

Survey results point to success of Govt's racial integration policy

R.H. Jafar Sadiq

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A recent survey found that some 15 per cent of Singaporeans found Muslims threatening, and that those who live in private housing were more likely to think this way (15% of respondents find Muslims threatening, March 29).

This points to one striking, positive inference: The Government's policy of racial integration in public housing has been remarkably successful.

The Housing Board's racial quota on housing seems to have worked wonders in promoting interracial integration.

Singaporeans of all races, religions and denominations are now interacting with one another daily, and this has led to the weaving of a cohesive national identity.

People living in private properties may not have as much a chance of living alongside people of different races and gaining first-hand knowledge about others.

They may also be relying on third-party information through foreign news streams and social media to form opinions about other races.

As it is not practical to implement racial quotas on private properties, the solution lies in creating more opportunities and spaces for people of all walks of life to interact through schools, hospitals and community spaces.

An example would be to include families in celebrations such as Racial Harmony Day in schools.

Schools can only do so much to impart values to children. At home, when an impressionable young child is exposed to the mindset and opinions of his parents or relatives, all the effort schools put in to try and teach the child may go to waste.

By changing the minds of at least even a handful of parents who believe in such negative stereotypes, we can make significant progress in reducing this 15 per cent proportion.

Also, it is a good time to take steps to tackle the various outside influences to safeguard the valuable culture of peaceful coexistence we have built over the years.

The survey is timely and gives us all the chance to reflect and thank our founding fathers for their wisdom, which has kept our nation peaceful.