Others	0.0% (3.9%)	22.2% (32.8%)	77.8% (63.3%)	70.4% (61.5%)	29.6% (38.5%)

Table 3.16: Views on racial humour in advertising, by respondents' race

Racial group	Making an advertisement where people are invited to laugh at a person of a particular race by making fun of some characteristic associated with their background				
	Always Acceptable	Sometimes Acceptable	Never Acceptable	Racist	Not Racist
Chinese	1.7%	21.1%	77.1%	72.1%	27.9%
Malay	2.0%	19.3%	78.6%	74.6%	25.4%
Indian	1.6%	15.5%	82.9%	76.1%	23.9%
Others	0.0%	25.9%	74.1%	66.7%	33.3%

Table 3.17: Views on speaking to someone of another race in a language besides English, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Speaking with a person of a different race in a language they may not be familiar with instead of in English				
	Always Acceptable	Sometimes Acceptable	Never Acceptable	Racist	Not Racist
Chinese	7.0% (17.1%)	56.2% (47.3%)	36.7% (35.6%)	31.3% (35.4%)	68.7% (64.6%)
Malay	8.7% (15.9%)	58.0% (42.6%)	33.3% (41.6%)	30.5% (41.3%)	69.5% (58.7%)
Indian	6.0% (13.5%)	50.7% (37.2%)	43.3% (49.3%)	36.0% (42.1%)	64.0% (57.9%)
Others	7.4% (11.2%)	48.1% (59.5%)	44.4% (29.3%)	37.0% (29.3%)	63.0% (70.7%)

Table 3.18: Views on dressing up in another race's traditional ethnic costume, by respondents' race

Racial group	Dressing up in the traditional ethnic costume of people of another ethnic background				
	Always Acceptable	Sometimes Acceptable	Never Acceptable	Racist	Not Racist
Chinese	57.5%	31.8%	10.7%	13.3%	86.7%
Malay	60.3%	29.8%	9.9%	16.5%	83.5%
Indian	55.6%	33.3%	11.0%	19.4%	80.6%
Others	55.6%	29.6%	14.8%	11.1%	88.9%

3.3.2 Making fun of language associated with another race viewed differently by the three major races

While 69 per cent of Indian respondents thought it was racist to make fun of the language associated with another race, a lower proportion of Chinese respondents (57.5 per cent) thought so. Compared to the 2016 results, however, there seems to be a lower proportion

believing that such actions are racist. Meanwhile, Indian respondents (73.2 per cent) were more likely to believe that it is never acceptable to do so compared to Chinese (60.6 per cent) and Malay (66.2 per cent) respondents (see Table 3.19 below).

Table 3.19: Views on making fun of another race's language, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Making fun of the language associated with another race				
	Always Acceptable	Sometimes Acceptable	Never Acceptable	Racist	Not Racist
Chinese	4.0% (5.8%)	35.4% (35.5%)	60.6% (58.6%)	57.5% (63.2%)	42.5% (36.8%)
Malay	2.8% (3.0%)	31.0% (28.5%)	66.2% (68.6%)	63.1% (67.6%)	36.9% (32.4%)
Indian	2.9% (3.2%)	23.9% (21.2%)	73.2% (75.6%)	69.0% (73.3%)	31.0% (26.7%)
Others	14.8% (8.3%)	18.5% (38.4%)	66.7% (53.3%)	59.3% (61.3%)	40.7% (38.7%)

3.3.3 Offering food without considering dietary restrictions not seen as racist, but viewed as sometimes or never acceptable by over eight in 10 respondents

Even though the act of offering food to members of another race without considering possible dietary restrictions was seen by majority of respondents from the three major races as not racist, more than half felt that it is unacceptable to do so. In addition, the proportion of Chinese respondents saying that it is never acceptable has increased compared to 2016, which indicates more awareness among Chinese respondents on possible differences in dietary practices (see Table 3.20 below).

Table 3.20: Views on offering food without considering dietary restrictions, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Offering food to members of another race without considering whether they have dietary restrictions				
	Always Acceptable	Sometimes Acceptable	Never Acceptable	Racist	Not Racist
Chinese	11.6% (6.9%)	30.2% (44.3%)	58.2% (48.8%)	31.8% (42.5%)	68.2% (57.5%)
Malay	8.7% (7.6%)	39.9% (41.2%)	51.4% (51.2%)	29.3% (37.9%)	70.7% (62.1%)
Indian	11.0% (7.9%)	35.7% (36.5%)	53.3% (55.6%)	34.1% (41.7%)	65.9% (58.3%)
Others	3.7% (3.5%)	37.0% (70.6%)	59.3% (25.9%)	33.3% (20.8%)	66.7% (79.2%)

3.3.4 Over two-thirds believe insults based on racial stereotypes are racist and unacceptable, but only half think the same of praises based on the racial stereotypes

Respondents' views on comments based on racial stereotypes varied. Most people thought it was unacceptable (67.3 per cent) and racist (67 per cent) to remark that people of a particular racial group are normally dirty, lazy, or too money-minded. But while attitudes towards such insults based on stereotypes are clear, people were much less certain about compliments based on stereotypes. Half the respondents felt that it was racist and never acceptable to comment to someone that their ability is an exception among members of their race. The other half felt that it was not racist, and either sometimes or always acceptable (see Table 3.13 above).

Respondents' race did not seem to impact their views on whether it is racist and to what degree it is acceptable to make remarks based on racial stereotypes, such as members of a racial group being dirty, lazy or too money-minded. However, Indian respondents were more likely than Chinese and Malay respondents to regard it as never acceptable and racist to give someone a backhanded compliment based on racial stereotypes. While 63 per cent of Indians felt this way, only 53 per cent of Chinese and 49.4 per cent of Malays did (see Tables 3.21 and 3.22 below).

Table 3.21: Views on insults based on racial stereotypes, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Remarking that people of a particular racial group are normally dirty, lazy, or too money-minded				
	Always Acceptable	Sometimes Acceptable	Never Acceptable	Racist	Not Racist
Chinese	2.7% (4.3%)	31.7% (31.7%)	65.6% (64.0%)	65.8% (73.4%)	34.2% (26.6%)
Malay	0.8% (2.6%)	29.8% (23.9%)	69.5% (73.5%)	69.5% (72.6%)	30.5% (27.4%)
Indian	1.8% (2.5%)	19.4% (20.8%)	78.7% (76.7%)	73.0% (75.6%)	27.0% (24.4%)
Others	0.0% (4.6%)	29.6% (29.2%)	70.4% (66.3%)	70.4% (67.3%)	29.6% (32.7%)

Table 3.22: Views on compliments based on racial stereotypes, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Commenting to someone that their ability is an exception among members of their race				
	Always Acceptable	Sometimes Acceptable	Never Acceptable	Racist	Not Racist
Chinese	12.3% (5.2%)	34.7% (34.2%)	53.0% (60.6%)	49.8% (65.8%)	50.2% (34.2%)
Malay	15.5% (6.1%)	35.1% (29.0%)	49.4% (64.9%)	47.6% (58.2%)	52.4% (41.8%)
Indian	12.3% (3.6%)	24.7% (24.9%)	63.0% (71.5%)	57.7% (67.1%)	42.3% (32.9%)
Others	11.1% (12.6%)	29.6% (44.7%)	59.3% (42.8%)	55.6% (44.5%)	44.4% (55.5%)

3.3.5 Around or over six in 10 feel that speaking about race on social media is racist and unacceptable

There was some wariness over making racial comments on social media or in the online space. Over two-thirds of all respondents felt that it is never acceptable to criticise a racial group or accuse them of being oppressors after being unfairly treated by a member of that group, nor to post about a racial group enjoying more privileges than others (see Table 3.13 above). These actions were also seen as racist by around or over six in 10 respondents across the three major races. Meanwhile, there were no major racial differences in opinions regarding speaking up about race on social media (see Tables 3.23 to 3.25 below).

Table 3.23: Views on criticising a racial group on social media, by respondents' race

Racial group	Criticising on social media the racial group of a person of another race by whom you have been wrongly treated				
	Always Acceptable	Sometimes Acceptable	Never Acceptable	Racist	Not Racist
Chinese	9.6%	22.5%	67.9%	62.3%	37.7%
Malay	14.0%	21.9%	64.1%	60.6%	39.4%
Indian	11.5%	16.3%	72.2%	65.4%	34.6%
Others	11.1%	18.5%	70.4%	63.0%	37.0%

Table 3.24: Views on calling a race oppressors on social media, by respondents' race

Racial group	Telling your followers on social media that people of a race that discriminated against you are oppressors				
	Always Acceptable	Sometimes Acceptable	Never Acceptable	Racist	Not Racist
Chinese	10.5%	21.9%	67.6%	61.1%	38.9%
Malay	13.2%	25.4%	61.3%	58.5%	41.5%
Indian	11.5%	18.6%	69.8%	62.7%	37.3%
Others	7.4%	22.2%	70.4%	66.7%	33.3%

Table 3.25: Views on social media posts about racial privilege, by respondents' race

Racial group	Posting on social media that one racial group has more privileges than another				
	Always Acceptable	Sometimes Acceptable	Never Acceptable	Racist	Not Racist
Chinese	2.4%	28.4%	69.2%	65.1%	34.9%
Malay	3.3%	32.8%	63.9%	64.1%	35.9%
Indian	5.5%	26.5%	68.0%	62.7%	37.3%
Others	3.7%	37.0%	59.3%	59.3%	40.7%

3.3.6 Over six in 10 felt that workplace discrimination is racist; similar proportions felt it was unacceptable

Respondents were surprisingly less critical about workplace discrimination. Only 61.4 per cent of respondents felt that it is racist for an employer not to hire someone because of their race. This marks a sharp drop from 79 per cent in 2016. Similarly, while 78.5 per cent of respondents in 2016 felt that it is racist for an employer not to hire someone because of their religious attire, only 60.9 per cent of respondents in 2021 felt this way. Moreover, only 59.6 per cent felt that not hiring someone because of their race is unacceptable while 61.9 per cent felt the same about not hiring because of religious attire (see Table 3.13 above).

There are substantial differences by respondents' race in views on an employer not hiring someone due to their race. While 71.5 per cent of Malays and 73 per cent of Indians believe that this is racist, a smaller proportion, 58.1 per cent, of Chinese respondents do. This is also much lower than the 78.5 per cent of Chinese respondents in 2016 who regarded this behaviour as racist (see Table 3.26 below). The proportions of minorities who see this act as racist have also fallen, but not as steeply.

A similar trend is evident for the case of an employer not hiring someone due to their religious attire (see Table 3.27 below).

Table 3.26: Views on employer not hiring due to race, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	An employer not hiring someone because of their race				
	Always Acceptable	Sometimes Acceptable	Never Acceptable	Racist	Not Racist
Chinese	8.8% (4.2%)	35.6% (24.2%)	55.6% (71.6%)	58.1% (78.5%)	41.9% (21.5%)
Malay	3.3% (3.4%)	26.0% (15.2%)	70.7% (81.5%)	71.5% (81.2%)	28.5% (18.8%)
Indian	3.4% (3.3%)	22.0% (17.5%)	74.5% (79.2%)	73.0% (83.4%)	27.0% (16.6%)
Others	0.0% (9.1%)	29.6% (22.8%)	70.4% (68.0%)	70.4% (70.7%)	29.6% (29.3%)

Table 3.27: Views on employer not hiring someone due to religious attire, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	An employer not hiring someone because of attire that identifies them with a particular religion (e.g., a cross, a head scarf)				
	Always Acceptable	Sometimes Acceptable	Never Acceptable	Racist	Not Racist
Chinese	8.1% (3.8%)	33.6% (21.7%)	58.3% (74.4%)	57.6% (78.8%)	42.4% (21.2%)
Malay	4.1% (3.9%)	24.4% (15.5%)	71.5% (80.5%)	71.8% (78.5%)	28.2% (21.5%)
Indian	3.4% (2.3%)	23.9% (16.7%)	72.7% (81.1%)	70.1% (80.0%)	29.9% (20.0%)
Others	3.7% (4.0%)	14.8% (23.7%)	81.5% (72.4%)	74.1% (71.7%)	25.9% (28.3%)

3.3.7 Racially-exclusive social circles and behaviours viewed as not racist by majority of respondents

Most people felt it was fine to have ties mostly with people of their own race. A majority of respondents (64.7 per cent) felt that it is not racist to not have friends of other races. In 2016, the respondents were divided on this issue. Meanwhile, 63 per cent felt that it is not racist to disapprove of your children or grandchildren dating someone of another race (see Table 3.13 above).

There was also a substantial shift in views on the act of not sitting beside someone of another race, for example on public transportation. While 65.3 per cent of respondents in 2016 felt that this is a racist act, only 46.4 per cent of respondents in 2021 thought so. The proportion of those who considered this act always acceptable has also increased from 14 per cent to 25.5 per cent. Given these shifts in which behaviours are considered to be racist, it is not surprising that people have, on the whole, come to perceive themselves and others around them as less

racist (see Table 3.4 above). Even if they or others they know carry out such acts, it would not be deemed racist behaviour.

Most people (62.9 per cent) found it always or sometimes acceptable to speak with someone of a different race in a language they may not be familiar with, instead of English. Over two-thirds, or 68.3 per cent of respondents, also stated that doing so is not racist (see Table 3.13 above).

Chinese respondents were marginally less likely to consider it racist not to have friends of other races. While 41.2 per cent of Malays and Indians thought this was racist, only 33.4 per cent of Chinese did. Chinese respondents were also more likely than minorities, especially Indians, to consider it fine to disapprove of your children or grandchildren dating people of another race. Only about a third of the Chinese respondents considered this never acceptable (34.2 per cent) and racist (34.6 per cent), compared to 53 per cent of Indian respondents who thought it never acceptable and 46.2 per cent who considered it racist (see Tables 3.28 and 3.29 below).

Table 3.28: Views on not having friends of other races, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Not having friends of other races				
	Always Acceptable	Sometimes Acceptable	Never Acceptable	Racist	Not Racist
Chinese	14.4% (13.2%)	47.1% (41.1%)	38.5% (45.7%)	33.4% (48.7%)	66.6% (51.3%)
Malay	8.9% (7.9%)	49.4% (41.7%)	41.7% (50.4%)	41.2% (40.6%)	58.8% (59.4%)
Indian	8.4% (9.3%)	45.7% (39.3%)	45.9% (51.5%)	41.2% (46.1%)	58.8% (53.9%)
Others	11.1% (7.1%)	44.4% (42.3%)	44.4% (50.6%)	40.7% (58.4%)	59.3% (41.6%)

Table 3.29: Views on descendants dating outside own race, by respondents' race

Racial group	Disapproving of your children/grandchildren dating people of another race				
	Always Acceptable	Sometimes Acceptable	Never Acceptable	Racist	Not Racist
Chinese	13.8%	52.1%	34.2%	34.6%	65.4%
Malay	10.4%	43.0%	46.6%	42.0%	58.0%
Indian	11.0%	36.0%	53.0%	46.2%	53.8%
Others	3.7%	33.3%	63.0%	51.9%	48.1%

3.3.8 Less consensus in 2016 as to whether not sitting next to someone of another race is racist

Less than half of Chinese respondents felt that not sitting with a person of another race was never acceptable (48.5 per cent) or racist (44.4 per cent). Malay respondents were more likely than Chinese respondents to see this act as never acceptable (56.2 per cent) but also under

half (47.1 per cent) felt that this was racist. Indian respondents, on the other hand, viewed this act the most negatively, with 64.6 per cent saying that this is never acceptable and 57.5 per cent viewing it as racist. It is interesting to note, however, that these reported proportions have all seen a decrease compared to those in 2016, indicating that there is less consensus that such an act is racist and/or unacceptable (see Table 3.30 below)

Table 3.30: Views on not sitting with a person of another race, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Not sharing a seat with/sitting beside a person of another race				
	Always Acceptable	Sometimes Acceptable	Never Acceptable	Racist	Not Racist
Chinese	26.9% (14.9%)	24.6% (30.0%)	48.5% (55.1%)	44.4% (64.4%)	55.6% (35.6%)
Malay	20.9% (11.6%)	22.9% (25.2%)	56.2% (63.2%)	47.1% (66.4%)	52.9% (33.6%)
Indian	18.9% (7.3%)	16.5% (22.8%)	64.6% (69.9%)	57.5% (75.3%)	42.5% (24.7%)
Others	29.6% (16.3%)	7.4% (26.1%)	63.0% (57.5%)	63.0% (59.0%)	37.0% (41.0%)

D) Racial preferences for different roles

3.4 Over nine in 10 would welcome Singaporean Chinese as new family member; acceptance of Singaporean Malays and Indians in the same role have increased compared to 2016

Respondents have become slightly more accepting of Singaporean Malays and Indians in private sphere roles in the last five years. While 35 per cent of respondents in 2016 would be fine with a Malay marrying into their family, the figure has increased to 55.4 per cent in 2021. The proportions for an Indian marrying into the family have likewise risen from 30 per cent to 54.1 per cent. This is still much lower than the 92.2 per cent who would accept a Chinese person marrying into the family, but the increase is substantial.

More than half of the respondents would now be accepting of a new citizen from China (56.9 per cent) or of Western origin (57.7 per cent) doing so. This is up from 16.7 per cent and 28.9 per cent in 2016, respectively. The proportion of those who said they found new citizens from India were acceptable has also more than tripled, from 10.6 per cent in 2016 to 38.2 per cent in 2021. While this is a substantial increase, it stems from a very low base in 2016. Moreover, the level of comfort for those originally of Indian nationality lags behind that for new citizens from China or a Western country (see Table 3.31 below).

Table 3.31: Respondents' racial preferences for new family member (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave, where available)

	Singaporean Chinese	Singaporean Malay	Singaporean Indian	New Citizen from China	New Citizen from India	New Citizen of Western origin
To marry into your family	92.2% (88.4%)	55.4% (35.0%)	54.1% (30.0%)	56.9% (16.7%)	38.2% (10.6%)	57.7% (28.9%)

3.4.1 Nearly all Chinese respondents prefer Singaporean Chinese as new family member, but have grown more accepting of other groups

When it comes to someone marrying into the family, Chinese respondents showed the greatest in-group preference. For example, virtually all Chinese (98.4 per cent) and Malay (98.2 per cent) respondents preferred other Chinese and Malay persons for this role, respectively, but most Malays were still accepting of Chinese (71.5 per cent) or Indian (62.8 per cent) persons marrying into the family. Comparatively, less than half of the Chinese respondents were fine with a Singaporean Malay (46.9 per cent) or Indian (47.5 per cent) person in this role. Indian respondents showed a similar trend to Malays.

Chinese respondents also seemed to prefer new citizens from China over Singaporeans of other races. While less than half would be fine with a Singaporean Malay or Indian marrying into the family, almost two-thirds, or 62.9 per cent, would be accepting of a new citizen from China. Indian respondents, meanwhile, do not show a similar preference for new citizens from India over Singaporeans of other races. About the same proportion of Indian respondents would be accepting of a Singaporean Chinese (66.1 per cent) marrying into the family, as a new citizen from India doing so (62.5 per cent). The level of acceptance for Malays is only marginally lower at 57 per cent. Therefore, only Singaporean Chinese respondents seem to prioritise race over nationality when it comes to someone marrying into the family.

Interestingly, if preferences for someone of the same race but different nationality are set aside, the next highest preference among respondents of all races is for new citizens of Western origin to marry into the family. More than half the respondents of all races are accepting of this group — substantially higher than the level of acceptance for other new citizens, which is about a third. This may reflect some bias in favour of Westerners and suggest Singaporean openness to western culture.

In the last five years, Singaporeans of all races are more accepting of Singaporean racial minorities marrying into the family. The proportion of Chinese respondents who would accept a Malay or Indian person marrying into the family has roughly doubled since 2016, when the figures were 23.8 per cent and 21.2 per cent respectively. There have been similar increases in Malay respondents' acceptance of Indian persons (from 41.1 per cent to 62.8 per cent) and Indian respondents' acceptance of Malay persons (from 30.1 per cent to 57 per cent).

The level of comfort with new citizens marrying into the family have also risen. This trend is reflected among respondents of all races, towards new citizens of all origins. The most dramatic increase is that 62.9 per cent of Chinese respondents now accept new citizens from China marrying into the family, compared to just 18.8 per cent in 2016. There were also other substantial increases. For example, the proportion of Malays who would welcome a new

citizen from India marrying into the family has risen from 8.5 per cent to 33.1 per cent (see Table 3.32 below).

Table 3.32: Racial preferences for marrying into the family, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	To marry into your family					
	Singaporean Chinese	Singaporean Malay	Singaporean Indian	New Citizen from China	New Citizen from India	New Citizen of Western origin
Chinese	98.4% (98.1%)	46.9% (23.8%)	47.5% (21.2%)	62.9% (18.8%)	35.2% (7.9%)	58.0% (28.7%)
Malay	71.5% (62.9%)	98.2% (94.6%)	62.8% (41.1%)	32.6% (10.3%)	33.1% (8.5%)	52.9% (31.4%)
Indian	66.1% (49.7%)	57.0% (30.1%)	92.7% (86.3%)	33.6% (9.1%)	62.5% (34.3%)	52.5% (22.9%)
Others	92.6% (77.7%)	85.2% (59.9%)	77.8% (40.1%)	74.1% (18.6%)	66.7% (19.9%)	85.2% (50.2%)

3.4.2 Acceptance levels of other races differ by respondents' socioeconomic status

Some differences were found when dividing respondents across socioeconomic levels. Overall, respondents living in larger housing types were less accepting of other groups marrying into their family. The only exception was for new citizens of Western origin – nearly six in 10 of all Chinese respondents found it acceptable; Malay respondents living in 4-room flats were least likely to find it acceptable (43.3 per cent) while Malay private property dwellers were most likely to find it acceptable (70.6 per cent). This is compared to 44 per cent of Indian respondents living in 4- or 5-room flats and 70 per cent of those living in private property who found it acceptable. Meanwhile, preferences for one's own racial group remained relatively constant across the different socioeconomic levels, with around nine in 10 or more finding it acceptable (see Table 3.33 below).

Table 3.33: Racial preferences for marrying into the family, by respondents' race and housing type

Racial group and housing type		To marry into your family					
		Singaporean Chinese	Singaporean Malay	Singaporean Indian	New Citizen from China	New Citizen from India	New Citizen of Western origin
Chinese	**1-3 room HDB**	98.4%	54.2%	52.2%	58.1%	38.7%	55.3%
	4-room HDB	96.8%	48.1%	48.7%	60.8%	35.7%	57.9%
	5-room HDB	99.2%	52.0%	50.0%	60.9%	38.3%	59.8%
	Private	99.7%	35.7%	40.4%	70.5%	29.5%	58.6%
Malay	**1-3 room HDB**	70.8%	99.3%	67.4%	41.7%	44.4%	58.3%
	4-room HDB	68.2%	98.7%	58.0%	23.6%	21.7%	43.3%
	5-room HDB	80.0%	96.0%	68.0%	32.0%	33.3%	58.7%
	Private	70.6%	94.1%	47.1%	41.2%	41.2%	70.6%
Indian	**1-3 room HDB**	77.0%	74.0%	92.0%	45.0%	70.0%	62.0%
	4-room HDB	61.3%	52.8%	93.7%	30.3%	57.0%	44.4%
	5-room HDB	60.7%	49.4%	94.4%	25.8%	52.8%	44.9%
	Private	68.0%	48.0%	88.0%	34.0%	80.0%	70.0%

3.5 Nearly nine in 10 would rent rooms to Singaporean Chinese, but only half would rent to Malays or Indians

There was an even greater disparity when it comes to Singaporean Malays and Indians, as opposed to Singaporean Chinese, as rental tenants. While the overwhelming majority of respondents would prefer to rent a spare room in their home to Singaporean Chinese (89.8 per cent), only about half of all respondents would consider Malays (51.4 per cent) or Indians (45.4 per cent) as acceptable tenants. The proportions are a little higher for Malays and Indians as tenants in another property owned by the respondent, rather than their own home — respectively, 62.4 per cent and 57.5 per cent. Still, it is much lower than the level of acceptance of Singaporean Chinese renting another property (91.6 per cent).

Respondents' level of comfort with rental tenants was generally lower when renting a spare room in their own home compared to renting another property. This is only to be expected, as renting a room in one's own home would bring the respondent into closer contact with the hypothetical rental tenant (see Table 3.34 below).

Table 3.34: Respondents' racial preferences for tenants

	Singaporean Chinese	Singaporean Malay	Singaporean Indian	New Citizen from China	New Citizen from India	New Citizen of Western origin
To rent a spare room in your home	89.8%	51.4%	45.4%	48.1%	32.4%	45.2%
To rent a property you own	91.6%	62.4%	57.5%	56.5%	43.7%	58.5%

3.5.1 Respondents are more comfortable with renting to tenants belonging to the same race

Respondents' level of comfort with a rental tenant of a different background from themselves was generally lower when renting a spare room in their own home compared to renting another property. For example, about half of the Chinese respondents, or 53.4 per cent, would rent a property to a Singaporean Indian, but only 38.6 per cent would rent a spare room in their own home to a person of this background. This trend was observed in respondents of all races.

Chinese respondents showed a slight preference for new citizens from China as their rental tenants, over non-Chinese Singaporeans. About half of the Chinese respondents, or 51.3 per cent, would rent a spare room in their home to a new citizen from China, compared to 40.8 per cent for Singaporean Malays and 38.6 per cent for Singaporean Indians. Indian respondents did not show a similar preference for new citizens from India over Singaporeans of other races. In addition, Chinese, Malay, and Indian respondents of all ages were highly accepting of their own groups. Towards the other groups, however, younger respondents were in general more accepting (see Tables 3.35 to 3.37 below).

Table 3.35: Racial preferences for renting a spare room, by respondents' race

Racial group	To rent a spare room in your home					
	Singaporean Chinese	Singaporean Malay	Singaporean Indian	New Citizen from China	New Citizen from India	New Citizen of Western origin
Chinese	97.9%	40.8%	38.6%	51.3%	28.4%	44.2%
Malay	55.2%	96.7%	49.6%	28.8%	28.8%	36.9%
Indian	68.2%	65.9%	86.9%	41.5%	59.3%	54.3%
Others	88.9%	88.9%	81.5%	66.7%	74.1%	81.5%

Table 3.36: Racial preferences for renting a property, by respondents' race

Racial group	To rent a property you own					
	Singaporean Chinese	Singaporean Malay	Singaporean Indian	New Citizen from China	New Citizen from India	New Citizen of Western origin
Chinese	97.5%	54.6%	53.4%	60.4%	42.1%	59.5%
Malay	65.9%	96.4%	56.7%	33.3%	33.6%	45.5%
Indian	76.4%	73.2%	89.0%	50.9%	62.5%	60.6%
Others	92.6%	88.9%	77.8%	70.4%	74.1%	81.5%

Table 3.37: Racial preferences for renting a spare room, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		To rent a spare room in your home					
		Singaporean Chinese	Singaporean Malay	Singaporean Indian	New Citizen from China	New Citizen from India	New Citizen of Western origin
Chinese	**21–35**	97.8%	50.9%	48.4%	56.2%	34.5%	54.0%
	36–50	97.1%	42.3%	37.3%	51.6%	28.3%	46.1%
	51–65	98.7%	33.1%	34.4%	47.7%	23.4%	40.9%
	> 65	98.3%	34.8%	32.6%	48.9%	27.0%	32.2%
Malay	**21–35**	63.7%	96.8%	59.7%	36.3%	34.7%	48.4%
	36–50	57.1%	95.2%	48.6%	26.7%	29.5%	34.3%
	51–65	47.2%	96.7%	40.7%	22.8%	22.0%	29.3%
	> 65	48.8%	100.0%	48.8%	29.3%	29.3%	31.7%
Indian	**21–35**	63.4%	65.6%	88.2%	37.6%	58.1%	59.1%
	36–50	63.5%	62.2%	83.8%	41.2%	64.9%	53.4%
	51–65	79.3%	69.6%	92.4%	48.9%	60.9%	55.4%
	> 65	70.8%	70.8%	83.3%	35.4%	41.7%	45.8%

3.5.2 Education differences found regarding comfort levels with property tenants of other races

Chinese respondents displayed strong educational effects in expressing racial preferences. While under three in 10 of those with below secondary education felt that Singaporean Malays and Indians were acceptable as property tenants, around two-thirds of those with university education said the same. There were different effects when it came to new citizens. Over six in 10 of all educational groups save those with secondary or ITE qualifications were accepting of new citizens from China. Meanwhile, 26 per cent of those with below secondary education, compared to 52.8 per cent of university graduates, said they would rent to new citizens from

India. There was more acceptance for new citizens of Western origin, especially from the groups with higher education – compared to 34.2 per cent of those with below secondary education, 74.1 per cent of university graduates would rent to this group.

When asked about local Chinese and Indians as potential property tenants, Malay respondents with higher education were more likely to be accepting. However, the level of acceptance towards new citizens of different origins was lowest for respondents with mid-level education qualifications. Compared to other educational groups amongst Malay respondents, those with secondary or ITE education were least accepting of new citizens from China (31.4 per cent) and those with Western origin (39.1 per cent), while respondents who had diploma qualifications were least accepting of new citizens from India.

Amongst Indian respondents, those with lower education were found to be slightly more accepting of local Chinese and Malays as potential property tenants. When asked about new citizens, those with below secondary education and university education were the most accepting, while those with mid-level education were less so (see Table 3.38 below).

Table 3.38: Racial preferences for renting a property, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		To rent a property you own					
		Singaporean Chinese	Singaporean Malay	Singaporean Indian	New Citizen from China	New Citizen from India	New Citizen of Western origin
Chinese	**Below secondary**	99.3%	28.8%	28.8%	61.0%	26.0%	34.2%
	Secondary / ITE	96.8%	43.8%	44.4%	47.6%	30.5%	43.8%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	98.8%	63.1%	62.2%	64.7%	47.8%	69.1%
	Bachelor's and above	96.8%	66.2%	63.1%	67.5%	52.8%	74.1%
Malay	**Below secondary**	56.6%	94.3%	49.1%	35.8%	35.8%	41.5%
	Secondary / ITE	63.8%	97.6%	54.1%	31.4%	30.9%	39.1%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	68.5%	96.7%	59.8%	28.3%	30.4%	47.8%
	Bachelor's and above	82.9%	92.7%	73.2%	51.2%	51.2%	78.0%
Indian	**Below secondary**	82.8%	89.7%	89.7%	58.6%	65.5%	62.1%
	Secondary / ITE	73.8%	71.5%	86.2%	47.7%	55.4%	57.7%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	75.0%	70.3%	90.6%	42.2%	57.8%	57.8%
	Bachelor's and above	78.3%	73.2%	90.4%	56.1%	70.1%	64.3%

3.5.3 Respondents more likely to change their minds about tenants if regular cleanliness inspections are allowed or tenants are not noisy; around one-third would not change their minds whatsoever

Respondents were also asked which factors would make them reconsider renting a spare room or property to any groups they had not selected. This was a hypothetical situation, given that respondents were not asked whether they actually had to make such decisions in real life before. They were allowed to select any number of relevant responses from the list of options. Their responses revealed the greatest sources of concern about the behaviour of those groups.

About 40.8 per cent of respondents indicated that they might change their mind if the tenants allowed regular inspections to ensure the house or room is being properly cleaned and maintained, while 35.1 per cent said the tenants should not be noisy. Other prevalent factors that affect this decision are tenants promising not to bring their friends home (30.6 per cent) and providing character references from previous landlords to show that they are responsible tenants (30.3 per cent).

More than a third of the respondents who were uncomfortable with renting to at least one racial group indicated that nothing would make them change their minds about this. Given that respondents were given a free response option to write other factors that were not asked about, this 34.2 per cent of respondents are likely fixed in their prejudice against certain groups. No matter the behaviour of these groups as tenants, they would not rent to them (see Table 3.39 below).

Table 3.39: Factors for reconsidering renting a property (ascending order)

Rank	Factors for reconsider renting property	Percentage
1	If they allow regular inspections to ensure the house/room is properly cleaned and maintained	40.8%
2	If they are not noisy	35.1%
3	**Nothing will make me change my mind**	34.2%
4	If they promise not to bring their friends home	30.6%
5	If they provide character references from previous landlords to show they are responsible tenants	30.3%
6	If they do not cook foods with strong smells	24.2%
7	If they agree to pay higher rent	19.3%
8	If they agree to pay rent for the whole year in advance	13.0%

The top few factors that would cause respondents to change their mind about renting are quite similar for Chinese, Malay and Indian respondents, with only marginal differences in the proportions who selected each factor. The only substantial disparity by respondents' race is that minority race respondents were less likely to be swayed by character references from

previous landlords. While 32.1 per cent of Chinese respondents indicated that this would make them reconsider, only 22.8 per cent of Malays and 25.6 per cent of Indians felt this way (see Table 3.40 below).

Table 3.40: Factors for reconsidering renting a property, by respondents' race

Rank	Chinese	Malay	Indian
1	Tenant allows regular inspections to ensure proper maintenance of house/room (41.3%)	Tenant allows regular inspections to ensure proper maintenance of house/room (41.5%)	Tenant allows regular inspections to ensure proper maintenance of house/room (37.0%)
2	Tenant not noisy (35.2%)	Tenant not noisy (35.3%)	Tenant not noisy (34.5%)
3	**Nothing will make me change my mind (34.8%)**	Promise not to bring their friends home (33.2%)	Promise not to bring their friends home (27.7%)
			Nothing will make me change my mind (27.7%)
4	Tenant provides character references from previous landlords (32.1%)	**Nothing will make me change my mind (30.8%)**	Tenant provides character references from previous landlords (25.6%)
5	Promise not to bring their friends home (30.4%)	If they do not cook foods with strong smells (22.8%)	Tenant agrees to pay higher rent (21.8%)
		Tenant provides character references from previous landlords (22.8%)	
6	If they do not cook foods with strong smells (24.7%)	Tenant agrees to pay higher rent (20.8%)	If they do not cook foods with strong smells (19.7%)
7	Tenant agrees to pay higher rent (19.2%)	Tenant agrees to pay rent for the whole year in advance (14.2%)	Tenant agrees to pay rent for the whole year in advance (12.6%)
8	Tenant agrees to pay rent for the whole year in advance (13.0%)		

3.6 Respondents have grown more open to the idea of a non-Chinese Prime Minister or President

Respondents showed the highest preference for Singaporeans, especially Singaporean Chinese, to occupy positions like the Prime Minister or President. Almost all respondents were comfortable with a Singaporean Chinese as the Prime Minister (96.8 per cent) or President (96.1 per cent). Most respondents were also accepting of Singaporean Malays (82.2 per cent) or Indians (82 per cent) as the President. These figures mark an increase from 2016, when they were 65.5 per cent and 70.6 per cent respectively. In other words, people have become more open to the idea of a non-Chinese President. A majority were accepting of Malays or Indians as the Prime Minister too, but the proportions were lower, at 69.6 per cent and 70.5 per cent respectively.

Conversely, respondents were very uncomfortable with the idea of a new citizen from any country taking on these roles. Fewer than 10 per cent of the respondents would be comfortable with a new citizen as President or Prime Minister. These proportions have remained roughly steady since 2016 (see Table 3.41 below).

Table 3.41: Respondents' racial preferences in political representation (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

	Singaporean Chinese	Singaporean Malay	Singaporean Indian	New Citizen from China	New Citizen from India	New Citizen of Western origin
To be the Prime Minister of Singapore	96.8% (95.6%)	69.6% (60.8%)	70.5% (64.3%)	9.1% (6.7%)	8.6% (5.8%)	9.4% (7.1%)
To be the President of Singapore	96.1% (93.2%)	82.2% (65.5%)	82.0% (70.6%)	8.9% (5.9%)	8.6% (4.8%)	9.6% (6.5%)

3.6.1 Respondents from the three major races display some degree of in-group preference for PM and President roles

Chinese, Malay and Indian respondents each showed the highest preference for someone of their own race as Prime Minister or President. For Prime Ministerial candidates, Chinese respondents showed the highest level of in-group preference. Virtually all of them, 98.9 per cent, would accept a Chinese Prime Minister, but only 63.9 per cent would accept a Malay one, while 65.8 per cent would accept an Indian one. Comparatively, 92.6 per cent of Malays would accept a Malay Prime Minister, but 87.5 per cent would be comfortable with a Chinese one and 80.4 per cent with an Indian one. The disparity between levels of acceptability is smaller for Malays than Chinese, and the same holds true for Indians compared to Chinese.

Over time, respondents have grown more accepting of leaders who are of a different race than themselves. For example, while 73 per cent of Indians in 2016 would accept a Malay President, now the figure is 83.7 per cent. There has been an even greater rise in the proportion of Chinese respondents who would accept a non-Chinese President. In 2016, 58.8 per cent of them would accept a Malay President, and this has since increased to 79.4 per cent. Chinese acceptance of an Indian President has also risen, from 67.6 per cent to 79.9 per cent (see Tables 3.42 and 3.43 below). The larger rise may be a result of the current president, Madam Halimah Yaacob being a Malay, dispelling earlier prejudices that a Malay was not suitable for the highest office of the land.

Table 3.42: Racial preferences for the Prime Minister, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	To be the Prime Minister of Singapore					
	Singaporean Chinese	Singaporean Malay	Singaporean Indian	New Citizen from China	New Citizen from India	New Citizen of Western origin
Chinese	98.9% (98.5%)	63.9% (53.3%)	65.8% (59.5%)	8.6% (7.0%)	7.7% (5.8%)	8.5% (6.9%)
Malay	87.5% (86.2%)	92.6% (93.1%)	80.4% (74.9%)	4.6% (2.4%)	4.8% (2.2%)	6.9% (2.6%)
Indian	90.3% (87.6%)	80.8% (70.1%)	91.9% (89.1%)	12.3% (9.7%)	14.4% (10.5%)	15.0% (9.2%)
Others	100.0% (86.7%)	85.2% (80.7%)	88.9% (68.1%)	29.6% (8.7%)	29.6% (6.0%)	29.6% (24.4%)

Table 3.43: Racial preferences for the President, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	To be the President of Singapore					
	Singaporean Chinese	Singaporean Malay	Singaporean Indian	New Citizen from China	New Citizen from India	New Citizen of Western origin
Chinese	98.4% (95.8%)	79.4% (58.8%)	79.9% (67.6%)	8.5% (5.8%)	8.0% (4.8%)	9.0% (6.2%)
Malay	86.8% (84.1%)	95.9% (93.7%)	83.5% (74.5%)	4.6% (2.2%)	4.3% (1.9%)	5.6% (2.4%)
Indian	87.7% (86.7%)	83.7% (73.0%)	94.0% (91.6%)	12.1% (10.5%)	12.9% (12.1%)	13.6% (9.7%)
Others	100.0% (84.4%)	92.6% (84.3%)	96.3% (69.1%)	25.9% (7.3%)	29.6% (5.9%)	29.6% (21.8%)

3.6.2 Racial preferences for leadership roles varied by respondents' housing type

There were not many major differences in responses for these two questions when respondents of the three major races were divided by age, education and socioeconomic backgrounds. The only exception was for Chinese respondents. Chinese private property dwellers appear to be much less likely to indicate acceptance of Singaporean Malays and Indians as Prime Minister compared to the rest of the socioeconomic groups belonging to the same race – while over seven in 10 of Chinese respondents living in public housing said that

Singaporean Malays and Indians being Prime Minister of Singapore was acceptable, only over four in 10 Chinese private property dwellers said the same (see Table 3.44 below).

This finding is interesting given that private housing is exempted from the Ethnic Integration Policy which imposes housing quotas on public housing to ensure a balanced racial mix (see Chapter 4 for a further discussion). While further studies are likely needed to ascertain the connection, it raises questions as to whether living environment or socioeconomic backgrounds could impact citizens' attitudes towards other races in society.

Table 3.44: Racial preferences for the Prime Minister, by respondents' race and housing type

Racial group and housing type		To be the Prime Minister of Singapore					
		Singaporean Chinese	Singaporean Malay	Singaporean Indian	New Citizen from China	New Citizen from India	New Citizen of Western origin
Chinese	**1-3 room HDB**	98.8%	72.7%	75.1%	9.9%	9.9%	9.9%
	4-room HDB	98.7%	70.4%	72.8%	10.1%	9.0%	9.8%
	5-room HDB	98.4%	74.5%	75.4%	8.2%	7.0%	9.4%
	Private	99.7%	40.8%	42.6%	6.3%	5.0%	5.0%
Malay	**1-3 room HDB**	84.7%	93.8%	78.5%	5.6%	5.6%	7.6%
	4-room HDB	87.3%	93.0%	80.3%	3.8%	3.8%	5.7%
	5-room HDB	93.3%	92.0%	84.0%	4.0%	5.3%	6.7%
	Private	88.2%	82.4%	82.4%	5.9%	5.9%	11.8%
Indian	**1-3 room HDB**	92.0%	88.0%	93.0%	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%
	4-room HDB	85.9%	78.2%	92.3%	12.7%	16.2%	15.5%
	5-room HDB	89.9%	76.4%	91.0%	9.0%	9.0%	14.6%
	Private	100.0%	82.0%	90.0%	22.0%	28.0%	24.0%

3.7 Rise in acceptance levels to have professional relationships with Singaporean Malays and Indians; preferences towards Singaporean Chinese remain high

There has also been a rise in comfort levels of Malays and Indians helping to manage one's business. While less than a fifth, or 19.1 per cent, of respondents in 2016 said they were accepting of a new citizen from China to help them manage a business, the proportion has more than doubled in 2021 to 41.1 per cent. The number of respondents who said they were accepting of a new citizen from India for the same role also almost doubled in the last five years, from 17.7 per cent to 33.4 per cent. These proportions are still comparatively low, but they have increased substantially.

In terms of work relationships, respondents had approximately the same level of acceptance for Singaporean Chinese, Malays, and Indians in the roles of colleague or subordinate. There is a disparity, however, for the role of the respondents' hypothetical boss. Whereas 89.2 per cent would be fine with a Singaporean Malay colleague, only 74.7 per cent would want a boss of this race. Meanwhile, 87.4 per cent were comfortable with having a Singaporean Indian colleague, but the figure drops to 73.9 per cent for a boss (see Table 3.45 below).

Table 3.45: Respondents' racial preferences for professional roles (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave, where available)

	Singaporean Chinese	Singaporean Malay	Singaporean Indian	New Citizen from China	New Citizen from India	New Citizen of Western origin
To help you manage your business if you have one	92.9% (93.1%)	58.5% (45.2%)	57.2% (46.0%)	41.1% (19.1%)	33.4% (17.7%)	42.6% (29.1%)
To be your boss	96.4%	74.7%	73.9%	55.3%	51.3%	62.6%
To be your colleague	97.1%	89.2%	87.4%	74.0%	70.4%	74.2%
To be your subordinate	96.9%	82.7%	80.9%	68.5%	64.4%	68.2%

3.7.1 Respondents preferred their own group, followed by Singaporean Chinese to manage their business

For helping to manage a business, Chinese respondents again showed a strong preference for other Chinese persons, with only about half being accepting of a Singaporean Malay (51.9 per cent) or Indian (52.8 per cent) in this role. The preference for Chinese persons to help manage a business was somewhat shared by minority race respondents. After someone of the same nationality and age group as themselves, the next highest preference was for a Chinese person. This was true for both Malay (72.3 per cent) and Indian (73.2 per cent) respondents. Lower proportions would be comfortable with another Singaporean racial minority in this role. For instance, 57.8 per cent of Malays would get an Indian to help manage a business, and 61.7 per cent of Indians would get a Malay to do this.

Respondents of all races prefer Singaporeans of any race to new citizens of any origin for helping to manage a business. This may reflect a certain level of distrust towards foreigners, as no group of new citizens were accepted by at least half the respondents of any race.

However, respondents have grown more accepting of racial minorities and new citizens helping to manage a business in the last five years. For instance, while in 2016, only 16.4 per cent of Indians would accept a new citizen from China in this role, the proportion has now more than doubled to 37.3 per cent. Meanwhile, 61.7 per cent of Indians would now accept a Malay helping to manage their business, up from 42.1 per cent (see Table 3.46 below).

Table 3.46: Racial preferences for managing a business, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	To help you manage your business if you have one					
	Singaporean Chinese	Singaporean Malay	Singaporean Indian	New Citizen from China	New Citizen from India	New Citizen of Western origin
Chinese	98.2% (97.6%)	51.9% (38.4%)	52.8% (41.5%)	43.0% (20.5%)	31.3% (17.1%)	41.8% (29.7%)
Malay	72.3% (82.1%)	90.6% (84.6%)	57.8% (46.7%)	27.0% (13.7%)	27.7% (14.2%)	37.4% (24.3%)
Indian	73.2% (71.9%)	61.7% (42.1%)	86.9% (80.3%)	37.3% (16.4%)	49.6% (27.9%)	45.7% (27.7%)
Others	100.0% (85.2%)	81.5% (52.3%)	81.5% (57.9%)	63.0% (22.7%)	63.0% (24.4%)	77.8% (46.9%)

3.7.2 Higher-educated respondents preferred Singaporean Chinese and their own group to manage their business; new citizens less preferred

For Chinese and Malay respondents, those with higher education levels were more likely to be accepting of local-born Singaporeans from other groups besides their own to manage their business.

Chinese respondents with below secondary education were the most accepting of Singaporean Chinese, but less than four in 10 said they would accept any of the other groups in this role. The most accepted group after Singaporean Chinese was new citizens from China, but even this group was accepted by only 38.4 per cent of Chinese respondents with below secondary education. While the low degree of acceptance for new citizens persisted for Chinese respondents of other educational levels, these groups were more accepting of Singaporean Malays and Indians. In addition, Chinese respondents with higher education were more likely to accept new citizens of Western origin to manage a business.

Malay respondents with higher education were more likely to be accepting of Singaporean Chinese and Indians, while acceptance of their own group did not differ much across educational levels. Interestingly, acceptance of Singaporean Chinese (92.7 per cent) by those with university education was higher than acceptance of Singaporean Malays (85.4 per cent).

When asked about new citizens from China and India, however, Malay respondents with diploma qualifications were the least accepting (22.8 per cent and 23.9 per cent respectively) while the most accepting group was those with below secondary education (35.8 per cent found these groups acceptable). Higher-educated Malay respondents were also more accepting of new citizens of Western origin, but the proportions that indicated thus for each educational group were lower compared to those who found Singaporean Chinese and Indians acceptable.

For Indian respondents, while acceptance of Singaporean Indians did not vary greatly across education levels, this was not the same for the rest of the groups they were asked about. Singaporean Chinese were most accepted by university-educated Indian respondents. When asked about the three groups of new citizens, respondents with secondary or ITE education were the least accepting while the highest and lowest education groups were most accepting (see Table 3.47 below).

Table 3.47: Racial preferences for managing a business, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		To help you manage your business if you have one					
		Singaporean Chinese	Singaporean Malay	Singaporean Indian	New Citizen from China	New Citizen from India	New Citizen of Western origin
Chinese	**Below secondary**	100.0%	32.9%	31.5%	38.4%	26.7%	29.5%
	Secondary / ITE	98.0%	45.5%	45.5%	34.6%	24.5%	33.4%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	97.6%	53.4%	55.0%	45.4%	32.5%	40.2%
	Bachelor's and above	98.1%	61.9%	63.8%	49.6%	37.3%	52.8%
Malay	**Below secondary**	64.2%	88.7%	52.8%	35.8%	35.8%	39.6%
	Secondary / ITE	69.1%	92.8%	54.6%	25.6%	26.6%	33.3%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	75.0%	89.1%	62.0%	22.8%	23.9%	37.0%
	Bachelor's and above	92.7%	85.4%	70.7%	31.7%	31.7%	56.1%
Indian	**Below secondary**	69.0%	72.4%	89.7%	44.8%	58.6%	51.7%
	Secondary / ITE	66.2%	58.5%	90.0%	31.5%	36.9%	37.7%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	78.1%	62.5%	84.4%	32.8%	45.3%	51.6%
	Bachelor's and above	78.3%	62.4%	84.7%	42.7%	60.5%	49.0%

3.7.3 Most respondents accepting of Singaporean bosses, colleagues, and subordinates, less accepting of new citizens

In a workplace setting, there does not appear to be much in-group preference on the part of respondents of any race, whether for all respondents or only those who are currently working. There is mostly no substantial disparity in comfort levels for a Singaporean co-worker of the same race, compared to one of a different race. New citizens, however, were generally less accepted by respondents of all races.

Put another way, most respondents of all races are generally accepting of bosses, colleagues and subordinates of any race, as long as they are Singaporean. One exception to this is that Chinese respondents do not seem very comfortable with having a Malay or Indian as their boss. While about 80 per cent or more of Chinese respondents would be fine with Malays or Indians as colleagues or subordinates, only 71.1 per cent (or 72.1 per cent of working respondents) would want them as bosses.

Minority respondents do not share this preference. Similar proportions of Malay respondents would want a Chinese boss (89.3 per cent of all respondents or 88.3 per cent of working respondents) or a Malay one (89.6 per cent of all respondents or 89.4 per cent of working respondents), while similar proportions of Indian respondents would want a Chinese boss (88.5 per cent of all respondents or 88.1 per cent of working respondents) or an Indian one (87.4 per cent of all respondents or 86.4 per cent of working respondents). However, it may be worth noting that minorities seem to prefer Chinese bosses to bosses of another minority race. While 89.3 per cent of all Malay respondents (or 88.3 per cent of working Malay respondents) would accept a Chinese boss, only 78.4 per cent (or 77.2 per cent of working respondents) would accept an Indian one. Likewise, 88.5 per cent of Indian respondents (or 88.1 per cent of working respondents) would accept a Chinese boss, but a lower proportion of 79.5 per cent (or 78.6 per cent of working respondents) would accept a Malay one (see Tables 3.48 to 3.50 below).

Table 3.48: Racial preferences for bosses, by respondents' race

Racial group and working status		To be your boss					
		Singaporean Chinese	Singaporean Malay	Singaporean Indian	New Citizen from China	New Citizen from India	New Citizen of Western origin
Chinese	All respondents	98.3%	71.1%	71.1%	57.7%	52.2%	63.3%
	Only working respondents	98.4%	72.1%	72.2%	58.4%	52.6%	64.5%
Malay	All respondents	89.3%	89.6%	78.4%	43.0%	42.2%	56.7%
	Only working respondents	88.3%	89.4%	77.2%	40.1%	39.1%	56.2%
Indian	All respondents	88.5%	79.5%	87.4%	49.1%	51.7%	55.8%
	Only working respondents	88.1%	78.6%	86.4%	48.7%	51.7%	57.6%
Others	All respondents	100.0%	88.9%	88.9%	63.0%	63.0%	77.8%
	Only working respondents	100.0%	90.5%	90.5%	69.0%	69.0%	78.6%

Table 3.49: Racial preferences for colleagues, by respondents' race

Racial group and working status		To be your colleague					
		Singaporean Chinese	Singaporean Malay	Singaporean Indian	New Citizen from China	New Citizen from India	New Citizen of Western origin
Chinese	All respondents	98.6%	88.1%	86.7%	77.5%	72.7%	75.9%
	Only working respondents	98.7%	88.6%	87.1%	77.7%	72.6%	76.5%
Malay	All respondents	91.9%	95.4%	86.8%	59.3%	58.0%	64.6%
	Only working respondents	92.0%	96.3%	87.0%	57.1%	55.0%	65.2%
Indian	All respondents	90.6%	86.9%	92.1%	65.1%	68.2%	70.3%
	Only working respondents	88.9%	85.5%	91.5%	66.1%	70.1%	72.6%
Others	All respondents	100.0%	96.3%	96.3%	70.4%	70.4%	81.5%
	Only working respondents	100.0%	95.2%	95.2%	73.8%	73.8%	83.7%

Table 3.50: Racial preferences for subordinates, by respondents' race

Racial group and working status		To be your subordinate					
		Singaporean Chinese	Singaporean Malay	Singaporean Indian	New Citizen from China	New Citizen from India	New Citizen of Western origin
Chinese	All respondents	98.6%	79.9%	78.8%	70.8%	65.2%	68.7%
	Only working respondents	98.4%	81.0%	79.8%	70.2%	64.8%	68.8%
Malay	All respondents	91.3%	94.7%	83.2%	55.5%	55.5%	61.3%
	Only working respondents	92.0%	94.4%	83.9%	53.7%	54.0%	61.5%
Indian	All respondents	89.2%	86.4%	91.6%	65.1%	66.9%	68.0%
	Only working respondents	88.9%	84.7%	90.7%	65.3%	67.5%	69.5%
Others	All respondents	100.0%	96.3%	96.3%	74.1%	74.1%	85.2%
	Only working respondents	100.0%	95.2%	95.2%	73.8%	73.8%	83.7%

E) Racial factors in the workplace

3.8 The racial makeup of a workplace is not a priority for most respondents compared to other factors

Relatedly, respondents were asked about what they prioritised when choosing a workplace. Presented with a list of factors, respondents generally viewed factors that were not related to race as more important. The most commonly selected factors were having a good relationship with colleagues (89.4 per cent), good medical benefits (76.1 per cent) and good career progression prospects (74.8 per cent). Comparatively, only 40 per cent of respondents indicated that racial diversity would make them prefer a workplace.

Only 11.3 per cent of respondents indicated the opposite — that a workplace where most people were of the same race as them would be preferable. In the same vein, the least popular option, selected by 8.2 per cent of respondents, was for the workplace to have few or no members of a certain race. This race was not specified; the factor therefore tracks any racial prejudices for colleagues that respondents may have (see Table 3.51 below).

Table 3.51: Importance of various factors when choosing a workplace

Which of the following factors would make you prefer a workplace? Tick all that apply.	Percentage
Good relationship with colleagues	89.4%
Good medical benefits	76.1%
Good career progression prospects	74.8%
Allows for flexibility (e.g., working hours, dressing)	72.9%
Financial security	70.2%
A work culture that pays attention to the professional development of employees	69.7%
Clear and structured work processes and guidelines	69.3%
Good number of leave days	68.6%
They accommodate diversity in the workplace (e.g., ensure that dietary restrictions are catered for in company celebrations)	44.1%
There is racial diversity among the people who work there	40.0%
Most of the people who work there are of the same race as me	11.3%
There are no or few members of a certain race	8.2%

The top three factors — good relationship with colleagues, good medical benefits, and good career progression prospects — are consistent across respondents of all races.

Race-related factors were generally not popular choices. However, there are some differences in the priorities of minority respondents compared to Chinese respondents when it comes to race-related factors. Minority race respondents were far more likely to value racial diversity in the workplace. More than half, or 55.4 per cent, of Indians expressed this sentiment, compared to 37.1 per cent of Chinese respondents and 47.6 per cent of Malays. To a slightly lesser degree, minorities were also more likely to value a workplace that accommodates diversity. Compared to 42.6 per cent of Chinese respondents who indicated that this factor is important to them, 51.2 per cent of Indian respondents did so, along with 48.9 per cent of Malays (see Table 3.52 below).

Table 3.52: Important factors when choosing a workplace, by respondents' race

Rank	Chinese	Malay	Indian
1	Good relationship with colleagues (90.2%)	Good relationship with colleagues (86.0%)	Good relationship with colleagues (87.7%)
2	Good medical benefits (77.9%)	Good medical benefits (72.8%)	Good medical benefits (69.6%)
			Good career progression prospects (69.6%)
3	Good career progression prospects (76.2%)	Good career progression prospects (69.7%)	A work culture that pays attention to the professional development of employees (66.4%)
4	Allows for flexibility (e.g., working hours, dressing) (74.9%)	Allows for flexibility (e.g., working hours, dressing) (69.5%)	Allows for flexibility (e.g., working hours, dressing) (65.4%)
5	Financial security (72.2%)	A work culture that pays attention to the professional development of employees (67.2%)	Clear and structured work processes and guidelines (64.3%)
6	Clear and structured work processes and guidelines (71.0%)	Clear and structured work processes and guidelines (65.9%)	Financial security (64.0%)
7	A work culture that pays attention to the professional development of employees (70.7%)	Good number of leave days (64.4%)	Good number of leave days (61.9%)
8	Good number of leave days (70.1%)	Financial security (63.9%)	Racial diversity (55.4%)
9	Accommodate diversity in the workplace (42.6%)	Accommodate diversity in the workplace (48.9%)	Accommodate diversity in the workplace (51.2%)
10	Racial diversity (37.1%)	Racial diversity (47.6%)	No or few members of a certain race (8.7%)
11	Most of the people who work there are of the same race as me (12.7%)	No or few members of a certain race (9.9%)	Most of the people who work there are of the same race as me (7.6%)
12	No or few members of a certain race (8.1%)	Most of the people who work there are of the same race as me (7.4%)	

3.8.1 Most people are comfortable with job interviewees of any race, but respondents were divided over practices such as racial quotas

To further investigate perceptions of racial bias or prejudice in a workplace setting, the respondents were asked how comfortable they were with various hiring practices. Most respondents were comfortable or very comfortable with most of the practices that were asked about. In particular, the race of the job interviewer does not seem to be a source of concern for respondents. An overwhelming majority was comfortable or very comfortable with being interviewed by someone of the same race (97.4 per cent) and being interviewed by someone

of another race (95.4 per cent). There were also no major racial differences in these stated preferences.

Respondents were divided over the practice of being hired to meet a racial quota, with 53.4 per cent of respondents feeling uncomfortable or very uncomfortable with this. This was also the aspect that had the highest proportion of respondents indicating some level of discomfort.

Respondents seemed comfortable with speaking English in the workplace by default, as 88.9 per cent of them were comfortable or very comfortable with such an expectation. A lower proportion of 71.7 per cent were comfortable or very comfortable with being told that a job requires one to be able to speak Mandarin.

There were a few questions relating to respondents' religion as well. Most respondents were broadly comfortable with being asked about their religion during the interview (74.2 per cent) and whether they considered themselves religious (71.2 per cent). However, there was some discomfort with being told that visible religious symbols cannot be displayed or worn in the workplace, with a much lower proportion of 57 per cent feeling comfortable or very comfortable with this (see Table 3.53 below). It seems that respondents are willing to have a potential employer ask about their religion and religiosity, but are less comfortable with being told to curtail aspects of their religious practice.

Table 3.53: Comfort levels with various hiring practices

	Very uncomfortable	Uncomfortable	Comfortable	Very comfortable
Being told that the ability to speak Mandarin is a requirement	10.7%	17.6%	52.7%	19.0%
Being interviewed by someone of another race	0.7%	3.9%	59.8%	35.6%
Being told that employees are expected to speak English in the workplace	2.8%	8.2%	59.7%	29.2%
Being interviewed by someone of the same race as you	0.6%	2.0%	59.1%	38.3%
Being told that visible religious symbols cannot be displayed or worn in the workplace	13.8%	29.2%	49.3%	7.7%
Being hired to meet a racial quota	20.7%	32.7%	40.1%	6.5%
Being asked about your religion during the interview	8.1%	17.7%	49.0%	25.2%
Being asked about if you are religious during the interview	9.2%	19.6%	46.9%	24.3%

3.8.2 Views on Mandarin-speaking job requirement varied by respondents' race

It is not surprising to see that minority races were much less comfortable than Chinese respondents with Mandarin-speaking ability being a job requirement. About 73.1 per cent of

Malays and 75.3 per cent of Indians felt this way, compared to just 14.7 per cent of Chinese respondents (see Table 3.54 below).

More than half of all respondents (*N* = 1,155) primarily spoke English rather than their Mother Tongues. Interestingly, 67.7 per cent of English-speakers were nevertheless comfortable or very comfortable with being told that Mandarin-speaking ability is a job requirement (see Table 3.55 below). Given that 73.5 per cent of English-speakers belong to the Chinese race, it is highly likely that most or all of those who indicate high comfort levels are Chinese who possess bilingual abilities in both Mandarin and English.

In contrast, a majority of respondents across all races were comfortable with an English-speaking workplace (see Table 3.56 below). Respondents who primarily spoke Malay or Tamil expectedly preferred to speak English in the workplace than to be required to speak Mandarin. While 74.2 per cent of those who primarily spoke Malay were uncomfortable or very uncomfortable with speaking Mandarin, only 6.8 per cent of them felt this way about speaking English instead (see Tables 3.55 and 3.57). Likewise, 76.8 per cent of Tamil speakers were uncomfortable with being required to speak Mandarin, but only 10.4 per cent felt this way about English. It is likely that English is seen as a common language between people of different races in Singapore, whereas a Mandarin-speaking workplace may inadvertently result in discrimination against non-Chinese in hiring, or in social exclusion even after being hired.

Table 3.54: Views on Mandarin-speaking job requirement, by respondents' race

Racial group	Being told that the ability to speak Mandarin is a requirement			
	Very uncomfortable	Uncomfortable	Comfortable	Very comfortable
Chinese	3.1%	11.6%	61.0%	24.3%
Malay	37.2%	35.9%	23.7%	3.3%
Indian	35.7%	39.6%	22.8%	1.8%
Others	22.2%	29.6%	48.1%	0.0%

Table 3.55: Views on Mandarin-speaking job requirement, by respondents' most commonly spoken language

Primary language	Being told that the ability to speak Mandarin is a requirement			
	Very uncomfortable	Uncomfortable	Comfortable	Very comfortable
English	13.1%	19.2%	51.1%	16.6%
Mandarin	0.6%	8.8%	61.8%	28.8%
Malay	32.1%	42.1%	20.8%	5.1%
Tamil	33.5%	43.3%	20.8%	2.3%
Other languages	7.7%	11.8%	67.8%	12.8%

Table 3.56: Views on English-speaking workplace, by respondents' race

Racial group	Being told that employees are expected to speak English in the workplace			
	Very uncomfortable	Uncomfortable	Comfortable	Very comfortable
Chinese	3.4%	9.4%	59.3%	27.9%
Malay	0.5%	4.6%	59.8%	35.1%
Indian	1.0%	4.5%	59.8%	34.6%
Others	3.7%	3.7%	70.4%	22.2%

Table 3.57: Views on English-speaking workplace, by respondents' most commonly spoken language

Primary language	Being told that employees are expected to speak English in the workplace			
	Very uncomfortable	Uncomfortable	Comfortable	Very comfortable
English	0.6%	3.3%	58.0%	38.1%
Mandarin	7.5%	16.4%	60.3%	15.8%
Malay	0.5%	6.3%	65.3%	27.8%
Tamil	0.0%	10.4%	64.1%	25.4%
Other languages	4.9%	17.0%	67.7%	10.4%

3.8.3 Over two-thirds of minority race respondents uncomfortable about being hired to meet racial quota

Minority races were more likely than Chinese respondents to be uncomfortable with being hired to meet a racial quota. While Chinese respondents were evenly split on this issue, 65.7 per cent of Malays and 68.7 per cent of Indians were opposed to such a practice (see Table 3.58 below). The disparity may be due to Chinese respondents being less likely to be the target of such quotas.

Table 3.58: Views on racial quotas in jobs, by respondents' race

Racial group	Being hired to meet a racial quota			
	Very uncomfortable	Uncomfortable	Comfortable	Very comfortable
Chinese	19.2%	30.2%	44.0%	6.6%
Malay	26.5%	39.2%	28.2%	6.1%
Indian	27.0%	41.7%	26.8%	4.5%
Others	18.5%	44.4%	25.9%	11.1%

3.8.4 Roman Catholics and Muslim respondents least comfortable with restrictions of religious-related symbols in workplace

Six in 10 respondents who identified as Roman Catholic were uncomfortable or very uncomfortable with being told that they would not be allowed to display or wear visible religious symbols in a workplace. Respondents of this religion were most uncomfortable with this, followed by Muslims (55.9 per cent).

Meanwhile, Christian and Hindu respondents were divided on this issue, with slightly over half of each group indicating some level of discomfort. Finally, Buddhist and Taoist respondents, as well as those with no religion, were more comfortable with such a regulation, with over six in 10 indicating thus (see Table 3.59 below), likely because these groups are less likely to have visible displays of their religious affiliation in the first place. Meanwhile, there were not enough respondents who identified with other religions, such as Sikhism (*N* = 7), to report meaningful statistics about their sentiments on this issue.

Table 3.59: Views on workplace regulations prohibiting the wearing of religious symbols, by respondents' religion

Religion	Being told that visible religious symbols cannot be displayed or worn in the workplace			
	Very uncomfortable	Uncomfortable	Comfortable	Very comfortable
Buddhism	8.4%	27.4%	55.3%	8.9%
Taoism / Traditional Chinese beliefs	11.6%	24.0%	56.7%	7.7%
Christianity	17.5%	35.4%	42.1%	4.9%
Catholicism	21.8%	38.2%	35.0%	5.0%
Islam	23.8%	32.1%	40.4%	3.7%
Hinduism	17.0%	34.9%	40.6%	7.5%
No religion	10.7%	25.3%	53.3%	10.8%

Buddhist respondents were the most comfortable with being asked about their religion during a job interview, with 81.7 per cent indicating this. A majority of Muslim and Hindu respondents felt the same way, but the proportions were lower at 64.1 per cent and 61.4 per cent respectively (see Table 3.60 below).

Table 3.60: Views on being asked about religion, by respondents' religion

Religion	Being asked about your religion during the interview			
	Very uncomfortable	Uncomfortable	Comfortable	Very comfortable
Buddhism	4.2%	14.1%	54.8%	26.9%
Taoism / Traditional Chinese beliefs	3.9%	18.6%	55.9%	21.6%
Christianity	7.7%	16.3%	48.1%	27.9%
Catholicism	7.0%	19.9%	50.3%	22.8%
Islam	14.9%	21.1%	41.9%	22.2%
Hinduism	11.2%	27.4%	42.7%	18.7%
No religion	10.1%	17.9%	44.8%	27.2%

Respondents of all religions were generally fine with being asked if they were religious, but the level of comfort varied. For instance, most Buddhist respondents, or 80.3 per cent, were comfortable or very comfortable with this, while substantially lower proportions of Muslims (59.6 per cent) and Hindus (60.6 per cent) felt this way (see Table 3.61 below).

Table 3.61: Views on being asked about religiosity, by respondents' religion

Religion	Being asked about if you are religious during the interview			
	Very uncomfortable	Uncomfortable	Comfortable	Very comfortable
Buddhism	4.6%	15.1%	55.4%	24.9%
Taoism / Traditional Chinese beliefs	4.6%	20.4%	55.7%	19.3%
Christianity	11.3%	20.8%	38.9%	29.0%
Catholicism	6.6%	24.0%	48.3%	21.1%
Islam	16.4%	24.0%	36.0%	23.6%
Hinduism	11.6%	27.8%	41.5%	19.1%
No religion	11.1%	18.9%	44.8%	25.2%

Chapter 4

Perceptions of race-related policies

CHAPTER 4 | PERCEPTIONS OF RACE-RELATED POLICIES

4.1 OVERALL FINDINGS

This chapter details findings on public sentiments towards policies related to race. Understanding public sentiments and perceptions towards policy is recognised as important to formulate effective public policies (Charalabidis et al., 2015).

Over the years, policies to manage racial diversity in Singapore have come under substantial scrutiny. Earlier studies critiqued Singapore's state-sanctioned multiracialism (Benjamin, 1975). Some of these critiques have gone as far as suggesting, as Zainal and Abdullah (2019) have asserted more recently, that the "PAP's race-based approach to policies inadvertently perpetuated Chinese privilege". This is of course not a new observation. Gomez (2010) had earlier argued that race-based policies have been the basis of racial discrimination in Singapore and that policy changes in Singapore can only take place as a result of politically challenging the PAP.

In terms of specific policies, the CMIO model has commonly been criticised for enabling racially discriminating assumptions to be formed and perpetuated in society (Chua, 2003; Reddy, 2016; Rocha & Yeoh, 2021). The colonial roots of CMIO have also been argued as problematic due the British practice of racial stereotyping, which attached and perpetuated inaccurate generalisations to different groups of people (Reddy, 2016).

The existence of Special Assistance Plan (SAP) schools has also been frequently brought up in relation to discussions on meritocracy and institutional biases. Nonetheless, they mostly surface in mainstream media discourses rather than as subjects of academic studies. An article published on alternative media, RICE Media, for example, opined that "as long as SAP schools exists, 'Chinese elitism' in Singapore will exist" (Pang, 2019). Lim (2012) provides a more sympathetic and nuanced explanation. While acknowledging that SAP schools seem invariably designed "to immerse students in Chinese culture and values" and could lead to ethnic segregation, he placed this in the context of an inherent philosophical dilemma which Singapore is in. This dilemma broadly refers to the paradox of upholding meritocracy and multiracialism at the same time. Addressing the growing concerns and discontentment with the principles and effects of SAP schools, then-Education Minister Ong Ye Kung stated in one of his speeches that the system should remain in place but with areas for improvement (Baharudin, 2019).

Some have also called for reforms and abolishment of race-based policies in Singapore on grounds that they are no longer relevant or compatible with existing norms. Kathiravelu (2017), for example, argued that the occurrence of racist incidents proves that Singapore's meritocracy and multiracialism are not successful as perceived. To this end, she argued that dismantling the racially harmonious myth is needed by "rethinking race" in ways which are "beyond the CMIO categorisations". The need to abandon these policies to deal with the "real" or changing social landscape of Singapore has also found expression outside the academic field. In 2020, Workers' Party chairman Sylvia Lim called for a review of such policies in order to advance Singapore toward a "race-blind society" (Kurohi, 2020). Online commentaries have also criticised the CMIO and EIP as "old values" and "inflexible ideologies" that have become obsolete (Sim, 2021).

The policies relating to CMIO, EIP and SAP schools have been longstanding controversial issues. In recent years, Singapore's bilingual policy has also been increasingly criticised on grounds of its growing irrelevance and hence pernicious effects. One perspective justifying the irrelevance of Singapore's language policies is the increasing dominance of the use of English over one's Mother Tongue. Tan (2014) interviewed over 400 Singaporeans and found that English has penetrated the psyche of the everyday Singaporean. From that, he argued that English should be reconceptualised as a new Mother Tongue.

There has also been a rise in academic analysis and evaluation of the Reserved Presidency, since the 2017 Presidential elections, which President Halimah Yacob won uncontested (SMU Apolitical & Ng, 2017; Abdul Aziz, 2017). Unsurprisingly, most of this literature argues that state rationales for the reserved presidency are inadequate (Neo & Jhaveri, 2019) and actually undermine the credibility and potency of the PAP government (Osman & Waikar, 2019). The debate surrounding this policy is not just about politics, but about people's perceptions, values and notions of fairness, which have to be properly engaged with (Chan, 2016).

4.1.1 Racial Harmony Day most well-received, SAP schools least so

Respondents were asked about their thoughts regarding several policies that had elements relating to multiracialism in society. Specifically, they were asked whether the policies (1) help to preserve racial harmony in Singapore, (2) disadvantage minorities, (3) disadvantage the majority race, (4) safeguard minority rights, (5) make the respondent feel less Singaporean and more as part of their racial group and (6) should be scrapped, kept as they are or enhanced further.

These questions were modified from the original set in the 2016 survey, which asked respondents for their opinions on the Ethnic Quota Housing Policy, Group Representative Constituency, Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act, CMIO categorisation, and Racial Harmony Day. The aspects included in the survey were whether the policies (1) help build trust between the races, (2) foster greater interaction between races and (3) safeguard minority rights. Given the relatively different sets of questions across the two survey iterations, comparisons will only be made where relevant.

The 11 policies included in the 2021 survey are listed in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: List of policies related to multiracialism

Policy Name	Overview of policy
Ethnic Integration Policy (EIP)	Housing quotas to ensure a balanced ethnic mix across public housing estates and prevent the formation of racial enclaves
Group Representation Constituency (GRC)	Policy ensuring that Parliament will always be multi-racial in composition
Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act (MRHA)	Laws to separate politics and religion, and safeguard against foreign influence
Sedition Act	Policy that allows for firm punishment of those who make statements that cause ill will between different races
CMIO race categories	Framework to classify Singaporeans by their race as Chinese, Malay, Indian, or Others
Ethnic Self-Help Groups	The setting up of CDAC, Mendaki, SINDA, and Eurasian Association to enable targeted community-based assistance (e.g., financial assistance, tuition, after school care)
Racial Harmony Day	Annual commemoration of Singapore's multiracial, harmonious society
Double-barreled race classification	The policy that children whose parents are of different races can have a dual racial classification reflected on their IC
Mother Tongue Policy	The policy that students learn their official mother tongue in school, e.g. if you are Chinese, you do Mandarin; if you are Malay, you do Bahasa Melayu
Special Assistance Plan (SAP) schools	Designated schools offering non-examinable subjects in Mandarin, and only Mandarin as Mother Tongue
Reserved Presidency	Policy to ensure that minority racial communities have an opportunity to be represented

Comparing overall policy sentiments, we found that Racial Harmony Day was the most well-received — it was least likely to be perceived as disadvantaging minorities or the majority race; respondents were least likely to feel that it made them feel less Singaporean and it had the highest proportion (65.6 per cent) supporting its retention. It was also the most well-received policy when the survey was conducted in 2016, with 85.2 per cent saying that it helps to build trust between the races and 87.5 per cent saying it fosters great interaction between the races.

Meanwhile, the Sedition Act was deemed to be the most useful for preserving racial harmony and safeguarding minority rights. In contrast, SAP schools were the least popular as a policy (see Table 4.2 below). When examining reactions across racial groups, the divisions occur mostly in on whether the policies preserve racial harmony, disadvantage minorities, or safeguard minority rights. In contrast, even for policies that are less well-received, the vast majority of respondents across the three major races do not believe that the majority race is disadvantaged by them.

Table 4.2: Sentiments towards policies

Policy Name	Helps preserve racial harmony	Disadvantage minorities	Disadvantage majority race	Safeguards minority rights	Feel less SGrean; more part of racial group	Scrapped / Kept / Enhanced?
EIP	77.9%	15.5%	**9.1%**	49.9%	14.4%	Kept (59.0%)
GRC	77.1%	10.9%	8.1%	53.1%	13.6%	Kept (60.3%)
MRHA	77.7%	8.4%	5.7%	46.9%	12.4%	Kept (58.6%)
Sedition Act	**81.2%**	9.3%	6.3%	**54.6%**	12.7%	Kept (59.4%)
CMIO	63.0%	14.9%	6.5%	38.6%	15.8%	Kept (61.4%)
Ethnic Self-Help Groups	70.3%	9.5%	6.6%	50.0%	14.6%	Kept (60.0%)
Racial Harmony Day	80.4%	**6.0%**	**4.2%**	50.0%	**10.9%**	**Kept (65.6%)**
Double-barreled race classification	58.3%	8.7%	5.0%	39.0%	12.2%	Kept (55.0%)
Mother Tongue Policy	66.8%	11.6%	6.4%	46.1%	15.3%	Kept (63.3%)
SAP schools	**41.5%**	**22.1%**	6.2%	**24.2%**	**17.2%**	**Kept (48.4%)**
Reserved Presidency	70.4%	14.1%	**9.1%**	49.6%	13.8%	Kept (57.3%)

Note: Most positive ratings are in **bold**, while least positive ones are in **red.**

4.1.2 Top three and bottom three policies in preserving racial harmony similar for respondents of the three major races; however, proportions indicating so differ, especially for bottom three policies

On the whole, Chinese respondents were more likely to rate policies positively for preserving racial harmony — the proportion of Chinese respondents supporting the top three policies was over eight in 10, compared to over seven in 10 for Malay and Indian respondents. For respondents of all three major races, the most highly-rated policy in preserving racial harmony was the Sedition Act. Even so, Chinese respondents (83.5 per cent) were more likely than Malay (74 per cent) and Indian (73.8 per cent) respondents to believe that it preserves racial harmony in Singapore. The proportion supporting Racial Harmony Day and policies such as the EIP, GRC and MHRA are fairly close (see Table 4.3 below).

Table 4.3: Most highly-rated policies in preserving racial harmony

Rank	Most highly-rated policies (Preserve racial harmony)		
	Chinese	Malay	Indian
1	Sedition Act (83.5%)	Sedition Act (74.0%)	Sedition Act (73.8%)
2	Racial Harmony Day (82.6%)	Racial Harmony Day (72.5%)	Racial Harmony Day (73.2%)
3	EIP (81.3%)	GRC (72.5%)	MRHA (71.4%)

The three least popular policies were the same for Chinese and Indian respondents — SAP schools were the least popular, followed by the double-barreled race classification and CMIO. Indian respondents in general viewed these three policies less positively than Chinese respondents. Meanwhile, the three least popular policies for Malay respondents were SAP schools (27.7 per cent), CMIO (56.5 per cent), and ethnic self-help groups (62.1 per cent) (see Table 4.4 below). While the top three and bottom three policies were largely similar for respondents of these three races, the differences in proportions indicate that majority race respondents perceive all the race-related policies more positively compared to minority race respondents.

Table 4.4: Least highly-rated policies in preserving racial harmony

Rank	Least highly-rated policies (Preserve racial harmony)		
	Chinese	Malay	Indian
1	SAP schools (45.9%)	SAP schools (27.7%)	SAP schools (25.2%)
2	Double-barreled race classification (59.5%)	CMIO (56.5%)	Double-barreled race classification (53.5%)
3	CMIO (65.6%)	Ethnic Self-Help Groups (62.1%)	CMIO (55.1%)

4.2 Eight in 10 felt overarching policies (CMIO and double-barreled race classification) did not disadvantage majority race; of the two, CMIO deemed more effective in preserving racial harmony, but less so in preserving minority rights

In Singapore, policies related to race is governed by the overarching classification system that divides the population into four main racial groups, namely Chinese, Malay, Indian, and Others, or CMIO for short. Building upon this overarching categorisation, double-barreled race classification was implemented on 1 January 2011 to allow some flexibility of race classification for children born to parents of different races.

When it comes to preserving racial harmony in Singapore, the CMIO classification received more positive responses (63 per cent) compared to double-barreled race classification (58.3 per cent). Around eight in 10 respondents also felt that both policies did not disadvantage the majority race, and around seven in 10 did not believe that it made them feel less Singaporean. However, the CMIO policy was viewed more negatively with respect to minority treatment, with

a larger proportion (14.9 per cent versus 8.7 per cent) believing that it disadvantages minorities and that it does not safeguard minority rights (42.7 per cent versus 38.5 per cent). Additionally, larger proportions chose the "don't know" option across all questions when asked about the double-barreled race classification sentiments, indicating that sentiments towards this policy were less clear overall compared to the CMIO classification (see Table 4.5).

Support for keeping the CMIO policy (61.4 per cent) was higher compared to the double-barreled race classification (55 per cent). However, this difference was also predicated on the fact that over one in five respondents did not have a clear stance on the double-barreled race policy (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.5: Sentiments about CMIO and Double-Barreled Race Classification Part 1

Do you think this policy…	Policy	Yes	No	Don't know
Helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore	CMIO	63.0%	21.7%	15.3%
	Double-barreled race	58.3%	22.4%	19.3%
Disadvantages minorities	CMIO	14.9%	72.8%	12.2%
	Double-barreled race	8.7%	76.0%	15.3%
Disadvantages the majority race	CMIO	6.5%	81.6%	11.9%
	Double-barreled race	5.0%	80.2%	14.7%
Safeguards minority rights	CMIO	38.6%	42.7%	18.7%
	Double-barreled race	39.0%	38.5%	22.5%
Makes me feel less Singaporean and more as part of my racial group	CMIO	15.8%	71.9%	12.4%
	Double-barreled race	12.2%	72.2%	15.6%

Table 4.6: Sentiments about CMIO and Double-Barreled Race Classification Part 2

Do you think this policy…	Scrapped	Kept	Enhanced further	Don't know
CMIO	9.7%	61.4%	15.1%	13.7%
Double-barreled race classification	7.9%	55.0%	15.6%	21.5%

4.2.1 Respondents from minority races less likely to feel that CMIO preserves racial harmony; higher-educated respondents across all races also less likely to believe so

Racial differences were found all the questions regarding the CMIO categorisation, with respondents from the minority races being less satisfied. Notably, around 56 per cent of Malay and Indian respondents said that CMIO helps to preserve racial harmony, compared to nearly two-thirds of Chinese respondents. There were also much larger proportions of minority respondents indicating that CMIO *did not* preserve racial harmony. Compared to 19 per cent of Chinese respondents, 26.5 per cent of Malay respondents and 33.1 per cent of Indian respondents gave this answer (see Table 4.6).

There was also a pronounced education effect. Higher-educated respondents across the three major races were less likely to agree that CMIO helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore. Over three-quarters of respondents with below secondary education from all three major races felt that the policy preserves racial harmony in Singapore. In contrast, 59.7 per cent of Chinese university graduates, 34.1 per cent of Malay university graduates and 42.7 per cent of Indian university graduates said the same (see Table 4.8 below).

Table 4.7: CMIO preserves racial harmony, by respondents' race

Racial group	CMIO helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	65.6%	19.0%	15.4%
Malay	56.5%	26.5%	17.0%
Indian	55.1%	33.1%	11.8%
Others	48.1%	37.0%	14.8%

Table 4.8: CMIO preserves racial harmony, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		CMIO helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	**Below secondary**	79.5%	5.5%	15.1%
	Secondary / ITE	67.1%	17.9%	15.0%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	66.3%	22.1%	11.6%
	Bachelor's and above	59.7%	22.4%	17.9%
Malay	**Below secondary**	75.5%	15.1%	9.4%
	Secondary / ITE	58.0%	25.1%	16.9%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	52.2%	25.0%	22.8%
	Bachelor's and above	34.1%	51.2%	14.6%
Indian	**Below secondary**	82.8%	13.8%	3.4%
	Secondary / ITE	64.6%	26.2%	9.2%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	54.7%	35.9%	9.4%
	Bachelor's and above	42.7%	40.8%	16.6%

4.2.2 Majority race respondents much more positive about how the different races fare under the CMIO policy

Perceptions on how the majority and minority races fare under the CMIO policy also differed. The vast majority of Chinese respondents felt that CMIO did not disadvantage minorities (77.3 per cent) and did not disadvantage the majority race (83.1 per cent). While over three-quarters of Malay and Indian respondents also agreed that the majority race was not disadvantaged,

they were less positive about how minorities have fared, with only around six in 10 of Malay (59 per cent) and Indian (61.9 per cent) saying that minorities were not disadvantaged.

Interestingly, perceptions about whether the policy safeguards minority rights have altered quite drastically compared to 2016. While between two-thirds and three-quarters of Chinese, Malay and Indian respondents in 2016 felt that the policy safeguards minority rights, only around four in 10 across all three major races felt so in 2021. Meanwhile, larger proportions of minority race respondents felt that the CMIO categorisation made them feel less Singaporean and more part of their own racial group. Compared to 14.5 per cent of Chinese respondents, 18.6 per cent of Malay respondents and 23.1 per cent of Indian respondents felt this way (see Tables 4.9 to 4.12 below).

Table 4.9: CMIO disadvantages minorities, by respondents' race

Racial group	CMIO disadvantages minorities		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	11.2%	77.3%	11.5%
Malay	24.9%	59.0%	16.0%
Indian	27.3%	61.9%	10.8%
Others	33.3%	48.1%	18.5%

Table 4.10: CMIO disadvantages the majority race, by respondents' race

Racial group	CMIO disadvantages the majority race		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	5.9%	83.1%	11.0%
Malay	8.9%	75.1%	16.0%
Indian	9.4%	79.5%	11.0%
Others	3.7%	77.8%	18.5%

Table 4.11: CMIO safeguards minority rights, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	CMIO safeguards minority rights		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	39.0% (73.1%)	42.8% (6.3%)	18.2% (20.6%)
Malay	38.9% (65.5%)	39.4% (8.4%)	21.6% (26.1%)
Indian	39.4% (64.0%)	44.4% (8.4%)	16.3% (27.6%)
Others	25.9% (67.6%)	48.1% (11.0%)	25.9% (21.4%)

Table 4.12: CMIO makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group, by respondents' race

Racial group	CMIO makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	14.5%	74.1%	11.4%
Malay	18.6%	64.4%	17.0%
Indian	23.1%	63.3%	13.6%
Others	14.8%	70.4%	14.8%

4.2.3 While two-thirds of Chinese respondents want to retain the original CMIO policy, less than half of Malay and Indian respondents say the same; older respondents in general more supportive of keeping policy

It is therefore not surprising to see two-thirds of Chinese respondents, compared to under half of Malay and Indian respondents, preferring to keep the CMIO policy as it is. Indian respondents were the least supportive of the policy amongst the three major races, with the lowest proportion (43.6 per cent compared to 49.9 per cent of Malay respondents and 66 per cent of Chinese respondents) indicating that they wanted to retain the policy as it is, 25.5 per cent wanting the policy to be further enhanced and nearly one in five wanting to scrap it altogether.

When the three major races were further divided by age, younger respondents were less likely to support keeping the policy as it is. Older Chinese respondents were the most supportive, with 76 per cent of those aged 51 to 65 and 70 per cent of those older than 65 wanting to retain the policy. On the other end of the spectrum, only under four in 10 of Malay and Indian respondents aged 21 to 50 felt that the policy should be retained. In addition, the second most popular option after keeping it for Indian respondents aged 21 to 35 was scrapping the policy (24.7 per cent) (see Tables 4.13 and 4.14 below).

Table 4.13: CMIO policy suggestions, by respondents' race

Racial group	CMIO should be scrapped, kept as it is, or enhanced further			
	Scrapped	Kept as it is	Enhanced further	Don't know
Chinese	8.0%	66.0%	12.8%	13.3%
Malay	10.7%	49.9%	21.6%	17.8%
Indian	19.4%	43.6%	25.5%	11.5%
Others	22.2%	44.4%	18.5%	14.8%

Table 4.14: CMIO policy suggestions, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		CMIO should be scrapped, kept as it is, or enhanced further			
		Scrapped	Kept as it is	Enhanced further	Don't know
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	12.1%	55.6%	16.1%	16.1%
	36–50 years old	8.2%	64.1%	12.2%	15.5%
	51–65 years old	4.2%	76.0%	12.3%	7.5%
	Above 65 years old	6.9%	70.0%	9.4%	13.7%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	14.5%	37.9%	25.0%	22.6%
	36–50 years old	8.6%	36.2%	30.5%	24.8%
	51–65 years old	8.1%	68.3%	13.8%	9.8%
	Above 65 years old	12.2%	65.9%	12.2%	9.8%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	24.7%	38.7%	22.8%	14.0%
	36–50 years old	24.3%	36.5%	27.0%	12.2%
	51–65 years old	10.9%	50.0%	29.3%	9.8%
	Above 65 years old	10.4%	62.5%	18.8%	8.3%

4.2.4 No major racial differences in most opinions about double-barreled race classification; minorities slightly more likely to believe it disadvantages minorities

There were no major racial differences when it came to whether the double-barreled race classification preserves racial harmony — over five in 10 of respondents from the three major races believed it is effective in doing so while over two in 10 disagreed. Opinions about whether the double-barreled race classification safeguards minority rights and disadvantages the majority race were also not that different across the three major races. Around four in 10 of Chinese, Malay and Indian respondents agreed that it safeguards minority rights, around one-third of them disagreed, while another one-quarter did not have a strong opinion about this issue. Meanwhile, under 8 per cent of Chinese, Malay and Indian respondents said that it disadvantages the majority race, between seven to eight in 10 disagreed, and under 19 per cent did not have an opinion. Meanwhile, respondents belonging to minority races were slightly

more likely to agree that the policy disadvantages minorities and Indian respondents were more likely to agree that the policy makes them feel less Singaporean and more a part of their racial group (see Tables 4.15 to 4.19 below).

Table 4.15: Double-Barreled Race Classification preserves racial harmony, by respondents' race

Racial group	Double-Barreled Race Classification helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	59.5%	21.6%	18.9%
Malay	55.0%	22.4%	22.6%
Indian	53.5%	25.7%	20.7%
Others	55.6%	33.3%	11.1%

Table 4.16: Double-Barreled Race Classification disadvantages minorities, by respondents' race

Racial group	Double-Barreled Race Classification disadvantages minorities		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	7.1%	78.6%	14.3%
Malay	12.7%	70.2%	17.0%
Indian	15.0%	65.6%	19.4%
Others	14.8%	63.0%	22.2%

Table 4.17: Double-Barreled Race Classification disadvantages the majority race, by respondents' race

Racial group	Double-Barreled Race Classification disadvantages the majority race		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	4.6%	81.9%	13.5%
Malay	6.4%	76.1%	17.6%
Indian	7.6%	73.5%	18.9%
Others	3.7%	74.1%	22.2%

Table 4.18: Double-Barreled Race Classification safeguards minority rights, by respondents' race

Racial group	Double-Barreled Race Classification safeguards minority rights		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	38.6%	39.3%	22.1%
Malay	41.0%	33.8%	25.2%
Indian	38.8%	36.5%	24.7%
Others	40.7%	44.4%	14.8%

Table 4.19: Double-Barreled Race Classification makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group, by respondents' race

Racial group	Double-Barreled Race Classification makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	11.7%	73.8%	14.5%
Malay	11.5%	70.0%	18.6%
Indian	16.8%	63.3%	19.9%
Others	14.8%	66.7%	18.5%

4.2.5 Minority race respondents and higher-educated respondents across all races were less likely to prefer retaining the double-barreled race classification as-is, more likely to suggest enhancing the policy

Respondents belonging to the three major races had different opinions about the policy of double-barreled race classification. Keeping the policy was the most popular choice for respondents of all three races but minority race respondents were less likely to choose it — 57.5 per cent of Chinese, 50.9 per cent of Malays and 43.8 per cent of Indians chose this option. In addition, 20.9 per cent of Malays and 23.9 per cent of Indians, compared with 13.7 per cent of Chinese preferred to enhance the policy further. Regardless, one in five Chinese, Malay and Indian respondents did not have a strong opinion about the policy (see Table 4.20 below).

In addition, higher-educated respondents across the three major races were more likely to suggest enhancing the current policy. While 4.8 per cent of Chinese, 17 per cent of Malays and 13.8 per cent of Indians with below secondary education chose this option, the corresponding proportions for those with university education were 15.1 per cent, 34.1 per cent and 28 per cent (see Table 4.21 below).

Table 4.20: Double-Barreled Race Classification policy suggestions, by respondents' race

Racial group	Double-Barreled Race Classification should be scrapped, kept as it is, or enhanced further			
	Scrapped	Kept as it is	Enhanced further	Don't know
Chinese	7.1%	57.5%	13.7%	21.7%
Malay	6.9%	50.9%	20.9%	21.4%
Indian	12.3%	43.8%	23.9%	19.9%
Others	18.5%	40.7%	18.5%	22.2%

Table 4.21: Double-Barreled Race Classification policy suggestions, by respondents' race

Racial group and education level		Double-Barreled Race Classification should be scrapped, kept as it is, or enhanced further			
		Scrapped	Kept as it is	Enhanced further	Don't know
Chinese	**Below secondary**	2.1%	71.9%	4.8%	21.2%
	Secondary / ITE	4.0%	58.8%	13.5%	23.6%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	9.6%	55.4%	16.5%	18.5%
	Bachelor's and above	9.7%	53.0%	15.1%	22.2%
Malay	**Below secondary**	5.7%	64.2%	17.0%	13.2%
	Secondary / ITE	4.8%	56.0%	17.4%	21.7%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	7.6%	43.5%	25.0%	23.9%
	Bachelor's and above	17.1%	24.4%	34.1%	24.4%
Indian	**Below secondary**	3.4%	69.0%	13.8%	13.8%
	Secondary / ITE	10.0%	51.5%	21.5%	16.9%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	15.6%	51.6%	21.9%	10.9%
	Bachelor's and above	14.6%	29.9%	28.0%	27.4%

4.3 Over three-quarters satisfied with legislation like MRHA and Sedition Act helping to preserve racial harmony, but respondents less certain about them safeguarding minority rights

Amongst the policies that respondents were asked about, there were two specifically relating to legislation — MRHA and the Sedition Act. As mentioned earlier, the Sedition Act was the most well-received policy with regards to preserving racial harmony in Singapore (81.2 per cent agreed), while the MRHA was quite close behind with 77.7 per cent agreeing.

Overall, respondents felt that these two policies did help to preserve racial harmony in Singapore, do not disadvantage minorities or the majority race, and also did not make them

feel less Singaporean. However, they were less certain about these policies safeguarding minority rights — 46.9 per cent felt that the MRHA did so, while 54.6 per cent felt the same about the Sedition Act. Sentiments towards these policies in their existing form were also quite similar — nearly six in 10 felt that the policies should be kept, between 21 and 26 per cent felt that the policies need to be further enhanced, approximately 4 per cent felt that the policies should be scrapped, while between 11 and 17 per cent did not have a clear opinion (see Tables 4.22 and 4.23 below). These sentiments indicate that while respondents are mostly satisfied about the policies, there is still a sizeable minority who believe that there is still room for improvement.

Table 4.22: Sentiments about Sedition Act and MRHA Part 1

Do you think this policy…	Policy	Yes	No	Don't know
Helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore	MRHA	77.7%	9.2%	13.2%
	Sedition Act	81.2%	10.3%	8.5%
Disadvantages minorities	MRHA	8.4%	78.2%	13.3%
	Sedition Act	9.3%	82.2%	8.4%
Disadvantages the majority race	MRHA	5.7%	80.9%	13.4%
	Sedition Act	6.3%	85.2%	8.5%
Safeguards minority rights	MRHA	46.9%	32.9%	20.2%
	Sedition Act	54.6%	32.8%	12.6%
Makes me feel less Singaporean and more as part of my racial group	MRHA	12.4%	72.9%	14.7%
	Sedition Act	12.7%	75.8%	11.4%

Table 4.23: Sentiments about Sedition Act and MRHA Part 2

Do you think this policy should be…	Scrapped	Kept	Enhanced further	Don't know
MRHA	4.0%	58.6%	21.2%	16.2%
Sedition Act	3.8%	59.4%	25.3%	11.5%

4.3.1 Majority race respondents more positive towards MRHA compared to minority race respondents

Overall, respondents from the majority race expressed slightly more positive sentiments towards MRHA. Chinese respondents were more likely to indicate that the policy helps to preserve racial harmony, does not disadvantage minorities or the majority race, and does not make respondents feel less Singaporean. In addition, Chinese respondents were most likely to indicate that they wanted to keep the policy as it is — compared to 45.4 per cent of Indian respondents and 51.9 per cent of Malay respondents, 61.4 per cent of Chinese respondents expressed this opinion. In addition, Indian respondents were more in favour of enhancing the policy compared to the other two major races, with 31 per cent indicating so compared to 19.2 per cent of Chinese respondents and 25.4 per cent of Malay respondents.

Meanwhile, there were no substantial racial differences found regarding sentiments on the MRHA being able to safeguard minority rights, with under five in 10 of Chinese, Malay and Indian respondents agreeing with the statement. This was not the case in 2016, when Chinese respondents (74.5 per cent) were more likely to agree that it safeguards minority rights compared to Malay (62.1 per cent) and Indian respondents (66.7 per cent). In addition, the overall support expressed for MRHA in 2016 was much higher compared to 2021 (see Tables 4.24 to 4.29 below).

Table 4.24: MRHA preserves racial harmony, by respondents' race

Racial group	MRHA helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	79.8%	7.8%	12.4%
Malay	71.8%	13.0%	15.3%
Indian	71.4%	13.9%	14.7%
Others	66.7%	14.8%	18.5%

Table 4.25: MRHA disadvantages minorities, by respondents' race

Racial group	MRHA disadvantages minorities		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	5.9%	81.8%	12.4%
Malay	18.3%	66.4%	15.3%
Indian	14.2%	66.9%	18.9%
Others	14.8%	70.4%	14.8%

Table 4.26: MRHA disadvantages the majority race, by respondents' race

Racial group	MRHA disadvantages the majority race		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	5.1%	82.4%	12.4%
Malay	8.9%	75.3%	15.8%
Indian	6.8%	76.6%	16.5%
Others	3.7%	77.8%	18.5%

Table 4.27: MRHA safeguards minority rights, by respondents' race (2016 figures in brackets)

Racial group	MRHA safeguards minority rights		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	47.3% (74.5%)	33.7% (5.0%)	19.1% (20.6%)
Malay	47.1% (62.1%)	30.5% (9.2%)	22.4% (28.7%)
Indian	45.4% (66.7%)	29.7% (9.5%)	24.9% (23.8%)
Others	40.7% (67.9%)	33.3% (8.3%)	25.9% (23.7%)

Table 4.28: MRHA makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group, by respondents' race

Racial group	MRHA makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	12.4%	74.1%	13.4%
Malay	13.2%	68.7%	18.1%
Indian	11.5%	68.2%	20.2%
Others	11.1%	70.4%	18.5%

Table 4.29: MRHA policy suggestions, by respondents' race

Racial group	MRHA should be scrapped, kept as it is, or enhanced further			
	Scrapped	Kept as it is	Enhanced further	Don't know
Chinese	3.5%	61.4%	19.2%	15.8%
Malay	5.3%	51.9%	25.4%	17.3%
Indian	5.5%	45.4%	31.0%	18.1%
Others	7.4%	51.9%	25.9%	14.8%

4.3.2 Older respondents, especially those above 65 years old, more positive towards MRHA

Older respondents across the three main racial groups were in general more likely to agree that the MRHA preserves racial harmony. Amongst the Chinese respondents, the youngest group was the least positive about the MRHA, with 74.5 per cent indicating agreement compared to over 80 per cent within the other age groups. Meanwhile, there were more age differences within the Malay and Indian respondents. Younger Malay respondents were less likely to agree with the statement. For Indian respondents, sentiments about MRHA were quite

different when comparing the oldest group with the rest — 81.3 per cent of the oldest group agreed with the statement, compared to around seven in 10 of Indian respondents aged below 66 years old. Additionally, it is interesting to note that there were similar sentiments expressed by Chinese, Malay and Indian respondents who were above 65 years old, with eight in 10 saying that the MRHA helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore (see Table 4.30 below).

Table 4.30: MRHA preserves racial harmony, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		MRHA helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	74.5%	9.3%	16.1%
	36–50 years old	81.3%	6.1%	12.5%
	51–65 years old	83.1%	10.1%	6.8%
	Above 65 years old	80.3%	5.2%	14.6%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	66.1%	11.3%	22.6%
	36–50 years old	73.3%	11.4%	15.2%
	51–65 years old	73.2%	15.4%	11.4%
	Above 65 years old	80.5%	14.6%	4.9%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	72.0%	16.1%	11.8%
	36–50 years old	69.6%	14.9%	15.5%
	51–65 years old	68.5%	12.0%	19.6%
	Above 65 years old	81.3%	10.4%	8.3%

4.3.3 Higher-educated respondents, especially Malays, were more likely to prefer enhancing MRHA than retaining it as-is

When asked about policy suggestions, respondents from different educational backgrounds expressed differing sentiments. Those with higher education levels were less likely to prefer keeping the policy as it is, and more likely to suggest enhancing it further. The education effect was the most pronounced for Malay respondents — for those with below secondary education, 73.6 per cent wanted to retain the policy and 9.4 per cent wanted enhancements. Meanwhile, for those with university education, the proportions were 19.2 per cent and 58.5 per cent respectively (see Table 4.31 below).

Table 4.31: MRHA policy suggestions, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		MRHA should be scrapped, kept as it is, or enhanced further			
		Scrapped	Kept as it is	Enhanced further	Don't know
Chinese	**Below secondary**	2.7%	73.3%	6.2%	17.8%
	Secondary / ITE	3.7%	64.0%	16.7%	15.6%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	2.8%	61.4%	21.7%	141%
	Bachelor's and above	3.9%	55.8%	23.9%	16.4%
Malay	**Below secondary**	1.9%	73.6%	9.4%	15.1%
	Secondary / ITE	6.3%	56.5%	19.8%	17.4%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	6.5%	43.5%	32.6%	17.4%
	Bachelor's and above	2.4%	19.2%	58.5%	19.5%
Indian	**Below secondary**	3.4%	65.5%	6.9%	24.1%
	Secondary / ITE	6.2%	50.0%	27.7%	16.2%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	9.4%	46.9%	23.4%	20.3%
	Bachelor's and above	3.8%	37.6%	40.8%	17.8%

4.3.4 Over eight in 10 Chinese respondents positive about the Sedition Act, compared to under three-quarters of Malay and Indian respondents

Chinese respondents were more likely than those of the other two main races to indicate that the Sedition Act helps to preserve racial harmony and less likely to agree that it disadvantages minorities. Over eight in 10 Chinese respondents agreed with the former statement, compared to slightly under three-quarters of Malay and Indian respondents. Similarly, 86.3 per cent of Chinese respondents disagreed that the Act disadvantages minorities, while only 66.4 per cent of Malay respondents and 73.2 per cent of Indian respondents said the same.

Meanwhile, Malay respondents were the least likely to say that the policy safeguards minority rights — 49.9 per cent agreed with the statement, while approximately 55 per cent of Chinese and Indian respondents did the same. Finally, there were no strong racial differences when it came to sentiments about whether the Act makes people feel less Singaporean (see Tables 4.32 to 4.36 below).

Table 4.32: Sedition Act preserves racial harmony, by respondents' race

Racial group	Sedition Act helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	83.5%	9.2%	7.3%
Malay	74.0%	12.7%	13.2%
Indian	73.8%	16.5%	9.7%
Others	74.1%	11.1%	14.8%

Table 4.33: Sedition Act disadvantages minorities, by respondents' race

Racial group	Sedition Act disadvantages minorities		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	6.9%	86.3%	6.8%
Malay	20.1%	66.4%	13.5%
Indian	16.3%	73.2%	10.5%
Others	7.4%	70.4%	22.2%

Table 4.34: Sedition Act disadvantages the majority race, by respondents' race

Racial group	Sedition Act disadvantages the majority race		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	5.8%	87.2%	7.0%
Malay	8.9%	77.1%	14.0%
Indian	6.6%	82.7%	10.8%
Others	7.4%	74.1%	18.5%

Table 4.35: Sedition Act safeguards minority rights, by respondents' race

Racial group	Sedition Act safeguards minority rights		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	55.1%	33.5%	11.4%
Malay	49.9%	32.3%	17.3%
Indian	54.6%	29.1%	16.3%
Others	59.3%	25.9%	14.8%

Table 4.36: Sedition Act makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group, by respondents' race

Racial group	Sedition Act makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	13.3%	76.4%	10.3%
Malay	11.5%	73.5%	15.0%
Indian	13.6%	71.1%	15.2%
Others	0%	85.2%	14.8%

4.3.4 More than half of Chinese and Malay respondents want to retain Sedition Act as-is; slightly less than half of Indian respondents say the same

With regard to policy suggestions, Chinese respondents were most in favour of retaining the policy as it is, which is unsurprising given the very positive sentiments they hold. A majority of Malay respondents (53.2 per cent) also felt that the policy should be kept as it is, but a large minority (30.5 per cent) believed it should be further enhanced. In comparison, less than half (47.8 per cent) of Indian respondents agreed that the Sedition Act should be kept in its current form, while 35.7 per cent believed it should be refined (see Table 4.37 below).

Table 4.37: Sedition Act policy suggestions, by respondents' race

Racial group	Sedition Act should be scrapped, kept as it is, or enhanced further			
	Scrapped	Kept as it is	Enhanced further	Don't know
Chinese	3.8%	62.2%	23.1%	10.9%
Malay	3.3%	53.2%	30.5%	13.0%
Indian	4.2%	47.8%	35.7%	12.3%
Others	3.7%	41.1%	29.6%	18.5%

4.4 Over seven in 10 respondents believe that economic-related policies of EIP and ethnic self-help groups help in preserving racial harmony; six in 10 believe the policies should be retained

Reception was mostly positive towards the EIP and ethnic self-help group policies, both of which impact economic aspects of Singaporeans' lives. Respondents were quite positive about the EIP policy — over three-quarters, or 77.9 per cent, said that it helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore. In comparison, perceptions towards ethnic self-help groups were slightly less positive, with 70.3 per cent believing it helps to preserve racial harmony. While perceptions about the two policies' treatment towards the majority race were similarly positive, a larger proportion of respondents disagreed that ethnic self-help group policy disadvantaged minorities.

Both policies were not viewed as exclusionary by most respondents, with approximately 14 per cent indicating that the two policies made them feel less Singaporean and more part of their own racial group. In terms of the retention of the two policies, similar sentiments were expressed. Around six in 10 felt that the policies should be kept, while 6.3 per cent felt separately that the policies should be scrapped. Meanwhile, 24.6 per cent felt that the EIP should be enhanced further, compared to 20.4 per cent for the ethnic self-help groups (see Tables 4.38 and 4.39).

Table 4.38: Sentiments about EIP and Ethnic Self-Help Groups Part 1

Do you think this policy…	Policy	Yes	No	Don't know
Helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore	EIP	77.9%	12.1%	10.0%
	Ethnic Self-Help Groups	70.3%	16.6%	13.1%
Disadvantages minorities	EIP	15.5%	73.6%	10.9%
	Ethnic Self-Help Groups	9.5%	80.2%	10.3%
Disadvantages the majority race	EIP	9.1%	81.8%	9.1%
	Ethnic Self-Help Groups	6.6%	82.8%	10.6%
Safeguards minority rights	EIP	49.9%	33.9%	16.2%
	Ethnic Self-Help Groups	50.0%	34.6%	15.3%
Makes me feel less Singaporean and more as part of my racial group	EIP	14.4%	75.2%	10.4%
	Ethnic Self-Help Groups	14.6%	72.8%	12.6%

Table 4.39: Sentiments about EIP and Ethnic Self-Help Groups Part 2

Do you think this policy should be…	Scrapped	Kept	Enhanced further	Don't know
EIP	6.3%	59.0%	24.6%	10.1%
Ethnic Self-Help Group	6.3%	60.0%	20.4%	13.4%

4.4.1 Chinese respondents most likely to believe EIP preserves racial harmony compared to minority race respondents

The objective of implementing the EIP in public housing was to ensure that citizens of different races live alongside each other, and that no racial enclaves form across the island. Therefore, it is imperative to examine the perceptions that respondents of different races hold towards this policy, particularly in the areas of minority rights and whether it enhances respondents' Singaporean identity.

The EIP was viewed most positively by the Chinese respondents — 81.3 per cent believed that it helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore, while only approximately two-thirds of respondents from minority races felt the same. In addition, less than six in 10 of respondents from minority races directly disagreed that it disadvantages minorities, compared to nearly

eight in 10 Chinese respondents. Views about whether the policy disadvantages the majority race, safeguards minority rights, and makes respondents feel less Singapore had less distinct racial differences, even though the general pattern of Chinese respondents being more positive remained. Similarly, Chinese respondents in 2016 were also more positive about the Ethnic Quota Housing Policy compared to minority race respondents. However, while between 53.8 per cent and 62.7 per cent of respondents from the three major races said that the Ethnic Quota Housing Policy safeguards minority rights, the proportion dropped to between 43.6 per cent and 51.3 per cent in 2021 when asked about the EIP (see Tables 4.40 to 4.44 below).

Table 4.40: EIP preserves racial harmony, by respondents' race

Racial group	EIP helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	81.3%	9.4%	9.3%
Malay	67.9%	21.9%	10.2%
Indian	67.2%	20.2%	12.6%
Others	63.0%	18.5%	18.5%

Table 4.41: EIP disadvantages minorities, by respondents' race

Racial group	EIP disadvantages minorities		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	11.1%	79.1%	9.8%
Malay	32.8%	55.7%	11.5%
Indian	30.7%	54.9%	14.4%
Others	11.1%	63.0%	25.9%

Table 4.42: EIP disadvantages the majority race, by respondents' race

Racial group	EIP disadvantages the majority race		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	9.5%	83.3%	7.3%
Malay	7.6%	79.1%	13.2%
Indian	10.0%	76.9%	13.1%
Others	3.7%	70.4%	25.9%

Table 4.43: EIP safeguards minority rights, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	EIP safeguards minority rights		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	51.3% (62.7%)	33.3% (10.0%)	15.4% (27.3%)
Malay	45.3% (58.2%)	37.2% (12.9%)	17.6% (28.9%)
Indian	43.6% (53.8%)	36.2% (17.8%)	20.2% (28.3%)
Others	51.9% (58.9%)	29.6% (16.0%)	18.5% (25.0%)

Note: In 2016, the policy name mentioned in the question was "Ethnic Quota Housing Policy".

Table 4.44: EIP makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group, by respondents' race

Racial group	EIP makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	13.9%	76.9%	9.2%
Malay	17.8%	69.7%	12.5%
Indian	16.3%	68.8%	15.0%
Others	7.4%	74.1%	18.5%

When asked about the status of the policy, Chinese respondents were the only group in which a majority (64.5 per cent) wanted to retain it as in its current form. Among the Malay respondents, while the most popular choice was also to keep the policy as it is (44.8 per cent), less than half chose this option, indicating division of views. The next most popular choice was to enhance it further (31.6 per cent). In contrast, Indian respondents were slightly more supportive of enhancing the policy further (41.7 per cent) rather than keeping the policy as it is (35.4 per cent) (see Table 4.45 below).

Table 4.45: EIP policy suggestions, by respondents' race

Racial group	EIP should be scrapped, kept as it is, or enhanced further			
	Scrapped	Kept as it is	Enhanced further	Don't know
Chinese	4.9%	64.5%	21.3%	9.3%
Malay	12.0%	44.8%	31.6%	11.7%
Indian	10.2%	35.4%	41.7%	12.6%
Others	7.4%	44.4%	29.6%	18.5%

4.4.2 Education effects differed across the races when considering whether EIP disadvantages minorities, safeguards minority rights, or make respondents feel less Singaporean; higher-educated Malays least positive about these aspects

There was no major educational difference among the Chinese respondents when they were asked about whether the EIP disadvantages minorities. However, higher-educated Malay respondents were much more likely to agree that it disadvantages minorities — while 18.9 per cent of those with below secondary education said EIP disadvantaged minorities, the proportion increased to 61 per cent for those with university education.

Among the Indian respondents, those with below secondary education were least likely to say that the EIP disadvantages minorities, while secondary-educated respondents were most likely to do so. Interestingly, university-educated Indian respondents were the most unsure about the impact of the policy, with 20.4 per cent indicating that they did not know the answer (see Table 4.46 below).

Table 4.46: EIP disadvantages minorities, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		EIP disadvantages minorities		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	**Below secondary**	7.5%	83.6%	8.9%
	Secondary / ITE	11.2%	78.1%	10.7%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	8.8%	83.9%	7.2%
	Bachelor's and above	13.4%	75.9%	10.8%
Malay	**Below secondary**	18.9%	73.6%	7.5%
	Secondary / ITE	30.0%	59.4%	10.6%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	34.8%	52.2%	13.0%
	Bachelor's and above	61.0%	22.0%	17.1%
Indian	**Below secondary**	20.7%	69.0%	10.3%
	Secondary / ITE	39.2%	50.0%	10.8%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	32.8%	59.4%	7.8%
	Bachelor's and above	24.8%	54.8%	20.4%

Chinese respondents with diploma or professional qualifications were the most likely to agree that the EIP safeguards minority rights. In contrast, university-educated Malays were least likely to do so. Furthermore, university-educated Malay respondents was the only group where over half indicated that the EIP *did not* safeguard minority rights. Meanwhile, Indian respondents with university education were the most likely to indicate that they did not know the answer (28.7 per cent).

There were only two other groups, Malay and Indian respondents with below secondary education, that also had over 20 per cent indicating the same response (see Table 4.47

below). But while the latter two groups were likely to indicate “don’t know” because they were less well-versed with policy implications, the same reason is unlikely to apply to those with university education. Given that there were similar findings for the other question on minority disadvantage, the reasons behind this finding probably require further thought and research.

Table 4.47: EIP safeguards minority rights, by respondents’ race and education level

Racial group and education level		EIP safeguards minority rights		
		Yes	No	Don’t know
Chinese	**Below secondary**	47.9%	34.2%	17.8%
	Secondary / ITE	43.5%	40.9%	15.6%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	59.8%	27.7%	12.4%
	Bachelor’s and above	53.7%	30.2%	16.2%
Malay	**Below secondary**	35.8%	43.4%	20.8%
	Secondary / ITE	50.2%	33.3%	16.4%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	45.7%	35.9%	18.5%
	Bachelor’s and above	31.7%	51.2%	17.1%
Indian	**Below secondary**	37.9%	41.4%	20.7%
	Secondary / ITE	42.3%	46.9%	10.8%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	53.1%	29.7%	17.2%
	Bachelor’s and above	42.0%	29.3%	28.7%

Higher-educated Chinese respondents were more likely to disagree that the EIP makes them feel less Singaporean and more part of their racial group. However, this trend was reversed for Malay respondents — compared to 7.5 per cent of those with below secondary education, 39 per cent of those with university education said that the EIP made them feel less Singaporean. In particular, Malay respondents who had university education were the most likely to agree with this statement compared to all other groups. Meanwhile, approximately 17 per cent of Indian respondents with secondary education and university education both said that the EIP made them feel less Singaporean, which was slightly more than the other two education groups (see Table 4.48 below).

Table 4.48: EIP makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		EIP makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	**Below secondary**	11.6%	77.4%	11.0%
	Secondary / ITE	20.5%	68.3%	11.2%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	14.1%	80.3%	5.6%
	Bachelor's and above	9.7%	81.3%	9.1%
Malay	**Below secondary**	7.5%	83.0%	9.4%
	Secondary / ITE	18.8%	70.5%	10.6%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	12.0%	69.6%	18.5%
	Bachelor's and above	39.0%	48.8%	12.2%
Indian	**Below secondary**	13.8%	65.5%	20.7%
	Secondary / ITE	17.7%	71.5%	10.8%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	10.9%	78.1%	10.9%
	Bachelor's and above	17.8%	63.1%	19.1%

4.4.3 Approximately eight in 10 Chinese respondents across SES levels thought that EIP preserves racial harmony; higher-SES Malay and Indian respondents less likely to think so

Given that the EIP directly affects the availability of public housing, which most Singaporeans live in, it was of interest to examine whether there were any differences in perceptions about the policy based on socioeconomic status. Perceptions were quite similar for Chinese respondents of all socioeconomic backgrounds, with around eight in 10 saying that the EIP helps to preserve racial harmony. However, perceptions towards the EIP were less positive amongst Malay and Indian respondents of higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Compared to 76.4 per cent and 73.0 per cent of Malays and Indians living in 1- to 3-room flats, 58.8 per cent and 64.0 per cent of Malays and Indians in private housing felt that the EIP preserves racial harmony (see Table 4.49 below).

Table 4.49: EIP preserves racial harmony, by respondents' race and housing type

Racial group and housing type		EIP helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	**1-3 room HDB**	81.4%	11.1%	7.5%
	4-room HDB	78.6%	9.0%	12.4%
	5-room HDB	78.9%	13.3%	7.8%
	Private	86.5%	5.3%	8.2%
Malay	**1-3 room HDB**	76.4%	13.2%	10.4%
	4-room HDB	65.6%	23.6%	10.8%
	5-room HDB	58.7%	34.7%	6.7%
	Private	58.8%	23.5%	17.6%
Indian	**1-3 room HDB**	73.0%	17.0%	10.0%
	4-room HDB	66.2%	24.6%	9.2%
	5-room HDB	64.0%	21.3%	14.6%
	Private	64.0%	12.0%	24.0%

4.4.4 Higher-SES Chinese respondents, lower-SES Malay respondents, and Indian respondents living in public housing more likely to believe EIP does not disadvantage minorities

When asked about whether the EIP disadvantages minorities, there were also some socioeconomic differences. Chinese respondents from higher socioeconomic backgrounds were more likely to say that the EIP did not disadvantage minorities — compared to approximately three-quarters of HDB dwellers, 89.7 per cent of private property dwellers expressed this opinion.

The trend was reversed amongst Malay respondents — 64.6 per cent of those living in 1- to 3-room flats felt that the EIP did not disadvantage minorities, but the corresponding proportions for those in 4-room flats, 5-room flats and private properties were 53.5 per cent, 45.3 per cent and 47.1 per cent respectively. For Indian respondents, around one-third of all HDB dwellers felt that the EIP disadvantages minorities, compared with 22 per cent of private property dwellers. In addition, 26 per cent of Indian private property dwellers were unsure about this statement. This proportion is much higher compared to the rest of the groups, each of which less than 16 per cent had chosen this option (see Table 4.50 below).

Table 4.50: EIP disadvantages minorities, by respondents' race and housing type

Racial group and education level		EIP disadvantages minorities		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	**1-3 room HDB**	13.8%	75.9%	10.3%
	4-room HDB	15.3%	74.3%	10.3%
	5-room HDB	10.2%	76.2%	13.7%
	Private	4.7%	89.7%	5.6%
Malay	**1-3 room HDB**	24.3%	64.6%	11.1%
	4-room HDB	32.5%	53.5%	14.0%
	5-room HDB	46.7%	45.3%	8.0%
	Private	47.1%	47.1%	5.9%
Indian	**1-3 room HDB**	31.0%	57.0%	12.0%
	4-room HDB	32.4%	56.3%	11.3%
	5-room HDB	32.6%	51.7%	15.7%
	Private	22.0%	52.0%	26.0%

4.4.5 Chinese respondents hold most positive perceptions about ethnic self-help groups

While approximately 62 per cent of Malay and Indian respondents felt that ethnic self-help groups preserve racial harmony, 73.1 per cent of Chinese respondents had the same opinion. In addition, 83.6 per cent of Chinese respondents felt that the self-help groups do not disadvantage minorities, compared to 65.1 per cent of Malay respondents and 75.9 per cent of Indian respondents. There were no substantial racial differences when it came to whether ethnic self-help groups disadvantage the majority race or safeguard minority rights — less than 10 per cent of Chinese, Malay and Indian respondents agreed with the first statement while around half of Chinese, Malay and Indian respondents agreed with the second.

Racial differences were not pronounced for sentiments about whether the policy makes people feel less Singaporean. However, Indian respondents were slightly more likely to agree with the statement, followed by Malay respondents and then Chinese respondents. It is therefore not surprising to see 63.9 per cent of Chinese respondents wanting to keep the policy as it is, compared to 50.9 per cent of Malay respondents and 43.3 per cent of Indian respondents. In addition, nearly one-third of Malay (29 per cent) and Indian (32.3 per cent) respondents felt that the policy should be enhanced, compared to just 17.5 per cent of Chinese respondents (see Tables 4.51 to 4.56 below).

Table 4.51: Ethnic Self-Help Groups preserves racial harmony, by respondents' race

Racial group	Ethnic Self-Help Groups helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	73.1%	14.4%	12.5%
Malay	62.1%	21.4%	16.5%
Indian	62.5%	24.9%	12.6%
Others	55.6%	29.6%	14.8%

Table 4.52: Ethnic Self-Help Groups disadvantages minorities, by respondents' race

Racial group	Ethnic Self-Help Groups disadvantages minorities		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	7.0%	83.6%	9.5%
Malay	20.4%	65.1%	14.5%
Indian	14.4%	75.9%	9.7%
Others	14.8%	70.4%	14.8%

Table 4.53: Ethnic Self-Help Groups disadvantages the majority race, by respondents' race

Racial group	Ethnic Self-Help Groups disadvantages the majority race		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	6.4%	84.2%	9.4%
Malay	7.1%	75.3%	17.6%
Indian	8.7%	81.6%	9.7%
Others	3.7%	81.5%	14.8%

Table 4.54: Ethnic Self-Help Groups safeguards minority rights, by respondents' race

Racial group	Ethnic Self-Help Groups safeguards minority rights		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	50.3%	35.2%	14.5%
Malay	50.1%	32.1%	17.8%
Indian	49.3%	34.1%	16.5%
Others	44.4%	33.3%	22.2%

Table 4.55: Ethnic Self-Help Groups makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group, by respondents' race

Racial group	Ethnic Self-Help Groups makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	14.3%	74.1%	11.5%
Malay	13.7%	69.7%	16.5%
Indian	18.6%	68.5%	12.9%
Others	14.8%	63.0%	22.2%

Table 4.56: Ethnic Self-Help Groups policy suggestions, by respondents' race

Racial group	Ethnic Self-Help Groups should be scrapped, kept as it is, or enhanced further			
	Scrapped	Kept as it is	Enhanced further	Don't know
Chinese	5.3%	63.9%	17.5%	13.3%
Malay	6.9%	50.9%	29.0%	13.2%
Indian	11.3%	43.3%	32.3%	13.1%
Others	14.8%	44.4%	22.2%	18.5%

4.4.6 Minority race respondents of lower SES more positive about ethnic self-help groups compared to those of higher SES

In terms of whether ethnic self-help groups preserve racial harmony, there were no strong differences in sentiments between Chinese respondents of different socioeconomic statuses. However, this was not the same for Malay and Indian respondents. While 73.6 per cent of Malay respondents living in 1- to 3-room HDB flats felt that ethnic self-help groups preserve racial harmony, less than six in 10 of the other Malay respondents felt the same. Similarly, compared to 72 per cent of Indian respondents living in 1- to 3-room flats, between 56 and 60.6 per cent of Indian respondents living in the other housing types felt that ethnic self-help groups help to preserve racial harmony (see Table 4.57 below). These differences are noteworthy given that those who are most likely beneficiaries of these self-help groups are more positive about their impact on preserving racial harmony.

Table 4.57: Ethnic Self-Help Groups preserves racial harmony, by respondents' race and housing type

Racial group and housing type		Ethnic Self-Help Groups helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	**1-3 room HDB**	75.5%	11.1%	13.4%
	4-room HDB	71.7%	14.6%	13.8%
	5-room HDB	69.1%	16.4%	14.5%
	Private	75.9%	15.4%	8.8%
Malay	**1-3 room HDB**	73.6%	14.6%	11.8%
	4-room HDB	53.5%	26.8%	19.7%
	5-room HDB	58.7%	20.0%	21.3%
	Private	58.8%	35.3%	5.9%
Indian	**1-3 room HDB**	72.0%	22.0%	6.0%
	4-room HDB	60.6%	24.6%	14.8%
	5-room HDB	58.4%	25.8%	15.7%
	Private	56.0%	30.0%	14.0%

4.5 When comparing policies related to politics, GRC was better received compared to Reserved Presidency

Among the policies that respondents were asked about, the GRC and Reserved Presidency were directly related to politics and elections. Overall, it appears that sentiments towards the GRC are more positive than those towards the Reserved Presidency, perhaps due to the recency of the Reserved Presidency. Respondents felt that the GRC was more likely to help preserve racial harmony in Singapore and safeguard minority rights, and less likely to disadvantage the majority race and minorities. In particular, 77.1 per cent felt that the GRC helps to preserve racial harmony, while 70.4 per cent felt the same about the Reserved Presidency. Meanwhile, sentiments were similar when it came to whether the policies made respondents feel less Singaporean — approximately 13 per cent agreed, around three-quarters disagreed while one in 10 were unsure.

Despite these sentiments, there was not much difference in the proportions wanting to keep either policy — 60.3 per cent wanted to keep the GRC as it is, while 57.3 per cent said the same about the Reserved Presidency. However, a larger proportion of respondents wanted to scrap the Reserved Presidency (11.1 per cent) compared to the GRC (6.8 per cent). In addition, compared to 16.8 per cent who wanted to further enhance the Reserved Presidency, 21.6 per cent said the same about the GRC, which seem to indicate that respondents are more interested in the GRC compared to the Reserved Presidency (see Tables 4.58 and 4.59 below).

Table 4.58: Sentiments about GRC and Reserved Presidency Part 1

Do you think this policy…	Policy	Yes	No	Don't know
Helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore	GRC	77.1%	14.2%	8.7%
	Reserved Presidency	70.4%	18.0%	12.6%
Disadvantages minorities	GRC	10.9%	79.7%	9.5%
	Reserved Presidency	14.1%	75.2%	10.8%
Disadvantages the majority race	GRC	8.1%	82.3%	9.6%
	Reserved Presidency	9.1%	80.2%	10.7%
Safeguards minority rights	GRC	53.1%	33.0%	13.9%
	Reserved Presidency	49.6%	37.3%	13.0%
Makes me feel less Singaporean and more as part of my racial group	GRC	13.6%	75.4%	11.1%
	Reserved Presidency	13.8%	73.2%	12.9%

Table 4.59: Sentiments about GRC and Reserved Presidency Part 2

Do you think this policy should be…	Scrapped	Kept	Enhanced further	Don't know
GRC	6.8%	60.3%	21.6%	11.4%
Reserved Presidency	11.1%	57.3%	16.8%	14.8%

4.5.1 Nearly eight in 10 Chinese respondents, around seven in 10 Malay and Indian respondents believe the GRC helps preserves racial harmony; but two in 10 Malay and Indian respondents felt that GRC disadvantages minorities

Compared to 79.4 per cent of Chinese respondents, 72.5 per cent of Malay respondents and 68.7 per cent of Indian respondents felt that the GRC helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore. However, around two in 10 Malay and Indian respondents felt that the GRC policy disadvantages minorities, a much higher proportion compared to just 8.3 per cent of Chinese respondents. In contrast, only around 10 per cent of Chinese, Malay and Indian respondents felt that the GRC disadvantages the majority race.

Meanwhile, there were no major racial differences with regards to whether GRC safeguards minority rights — among the Chinese, Malay and Indian respondents, around half agreed with the statement, one-third disagreed and less than 18 per cent did not have a strong opinion. These proportions were lower compared to the 2016 results, in which 71 per cent of Chinese, 60.3 per cent of Malays and 59.4 per cent of Indians said that the GRC safeguards minority rights. In addition, around 15 per cent of Chinese, Malay and Indian respondents also felt that the GRC policy made them feel less Singaporean, while Chinese respondents were more likely to disagree with the statement compared to the respondents of the other two races.

Even though there are racial differences in sentiments towards the policy, less than 10 per cent of each major race wanted to scrap it. Instead, keeping it in its current form was the most popular choice for all three races, even though proportions differed, with Chinese respondents

(62.8 per cent) being most likely to choose it compared to Malay (51.7 per cent) and Indian (45.9 per cent) respondents. Correspondingly, Indian respondents (32.5 per cent) were the most likely to say they want further enhancements to the policy, followed by Malays (29.3 per cent) and then the Chinese (18.9 per cent) (see Tables 4.60 to 4.65).

Table 4.60: GRC preserves racial harmony, by respondents' race

Racial group	GRC helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	79.4%	12.5%	8.1%
Malay	72.5%	18.1%	9.4%
Indian	68.7%	20.7%	10.8%
Others	63.0%	22.2%	14.8%

Table 4.61: GRC disadvantages minorities, by respondents' race

Racial group	GRC disadvantages minorities		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	8.3%	83.7%	8.0%
Malay	21.4%	65.4%	13.2%
Indian	19.7%	66.1%	14.2%
Others	7.4%	74.1%	18.5%

Table 4.62: GRC disadvantages the majority race, by respondents' race

Racial group	GRC disadvantages the majority race		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	7.9%	83.7%	8.5%
Malay	10.4%	76.1%	13.5%
Indian	8.4%	79.3%	12.3%
Others	3.7%	81.5%	14.8%

Table 4.63: GRC safeguards minority rights, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	GRC safeguards minority rights		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	53.9% (71.0%)	33.1% (6.0%)	13.0% (23.0%)
Malay	50.9% (60.3%)	32.8% (9.2%)	16.3% (30.5%)
Indian	49.3% (59.4%)	32.8% (8.0%)	17.8% (32.7%)
Others	51.9% (59.7%)	33.3% (11.1%)	14.8% (29.3%)

Table 4.64: GRC makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group, by respondents' race

Racial group	GRC makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	13.3%	76.8%	10.0%
Malay	15.3%	72.0%	12.7%
Indian	14.7%	69.3%	16.0%
Others	11.1%	70.4%	18.5%

Table 4.65: GRC policy suggestions, by respondents' race

Racial group	GRC should be scrapped, kept as it is, or enhanced further			
	Scrapped	Kept as it is	Enhanced further	Don't know
Chinese	6.6%	63.8%	18.9%	10.8%
Malay	6.9%	51.7%	29.3%	12.2%
Indian	7.3%	45.9%	32.5%	14.2%
Others	11.1%	48.1%	25.9%	14.8%

4.5.2 Younger respondents more likely to agree that GRC safeguards minority rights, less likely to disagree that GRC makes them feel less Singaporean; younger minority race respondents more likely to indicate uncertainty about the two aspects

Younger Chinese and Malay respondents were more likely to say that the GRC safeguards minority rights, while older Indian respondents were more likely to disagree with the statement. While over 54 per cent of Chinese respondents aged below 66 felt that the GRC safeguards minority rights, 46.8 per cent of those aged above 65 felt the same. Meanwhile, for Malay

respondents, those aged below 51 were more likely to agree with the statement. It is also interesting to note that younger Malay and Indian respondents were more likely to indicate that they did not have a strong opinion about this statement compared to older respondents belonging to the same racial group (see Table 4.66 below).

Table 4.66: GRC safeguards minority rights, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		GRC safeguards minority rights		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	57.8%	28.9%	13.4%
	36–50 years old	54.8%	30.6%	14.6%
	51–65 years old	54.2%	37.0%	8.8%
	Above 65 years old	46.8%	37.3%	15.9%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	52.4%	27.4%	20.2%
	36–50 years old	53.3%	22.9%	23.8%
	51–65 years old	48.8%	40.7%	10.6%
	Above 65 years old	46.3%	51.2%	2.4%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	46.2%	33.3%	20.4%
	36–50 years old	54.1%	25.0%	20.9%
	51–65 years old	44.6%	40.2%	15.2%
	Above 65 years old	50.0%	41.7%	8.3%

When asked if the GRC made them feel less Singaporean, there were no strong age differences among the Chinese respondents. In comparison, older Malay and Indian respondents were more likely to disagree with the statement. Similar to the question on minority rights, younger Malay and Indian respondents were more likely than older respondents to say that they did not have a straight answer to the statement (see Table 4.67 below).

Table 4.67: GRC makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		GRC makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	9.9%	79.8%	10.2%
	36–50 years old	13.7%	73.8%	12.5%
	51–65 years old	16.2%	78.9%	4.9%
	Above 65 years old	13.3%	74.2%	12.4%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	16.1%	64.5%	19.4%
	36–50 years old	14.3%	70.5%	15.2%
	51–65 years old	17.1%	76.4%	6.5%
	Above 65 years old	9.8%	85.4%	4.9%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	15.1%	66.7%	18.3%
	36–50 years old	14.2%	68.9%	16.9%
	51–65 years old	13.0%	71.7%	15.2%
	Above 65 years old	18.8%	70.8%	10.4%

4.5.3 Older respondents more supportive of keeping the GRC system in its current form; significant minority of younger respondents want further enhancements

Older respondents across the three major races were more likely to suggest keeping the policy as it is compared to younger respondents. While 70.4 per cent of Chinese respondents, 65.9 per cent of Malay respondents and 64.6 per cent of Indian respondents aged above 65 felt that the policy should be kept as it is, the corresponding figures for Chinese, Malay and Indian respondents aged 21 to 35 were 53.1 per cent, 40.3 per cent and 41.9 per cent respectively.

Younger respondents were also more likely to suggest further enhancements to the policy. In fact, nearly similar proportions of Indian respondents aged 21 to 35 chose the "kept as it is" and "enhanced further" options (see Table 4.68 below). These differences suggest that younger respondents across the three major races are less satisfied with how the GRC policy in its current form.

Table 4.68: GRC policy suggestions, by respondents' race

Racial group and age cohort		GRC should be scrapped, kept as it is, or enhanced further			
		Scrapped	Kept as it is	Enhanced further	Don't know
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	6.5%	53.1%	27.6%	12.7%
	36–50 years old	7.9%	64.1%	18.1%	9.9%
	51–65 years old	6.2%	69.5%	16.6%	7.8%
	Above 65 years old	5.2%	70.4%	11.2%	13.3%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	8.1%	40.3%	35.5%	16.1%
	36–50 years old	6.7%	43.8%	36.2%	13.3%
	51–65 years old	4.9%	65.0%	22.0%	8.1%
	Above 65 years old	9.8%	65.9%	14.6%	9.8%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	2.2%	41.9%	39.8%	16.1%
	36–50 years old	8.1%	39.2%	37.2%	15.5%
	51–65 years old	8.7%	51.1%	27.2%	13.0%
	Above 65 years old	12.5%	64.6%	14.6%	8.3%

4.5.4 No major racial differences in sentiments towards Reserved Presidency; Chinese most likely to prefer keeping the policy as-is, over two in 10 minority race respondents want to enhance the policy further

There were no major racial differences across respondents of the three major races when asked about whether the Reserved Presidency preserves racial harmony, disadvantages the majority race, safeguards minority rights and makes respondents feel less Singaporean. With respect to disadvantaging the minority, Malay respondents were slightly more likely to disagree — 69.5 per cent of Malay respondents, compared to 76.1 per cent of Chinese and 72.7 per cent of Indian respondents, gave this response.

In terms of the future of this policy, 11.9 per cent of Chinese respondents, compared to 7.4 per cent of Malays and 9.7 per cent of Indians, wanted to scrap the policy. However, the most popular option was still to keep the policy as it is. This option was chosen by 59.3 per cent of Chinese, 56.2 per cent of Malay and 46.7 per cent of Indian respondents. Meanwhile, further enhancing the policy was also on the mind of a sizeable minority, particularly minority race respondents — 28.1 per cent of Indian and 21.9 per cent of Malay respondents chose this option, compared with 14.2 per cent of Chinese respondents (see Tables 4.69 to 4.74 below).

Table 4.69: Reserved Presidency preserves racial harmony, by respondents' race

Racial group	Reserved Presidency helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	70.7%	17.8%	11.4%
Malay	69.0%	17.8%	13.2%
Indian	68.2%	20.2%	11.5%
Others	74.1%	18.5%	7.4%

Table 4.70: Reserved Presidency disadvantages minorities, by respondents' race

Racial group	Reserved Presidency disadvantages minorities		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	13.7%	76.1%	10.2%
Malay	17.0%	69.5%	13.5%
Indian	14.4%	72.7%	12.9%
Others	11.1%	81.4%	7.4%

Table 4.71: Reserved Presidency disadvantages the majority race, by respondents' race

Racial group	Reserved Presidency disadvantages the majority race		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	9.0%	80.8%	10.2%
Malay	8.4%	77.6%	14.0%
Indian	10.8%	77.2%	12.1%
Others	7.4%	85.2%	7.4%

Table 4.72: Reserved Presidency safeguards minority rights, by respondents' race

Racial group	Reserved Presidency safeguards minority rights		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	49.0%	38.2%	12.8%
Malay	50.1%	34.9%	15.0%
Indian	52.5%	33.1%	14.4%
Others	55.6%	37.0%	7.4%

Table 4.73: Reserved Presidency makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group, by respondents' race

Racial group	Reserved Presidency makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	14.3%	73.4%	12.3%
Malay	12.5%	72.5%	15.0%
Indian	13.4%	70.1%	16.5%
Others	7.4%	81.5%	11.1%

Table 4.74: Reserved Presidency policy suggestions, by respondents' race

Racial group	Reserved Presidency should be scrapped, kept as it is, or enhanced further			
	Scrapped	Kept as it is	Enhanced further	Don't know
Chinese	11.9%	59.3%	14.2%	14.7%
Malay	7.4%	56.2%	21.9%	14.5%
Indian	9.7%	46.7%	28.1%	15.5%
Others	11.1%	40.7%	29.6%	18.5%

4.5.5 Younger respondents across races more likely to say Reserved Presidency safeguards minority rights, oldest Malays least likely

There were some age differences found within racial groups when asked about whether the Reserved Presidency safeguards minority rights. Younger respondents across the three major races were more likely to agree with the statement. Within the Chinese respondents, 56.2 per cent of those aged 21 to 35 agreed with the statement, while less than half of the other age groups did so. Amongst the Indian respondents, those aged 36 to 50 were the most likely to agree with the statement with 58.8 per cent, compared with 52.7 per cent of those aged 21 to 35, 44.6 per cent of those aged 51 to 65 and 47.9 per cent of those older than 65. The most drastic age difference was found amongst the Malay respondents — while 55.6 per cent of those aged 21 to 35 agreed with the statement, only 29.3 per cent of those older than 65 did the same (see Table 4.75 below).

Table 4.75: Reserved Presidency safeguards minority rights, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		Reserved Presidency safeguards minority rights		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	56.2%	34.8%	9.0%
	36–50 years old	49.6%	35.9%	14.6%
	51–65 years old	45.8%	42.9%	11.4%
	Above 65 years old	42.5%	40.3%	17.2%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	55.6%	22.6%	21.8%
	36–50 years old	52.4%	30.5%	17.1%
	51–65 years old	49.6%	43.1%	7.3%
	Above 65 years old	29.3%	58.5%	12.2%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	52.7%	35.5%	11.8%
	36–50 years old	58.8%	22.3%	18.9%
	51–65 years old	44.6%	43.5%	12.0%
	Above 65 years old	47.9%	41.7%	10.4%

4.5.6 Higher-educated respondents were more likely to think Reserved Presidency makes them feel less Singaporean

Respondents of different education levels had different opinions about whether the Reserved Presidency makes them feel less Singaporean. Overall, those with higher education were more likely to agree with the statement. Compared to 8.9 per cent of Chinese, 3.8 per cent of Malays and 6.9 per cent of Indians who had below secondary education, 17.5 per cent of Chinese, 31.7 per cent of Malays and 14.6 per cent of Indians with university education agreed with the statement. It is also interesting to note that Malays and Indians with diploma qualifications or higher were more likely than those with lower educational qualifications to say that they do not have a strong opinion about the statement, which seems to indicate that they hold more complex feelings about this issue compared to other groups (see Table 4.76 below).

Table 4.76: Reserved Presidency makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		Reserved Presidency makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	**Below secondary**	8.9%	74.0%	17.1%
	Secondary / ITE	15.6%	69.5%	15.0%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	10.0%	79.9%	10.0%
	Bachelor's and above	17.5%	72.6%	9.9%
Malay	**Below secondary**	3.8%	86.8%	9.4%
	Secondary / ITE	11.1%	74.4%	14.5%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	12.0%	69.6%	18.5%
	Bachelor's and above	31.7%	51.2%	17.1%
Indian	**Below secondary**	6.9%	79.3%	13.8%
	Secondary / ITE	11.5%	74.6%	13.8%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	17.2%	68.8%	14.1%
	Bachelor's and above	14.6%	65.6%	19.7%

4.6 Eight in 10 felt Racial Harmony Day preserves racial harmony, two-thirds felt the same about Mother Tongue policy, four in 10 said so about SAP schools

The education-related policies that respondents were asked about were the Mother Tongue policy, SAP schools and Racial Harmony Day. Coincidentally, this group of policies include both the most popular (Racial Harmony Day) and least popular (SAP schools) ones. The sentiments expressed about these policies were therefore markedly different. While 80.4 per cent said that Racial Harmony Day helps preserve racial harmony in Singapore, only 41.5 per cent said so about SAP schools. Sentiments towards the Mother Tongue policy fell right in the middle with two-thirds saying that it helps to preserve racial harmony.

Perusing the other questions, it is clear that sentiments about SAP schools were much less positive — 22.1 per cent felt that it disadvantages minorities and 49.4 per cent disagreed that it safeguards minority rights. While the proportions saying that SAP schools disadvantage the majority race and make them feel less Singaporean were very similar to those who said the same about Mother Tongue policy and Racial Harmony Day, much larger proportions indicated that they did not have a clear opinion for these two aspects when it comes to SAP schools. Compared to all the other policies, therefore, SAP schools appear to be the policy that least serves the objective of racial harmony in respondents' eyes.

Correspondingly, a larger proportion of respondents felt that SAP schools should be scrapped (13.1 per cent) compared to Mother Tongue policy (5.8 per cent) and Racial Harmony Day (4 per cent). In addition, while nearly two-thirds felt that Mother Tongue policy and Racial Harmony Day should be kept as they are, only 48.4 per cent felt the same about SAP schools.

Even the proportion of respondents who were not fully satisfied with the policies were lower for SAP schools. While two in 10 felt that further enhancements were needed for Mother Tongue policy and Racial Harmony Day, only 13.6 per cent felt the same about SAP schools (see Tables 4.77 and 4.78 below).

Table 4.77: Sentiments about Mother Tongue Policy, SAP Schools, and Racial Harmony Day Part 1

Do you think this policy…	Policy	Yes	No	Don't know
Helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore	Mother Tongue	66.8%	23.2%	9.9%
	SAP schools	41.5%	33.9%	24.6%
	Racial Harmony Day	80.4%	10.9%	8.7%
Disadvantages minorities	Mother Tongue	11.6%	81.1%	7.3%
	SAP schools	22.1%	57.3%	20.5%
	Racial Harmony Day	6.0%	86.2%	7.7%
Disadvantages the majority race	Mother Tongue	6.4%	86.2%	7.5%
	SAP schools	6.2%	73.5%	20.2%
	Racial Harmony Day	4.2%	88.1%	7.7%
Safeguards minority rights	Mother Tongue	46.1%	39.7%	14.2%
	SAP schools	24.2%	49.4%	26.4%
	Racial Harmony Day	50.0%	36.2%	13.8%
Makes me feel less Singaporean and more as part of my racial group	Mother Tongue	15.3%	75.7%	9.0%
	SAP schools	17.2%	60.7%	22.1%
	Racial Harmony Day	10.9%	79.5%	9.5%

Table 4.78: Sentiments about Mother Tongue Policy, SAP Schools, and Racial Harmony Day Part 2

Do you think this policy should be…	Scrapped	Kept	Enhanced further	Don't know
Mother Tongue	5.8%	63.3%	21.2%	9.7%
SAP schools	13.1%	48.4%	13.6%	24.9%
Racial Harmony Day	4.0%	65.6%	20.6%	9.9%

4.6.1 While reception towards Mother Tongue Policy was generally positive, fewer Chinese that it disadvantages minorities; no other major racial differences in perceptions towards the policy

There were no major racial differences when respondents were asked about whether the Mother Tongue policy helps to preserve racial harmony, disadvantages the majority race, safeguards minority rights or makes them feel less Singaporean. However, larger proportions of Malay and Indian respondents felt that the policy disadvantages minorities. Compared to 9.7 per cent of Chinese respondents, 16.3 per cent of Malay respondents and 17.6 per cent of Indian respondents felt that way.

However, respondents generally still felt that there is some use for the policy, given that less than one in 10 across all three major races wanted to scrap it. Two-thirds of Chinese respondents and over half of Malay and Indian respondents wanted to keep the policy as it is, while 19.5 per cent of Chinese, 27 per cent of Malay and 29.1 per cent of Indian respondents felt that further enhancements were needed (see Tables 4.79 to 4.84 below).

Table 4.79: Mother Tongue Policy preserves racial harmony, by respondents' race

Racial group	Mother Tongue Policy helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	68.4%	22.1%	9.5%
Malay	64.9%	23.9%	11.2%
Indian	62.2%	27.0%	10.8%
Others	48.1%	37.0%	14.8%

Table 4.80: Mother Tongue Policy disadvantages minorities, by respondents' race

Racial group	Mother Tongue Policy disadvantages minorities		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	9.7%	84.2%	6.1%
Malay	16.3%	73.0%	10.7%
Indian	17.6%	72.2%	10.2%
Others	22.2%	63.0%	14.8%

Table 4.81: Mother Tongue Policy disadvantages the majority race, by respondents' race

Racial group	Mother Tongue Policy disadvantages the majority race		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	5.8%	88.1%	6.1%
Malay	7.4%	81.4%	11.2%
Indian	8.4%	80.8%	10.8%
Others	11.1%	70.4%	18.5%

Table 4.82: Mother Tongue Policy safeguards minority rights, by respondents' race

Racial group	Mother Tongue Policy safeguards minority rights		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	45.7%	40.8%	13.5%
Malay	48.3%	36.1%	15.5%
Indian	49.3%	36.5%	14.2%
Others	37.0%	37.0%	25.9%

Table 4.83: Mother Tongue Policy makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group, by respondents' race

Racial group	Mother Tongue Policy makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	14.3%	77.9%	7.9%
Malay	17.0%	71.5%	11.5%
Indian	17.8%	70.1%	12.1%
Others	25.9%	55.6%	18.5%

Table 4.84: Mother Tongue Policy policy suggestions, by respondents' race

Racial group	Mother Tongue Policy should be scrapped, kept as it is, or enhanced further			
	Scrapped	Kept as it is	Enhanced further	Don't know
Chinese	4.9%	66.7%	19.5%	8.9%
Malay	5.9%	55.0%	27.0%	12.2%
Indian	9.7%	51.2%	29.1%	10.0%
Others	18.5%	44.4%	18.5%	18.5%

4.6.2 Higher-educated respondents, particularly those from minority races, less positive about Mother Tongue policy helping to preserve racial harmony and more likely to say it disadvantages minorities

Overall, respondents with higher education were less likely to say that the Mother Tongue policy helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore but more likely to say that it disadvantages minorities. The educational differences were the least pronounced amongst Chinese respondents.

Meanwhile, compared to 75.5 per cent of Malay and 72.4 per cent of Indian respondents with below secondary education, only 46.3 per cent of Malay and 58 per cent of Indian university-education respondents believed that the Mother Tongue policy preserves racial harmony. The same pattern was found in the question about disadvantaging minorities. While around eight

in 10 Malay and Indian respondents with below secondary education felt that the policy does not disadvantage minorities, 61 per cent of Malay and 68.2 per cent of Indian university-educated respondents said the same (see Tables 4.85 and 4.86 below).

Table 4.85: Mother Tongue Policy preserves racial harmony, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		Mother Tongue Policy helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	**Below secondary**	77.4%	9.6%	13.0%
	Secondary / ITE	66.3%	23.3%	10.4%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	70.7%	22.5%	6.8%
	Bachelor's and above	65.9%	25.0%	9.1%
Malay	**Below secondary**	75.5%	17.0%	7.5%
	Secondary / ITE	65.7%	19.3%	15.0%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	65.2%	27.2%	7.6%
	Bachelor's and above	46.3%	48.8%	4.9%
Indian	**Below secondary**	72.4%	10.3%	17.2%
	Secondary / ITE	66.2%	28.5%	5.4%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	60.9%	31.3%	7.8%
	Bachelor's and above	58.0%	26.8%	15.3%

Table 4.86: Mother Tongue Policy disadvantages minorities, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		Mother Tongue Policy disadvantages minorities		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	**Below secondary**	2.1%	87.7%	10.3%
	Secondary / ITE	9.5%	82.1%	8.4%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	9.6%	87.1%	3.2%
	Bachelor's and above	12.3%	83.0%	4.7%
Malay	**Below secondary**	9.4%	81.1%	9.4%
	Secondary / ITE	15.0%	71.5%	13.5%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	17.4%	77.2%	5.4%
	Bachelor's and above	29.3%	61.0%	9.8%
Indian	**Below secondary**	6.9%	79.3%	13.8%
	Secondary / ITE	17.7%	73.8%	8.5%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	21.9%	75.0%	3.1%
	Bachelor's and above	17.8%	68.2%	14.0%

4.6.3 Younger respondents were more positive about Mother Tongue policy safeguarding minority rights

Meanwhile, age differences were found with regard to the statement on safeguarding minority rights. While around 48 per cent of Chinese and Malay respondents below 66 years old felt that the policy safeguards minority rights, less than four in 10 of those above 65 felt this way. While the proportions of Indian respondents across age groups agreeing with the statement were fairly similar at around 50 per cent, the proportions choosing the other two options differed quite greatly — 44.1 per cent of the youngest group said that it did not safeguard minority rights, while only 29.7 per cent of those aged 36 to 50 said the same. In contrast, only 9.7 per cent of the youngest group did not have a strong opinion on the matter, while 19.6 per cent of those aged 36 to 50 indicated thus (see Table 4.87 below). These proportions possibly indicate different experiences towards the Mother Tongue policy in school across generations of students.

Table 4.87: Mother Tongue Policy safeguards minority rights, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		Mother Tongue Policy safeguards minority rights		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	48.8%	38.2%	13.0%
	36–50 years old	48.1%	39.9%	14.0%
	51–65 years old	46.4%	43.2%	10.4%
	Above 65 years old	39.9%	42.5%	17.8%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	48.4%	28.2%	23.4%
	36–50 years old	49.5%	33.3%	17.1%
	51–65 years old	50.4%	41.5%	8.1%
	Above 65 years old	39.0%	51.2%	9.8%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	46.2%	44.1%	9.7%
	36–50 years old	50.7%	29.7%	19.6%
	51–65 years old	50.0%	38.0%	12.0%
	Above 65 years old	50.0%	39.6%	10.4%

4.6.4 Older and lower-educated respondents more supportive of retaining the Mother Tongue policy; university-educated respondents more likely to want further enhancements

Older and lower-educated respondents were more likely to support keeping the Mother Tongue policy as it is. Amongst Chinese respondents, those aged 51 to 65 were the most supportive of the original policy, with 74.4 per cent indicating that it should be kept in its current

form. In contrast, 58.7 per cent of the youngest Chinese respondent group felt the same, while 25.5 per cent thought that it should be enhanced further. Amongst the Malay respondents, under half of those aged 21 to 50 thought that it should be kept as it is while around one-third of the same group felt that it should be enhanced further. However, two-thirds of older Malay respondents felt that it should be kept as it is while under 18 per cent felt it should be enhanced further. The age differences were the greatest for Indian respondents — compared to 70.8 per cent of those above 65 years old, only 45.2 per cent of the youngest group felt that the policy should be kept as it is.

Educational differences were the most pronounced for Malay respondents and least so for Chinese respondents. While 75.5 per cent of those with below secondary education felt that the policy should be retained, only 24.4 per cent of the university-educated felt the same. In addition, 24.4 per cent of university-educated Malays preferred to scrap the policy. Meanwhile, university-educated minority race respondents were most likely to prefer further enhancements to the Mother Tongue policy. University-educated Malays were also the most likely to support further enhancements to the policy, with 43.9 per cent choosing this option, while university-educated Indian respondents were not too far behind with 36.9 per cent (see Tables 4.88 and 4.89 below).

Table 4.88: Mother Tongue Policy policy suggestions, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		Mother Tongue Policy should be scrapped, kept as it is, or enhanced further			
		Scrapped	Kept as it is	Enhanced further	Don't know
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	5.6%	58.7%	25.5%	10.2%
	36–50 years old	4.4%	65.0%	23.0%	7.6%
	51–65 years old	3.9%	74.4%	14.9%	6.8%
	Above 65 years old	6.0%	70.4%	12.0%	11.6%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	4.8%	46.0%	36.3%	12.9%
	36–50 years old	5.7%	47.6%	33.3%	13.3%
	51–65 years old	6.5%	66.7%	15.4%	11.4%
	Above 65 years old	7.3%	65.9%	17.1%	9.8%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	11.8%	45.2%	35.5%	7.5%
	36–50 years old	10.8%	42.6%	34.5%	12.2%
	51–65 years old	7.6%	60.9%	21.7%	9.8%
	Above 65 years old	6.3%	70.8%	14.6%	8.3%

Table 4.89: Mother Tongue Policy policy suggestions, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		Mother Tongue Policy should be scrapped, kept as it is, or enhanced further			
		Scrapped	Kept as it is	Enhanced further	Don't know
Chinese	**Below secondary**	1.4%	83.6%	6.2%	8.9%
	Secondary / ITE	5.5%	67.7%	13.8%	13.0%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	4.8%	67.9%	21.7%	5.6%
	Bachelor's and above	5.6%	60.1%	26.7%	7.5%
Malay	**Below secondary**	3.8%	75.5%	11.3%	9.4%
	Secondary / ITE	4.3%	58.0%	22.2%	15.5%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	2.2%	50.0%	39.1%	8.7%
	Bachelor's and above	24.4%	24.4%	43.9%	7.3%
Indian	**Below secondary**	6.9%	65.5%	10.3%	17.2%
	Secondary / ITE	8.5%	60.8%	22.3%	8.5%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	9.4%	54.7%	31.3%	4.7%
	Bachelor's and above	11.5%	39.5%	36.9%	12.1%

4.6.5 Minority race respondents, particularly those who are younger, more likely to say that SAP schools do not preserve racial harmony in Singapore

While reception to the SAP schools policy was mixed at best, it was received even less positively by minority race respondents. These sentiments are also reflected in the large proportions of respondents choosing "Don't Know" for each statement relative to other policies — indicating more complex sentiments towards the policy with respect to racial relations. While 45.9 per cent of Chinese respondents said that the policy helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore, only around one-quarter of Malay and Indian respondents say the same. In fact, 45.7 per cent of Indian respondents felt that the policy did not help to preserve racial harmony.

Older Malay and Indian respondents were more likely to agree that the policy preserves racial harmony, while age differences were quite muted for Chinese respondents. However, it should be noted that the proportion of the oldest Malay and Indian respondents agreeing with the statement was still smaller compared to the youngest group of Chinese respondents (see Tables 4.90 and 4.91 below).

Table 4.90: SAP Schools Policy preserves racial harmony, by respondents' race

Racial group	SAP Schools Policy helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	45.9%	31.4%	22.7%
Malay	27.7%	38.4%	33.8%
Indian	25.2%	45.7%	29.1%
Others	33.3%	44.4%	22.2%

Table 4.91: SAP Schools Policy preserves racial harmony, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		SAP Schools Policy helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	40.7%	36.6%	22.7%
	36–50 years old	46.4%	34.4%	19.2%
	51–65 years old	50.0%	28.2%	21.8%
	Above 65 years old	46.8%	24.0%	29.2%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	17.7%	44.4%	37.9%
	36–50 years old	25.7%	41.9%	32.4%
	51–65 years old	35.8%	34.1%	30.1%
	Above 65 years old	39.0%	24.4%	36.6%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	12.9%	59.1%	28.0%
	36–50 years old	24.3%	43.9%	31.8%
	51–65 years old	33.7%	38.0%	28.3%
	Above 65 years old	35.4%	39.6%	25.0%

4.6.6 Chinese respondents least likely to say minorities are disadvantaged or Singaporean identity is weakened by the SAP school policy; more likely to say that the policy did not disadvantage majority race

Racial differences were found particularly in the statements concerning minorities or weakening the Singaporean identity, with Chinese respondents reflecting the most positive sentiments. When asked about whether the policy disadvantages minorities, only 18.4 per cent of Chinese respondents said yes, compared to 29.8 per cent of Malays and 37.8 per cent of Indians. The disparity in respondents of the three major races agreeing to whether the policy safeguards minority rights was not as great, but Chinese respondents were still more likely to agree (see Tables 4.92 and 4.93 below).

Table 4.92: SAP Schools Policy disadvantages minorities, by respondents' race

Racial group	SAP Schools Policy disadvantages minorities		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	18.4%	63.3%	18.2%
Malay	29.8%	40.5%	29.8%
Indian	37.8%	34.1%	28.1%
Others	40.7%	40.7%	18.5%

Table 4.93: SAP Schools Policy safeguards minority rights, by respondents' race

Racial group	SAP Schools Policy safeguards minority rights		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	26.3%	48.9%	24.8%
Malay	18.6%	46.8%	34.6%
Indian	15.5%	52.8%	31.8%
Others	18.5%	63.0%	18.5%

In addition, 77.7 per cent of Chinese respondents, compared to 58 per cent of Malay respondents and 61.4 per cent of Indian respondents, said that the policy *did not* disadvantage the majority race, even though only between 5 and 10 per cent of each racial group agreed with the statement. The main reason for this distribution was because around three in 10 Malay and Indian respondents indicated that they did not know the answer, compared with just 17.3 per cent of Chinese respondents (see Table 4.94 below). This indicates that while Chinese respondents were quite certain of their answer to this statement, a sizeable proportion of minority race respondents seem to be less certain about whether the policy holds any impact to the majority race.

Table 4.94: SAP Schools Policy disadvantages the majority race, by respondents' race

Racial group	SAP Schools Policy disadvantages the majority race		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	5.0%	77.7%	17.3%
Malay	10.4%	58.0%	31.6%
Indian	9.7%	61.4%	28.9%
Others	11.1%	66.7%	22.2%

When asked about whether the policy makes them feel less Singaporean and more part of their racial group, 14.9 per cent of Chinese respondents said yes, while 23.4 per cent of Malays and 28.1 per cent of Indians did the same. However, over three in 10 Malay and Indian respondents did not give a direct answer to this statement, choosing the "Don't Know" option instead (see Table 4.95 below).

Table 4.95: SAP Schools Policy makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group, by respondents' race

Racial group	SAP Schools Policy makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	14.9%	65.7%	19.4%
Malay	23.4%	44.3%	32.3%
Indian	28.1%	40.4%	31.5%
Others	18.5%	59.3%	22.2%

4.6.7 Younger minority race respondents more likely to say SAP schools disadvantages minorities; younger respondents more likely to feel the policy makes them feel less Singaporean

Overall, younger respondents were more likely to say that the SAP schools policy disadvantages minorities. The age difference was the most pronounced for Indian respondents — while 31.3 per cent of those older than 65 said that minorities were disadvantaged, the proportion increased to 51.6 per cent for those aged 21 to 35.

With regard to weakening the Singaporean identity, younger respondents across all three major races were more likely than their older cohorts to agree with the statement. The group that felt the most strongly about this was the Indian respondents aged 21 to 35. Of this group, 41.9 per cent said that they felt less Singaporean and more part of their racial group (see Tables 4.96 and 4.97 below).

Table 4.96: SAP Schools Policy disadvantages minorities, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		SAP Schools Policy disadvantages minorities		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	22.0%	61.5%	16.5%
	36–50 years old	21.9%	62.7%	15.5%
	51–65 years old	15.6%	65.3%	19.2%
	Above 65 years old	12.0%	64.4%	23.6%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	37.1%	29.0%	33.9%
	36–50 years old	31.4%	41.0%	27.6%
	51–65 years old	26.8%	47.2%	26.0%
	Above 65 years old	12.2%	53.7%	34.1%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	51.6%	22.6%	25.8%
	36–50 years old	37.2%	34.5%	28.4%
	51–65 years old	28.3%	38.0%	33.7%
	Above 65 years old	31.3%	47.9%	20.8%

Table 4.97: SAP Schools Policy makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		SAP Schools Policy makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	18.6%	63.7%	17.7%
	36–50 years old	16.0%	67.1%	16.9%
	51–65 years old	14.0%	68.5%	17.5%
	Above 65 years old	9.4%	62.7%	27.9%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	28.2%	32.3%	39.5%
	36–50 years old	27.6%	41.9%	30.5%
	51–65 years old	19.5%	54.5%	26.0%
	Above 65 years old	9.8%	56.1%	34.1%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	41.9%	26.9%	31.2%
	36–50 years old	26.4%	41.2%	32.4%
	51–65 years old	19.6%	45.7%	34.8%
	Above 65 years old	22.9%	54.2%	22.9%

4.6.8 Over half of Chinese respondents across education levels preferred to keep the SAP school policy; minority race respondents were more divided

Given all the above sentiments towards SAP schools, it is not surprising to see that Chinese respondents were the only group where more than half wanted to keep the policy as it is, while only 30 per cent of Malays and 24.7 per cent of Indian respondents gave the same response. Among those who had a specific policy suggestion, more Indian respondents wanted to scrap the policy (27.8 per cent) compared to keeping it (24.7 per cent).

When analysed by education levels, Malay university graduates were the most supportive of scrapping the policy, with 58.5 per cent indicating thus. Indian respondents with diploma or above qualifications were also quite supportive of scrapping the policy, given that around one-third chose that option. In contrast, the most popular option by far for Chinese respondents was to keep the policy as it is. Over half of Chinese respondents across education levels chose this option (see Tables 4.98 and 4.99 below).

Table 4.98: SAP Schools Policy policy suggestions, by respondents' race

Racial group	SAP Schools Policy should be scrapped, kept as it is, or enhanced further			
	Scrapped	Kept as it is	Enhanced further	Don't know
Chinese	9.8%	54.6%	13.4%	22.1%
Malay	17.6%	30.0%	15.5%	36.9%
Indian	27.8%	24.7%	15.0%	32.5%
Others	37.0%	33.3%	7.4%	22.2%

Table 4.99: SAP Schools Policy policy suggestions, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		SAP Schools Policy should be scrapped, kept as it is, or enhanced further			
		Scrapped	Kept as it is	Enhanced further	Don't know
Chinese	**Below secondary**	4.8%	58.9%	3.4%	32.9%
	Secondary / ITE	6.9%	59.9%	9.2%	23.9%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	9.2%	51.8%	17.7%	21.3%
	Bachelor's and above	13.8%	50.9%	17.5%	17.9%
Malay	**Below secondary**	5.7%	41.5%	5.7%	47.2%
	Secondary / ITE	11.6%	35.3%	15.5%	37.7%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	19.6%	20.7%	21.7%	38.0%
	Bachelor's and above	58.5%	9.8%	14.6%	17.1%
Indian	**Below secondary**	10.3%	27.6%	10.3%	51.7%
	Secondary / ITE	20.8%	32.3%	16.2%	30.8%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	32.8%	28.1%	10.9%	28.1%
	Bachelor's and above	35.0%	16.6%	15.9%	32.5%

4.6.9 Racial Harmony Day well received by respondents of the three major races; half to seven in 10 respondents want to keep it as-is

Racial Harmony, being the most popular policy overall, was well-received by respondents regardless of race. Chinese respondents were most likely to provide positive responses for all the follow up questions related to the usefulness of the policy. The only question with less than seven in 10 providing positive responses was the one about safeguarding minority rights. Only around half of respondents from the three major races indicated that the policy safeguards minority rights. This proportion is much lower compared to the findings from the 2016 survey, in which around three-quarters of respondents from the three major races agreed with the statement.

While most respondents across all races preferred to keep the policy as it is, a large minority wanted further enhancements to the policy. Nearly two in 10 Chinese respondents, 24.4 per cent of Malay respondents and 32.8 per cent of Indian respondents indicated this preference (see Tables 4.100 to 4.105 below).

Table 4.100: Racial Harmony Day preserves racial harmony, by respondents' race

Racial group	Racial Harmony Day helps to preserve racial harmony in Singapore		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	82.6%	9.7%	7.7%
Malay	72.5%	14.5%	13.0%
Indian	73.2%	16.3%	10.5%
Others	77.8%	11.1%	11.1%

Table 4.101: Racial Harmony Day disadvantages minorities, by respondents' race

Racial group	Racial Harmony Day disadvantages minorities		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	5.2%	88.4%	6.4%
Malay	11.2%	75.3%	13.5%
Indian	7.9%	80.8%	11.3%
Others	0%	92.6%	7.4%

Table 4.102: Racial Harmony Day disadvantages the majority race, by respondents' race

Racial group	Racial Harmony Day disadvantages the majority race		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	3.8%	89.7%	6.5%
Malay	6.9%	79.6%	13.5%
Indian	5.2%	84.5%	10.2%
Others	0%	92.6%	7.4%

Table 4.103: Racial Harmony Day safeguards minority rights, by respondents' race (figures in brackets are from 2016 wave)

Racial group	Racial Harmony Day safeguards minority rights		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	49.5% (75.1%)	37.8% (9.9%)	12.7% (15.1%)
Malay	50.4% (72.6%)	31.6% (9.6%)	18.1% (17.8%)
Indian	50.7% (73.8%)	32.5% (10.1%)	16.8% (16.0%)
Others	59.3% (74.5%)	25.9% (10.9%)	14.8% (14.6%)

Table 4.104: Racial Harmony Day makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group, by respondents' race

Racial group	Racial Harmony Day makes me feel less Singaporean; more part of my racial group		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Chinese	10.2%	81.8%	8.0%
Malay	14.8%	70.2%	15.0%
Indian	12.9%	72.7%	14.4%
Others	7.4%	81.5%	11.1%

Table 4.105: Racial Harmony Day policy suggestions, by respondents' race

Racial group	Racial Harmony Day should be scrapped, kept as it is, or enhanced further			
	Scrapped	Kept as it is	Enhanced further	Don't know
Chinese	3.4%	69.1%	18.5%	9.0%
Malay	5.9%	57.5%	24.4%	12.2%
Indian	7.1%	48.0%	32.8%	12.1%
Others	3.7%	59.3%	22.2%	14.8%

Chapter 5

Lived Experiences

CHAPTER 5 | LIVED EXPERIENCES

5.1 OVERALL FINDINGS

Alongside the rise of racial activism and increasing normalisation of discussions pertaining to racial issues, the concept of lived experience has also gained salience. Lived experiences generally refers to personal knowledge of an issue or event through direct, first-hand involvement (Oxford Reference, n.d.). This chapter concerns respondents' experiences with discrimination in the workplace and in the housing market, as well as hypothetical situations involving such discrimination and how they would respond to it. This includes calling out or reporting racism. The chapter is divided into four sections accordingly: (A) Prevalence of experiencing discrimination; (B) Views on calling out and reporting racism; (C) Views on majority actions to support minorities and (D) Views on public discussions about race.

The epistemic value of lived experiences in deepening understanding of social issues has gained traction and generated considerable debate in recent years. As explained and laid out by the 2021 UK Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities report, controversy over the validity of lived experience narratives mostly comes about when they clash with "objective data" (The United Kingdom. Cabinet Office, Race Disparity Unit, 2021). The report also highlights the tendency of such racial discourse to be viewed differently by academics, political groups and the ordinary citizens of the country. The report was met with some criticism for discrediting the validity of lived experiences by emphasising objective data over subjective experiences (Hothi, 2021).

There has yet to be substantial activity on the specific debate of the validity and value of lived experiences. It has, however, long been a common tool employed in the study and exploration of racial relations in different parts of the world (Mtose, 2011; Jaiswal et al., 2019).

Most of the literature dealing with or related to lived experiences of people in Singapore have referred to everyday encounters of microaggressions and subtle acts of discrimination (Velayutham, 2009 and 2017; Zainal & Wong, 2017; Velayutham & Somaiah, 2021). Farah Bawany, a critical anthropologist and ethnographer of digital cultures, chronicled her experiences growing up as a woman of colour in Singapore (2021). Her autoethnography was aimed at revealing "the hegemonic ideologies that are socially integrated and communicated insidiously" "and their hierarchizing effects on ethnicity". The TODAY Youth Survey 2021, which polled 1,066 respondents aged between 18 and 35, also concluded that over four in 10 of them had personal experiences of racism which had an impact on their opinions on racial issues (Teo & Pereira, 2021).

A) Prevalence of experiencing discrimination

5.1.1 Overall most respondents had never experienced discrimination at work, or in terms of renting and selling a flat, though more minorities face such discrimination

Over four-fifths of respondents stated that they had never lost out on a job, promotion, or opportunity at work, and never been paid less than a counterpart (see Table 5.1). Less than 9 per cent of respondents had experienced discrimination at work at least once.

Of all the respondents, less than 3 per cent had experienced disadvantages in renting a flat or selling one because of their race at least once. However, these situations did not apply to about half of the respondents, making it difficult to access significant statistics on this. However, even if there is a relatively low incidence of such discrimination, it should not discount individual experiences.

Table 5.1: Experiences of discrimination and unfair treatment

While living in Singapore, have you experienced any of the following because of your race? Tick all that apply.	Four times or more	Two or three times	Once	Never	Not applicable
You have lost out on a job	1.0%	4.0%	3.5%	83.3%	8.2%
You have lost out on a promotion	0.7%	3.6%	3.1%	83.8%	8.7%
You have been paid less than your counterparts of similar ability or rank	0.8%	4.5%	3.0%	82.8%	8.9%
You have lost out on an opportunity at work	1.1%	4.2%	3.6%	82.2%	8.8%
You have been rejected as a rental tenant	0.3%	0.9%	1.2%	46.9%	50.6%
You have sold your HDB flat for less than people of a different race	0.1%	0.3%	2.2%	49.0%	48.3%

5.1.2 Minorities were more likely to have experienced discrimination at work or in the housing market

While the trends in work-related discrimination noted above hold true across respondents of all races, minority races were more likely than Chinese respondents to have experienced unfair treatment in the workplace due to their race at least once. Compared to the 5 per cent of Chinese who had lost out on a job due to their race at least once, there were 21.2 per cent of Malays and 17.4 per cent of Indians who had had this experience (see Table 5.2 below). Likewise, while 4.3 per cent of Chinese had lost out on a promotion, this had happened to 19.4 per cent of Malays and 17 per cent of Indians (see Table 5.3 below). Similar disparities are apparent for the other two work-related experiences: losing out on an opportunity at work and being paid less than counterparts of similar ability or rank (see Tables 5.4 and 5.5).

Table 5.2: Frequency of losing out on a job, by respondents' race

Racial group	You have lost out on a job				
	Four times or more	Two or three times	Once	Never	Not applicable
Chinese	0.2%	2.8%	2.0%	87.0%	8.0%
Malay	3.6%	9.2%	8.4%	70.2%	8.7%
Indian	2.9%	5.8%	8.7%	72.7%	10.0%
Others	3.7%	7.4%	7.4%	74.1%	7.4%

Table 5.3: Frequency of losing out on a promotion, by respondents' race

Racial group	You have lost out on a promotion				
	Four times or more	Two or three times	Once	Never	Not applicable
Chinese	0.2%	2.4%	1.7%	87.3%	8.4%
Malay	3.6%	6.9%	8.9%	71.5%	9.2%
Indian	2.1%	7.3%	7.6%	71.7%	11.3%
Others	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	81.5%	7.4%

Table 5.4: Frequency of being paid less than counterparts, by respondents' race

Racial group	You have been paid less than your counterparts of similar ability or rank				
	Four times or more	Two or three times	Once	Never	Not applicable
Chinese	0.2%	3.4%	1.8%	86.2%	8.5%
Malay	2.8%	8.4%	9.4%	69.5%	9.9%
Indian	2.4%	6.3%	5.0%	74.0%	12.3%
Others	3.7%	11.1%	0.0%	77.8%	7.4%

Table 5.5: Frequency of losing out on an opportunity at work, by respondents' race

Racial group	You have lost out on an opportunity at work				
	Four times or more	Two or three times	Once	Never	Not applicable
Chinese	0.4%	2.7%	2.6%	86.0%	8.4%
Malay	3.3%	8.7%	8.9%	69.0%	10.2%
Indian	3.4%	9.2%	6.8%	69.3%	11.3%
Others	3.7%	11.1%	0.0%	77.8%	7.4%

It seems that Indians have it tougher as rental tenants, with 10.8 per cent of them having been rejected due to their race at least once, compared to 1.4 per cent of Chinese (see Table 5.6). There was also a marginally higher proportion of Malays and Indians (5.4 per cent and 5 per cent respectively) compared to Chinese (2.1 per cent) who indicated that they had sold their HDB flat for less than someone of another race (see Table 5.7). However, it is hard to draw conclusions about these figures due to the large proportion who selected that the question

was not applicable to them, perhaps due to Singapore's high home ownership rates where relatively few will have to rent.

Table 5.6: Frequency of being rejected as a rental tenant, by respondents' race

Racial group	You have been rejected as a rental tenant				
	Four times or more	Two or three times	Once	Never	Not applicable
Chinese	0.1%	0.5%	0.8%	49.5%	49.1%
Malay	0.5%	0.5%	2.0%	37.4%	59.5%
Indian	2.4%	5.5%	2.9%	36.2%	53.0%
Others	0.0%	0.0%	3.7%	51.9%	44.4%

Table 5.7: Frequency of selling a flat for less, by respondents' race

Racial group	You have sold your HDB flat for less than people of a different race				
	Four times or more	Two or three times	Once	Never	Not applicable
Chinese	0.1%	0.2%	1.8%	51.2%	46.7%
Malay	0.3%	0.8%	4.3%	41.7%	52.9%
Indian	0.5%	0.8%	3.7%	40.2%	54.9%
Others	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	48.1%	51.9%

5.1.3 Respondents, especially minorities, often felt sad, resigned or angry in response to unfair or discriminatory treatment

Respondents who stated that they had experienced any form of unfair treatment at least once were asked about their emotional response to it. There was a range of experiences among respondents (see Table 5.8). The most prevalent emotions were sadness (46.2 per cent) and resignation (40.6 per cent). This was followed by anger (35.2 per cent).

Table 5.8: Emotional responses to unfair treatment

How did this make you feel? Tick all that apply.	Percentage
Sad	46.2%
Anxious	15.3%
Angry	35.2%
Resigned ("I cannot do anything about it")	40.6%
Indifferent ("I don't care")	18.8%

There was some disparity by respondents' race in terms of the emotions they felt after being treated unfairly. While the top three emotions are consistent across Chinese, Malays and

Indians, the latter two were more likely to feel sad than Chinese. More than half the Malays and Indians (51.9 per cent and 55.9 per cent respectively) indicated that they felt sad after being discriminated, compared to 40.8 per cent of Chinese (see Table 5.9 below).

Minority races were also more likely to feel anxious than Chinese respondents after some form of unfair treatment. Whereas 10.8 per cent of Chinese respondents stated that they felt this way, nearly twice as many Malays (20.9 per cent) and Indians (19.9 per cent) said so.

Table 5.9: Emotional responses to unfair treatment, by respondents' race

How did this make you feel? Tick all that apply.	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
Sad	40.8%	51.9%	55.9%	33.3%
Anxious	10.8%	20.9%	19.9%	16.7%
Angry	33.8%	38.8%	38.2%	16.7%
Resigned ("I cannot do anything about it")	39.2%	45.0%	39.7%	33.3%
Indifferent ("I don't care")	21.5%	16.3%	11.8%	33.3%

5.1.4 Younger respondents tended to feel sad or angry in response to discrimination, while middle-aged respondents were most likely to feel resigned

The most common emotional responses to discrimination differed by respondents' age (see Table 5.10). Those in the youngest age cohort, from 21 to 35 years old, were most likely to feel sad (62.5 per cent). Nearly 46 per cent of this group also claimed to be angry. This is the highest proportion for any emotion and any age cohort. While elderly participants above 65 years old were also most likely to feel sad, only 39.1 per cent indicated this.

Meanwhile, respondents aged between 36 and 50 years old were most likely to feel resigned (43.2 per cent) or sad (40.8 per cent). The same can be said for those aged 51 to 65 years old, although lower proportions indicated these emotions. Due to the low number of respondents who indicated that they had experienced unfair treatment at least once, it is not feasible to report data by race in addition to age.

Table 5.10: Emotional responses to unfair treatment, by respondents' age

How did this make you feel? Tick all that apply.	21–35 years old	36–50 years old	51–65 years old	Above 65 years old
Sad	62.5%	40.8%	37.0%	39.1%
Anxious	21.6%	12.0%	14.3%	12.6%
Angry	45.9%	30.8%	30.4%	31.8%
Resigned ("I cannot do anything about it")	45.5%	43.2%	38.2%	20.5%
Indifferent ("I don't care")	18.5%	22.8%	12.2%	17.9%

5.2 Low impact of race-related incidents on approaching race relations given moderate level of apathy

When participants were asked how they had been affected by recent race-related incidents highlighted in the media, there was a range of responses. The most common sentiment shared by 41 per cent of respondents was that nothing had changed for them because they did not really care (see Table 5.11). This indicates a moderate level of apathy towards racial issues within the population. A much smaller proportion, 16.3 per cent, stated that nothing much had changed because they have always been concerned about these issues.

About a quarter of respondents (24.1 per cent) reported that they would be more careful when talking to someone of a different race This is followed by the 18.8 per cent who reported that they paid more attention to race-related stories in the media.

The rise in racial incidences pushed some to be more sensitive or interested in issues with 11 per cent indicating that they have begun to talk more about race with their family and friends, On the other hand, an equal portion (11.6 per cent) avoided discussions as well as news about race.

Meanwhile, the two options that describe a deterioration of inter-racial trust and safety as a result of race-related incidents were the least popular. Only 6 per cent of respondents indicated that they now trust people of other races less, and 5 per cent felt less safe going about their daily lives.

Table 5.11: Impacts of race-related incidents on respondents

There have been a number of race-related incidents highlighted in the media recently. How has it affected the way you approach race relations? Choose all that apply.	**Percentage**
I trust people of other races less.	6.0%
I feel less safe going about my daily life.	5.0%
I have talked more about race with family and friends.	11.0%
I now pay more attention to race-related stories in the media.	18.8%
I have avoided discussions and news about race.	11.6%
I have become more careful when talking to someone of a different race.	24.1%
Nothing much has changed since I have always been concerned about these issues.	16.3%
Nothing much has changed because I do not really care.	41.0%

5.2.1 Minorities are more likely than Chinese respondents to change their approach to race relations as a result of media attention on race-related incidents

Across respondents of all races, the most often-selected impact is consistently that nothing much has changed for them as they do not really care (see Table 5.12). However, there were

substantially fewer Indian respondents (29.4 per cent) than Chinese respondents (43 per cent) who said this. The proportion of Malay respondents who concurred was also somewhat lower than that of Chinese respondents, at 35.6 per cent. In other words, minorities were more likely to have been affected by race-related incidents.

Table 5.12: Impacts of race-related incidents on respondents, by respondents' race

There have been a number of race-related incidents highlighted in the media recently. How has it affected the way you approach race relations? Choose all that apply.	**Chinese**	**Malay**	**Indian**	**Others**
Nothing much has changed because I do not really care.	43.0%	35.6%	29.4%	44.4%
I have become more careful when talking to someone of a different race.	23.7%	25.2%	27.6%	18.5%
I now pay more attention to race-related stories in the media.	19.5%	17.0%	18.4%	11.1%
Nothing much has changed since I have always been concerned about these issues.	16.0%	16.3%	17.1%	22.2%
I have avoided discussions and news about race.	10.2%	14.8%	19.9%	11.1%
I have talked more about race with family and friends.	10.0%	13.5%	15.2%	14.8%
I trust people of other races less.	5.1%	8.9%	10.2%	7.4%
I feel less safe going about my daily life.	4.1%	6.9%	10.0%	3.7%

5.2.2 Older respondents, regardless of their race, were more likely to be apathetic about race-related incidents

Older respondents, whether they were Chinese, Malay or Indian, had a higher level of apathy about race-related incidents (see Table 5.13). The disparity was especially wide for Chinese respondents. Compared to the 37.9 per cent of Chinese between 21 and 35 years old who indicated that nothing much has changed for them because they do not really care, more than half or 56.2 per cent of Chinese above 65 years old felt this way.

Table 5.13: Impacts of race-related incidents on respondents, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		Nothing much has changed because I do not really care.
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	37.9%
	36–50 years old	35.9%
	51–65 years old	46.4%
	Above 65 years old	56.2%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	30.6%
	36–50 years old	30.5%
	51–65 years old	41.5%
	Above 65 years old	46.3%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	28.0%
	36–50 years old	25.7%
	51–65 years old	33.7%
	Above 65 years old	35.4%

5.2.3 Lower educated respondents were more likely to be disinterested about race-related incidents

Respondents with below secondary education were the most likely to indicate that they do not really care about race-related incidents (see Table 5.14). About 69.2 per cent of Chinese, 56.6 per cent of Malays and 48.3 per cent of Indians with this education level selected this option. These are the highest proportions within each racial group. At the same time, those with a bachelor's degree or above had the lowest level of apathy.

Table 5.14: Impacts of race-related incidents on respondents, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		Nothing much has changed because I do not really care.
Chinese	**Below secondary**	69.2%
	Secondary / ITE	46.4%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	39.4%
	Bachelor's and above	34.3%
Malay	**Below secondary**	56.6%
	Secondary / ITE	38.2%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	28.3%
	Bachelor's and above	12.2%
Indian	**Below secondary**	48.3%
	Secondary / ITE	35.4%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	29.7%
	Bachelor's and above	20.4%

B) Views on calling out and reporting racism

5.3 People generally approve of making police reports about racism, with minorities especially supportive of this

Most respondents (63.9 per cent) thought that racist acts should be reported to the police (see Table 5.15 below). Malay and Indian respondents were even more supportive of reporting racism to the police than Chinese respondents. While 61.9 per cent of Chinese respondents agreed or strongly agreed that people should do this, the proportion is 73.3 per cent for Malays and 69.3 per cent for Indians (see Table 5.16 below).

Table 5.15: Support for different acts to tackle racism

To what extent do you agree or disagree that people should carry out the following acts?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Report racist acts to the police	8.4%	27.7%	42.1%	21.8%

Table 5.16: Support for reporting racism to police, by respondents' race

Racial group	Report racist acts to the police			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	9.5%	28.6%	41.5%	20.4%
Malay	4.1%	22.6%	44.3%	29.0%
Indian	5.2%	25.5%	42.3%	27.0%
Others	7.4%	33.3%	48.1%	11.1%

5.3.1 Older respondents were ambivalent about reporting racist acts to the police, while younger respondents were supportive of this

While younger respondents were generally supportive of reporting racist acts to the police, Chinese, Malay and Indian respondents above 65 years old were divided on this action (see Table 5.17). About half of them agreed or strongly agreed with doing this.

Table 5.17: Support for reporting racism to police, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		Report racist acts to the police			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	7.1%	21.7%	44.7%	26.4%
	36–50 years old	9.0%	25.7%	47.2%	18.1%
	51–65 years old	10.1%	32.1%	36.7%	21.1%
	Above 65 years old	12.9%	37.8%	34.8%	14.6%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	3.2%	10.5%	44.4%	41.9%
	36–50 years old	4.8%	21.9%	46.7%	26.7%
	51–65 years old	4.9%	27.6%	43.9%	23.6%
	Above 65 years old	2.4%	46.3%	39.0%	12.2%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	3.2%	16.1%	31.2%	49.5%
	36–50 years old	6.1%	19.6%	51.4%	23.0%
	51–65 years old	5.4%	35.9%	42.4%	16.3%
	Above 65 years old	6.3%	41.7%	35.4%	16.7%

5.3.2 People are most likely to report racial discrimination experienced in the workplace or in public

People seem to be generally less inclined to report experiences of racism to the authorities. More than a third of respondents indicated that they would not make a report to the authorities for a range of possible discriminatory treatment based on race or racially insensitive behaviour

(see Table 5.18). Of those situations, none would cause more than half of the respondents to make a report. Still, people were most likely to report discrimination when it happens at work (42.8 per cent) or in a public space (41.3 per cent). About 40.4 per cent would report a racist comment that had been levelled against them on social media, but this proportion drops to 27.9 per cent if the online comment was levelled against other people of their race.

While a sizeable number of respondents considered it important to report unfair treatment and discrimination at work, a lower proportion, 32.3 per cent, would file a report if they felt they had not been hired for a job because of their race. This may be because workplace discrimination is more likely to be ongoing, resulting in a continuous impact on the respondent's life. Some respondents may also have felt that it is difficult to tell if their job application was rejected due to their race or possibly other factors, even if they suspected that there were racial undertones.

Respondents were the least likely to report being rejected as a rental tenant because of race, with only 15.4 per cent who would do so.

Table 5.18: Situations in which respondents would make a report to the authorities

In which of the following cases would you make a report to the authorities (e.g. police, TAFEP)? Tick all that apply.	Percentage
You feel that you have been unfairly treated/discriminated at work because of your race	42.8%
You feel that you were not hired for a job because of your race	32.3%
A racist comment has been levelled against you on social media	40.4%
A racist comment has been levelled against you in a public space (e.g., hawker centre)	41.3%
A racist comment has been levelled against other people of your race on social media	27.9%
You feel that you have been rejected as a rental tenant because of your race	15.4%
None of the above	37.7%

5.3.3 Racial minorities were more likely to make a report about racism experienced in public and in the workplace

In certain situations, minority race respondents were more likely than Chinese respondents to make a report to the authorities. For instance, while 51.1 per cent of Malays would report a racist comment being levelled against them in a public space, only 39.4 per cent of Chinese would do so (see Table 5.19). In the case of job discrimination, 40.4 per cent of Indians would report being rejected for a job due to their race, compared to only 30.8 per cent of Chinese who would.

Interestingly, 36.6 per cent of Malays would report a racist comment being levelled against other people of their race on social media — substantially higher than the 26 per cent of Chinese who would do so. Minorities may be more willing to stand up for one another in the face of racist comments.

Indians were slightly more likely to report being rejected as rental tenants compared to Chinese people. Compared to 14 per cent of Chinese, 22.3 per cent of Indians would do so.

Table 5.19: Situations in which respondents would make a report to the authorities, by respondents' race

In which of the following cases would you make a report to the authorities (e.g. police, TAFEP)? Tick all that apply.	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
You feel that you have been unfairly treated/discriminated at work because of your race	41.7%	49.6%	45.7%	33.3%
You feel that you were not hired for a job because of your race	30.8%	36.6%	40.4%	29.6%
A racist comment has been levelled against you on social media	38.9%	45.3%	47.5%	37.0%
A racist comment has been levelled against you in a public space (e.g., hawker centre)	39.4%	51.1%	44.1%	40.7%
A racist comment has been levelled against other people of your race on social media	26.0%	36.6%	34.6%	22.2%
You feel that you have been rejected as a rental tenant because of your race	14.0%	19.8%	22.3%	11.1%
None of the above	40.1%	27.2%	29.7%	40.7%

5.3.4 Most people who would report work-related discrimination would do so because they believe it is wrong for them to be unfairly treated and the government should be made aware of such cases

Respondents who indicated that they would report work-related discrimination, be it unfair treatment or hiring, were subsequently asked for their rationale for this. Overall, 59.3 per cent of them stated that it is difficult to prove that racial discrimination occurred (see Table 5.20 below). Much lower proportions indicated that they did not believe the authorities could do anything about it (30.3 per cent) or that such unfair treatment is only to be expected (29.7 per cent).

Those who indicated that they would not report work-related discrimination were likewise asked for their reasons (see Table 5.21 below). The top reasons are that they felt it was wrong for them to be unfairly treated due to their race (85.9 per cent) and that the government should be made aware of cases of workplace discrimination (80.8 per cent). A smaller majority, 62 per cent, felt that helplines like TAFEP can help to curb discrimination at work.

Table 5.20: Reasons for not reporting work-related discrimination

Why are you unlikely to make a complaint about work-related discrimination? Tick all that apply.	Percentage
It is difficult to prove that racial discrimination occurred.	59.3%
Such unfair treatment is common and only to be expected.	29.7%
I do not believe the authorities can do anything about it.	30.3%

Table 5.21: Reasons for reporting work-related discrimination

Why are you likely to make a complaint about work-related discrimination? Tick all that apply.	Percentage
It is wrong that I was unfairly treated due to my race.	85.9%
Helplines like TAFEP can help to curb discrimination at work.	62.0%
The government should be made aware of workplace discrimination cases.	80.8%

Respondents' race did not seem to have an impact on their reasons for reporting or not reporting work-related discrimination (see Tables 6.22 and 6.23 below).

Table 5.22: Reasons for not reporting work-related discrimination, by respondents' race

Why are you unlikely to make a complaint about work-related discrimination? Tick all that apply.	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
It is difficult to prove that racial discrimination occurred.	59.2%	62.1%	60.5%	50.0%
Such unfair treatment is common and only to be expected.	30.9%	28.4%	23.8%	18.8%
I do not believe the authorities can do anything about it.	28.4%	34.3%	32.0%	56.3%

Table 5.23: Reasons for reporting work-related discrimination, by respondents' race

Why are you likely to make a complaint about work-related discrimination? Tick all that apply.	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
It is wrong that I was unfairly treated due to my race.	85.9%	84.8%	86.1%	90.9%
Helplines like TAFEP can help to curb discrimination at work.	63.4%	55.8%	62.7%	54.5%
The government should be made aware of workplace discrimination cases.	80.7%	79.9%	82.8%	81.8%

5.4 Respondents of all races were reserved in calling out racism via various means; they were especially disapproving of doxing

Generally, respondents seemed disinclined to support calling out racism. Fewer than half of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that people should directly criticise people who have made a racist comment or carried out a racist act, or write a post calling out racist incidents

they have observed or personally experienced (see Table 5.24 below). This was consistent across respondents of all races (see Tables 5.25 to 5.27 below).

Most respondents (68.4 per cent) disapproved of doxing those who had carried out racist acts. Vigilante justice online seemed to be a line most respondents would not cross.

Table 5.24: Support for different ways of calling out racism

To what extent do you agree or disagree that people should carry out the following acts?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Directly criticise people who have made a racist comment or carried out a racist act	16.5%	42.2%	29.0%	12.2%
Write a post or posts calling out racist incidents they have observed	11.1%	50.0%	27.7%	11.1%
Write a post or posts calling out racist incidents they have personally experienced	14.3%	42.3%	31.7%	11.7%
Reveal the names, pictures and personal information of people who have carried out racist acts (a practice known as doxing)	23.5%	44.9%	19.7%	11.9%

Table 5.25: Support for directly calling out racism, by respondents' race

Racial group	Directly criticise people who have made a racist comment or carried out a racist act			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	17.5%	43.4%	28.1%	11.0%
Malay	12.5%	38.7%	32.3%	16.5%
Indian	14.4%	37.8%	30.7%	17.1%
Others	14.8%	40.7%	33.3%	11.1%

Table 5.26: Support for writing posts calling out observed racism, by respondents' race

Racial group	Write a post or posts calling out racist incidents they have observed			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	12.4%	49.8%	27.7%	10.1%
Malay	5.9%	50.4%	28.5%	15.3%
Indian	12.1%	44.1%	27.0%	16.8%
Others	0.0%	70.4%	25.9%	3.7%

Table 5.27: Support for writing posts calling out personally-experienced racism, by respondents' race

Racial group	Write a post or posts calling out racist incidents they have personally experienced			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	15.1%	42.5%	31.5%	10.9%
Malay	11.5%	42.5%	31.0%	15.0%
Indian	14.7%	35.7%	32.8%	16.8%
Others	3.7%	55.6%	37.0%	3.7%

While people were generally not supportive of doxing, Chinese respondents were even more disapproving of this practice than minority respondents were. A large majority of 70.9 per cent of them felt this way, compared to 57.7 per cent of Malays and 60.1 per cent of Indians (see Table 5.28 below).

Table 5.28: Support for doxing racist people, by respondents' race

Racial group	Reveal the names, pictures and personal information of people who have carried out racist acts (a practice known as doxing)			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	26.2%	44.7%	18.4%	10.7%
Malay	14.2%	43.5%	24.7%	17.6%
Indian	15.0%	45.1%	24.1%	15.7%
Others	18.5%	55.6%	18.5%	7.4%

5.4.1 Younger respondents were often more likely to support calling out racism

Among Chinese and Indian respondents, those who were younger were more likely to support directly calling out racism (see Table 5.29 below).

This trend is only partly true for Malay respondents. Among Malays aged 51 to 65 years old, 49.6 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that people should directly criticise people who have made a racist comment or carried out a racist act. This is higher than the proportion of Malays aged 36 to 50 years old (40 per cent).

Table 5.29: Support for directly calling out racism, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		Directly criticise people who have made a racist comment or carried out a racist act			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	15.8%	39.4%	33.5%	11.2%
	36–50 years old	17.5%	44.0%	30.9%	7.6%
	51–65 years old	16.9%	41.6%	26.6%	14.9%
	Above 65 years old	20.6%	50.2%	18.5%	10.7%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	8.1%	30.6%	40.3%	21.0%
	36–50 years old	10.5%	49.5%	29.5%	10.5%
	51–65 years old	14.6%	35.8%	30.9%	18.7%
	Above 65 years old	24.4%	43.9%	19.5%	12.2%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	11.8%	22.6%	31.2%	34.4%
	36–50 years old	15.5%	38.5%	34.5%	11.5%
	51–65 years old	13.0%	47.8%	28.3%	10.9%
	Above 65 years old	18.8%	45.8%	22.9%	12.5%

Younger respondents of the three major races were more likely to support writing posts calling out racist incidents they have observed or personally experienced (see Tables 5.30 and 5.31 below).

Table 5.30: Support for writing posts calling out observed racism, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		Write a post or posts calling out racist incidents they have observed			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	12.1%	39.1%	38.8%	9.9%
	36–50 years old	12.8%	54.5%	26.8%	5.8%
	51–65 years old	11.7%	49.0%	24.7%	14.6%
	Above 65 years old	12.9%	58.8%	17.6%	10.7%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	8.9%	33.9%	37.9%	19.4%
	36–50 years old	7.6%	57.1%	24.8%	10.5%
	51–65 years old	3.3%	53.7%	26.8%	16.3%
	Above 65 years old	0.0%	73.2%	14.6%	12.2%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	10.8%	24.7%	31.2%	33.3%
	36–50 years old	15.5%	45.9%	27.0%	11.5%
	51–65 years old	9.8%	55.4%	23.9%	10.9%
	Above 65 years old	8.3%	54.2%	25.0%	12.5%

Table 5.31: Support for writing posts calling out personally-experienced racism, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		Write a post or posts calling out racist incidents they have personally experienced			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	13.7%	29.8%	45.0%	11.5%
	36–50 years old	15.7%	44.9%	33.2%	6.1%
	51–65 years old	17.5%	42.2%	24.4%	15.9%
	Above 65 years old	12.9%	56.7%	19.7%	10.7%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	8.9%	33.1%	40.3%	17.7%
	36–50 years old	9.5%	50.5%	28.6%	11.4%
	51–65 years old	12.2%	41.5%	30.1%	16.3%
	Above 65 years old	22.0%	53.7%	12.2%	12.2%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	10.8%	12.9%	40.9%	35.5%
	36–50 years old	16.2%	40.5%	33.1%	10.1%
	51–65 years old	15.2%	46.7%	27.2%	10.9%
	Above 65 years old	16.7%	43.8%	27.1%	12.5%

There is no clear trend by respondents' age when it comes to their support for the practice of doxing racist people. Among Indian respondents, respondents of all age cohorts generally were not supportive of doxing. The exception is Indians between 21 and 35 years old, who were divided on this action. About half disagreed or strongly disagreed with doxing, compared to over 60 per cent for every other age cohort of Indians.

In most age cohorts of Chinese respondents, over seven in 10 disapprove of doxing. The exception is Chinese aged 51 to 65 years old, of whom a slightly lower proportion (63.9 per cent) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this practice. Meanwhile, Malays between 51 and 65 years of age were equally split on their stances on doxing (see Table 5.32 below).

Table 5.32: Support for doxing racist people, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		Reveal the names, pictures and personal information of people who have carried out racist acts (a practice known as doxing)			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	29.8%	41.9%	18.3%	9.9%
	36–50 years old	29.7%	46.9%	16.9%	6.4%
	51–65 years old	24.0%	39.9%	21.1%	14.9%
	Above 65 years old	18.9%	51.5%	17.2%	12.4%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	12.9%	44.4%	21.0%	21.8%
	36–50 years old	13.3%	51.4%	20.0%	15.2%
	51–65 years old	14.6%	35.8%	32.5%	17.1%
	Above 65 years old	19.5%	43.9%	24.4%	12.2%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	12.9%	38.7%	20.4%	28.0%
	36–50 years old	14.9%	47.3%	25.0%	12.8%
	51–65 years old	13.0%	52.2%	25.0%	9.8%
	Above 65 years old	22.9%	37.5%	27.1%	12.5%

5.4.3 Respondents were most likely to call out racist behaviour in private conversation and in the workplace, and least likely to call it out on social media

Respondents were generally disinclined to call out racism when they saw it occurring. Still, they were most likely to do so in private conversations. In this context, 59.6 per cent of respondents would or probably would call out racist behaviour. Comparatively, if the behaviour took place in public, 64.3 per cent of respondents would not or probably would not call it out. A slightly higher proportion of 68.5 per cent would not or probably would not call out racism on social media. Meanwhile, respondents were quite evenly split on whether to call out racist behaviour in the workplace, with 52.6 per cent being more likely to do so, while the other 47.4 per cent felt the opposite way (see Table 5.33 below).

Table 5.33: Likelihood of calling out racism in different contexts

If you saw someone displaying racist behaviour (for example, blaming a specific race for certain social problems) in the following contexts, would you speak up?	Yes	Probably yes	Probably no	No
In public	9.8%	25.8%	25.1%	39.2%
In private conversation	26.5%	33.1%	13.8%	26.6%
On your social media	9.9%	21.5%	22.5%	46.0%
In your workplace	22.8%	29.8%	18.6%	28.8%

5.4.4 Minority races were likely to call out racism in the workplace, while Chinese people were evenly split on the issue

However, there is substantial difference in views on calling out racism depending on respondents' race. Malays and Indians were more likely than Chinese respondents to call out racism in public. About 54.7 per cent of Malays and 55.1 per cent of Indians would or probably would do so, compared to just 30.3 per cent of Chinese respondents.

There was also a disparity between minority race respondents and Chinese in propensity for calling out racism in private conversation. While slightly more than half (55.8 per cent) of Chinese respondents would or probably would do this, the figures are 70.5 per cent for Malays and 73.5 per cent for Indians.

A large majority, 72.8 per cent, of Chinese respondents would not or probably would not call out racism on social media. By contrast, 54 per cent of Malays and 53 per cent of Indians felt the same way. In another words, they were about as likely to do so as they were not to do so.

Lastly, while 67 per cent of Malays and 65.1 per cent of Indians would or probably would call out racism in the workplace, only 48.5 per cent of Chinese concurred (see Tables 5.34 to 5.37 below).

Table 5.34: Likelihood of calling out racism in public, by respondents' race

Racial group	In public			
	Yes	Probably yes	Probably no	No
Chinese	6.5%	23.8%	26.9%	42.9%
Malay	18.8%	35.9%	18.6%	26.7%
Indian	23.1%	32.0%	20.5%	24.4%
Others	18.5%	18.5%	22.2%	40.7%

Table 5.35: Likelihood of calling out racism in private, by respondents' race

Racial group	In private conversation			
	Yes	Probably yes	Probably no	No
Chinese	22.6%	33.2%	14.3%	29.9%
Malay	35.9%	34.6%	12.5%	17.0%
Indian	40.7%	32.8%	11.3%	15.2%
Others	44.4%	25.9%	14.8%	14.8%

Table 5.36: Likelihood of calling out racism on social media, by respondents' race

Racial group	On your social media			
	Yes	Probably yes	Probably no	No
Chinese	7.5%	19.7%	23.3%	49.5%
Malay	17.0%	29.0%	20.9%	33.1%
Indian	19.7%	27.3%	21.0%	32.0%
Others	14.8%	18.5%	14.8%	51.9%

Table 5.37: Likelihood of calling out racism in the workplace, by respondents' race

Racial group	In your workplace			
	Yes	Probably yes	Probably no	No
Chinese	18.7%	29.8%	19.6%	32.0%
Malay	34.4%	32.6%	15.5%	17.6%
Indian	36.5%	28.6%	16.8%	18.1%
Others	40.7%	22.2%	11.1%	25.9%

5.4.5 Younger minorities were more likely to call out racism in both public and private settings, while younger Chinese respondents were more comfortable with doing so in private

Across respondents of all races, younger respondents were more likely to call out racism in public. For example, 79 per cent of Malays aged 21 to 35 years old would or probably would do so, compared to 21.9 per cent of Malays above 65 years of age. The same trend can be observed for calling out racism in private conversation.

While younger Chinese respondents were markedly more likely than older Chinese respondents to speak out in private conversation, they were still hesitant about speaking out in public. In private, 67.1 per cent of those aged between 21 and 35 years old would or probably would speak up. In public, this figure falls to just 36 per cent.

By contrast, the willingness of young racial minorities to speak up seems less affected by how public the setting is. There is only a small drop from the 87.9 per cent of Malays aged 21 to

35 years old who would or probably would speak up in private conversation, to the 79 per cent of the same demographic who felt this way about speaking up in public. Similarly, 78.5 per cent of Indians between 21 and 35 years old would or probably would speak up in private, while 63.4 per cent would do this in public (see Tables 5.38 and 5.39 below).

Table 5.38: Likelihood of calling out racism in public, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		In public			
		Yes	Probably yes	Probably no	No
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	7.1%	28.9%	37.3%	26.7%
	36–50 years old	6.7%	27.4%	27.7%	38.2%
	51–65 years old	6.5%	19.2%	22.1%	52.3%
	Above 65 years old	5.2%	17.6%	17.6%	59.7%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	23.4%	55.6%	14.5%	6.5%
	36–50 years old	27.6%	32.4%	22.9%	17.1%
	51–65 years old	10.6%	26.0%	17.1%	46.3%
	Above 65 years old	7.3%	14.6%	24.4%	53.7%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	24.7%	38.7%	22.6%	14.0%
	36–50 years old	24.3%	29.7%	22.3%	23.6%
	51–65 years old	18.5%	32.6%	21.7%	27.2%
	Above 65 years old	25.0%	25.0%	8.3%	41.7%

Table 5.39: Likelihood of calling out racism in private, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		In private conversation			
		Yes	Probably yes	Probably no	No
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	26.4%	40.7%	11.8%	21.1%
	36–50 years old	24.8%	39.1%	11.7%	24.5%
	51–65 years old	23.1%	26.3%	18.2%	32.5%
	Above 65 years old	13.7%	23.2%	16.3%	46.8%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	52.4%	35.5%	7.3%	4.8%
	36–50 years old	38.1%	39.0%	12.4%	10.5%
	51–65 years old	26.0%	31.7%	15.4%	26.8%
	Above 65 years old	9.8%	29.3%	19.5%	41.5%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	53.8%	24.7%	11.8%	9.7%
	36–50 years old	41.9%	31.8%	11.5%	14.9%
	51–65 years old	33.7%	42.4%	7.6%	16.3%
	Above 65 years old	25.0%	33.3%	16.7%	25.0%

5.4.6 Older respondents were less likely to call out racism on social media and in the workplace

Among Malay and Indian respondents, the older they were, the less likely they were to call out racism on social media (see Table 5.40 below). This may have been a function of both their digital savviness and their receptivity to callout culture in general.

Table 5.40: Likelihood of calling out racism on social media, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		On your social media			
		Yes	Probably yes	Probably no	No
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	8.1%	26.1%	32.9%	32.9%
	36–50 years old	8.2%	24.5%	24.8%	42.6%
	51–65 years old	8.4%	14.0%	18.5%	59.1%
	Above 65 years old	4.3%	11.6%	14.2%	70.0%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	25.0%	41.9%	21.8%	11.3%
	36–50 years old	21.9%	33.3%	21.9%	22.9%
	51–65 years old	8.9%	19.5%	18.7%	52.8%
	Above 65 years old	4.9%	7.3%	22.0%	65.9%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	23.7%	38.7%	19.4%	18.3%
	36–50 years old	20.9%	24.3%	23.6%	31.1%
	51–65 years old	16.3%	23.9%	21.7%	38.0%
	Above 65 years old	14.6%	20.8%	14.6%	50.0%

When it comes to racism in the workplace, older respondents of all races were once again the least likely to call it out (see Table 5.41 below). Among respondents above 65 years old, Indians were the most likely to speak out in this context. About 56.3 per cent said they would or probably would do so, compared to 31.7 per cent of Chinese and Malays above 65 years old.

Table 5.41: Likelihood of calling out racism at work, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		In your workplace			
		Yes	Probably yes	Probably no	No
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	20.8%	41.0%	18.6%	19.6%
	36–50 years old	18.7%	33.8%	19.2%	28.3%
	51–65 years old	22.4%	20.1%	21.8%	35.7%
	Above 65 years old	10.7%	21.0%	18.5%	49.8%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	46.8%	41.1%	6.5%	5.6%
	36–50 years old	38.1%	34.3%	18.1%	9.5%
	51–65 years old	26.0%	26.8%	18.7%	28.5%
	Above 65 years old	12.2%	19.5%	26.8%	41.5%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	50.5%	21.5%	17.2%	10.8%
	36–50 years old	34.5%	31.1%	16.2%	18.2%
	51–65 years old	28.3%	33.7%	17.4%	20.7%
	Above 65 years old	31.3%	25.0%	16.7%	27.1%

5.4.7 Respondents would likely speak up because they believe it is the right thing to do and that racism is bad. Respondents who were unlikely to speak up believed they could not be certain of the context behind the behaviour they witnessed.

Most of the respondents (73.5 per cent) who were likely to speak up stated that they would do so because it is the right thing to do (see Table 5.42 below). Another prevalent reason they cited is the belief that racism is bad, which was selected by 68.8 per cent of the respondents.

As for respondents who were unlikely to speak up, the top reason is that they felt they could not be certain of the context behind the comment or act. About two-thirds of respondents chose this (see Table 5.43 below). This speaks to the lack of clarity in community norms with regard to racist behaviour, which results in a possible reluctance to intervene. Apart from the options listed in Table 5.43, some respondents chose to provide their other reasons for not speaking up besides provided by the research team. Some of these include being afraid of having conflicts with other people, or being afraid of being harmed in some way after speaking up.

Table 5.42: Top reasons for speaking up

Which statement best describes why you are likely to speak up? Tick all that apply.	Percentage
It is the right thing to do.	73.5%
Racism is bad.	68.8%
The receiving party seems upset by the remark.	41.2%
I should express solidarity for the receiving party.	29.8%

Table 5.43: Top reasons for not speaking up

Which statement best describes why you are unlikely to speak up? Tick all that apply.	Percentage
I cannot be certain of the context behind the comment or act.	67.3%
It is a matter between the two parties.	50.9%
I think these incidents are part and parcel of life.	19.5%
The receiving party does not seem affected by the remark.	19.3%

The top reasons for speaking up were the same among Chinese and Malay respondents. For Indians, instead of "It is the right thing to do", the top-ranked reason was "Racism is bad" with 77 per cent ticking this option. However, over seven in 10 Indian respondents also selected "It is the right thing to do" (see Table 5.44 below).

Table 5.44: Reasons for speaking up, by respondents' race

Which statement best describes why you are likely to speak up? Tick all that apply.	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
It is the right thing to do.	72.8%	79.3%	70.8%	71.4%
Racism is bad.	66.5%	74.3%	77.0%	66.7%
The receiving party seems upset by the remark.	42.6%	39.3%	41.6%	19.0%
I should express solidarity for the receiving party.	28.7%	34.3%	35.1%	19.0%

The top two reasons for not speaking up were consistent across all races (see Table 5.45 below). There were no major variations in sentiments on this matter by respondents' race.

Table 5.45: Reasons for not speaking up, by respondents' race

Which statement best describes why you are unlikely to speak up? Tick all that apply.	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
I cannot be certain of the context behind the comment or act.	67.9%	64.2%	65.7%	66.7%
It is a matter between the two parties.	51.7%	49.2%	43.5%	52.4%
I think these incidents are part and parcel of life.	19.1%	22.1%	21.8%	19.0%
The receiving party does not seem affected by the remark.	20.0%	14.6%	20.5%	14.3%

5.5 Respondents were most likely to explain a colleague's disclosure of being discriminated against as non-racist

The results in the previous two sections describe respondents' attitudes towards reporting and calling out racism, respectively. In order to solicit possible responses of how to manage possible discrimination, respondents were also asked how they would respond in a

hypothetical situation where a colleague tells them that s/he has felt discriminated against at work. These responses may be divided into several categories, as detailed in Tables 5.46 to 5.49 below.

The action that the highest proportion of respondents indicated they were likely or extremely likely to take is explaining to the colleague that other factors, and not race, led to the negative experience, with 58.1 per cent feeling this way. However, it is worth noting that other actions to dismiss the colleague's experience were far less popular. Only 20.3 per cent of respondents said that they would probably tell their colleague to not complain and just accept it as a fact of life (see Table 5.46 below). Thus, while there may be some reluctance to admit that workplace racial discrimination could actually be taking place, there is also a latent acknowledgement that if such discrimination is taking place, it is unjust, and employees should not simply resign themselves to it.

About half of all respondents would keep silent. Respondents who selected this option may have felt unable or unwilling to engage with the notion of their colleague's experience of discrimination. In any case, keeping silent implies that the respondent would not advise the colleague to take any action about the discriminatory experience. In that sense, it is similar to the other two actions mentioned in Table 5.46.

Table 5.46: Likelihood of thinking colleague should do nothing after experiencing racial discrimination at work

Your colleague has confided in you that s/he feels discriminated on the grounds of race at the workplace. How likely are you to do the following? (If you are not currently working, please answer these questions as if you are.)	**Extremely unlikely**	**Unlikely**	**Likely**	**Extremely likely**
Tell the colleague to not complain and accept it as a fact of life	19.0%	60.6%	18.8%	1.5%
Explain to your colleague that other factors, rather than race, led to this negative experience	9.8%	32.0%	54.8%	3.3%
Keep silent	7.5%	43.7%	39.2%	9.6%

5.5.1 Respondents were more likely to file a report with the company than with external bodies

The second most likely response, which was selected by 56.4 per cent of respondents, is to inform human resources or a member of the senior management. Respondents were a lot more likely to do this instead of making a report to the relevant authorities — only 40.6 per cent considered this a likely or extremely likely response on their part. Perhaps respondents felt that the company would be better equipped to handle the colleague's case, especially in the absence of more specific details about what caused the colleague to feel discriminated.

Analogously to respondents' general preference for filing reports rather than calling out racism themselves — as described in the previous two sections — posting on social media about the

incident was an unpopular option. Just 12.1 per cent of respondents would post online about the incident of workplace discrimination (see Table 5.47 below).

Table 5.47: Likelihood of calling out or reporting racial discrimination experienced by colleague

Your colleague has confided in you that s/he feels discriminated on the grounds of race at the workplace. How likely are you to do the following? (If you are not currently working, please answer these questions as if you are.)	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Extremely likely
Inform human resources or a member of the senior management	11.9%	31.7%	47.5%	8.9%
Report to external bodies, e.g., the Ministry of Manpower, TAFEP (Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices)	12.3%	47.1%	35.4%	5.2%
Post it on a social media platform	31.4%	56.5%	11.0%	1.1%

5.5.2 Respondents were more likely to suggest a limited, rather than drastic, extent of avoidance as a strategy for a colleague who has experienced workplace racial discrimination

The third category of responses may be described as avoidance strategies. These were also quite popular. More than half, or 54.1 per cent, of respondents would probably suggest that the colleague avoid the offender.

While not the majority, 29.4 per cent of respondents would encourage the colleague to avoid those of the same racial group as the offender. This is unfortunate as it extends the offence to the whole racial group.

More drastic avoidance actions, such as suggesting that the colleague find another job or migrate to another country that was more accepting of the colleague's race or religion, had a lower level of support. The proportions who were likely or extremely likely to advise the colleague to undertake these measures were very low, at 13.6 per cent and 10.6 per cent respectively (see Table 5.48 below). This is only to be expected, as these actions require drastic changes.

Table 5.48: Likelihood of recommending avoidance strategies after colleague experiences racial discrimination at work

Your colleague has confided in you that s/he feels discriminated on the grounds of race at the workplace. How likely are you to do the following? (If you are not currently working, please answer these questions as if you are.)	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Extremely likely
Suggest that s/he avoid the offender	10.9%	35.0%	49.4%	4.7%
Suggest that s/he just avoid interacting with others from the same racial group as the offender	16.1%	54.6%	27.3%	2.1%
Suggest that s/he migrate to another country more accepting of your colleague's race or religion	30.9%	58.5%	9.4%	1.2%
Suggest that s/he look for another job	27.2%	59.2%	12.3%	1.3%

5.5.3 Respondents more likely to adopt civil mediation strategy than a confrontational one in response to colleague's experience of workplace racial discrimination

Finally, some respondents would also carry out certain mediation strategies. About half would try to change the perception of the offender calmly. Maintaining diplomacy when communicating with the offender seems to be a priority, as a much lower proportion (23.3 per cent) chose the more aggressive option of scolding the offender on behalf of the colleague.

About half the respondents, or 54.7 per cent, would suggest that the colleague work even harder to prove herself to others (see Table 5.49 below).

Collectively, the data about these strategies suggests that respondents find it reasonable for there to be some compromise between the colleague and the offender, and are disinclined to disrupt amicable work relationships by, for example, scolding the offender.

Table 5.49: Likelihood of recommending mediation strategies after colleague experiences racial discrimination at work

Your colleague has confided in you that s/he feels discriminated on the grounds of race at the workplace. How likely are you to do the following? (If you are not currently working, please answer these questions as if you are.)	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Extremely likely
Try to change the perception of the offender calmly	7.5%	39.8%	48.7%	4.0%
Scold the offender on behalf of my colleague	17.8%	58.9%	20.9%	2.4%
Suggest that s/he work even harder to prove herself to others	11.2%	34.1%	48.2%	6.5%

5.5.4 Racial minorities, especially Indians, were much less likely to tell a colleague to not complain and accept things in response to their colleague feeling discriminated

There was no substantial impact of respondents' race on their likelihood of telling the colleague not to complain, or justifying the colleague's experience as the result of another factor besides race (see Tables 5.50 and 5.51 below).

Indian respondents were much less likely than other races to tell colleagues to keep silent and accept discrimination as part of life. About half of the Chinese respondents, 51.7 per cent, indicated that they would probably keep silent, compared to 36.2 per cent of Indians. The proportion for Malays is in between, at 43 per cent (see Table 5.52 below). This disparity may indicate that more minority race respondents consider it important to not take discrimination lying down.

Table 5.50: Likelihood of telling colleague to not complain, by respondents' race

Racial group	Tell the colleague to not complain and accept it as a fact of life			
	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Extremely likely
Chinese	19.1%	60.7%	18.8%	1.4%
Malay	16.3%	62.1%	19.8%	1.8%
Indian	22.6%	57.0%	17.6%	2.9%
Others	18.5%	63.0%	18.5%	0.0%

Table 5.51: Likelihood of giving non-race explanation, by respondents' race

Racial group	Explain to your colleague that other factors, rather than race, led to this negative experience			
	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Extremely likely
Chinese	9.7%	30.5%	56.7%	3.1%
Malay	9.9%	33.3%	52.2%	4.6%
Indian	10.5%	38.1%	47.0%	4.5%
Others	11.1%	48.1%	40.7%	0.0%

Table 5.52: Likelihood of keeping silent, by respondents' race

Racial group	Keep silent			
	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Extremely likely
Chinese	5.9%	42.5%	41.7%	10.0%
Malay	10.4%	46.6%	33.1%	9.9%
Indian	16.3%	47.5%	29.1%	7.1%
Others	11.1%	51.9%	29.6%	7.4%

5.5.5 Minorities were more likely than Chinese respondents to inform the company or report to external bodies about a colleague's experience of discrimination

Minority race respondents were slightly more inclined than Chinese respondents to inform human resources about their colleague's experience of discrimination. While only about half, or 54.2 per cent, of Chinese respondents were likely or extremely likely to do this, 63.4 per cent of Malays and 64.8 per cent of Indians were (see Table 5.53 below).

Malays and Indians were polarised on whether to report the case to external bodies. Chinese respondents, meanwhile, were disinclined to file a report. Only 37.9 per cent were likely or extremely likely to do this (see Table 5.54 below). Thus, minorities were again more inclined than Chinese respondents to report the case.

Table 5.53: Likelihood of informing HR, by respondents' race

Racial group	Inform human resources or a member of the senior management			
	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Extremely likely
Chinese	12.5%	33.3%	46.8%	7.4%
Malay	11.2%	25.4%	51.7%	11.7%
Indian	8.1%	27.0%	47.2%	17.6%
Others	11.1%	29.6%	48.1%	11.1%

Table 5.54: Likelihood of reporting to external bodies, by respondents' race

Racial group	Report to external bodies, e.g., the Ministry of Manpower, TAFEP (Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices)			
	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Extremely likely
Chinese	13.2%	48.9%	34.2%	3.7%
Malay	8.7%	41.2%	39.9%	10.2%
Indian	9.2%	41.7%	38.8%	10.2%
Others	14.8%	40.7%	37.0%	7.4%

Meanwhile, respondents' race did not seem to affect the likelihood of their posting about the colleague's experience on social media (see Table 5.55 below). Respondents of all races were generally disinclined to do this.

Table 5.55: Likelihood of posting on social media, by respondents' race

Racial group	Post it on a social media platform			
	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Extremely likely
Chinese	34.1%	55.1%	9.8%	1.0%
Malay	24.7%	58.3%	15.8%	1.3%
Indian	21.8%	59.3%	16.5%	2.4%
Others	18.5%	74.1%	7.4%	0.0%

5.5.6 Malays were more likely to suggest that the colleague avoid the offender

While nearly two-thirds of Malay respondents were likely or extremely likely to suggest that the colleague avoid the offender, Chinese and Indian respondents were divided on the issue (see Table 5.56 below). Similarly, Malays were more inclined to suggest that the colleague avoid people of the offender's race, with 38.4 per cent indicating they were likely or extremely likely to do this, compared to 28.7 per cent of Chinese and 26 per cent of Indians (see Table 5.57 below). Overall, however, respondents of all races were not likely to suggest avoiding people of the offender's race.

Table 5.56: Likelihood of suggesting colleague avoid the offender, by respondents' race

Racial group	Suggest that s/he avoid the offender			
	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Extremely likely
Chinese	10.4%	37.1%	47.8%	4.6%
Malay	9.4%	28.2%	56.2%	6.1%
Indian	14.7%	32.0%	48.0%	5.2%
Others	18.5%	18.5%	63.0%	0.0%

Table 5.57: Likelihood of suggesting colleague avoid people of the offender's race, by respondents' race

Racial group	Suggest that s/he just avoid interacting with others from the same racial group as the offender			
	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Extremely likely
Chinese	15.6%	55.7%	26.5%	2.2%
Malay	13.5%	48.1%	36.1%	2.3%
Indian	22.0%	52.0%	24.4%	1.6%
Others	22.2%	59.3%	18.5%	0.0%

Respondents' race did not seem to affect the likelihood of their suggesting that the colleague migrate to another country or find another job (see Tables 5.58 and 5.59 below).

Table 5.58: Likelihood of suggesting that colleague migrate, by respondents' race

Racial group	Suggest that s/he migrate to another country more accepting of your colleague's race or religion			
	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Extremely likely
Chinese	32.8%	56.8%	9.4%	1.0%
Malay	23.2%	62.8%	11.7%	2.3%
Indian	28.1%	61.7%	8.1%	2.1%
Others	22.2%	74.1%	3.7%	0.0%

Table 5.59: Likelihood of suggesting colleague find another job, by respondents' race

Racial group	Suggest that s/he look for another job			
	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Extremely likely
Chinese	29.4%	57.6%	11.7%	1.2%
Malay	19.1%	62.8%	16.3%	1.8%
Indian	20.5%	64.0%	13.6%	1.8%
Others	22.2%	70.4%	7.4%	0.0%

5.5.7 Malays were more likely to try to change the offender's perception, and to suggest that the colleague work harder

Malays were slightly more likely to try to mediate the situation. Compared to 50.4 per cent of Chinese who were likely or extremely likely to try to change the offender's perception, 63.1 per cent of Malays and 56.9 per cent of Indians would attempt this (see Table 5.60 below).

The same disparity is evident when it comes to direct confrontation. While an unpopular option, a higher proportion of Malays would be willing to do this, compared to Chinese respondents. Whereas only 20.9 per cent of Chinese were likely or extremely likely to scold the offender, 34.4 per cent of Malays and 27.6 per cent of Indians would do so (see Table 5.61 below).

Table 5.60: Likelihood of trying to change offender's perception, by respondents' race

Racial group	Try to change the perception of the offender calmly			
	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Extremely likely
Chinese	8.0%	41.5%	47.1%	3.3%
Malay	4.6%	32.3%	57.0%	6.1%
Indian	6.0%	37.0%	49.6%	7.3%
Others	11.1%	33.3%	51.9%	3.7%

Table 5.61: Likelihood of scolding the offender, by respondents' race

Racial group	Scold the offender on behalf of my colleague			
	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Extremely likely
Chinese	19.0%	60.1%	19.0%	1.9%
Malay	13.0%	52.7%	29.3%	5.1%
Indian	12.3%	60.1%	23.4%	4.2%
Others	22.2%	51.9%	25.9%	0.0%

Malays were also more likely to suggest that the colleague work harder. Almost two-thirds felt this way, higher than the 52.7 per cent of Chinese and 53.6 per cent of Indians (see Table 5.62 below). Perhaps this strategy may be an attempt to counter existing stereotypes.

Table 5.62: Likelihood of suggesting colleague work harder, by respondents' race

Racial group	Suggest that s/he work even harder to prove herself to others			
	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Extremely likely
Chinese	11.8%	35.6%	46.8%	5.9%
Malay	7.9%	25.7%	57.8%	8.7%
Indian	11.5%	34.9%	46.5%	7.1%
Others	11.1%	29.6%	48.1%	11.1%

5.6 Respondents more likely to take action against racism if they are more cognizant of racist acts, more supportive of meritocracy, and are more aware of majority and cultural privilege

Given the varying reactions towards racism, we were interested to find out the degree to which respondents would take matters into their own hands and take action against offending individuals. Therefore, we constructed a measure of how likely respondents would be to take action against racism using 21 items throughout the survey. The scores for the items were aggregated, resulting in a variable with a minimum score of 0 and maximum score of 1. The mean for this indicator is 0.41 while the median is 0.43. We therefore made use of a linear regression to examine the factors that might lead one to be more or less likely to take action against racism. We ran three versions of the same model — (1) comparing the Chinese (majority race) against the rest of the respondents, (2) comparing all the different racial categories, (3) comparing just Chinese Malay, and Indian respondents given the small number of respondents belonging to the "Other" category. We found that there were no major differences across these versions, but that each of the three major races differed in terms of how likely they would take action against racism.

We found that respondents who (1) recognised a larger number of racist acts, (2) expressed stronger support for meritocracy and (3) were more cognizant of majority and cultural privilege were more likely to take action against racism in different ways and under different

circumstances. In addition, younger respondents, those from the minority races, those whose preferred language is English and those with at least diploma qualifications are more likely to take action against racism. Meanwhile, private property dwellers are less likely to take action compared to those living in 1- to 3-room HDB flats (see Table 5.63 below).

Table 5.63: Overall propensity of taking action against racism (linear regression)

Variables	**Standardised Coefficient N=2006**	**Standardised Coefficient N=2006**	**Standardised Coefficient N=1979**
Number of actions viewed as racist	**.186*** **	**.186*** **	**.189*** **
Support for meritocracy	**.270*** **	**.270*** **	**.270*** **
Acknowledgement of majority and cultural privilege	**.257*** **	**.256*** **	**.257*** **
Gender (females vs males)	-.082***	-.082***	-.082***
Age			
36-50	-.122***	-.121***	-.125***
51-65	.116***	-.114***	-.112***
Above 65	-.158***	-.155***	-.153***
Reference group: 21-35			
Part of the majority race (Chinese vs other races)	-.094***		
Race			
Malay		.083***	.082***
Indian		.075***	.075***
Others		.001	*Not included*
Reference group: Chinese			
Preferred language (English vs others)	.106***	.107***	.108***
Education			
Secondary school / ITE	.037	.037	.039
Diploma/ Professional qualification	.073*	.074*	.079*
Bachelor's and above	.078*	.082*	.083*
Reference group: Below secondary school			
Housing type			
4-room HDB	-.006	-.006	-.011
5+-room HDB	.026	.026	.020
Private property	-.057*	-.056*	-.063**
Reference group: 1- 3-room HDB			
Adjusted R^2	.342	.342	.342

** p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001*

C) Views on majority actions to support minorities

5.7 Most respondents think it would be beneficial to minorities if members of the majority empathise with minorities who had been discriminated, and find out about their cultural celebrations

Respondents were asked what actions undertaken by members of the majority race would be most helpful to minorities. These actions can be broadly classified into actions to support the minority community generally (see Table 5.64 below) or everyday actions to include members of the minority races (see Table 5.65 below).

Among the top actions that the Chinese could take to support minorities, empathising with them if they report having felt discrimination was seen as the most beneficial, with 59.7 per cent of respondents indicating this (see Table 5.64 below). A lower proportion, 42.8 per cent, wanted the majority race to voice support for minorities after racist incidents occur.

About 39.6 per cent of respondents thought it would be helpful for the Chinese to support efforts to change policies which impact minorities. It is surprising that this action is not supported by more respondents, since the numerical heft of the majority race would be important in ensuring such policy changes occurred. Perhaps this may also reflect the fact that most respondents are supportive of current policies.

Table 5.64: Top majority race actions to support minorities

Some believe that it is important for majority members in society to take extra steps to make it easier for minorities to thrive in society. Which of the following acts do you think would be helpful to minorities if carried out by members of the majority race?	**Percentage**
Empathise with minorities if they report having felt discrimination	59.7%
Voice support for minorities after racist incidents occur	42.8%
Support efforts to change policies which impact minorities	39.6%
Participate actively in discussions on racism in Singapore	28.2%

As for everyday actions to include minorities, the action with the highest level of support was for the majority race to find out about the cultural celebrations of minority races and use the appropriate greeting (59.1 per cent). There was also a sizeable proportion of 56.4 per cent who thought it would be good if Chinese people found ways to accommodate dietary requirements of minorities.

Respondents were polarised on whether it would be beneficial for members of the majority race to speak in a language that minorities understand when they are around. Exactly half indicated that this would be helpful.

Table 5.65: Top everyday actions to include minorities

Some believe that it is important for majority members in society to take extra steps to make it easier for minorities to thrive in society. Which of the following acts do you think would be helpful to minorities if carried out by members of the majority race?	Percentage
Find out about the cultural celebrations of minority ethnic groups and use the appropriate greeting	59.1%
Find ways to accommodate the dietary requirements (e.g., Halal, vegetarian meals) of minorities when you are out with them	56.4%
Speak in a language that minorities understand when they are around you	50.0%

5.7.1 Minorities were much more likely to think it would be helpful for the Chinese to support them after racist incidents and in policy changes, and to participate actively in discussions on racism

Respondents of all three major races had the same order of priorities when it comes to the top actions the majority race could undertake to support minority communities. However, it was much more important to respondents from the minority races that the Chinese voice support for them after racist incidents occur. While 39.5 per cent of Chinese indicated that they thought this would be helpful, 51.9 per cent of Malays and 56.4 per cent of Indians did. Similarly, 51.1 per cent of Malays and 55.6 per cent of Indians wanted the Chinese to support efforts to change policies which impact minorities, but only 35.4 per cent of Chinese respondents thought this was important. Evidently, there is a gap between what the majority race and minority races think is helpful for the Chinese to do.

Minority race respondents were also more likely to want the Chinese to participate in discussions on racism. Although less than half of the Malay (39.2 per cent) and Indian (47 per cent) respondents indicated that this would be helpful, these proportions were still much higher than the 23.9 per cent of Chinese who concurred (see Table 5.66 below).

Table 5.66: Top majority race actions to support minorities, by respondents' race

Some believe that it is important for majority members in society to take extra steps to make it easier for minorities to thrive in society. Which of the following acts do you think would be helpful to minorities if carried out by members of the majority race?	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
Empathise with minorities if they report having felt discrimination	59.3%	60.3%	60.6%	66.7%
Voice support for minorities after racist incidents occur	39.5%	51.9%	56.4%	51.9%
Support efforts to change policies which impact minorities	35.4%	51.1%	55.6%	51.9%
Participate actively in discussions on racism in Singapore	23.9%	39.2%	47.0%	40.7%

5.7.2 Views on everyday actions to include minorities were quite consistent across respondents of different races

Whereas the top-ranked everyday action among Chinese respondents was finding out about minorities' cultural celebrations, Malays and Indians prioritised the accommodation of dietary requirements (see Table 5.67). However, the figures are close, and overall, there were similar proportions in each of the three major races who considered these actions important.

The main consensus across respondents of all races seems to be that it is not that important for Chinese people to speak in a language that minorities understand. Perhaps many respondents accept that within Singapore's multilingual space, all groups should be accorded freedom to use their language of choice.

Table 5.67: Top everyday actions to include minorities, by respondents' race

Some believe that it is important for majority members in society to take extra steps to make it easier for minorities to thrive in society. Which of the following acts do you think would be helpful to minorities if carried out by members of the majority race?	**Chinese**	**Malay**	**Indian**	**Others**
Find out about the cultural celebrations of minority ethnic groups and use the appropriate greeting	59.1%	55.2%	59.1%	74.1%
Find ways to accommodate the dietary requirements (e.g., Halal, vegetarian meals) of minorities when you are out with them	55.1%	58.0%	62.5%	63.0%
Speak in a language that minorities understand when they are around you	51.3%	41.5%	52.5%	44.4%

5.7.3 Primarily Mother Tongue-speaking respondents are less likely to consider it important for the majority race to speak in a language that minorities can understand

Interestingly, based on responses from Table 5.67, Malays were slightly less likely than Chinese and Indians to think it is important for the majority race to speak in a language that minorities understand when in their presence. Compared to about half of Chinese (51.3 per cent) and Indians (52.5 per cent) who thought so, 41.5 per cent of Malays chose this action.

This disparity can be accounted for by examining data for respondents' most commonly spoken language (see Table 5.68). Only 36 per cent of Malays who primarily spoke Malay thought this action was helpful, even lower than the 46.2 per cent of English-speaking Malays who felt the same way. Similarly, 41.7 per cent of primarily Mandarin-speaking Chinese consider it important to speak in a language that minorities can understand, while 58.1 per cent of English-speaking Chinese thought this action would be helpful.

It seems likely that respondents who were unable to speak English or at least uncomfortable with doing so, were generally less likely to consider it helpful for Chinese to speak in a language that minorities understand. This may be because they themselves are precluded

from interacting in English. Since they primarily interact with others who speak their Mother Tongue, their social circles are largely limited to their own race.

Table 5.68: Top everyday actions to include minorities, by respondents' race and most commonly spoken language*

Racial group and language		Speak in a language that minorities understand when they are around you
Chinese	**English**	58.1%
	Mandarin	41.7%
Malay	**English**	46.2%
	Malay	36.0%
Indian	**English**	52.5%
	Tamil	49.4%

**Due to low N, data is not presented for respondents who speak other languages*

D) Views on public discussions about race

5.8 Indians more likely to look forward to more public race dialogues; Chinese and Malays more likely to express fatigue

Slightly more than half of all respondents, 57.6 per cent, indicated that they were tired of talking about issues of race and racism (see Table 5.69). The rest conversely looked forward to having more public dialogue about race.

Table 5.69: Level of earnestness or fatigue on racial dialogue

Of these statements, which comes closest to your point of view? (Tick the most appropriate response)	Percentage
I am looking forward to more public dialogue about race in Singapore.	42.4%
I am tired of talking about issues of race and racism.	57.6%

Chinese and Malay respondents were more likely to feel fatigue about racial dialogue, with 58.6 per cent and 59.8 per cent respectively indicating this (see Table 5.70). This is higher than the 48.3 per cent of Indians who felt this way. Put another way, Indians were slightly more likely to be looking forward to more public dialogue about race, with about half or 51.7 per cent feeling this way, compared to 41.4 per cent of Chinese and 40.2 per cent of Malays.

Table 5.70: Level of earnestness or fatigue on racial dialogue, by respondents' race

Of these statements, which comes closest to your point of view? (Tick the most appropriate response)	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
I am looking forward to more public dialogue about race in Singapore.	41.4%	40.2%	51.7%	51.9%
I am tired of talking about issues of race and racism.	58.6%	59.8%	48.3%	48.1%

5.8.1 People are divided on whether discussions on race should be carried out, although Malays are more likely to feel that they should be

Respondents were also asked whether they thought people should carry out public discussions on racism in Singapore. About 55.4 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed that this should be done (see Table 5.71). This is a similar proportion to the 57.6 per cent who stated that they were tired of public discussions about race (see Table 5.69).

Table 5.71: Support for public discussions on racism

To what extent do you agree or disagree that people should carry out the following acts?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Carry out public discussions on racism in Singapore	21.6%	33.8%	37.0%	7.6%

There was a substantial difference by respondents' race in opinions on whether people should carry out public discussions on racism. Most Malays (60.5 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed that this should be done, whereas only 40.4 per cent of Chinese respondents concurred (see Table 5.72). Meanwhile, Indians were divided on the issue, with close to half (53.8 per cent) broadly supporting public discussions while the rest did not.

Table 5.72: Support for carrying out discussions on racism, by respondents' race

Racial group	Carry out public discussions on racism in Singapore			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	25.0%	34.6%	35.3%	5.1%
Malay	9.9%	29.5%	45.0%	15.5%
Indian	11.5%	34.6%	36.2%	17.6%
Others	14.8%	29.6%	48.1%	7.4%

5.8.2 Older respondents tended to be tired of public dialogue about race, while younger respondents thought such discussions should be carried out

Older respondents of the three major races are generally less likely to be looking forward to more public dialogue about race (see Table 5.73). Among respondents of the oldest age

cohort, above 65 years old, Malays were the least likely to want more public dialogue. Less than a fifth, or 19.5 per cent, of Malays above 65 years old felt this way, compared to 28.3 per cent of Chinese and 43.8 per cent of Indians in this age cohort. Meanwhile, respondents of the three major races in the youngest age cohort, 21 to 35 years old, had similar levels of earnestness about public dialogue.

Table 5.73: Level of earnestness or fatigue on racial dialogue, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		I am looking forward to more public dialogue about race in Singapore.	I am tired of talking about issues of race and racism.
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	51.2%	48.8%
	36–50 years old	44.3%	55.7%
	51–65 years old	37.7%	62.3%
	Above 65 years old	28.3%	71.7%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	51.6%	48.4%
	36–50 years old	51.4%	48.6%
	51–65 years old	26.0%	74.0%
	Above 65 years old	19.5%	80.5%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	51.6%	48.4%
	36–50 years old	59.5%	40.5%
	51–65 years old	43.5%	56.5%
	Above 65 years old	43.8%	56.3%

The youngest respondents of each major race generally are the most supportive of carrying out public discussions on racism (see Table 5.74). The highest proportions of those who agreed or strongly agreed that such discussions should be carried out are among Malays between 21 and 35 years old (75 per cent) and Indians between 21 and 35 years old (71 per cent).

Table 5.74: Support for carrying out public discussions on racism, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		Carry out public discussions on racism in Singapore			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chinese	**21–35 years old**	28.0%	23.0%	38.5%	10.6%
	36–50 years old	29.4%	38.5%	29.4%	2.6%
	51–65 years old	20.8%	36.4%	38.6%	4.2%
	Above 65 years old	19.7%	42.5%	35.2%	2.6%
Malay	**21–35 years old**	8.1%	16.9%	47.6%	27.4%
	36–50 years old	15.2%	33.3%	41.0%	10.5%
	51–65 years old	8.1%	35.0%	48.0%	8.9%
	Above 65 years old	7.3%	41.5%	39.0%	12.2%
Indian	**21–35 years old**	11.8%	17.2%	34.4%	36.6%
	36–50 years old	13.5%	39.2%	32.4%	14.9%
	51–65 years old	8.7%	39.1%	44.6%	7.6%
	Above 65 years old	10.4%	45.8%	35.4%	8.3%

5.8.3 More highly educated respondents, especially minorities, were more likely to look forward to more public dialogue about race

The higher the respondent's education level, the more likely they were to look forward to more public dialogue about race (see Table 5.75). This is especially so for minorities. About half or 51.3 per cent of the Chinese university graduates felt this way, compared to 78 per cent of Malays and 66.2 per cent of Indians who had a bachelor's degree or higher qualifications.

Table 5.75: Level of earnestness or fatigue on racial dialogue, by respondents' race and education level

Racial group and education level		I am looking forward to more public dialogue about race in Singapore.	I am tired of talking about issues of race and racism.
Chinese	**Below secondary**	19.9%	80.1%
	Secondary / ITE	35.2%	64.8%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	44.2%	55.8%
	Bachelor's and above	51.3%	48.7%
Malay	**Below secondary**	28.3%	71.7%
	Secondary / ITE	32.9%	67.1%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	46.7%	53.3%
	Bachelor's and above	78.0%	22.0%
Indian	**Below secondary**	37.9%	62.1%
	Secondary / ITE	36.2%	63.8%
	Dip. / Prof. qual.	54.7%	45.3%
	Bachelor's and above	66.2%	33.8%

5.8.4 Chinese private property residents were especially likely to be tired of talking about race and racism

Nearly seven in 10 Chinese respondents who lived in private property were tired of talking about issues of race and racism (see Table 5.76). This is much higher than the proportion of Chinese respondents of other housing types who felt the same way. Meanwhile, 78 per cent of Indian respondents who lived in private property were looking forward to more public dialogue about race.

Table 5.76: Level of earnestness or fatigue on racial dialogue, by respondents' race and housing type

Racial group and housing type		I am looking forward to more public dialogue about race in Singapore.	I am tired of talking about issues of race and racism.
Chinese	**1-3 room HDB**	47.0%	53.0%
	4-room HDB	41.8%	58.2%
	5-room HDB	49.2%	50.8%
	Private	30.1%	69.9%
Malay	**1-3 room HDB**	34.0%	66.0%
	4-room HDB	40.8%	59.2%
	5-room HDB	50.7%	49.3%
	Private	41.2%	58.8%
Indian	**1-3 room HDB**	44.0%	56.0%
	4-room HDB	47.9%	52.1%
	5-room HDB	51.7%	48.3%
	Private	78.0%	22.0%

Chapter 6

Aspirations about race in Singapore

CHAPTER 6 | ASPIRATIONS ABOUT RACE IN SINGAPORE

6.1 OVERALL FINDINGS

This chapter captures the sentiments of Singaporeans regarding possible developments on race-related trends and norms. In relation to race issues, there is a wealth of literature on the disparity between races on aspects such as educational and occupational aspirations. However, the exploration of people's aspirations for society's racial development has seldom received attention, both in domestic and international contexts.

Nonetheless, from online dialogues as well as sentiments gleaned from other surveys and studies, some indications can be found regarding certain ideals that people might have regarding race relations in Singapore. Drastic and fundamental changes to the existing norms and principles of Singapore's society might have received some attention but have yet to gain substantial consideration. At the IPS-RSIS forum on race and racism in Singapore for example, Finance Minister Lawrence Wong mentioned the different trajectories other countries had embarked on the issue of race, such as France's attempt to ignore identities and tribes by banning the collection of race-based data, as well as America's "long-cherished melting pot ethos". These arguably have not worked as well and are inconsistent with Singapore's long-standing beliefs (Singapore. Ministry of Finance, 2021).

As such, this study focuses on more specific and minute race-related changes that could possibly take place such as freedom to choose the Mother Tongue to learn. This is at least somewhat controversial given the fact that English is becoming the de facto language spoken at home for many families across races (Mathew et al., 2020) but many still believe that speaking Chinese, Malay or an Indian language is an important marker of one's racial identity in Singapore (Mathew et al., 2021)

Following the increased visibility of racial issues and activism around the world, some have identified and attributed the rise in racial activism in Singapore to the increased spaces for expression enabled by proliferating cyberspaces (Weiss, 2014; Lim et al., 2014). However, many are still of the opinion that Singaporeans are not ready and unable to speak comfortably or effectively about these sensitive issues despite how important they are (Chew, 2021; Awang et al., 2021)

Others are increasingly feeling that Singaporeans are "not shying away" from calling people out on racism and that the conversation about race is now "loud" (Paulo et al., 2021). In general the concerns and debate lie more in the manners in which racial discourses are taking place, and less of whether or not they are taking place. Both in Singapore and around the world, discussions have arisen on the call-out culture enabled by social media. Those wary of the normalisation of unbridled discussions and confrontations have warned of its uncontrollability, deep psychological effects (Huffman, 2016), ineffectiveness in generating proper discourses (Tucker, 2018; Rom & Mitchell, 2021) and more.

While academic attention on the debate of call-out culture in Singapore is still limited, there is growing interest in it (Lifestyle Asia, 2020; Zhang & Laiu, 2020). In August 2021, a youth-led interfaith initiative, Roses of Peace, hosted a virtual panel discussion focusing on online discussions about race and religion. One of the key points highlighted by one of the forum

panellists, Shamil Zainuddin, was the importance of “calling out the issue, as opposed to calling out the person” (Ong, 2021).

6.1.1 Over six in 10 welcomed greater intercultural understanding

Between 40 and 55 per cent of respondents felt that it would make no difference to Singapore society if various racial developments occurred in the next five years (see Tables 6.1, 6.6, 6.11 and 6.15). Of the 17 questions asked with reference to changes in intercultural understanding, state policies, moving beyond the CMIO framework and moving towards a race-blind society, 10 of them had more than 40 per cent of respondents saying it would make no difference to society. Four of the questions yielded results with more than half the respondents harbouring that attitude.

Singaporeans tend not to have extreme negative attitudes regarding racial developments in the society, with hardly any respondent choosing the “very bad” option across most questions. Questions pertaining to racial policies, however, tend to draw more reactive responses, with about a tenth of respondents choosing the “very bad” option.

Indeed, Singaporeans were generally positive about various racial developments. Combining responses that indicated ‘good’ and ‘very good’, about 40 to 60 per cent of respondents believe that the proposed racial developments would be positive. It was no surprise that 62.9 per cent thought it would be good or very good for people to have a deeper understanding of one another’s culture (see Table 6.1).

This may involve, or be bolstered by, people more commonly learning the language of another ethnic group. A substantial proportion, 59.3 per cent, thought this would be beneficial. Similarly, on the possibility that people have free choice of which mother tongue(s) to learn, 63.1 per cent indicated that it would be good or very good, while 32.8 per cent were indifferent.

Respondents were also asked about the possibility of more interracial marriages in Singapore, which is generally viewed as an indicator of greater interracial interactions and acceptance. However, respondents were much more divided about this, with about half thinking it would be good or very good (45.8 per cent) and another half thinking it would make no difference (49.3 per cent).

Table 6.1: Attitudes to future developments relating to more interracial interaction and understanding

The following statements describe what some believe may happen in Singapore over the next 5 years. Do you think these developments may be good, bad or make no difference to Singapore society?	Very good	Good	No difference	Bad	Very bad
People have a deeper understanding of one another's culture	20.9%	42.0%	34.4%	2.5%	0.3%
There are more interracial marriages	11.6%	34.2%	49.3%	4.3%	0.6%
People more commonly learn the language of another ethnic group	15.9%	43.4%	38.8%	1.5%	0.4%
People have free choice of which mother tongue(s) to learn	21.4%	41.7%	32.8%	3.6%	0.4%

6.1.2 Chinese and Indians more likely to think deeper intercultural understanding is beneficial, while Indians were more likely to think this of interracial marriages increasing

Malays were more sceptical that people having a deeper understanding of other cultures would be beneficial (see Table 6.2). While 63.9 per cent of Chinese and 64.1 per cent of Indians thought this would be good or very good, a lower proportion of Malays (54.2 per cent) felt this way. The difference largely comprises Malays who felt this would make no difference, rather than Malays who felt it would be bad or very bad.

Indians were more likely to feel that more interracial marriages would be good or very good for Singapore society, with 60.4 per cent of them feeling this way (see Table 6.3). This is compared to 43.5 per cent of Chinese and 49.1 per cent of Malays. Again, the disparity largely arises from fewer Indians thinking interracial marriages would make no difference, rather than more Indians thinking this would be harmful to society.

Table 6.2: Views on deeper intercultural understanding, by respondents' race

Racial group	People have a deeper understanding of one another's cultures				
	Very good	Good	No difference	Bad	Very bad
Chinese	22.6%	41.3%	33.7%	2.2%	0.2%
Malay	10.2%	44.0%	41.7%	3.6%	0.5%
Indian	23.4%	40.7%	31.2%	3.9%	0.8%
Others	14.8%	55.6%	29.6%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 6.3: Views on more interracial marriages, by respondents' race

Racial group	There are more interracial marriages				
	Very good	Good	No difference	Bad	Very bad
Chinese	10.9%	32.6%	50.6%	5.3%	0.6%
Malay	10.4%	38.7%	49.6%	1.3%	0.0%
Indian	18.9%	41.5%	36.7%	1.6%	1.3%
Others	11.1%	37.0%	51.9%	0.0%	0.0%

6.1.3 At least half believe it is beneficial for people to more commonly learn the language of another ethnic group

Malays were slightly less likely to think it is good for more people to learn another group's language. While 60 per cent of Chinese and 61.5 per cent of Indians felt this way, 53.4 per cent of Malays did (see Table 6.4). However, this difference is quite marginal.

Meanwhile, sentiments on people being able to choose which mother tongue(s) they learn were consistent across respondents of all races (see Table 6.5). This is consistent with the findings in Section 4.6 about attitudes to the Mother Tongue Policy. This general positive sentiment toward freedom of mother tongue usage has been reflected in an earlier survey carried out, which found that about 70 per cent of respondents had agreed or strongly agreed to statements on language choice freedom (Mathew et al., 2020).

Table 6.4: Views on people learning another group's language, by respondents' race

Racial group	People more commonly learn the language of another ethnic group				
	Very good	Good	No difference	Bad	Very bad
Chinese	17.4%	42.6%	38.2%	1.3%	0.4%
Malay	7.9%	45.5%	44.8%	1.5%	0.3%
Indian	17.1%	44.4%	34.4%	3.1%	1.0%
Others	7.4%	51.9%	40.7%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 6.5: Views on people choose their mother tongue, by respondents' race

Racial group	People have free choice of which mother tongue(s) to learn				
	Very good	Good	No difference	Bad	Very bad
Chinese	22.5%	41.4%	32.2%	3.6%	0.4%
Malay	15.5%	43.5%	38.9%	2.0%	0.0%
Indian	23.4%	40.9%	29.1%	5.2%	1.3%
Others	14.8%	44.4%	33.3%	7.4%	0.0%

6.2 Mixed sentiments expressed regarding the discussions of racial issues

Respondents were split over whether it would be beneficial for society if people felt able to speak up freely about their ethnic identity not being properly respected or about problems with different ethnic cultures (see Table 6.6). About half thought this would be good or very good, while most of the rest felt it would make no difference. The same goes for the question of whether it would be good to have a national consensus on what constitutes racism. Overall, these results indicate ambivalence about greater and more open national discourse about racial issues.

Only 32.9 per cent of respondents thought it would be good or very good for different ethnic groups to call greater attention to their identity needs. A little over half, or 53.9 per cent, thought it would make no difference. Considering that most respondents were fine with the current degree to which the majority race and minority races are pushing for their cultural rights (as discussed in Chapter 2), Singaporeans seem quite indifferent to this issue overall.

Table 6.6: Attitudes to future developments indicating more open discourse about race and racism

The following statements describe what some believe may happen in Singapore over the next 5 years. Do you think these developments may be good, bad or make no difference to Singapore society?	Very good	Good	No difference	Bad	Very bad
There is national consensus on what constitutes racism	15.6%	35.8%	46.5%	1.7%	0.4%
Different ethnic groups in Singapore call for greater attention to their identity needs	6.0%	26.9%	53.9%	6.2%	7.1%
People are not afraid to speak up publicly if they feel that their ethnic identity is not properly respected	7.3%	42.6%	42.1%	7.3%	0.7%
People can speak up freely if they feel that there are problems with some ethnic groups and their cultures	7.4%	40.8%	43.0%	7.8%	1.0%

6.2.1 Indians were more positive about having a national consensus on what constitutes racism

Compared to respondents of other races, Indian respondents were more likely to think having a national consensus on what constitutes racism would be good or very good for society. About 58.5 per cent of them felt this way, compared to 51.6 per cent of Chinese and 44.8 per cent of Malays. Since such a national consensus would probably be derived after public discourse about it, it is worth noting that Indians were also the most likely to want more public discussions about race (see Chapter 5). In that same question, Chinese and Malays were more likely than Indians to be tired of talking about race. This may have affected results for this question.

Table 6.7: Views on national consensus on definition of racism, by respondents' race

Racial group	There is national consensus on what constitutes racism				
	Very good	Good	No difference	Bad	Very bad
Chinese	16.8%	34.8%	46.1%	1.8%	0.4%
Malay	8.7%	36.1%	53.7%	1.3%	0.3%
Indian	17.6%	40.9%	39.6%	1.0%	0.8%
Others	7.4%	44.4%	44.4%	3.7%	0.0%

6.2.2 While at least 48 per cent of all races wanted open discussion about race, Indian respondents showed most preference

For the other three questions relating to more open discussion about race, Indians were likewise the most likely to view these developments as positive. For instance, while only about half the Chinese (48.7 per cent) and Malay respondents (50.4 per cent) thought it would be good or very good for people to feel comfortable with speaking up publicly about their ethnic identity not being properly respected, 60.1 per cent of Indians felt this way (see Table 6.9). There is a similar trend for the question for views on people speaking up about other cultures being problematic (see Table 6.10). Similarly, 54.9 per cent of Indian respondents believed that people can speak freely if they see problems with other groups, compared to 47.7 per cent of Chinese and 48.1 per cent of Malays.

On the issue of different ethnic groups calling for greater attention to their identity needs, 49.1 per cent of Indians and 38 per cent of Malays thought this would be good or very good, compared to 30 per cent of Chinese respondents (see Table 6.8).

Table 6.8: Views on calling for greater attention to ethnic needs, by respondents' race

Racial group	Different ethnic groups in Singapore call for greater attention to their identity needs				
	Very good	Good	No difference	Bad	Very bad
Chinese	5.5%	24.5%	55.2%	6.2%	8.5%
Malay	5.4%	32.6%	55.5%	4.8%	1.8%
Indian	12.1%	37.0%	41.5%	6.6%	2.9%
Others	3.7%	33.3%	48.1%	11.1%	3.7%

Table 6.9: Views on speaking up for respect of ethnic identity, by respondents' race

Racial group	People are not afraid to speak up publicly if they feel that their ethnic identity is not properly respected				
	Very good	Good	No difference	Bad	Very bad
Chinese	7.0%	41.7%	43.3%	7.2%	0.7%
Malay	5.6%	44.8%	43.0%	6.1%	0.5%
Indian	13.6%	46.5%	33.3%	5.5%	1.0%
Others	3.7%	44.4%	33.3%	18.5%	0.0%

Table 6.10: Views on speaking up about problematic ethnic groups and cultures, by respondents' race

Racial group	People can speak up freely if they feel that there are problems with some ethnic groups and their cultures				
	Very good	Good	No difference	Bad	Very bad
Chinese	6.9%	40.8%	43.6%	7.8%	0.9%
Malay	6.9%	41.2%	45.8%	5.1%	1.0%
Indian	13.4%	41.5%	35.7%	7.6%	1.8%
Others	7.4%	37.0%	37.0%	18.5%	0.0%

6.3 Over four in 10 respondents support recognising a greater variety of racial and cultural backgrounds; support for the CMIO framework remains

There were a number of potential developments asked about that involved the recognition of racial diversity beyond the current CMIO framework. About half of all respondents thought none of these developments would make a difference (see Table 6.11). The highest level of support was for Singapore to officially recognise other cultures apart from Chinese, Malay, Indian and Eurasian, with 48.9 per cent indicating that this would be good or very good. A similar proportion, 41.6 per cent, supported this kind of move in terms of identity documents allowing for categorisations like Peranakan, Javanese and others. Currently, these tend to be subsumed under the Chinese or Malay categories.

Fewer people thought it would be beneficial to stop categorising people by their ethnic background on identity documents. Only 30.4 per cent thought abolishing CMIO on NRIC would be good or very good for society. Considered together, it seems that most respondents want to expand the CMIO framework rather than do away with it.

Table 6.11: Attitudes to future developments leading to greater recognition of racial diversity beyond CMIO

The following statements describe what some believe may happen in Singapore over the next 5 years. Do you think these developments may be good, bad or make no difference to Singapore society?	Very good	Good	No difference	Bad	Very bad
Singapore officially recognises more than just Chinese, Malay, Indian and Eurasian cultures but the many other cultures which are here because of our rich diversity of ethnic/cultural heritages	16.2%	32.7%	48.7%	2.0%	0.4%
Identity documents are not limited to Chinese-Malay-Indian-Others but allow for many other ethnic labels such as Peranakan, Hakka Chinese, Javanese-Sundanese, Malayalee-Goanese or whatever identities are reasonable to describe Singaporeans' rich heritage	12.2%	29.4%	52.9%	4.9%	0.6%
People are not officially categorised by their ethnic background (i.e., CMIO) (e.g., racial group is not included in identity documents like NRIC)	8.4%	22.0%	52.7%	9.2%	7.7%

6.3.1 Indians more likely to support recognising more racial diversity

Indians were the most positive about racial diversity, with 55.9 per cent indicating so. In comparison, 40.5 per cent of Malays and 49.4 per cent of Chinese respondents said the same (see Table 6.12).

Racial differences were more muted for the question of identity documents including more racial categories than Chinese, Malay, Indian or Others (see Table 6.13). Just under half of all Indians, or 48.3 per cent, felt this would be good or very good, while 42 per cent of Malays and 40.3 per cent of Chinese did.

Table 6.12: Views on recognising more racial groups, by respondents' race

Racial group	Singapore officially recognises more than just Chinese, Malay, Indian and Eurasian cultures but the many other cultures which are here because of our rich diversity of ethnic/cultural heritages				
	Very good	Good	No difference	Bad	Very bad
Chinese	16.7%	32.7%	48.8%	1.6%	0.2%
Malay	9.2%	31.3%	55.7%	3.3%	0.5%
Indian	22.6%	33.3%	39.1%	3.7%	1.3%
Others	14.8%	37.0%	44.4%	3.7%	0.0%

Table 6.13: Views on expanding CMIO in identity documents, by respondents' race

Racial group	Identity documents are not limited to Chinese-Malay-Indian-Others but allow for many other ethnic labels such as Peranakan, Hakka Chinese, Javanese-Sundanese, Malayalee-Goanese Indian or whatever identities are reasonable to describe Singaporeans' rich heritage				
	Very good	Good	No difference	Bad	Very bad
Chinese	11.9%	28.4%	54.5%	4.7%	0.5%
Malay	10.4%	31.6%	51.9%	5.6%	0.5%
Indian	17.3%	31.0%	44.9%	4.7%	2.1%
Others	11.1%	40.7%	40.7%	7.4%	0.0%

6.3.2 Respondents of the three major races held different stances towards CMIO categorisation on official documents

About 44.9 per cent of Indians thought it would be good or very good if the CMIO framework were removed and people are no longer officially categorised by their ethnic background (see Table 6.14). The other races were more reserved in their sentiments; 28.6 per cent of Chinese and 32.8 per cent Malays felt the same way. Indians were also the least likely to feel that abolishing CMIO would make no difference, with 37.8 per cent of them choosing this option. This is compared to 54.5 per cent of Chinese and 49.4 per cent of Malays.

Despite these differences in proportions who felt positively or neutrally about getting rid of the CMIO framework, the proportions of each major race who felt doing this would be bad or very bad were very consistent – 16.8 per cent of Chinese, 17.8 per cent of Malays and 17.3 per cent of Indians.

Table 6.14: Views on abolishing CMIO categorisation, by respondents' race

Racial group	People are not officially categorised by their ethnic background (i.e., CMIO) (e.g., racial group is not included in identity documents like NRIC)				
	Very good	Good	No difference	Bad	Very bad
Chinese	7.5%	21.1%	54.5%	9.7%	7.1%
Malay	7.6%	25.2%	49.4%	6.6%	11.2%
Indian	18.9%	26.0%	37.8%	8.4%	8.9%
Others	3.7%	18.5%	63.0%	11.1%	3.7%

6.4 Over half are in favour of a more consolidated Singaporean identity; less support expressed for developments towards a race-blind society

Compared to other developments indicating that Singapore is moving towards becoming race-blind, the most well-received one was thinking of ourselves as Singaporean rather than hyphenated identities including one's race. About 53.6 per cent indicated that this would be good or very good (see Table 6.15). Considering that a sizeable proportion of respondents chose 'No difference' for all the questions, this figure is actually quite sizeable.

A much smaller proportion, or 33.8 per cent, felt positively about Singaporeans mostly speaking English rather than their mother tongue. Thus, although respondents are fine with abstract changes in one's identity, they are less comfortable with other implications of moving past racial and cultural differences. The lower figure may also have resulted from the latter part of this question, "rather than their heritage language (Mother Tongue)" as some respondents may have feared a loss of knowledge about one's own culture.

A number of developments indicating a broadly race-blind movement have to do with policies on representation in various areas, including housing, politics, immigration and national celebrations. Respondents were the most positive about not consciously ensuring that all races are represented in national celebrations, as 40.6 per cent said this would be good or very good. The proportion may have been higher than for other questions because although national celebrations have significant symbolic meaning, the representation of different races does not affect respondents' everyday lives as much as the other policies would. For example, the lowest level of positive sentiment was for removing racial quotas in Parliament. Only 28.8 per cent of respondents thought this would be beneficial.

While 36.4 per cent thought it would be good or very good to remove racial quotas in housing, a slightly lower proportion (30.9 per cent) thought the same of immigration laws. This suggests that people are more concerned about the racial makeup of the country than the racial makeup of their particular neighbourhood. There may be some latent feelings of hostility or discomfort towards foreigners, or respondents may feel that it is no longer a priority to preserve the current approximate proportions of different races. Overall, the lower support for race-blind policies indicates that respondents are only comfortable with this movement in the abstract.

Table 6.15: Attitudes to future developments towards a race-blind society

The following statements describe what some believe may happen in Singapore over the next 5 years. Do you think these developments may be good, bad or make no difference to Singapore society?	Very good	Good	No difference	Bad	Very bad
We think of ourselves simply as "Singaporean" rather than "Singaporean-Malay", "Singaporean-Chinese", "Singaporean Indian", Singaporean-Eurasian, etc.	21.4%	32.2%	44.0%	2.0%	0.4%
Nearly everyone in Singapore speaks English rather than their heritage language (Mother Tongue)	7.6%	26.2%	50.0%	8.3%	7.9%
There are no racial quotas or proportional representation in housing – people can sell their HDB flats to buyers of any race and vice versa	8.4%	28.0%	40.7%	14.5%	8.3%
There are no racial quotas or proportional representation in Parliament – there is no need to ensure that there are MPs from every racial group	7.1%	21.7%	48.4%	14.5%	8.3%
There are no racial quotas in immigration law – anyone who meets immigration criteria based on their skills is allowed in without consideration of racial category	7.4%	23.5%	47.6%	12.7%	8.9%
Showcasing different racial groups is not a priority in national celebrations – it does not matter whether we are from the same racial group or different racial groups in national celebrations	13.7%	26.9%	49.4%	8.1%	1.8%

6.4.1 Indians most in favour of consolidated national identity

Indians were especially likely to consider it beneficial to remove race from concepts of national identity. About 64.3 per cent of them indicated this, compared to 53.2 per cent of Chinese and 48.8 per cent of Malays (see Table 6.16).

Table 6.16: Views on raceless national identity, by respondents' race

Racial group	We think of ourselves simply as "Singaporean" rather than "Singaporean-Malay", "Singaporean-Chinese", "Singaporean Indian", Singaporean-Eurasian, etc.				
	Very good	Good	No difference	Bad	Very bad
Chinese	22.0%	31.2%	44.9%	1.7%	0.3%
Malay	15.0%	33.8%	49.1%	1.5%	0.5%
Indian	27.6%	36.7%	32.8%	1.6%	1.3%
Others	14.8%	37.0%	33.3%	14.8%	0.0%

6.4.2 Over four in 10 respondents ambivalent about language changes

About half of the Chinese and Malay respondents and 42.8 per cent of Indian respondents felt that it would make no difference if everyone spoke English rather than their mother tongue. Meanwhile, only 30.4 per cent of Chinese indicated that it would be good or very good for nearly everyone in Singapore to speak English. This is compared to 42.5 per cent of Malays and 49.8 per cent of Indians. This generally concurs with Mathew et al. (2020)'s study which noted that many still consider Mother Tongue languages important to their identities, despite the predominant use of English and Singlish.

Table 6.17: Views on development of language-related norms, by respondents' race

Racial group	Nearly everyone in Singapore speaks English rather than their heritage language (mother tongue)				
	Very good	Good	No difference	Bad	Very bad
Chinese	6.4%	24.0%	50.9%	9.1%	9.6%
Malay	8.4%	34.1%	50.6%	4.3%	2.8%
Indian	15.7%	34.1%	42.8%	5.8%	1.6%
Others	11.1%	29.6%	44.4%	11.1%	3.7%

6.4.3 Between 35 and 54 per cent of the three major races were ambivalent about removing racial quotas in housing, immigration law, and Parliament

When asked about removing racial quotas in different areas, the most popular option for all three major races was "no difference". Indians were the most likely to think it beneficial to remove racial quotas in housing. While 48.8 per cent of them felt this way, only 34.7 per cent of Chinese and 39.2 per cent of Malays did (see Table 6.18). Similarly, when it comes to immigration law, 45.4 per cent of Indians thought removing racial quotas would be good or very good (see Table 6.19). This is compared to 29 per cent of Chinese and 30.2 per cent of Malays.

Table 6.18: Views on removal of racial quotas in housing, by respondents' race

Racial group	There are no racial quotas or proportional representation in housing – people can sell their HDB flats to buyers of any race and vice versa				
	Very good	Good	No difference	Bad	Very bad
Chinese	7.6%	27.1%	40.0%	16.3%	9.0%
Malay	10.4%	28.8%	47.8%	10.2%	2.8%
Indian	14.7%	34.1%	35.7%	12.1%	3.4%
Others	3.7%	29.6%	40.7%	22.2%	3.7%

Table 6.19: Views on removal of racial quotas in immigration, by respondents' race

Racial group	There are no racial quotas in immigration law – anyone who meets immigration criteria based on their skills is allowed in without consideration of racial category				
	Very good	Good	No difference	Bad	Very bad
Chinese	6.6%	22.4%	47.8%	12.9%	10.4%
Malay	7.6%	22.6%	54.7%	11.5%	3.6%
Indian	15.7%	29.7%	39.4%	12.6%	2.6%
Others	3.7%	37.0%	37.0%	11.1%	11.1%

Likewise, 38.9 per cent of Indians felt it would be good not to legislate proportional representation in Parliament (see Table 6.20). This is higher than the 27.4 per cent of Chinese and 29.5 per cent of Malays who felt the same way.

Table 6.20: Views on removal of racial quotas in Parliament, by respondents' race

Racial group	There are no racial quotas or proportional representation in Parliament – there is no need to ensure that there are MPs from every racial group				
	Very good	Good	No difference	Bad	Very bad
Chinese	6.5%	20.9%	48.4%	14.7%	9.5%
Malay	7.6%	21.9%	53.7%	12.5%	4.3%
Indian	13.4%	25.5%	42.3%	14.4%	4.5%
Others	3.7%	29.6%	44.4%	18.5%	3.7%

6.4.4 Around four in 10 felt that national celebrations can rise above race

Only 36.4 per cent of the Malay respondents felt it would be good or very good to not require different races to be represented in national celebrations (see Table 6.21). This is lower than the 41 per cent of Chinese and 45.4 per cent of Indians who indicated the same sentiment.

Table 6.21: Views on racial representation in national celebrations, by respondents' race

Racial group	Showcasing different racial groups is not a priority in national celebrations – it does not matter whether we are from the same racial group or different racial groups in national celebrations				
	Very good	Good	No difference	Bad	Very bad
Chinese	14.5%	26.5%	49.7%	7.6%	1.7%
Malay	10.2%	26.2%	56.0%	6.9%	0.8%
Indian	15.5%	29.9%	41.7%	10.8%	2.1%
Others	3.7%	33.3%	37.0%	18.5%	7.4%

6.5 More than half are optimistic about society becoming regardless of race, language or religion

As shown in Table 6.22, close to half of the respondents (48.5 per cent) felt that Singapore has either reached the stage where the society functions without any discrimination in terms of race, language, or religion, or that it will achieve this ideal in less than 10 years. On the other end, about a third of them (29.5 per cent) indicated that it will likely take more than 50 years to reach this stage, with the majority of this group expressing that society will never achieve this (19.8 per cent).

This means that Singaporeans are generally skewed towards two ends where they are either generally optimistic of the non-discriminatory state of society or not hopeful of improvements in the near future. Those who think that such an ideal is possible but with a substantial amount of time such as in 10 years (8.6 per cent), 20 years (9.7 per cent) and 50 years (3.7 per cent) are generally in the minority.

Table 6.22: Respondents' views on Singapore's progress in achieving a non-discriminatory ideal

How long do you think it will take before there is no longer racial discrimination in Singapore and the society truly becomes "regardless of race, language, or religion" as our national pledge describes?	
We have already achieved this	33.7%
Less than 10 years	14.8%
10 years	8.6%
20 years	9.7%
50 years	3.7%
More than 50 years	9.7%
Never	19.8%

6.5.1 Respondents from different races share the same opinions about society becoming regardless of race, language, or religion

Consistent with the overall results, about half of the respondents had optimistic perceptions about Singapore achieving the ideal state of non-discrimination. About 49.2 per cent of Chinese, 49.1 per cent of Malays and 48.5 per cent of Indians felt that we have either already achieved a society which is truly "regardless of race, language or religion", or will do so in less than 10 years (see Table 6.23).

About the same proportion expressed the sceptical view that it will either take more than 50 years to achieve such ideal, or that it will never be attained. Some 28.9 per cent of Chinese, 30.5 per cent of Malays and 24.4 per cent of Indians shared this sentiment.

Table 6.23: Views on Singapore's progress in achieving a non-discriminatory ideal, by respondents' race

How long until society truly becomes "regardless of race, language, or religion"?	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
We have already achieved this	35.1%	33.8%	27.8%	14.8%
Less than 10 years	14.1%	15.3%	20.7%	14.8%
10 years	8.5%	8.9%	10.8%	3.7%
20 years	9.7%	8.1%	12.9%	7.4%
50 years	3.8%	3.3%	3.4%	3.7%
More than 50 years	9.4%	12.2%	8.1%	11.1%
Never	19.5%	18.3%	16.3%	44.4%

6.5.2 Younger minority race respondents are more pessimistic about Singapore becoming regardless of race

Among Malay and Indian respondents, those who are younger are more likely to think Singapore will never be regardless of race. Over one quarter of Malays (26.6 per cent) and Indians (29 per cent) between 21 and 35 years old feel this way, with lower proportions concurring among the other age cohorts. Malays in this youngest age cohort were also the least likely within the racial group to believe that Singapore has already achieved this state (see Table 6.24).

Older Chinese respondents were more likely to feel that Singapore is already regardless of race, with 43.8 per cent of those between 51 and 65 years old and 40.8 per cent of those above 65 years old, feeling this way. This is compared to less than 30 per cent of younger Chinese in the other two age cohorts.

Table 6.24: Views on Singapore's progress in achieving a non-discriminatory ideal, by respondents' race and age

Racial group and age cohort		How long until society truly becomes "regardless of race, language, or religion"?						
		We have already achieved this	Less than 10 years	10 years	20 years	50 years	More than 50 years	Never
Chinese	**21–35**	28.6%	19.9%	9.3%	11.2%	2.8%	8.4%	19.9%
	36–50	29.4%	15.7%	9.6%	9.9%	5.0%	9.0%	21.3%
	51–65	43.8%	10.1%	7.8%	10.4%	3.6%	5.5%	18.8%
	> 65	40.8%	9.0%	6.4%	6.4%	3.9%	16.3%	17.2%
Malay	**21–35**	24.2%	21.0%	6.5%	8.9%	5.6%	7.3%	26.6%
	36–50	32.4%	10.5%	11.4%	11.4%	4.8%	9.5%	20.0%
	51–65	43.1%	13.0%	9.8%	7.3%	0.8%	15.4%	10.6%
	> 65	39.0%	17.1%	7.3%	0.0%	0.0%	24.4%	12.2%
Indian	**21–35**	24.7%	19.4%	9.7%	9.7%	2.2%	5.4%	29.0%
	36–50	27.0%	24.3%	12.8%	16.9%	4.1%	3.4%	11.5%
	51–65	32.6%	19.6%	10.9%	8.7%	4.3%	10.9%	13.0%
	> 65	27.1%	14.6%	6.3%	14.6%	2.1%	22.9%	12.5%

Chapter 7

Profiling Respondents by Racial Consciousness and Activism

CHAPTER 7 | PROFILING RESPONDENTS BASED ON RACIAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND ACTIVISM

The information presented in earlier chapters provides an overview of how respondents perceive issues and policies related to race in Singapore. This chapter seeks to condense the different findings and better understand how different groups of people view these issues. We present the findings for a cluster analysis that distils the respondents into groups with similar perceptions and behavioural patterns.

7.1 CLUSTER ANALYSIS

We were particularly interested in grouping respondents based on their consciousness of racial inequality and their interest in addressing this through changes in policy and/or individual action. We recognise that some view social policies that tackle race as requiring enhancement or even removal to ensure greater equality. Though not mutually exclusive, some instead prefer to engage in action at the individual level dealing with racist through reporting discrimination and speaking out in various ways when they encounter racism. Table 7.1 presents the components included within these dimensions, while Table 7.2 shows the correlations between the dimensions.

Table 7.1: Cluster dimensions

Dimension	Included Components
Proclivity for individual action	Degree to which respondents would speak out against racist behaviour in public, private conversation, on social media, or at the workplace
	Degree to which respondents would use different platforms to speak out against racist behaviour
	Likelihood of reporting workplace racial discrimination
	Likelihood of reporting racism to various authorities
Demand for policy change	Number of race-related policies that respondents prefer to scrap or modify
Consciousness of racial inequality	Acknowledgment of majority and cultural privilege
	Recognising racist acts
	Extent of belief that there is no meritocracy in Singapore along racial lines

Table 7.2: Correlations of cluster dimensions

Dimension	Correlations	
	Proclivity for individual action	**Consciousness of racial inequality**
Demand for policy change	.205***	.258***
Consciousness of racial inequality	.266***	

7.2 Four distinct clusters found in relation to perspectives about race and racism in Singapore

In the preceding chapters, we found that respondents with below secondary educational qualifications were more likely to indicate no opinion or that they were unsure when questions provided such options. They were also less likely to indicate strong opinions towards different issues. Therefore, we excluded these respondents when conducting the cluster analysis.

Based on the three dimensions listed above, we derived four clusters of respondents: (1) Apathetics, (2) Advocates, (3) Micro Change Agents and (4) Armchair Critics. The characteristics of each cluster are presented in Table 7.3 below.

Table 7.3: Cluster characteristics, by dimension

Dimension	Clusters			
	Apathetics	Advocates	Micro Change Agents	Armchair Critics
	N=517 (29.1%)	N=324 (18.2%)	N=608 (34.2%)	N=327 (18.4%)
Demand for policy change	0.05	0.79	0.11	0.63
Consciousness of racial inequality	0.47	0.62	0.54	0.52
Proclivity for individual action	0.13	0.65	0.63	0.31

7.2.1 Respondents were largely aware of race-related issues and policies, but stances regarding individual action and policy change differed more

The largest cluster formed we described as the Micro Change Agents, which constituted 34.2 per cent of the sample included in the analysis. The second largest cluster was the Apathetics at 29.1 per cent. Meanwhile, the Advocates and Armchair Critics made up around 18 per cent each of the sample. To further understand these groups, their mean scores for a constructed prejudice index were also compared. The index was computed to measure the extent to which respondents found it harder to accept Singaporeans of other races performing different roles in society, and has values ranging between 0 and 1. The mean score for the sample included in the cluster analysis is 0.333.

The Apathetics lack interest in policy change and individual action, even though they are conscious of racial inequality to some extent. They also as most prejudiced with a mean score at 0.380. They differ substantially from the Advocates, who rate high on all the dimensions — they are highly conscious of racial inequality, will take individual action if they come across racism and are also critical of existing race-related policies. In addition, Advocates are the least prejudiced, with a mean score of 0.263.

Meanwhile, the Micro Change Agents and Armchair Critics are conscious of racial inequality but differ on the other two dimensions. Micro Change Agents are largely supportive of the current race-related policies given their low preference for change, but are likely to take personal responsibility to act or speak out when they encounter instances of racism. They are also relatively less prejudiced with a mean score of 0.313.

The Armchair Critics, on the other hand, have a higher mean prejudice score of 0.367 and are less likely to take individual action against racism. However, they are not very satisfied with current race-related policies, given their higher score in demanding policy change (see Table 7.4 below).

Table 7.4: Mean scores for Prejudice Index, by cluster

Cluster	Mean scores (Prejudice Index)
Apathetics	0.380
Advocates	0.263
Micro Change Agents	0.313
Armchair Critics	0.366

*F-statistic = 10.084****

7.2.2 Approach to race relations differed across clusters; Advocates most likely to have increased awareness or avoidance, Apathetics remain unchanged in their approach

Given the different perspectives these clusters hold towards race-related issues, it was also important to establish how they wanted to approach race relations going forward. Respondents were asked how the featuring of race-related incidents in the media has affected their approach to race relations. This question was also presented in Chapter 5.2. The full range of response options was condensed into five general approaches: (1) less trusting, (2) more awareness, (3) more avoidance, (4) no difference because they have always been concerned and (5) no difference because they never cared. As the question allowed multiple selections, it was possible for a respondent to have responses falling into multiple categories.

The Apathetics expressed opinions that fit their perspectives on race — 62.9 per cent indicated that nothing has changed in their approach because they do not care, while the next most popular option was that they avoided these topics more (21.3 per cent). Meanwhile, the Advocates were more likely to say they either became more aware (43.2 per cent) or avoided the topic more (48.1 per cent). More avoidance was also the top choice for Armchair Critics, while Micro Change Agents were more split between avoidance and no difference because they do not care.

It appears that there is a sizeable proportion of the sample who have become more discouraged or afraid of discussing the topic of race, possibly because of growing polarisation of opinions. This has potential for concern, as a fear of making one's opinion known may impede honest discussions and debates about the issue, especially if people hold vastly different opinions (see Table 7.5 below).

Table 7.5: Approach in dealing with race relations, by cluster

Cluster	How have race-related incidents highlighted in the media affected the way you approach race relations?				
	Less trusting	More awareness	More avoidance	Nothing much has changed (always been concerned)	Nothing much has changed (don't care)
Apathetics	5.4%	10.8%	21.3%	8.3%	62.9%
Advocates	14.5%	43.2%	48.1%	27.5%	8.6%
Micro Change Agents	17.6%	28.0%	32.4%	16.3%	35.9%
Armchair Critics	12.2%	30.0%	42.2%	23.2%	19.9%
Overall	**12.5%**	**26.1%**	**33.8%**	**17.3%**	**35.8%**

7.2.3 Advocates and Armchair Critics want more public dialogue; Micro Change Agents and Apathetics indicate fatigue

Among the four clusters, Advocates were the most open to more dialogue on race relations, with nearly three-quarters wanting this. In contrast, a similar proportion (76.2 per cent) of Apathetics indicated that they are tired of talking about race and racism. Armchair Critics and Micro Change Agents were quite split between the two stances, but the former leaned towards wanting more dialogue while the latter indicated fatigue (see Table 7.6 below).

Table 7.6: Level of fatigue towards race dialogues, by cluster

Cluster	Level of fatigue towards race dialogue	
	Looking forward to more public dialogue about race in Singapore	Tired of talking about race and racism
Apathetics	23.8%	76.2%
Advocates	74.4%	25.6%
Micro Change Agents	44.7%	55.3%
Armchair Critics	53.8%	46.2%

7.2.4 Chinese equally likely to be Micro Change Agents and Apathetics; Malays and Indians more likely to be Micro Change Agents or Advocates

We also examined which clusters different demographic groups were more likely to belong to. While there were respondents from each ethnic group belonging to each of the four profiles, the Chinese were more likely to be Apathetics or Micro Change Agents, with 35 per cent of the racial group belonging to these two groups respectively. Meanwhile, Malays were most likely to be Micro Change Agents and also quite likely to be Advocates. Nearly four in 10

Malays belonged to the former and 26.8 per cent to the latter. Indian respondents, on the other hand, were equally likely to be Advocates or Micro Change Agents (see Table 7.7 below).

Table 7.7: Breakdown of race, by clusters

Cluster	Racial group			
	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
Apathetics	35.7%	19.1%	19.4%	24.0%
Advocates	11.7%	26.8%	28.5%	36.0%
Micro Change Agents	34.7%	39.1%	28.5%	28.0%
Armchair Critics	17.9%	15.0%	23.6%	12.0%

7.2.5 Youngest respondents more likely to be Micro Change Agents or Advocates; older respondents least likely to be Advocates

Respondents aged 21 to 35 were most likely to be Micro Change Agents, with 39.6 per cent belonging to this cluster. However, they were also the most likely to belong to the Advocates cluster compared to other age groups, which is in line with the overall trend indicating that younger respondents are more likely to take action or be enthusiastic about race-related issues. Respondents aged 36 to 50 were quite evenly split between being Apathetics (31 per cent) and Micro Change Agents (29.5 per cent).

Those aged between 51 and 65 were more likely to be Micro Change Agents (37.3 per cent) while Apathetics also constituted a sizeable proportion of this group with 32.1 per cent. Meanwhile, those older than 65 were most likely to be Apathetics, given that 41 per cent of the group belonged to this cluster. A smaller proportion of 27.4 per cent belonged to the Micro Change Agent cluster (see Table 7.8 below).

Table 7.8: Breakdown of age groups, by clusters

Clusters	Age cohort			
	21–35 years old	36–50 years old	51–65 years old	Above 65 years old
Apathetics	19.8%	31.0%	32.1%	41.0%
Advocates	26.3%	18.4%	11.5%	11.8%
Micro Change Agents	39.6%	29.5%	37.3%	27.4%
Armchair Critics	14.4%	21.1%	19.1%	19.8%

7.2.6 No strong educational differences found when comparing most likely cluster membership, but lower-educated less likely to be Advocates

Educational differences were not very strong when looking at cluster membership. Respondents across all education levels were most likely to be Micro Change Agents — 37.8 per cent of those with secondary school qualifications, 34.2 per cent of those with diploma qualifications and 30.9 per cent of university graduates belonged to this cluster. While university graduates were quite evenly split across the other clusters, those with secondary education were least likely to belong to the Advocates cluster (see Table 7.9 below).

Table 7.9: Breakdown of education levels, by clusters

Clusters	Education level		
	Sec/ITE/A levels/IB	Dip/Prof Qual	University
Apathetics	33.6%	28.6%	24.9%
Advocates	12.1%	19.6%	23.7%
Micro Change Agents	37.8%	34.2%	30.9%
Armchair Critics	16.7%	17.6%	20.6%

Chapter 8

Conclusion

CONCLUSION

Broadly speaking, the results from the 2021 CNA-IPS Survey on Race Relations indicate that racial issues are not a serious source of concern for most Singaporeans in their daily lives. Minorities expectedly face more difficulties than members of the majority race, with higher incidence of feelings of discrimination and marginalisation. Still, this is true for only a small number. It would not do to discount the lived experiences of every person who has experienced discrimination, but at the same time, the level of racial harmony that has been achieved and sustained in Singapore is worth celebrating. The progress made on various fronts in the last five years is an indicator that Singaporeans are growing more mature and more exposed to diverse others. This can only make us a more resilient and vibrant society.

Even with the progress that has been made, more than half the respondents now think racism remains an important problem, and the proportion has increased since 2016. This may be the result of more race-related incidents arising during the COVID-19 pandemic, when social stresses have increased. Furthermore, the steady stream of discourse on racism both from political leaders and local commentators could have raised heightened awareness of issues. Whatever the cause, the greater consciousness among Singaporeans about racial issues indicates potential for more support when it comes to policy and attitude changes to ensure racial equality for all.

Much has been made of the finding in the 2016 wave of the survey that Singaporeans were generally not as comfortable with a non-Chinese Prime Minister. In the 2021 version, results show that people have become more open to the idea of a Singaporean Malay or Indian as Prime Minister or President. Interestingly, this comes after the implementation of the Reserved Presidency policy in 2017, and the election of Madam Halimah Yacob as President thereafter. In retrospect, this can be seen as an intervention on Singaporeans' sentiments that has brought about increased racial acceptance, which is a positive shift. Perhaps over time, the Restricted Elected Presidency may even no longer be necessary given that all races are elected from time to time to the Presidency.

If this intervention has been effective, some may wonder whether, in future, the state should wait for attitudes about race to change, or make bold moves to catalyse that change? Given that our results already show increasing acceptance of minorities becoming President and Prime Minister, perhaps the ruling party can work towards naming a minority candidate as Prime Minister in the near future, even if segments of the population are still not ready for a minority in such a political role. The rationale for this would be that this action could perhaps break barriers and further dismantle prejudices. Of course, decisions on this matter have to be carefully considered. While racial representation at the political level is crucial, it is important that any move should preserve meritocracy. It should therefore not lead to a minority Prime Minister being viewed as a token and subsequently not accorded the high level of support needed for his or her leadership.

Whatever the answer to this question, it is clear that in Singapore, the state continues to play a key role in influencing social norms. It is not, however, the only player. The agency of the individual multicultural actor cannot be overstated. The finding that respondents value everyday actions by the majority race to include and support minority races, such as finding out about their cultural celebrations, speaks to the importance of every Singaporean resident being culturally sensitive. To support the honing of such awareness, it may be prudent to invest resources in developing sensitivity training programmes. Such well thought-out, empirically

validated programmes, perhaps mainstreamed in the public sector, might go a long way to signify the nation's commitment to ensure that public services continue to be delivered with sensitivity to the cultural background of residents. The same should be employed in the private sector as well. Many private companies already embrace diversity and inclusion goals, but more can be done to develop competence in their employees to operate in a culturally sensitive way. One possible strategy is to conduct more sensitivity training. This is especially crucial given the significant portion of workers and corporate leaders from around the world who constantly flow into Singapore to take up positions, but who may need greater awareness of local cultural sensitivities.

Meanwhile, it is also noteworthy that comfort levels toward new citizens have improved in some professional and personal relationships, though the levels are still considerably lower than what it is for locals. There was also a stark difference in acceptance for political roles. This is unsurprising given the sense of national identity that has developed in Singapore, where there are clear preferences for those who are rooted here to lead and determine the course of the nation. Nonetheless, the finding also reminds us that there is still a significant sense of otherness between the local core and those who have migrated here in more recent years. While there are already significant initiatives championed by the National Integration Council, this work needs to continue at the community level to help locals and migrants to create bonds that remove any vestiges of prejudice.

Another area of discrimination that is highlighted in this round of the survey is rental discrimination. While it is true that even among minorities, not many are affected by prejudice in this area, the data indicates clear lingering racial biases that are worth investigating. Most crucially, a third of the respondents who were not comfortable with renting to at least one racial group would not change their minds even if the potential tenants changed their behaviour. This group makes up a quarter of the overall sample. This shows that within a purportedly multiracial society, people nevertheless have different comfort levels shaped by a fundamental sense of racial difference. When it comes to home, a private and personal sphere, this racial difference is more stark than it is in professional relationships.

Of course, most of the respondents posed this question treated it hypothetically, as they had never been placed in the situation of having to decide whether they should accept a rental tenant, and may never be. In a way, though, this makes it more significant that they would still not reconsider renting to some racial groups. The inference is that quite apart from their actual conduct as rental tenants, some groups in society are simply viewed as too different to feel comfortable living in proximity to, or interacting with. For those who feel this way, it is easier to stick to one's own tribe — to borrow an analogy that has been employed by Minister Lawrence Wong at the 2021 IPS Forum on Race and Racism, among others.

Do the differences that separate us create so significant a gulf in understanding and communication that we cannot get along in various contexts? One hopes not. But it will take policy interventions and ground-up changes in attitudes to slowly change people's minds and ensure that they see the commonalities that unite them as more important.

Different groups prefer different means of enacting such change. It is interesting that younger minority race respondents seem to prefer direct engagement, while their older counterparts are less approving of such interventionist strategies. This may lead to a rift within the groups that are most likely to lobby for change. It remains to be seen whether young minorities will be able to find enough allyship to reach their goals. After all, other young persons of the majority

race, while generally more conscious of racial inequality than older Chinese, still tend to be conservative and quite supportive of the status quo. The channels deemed appropriate for approaching racial issues are limited, and young would-be changemakers may need to work within them to be effective.

That said, respondents outside of this demographic also show some openness to government representatives talking about issues of race and racism. In Singapore there is certainly a considerable respect for the state leading the public discourse to build racial harmony. However, if the state is the only source of such authoritative discourse, there will also be concerns that this discourse can be politicised. Hopefully, community voices who seek ways to build harmonious social relations here will also gain substantial traction to lead robust discourse in this space.

One area that may be worth looking into is promoting greater awareness among the populace on what actions can be taken by someone who has experienced discrimination. In response to a hypothetical situation where a colleague has experienced racial discrimination at work, the most popular action by survey participants was rationalising the experience as non-race-based. This confirms that there is generally trust in meritocracy and fairness in Singaporean workplaces, which is heartening. But this is also a potentially alienating response for people who genuinely feel that they have experienced racial discrimination. The burden of proof often rests on these people and may disincentivise them from filing reports about their experiences, since they feel that nothing can be done anyway. It would be pitiable if minorities are expected to continue tolerating unfair treatment because of such circumstances.

It may also be necessary to consider how to tackle the moderate level of apathy that is present in the population. Many respondents of this survey stated that they had not been affected by race-related incidents in the news, and that they felt various future race-related developments would make no difference to Singapore society. Taken together, there seems to be a blasé attitude that on the whole, things will work out. Indeed, in the cluster analysis carried out using the survey data, the largest and second largest clusters were respectively not too interested in race issues, and held a general support for the status quo. While such contentment with the current state of affairs is a good sign about Singaporeans' wellbeing when it comes to race relations, too much of it may imply that people are distanced from knowing how racial issues actually impact their lives and the lives of those around them. This would not be ideal, as each individual's everyday actions contribute to racial harmony in Singapore.

The connotations of various everyday actions are also a point of contention. The definition of racism itself among the populace has shifted over time. One substantial change is that fewer people now consider it racist for an employer to choose not to hire someone due to their race or their religious attire. A larger proportion of the population, it seems, is now willing to consider that other factors may be at play and that some employers may have preferences or other requirements, which do not constitute racism per se. At the same time, a clear point of consensus that has remained constant since 2016 is that racial jokes made in public or private are racist and generally unacceptable. Rather than a blanket opposition to all acts that appear racially unjust, there is a complexity to how Singaporeans conceptualise racism. This indicates that they are thinking for themselves based on their personal experiences, and drawing the lines for their own behaviours accordingly.

This is important, given the potential influence of social justice movements on race relations locally. Much has been made recently, especially regarding the term "Chinese privilege", about

whether Singaporeans are jumping on the bandwagon of woke culture and Western ideas about race without critically considering their applicability in the local context. In one regard at least, this has not occurred. Whereas much is made in the West about the issue of cultural appropriation, in the Singaporean context wherein most people are exposed to Racial Harmony Day and other celebrations of diversity from a young age, they grow up without feeling that it is cultural appropriation to don the ethnic costume of another racial group. In fact, doing this tends to be seen as a sign of respect and appreciation. There is a greater proclivity to seeing such actions in good faith here in Singapore than elsewhere in the world, and this is worth preserving.

As another example of a shift, fewer people now regard it as racist to choose not to sit beside someone of another race, for example on public transportation. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic in the last couple of years, a new form of stereotyping may be at play. After all, there have been reports of increased avoidance of certain groups depending on the countries where new coronavirus variants have recently emerged. As the pandemic continues, we should not allow it to strain race relations and heighten xenophobia.

Generally, Singaporeans appear quite optimistic about the future. They feel that meritocracy and national unity will continue to characterise Singapore society, and that discrimination will remain at current levels or fall. One exception is that there is greater concern over online comments attacking other races. As Singaporeans are highly digitally connected and social media can amplify the perceived tensions resulting from any incident, properly managing the online space may become vital in the coming years. This should not verge on outright censorship on the part of the government, as this would lead to a loss in trust. However, what can be depended on is Singaporeans' own sense of the OB markers surrounding what can and cannot be said publicly about sensitive topics. By hinging on an ingrained understanding that it is important to maintain peace, civil and productive conversations online can be fostered without giving way to senseless racial hate.

Many people think Singapore has already become regardless of race, or that it is on track to do this within the next few years or decades. Still, a minority think we will never achieve this. Moving forward, it will be important to engage this group. It may comprise people who have lost faith in the authorities and tend to be less trusting of others in society, possibly due to past experiences of discrimination they have had. While this group is small, efforts must be made to ensure it does not grow. Change takes time, and even young minorities who are the most earnest about improving race relations may start to feel resigned. In the ongoing management of race relations, it is important that no one is left behind. At the same time, it is crucial that those who think we have already arrived, be made aware that there is still work to be done to ensure that everyone, regardless of race, obtains fair treatment — especially in the labour market.

When asked about future developments that fall along broadly multiracial or post-racial lines, the higher preference was generally for the former. Unlike France for example, which has tried to adopt a colour-blind approach, most people in Singapore wish to pragmatically acknowledge racial differences and have policies to manage them well. While the CMIO system remains quite well-received, there are some concerns about whether it preserves minority rights. In addition, a sizeable proportion of people would like for more racial diversity to be acknowledged beyond these racial categories in the future. Still, many are conservative in the changes they would like to see. Any modifications to existing policies on race will likely

need to be made in small increments as societal norms change. More importantly, the fundamental principles which undergird these different policies and have allowed Singapore to reach good levels of harmony need to be constantly defended and retained even as policies are constantly updated to deal with new realities.

There has been an upswell in support for post-racial sentiments, but it is not surprising that the current generations, which have been raised in a multicultural society, would favour continuing in that direction. Singapore has always had to maintain a delicate balance between celebrating diversity and ensuring unity. Ultimately, the results of this survey show that while work remains to be done, the country and its people have the willingness to continue walking that line together.

Annex 1

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Annex 2

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Annex 3

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