

**FAULTLINES IN SINGAPORE: PUBLIC OPINION ON
THEIR REALITIES, MANAGEMENT AND
CONSEQUENCES**

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Abbreviations

| | |
|------|--|
| 377A | Section 377A, Penal Code (law criminalising sex between men) |
| CECA | India–Singapore Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement |
| CMIO | Chinese, Malay, Indian, Others |
| CNA | Channel NewsAsia |
| DoS | Department of Statistics |
| EP | Employment Pass |
| EU | European Union |
| FDW | Foreign Domestic Worker |
| FiS | Faultlines in Singapore |
| HDB | Housing & Development Board |
| IPS | Institute of Policy Studies |
| IRCC | Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circles |
| ISA | Internal Security Act |
| ISD | Internal Security Department |
| ITE | Institute of Technical Education |
| MHA | Ministry of Home Affairs |
| MOM | Ministry of Manpower |
| MRHA | Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act |
| LGBT | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender |
| PR | Permanent Resident |
| RRL | Race, Religion and Language |
| SC | Singapore Citizen |
| SES | Socio-Economic Status |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| US | United States |

FAULTLINES IN SINGAPORE: PUBLIC OPINION ON THEIR REALITIES, MANAGEMENT AND CONSEQUENCES

Abstract

Amidst continued spotlight on social cohesion and divisions in Singapore, this Faultlines in Singapore (FiS) paper examines the views of the local population on the implications of mismanaging across five key issue-spheres including 1) race; 2) religion; 3) class; 4) immigration; and 5) LGBT. It subsequently peruses the views of the population on potential mitigating mechanisms including public discourse and state involvement. More in-depth insights are presented on community attitudes towards specific issues associated with key faultlines — such as the role of the state; reactions to inflammatory content; and the interplay of religion and LGBT issues. Survey responses to new questions in the 2018 IPS RRL study were utilised across this study to facilitate social sensing of the broader community's key concerns and desired approaches.

In general, this study has found that the majority of Singaporeans are cognizant of the gravity of managing societal faultlines. A large majority anticipates some adverse consequence (to varying extents ranging from suspicion or mistrust, to outright violence) to arise, should the mismanagement of faultlines occur. This awareness highlights that the national education methods in Singapore has nurtured a population that does not take social harmony for granted — Singaporeans recognise the potential for undesirable outcomes even amidst relative social harmony and stability. Perennial issues of race and religion are perceived to be adequately managed by the state; while a sizeable proportion

of the population indicated the need for more state involvement and public discourse on issues of immigration, class and LGBT — contemporary faultlines that have come to the fore amidst a more globalised and open socio-economic landscape.

A more in-depth review of community attitudes towards various issues associated with the faultlines reveals the need for further study and focus vis-à-vis: 1) equipping the community to deal with inflammatory content circulated across traditional and contemporary channels such as social media; 2) continued efforts to navigate increasing religiosity and preferences for greater religious freedoms; 3) the efficacy of meritocratic ideals in relation to desires for affirmative action; 4) continued management of resident population's preferences in relation to immigration policies; 5) the need to address perceived difficulties and sustain the positive impact of education in social mixing; and 6) the disaggregation of religion and politics to prevent the “deepening” and “conflation” of faultlines along religious and sexual identities. In addition, it is noted that a significant number of viewpoints expressed would vary, based on age cohorts and education levels. Broad-brush policy directions are presented alongside these findings.

FAULTLINES IN SINGAPORE: PUBLIC OPINION ON THEIR REALITIES, MANAGEMENT AND CONSEQUENCES

1. INTRODUCTION

There has been continued spotlight on social cohesion issues with a number of previous studies highlighting faultlines in Singapore such as the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS)' reports on surveys related to race, religion and social attitudes (Mathew, Mohammad, & Teo, 2014; Mathew, 2016; (Mathew, Lim, Selvarajan, & Cheung, 2017; Mathew, Lim & Selvarajan, 2018; Mathew, Lim, & Selvarajan, 2019a) and the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY)'s annual Social Pulse Survey (MCCY, 2018). This study, FiS (Faultlines in Singapore), focuses on 1) the perceptions of our resident population regarding the consequences of mismanaging significant societal faultlines and the relative volatility of issues; 2) desired levels of state involvement and public discourse in addressing the faultlines; and 3) key insights on community attitudes towards and management of faultlines.

This study is based on the responses of 4,015 individuals who took part in a survey for the 2018 IPS Race, Religion and Language (RRL) study. The survey questions utilised in FiS are a new addition to the 2018 IPS RRL study compared to the initial 2013 run. This new component allows a better sensing of public sentiments on enduring, emotionally charged issues impacting Singapore society and politics. These sentiments are by no means mono-dimensional; they are predicated on fundamental beliefs regarding the freedom

of expression, the role of the state in ensuring a safe and harmonious social fabric, personal concerns and interests, and the issue's perceived volatility.

Various incidents in Singapore have highlighted the divisive nature of five key issues: 1) race; 2) religion; 3) immigration; 4) class; and 5) LGBT. Consider for instance the recent July 2019 NETS-Preeti incident (relating to race); censure of foreign Christian and Muslim preachers for promulgating inflammatory content across previous years (religion); public debates on inequality, SES discrimination and divides (relating to class); public fallout from the Population White Paper released in January 2013 (immigration); and the Pink Dot versus Wear White campaigns (relating to LGBT). These challenges to social cohesion are amplified by their tendency to conflate too. For instance, the video of a condominium owner verbally abusing a security guard went viral recently — engendering widespread reactions from netizens, industry associations, and politicians alike on the detriments of immigration; according respect to others regardless of class; and more robust legislation to deter the abuse of lower-wage workers such as cleaners and security guards.

Against this backdrop, it is critical that we augment our understanding of these issues beyond mere awareness of observable differences. Recognising their relative significance and bridging mechanisms such as public conversations and state involvement in managing social divisions, will enable more informed and effective strategies to sustain our harmonious social fabric.

At the same time, it is also worthwhile to consider the global context, as we scrutinise other potential faultlines that have the potential to deepen and divide our society. The world remains considerably less peaceful now than a decade ago — both in terms of intra- and inter-state conflict (Institute for Economics and Peace [IEP], 2019, p. 2). Despite this, Singapore remains among the top 10 most peaceful nations in the world, ranking seventh this year compared to ninth last year (IEP 2019, p. 8). This is a validation of our current policies embracing diversity, inclusion, and harmonious relations within one of the world's most multi-racial, multi-religious social settings (Pew Research Center, 2014). This is no mean feat considering that most other countries that enjoy similar levels of harmony tend to be demographically homogeneous — such as Iceland, Portugal, Austria, Denmark and Japan.

Given the highly globalised and open nature of Singapore's economy, our social divisions are only likely to accentuate with time. Our reliance on labour inflows to fuel our economy, build our infrastructure, and supplement our social needs means that immigration will remain an important issue — alongside shifting racial composition and pressures on economic divides. Unrestricted flows of ideas and beliefs from abroad, coupled with the rise of technology and social media, will also lead to shifts in religious (or non-religious) demographics and stances on gender and sexuality.

This paper seeks to provide insights on the views of our resident population regarding these five social divisions. Following a brief discussion of the survey

methodology employed and respondents' demographic profiles (Section 2), the study begins by presenting the context for a more in-depth understanding of five key faultlines (Section 3). It then attempts to explicate the potential consequences of mismanaging these key societal faultlines (Section 4). Following this, mitigation mechanisms are explored in Sections 5 and 6. Section 5 addresses the question of whether respondents feel the state is doing enough or should be more involved in managing each of these faultlines. Section 6 provides community perspectives as to whether more public discourse is desired on the faultlines. Across Sections 4, 5, and 6, the study examines the relationship between the sentiments of respondents and demographics or responses to related issues. Section 7 analyses community recognition of and attitudes towards specific issues arising from faultlines — such as the interplay between religion and LGBT issues; reactions to potential discriminatory incidents; and local-immigrant relations. Broad-brush recommendations are also included in the analysis. Section 8 concludes the study.

2. METHODOLOGY, DEMOGRAPHICS & REPRESENTATION

Data for this FiS study (N = 4,015) is derived from the 2018 instalment of the IPS Race, Religion and Language (RRL) survey, which commenced in August 2018 and was concluded in January 2019. Notwithstanding the fact that some data was collected in January 2019, for ease of subsequent mentions of this survey, we denote the different instalments or waves based on when the bulk of responses were collected, i.e., in the 2018 instalment. At the outset, a sampling frame comprising a list of 5,000 randomly generated household addresses and associated contact details was obtained from the Singapore Department of Statistics (DoS). About 3,000 respondents completed the survey based on this initial list. Thereafter, a booster sample was procured, comprising the selection of an additional 1,000 ethnic Malays and Indians respondents based on a pre-defined strategy — they lived in close proximity to survey respondents in the initial DoS sampling frame. The fieldwork for this 2018 IPS RRL run was conducted by the IPS Social Lab.

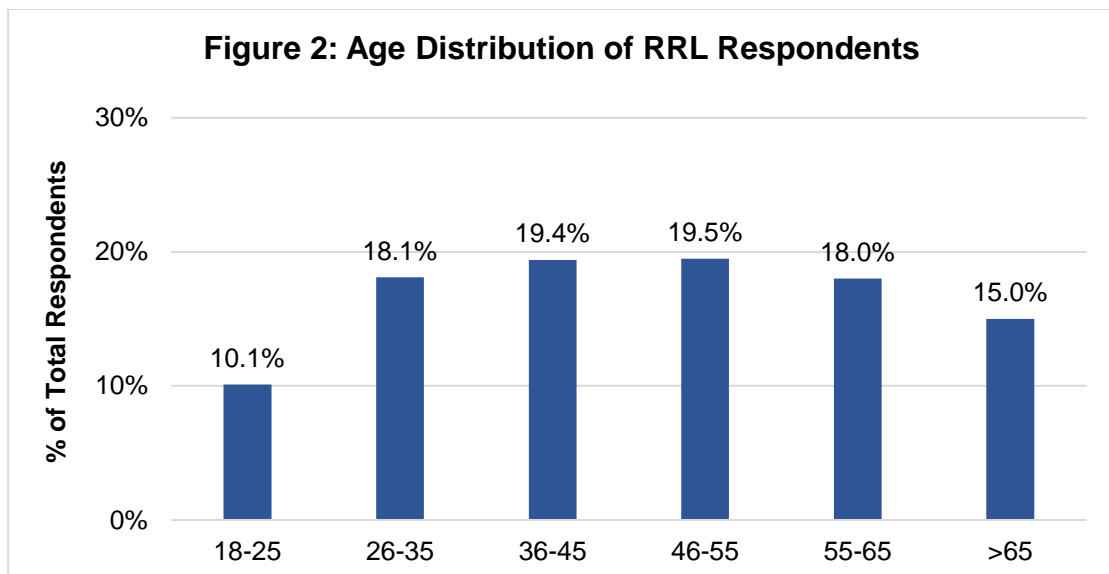
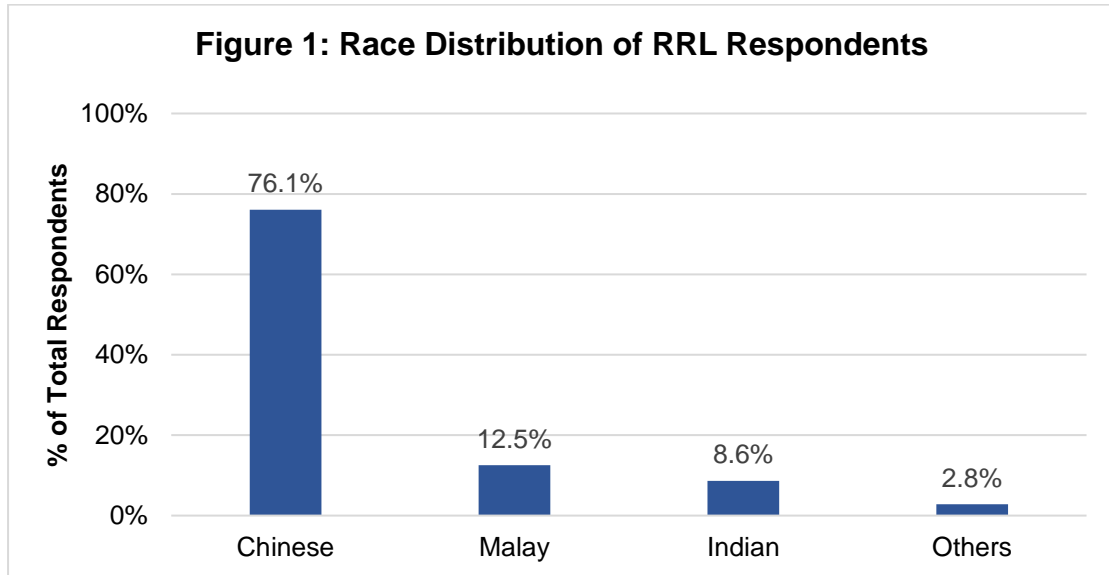
A drop-off / pick-up method for the survey was employed where the surveyors from IPS Social Lab approached the pre-determined prospective households, identified the eligible respondent using a set of criteria, briefed the respondent about the RRL study, and invited the respondent to participate in the survey. If they agreed, they received a survey booklet that they had to complete on their own. The completed questionnaire was sealed by the respondent in a provided envelope, which was collected at a stipulated time. This self-administered questionnaire method limits the potential for 1) interviewer bias, which could

arise when responses were recorded by an interviewer; and 2) social desirability bias, whereby respondents might temper or alter their responses in a one-on-one interview to be regarded as “politically correct”, or to ostensibly avert potential discomfort, or the interviewer’s adverse judgement.

The survey booklets were available in Singapore’s four official languages. For respondents unable to read or write, they were given the option of having the interviewer guide them through the survey instrument. There was a good response rate for the RRL survey, with nearly 70 per cent of those eligible to complete this study doing so. New questions in the 2018 RRL run were introduced compared to the 2013 survey, in order to collate responses to the adequacy of public discourse and government involvement in managing faultlines; as well as the volatility of these faultlines should they be mismanaged. Wordings of the questions are provided directly in the analyses across the next few chapters.

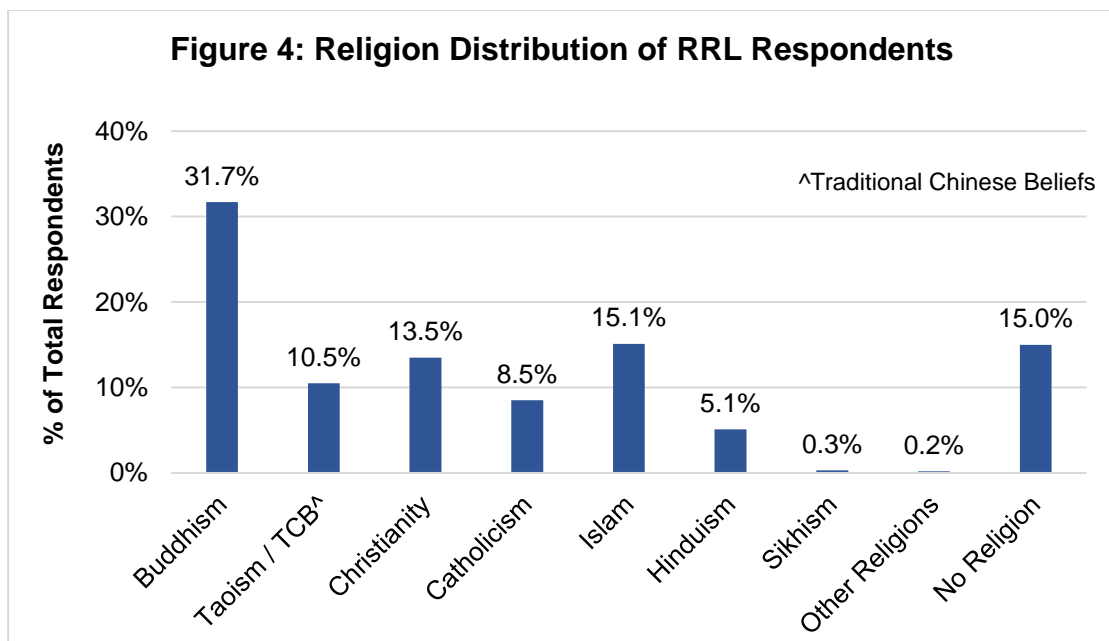
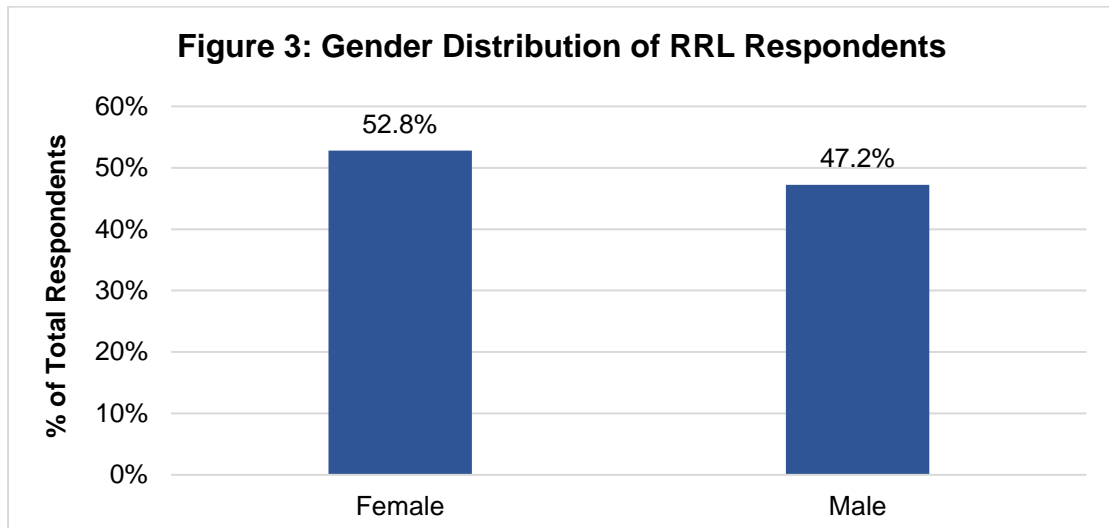
Deviations in the responses of minorities in the main DoS sample and additional booster sample to the questions-of-interest in this FiS study were statistically insignificant; and hence data obtained from both sampling frames were combined to form one overall dataset. The dataset was subsequently weighted to mirror the race and age demographics of Singapore’s resident population. The weights applied to the dataset were based on the latest available publicly accessible DoS population data (DoS, 2019a). After weighting, race and age

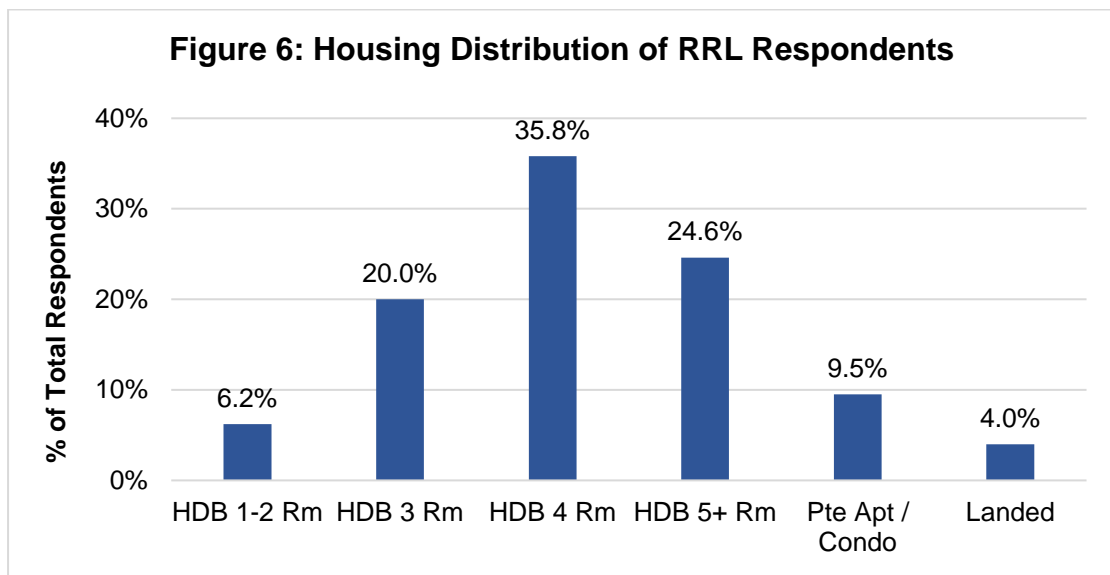
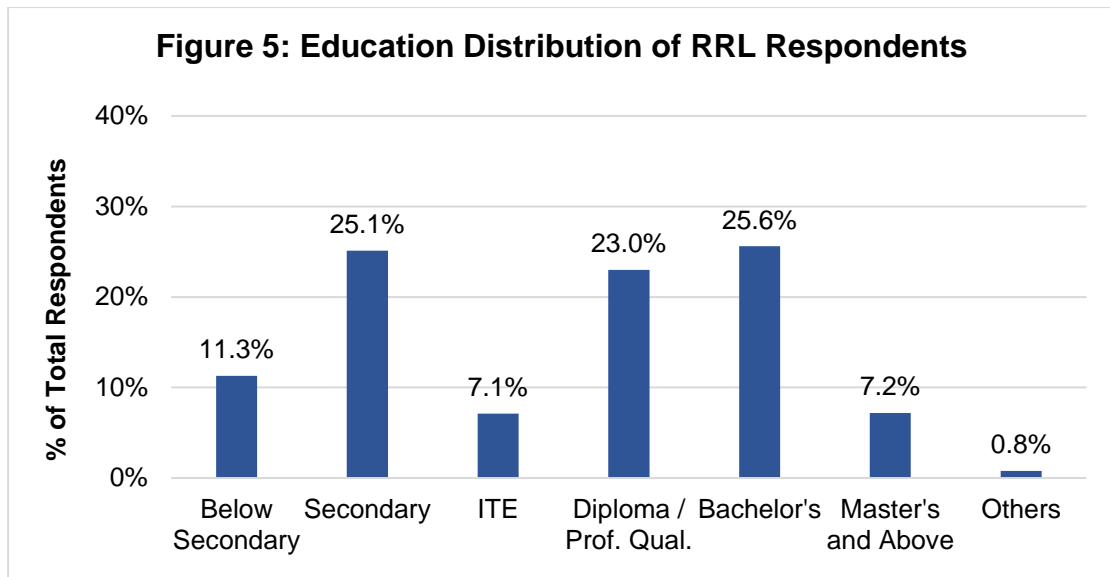
profiles in our sample used for analysis closely mirror that of local population (see Figures 1 and 2).



After applying weights, the sample was appraised by gender, religion, education levels and housing type. In general, the 2018 RRL weighted dataset is largely representative of the actual population in terms of these four

attributes, with survey responses providing a robust sense of the overall resident population's views (see Figures 3, 4, 5 and 6).





The next few sections present the case for focusing on five key societal faultlines — with significant findings pertaining to perceptions of consequences of mismanaging, and mitigation mechanisms for faultlines. Where findings are deemed statistically insignificant or non-varying across demographics, they are omitted from the written analysis.

3. FAULTLINES IN THE SINGAPORE CONTEXT

In this section, the context of social division in Singapore is presented with a spotlight on five key issues of 1) race; 2) religion; 3) class; 4) immigration; and 5) LGBT. Existing literature, overall findings and relevant contemporary events are referenced to provide the impetus for spotlighting these five faultlines.

The notion of a social divide generally refers to systematic “patterns of division in society associated with membership of particular social groupings” (McCarthy & Edwards, 2011, 180). These groupings are usually defined with reference to characteristics such as generation, gender, sexuality, income, and race / ethnicity; see Lenski (2013) and Ridgeway (2011) for examples. Some of these characteristics may be non-malleable – such as age, race or birth origin. Others are contingent on resources, opportunities, and the tractable identities individuals assume — such as religion, education, and sexuality. Certain groupings may arise as a logical “collection” of attributes; such as income levels, language, and education contributing to the notion of a class divide, for instance. Nonetheless, these social characteristics and divisions in turn form the basis for differences in individuals’ experiences, treatment by others, access to resources, judgements of issues and others.

3.1 Race

While a gamut of social divides exists in societies globally, a few are especially pertinent in the local context. Singapore’s history as an immigrant nation saw

race underscored by its British colonial masters as a key aspect of population classification (Hirschman, 1987; Purushotam, 1998), and thereafter as a key factor driving its race-equal national identity, social harmony and informing state policies on education, housing, personal freedoms of expression and political representation (Chua, 2009; Tan, 2004). Race (and the state management of race) continues to feature prominently in the social consciousness. Intermittent high-profile incidents, such as the recent NETS-Preetipls affair (Lim, 2019) and the “Is it because I’m Chinese” Go-Jek episode (Lay, 2019) both occurring this year illustrate the volatile nature of this faultline.

It is important to note at the outset that previous studies, including responses to the 2018 IPS RRL survey (Mathew, Lim, & Selvarajan, 2019b) indicate that most perceive Singapore to have moderate to high levels of racial (and religious) harmony (see Table 1). However, a number of potential race-related fractures can also be discerned. For one, minorities were *less* likely to feel they have high levels of harmony compared to the majority Chinese. Another area of concern flagged was the marginal rise of perceived race discrimination in the workplace by minorities, such as when at work, applying for a job or seeking a job promotion (see Table 2). Though inter-racial trust amidst crises has increased since 2013 (see Table 3), there still remains a sizeable difference between trust in majority Chinese and trust in minorities (about >10 per cent gap). While a large majority (90 per cent or more) of residents indicated they were comfortable with someone of another race being their colleague or neighbour, this proportion drops a little when respondents are asked about minorities being their boss.

Table 1: Race vs. Views on Levels of Racial and Religious Harmony

| What would you say is the level of racial and religious harmony in Singapore currently? | Very Low | Low | Moderate | High | Very High |
|--|----------|-----|----------|------|-----------|
| Responses by racial group % of total 2018 | | | | | |
| Chinese | 0.8 | 2.2 | 37.3 | 48.8 | 10.8 |
| Malay | 1.6 | 3.6 | 46.9 | 37.0 | 10.9 |
| Indian | 2.0 | 4.7 | 48.7 | 34.4 | 10.2 |
| Others | 0.0 | 0.0 | 35.1 | 50.0 | 14.9 |
| Overall | 0.9 | 2.6 | 39.4 | 46.2 | 10.9 |

Table 2: Race vs. Perceived Discriminatory Treatment at Work

| How often do you feel racially discriminated in these areas of your everyday life? – When at work | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often / Very Often or Always |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| Responses by racial group % of total 2018 (2013) | | | | |
| Chinese | 62.8 (61.9) | 26.5 (22.5) | 8.5 (12.2) | 2.1 (3.4) |
| Malay | 40.4 (41.4) | 24.4 (23.6) | 25.7 (24.5) | 9.5 (10.6) |
| Indian | 43.7 (47.5) | 24.3 (22.6) | 22.6 (20.5) | 9.4 (9.5) |
| Others | 61.9 (43.0) | 21.2 (28.9) | 8.0 (22.3) | 8.8 (5.8) |
| Overall | 58.4 (57.5) | 25.9 (22.9) | 11.9 (14.7) | 3.9 (4.9) |

Table 3: Inter-racial Trust Amidst Crises

| What proportion of people with the following race do you think can be trusted to help you if Singapore faced a national crisis (e.g., SARS)?[^] | Singapore Chinese | Singapore Malay | Singapore Indian | Singapore Eurasian |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| % of total 2018 (2013) | | | | |
| All or mostly all | 46.0 (35.4) | 33.9 (26.7) | 34.1 (26.4) | 33.1 (26.9) |
| More than half | 25.3 (30.0) | 27.1 (26.0) | 28.3 (25.9) | 25.7 (24.9) |
| About half | 19.8 (26.0) | 21.4 (25.6) | 22.5 (26.0) | 21.3 (24.8) |
| Less than half / None or mostly none | 8.9 (8.5) | 17.6 (21.7) | 15.1 (21.6) | 19.8 (23.4) |

[^] Responses of the members of a particular racial group were excluded when calculating trust levels for that particular race

Not surprisingly, when respondents were asked about their levels of comfort with local-born minorities hypothetically making up the majority of people in Singapore, there was a significant drop in comfort levels — clearly illustrating that Singapore is not as post-racial as we are sometimes tempted to believe (see Table 4). These results, alongside intermittent high profile incidents illustrate the potential for the race faultline to deepen, if left unchecked.

Table 4: Levels of Comfort for Public-Sphere Relationships

| Levels of comfort with people of other ethnicities / nationalities for public sphere relationships | Local-born Chinese | Local-born Malay | Local-born Indian | Local-born Eurasian |
|---|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| % of total 2018 (2013) | | | | |
| As your colleague in the same occupation | 93.7 (96.5) | 91.5 (92.9) | 90.4 (92.9) | 91.3 (93.4) |
| As your next-door neighbour | 95.5 (96.4) | 90.9 (92.9) | 88.3 (90.8) | 91.6 (93.6) |
| As the majority of people in Singapore | 88.1 (89.5) | 67.1 (72.1) | 65.8 (71.7) | 69.8 (71.3) |

3.2 Religion

Another significant social distinction in Singapore is *religion* — where the island-nation is considered the most religiously diverse country in the world (Pew Research Center, 2014). Practically all of the world's main religions are represented among its resident population of four million (DoS, 2019b); of which 43 per cent identify as Buddhist, Taoist, or practise some form of syncretic Chinese folk religion, 19 per cent identify as Christian or Catholic, 14 per cent identify as Muslim, and 5 per cent identify as Hindu (DoS, 2016). In keeping with the highly pluralistic social fabric, there is also substantial variety vis-à-vis the denominations of the major religions in Singapore, as well as new religious movements which are often spin-offs of broader religious traditions (Chia, 2009; Goh, 2009). Most religions in Singapore also overlap or conflate with race or ethnicity (Mathew, 2018; Tong, 2007). While no violence or serious clashes attributed to religion has occurred in Singapore post-independence, rifts or tensions still transpire amidst the multifarious religious landscape. Contemporary examples include the censure of foreign Christian and Muslim preachers for promulgating inflammatory content (Ng, 2019; Tham, 2017), and escalating national security threats due to extremism and self-radicalisation (CNA, 2019; TODAY, 2019 amongst several others).

In tandem with findings for race as a societal faultline, the majority of the resident population perceive moderate to high levels of religious harmony amidst (or despite) a highly pluralist setting (see Table 1). In addition, based on the available literature (Mathew, Lim, & Selvarajan, 2019c) nearly three-

quarters of respondents also indicated disagreement or strong disagreement with the notion that people of differing religions cannot get along with each other (see Table 5). However, dissecting this general state of affairs yields more insights vis-à-vis potential “cracks” beneath the surface. For instance, when perusing attitudes towards various religious groups, it has been reported that slightly elevated proportions of the population view Muslims as somewhat or very threatening (see Table 6). This finding is further supported by slightly lower proportions of respondents reporting positive attitudes towards Muslims relative to adherents of other religions. This is likely due to the prevailing geopolitical landscape and contemporary world events.

Table 5: Views on Prospects of Inter-religious Harmony

| People belonging to different religions cannot get along | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| % of total 2018 | | | | | |
| Overall | 2.1 | 8.3 | 16.9 | 53.0 | 19.7 |

Source: *Religion in Singapore: The private and public spheres*

Table 6: Perceived Threat of Religious Groups

| Perceived threat of people belonging to the following groups | Not at all threatening | Not very threatening | Somewhat threatening | Very threatening |
|---|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| % of total 2018 | | | | |
| Buddhists | 71.6 | 25.5 | 2.4 | 0.4 |
| Christians | 69.7 | 23.8 | 5.5 | 1.0 |
| Muslims | 60.1 | 24.4 | 13.5 | 2.1 |
| Hindus | 66.8 | 29.0 | 3.6 | 0.6 |
| Jews | 68.4 | 26.3 | 4.3 | 1.0 |
| Atheists | 69.4 | 25.4 | 4.2 | 0.9 |

Source: *Religion in Singapore: The private and public spheres*

At the community level, it has been observed that while the majority of the population expressed agreement to varying degrees that Singapore is free from religious tension (see Table 7), a significant minority reported being upset (sometimes, often, very often, or always) due to negative experiences associated with religion. Based on recently published findings (Mathew, Lim, & Selvarajan, 2019b), over a fifth of respondents experienced someone challenging their religious beliefs and practices while over a quarter of respondents were upset over proselytisation attempts (see Table 8). Instances where specific religious practices (such as burning incense) may give rise to unhappiness and tense inter-religious relations have also been noted. These illustrate the potential of this faultline to widen if mismanaged; and that the maintenance of the religious peace is an ongoing endeavour.

Table 7: Views on Religious Tension in Singapore

| Overall, I feel Singapore is free from religious tension | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of total 2018 | | | | | | |
| Overall | 2.0 | 5.5 | 9.9 | 26.5 | 41.6 | 14.4 |

Table 8: Frequency of Reported Upset Feelings Due to Negative Experiences Associated with Religion

| In the last year, how often have you felt upset because of the following? [^] | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often / Very Often or Always |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| % of total 2018 (2013) | | | | |
| Someone insulting my religious beliefs | 55.4 (58.4) | 25.9 (23.3) | 13.3 (12.8) | 5.4 (5.5) |
| Someone challenging my religious beliefs and practices | 50.2 (54.5) | 28.4 (24.2) | 15.9 (16.0) | 5.6 (5.3) |
| Someone trying to convert me to a religious belief | 46.6 (51.1) | 25.3 (21.6) | 20.0 (20.0) | 8.0 (7.3) |
| Someone made fun of my religious beliefs or customs | 55.8 | 25.8 | 13.2 | 5.3 |
| Something you watched on social or mainstream media insulted your racial or religious customs | 45.7 | 28.1 | 17.5 | 8.7 |

[^] Items without 2013 figures are new questions incorporated into the 2018 iteration of the IPS RRL survey.

3.3 Immigration

A third faultline evident in Singapore society spans the issue of *immigration*. In light of an ageing, shrinking citizen population, sustaining economic growth, meeting infrastructural demands such as labourers in construction, and supplementing social needs in healthcare and domestic work necessitates continued reliance on foreign labour and immigrants. However, while most locals accept the importance and value of the latter (Mathew, 2019), many nonetheless perceive themselves to be in competition with migrant skilled labour, professionals, and students — at times unfairly. For instance, perceptions of foreigners depressing wages, displacing locals in universities, driving up rents and property prices abound (Fenn, 2014; Hakeem, 2019; Hugo, 2017; The Independent, 2016). Perceptions of differential treatment and

unequal allocation of resources based on the origins of individuals persist too; at times exacerbated by fast flows of information via online and social media, and a limited understanding of context (Rajah, 2019; Soezean, 2017).

Analysing the sentiments of the local resident population on immigration reveals that 1) just under 90 per cent felt they could learn a lot from foreign cultures and appreciated people of different nationalities living in the same neighbourhood; and 2) nearly three-quarters of respondents indicated agreement (to varying degrees) on their liking to meet and know new migrants (see Table 9). However, over two-thirds of local residents also concurrently indicate that they felt (to varying extents) immigrants were not doing enough to integrate in Singapore.

Table 9: Sentiments of Local Resident Population Towards Immigrants

| Levels of agreement on issues of immigration | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| % of total 2018 | | | | | | |
| I like meeting and getting to know people who are new migrants to Singapore | 4.7 | 7.5 | 15.8 | 39.1 | 26.7 | 6.2 |
| You can learn a lot from the cultures that foreigners of different nationalities bring into Singapore | 1.5 | 3.4 | 8.1 | 34.5 | 38.3 | 14.3 |
| It is troublesome to understand immigrants who come to live in Singapore | 10.4 | 27.6 | 31.2 | 20.0 | 8.2 | 2.6 |
| Good to have people of different nationalities living in the same neighbourhood | 1.2 | 2.4 | 6.5 | 31.3 | 42.7 | 15.9 |
| It is important for me to help immigrants and new citizens integrate into Singapore | 2.9 | 5.4 | 13.4 | 41.2 | 30.5 | 6.6 |
| I feel that immigrants are not doing enough to integrate into Singapore | 2.5 | 6.5 | 23.5 | 36.0 | 21.5 | 10.0 |

The reported levels of comfort with and trust for people of foreign origins were also lower relative to local-born individuals — both in the public sphere and in private-sphere relationships (Mathew, Lim, & Selvarajan, 2019b). For instance, while most still indicate comfort with foreign-born individuals in the context of the workplace and neighbourhood, half or more of the resident population were not comfortable with foreign-born individuals making up the majority of people in Singapore (see Table 10). Significantly lower proportions also indicated comfort with foreign-born individuals as spouses and in-laws (see Table 11). These suggest that immigration is another faultline that needs to be continually mitigated.

Table 10: Levels of Comfort in Public-Sphere Relationships

| Levels of comfort in public-sphere relationships[^] | Local-born Chinese | Local-born Malay | Local-born Indian | Local-born Eurasian | New Singaporean Chinese originally from China | New Singaporean Indian originally from India | New Singaporean Malay originally from the region |
|---|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---|--|--|
| % of total 2018 (2013) indicating comfort* | | | | | | | |
| As your colleague in the same occupation | 93.7 (96.5) | 91.5 (92.9) | 90.4 (92.9) | 91.3 (93.4) | 85.5 (85.2) | 83.2 (85.3) | 87.1 (87.5) |
| As your boss | 94.5 (94.7) | 85.0 (83.6) | 83.8 (84.4) | 89.1 (90.7) | 74.7 (75.1) | 71.1 (74.2) | 78.0 (77.4) |
| As your employee | 94.4 (95.7) | 89.8 (90.4) | 89.2 (90.5) | 91.0 (92.6) | 83.8 (83.7) | 80.9 (83.3) | 84.8 (85.6) |
| As your next-door-neighbour | 95.5 (96.4) | 90.9 (92.9) | 88.3 (90.8) | 91.6 (93.6) | 80.1 (81.7) | 78.0 (82.2) | 84.8 (86.9) |
| As the majority of people in Singapore | 88.1 (89.5) | 67.1 (72.1) | 65.8 (71.7) | 69.8 (71.3) | 47.5 (51.7) | 44.3 (51.0) | 50.3 (54.7) |

[^] Responses of individuals belonging to a particular group were excluded in calculating comfort levels for that particular group. * Binary option ("Yes, I am comfortable" vs. "No, I am not comfortable")

Table 11: Levels of Comfort in Private-Sphere Relationships

| Levels of comfort in public-sphere relationships [^] | Local-born Chinese | Local-born Malay | Local-born Indian | Local-born Eurasian | New Singaporean Chinese originally from China | New Singaporean Indian originally from India | New Singaporean Malay originally from the region |
|---|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---|--|--|
| % of total 2018 (2013) indicating comfort* | | | | | | | |
| Brother / Sister-in-law | 77.9 (72.5) | 58.9 (54.9) | 58.6 (54.8) | 71.8 (68.0) | 63.1 (59.1) | 48.4 (47.5) | 56.1 (52.3) |
| Son / Daughter-in-law | 74.6 (70.7) | 48.5 (46.0) | 50.0 (48.4) | 67.5 (64.5) | 57.5 (55.9) | 40.8 (41.9) | 47.3 (45.0) |
| Spouse | 66.8 (61.9) | 35.7 (35.5) | 36.3 (36.0) | 56.9 (53.9) | 49.3 (47.8) | 29.5 (31.4) | 36.3 (35.0) |
| Close friend | 90.2 (92.2) | 81.4 (84.1) | 79.4 (82.2) | 83.1 (84.6) | 75.7 (77.2) | 69.2 (73.5) | 75.2 (77.1) |

[^] Responses of individuals belonging to a particular group were excluded in calculating comfort levels for that particular group. * Binary option ("Yes, I am comfortable" vs. "No, I am not comfortable")

3.4 SES

Socio-economic status (SES) or *class* is an emerging divide that has ensued from Singapore's rapid economic development. While founded on ideals of equality and meritocracy, a widening social class divide spanning other divisions including income, language (the use of proper English versus colloquials and vernaculars), housing, profession, and behavioral preferences has emerged (IPS, 2017). In fact, a recent CNA survey also found that nearly half of citizen respondents polled felt that income inequality would be most likely to cause social strife — relative to other faultlines such as race and religion (2018). Discrimination of lower-SES individuals and inter-group friction are also increasingly reported (Low, 2018; Wong, 2018) and discussed in extant

scholarship (Falnikar, Tan, Ganchoudhuri, & Dutta, 2019; Lee & Morris, 2016; Rodan, 2016).

The survey responses indicate a sizeable divide in perceived financial mobility based on education levels, one factor correlated with SES. Under a quarter of the population with secondary and below education perceived potential for upward financial mobility in the next decade, as opposed to 44 per cent of their counterparts holding a degree or higher qualifications (see Table 12). Also pertinent is the majority perception (over 60 per cent) of either *downward or negligible* financial mobility over the next decade. This would exacerbate socio-economic inequality, and render class divisions yet more capricious amidst an uncertain economic climate. We explore these in more detail in Section 7.

Table 12: Perceptions of Financial Mobility by Education Levels

| Differences Between Responses on Current Financial Situation and Financial Situation in 10 years [^] | Downward Financial Mobility | Negligible Financial Mobility | Upward Financial Mobility |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| % of total by education levels 2018 | | | |
| Secondary school or below | 10.6 | 63.1 | 23.8 |
| ITE / Polytechnic diploma / Professional qualifications | 6.5 | 51.3 | 40.6 |
| Bachelor's degree or higher | 5.8 | 49.1 | 44.0 |
| Overall | 7.8 | 54.9 | 35.6 |

[^] The numeric difference between respondents' original ordinal responses (0 to 10 inclusive) were computed and thereafter re-grouped into 3 broad categories (downward = -10 to -2; negligible / no change = -1 to 1 and upward = 2 to 10) for easier analysis and brevity.

3.5 LGBT

While Singaporeans are generally conservative on matters of sexuality, mounting activism and acceptance of *LGBT*¹ rights globally has arisen over the past decade (Human Rights Watch, 2014; McGoldrick, 2019; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2019; Woodhouse, 2019). These trends have seemingly exerted a knock-on effect in Singapore, whereby more younger Singaporeans have become open to embracing such issues (Mathew, Lim, & Selvarajan, 2019a).

Increasingly liberal attitudes to LGBT have however not gone unopposed. One instance is the strong criticism levelled at Pink Dot — Singapore’s annual event held in support of the LGBT community — from Christian and Muslim communities. This is exemplified with “counter-campaigns” urging the public to “Wear White” and support traditional family values instead — which was widely covered in local media and dominated (often visceral) online discourse (Abdullah, 2019; Andanari & Ng, 2015; Han, 2018; Lee, 2016; Zaccheus & Tai, 2015). The likelihood of deepening divisions between sexual minorities and the heterosexual majority seems likely, given other societal divides such as religion, age cohort, and exposure to differing narratives through education also playing a great part in shaping attitudes towards LGBT.

¹ References to LGBT in the context of this paper can be taken to be all-encompassing vis-à-vis LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transexual, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and others who do not fall into stated categories of sexuality / gender).

To exemplify the above observations, findings from a recent IPS survey (Mathew, Lim, & Selvarajan, 2019a) found steep drops in opposition towards homosexual sex and associated issues on LGBT across the past half-decade (see Tables 13 and 14). This trend is clearly noted among 1) younger respondents; 2) more educated respondents; as well as 3) respondents of non-monotheistic faiths or no religion (see Tables 14 and 15 for views on homosexual sex). This faultline has the potential to deepen because views on LGBT issues are often fervently held, with substantial portions of the population indicating “views at the poles” (either expressing that gay marriage is *always* wrong or not wrong *at all*); and because the differences in views by age cohorts, education levels, and religions (or lack thereof) are substantial. Social divisions stemming from views on LGBT may also widen, should like-minded individuals continuously attempt to impose their views on society-at-large.

Table 13: Views on Morality of Issues Concerning LGBT

| Views on morality of issues concerning LGBT[^] | Always Wrong | Almost Always Wrong | Only Wrong Sometimes | Not Wrong Most of the Time | Not Wrong at All |
|--|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| % of total 2018 (2013) | | | | | |
| Sexual relations between two adults of the same sex | 50.4 (61.6) | 13.2 (18.4) | 14.8 (9.8) | 10.2 (4.7) | 11.4 (5.6) |
| Adoption of a child by a gay couple | 41.2 (45.9) | 12.2 (15.9) | 16.6 (14.5) | 13.2 (10.5) | 16.8 (13.2) |
| A gay couple having a child through surrogacy / artificial reproductive techniques | 44.0 | 12.6 | 15.6 | 12.5 | 15.3 |
| Gay marriage | 48.5 (58.8) | 11.5 (15.4) | 13.1 (11.2) | 10.5 (6.2) | 16.4 (8.4) |

[^] Items without 2013 figures are new questions incorporated into the 2018 iteration of the IPS RRL survey.

Table 14: Views on Morality of Homosexual Sex by Age Cohort

| Views on morality of sexual relations between two adults of the same sex | Always Wrong | Almost Always Wrong | Only Wrong Sometimes | Not Wrong Most of the Time | Not Wrong at All |
|---|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| % of total 2018 by age cohort (2013) | | | | | |
| 18-25 years old | 25.4 (47.6) | 9.5 (18.8) | 16.5 (14.5) | 18.5 (7.5) | 30.2 (11.6) |
| 26-35 years old | 36.6 (54.2) | 11.3 (18.0) | 17.8 (12.0) | 14.0 (6.1) | 20.3 (9.7) |
| 36-45 years old | 47.3 (63.9) | 15.5 (15.8) | 16.5 (9.3) | 11.0 (5.8) | 9.7 (5.2) |
| 46-55 years old | 58.2 (65.9) | 13.4 (18.5) | 15.2 (9.9) | 6.6 (3.0) | 6.5 (2.8) |
| 56-65 years old | 61.2 (65.7) | 12.5 (21.3) | 13.6 (6.7) | 7.2 (3.3) | 5.6 (3.0) |
| > 65 years old | 64.9 (70.8) | 15.8 (18.9) | 8.9 (6.9) | 7.2 (1.8) | 3.2 (1.5) |

Table 15: Views on Morality of Homosexual Sex by Religion

| Views on morality of sexual relations between two adults of the same sex | Always Wrong | Almost Always Wrong | Only Wrong Sometimes | Not Wrong Most of the Time | Not Wrong at All |
|---|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| % of total 2018 by religion (2013) | | | | | |
| Buddhism | 35.9 (55.6) | 16.8 (19.8) | 21.3 (14.0) | 12.9 (4.7) | 13.1 (5.9) |
| Taoism | 46.9 (58.1) | 16.4 (21.6) | 15.9 (10.6) | 10.6 (6.5) | 10.1 (3.2) |
| Christianity | 73.7 (75.7) | 7.5 (11.8) | 6.9 (4.3) | 5.8 (4.0) | 6.2 (4.3) |
| Catholicism | 61.3 (60.9) | 12.6 (18.1) | 8.7 (9.0) | 8.1 (6.4) | 9.3 (5.6) |
| Islam | 76.5 (81.4) | 8.2 (12.3) | 6.7 (3.7) | 4.0 (1.4) | 4.5 (1.2) |
| Hinduism | 51.0 (68.1) | 13.0 (16.8) | 11.5 (5.8) | 11.5 (3.1) | 13.0 (6.2) |
| No Religion | 30.5 (44.1) | 14.0 (23.9) | 19.7 (13.4) | 15.2 (5.9) | 20.6 (12.7) |

4. IMPLICATIONS OF MISMANAGING FAULTLINES

Discussions on social divisions will undoubtedly have to address their consequences, should efforts by the community and state be deficient in bridging divides. Depending on local context, certain differences, and the management of these differences or lack thereof may not elicit any deep-seated reactions or consequences. For instance, the issue of racial divides within a homogeneous society organised along the lines of a *de facto* single race or ethnicity would not matter as much. However, in the context of multi-racial Singapore, race issues have the potential to escalate from simple disagreements to more insidious outcomes.

Borrowing from the personal and political conflict literature, it is reasonable to understand the potential consequences from mismanaged social divides as lying along a continuum. Much like how inter-state (and interpersonal) conflicts may range from cooperation, to negotiation, to arbitration, to limited small-scale conflicts and all-out wars (Gleditsch, Wallensteen, Eriksson, Sollenberg, & Strand, 2002; Hocker & Wilmot, 2018), social divides may simply have trivial consequences on prevailing harmony such as acceptance of differences, or result in 1) distrust among communities; 2) polarisation; 3) anger; 4) eroding national identity; 5) distrust in government; or even 6) outright violence.

At present, we are not aware of any research appraising the perceptions of Singaporeans regarding the adequacy of public discourse and state intervention in relation to the five key faultlines elaborated on in Section 3.

There is also a dearth of scholarship in identifying the level of volatility of each of these faultlines in our society today — an important gauge to identify the severity of clear and present threats to our existing social harmony. In this section, this FiS study will explore these areas of interest by considering and analysing the relevant survey responses of resident respondents.

4.1 Overall Sentiments

Overall, the majority of Singaporeans are cognizant of the gravity of managing our societal faultlines. Over 85 per cent of respondents indicate anticipating some adverse consequence (to varying extents ranging from suspicion or mistrust, to outright violence) arising from the mismanagement of faultlines (see Table 16). Of the five faultlines of interest, race and religion were identified by more respondents as having the potential to result in suspicion, mistrust and anger among racial and religious groups if not managed well (just under half). These two faultlines were also identified by about a third of respondents as having the potential to engender violence in Singapore if mismanaged — significantly more so than the other three faultlines. The actual occurrence of incidents centred on these faultlines from Singapore's pre-independence period — such as the Maria Hertogh riots and 1964 racial riots — may have impacted respondents' perceptions as such. All these indicate that race and religion persist as core issues of potential social fracture in Singapore; evidenced by intermittent high-profile incidents of friction.

Table 16: Overall Opinions on Implications of Faultlines Mismanagement

| There are certain issues in society which may have an impact on social cohesion. If not managed well, in your opinion, what are the likely consequences to Singapore of each of these issues? (You can tick as many choices as you feel are appropriate for each. For example, if you feel that a particular issue may lead to suspicion/mistrust among groups, anger, and polarisation, you can tick all three.) | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|-------------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|----------|
| Faultlines | Valid N* | % of Respondents Indicating "Yes" ^ | | | | | | |
| | | No Consequence | Suspicion / Mistrust Among Communities | Polarisation (sharp differences in views) | Anger Against Particular Communities | Decreased National Identity / Sense of Belonging to Singapore | Fall in Levels of Trust in Government / Politicians | Violence |
| Race | 3,914 | 12.8 | 48.5 | 35.3 | 48.1 | 30.6 | 29.6 | 34.0 |
| Religion | 3,903 | 13.8 | 42.0 | 42.6 | 46.3 | 22.7 | 24.0 | 31.9 |
| Socio-economic Class Differences | 3,867 | 12.4 | 27.8 | 36.6 | 36.5 | 27.9 | 37.2 | 14.6 |
| Immigration | 3,878 | 11.4 | 28.9 | 31.1 | 37.6 | 41.3 | 39.5 | 16.6 |
| LGBT Issues | 3,879 | 16.5 | 23.2 | 42.4 | 41.2 | 19.6 | 23.5 | 13.8 |

* Maximum possible N=4,007; difference between valid N denotes missing responses (no ticks across all seven outcomes); ^ Percentages represent proportion of participants who checked boxes for the outcome and will not equate across the outcomes to 100% due to multiple selections.

When examining how faultlines can impact individuals' sense of belonging to Singapore, the survey responses illustrate how issues of immigration can impact matters of national identity. More than 40 per cent of respondents indicated that if mismanaged, immigration could result in a decreased sense of national identity. This is coherent as incoming foreigners would import a range of varying norms, values and practices — and potentially “dilute” or “morph” prevailing notions of the Singaporean identity. Race and class were also the other salient faultlines identified by about 30 per cent of respondents to adversely impact national identity if mismanaged. These would correspond

respectively to prevailing state discourse on the need to embrace a multi-racial and meritocratic society, and allude to the success of state discourse over the past few decades in engendering a national identity.

While race and religion are seen as issues more likely to result in community conflict and violence, only about a quarter of Singapore's resident population tie the management of these two issues to trust in the state and politicians. Conversely, immigration and class differences have emerged as the most salient issues impacting trust in government — with nearly 40 per cent of respondents indicating falls in trust levels should these two issues be mismanaged. It is possible then, that the state is at this point of time accorded greater responsibility by its citizens to do more in terms of managing class and immigration issues relative to others, and that the state is perceived to have greater control in managing both immigration issues and class differences. While we have no data to support our views, it is possible that in the years just after independence, the backdrop of a newly emerging nation arising from the throes of communal politics would have prompted more to indicate that the mismanagement of race and religion would result in a loss of government trust.

The next few sub-sections will explore respondents' views on the consequences of mismanaging faultlines. Insights on the five key faultlines are collated into three categories for brevity: 1) race and religion; 2) immigration and class, or SES; and 3) LGBT issues, as the survey responses on the faultlines within each of these categories exhibit similar trends.

4.2 Race and Religion

Younger respondents perceive the consequences of mismanaging race and religion to be more ominous, compared to older cohorts

When analysing respondents' views by age cohort, it is evident that younger cohorts exhibit increased sensitivities and apprehension about the implications of mismanaging race issues in Singapore. A greater proportion of younger respondents indicate the potential for adverse consequences to follow from mismanagement compared to older respondents across all potential outcomes (differences of 5 to 21 per cent; see Table 17). Specifically, nearly 60 per cent of respondents aged 18–25 indicated that mistrust and anger among and against communities would occur if race issues were mismanaged. Forty-two per cent of respondents aged 18–25 also felt violence could result from mismanaging race issues — significantly more compared to just over 25 per cent for respondents aged 65 and above.

Table 17: Age vs. Views on Implications of Mismanaging Race Issues

| Respondents' Age | There are certain issues in society which may have an impact on social cohesion. If not managed well, in your opinion, what are the likely consequences to Singapore of each of these issues? (You can tick as many choices as you feel are appropriate for each. For example, if you feel that a particular issue may lead to suspicion/mistrust among groups, anger, and polarisation, you can tick all three.) | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|----------|
| | Race: % of Respondents Indicating "Yes" ^ | | | | | | |
| % of Respondents | No Consequence | Suspicion / Mistrust Among Communities | Polarisation (sharp differences in views) | Anger Against Particular Communities | Decreased National Identity / Sense of Belonging to Singapore | Fall in Levels of Trust in Government / Politicians | Violence |
| 18-25 years old | 9.9 | 57.7 | 40.3 | 57.8 | 35.3 | 32.3 | 41.6 |
| 26-35 years old | 11.7 | 46.8 | 35.2 | 54.0 | 31.0 | 29.5 | 39.9 |
| 36-45 years old | 12.6 | 47.0 | 38.3 | 50.4 | 31.3 | 30.8 | 37.1 |
| 46-55 years old | 12.9 | 46.3 | 37.0 | 47.1 | 29.4 | 29.7 | 33.2 |
| 55-65 years old | 14.0 | 48.3 | 31.8 | 44.6 | 28.9 | 28.1 | 28.0 |
| > 65 years old | 14.5 | 49.8 | 30.1 | 36.8 | 29.8 | 27.8 | 25.7 |
| Overall | 12.8 | 48.6 | 35.3 | 48.1 | 30.6 | 29.5 | 34.0 |

^ Percentages represent proportion of participants who checked boxes for the outcome and will not equate across the outcomes to 100% due to multiple selections.

When scrutinising responses by both age and religious beliefs, it is once again apparent that younger cohorts have more concerns about mismanaging religious issues in Singapore. Across different religious affiliations those in the 18–25 age category were more likely to indicate some consequence for the mismanaging of the religious fault line, compared to those 65 years and above. In tandem with this trend, intermediate age cohorts progressively became “less concerned” the older they were. Comparatively more Christians were likely to point out that suspicion, polarisation, anger and violence could result from religion being mismanaged. Seventy-seven per cent of Christians between 18–

25 years of age indicated that there could be suspicion and mistrust, and 57 per cent indicated potential violence (see Table 18). Perhaps younger cohorts with religious beliefs have become more cognizant of religion-based differences considering the substantial media accounts on this matter, leading to more apprehension and feelings of the potential adverse consequences.

Table 18: Age, Religion vs. Views on Implications of Mismanaging Religion

| Respondents' Age* / Religion (respondents "most closely identify with") | | There are certain issues in society which may have an impact on social cohesion. If not managed well, in your opinion, what are the likely consequences to Singapore of each of these issues? (You can tick as many choices as you feel are appropriate for each. For example, if you feel that a particular issue may lead to suspicion/mistrust among groups, anger, and polarisation, you can tick all three.) | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|----------|
| | | Religion: % of Respondents Indicating "Yes" ^ | | | | | | |
| % of Respondents | | No Consequence | Suspicion / Mistrust Among Communities | Polarisation (sharp differences in views) | Anger Against Particular Communities | Decreased National Identity / Sense of Belonging to Singapore | Fall in Levels of Trust in Government / Politicians | Violence |
| 18-25 years old | Buddhism | 9.0 | 51.9 | 49.6 | 57.9 | 20.5 | 22.6 | 37.1 |
| | Taoism | 6.9 | 62.1 | 64.3 | 64.3 | 21.4 | 32.1 | 39.3 |
| | Christianity | 2.9 | 77.1 | 74.3 | 68.6 | 42.9 | 48.6 | 57.1 |
| | Catholicism | 15.4 | 61.5 | 46.2 | 57.7 | 26.9 | 30.8 | 38.5 |
| | Islam | 11.1 | 45.7 | 44.4 | 50.6 | 25.6 | 25.6 | 34.1 |
| | Hinduism | 11.1 | 42.1 | 38.9 | 50.0 | 21.1 | 22.2 | 33.3 |
| | No Religion | 7.6 | 40.0 | 55.7 | 58.8 | 30.4 | 25.3 | 31.6 |
| >65 years old | Buddhism | 13.0 | 42.6 | 32.9 | 40.1 | 27.8 | 20.4 | 24.7 |
| | Taoism | 17.2 | 45.5 | 37.5 | 29.5 | 17.2 | 23.9 | 27.3 |
| | Christianity | 12.7 | 46.8 | 43.0 | 43.0 | 21.5 | 21.5 | 39.2 |
| | Catholicism | 23.1 | 46.2 | 39.7 | 28.2 | 11.5 | 16.5 | 31.6 |
| | Islam | 15.9 | 44.4 | 25.4 | 34.9 | 19.0 | 20.6 | 15.9 |
| | Hinduism | 23.8 | 28.6 | 28.6 | 28.6 | 28.6 | 19.0 | 19.0 |
| | No Religion | 18.6 | 42.6 | 35.6 | 35.6 | 21.8 | 20.6 | 32.4 |
| Overall | | 13.9 | 42.2 | 42.7 | 46.4 | 22.8 | 24.1 | 31.9 |

^ Percentages represent proportion of participants who checked boxes for the outcome and will not equate across the outcomes to 100% due to multiple selections; *Other intermediate age cohorts omitted for brevity

Education plays a key role in sensitising individuals to the potential fallout of mismanaging race and religion

When responses on the implications of mismanaging race are considered across education levels, it is clear that the latter plays a major role in sensitising individuals to the potential implications of faultlines mismanagement. Less than 10 per cent of degree-holding individuals indicated that no consequences would arise from the mismanagement of race, compared to nearly 20 per cent of respondents with ITE or lower qualifications (see Table 19). Across all possible adverse outcome categories, significantly higher numbers among more educated respondents indicated the propensity for negative consequences to arise from mismanaging race issues too. For instance, over 60 per cent of degree-holding participants indicated that anger against particular communities would likely result if race was mismanaged, compared to 40 per cent of participants with ITE or lower qualifications.

Table 19: Education vs. Views on Implications of Mismanaging Race Issues

| Respondents' Education Levels | There are certain issues in society which may have an impact on social cohesion. If not managed well, in your opinion, what are the likely consequences to Singapore of each of these issues? (You can tick as many choices as you feel are appropriate for each. For example, if you feel that a particular issue may lead to suspicion/mistrust among groups, anger, and polarisation, you can tick all three.) | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|----------|
| | Race: % of Respondents Indicating "Yes" ^ | | | | | | |
| % of Respondents | No Consequence | Suspicion / Mistrust Among Communities | Polarisation (sharp differences in views) | Anger Against Particular Communities | Decreased National Identity / Sense of Belonging to Singapore | Fall in Levels of Trust in Government / Politicians | Violence |
| Below Secondary | 17.6 | 42.0 | 27.9 | 32.4 | 22.4 | 18.0 | 22.1 |
| Secondary | 16.3 | 43.1 | 26.8 | 37.2 | 25.6 | 25.1 | 24.2 |
| ITE | 17.5 | 41.7 | 32.2 | 40.6 | 27.3 | 25.8 | 27.5 |
| Poly Diploma / Prof. Qual. | 12.8 | 47.8 | 36.1 | 51.2 | 31.0 | 30.4 | 34.2 |
| Bachelor's | 6.5 | 58.2 | 45.5 | 62.7 | 39.0 | 37.2 | 48.4 |
| Master's and above | 8.6 | 56.5 | 42.4 | 60.1 | 34.7 | 36.0 | 44.4 |
| Others | 6.3 | 68.8 | 48.5 | 57.6 | 40.6 | 50.0 | 43.8 |
| Overall | 12.6 | 49.0 | 35.5 | 48.5 | 30.8 | 29.6 | 34.3 |

^ Percentages represent proportion of participants who checked boxes for the outcome and will not equate across the outcomes to 100% due to multiple selections.

In general, the above findings could be reflective of the effectiveness of state endeavours to sensitise the population to issues of race, and the imperative for racial harmony amidst diversity. One premise for the more "ominous" responses of younger respondents would be the mechanisms of National Education — implemented in the 1990s — and Social Studies; both of which would have impacted younger cohorts and inculcated the state narrative during one's secondary school years. This explanation would also account for the

comparable trends for responses on the implications of mismanaging religion. Compared to older respondents, a greater proportion of younger respondents, especially those aged 18–25, felt that adverse implications would result due to mismanaging issues of religion, across all outcome categories.

Similarly, higher-educated individuals would have completed more school years, and hence be more familiar with, or internalised narratives espousing the importance of sustaining a multi-racial, harmonious society. These individuals would also be more cognizant of the consequences if race issues were mishandled due to knowledge of Singapore's pre-independence history, as well as awareness of trends and events abroad (e.g., Rohingyas in Myanmar). This line of reasoning also explains similar trends observed for respondents' views on the mismanagement of religion.

Majority-race respondents more likely to perceive greater susceptibility to social fracture due to mismanaging race issues

There are also interesting insights when analysing the views of racial groups on the implications of mismanaging race issues in Singapore. Relatively high proportions of majority-race respondents are cognizant of the sensitivities of race and Singapore's susceptibility to social fractures due to race issues. Half of Chinese respondents indicated that suspicion, mistrust and anger among and against communities would result if race is improperly managed; as compared to about 40 per cent of minority-race respondents (see Table 20). Just under 40 per cent of Chinese respondents also felt that polarisation and violence

could occur too (compared to about a quarter of minority-race respondents). The figures suggest that in general, issues of race are not taken lightly by majority-race individuals.

Table 20: Race vs. Views on Implications of Mismanaging Race Issues

| Respondents' Race | There are certain issues in society which may have an impact on social cohesion. If not managed well, in your opinion, what are the likely consequences to Singapore of each of these issues? (You can tick as many choices as you feel are appropriate for each. For example, if you feel that a particular issue may lead to suspicion/mistrust among groups, anger, and polarisation, you can tick all three.) | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|----------|
| | Race: % of Respondents Indicating "Yes" ^ | | | | | | |
| % of Respondents | No Consequence | Suspicion / Mistrust Among Communities | Polarisation (sharp differences in views) | Anger Against Particular Communities | Decreased National Identity / Sense of Belonging to Singapore | Fall in Levels of Trust in Government / Politicians | Violence |
| Chinese | 10.7 | 51.0 | 37.0 | 50.0 | 32.2 | 31.4 | 37.1 |
| Malay | 17.2 | 45.0 | 29.7 | 43.6 | 27.4 | 26.5 | 24.2 |
| Indian | 22.2 | 35.0 | 28.9 | 41.1 | 25.1 | 23.0 | 25.1 |
| Others | 20.2 | 39.5 | 31.6 | 38.1 | 18.4 | 13.3 | 21.2 |
| Overall | 12.8 | 48.6 | 35.3 | 48.1 | 30.6 | 29.6 | 34.0 |

^ Percentages represent proportion of participants who checked boxes for the outcome and will not equate across the outcomes to 100% due to multiple selections.

Respondents' views on the implications of mismanaging religion largely paralleled that of race. However, lower proportions of minority and majority respondents indicated that national identity and trust in government would decay if religion were mismanaged, as opposed to race (see Table 21 for

comparison). This illustrates the primacy of race and multiracialism as a core aspect of Singaporean identity.

Table 21: Race vs. Views on Implications of Mismanaging Religious Issues

| Respondents' Race | There are certain issues in society which may have an impact on social cohesion. If not managed well, in your opinion, what are the likely consequences to Singapore of each of these issues? (You can tick as many choices as you feel are appropriate for each. For example, if you feel that a particular issue may lead to suspicion/mistrust among groups, anger, and polarisation, you can tick all three.) | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|----------|
| | Religion: % of Respondents Indicating "Yes" ^ | | | | | | |
| % of Respondents | No Consequence | Suspicion / Mistrust Among Communities | Polarisation (sharp differences in views) | Anger Against Particular Communities | Decreased National Identity / Sense of Belonging to Singapore | Fall in Levels of Trust in Government / Politicians | Violence |
| Chinese | 12.0 | 43.2 | 45.6 | 48.1 | 23.1 | 24.5 | 33.7 |
| Malay | 16.8 | 41.7 | 35.7 | 41.9 | 23.4 | 24.8 | 25.9 |
| Indian | 23.3 | 32.9 | 30.6 | 40.6 | 21.3 | 21.9 | 25.4 |
| Others | 21.2 | 38.6 | 29.8 | 35.4 | 13.3 | 14.2 | 27.4 |
| Overall | 13.8 | 42.0 | 42.6 | 46.3 | 22.7 | 24.0 | 31.9 |

^ Percentages represent proportion of participants who checked boxes for the outcome and will not equate across the outcomes to 100% due to multiple selections.

4.3 Immigration and SES

Mismanaging immigration issues perceived to impact national identity and government trust the most; especially so for Chinese respondents

When it comes to mismanagement of immigration issues, majority and minority responses vary across the board. In general, about 25–30 per cent of

respondents across racial groups indicated suspicion, mistrust and polarisation as likely to occur; a third or more of respondents indicated anger against particular communities would result due to mismanaging immigration issues (see Table 22). However, more Chinese respondents were likely to feel an erosion of identity and trust in government would occur if immigration issues were mismanaged, compared to minority respondents (about 12 per cent difference). This suggests that immigration issues are especially poignant for Chinese respondents.

Table 22: Race vs. Views on Implications of Mismanaging Immigration Issues

| Respondents' Race | There are certain issues in society which may have an impact on social cohesion. If not managed well, in your opinion, what are the likely consequences to Singapore of each of these issues? (You can tick as many choices as you feel are appropriate for each. For example, if you feel that a particular issue may lead to suspicion/mistrust among groups, anger, and polarisation, you can tick all three.) | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|----------|
| | Immigration: % of Respondents Indicating "Yes" ^ | | | | | | |
| % of Respondents | No Consequence | Suspicion / Mistrust Among Communities | Polarisation (sharp differences in views) | Anger Against Particular Communities | Decreased National Identity / Sense of Belonging to Singapore | Fall in Levels of Trust in Government / Politicians | Violence |
| Chinese | 9.8 | 29.9 | 32.8 | 39.1 | 44.3 | 42.0 | 17.5 |
| Malay | 14.2 | 29.5 | 26.4 | 33.4 | 31.9 | 33.4 | 15.0 |
| Indian | 19.5 | 23.3 | 25.4 | 32.7 | 31.9 | 30.0 | 12.6 |
| Others | 17.5 | 15.9 | 21.2 | 29.2 | 29.8 | 30.1 | 12.4 |
| Overall | 11.4 | 28.9 | 31.0 | 37.6 | 41.3 | 39.5 | 16.6 |

^ Percentages represent proportion of participants who checked boxes for the outcome and will not equate across the outcomes to 100% due to multiple selections.

Several factors could contribute to this: 1) inflows of non-Chinese immigrants with varying norms and cultures, and 2) inflows of Chinese immigrants with differing norms and cultures relative to local-born Chinese. Since there is a close connection in Singapore between national and ethnic identity with many Singaporeans identifying with both these identities, it is possible that more Chinese respondents want to maintain a distinctly Singaporean-Chinese identity and fear that immigration might change that.

Affluence is correlated with expectations of more severe consequences arising from mismanaging immigration

Aside from race, affluence also seems to have an impact on respondents' sensitivities to immigration mismanagement implications. In general, respondents residing in larger, more expensive housing units (highly correlated with income) are also more likely to perceive more severe consequences arising from the mismanagement of immigration. For instance, half or more of respondents residing in private property indicated that trust in government and national identity would erode; compared to about one-third of their counterparts residing in three-room or smaller HDB units (see Table 23).

Table 23: Housing Type vs. Views on Implications of Mismanaging Immigration Issues

| Respondents' Housing Type | There are certain issues in society which may have an impact on social cohesion. If not managed well, in your opinion, what are the likely consequences to Singapore of each of these issues? (You can tick as many choices as you feel are appropriate for each. For example, if you feel that a particular issue may lead to suspicion/mistrust among groups, anger, and polarisation, you can tick all three.) | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|----------|
| | Immigration: % of Respondents Indicating "Yes" ^ | | | | | | |
| % of Respondents | No Consequence | Suspicion / Mistrust Among Communities | Polarisation (sharp differences in views) | Anger Against Particular Communities | Decreased National Identity / Sense of Belonging to Singapore | Fall in Levels of Trust in Government / Politicians | Violence |
| HDB 1-2 Room | 20.6 | 23.4 | 23.0 | 30.8 | 26.6 | 27.8 | 17.7 |
| HDB 3 Room | 14.9 | 25.9 | 28.7 | 33.8 | 36.9 | 30.8 | 13.5 |
| HDB 4 Room | 11.7 | 28.9 | 29.0 | 37.0 | 40.9 | 39.0 | 14.9 |
| HDB 5+ Room | 8.8 | 28.3 | 33.2 | 38.1 | 44.1 | 43.1 | 18.4 |
| Private Apt / Condo | 6.0 | 37.9 | 38.6 | 49.7 | 49.7 | 52.1 | 23.5 |
| Landed | 5.7 | 34.8 | 42.4 | 40.5 | 51.3 | 54.1 | 19.6 |
| Overall | 11.4 | 28.9 | 31.1 | 37.6 | 41.3 | 39.5 | 16.6 |

^ Percentages represent proportion of participants who checked boxes for the outcome and will not equate across the outcomes to 100% due to multiple selections.

One potential explanation for this is that more affluent individuals have greater propensity to be more educated, and thus be in increased competition with foreigners working in similar industries and professions in the labour market (e.g., EP holders). This is not the case for less educated resident individuals, who are likely to work in industries with significantly less foreign labour; semi-skilled migrant workers in Singapore are largely employed in the construction and manufacturing industries, or as FDWs. A second line of reasoning stems from the housing market — whereby individuals residing in private housing are

exposed to competition with foreigners in the housing market (for both investment and ownership). Again, this is not the case for individuals residing in public housing, due to restrictions imposed on foreigners for HDB flat purchases. Hence, more affluent individuals may tie the management of immigration issues more directly to their trust in the state; as well as their sense of national belonging and identity.

Younger cohorts are more sensitive to the perils of mismanaging class division and immigration issues

At the same time, larger proportions of younger respondents also indicated a potential fall in trust of the government if class differences were not properly managed too (44 per cent of 18 to 25-year-olds versus 29 per cent of > 65-year-olds; see Table 24). Similar trends are noted too vis-à-vis the mismanagement of immigration issues. Differences in the responses of age cohorts suggest that issues of class (and immigration) are more pertinent to younger respondents, who would be most impacted by widening divides associated with the pursuit of economic development and progress across the years. An increasingly globalised and open economy would also mean that younger cohorts would face augmented competition from incoming foreigners over time in the jobs and housing market. If mismanaged, these would result in increased disenfranchisement within younger cohorts, and perceptions of greater discord.

Table 24: Age vs. Views on Implications of Mismanaging Class Differences

| Respondents' Age | There are certain issues in society which may have an impact on social cohesion. If not managed well, in your opinion, what are the likely consequences to Singapore of each of these issues? (You can tick as many choices as you feel are appropriate for each. For example, if you feel that a particular issue may lead to suspicion/mistrust among groups, anger, and polarisation, you can tick all three.) | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|----------|
| | Class Differences: % of Respondents Indicating "Yes" ^ | | | | | | |
| % of Respondents | No Consequence | Suspicion / Mistrust Among Communities | Polarisation (sharp differences in views) | Anger Against Particular Communities | Decreased National Identity / Sense of Belonging to Singapore | Fall in Levels of Trust in Government / Politicians | Violence |
| 18-25 years old | 12.4 | 30.4 | 43.0 | 42.1 | 30.4 | 44.3 | 16.3 |
| 26-35 years old | 11.8 | 25.7 | 34.6 | 40.6 | 26.3 | 41.5 | 17.1 |
| 36-45 years old | 12.4 | 27.1 | 40.1 | 36.2 | 29.9 | 41.1 | 17.0 |
| 46-55 years old | 12.2 | 28.8 | 39.1 | 37.4 | 26.7 | 34.5 | 15.1 |
| 55-65 years old | 12.2 | 27.5 | 32.4 | 33.3 | 27.2 | 34.6 | 9.7 |
| > 65 years old | 13.5 | 28.8 | 32.3 | 30.8 | 27.6 | 29.2 | 12.3 |
| Overall | 12.4 | 27.8 | 36.6 | 36.5 | 27.9 | 37.3 | 14.6 |

^Percentages represent proportion of participants who checked boxes for the outcome and will not equate across the outcomes to 100% due to multiple selections.

Perceived financial mobility shapes views of consequences arising from mismanaging class divisions too

The responses on mismanaging class issues also considered perceived financial mobility. The results indicate that a significantly greater proportion of respondents who perceived downward financial mobility in the future, also expected national identity to deteriorate if class differences were mismanaged (see Table 25). Slightly more respondents perceiving downward financial mobility also indicated that trust in government would fall too. These trends are

also noted when considering inter-generational financial mobility (see Table 26). In light of how two-thirds of respondents indicated either downward or negligible financial mobility, ensuring that class differences are managed and well mitigated would be vital to avert these adverse outcomes. However, roughly equal proportions of “pessimists” and “optimists” identified mistrust, anger, and polarisation as adverse outcomes of class difference mismanagement. This suggests that these issues are not as pertinent in the context of class, compared to identity and trust in government.

Table 25: Perceptions of Personal Financial Mobility vs. Views on Implications of Mismanaging Class Differences

| Differences Between Responses on Current Financial Situation and Financial Situation in 10 years* | There are certain issues in society which may have an impact on social cohesion. If not managed well, in your opinion, what are the likely consequences to Singapore of each of these issues? (You can tick as many choices as you feel are appropriate for each. For example, if you feel that a particular issue may lead to suspicion/mistrust among groups, anger, and polarisation, you can tick all three.) | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|----------|
| | Class Differences: % of Respondents Indicating “Yes” ^ | | | | | | |
| % of Respondents | No Consequence | Suspicion / Mistrust Among Communities | Polarisation (sharp differences in views) | Anger Against Particular Communities | Decreased National Identity / Sense of Belonging to Singapore | Fall in Levels of Trust in Government / Politicians | Violence |
| Downward Financial Mobility | 6.8 | 28.9 | 35.4 | 34.4 | 31.8 | 45.7 | 15.1 |
| Negligible / No Change | 12.8 | 27.8 | 36.5 | 35.9 | 29.8 | 36.2 | 15.1 |
| Upward Financial Mobility | 13.0 | 28.3 | 37.8 | 38.9 | 24.9 | 38.1 | 14.1 |
| Overall | 12.4 | 27.8 | 36.6 | 36.5 | 27.9 | 37.2 | 14.6 |

* The numeric difference between respondents' original ordinal responses (0 to 10 inclusive) were computed and thereafter re-grouped into 3 broad categories (downward = -10 to -2; negligible / no change = -1 to 1 and upward = 2 to 10) for easier analysis and brevity. ^ Percentages represent proportion of participants who checked boxes for the outcome and will not equate across the outcomes to 100% due to multiple selections.

Table 26: Perceptions of Inter-Generational Financial Mobility vs. Views on Implications of Mismanaging Class Differences

| Differences Between Responses on Current Personal Financial Situation and Children's Financial Situation in 20-30 years* | There are certain issues in society which may have an impact on social cohesion. If not managed well, in your opinion, what are the likely consequences to Singapore of each of these issues? (You can tick as many choices as you feel are appropriate for each. For example, if you feel that a particular issue may lead to suspicion/mistrust among groups, anger, and polarisation, you can tick all three.) | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|----------|
| | Class Differences: % of Respondents Indicating "Yes" ^ | | | | | | |
| % of Respondents | No Consequence | Suspicion / Mistrust Among Communities | Polarisation (sharp differences in views) | Anger Against Particular Communities | Decreased National Identity / Sense of Belonging to Singapore | Fall in Levels of Trust in Government / Politicians | Violence |
| Downward Financial Mobility | 11.6 | 22.6 | 37.7 | 33.6 | 30.4 | 38.3 | 16.9 |
| Negligible / No Change | 10.6 | 29.1 | 39.3 | 38.2 | 29.1 | 39.2 | 15.5 |
| Upward Financial Mobility | 14.5 | 28.9 | 34.4 | 35.9 | 26.4 | 35.9 | 13.6 |
| Overall | 12.4 | 27.8 | 36.6 | 36.5 | 27.9 | 37.3 | 14.6 |

* The numeric difference between respondents' original ordinal responses (0 to 10 inclusive) were computed and thereafter re-grouped into 3 broad categories (downward = -10 to -2; negligible / no change = -1 to 1 and upward = 2 to 10) for easier analysis and brevity. ^ Percentages represent proportion of participants who checked boxes for the outcome and will not equate across the outcomes to 100% due to multiple selections.

4.4 LGBT

Polarised, angry society expected if LGBT issues mismanaged; especially among youth

Though LGBT issues are seen as more contemporary and evolving in nature compared to faultlines existing since or before independence such as race and religion, the interplay between stances on gender, sexuality and religious beliefs seem to augment the volatility of this faultline. From the results, it follows

that both religion and LGBT were polled as the faultlines most likely to engender polarisation, with highly contrasting viewpoints at play. If mismanaged or left unmanaged, polarisation can easily morph into more insidious outcomes.

Clear differences between age cohorts can be discerned when considering identified implications of mismanaging LGBT issues. This could be due to the nature of the faultline as an emerging one over the past decade. Anger against particular communities and polarisation were identified as the most probable adverse implications — with half of respondents in the 18–25 age cohort indicating so (compared to over a third of older respondents above 65 years; see Table 27). More than a quarter of these youngest respondents indicated falls in trust of the government if LGBT issues were mismanaged too. However, there was no discernible difference between age cohorts in identifying an erosion of national identity or mistrust among communities as key implications of LGBT mismanagement. Taken *in toto*, these observations seem to indicate that LGBT issues were in general viewed as more germane and crucial for younger individuals — in line with largely more “liberal” views on sexuality.

Table 27: Age vs. Views on Implications of Mismanaging LGBT Issues

| Respondents' Age | There are certain issues in society which may have an impact on social cohesion. If not managed well, in your opinion, what are the likely consequences to Singapore of each of these issues? (You can tick as many choices as you feel are appropriate for each. For example, if you feel that a particular issue may lead to suspicion/mistrust among groups, anger, and polarisation, you can tick all three.) | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|----------|
| | LGBT Issues: % of Respondents Indicating "Yes" ^ | | | | | | |
| % of Respondents | No Consequence | Suspicion / Mistrust Among Communities | Polarisation (sharp differences in views) | Anger Against Particular Communities | Decreased National Identity / Sense of Belonging to Singapore | Fall in Levels of Trust in Government / Politicians | Violence |
| 18-25 years old | 15.1 | 23.5 | 49.0 | 50.0 | 19.3 | 27.2 | 20.5 |
| 26-35 years old | 17.1 | 20.7 | 42.3 | 45.2 | 17.2 | 24.1 | 14.2 |
| 36-45 years old | 16.2 | 23.6 | 44.8 | 43.4 | 16.9 | 24.1 | 11.5 |
| 46-55 years old | 16.3 | 26.2 | 43.0 | 40.8 | 22.1 | 25.1 | 15.6 |
| 55-65 years old | 15.8 | 21.8 | 40.0 | 36.2 | 21.8 | 23.2 | 12.8 |
| > 65 years old | 18.3 | 23.3 | 36.9 | 33.9 | 20.3 | 17.5 | 10.3 |
| Overall | 16.5 | 23.2 | 42.4 | 41.2 | 19.6 | 23.5 | 13.8 |

^ Percentages represent proportion of participants who checked boxes for the outcome and will not equate across the outcomes to 100% due to multiple selections.

Christians, Muslims and higher educated individuals are more sensitive to the consequences of mismanaging LGBT issues

Given the correlation between religious beliefs and stances on LGBT issues, participants' responses are analysed by religion. From the data, Christians were most likely to identify polarisation as a consequence of mismanaging LGBT issues (more than half), which illustrates the significance of these issues in relation to their faith (see Table 28). Among the major religions, Christians were

also most likely by proportion to identify an erosion of national identity and trust in government as other potential implications.

Table 28: Religion vs. Views on Implications of Mismanaging LGBT Issues

| Religion (respondents “most closely identify with”) | There are certain issues in society which may have an impact on social cohesion. If not managed well, in your opinion, what are the likely consequences to Singapore of each of these issues? (You can tick as many choices as you feel are appropriate for each. For example, if you feel that a particular issue may lead to suspicion/mistrust among groups, anger, and polarisation, you can tick all three.) | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|----------|
| | LGBT Issues: % of Respondents Indicating “Yes” ^ | | | | | | |
| % of Respondents | No Consequence | Suspicion / Mistrust Among Communities | Polarisation (sharp differences in views) | Anger Against Particular Communities | Decreased National Identity / Sense of Belonging to Singapore | Fall in Levels of Trust in Government / Politicians | Violence |
| Buddhism | 18.9 | 22.1 | 41.5 | 36.9 | 19.2 | 20.3 | 11.7 |
| Taoism | 15.6 | 19.9 | 45.2 | 40.0 | 19.4 | 21.3 | 14.6 |
| Christianity | 8.2 | 30.6 | 55.9 | 53.0 | 25.9 | 38.6 | 20.7 |
| Catholicism | 15.6 | 22.6 | 44.7 | 41.8 | 18.8 | 25.0 | 13.8 |
| Islam | 15.2 | 26.2 | 34.6 | 44.9 | 19.0 | 24.2 | 15.1 |
| Hinduism | 26.7 | 18.8 | 27.6 | 33.5 | 15.8 | 17.8 | 11.9 |
| No Religion | 18.2 | 19.9 | 42.5 | 38.4 | 17.4 | 19.7 | 11.0 |
| Overall | 16.6 | 23.2 | 42.5 | 41.1 | 19.6 | 23.6 | 13.9 |

^ Percentages represent proportion of participants who checked boxes for the outcome and will not equate across the outcomes to 100% due to multiple selections.

It is similarly notable that marginally higher proportions of Muslim respondents compared to respondents of other faiths indicate a propensity for suspicion, mistrust and anger to result if LGBT issues were mishandled (see Table 28). This is in keeping with the nature of monotheistic faiths — where adherents are more likely to hold more substantive, conservative views on LGBT issues

relative to others by virtue of their religious beliefs. The responses of Muslims in this case may also reflect their expectations of the government to be inclusive, and effectively incorporate their views on LGBT in policy-making.

Finally, education levels also seemed to exert considerable impact on respondents' perceptions vis-à-vis the implications of mismanaging LGBT issues. Over half of higher-educated respondents were more likely to indicate that polarisation and anger would result due to mismanaging LGBT issues, compared to about a third of their lower-educated counterparts (see Table 29). More than a quarter also indicated a loss of trust in government as a result. These indicate an augmented comprehension, and possibly increased personal and emotional investment in LGBT issues and rights by better-educated individuals more exposed to viewpoints originating outside Singapore.

Table 29: Education vs. Views on Implications of Mismanaging LGBT Issues

| Respondents' Education Levels | There are certain issues in society which may have an impact on social cohesion. If not managed well, in your opinion, what are the likely consequences to Singapore of each of these issues? (You can tick as many choices as you feel are appropriate for each. For example, if you feel that a particular issue may lead to suspicion/mistrust among groups, anger, and polarisation, you can tick all three.) | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|----------|
| | Race: % of Respondents Indicating "Yes" ^ | | | | | | |
| % of Respondents | No Consequence | Suspicion / Mistrust Among Communities | Polarisation (sharp differences in views) | Anger Against Particular Communities | Decreased National Identity / Sense of Belonging to Singapore | Fall in Levels of Trust in Government / Politicians | Violence |
| Secondary and below | 20.4 | 21.5 | 34.1 | 32.5 | 19.1 | 17.2 | 11.1 |
| ITE / Poly Diploma / Prof. Qual. | 15.8 | 22.7 | 42.0 | 42.3 | 19.0 | 26.3 | 15.3 |
| Bachelor's Degree and above | 12.4 | 25.4 | 53.1 | 50.3 | 20.8 | 28.3 | 15.5 |
| Overall | 16.4 | 23.2 | 42.7 | 41.4 | 19.6 | 23.6 | 13.8 |

^ Percentages represent proportion of participants who checked boxes for the outcome and will not equate across the outcomes to 100% due to multiple selections.

5. MITIGATING FAULTLINES WITH STATE INVOLVEMENT

With the five key social divides and the consequences of mismanaging them explicated in some part, a salient question follows: How do we bridge these divides? One solution involves *actions undertaken by the state*. While some gravitate towards libertarian views and would prioritise virtues of freedom of choice, the free market and individual judgement, others prefer the state to exercise varying degrees of authority in engendering social equality and harmony. Differences in how individuals value these ideals can be discerned based on their acquiescence to how their governments deal with social divides.

In the case of the Singapore state, its satisfactory performance — predicated on soft authoritarianism and paternalism to prioritise security, economic development, social resilience and cohesion — has thus far received the support of a significant majority of its citizens (Hill & Lian, 2013; Means, 1996; Nasir & Turner, 2013). An example of vigorous state intervention to combat social divides can be seen in the ambit of religion — where a range of hard and soft legislation like the ISA, MRHA, and the IRCC enacted over the past few decades have served to check potential discord and wider conflict (Ang & Mohan, 2019; ISA, 1985; MCCY, 2019; MRHA, 2001).

5.1 Overall Sentiments

In general, respondents were most likely to feel that there is sufficient government involvement across all five social faultlines of interest. Less than

half of respondents felt that more government involvement was necessary for all five faultlines (see Table 30). In particular, close to two-thirds of the population felt state involvement in matters of race and religion were sufficient at present — compared to under half of respondents for the other faultlines. This could likely be attributed to the active and sustained involvement of the state in managing racial and religious harmony in Singapore through robust legislation and education since independence. Regardless, about a quarter of the population still desire greater state involvement in matters of race and religion.

Table 30: Overall Opinions on Government Involvement in Mitigating Key Faultlines

| Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of government involvement</i>? | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Faultlines | % of Respondents | | |
| | Have less government involvement | Sufficient government involvement currently | Have more government involvement |
| Race | 7.0 | 65.7 | 27.3 |
| Religion | 9.0 | 67.8 | 23.2 |
| Socio-economic Class Differences | 6.0 | 48.7 | 45.3 |
| Immigration | 7.2 | 45.7 | 47.1 |
| LGBT Issues | 18.1 | 42.9 | 39.1 |

When it comes to the other three faultlines, the resident population is significantly more divided as to whether more state involvement was desired; or already sufficient at present. Roughly equal proportions (just under half) of respondents indicated that levels of state involvement in class and immigration

issues were sufficient; or that greater involvement was desired. With these two faultlines rising to the fore over the past decade alongside Singapore's economic imperatives, continued attention is warranted. Even as many have benefited from the state's economic prerogatives, a substantial proportion of residents still desire the state to further mitigate the discontents of economic growth and openness.

A substantial proportion of respondents also desired more government involvement in LGBT issues (39 per cent). This could potentially be attributed to 1) more liberal respondents desiring state intervention to accord equitable rights to LGBT individuals (in terms of housing and employment, for instance); 2) more conservative respondents desiring state action to check LGBT activities (by stopping Pink Dot, for instance); and 3) desire to mitigate the highly polarising nature of this faultline. However, in comparison to the other four faultlines, respondents were also most likely to desire *less* state involvement in mitigating LGBT issues (about a fifth, as compared to under 10 per cent for the other faultlines). This could possibly stem from perceptions of LGBT issues as belonging to the ambit of private choice and decision-making, whereby individuals prefer the state to minimise its "intrusion into the bedroom" (for instance by decriminalising homosexuality and reducing censorship of gay themes in public broadcasts for instance).

The next few sub-sections will explore respondents' views on the government involvement in managing the five key faultlines. Insights on these faultlines are

collated into three categories for brevity: 1) race and religion; 2) immigration and class, or SES; and 3) LGBT issues, as the survey responses on the faultlines within each of these categories exhibit similar trends.

5.2 Race and Religion

Older cohorts desire more state involvement in issues of race and religion compared to youth

In the case of race as a faultline, greater proportions of younger respondents indicated sufficient state involvement; with 70 per cent of 18 to 25-year-olds indicating so compared to 60 per cent of respondents aged above 65 (see Table 31). One-third of respondents aged above 65 also desired more state involvement in race issues, as opposed to just over a fifth of 18 to 25-year-olds. Similar (but more muted) results were also noted for state involvement in issues of religion (see Table 32). These could be attributed to the lived experiences of the older generation, which include race and religion-motivated incidents during the 1950–1960s (such as the Maria Hertogh riots and 1964 race riots) motivating desire for robust state apparatus to intervene and keep the peace.

Table 31: Opinions on Government Involvement in Mitigating Race Issues by Age Cohort

| Respondents' Age | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of government involvement?</i> | | |
|------------------|--|---|----------------------------------|
| | Race | | |
| % of Respondents | Have more government involvement | Sufficient government involvement currently | Have less government involvement |
| 18-25 years old | 23.6 | 69.9 | 6.5 |
| 26-35 years old | 26.7 | 66.7 | 6.6 |
| 36-45 years old | 28.2 | 64.4 | 7.5 |
| 46-55 years old | 25.7 | 67.4 | 6.9 |
| 55-65 years old | 26.0 | 66.6 | 7.4 |
| > 65 years old | 33.3 | 59.7 | 7.0 |
| Overall | 27.3 | 65.7 | 7.0 |

Table 32: Opinions on Government Involvement in Mitigating Religion Issues by Age Cohort

| Respondents' Age | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of government involvement?</i> | | |
|------------------|--|---|----------------------------------|
| | Religion | | |
| % of Respondents | Have more government involvement | Sufficient government involvement currently | Have less government involvement |
| 18-25 years old | 20.6 | 71.8 | 7.7 |
| 26-35 years old | 23.1 | 68.5 | 8.4 |
| 36-45 years old | 23.6 | 67.2 | 9.2 |
| 46-55 years old | 21.9 | 69.7 | 8.4 |
| 55-65 years old | 23.5 | 65.9 | 10.5 |
| > 65 years old | 25.9 | 64.7 | 9.4 |
| Overall | 23.2 | 67.8 | 9.0 |

It should be noted that this trend, taken in concert with the finding in Section 4.2 that older cohorts perceive less ominous consequences arising from mismanaging race and religion, suggests the following: that older cohorts seem to attribute greater responsibility of managing racial and religious faultlines to the state; or believe that these faultlines are most effectively managed by robust government intervention. The effectiveness of such state intervention post-independence in maintaining social harmony may well have exerted an enduring effect on older generations to desire sustained, or more state intervention too.

State involvement in managing race and religion more desirable to less educated Chinese and higher-educated minorities

When analysing responses by race, Chinese respondents were more likely to perceive sufficient state involvement in race issues (69 per cent) compared to ethnic minority respondents (just over half of Malays and Indians; see Table 33). Significantly greater proportions of Malay and Indian respondents (about 40 per cent) desired greater state involvement in race issues compared to 24 per cent of Chinese respondents. Ethnic minorities are more likely to perceive or experience instances of discrimination than the majority. It is thus conceivable that larger proportions of minorities would expect the state to mitigate such issues. Chinese respondents would (unintentionally) be less cognizant of such issues owing to their limited experience as members of the majority. This finding is in line with trends on workplace discrimination and interracial trust elaborated upon in Section 3.1.

Table 33: Opinions on Government Involvement in Mitigating Race Issues by Racial Group

| Respondents' Race | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of government involvement</i> ? | | |
|-------------------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| | Race | | |
| % of Respondents | Have more government involvement | Sufficient government involvement currently | Have less government involvement |
| Chinese | 24.2 | 68.8 | 7.1 |
| Malay | 40.4 | 54.2 | 5.4 |
| Indian | 37.4 | 55.3 | 7.3 |
| Others | 25.5 | 62.8 | 11.7 |
| Overall | 27.3 | 65.7 | 7.0 |

This finding seemingly stands in contradiction to earlier trends set out in Section 4.2, whereby greater proportions of majority Chinese anticipate “graver” consequences resulting from mismanaging race issues; but are less likely to desire greater state involvement or public discourse. The converse holds true too, for minority-race respondents. One potential line of reasoning could be that more majority-race respondents believe that enough has been done (both by the government and the community) to mitigate the potential consequences of the race faultline at present — even in the face of the deep-seated dangers to society. This belief is in line with notions of differing lived experiences relative to their minority counterparts, who may be more sanguine about the dangers of deepening racial divides *but* still be of the opinion that more should be done to mitigate some of their unpleasant experiences.

Similar trends were also evident in the case of religion — an unsurprising finding given the close conflation of race and religion in Singapore. Seven in 10 Chinese respondents felt that there was sufficient state involvement in issues of religion, compared to just over half of Malay and Indian respondents (see Table 34). In addition, Malay and Indian respondents were more likely than Chinese respondents to desire more state involvement in issues of religion (about one-third compared to one-fifth). Against the backdrop of religious practices with the propensity to cause annoyance or offence (e.g., incense-burning, proselytisation) and activism by a smaller community for religious rights (such as the donning of the *tudung* with uniforms and the playing of percussion instruments in Thaipusam for instance), it is clear that a substantial portion of minorities desire the state to do more to manage these issues.

Table 34: Opinions on Government Involvement in Mitigating Religion Issues by Racial Group

| Respondents' Race | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of government involvement</i> ? | | |
|-------------------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| | Religion | | |
| % of Respondents | Have more government involvement | Sufficient government involvement currently | Have less government involvement |
| Chinese | 20.2 | 70.6 | 9.2 |
| Malay | 36.9 | 55.8 | 7.3 |
| Indian | 32.9 | 58.4 | 8.7 |
| Others | 18.5 | 69.6 | 12.0 |
| Overall | 23.2 | 67.8 | 9.0 |

When responses were analysed by both race and education, it was found that highly-educated Malay and Indian respondents were slightly more likely than their less-educated counterparts to desire greater state involvement in issues of race. Over 40 per cent of degree-holding or higher-qualified Malay and Indian respondents desired more state involvement vis-à-vis race issues (see Table 35). Interestingly, the reverse is the case when it comes to Chinese respondents. Higher-educated Chinese respondents were *less* likely to desire greater state involvement in issues of race, as compared to their less-educated Chinese counterparts (one fifth compared to about one-third).

Table 35: Opinions on Government Involvement in Mitigating Race Issues by Race and Education Levels

| Respondents' Race ^ / Education | | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of government involvement</i> ? | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| | | Race | | |
| % of Respondents | | Have more government involvement | Sufficient government involvement currently | Have less government involvement |
| Chinese | Below Secondary / Secondary | 30.1 | 63.2 | 6.7 |
| | ITE / Poly Diploma / Prof. Qual | 23.5 | 69.9 | 6.6 |
| | Degree and above | 19.7 | 73.1 | 7.2 |
| Malay | Below Secondary / Secondary | 38.5 | 56.8 | 4.7 |
| | ITE / Poly Diploma / Prof. Qual | 41.3 | 53.6 | 5.0 |
| | Degree and above | 42.9 | 49.0 | 8.2 |
| Indian | Below Secondary / Secondary | 35.3 | 55.3 | 9.4 |
| | ITE / Poly Diploma / Prof. Qual | 35.5 | 55.9 | 8.6 |
| | Degree and above | 42.7 | 52.7 | 4.5 |

^ "Others" Race category and Education Level category omitted due to insufficient sample sizes

The above findings could potentially be attributed to increased awareness of, understanding of and desire to resolve issues of race and religion brought about with increased education. The latter endows individuals with the critical lens and vocabulary to do so, alongside an understanding of state apparatus and its utility. For higher-educated minorities, this would in turn translate into a desire for more state intervention if they perceive existing issues of race and religion to endure. As for the smaller proportions of majority respondents desiring more government involvement in race and religion, one possibility is (the more heartening view) that higher-educated Chinese feel such issues need to be

continuously addressed within communities (e.g., via public dialogue) over and above the already-comprehensive state efforts to maintain social harmony. Another possibility is (a more sobering view) that higher-educated Chinese may have vastly different day-to-day experiences and now view race as a benign (or perhaps a “resolved”) faultline, even if they concede that the consequences of race being mismanaged is grievous. In fact, as the survey shows, more Chinese respondents perceive levels of racial and religious harmony as high compared to minorities.

Similar trends were also noted for religion – likely due to the conflation of race and religion in Singapore. It was found that highly-educated Buddhists and Christians (religions most associated with majority Chinese) were less likely to desire greater state involvement than their less educated counterparts (difference of ~10 per cent in proportion). This trend, however, was reversed for Muslims (who are predominantly Malays).

5.3 Immigration and SES

Many feel the state should do more to mitigate immigration and class issues, especially youth

In general, higher-educated and younger respondents feel that more state involvement is warranted for class and immigration issues; mirroring responses for public discussion (see Section 6). Greater proportions of the population also desire more state involvement in mitigating these faultlines relative to others.

For example, half of 18 to 25-year-old respondents desired more state involvement in issues concerning class differences, as compared to just over 40 per cent of their counterparts aged 65 and above (see Table 36). A potential reason for this augmented desire for state involvement in class-related (and immigration) issues relative to others could be their perceived malleability — whereby their origins and mitigating mechanisms revolve around the state’s socio-economic policies (e.g., welfare provision, wealth redistribution, open economy and borders).

Table 36: Opinions on Government Involvement in Mitigating Class Issues by Age Cohort

| Respondents' Age | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of government involvement</i> ? | | |
|------------------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| | Socio-economic Class Differences | | |
| % of Respondents | Have more government involvement | Sufficient government involvement currently | Have less government involvement |
| 18-25 years old | 50.1 | 43.6 | 6.2 |
| 26-35 years old | 47.0 | 47.0 | 6.1 |
| 36-45 years old | 48.1 | 46.4 | 5.5 |
| 46-55 years old | 42.0 | 51.9 | 6.1 |
| 55-65 years old | 42.6 | 51.5 | 5.9 |
| > 65 years old | 43.3 | 50.6 | 6.1 |
| Overall | 45.3 | 48.7 | 6.0 |

With regard to differences between age cohorts, one explanation could be the increased pertinence of issues on inequality especially among youth, who now experience increased competition in the job market and industry, in line with a

globalised, open economy. This is also reflective of widening divides associated with the pursuit of economic development and progress across the years — leading to greater concern among younger cohorts. This is in line with data on income inequality in Singapore which is highly correlated with notions of class or SES (CNA, 2018; Ministry of Finance, 2015).

At this juncture, it is useful to consider a contemporary incident which unfolded at the time of the FiS release. The video of a condominium resident verbally abusing a security guard went viral in late October 2019, with the resulting fallout on social media spotlighting the callous classist comments made by the resident — a JP Morgan employee of presumably foreign Indian origin (Yong & lau, 2019). Much of the online discourse, both measured and vitriolic, 1) called for punitive action to be taken against the resident, including arresting him, investigating his educational credentials, dismissing him from his job, and / or deporting him; 2) referenced the resident's foreign origins and his treatment of the local Singaporean security guard in articulating a prevailing local-foreign class divide; and 3) referenced the resident's ethnic and foreign origins as the *raison d'être* for his undignified outburst (HardwareZone Forum, 2019).

The above incident provides a clear vignette of how immigration and class issues (and race to some extent) can intersect, as well as some expectations of government involvement to mitigate immigration and class issues. Netizens often referenced CECA (a bilateral comprehensive trade agreement between India and Singapore enabling freer flows of labour) as an adverse state-of-

affairs that should be addressed by the state. In the same vein, security associations, unions and politicians expressed desire for more legislation to protect the rights of lower-paid workers and robustly penalise abuse or harassment of the latter (Tang, 2019; Yong & Lau, 2019).

Desire for state intervention in immigration, class issues associated with views on social welfarism and education levels

Further analysis supports the premise that the desire for greater state involvement is in part motivated by support for social welfarism. For example, 53 per cent of respondents who favoured some form of social welfarism desired more state involvement in class issues; as compared to 45 per cent of respondents who identified more with individual responsibility (see Table 37).

Table 37: Opinions on Government Involvement in Mitigating Class Issues by Stances on Social Welfarism

| <p>Would you say you identify more with the first position (A) or the second position (B), or are neutral between positions? (A): Individuals responsible for their own success (B): Community and/or the government provides help to those less successful</p> | <p>Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of government involvement</i>?</p> | | |
|--|--|---|----------------------------------|
| | Socio-economic Class Differences | | |
| % of Respondents | Have more government involvement | Sufficient government involvement currently | Have less government involvement |
| Identify with (A) | 45.3 | 48.2 | 6.6 |
| Neutral | 37.1 | 57.7 | 5.2 |
| Identify with (B) | 53.4 | 40.7 | 6.0 |

Higher-educated respondents were a little more likely to desire greater state involvement in SES and immigration issues, as compared to their less educated counterparts. This is especially so for SES, whereby about 40 per cent of respondents with secondary education levels and below desired the state to do more to mitigate issues of class, compared to over half of degree-holding respondents (see Table 38). Though class is positively correlated with education, these findings seem to suggest that the effect of education on augmenting awareness of class differences is perhaps greater than the effect of lived experiences of lower-educated respondents on their desire for more state involvement. Less educated respondents may not be as aware of more recent deliberations of widening class divides; something that higher-educated individuals may have greater awareness of as an important faultline, which if not handled well can be consequential.

Table 38: Opinions on Government Involvement in Mitigating Class Issues by Education Levels

| Respondents' Education Levels | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of government involvement</i> ? | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| | Socio-economic Class Differences | | |
| % of Respondents | Have more government involvement | Sufficient government involvement currently | Have less government involvement |
| Below Secondary / Secondary | 39.7 | 54.2 | 6.1 |
| ITE / Poly Diploma / Prof. Qual | 43.6 | 49.4 | 7.0 |
| Degree and above | 52.5 | 42.7 | 4.8 |
| Overall | 45.3 | 48.8 | 5.9 |

The deviation was slightly more marginal for issues of immigration, where half of degree-holding respondents desired greater state involvement compared to 45 per cent of respondents with secondary education levels and below (see Table 39). Close to half of both younger and older respondents also felt that there should be more state involvement in immigration issues (see Table 40). A potential reason for this could be higher levels of xenophobia and insecurity when it comes to job security amongst Singaporeans. This results in the desire for greater state involvement to regulate immigrant flows into Singapore. Higher-educated respondents may also be more sensitive to issues of immigration, for the same reasons as elaborated upon in Section 4.3.

Table 39: Opinions on Government Involvement in Mitigating Immigration Issues by Education Levels

| Respondents' Education Levels | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of government involvement</i> ? | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| | Immigration | | |
| % of Respondents | Have more government involvement | Sufficient government involvement currently | Have less government involvement |
| Below Secondary / Secondary | 44.6 | 47.3 | 8.1 |
| ITE / Poly Diploma / Prof. Qual | 46.2 | 46.0 | 7.8 |
| Degree and above | 50.5 | 43.7 | 5.8 |
| Overall | 47.1 | 45.6 | 7.2 |

Table 40: Opinions on Government Involvement in Mitigating Immigration Issues by Age Cohort

| Respondents' Age | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of government involvement?</i> | | |
|------------------|--|---|----------------------------------|
| | Immigration | | |
| % of Respondents | Have more government involvement | Sufficient government involvement currently | Have less government involvement |
| 18-25 years old | 45.2 | 49.6 | 5.2 |
| 26-35 years old | 49.6 | 42.7 | 7.7 |
| 36-45 years old | 49.0 | 45.0 | 6.0 |
| 46-55 years old | 45.8 | 46.0 | 8.2 |
| 55-65 years old | 46.7 | 45.3 | 8.0 |
| > 65 years old | 45.0 | 47.8 | 7.2 |
| Overall | 47.1 | 45.7 | 7.2 |

Race is insignificant in driving perceptions of state involvement in immigration and class issues

It is notable that race is an insignificant factor in impacting perceptions of state involvement in immigration and class issues. Similar proportions of Chinese, Malay and Indian respondents (about or under half) desired greater state involvement for SES and immigration issues (see Tables 41 and 42). It is clear from the analysis that issues of class and immigration are perceived to transcend racial groups.

Table 41: Opinions on Government Involvement in Mitigating Class Issues by Racial Group

| Respondents' Race | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of government involvement?</i> | | |
|-------------------|--|---|----------------------------------|
| | Socio-economic Class Differences | | |
| % of Respondents | Have more government involvement | Sufficient government involvement currently | Have less government involvement |
| Chinese | 44.9 | 49.1 | 6.0 |
| Malay | 48.5 | 45.8 | 5.6 |
| Indian | 46.4 | 46.0 | 7.6 |
| Others | 38.8 | 60.2 | 1.0 |
| Overall | 45.3 | 48.7 | 6.0 |

Table 42: Opinions on Government Involvement in Mitigating Immigration Issues by Racial Group

| Respondents' Race | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of government involvement?</i> | | |
|-------------------|--|---|----------------------------------|
| | Immigration | | |
| % of Respondents | Have more government involvement | Sufficient government involvement currently | Have less government involvement |
| Chinese | 46.4 | 46.5 | 7.1 |
| Malay | 51.0 | 41.8 | 7.2 |
| Indian | 49.0 | 41.8 | 9.2 |
| Others | 43.1 | 52.0 | 4.9 |
| Overall | 47.1 | 45.7 | 7.2 |

5.4 LGBT

Millennials more likely to desire state involvement in LGBT issues, especially those with liberal sexual values

Younger respondents were found more likely to desire greater state involvement when it comes to LGBT issues. For example, close to half of 18 to 25-year-old respondents desired greater state involvement in LGBT issues, as compared to 40 per cent of respondents aged 65 and above (see Table 43). As mentioned in Section 3.5, a potential reason for this could be that millennials in general gravitate towards more liberal viewpoints. The desire for greater state involvement could hence be due to their concerns revolving around LGBT rights (e.g., the criminalisation of homosexual sex), and the need for the state to resolve these issues.

Table 43: Opinions on Government Involvement in Mitigating LGBT Issues by Age Cohort

| Respondents' Age | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of government involvement?</i> | | |
|------------------|--|---|----------------------------------|
| | LGBT Issues | | |
| % of Respondents | Have more government involvement | Sufficient government involvement currently | Have less government involvement |
| 18-25 years old | 47.7 | 38.3 | 14.0 |
| 26-35 years old | 37.1 | 44.0 | 18.9 |
| 36-45 years old | 36.5 | 45.4 | 18.1 |
| 46-55 years old | 36.6 | 43.8 | 19.6 |
| 55-65 years old | 40.4 | 41.7 | 17.9 |
| > 65 years old | 40.5 | 41.5 | 18.0 |
| Overall | 39.1 | 42.9 | 18.1 |

Nonetheless, it should be noted that a substantial proportion of respondents across age groups also desired greater state involvement in LGBT issues. As noted in Section 5.1, this desire could either be motivated by more liberal respondents desiring state intervention to accord equitable rights to LGBT individuals; or more conservative respondents desiring state action to check LGBT activities (e.g., ensuring the maintenance of 377A).

Further analysis revealed that youth identifying with conservative sexual values were less likely to desire greater state involvement. They were much more likely to perceive current state involvement to be sufficient, as compared to their similar-age counterparts who identified with liberal sexual values. Slightly more than half of 18 to 35-year-old respondents who identified with liberal sexual

values desired greater state involvement, as compared to only four in 10 of their counterparts who identify with conservative sexual values (see Table 44). This difference in perception is insignificant for older age cohorts regardless of their sexual stances. This illustrates that youth identifying with liberal sexual values were the most likely to desire greater state involvement in LGBT issues — probably in terms of repealing 377A and ensuring equal rights.

Table 44: Age Cohort, Views on Sexuality vs. Views on Government Involvement in Mitigating LGBT Issues

| <p>Would you say you identify more with the first position (A) or the second position (B), or are neutral between positions? (A): Conservative sexual values (such as sexual relations only within marriage or marriage is only between man and woman) (B): Liberal sexual values</p> | | <p>Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of government involvement</i>?</p> | | |
|---|-------------------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| | | LGBT Issues | | |
| Age of Respondents | % of Respondents | Have more government involvement | Sufficient government involvement currently | Have less government involvement |
| 18-35 | Identify with (A) | 40.9 | 40.9 | 18.3 |
| | Neutral | 32.1 | 53.4 | 14.6 |
| | Identify with (B) | 55.3 | 25.2 | 19.5 |
| 36-55 | Identify with (A) | 40.4 | 41.9 | 17.7 |
| | Neutral | 28.1 | 55.1 | 16.8 |
| | Identify with (B) | 43.0 | 30.2 | 26.7 |
| Above 55 | Identify with (A) | 43.7 | 38.8 | 17.6 |
| | Neutral | 34.8 | 47.3 | 17.9 |
| | Identify with (B) | 42.5 | 34.5 | 23.0 |

Christians and Muslims most likely to support greater state involvement in LGBT issues too — though for different reasons

The study also found a religion-based division in perceptions of government involvement in LGBT issues. Christian and Muslim respondents were most likely to indicate a desire for more state involvement in LGBT issues, as compared to respondents of other religions (about 45 per cent as compared to over a third; see Table 45). As previously explicated in Section 4.4, this is likely due to the interplay between religion and views on LGBT issues — whereby individuals adhering to monotheistic faiths are less likely to support LGBT practices and rights. The desire for more state involvement to this regard would likely be associated with retaining 377A and stemming the rise of pro-LGBT discourse and programming (such as Pink Dot).

Further comparisons between the views of Christians and Muslim respondents are noteworthy in that while both groups have significant proportions of individuals desiring the state to do more vis-à-vis LGBT issues, a sizeable proportion of Muslims also indicate the converse — that is, for the state to be *less* involved. Over a fifth of Muslims fall into this category, compared to just 13 per cent of Christians. This implies that even within the Muslim community, there are significant differences in views as to whether the management of LGBT issues falls within the ambit of governance and policy.

Table 45: Opinions on Government Involvement in LGBT Issues, by Religion

| Respondents' Religion | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of government involvement</i> ? | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| | LGBT Issues | | |
| % of Respondents | Have more government involvement | Sufficient government involvement currently | Have less government involvement |
| Buddhism | 35.2 | 47.2 | 17.7 |
| Taoism | 37.2 | 43.2 | 19.6 |
| Christianity | 46.0 | 41.3 | 12.6 |
| Catholic | 37.3 | 44.2 | 18.5 |
| Islam | 44.4 | 34.6 | 21.0 |
| Hinduism | 39.1 | 38.5 | 22.4 |
| No Religion | 38.0 | 42.9 | 19.1 |
| Overall | 39.1 | 42.8 | 18.1 |

6. MITIGATING FAULTLINES WITH PUBLIC DISCOURSE

In addition to state involvement, a second conduit to bridge the divide is through public discourse. These entail ensuring the *presence of channels or opportunities for open and genuine conversations* between all stakeholders involved — such as dialogues, focus group discussions, and other channels openly and readily accessible via mainstream and online media platforms. These channels increase the propensity for more civil interactions, and promote understanding and tolerance of, and trust for each other; all key to engendering inclusion, bridging differences and inhibiting potential conflict (Feldman & Khademian, 2007; Walsh, 2007). Encouraging and facilitating public discourse on social divisions, while potentially unnerving due to potential reactivity and deterioration into offensive exchanges, is one way of ensuring open and amenable conversation channels for all to leverage.

6.1 Overall Sentiments

Based on the survey responses, just under 60 per cent of respondents considered levels of public discourse on race and religion to be sufficient at present; while about one-quarter of respondents desired more public discussion on these two faultlines (see Table 46). Overall, this indicates some level of agreement that issues of race and religion have received a broad airing and have been handled in a fairly inclusive fashion over the years since independence — while also illustrating that we still have some way to go in addressing prevailing concerns.

Table 46: Overall Opinions on Desired Levels of Public Discussion

| Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of public discussion</i>? | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Faultlines | % of Respondents | | |
| | Have less public discussion | Sufficient public discussion currently | Have more public discussion |
| Race | 13.4 | 58.1 | 28.5 |
| Religion | 16.0 | 59.4 | 24.6 |
| Socio-economic Class Differences | 12.3 | 46.1 | 41.6 |
| Immigration | 12.0 | 44.8 | 43.2 |
| LGBT Issues | 24.9 | 36.1 | 39.0 |

The remaining three faultlines have transpired in recent decades with sustained economic development, increased reliance on foreign labour, and free-flows of information and views. It is hence not surprising that a reduced number of respondents perceive present levels of public discourse to be adequate for these increasingly pertinent faultlines (about 45 per cent for class differences and immigration, and only over one-third for LGBT issues). In fact, nearly equal or greater proportions of participants felt that more public discussions were needed to address class differences, immigration, and LGBT issues (about 40 per cent or more across these three faultlines).

While about 15 per cent or less of respondents indicated their desire for *less* public discussion for issues of race, religion, class and immigration, it is interesting to note the elevated percentage for LGBT issues (one-quarter). This could possibly be attributed to significant numbers of conservative-leaning individuals who may be satisfied with the status quo and are unsupportive of

sustaining public discourse on issues of LGBT rights (e.g., repeal of 377A); or individuals who deem discussions of LGBT as better confined to the private sphere due to the “personal”, more intimate nature of such issues.

It is also conceivable that respondents’ views on 1) the need for free speech versus 2) the need to exercise care and restraint when discussing sensitive topics, are correlated with their stances on the adequacy of public discourse levels. For instance, just over 20 per cent of participants who strongly identified with 1) felt *less* discussion was needed for LGBT issues; compared to nearly one-third of participants who strongly identified with 2) (see Table 47). The converse is also true whereby significantly more liberal respondents felt more public discussions on LGBT issues were needed, relative to their more conservative counterparts. Similar trends were also observed across the other four faultlines of interest, when cross-tabulating views on free speech and views on public discussion of faultlines.

Table 47: Views on Free Speech vs. Public Discussion of LGBT

| The following are different values or positions people might have towards certain issues. For each item, would you say you identify more with the first position (A), the second position (B), or are neutral between either positions? | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of public discussion</i> ? | | |
|---|--|--|-----------------------------|
| A – Allowing people to speak freely on any topic; B – Being careful when speaking about sensitive topics | LGBT Issues | | |
| % of Respondents | Have less public discussion | Sufficient public discussion currently | Have more public discussion |
| Strongly Identify with A | 22.6 | 28.1 | 49.4 |
| Slightly Identify with A | 20.6 | 36.3 | 43.0 |
| Neutral | 23.6 | 41.8 | 34.5 |
| Slightly Identify with B | 23.6 | 36.6 | 39.8 |
| Strongly Identify with B | 32.1 | 33.0 | 34.8 |

6.2 Race and Religion

Older respondents more likely to eschew public dialogue for issues of race and religion; would prefer state intervention

Respondents' views on the adequacy of public discussions on race and religion exhibited comparable trends. Younger respondents were marginally more likely to agree that public discourse on these two faultlines were sufficient at present (>60 per cent for 18–35 years versus ~55 per cent for >55 years); and were just as likely to desire more discussion (see Table 48 for cross-tabulations of age versus discussions on race). It is notable that a larger minority of older respondents preferred *less* public conversation on race and religion compared to younger respondents (7 per cent versus 15 per cent at the group

boundaries). This is in keeping with expected trends on conservatism and age. Previous findings explicated in Section 5.2 support this conservative outlook, which gives precedence to coordinated state action over community-led endeavours.

Table 48: Age vs. Views on Public Discussion of Race

| Respondents' Age | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of public discussion</i> ? | | |
|------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|
| | Race | | |
| % of Respondents | Have less public discussion | Sufficient public discussion currently | Have more public discussion |
| 18-25 years old | 7.2 | 62.1 | 30.8 |
| 26-35 years old | 12.0 | 60.9 | 27.1 |
| 36-45 years old | 14.6 | 57.6 | 27.7 |
| 46-55 years old | 14.5 | 58.8 | 26.8 |
| 55-65 years old | 14.2 | 55.8 | 29.9 |
| > 65 years old | 15.3 | 54.6 | 30.1 |
| Overall | 13.4 | 58.1 | 28.5 |

Minority-race respondents significantly more likely to feel more public dialogue needed on race and religion

Examining views on public race discourse segmented by race sheds further insights on our findings above. About 60 per cent of Chinese respondents indicated sufficient levels of public discourse on race issues. However, fewer minority-race respondents (under half) feel the same way (see Table 49). About 40 per cent of Malay and Indian respondents feel that more public discussions

on race are needed, compared to just one-quarter of Chinese respondents. This reinforces the premise that more attention needs to be paid to issues of race, especially from the minority's point of view. This trend is consistent with notions of majoritarian privilege and the lived experiences of minorities — where it is far more likely for minorities to encounter and be cognizant of instances whereby their race was a primary or contributing factor of an adverse experience.

Table 49: Race vs. Views on Public Discussion of Race

| Respondents' Race | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of public discussion</i> ? | | |
|-------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|
| | Race | | |
| % of Respondents | Have less public discussion | Sufficient public discussion currently | Have more public discussion |
| Chinese | 13.6 | 60.7 | 25.7 |
| Malay | 10.5 | 48.6 | 40.9 |
| Indian | 16.8 | 47.4 | 35.8 |
| Others | 8.9 | 63.4 | 27.7 |
| Overall | 13.4 | 58.1 | 28.5 |

Similar trends are noted for respondents' views on public conversations about religion — in keeping with how most religions in Singapore conflate with race or ethnicity (Mathew, 2018; Tong, 2007). Based on the most recent DoS population census, virtually all Malays are Muslims; 60 per cent of Indians identify as Hindus; 55 per cent of Chinese adhere to Buddhist, Taoist or some form of syncretic traditional Chinese beliefs; and a large majority of non-

religious individuals are Chinese (DoS, 2016). In this regard, we would expect elevated levels of sensitivity towards religion amongst minority races; a third of Indians and nearly 40 per cent of Malays indicated the need for more public discourse on religion compared to just over a fifth of Chinese.

Education and religious conservatism also impact desire for public dialogue on race and religion

Education is often seen as a key factor facilitating the recognition of the value of public discourse — where concerns and needs can be communicated by individuals and to individuals to foster awareness and understanding. In this regard, there seems to be no remarkable difference in the views of lower-educated respondents and higher-educated respondents on whether current levels of public discourse on race and religion are adequate. If at all, a slightly higher proportion of higher-educated respondents (about 6–10 per cent difference between less educated groups and degree holders) seem to feel that sufficient public discussions on race and religion are already taking place (see Section 4.2 for potential mechanisms).

Other than respondent demographics, considering respondents' views on how religion should be practised sheds some light on why some desire more public discourse on religion compared to others. Across all religions, more religiously conservative adherents supporting “pure” or “traditional” practices indicate that current public discourse on religion is sufficient, compared to their peers who identify with the need to adapt religion to secular realities (54 compared to 44

per cent) (see Table 50). The difference is especially pronounced for Christians and Catholics. This is also reflected in the markedly *smaller* proportions of religiously conservative individuals indicating the need for more public discourse, compared to their peers being open to adapting religion to secular realities. This could be due to the “non-negotiable” nature of a conservative (sometimes even fundamentalist) stance, which necessitates religion and associated practices taking precedence over secular considerations. In this regard, engaging in public discourse would have much less impact on the desired outcomes of such individuals; as compared to public discourse functioning as a conduit to make sense of contemporary realities for those open to change and adaptation.

Table 50: Religious Conservatism vs. Views on Public Discussion of Religion

| The following are different values or positions people might have towards certain issues. For each item, would you say you identify more with the first position (A), the second position (B), or are neutral between either positions? | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of public discussion</i> ? | | |
|---|--|--|-----------------------------|
| A – Adapting religion and religious customs to secular realities; B – Keeping religion as pure / traditional as possible | Religion | | |
| % of Respondents | Have less public discussion | Sufficient public discussion currently | Have more public discussion |
| Strongly Identify with A | 15.0 | 44.3 | 40.7 |
| Slightly Identify with A | 17.0 | 57.5 | 25.5 |
| Neutral | 16.2 | 64.0 | 19.7 |
| Slightly Identify with B | 15.4 | 61.4 | 23.1 |
| Strong Identify with B | 16.0 | 53.5 | 30.5 |
| Overall | 16.1 | 59.5 | 24.4 |

6.3 Immigration and SES

Youth, higher-educated desire more public discussions on class and immigration

When queried on whether levels of public discourse were adequate for class-related issues, half of respondents aged 18–25 indicated the need for more public discourse on socio-economic class differences compared to 40 per cent of respondents aged 65 and above (see Table 51). This represented a larger proportion of the 18–25 age cohort compared to those who felt that there were sufficient public discussions on class issues — which was not the case for older cohorts. Similar, though more muted trends were observed for immigration issues. Similar analyses and explanations can be found in Section 5.3.

Table 51: Age vs. Views on Public Discussion of Class Differences

| Respondents' Age | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of public discussion</i> ? | | |
|------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|
| | Socio-Economic Class Differences | | |
| % of Respondents | Have less public discussion | Sufficient public discussion currently | Have more public discussion |
| 18-25 years old | 7.6 | 42.7 | 49.7 |
| 26-35 years old | 11.7 | 46.0 | 42.3 |
| 36-45 years old | 13.0 | 44.2 | 42.8 |
| 46-55 years old | 13.5 | 47.8 | 38.6 |
| 55-65 years old | 11.7 | 48.7 | 39.6 |
| > 65 years old | 14.8 | 45.5 | 39.7 |
| Overall | 12.3 | 46.1 | 41.6 |

Local-born and affluent individuals more likely to desire increased public discussions on immigration faultline

Greater proportions of local-born respondents (45 per cent) indicated the need for more public discussions on immigration compared to their foreign-born counterparts (see Table 52). This is anticipated given 1) perceptions of competition and differential treatment between locals and foreigners across various spheres such as workplaces and universities, as well as 2) differences in norms and values giving rise to discomfort and distancing. These would give rise to more perceived issues on immigration by local-born respondents, in turn engendering greater calls for public debate as was seen after the release of the Population White Paper in 2013.

Table 52: Origin vs. Views on Public Discussion of Immigration

| Singapore Citizen by Birth? ^ | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of public discussion</i> ? | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|
| | Immigration | | |
| % of Respondents | Have less public discussion | Sufficient public discussion currently | Have more public discussion |
| Yes | 11.9 | 43.0 | 45.2 |
| No | 12.3 | 51.9 | 35.9 |
| Overall | 11.9 | 44.7 | 43.4 |

^ It should be noted that respondents in the 2018 RRL survey are either Singapore Citizens or PRs. Non-resident individuals are not represented in the survey.

While one might expect socio-economic status to figure as a key driver of friction between locals and foreigners, the data suggests otherwise. When considering both origin and housing type when analysing desire for

immigration-related public discourse, about 10 per cent more local-born citizen respondents residing in larger public or private housing indicate such a desire compared to their less affluent counterparts (see Table 53). Based on this, it is likely that issues arising from immigration and associated policies in Singapore are not driven by inter-class differentials; but rather intra-class differences.

Table 53: Housing, Origin vs. Views on Public Discussion of Immigration

| Respondents' Country of Origin / Housing [^] | | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the desired level of public discussion? | | |
|---|---------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|
| | | Immigration | | |
| % of Respondents | | Have less public discussion | Sufficient public discussion currently | Have more public discussion |
| Singapore Citizen by Birth | HDB 1-2 Rm | 14.1 | 46.1 | 39.8 |
| | HDB 3 Rm | 15.2 | 41.1 | 43.7 |
| | HDB 4 Rm | 12.2 | 43.2 | 44.6 |
| | HDB 5+ Rm | 10.4 | 42.0 | 47.6 |
| | Private Apt / Condo | 7.3 | 47.0 | 45.6 |
| Non-Singapore Citizen by Birth | HDB 1-2 Rm | 16.7 | 54.2 | 29.2 |
| | HDB 3 Rm | 10.3 | 51.6 | 38.1 |
| | HDB 4 Rm | 11.9 | 56.9 | 31.2 |
| | HDB 5+ Rm | 14.2 | 45.8 | 40.0 |
| | Private Apt / Condo | 13.3 | 50.6 | 36.1 |
| Overall | | 11.9 | 44.7 | 43.4 |

[^] Landed housing figures omitted due to low sample size.

Considering the above findings in concert, the survey results seem to point to issues of competition and concerns of citizen prerogative or privilege as the most significant issues for local-born citizens. Given more affluent, more educated and younger local-born citizens are more likely to desire increased

public discussion on immigration, this implies that exposure or openness to a globalised community is not the main factor smoothing over local-foreign friction.

Race does not significantly impact views of whether public discourse on immigration is adequate

It is interesting to note that in general race does not seem to significantly influence opinions of whether public conversations on class and immigration are currently adequate. Similar proportions of Chinese, Malay and Indian respondents (40–45 per cent with 3–4 per cent difference between groups) indicate sufficient public discourse, as well as the need for more discourse on these two issues (see Table 54 for cross-tabulations of race versus discussions on immigration). However, more respondents who identified racially as belonging to “Others” within the CMIO framework seemed to agree that current public discourse on immigration and class was sufficient compared to their “CMI” peers (>50 per cent versus ~40–45 per cent). This could potentially be influenced by the origins of these “Others” respondents. Nearly 60 per cent of “Others” respondents were not Singapore citizens by birth, compared to just 20, 4 and 34 per cent of Chinese, Malay and Indian respondents, respectively.

Table 54: Race vs. Views on Public Discussion of Immigration

| Respondents' Race | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of public discussion</i> ? | | |
|-------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|
| | Immigration | | |
| % of Respondents | Have less public discussion | Sufficient public discussion currently | Have more public discussion |
| Chinese | 11.7 | 45.5 | 42.8 |
| Malay | 12.6 | 41.0 | 46.4 |
| Indian | 15.8 | 41.1 | 43.1 |
| Others | 7.4 | 52.6 | 40.0 |
| Overall | 12.0 | 44.8 | 43.2 |

6.4 LGBT

Half of younger respondents aged 18–25 desire more public discourse on LGBT issues

With regard to opinions on public LGBT discourse, clear differences are observed too — particularly with the 18–25 age cohort relative to older cohorts. Similar to class differences, half of respondents in this cohort wanted more public discussions on LGBT issues; about 7–15 per cent more compared to older cohorts (see Table 55). While about a quarter of older cohorts wanted *less* discussion, only 15 per cent of the 18–25 age cohort felt the same way. This is reflective of evident divergences in sexual attitudes between age cohorts, alongside perceptions of the need for stronger spotlight on LGBT issues. In an earlier IPS paper that used different questions from the 2018 RRL survey, nearly half of the 18–25 age cohort felt gay sex was not wrong,

compared to just over 10 per cent of the 65 and above age cohort (Mathew, Lim, & Selvarajan, 2019a).

Table 55: Age vs. Views on Public Discussion of LGBT Issues

| Respondents' Age | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of public discussion</i> ? | | |
|------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|
| | LGBT Issues | | |
| % of Respondents | Have less public discussion | Sufficient public discussion currently | Have more public discussion |
| 18-25 years old | 14.9 | 35.3 | 49.7 |
| 26-35 years old | 23.6 | 38.1 | 38.3 |
| 36-45 years old | 27.4 | 37.7 | 34.9 |
| 46-55 years old | 26.7 | 36.9 | 36.4 |
| 55-65 years old | 26.2 | 35.2 | 38.7 |
| > 65 years old | 26.1 | 32.1 | 41.8 |
| Overall | 24.8 | 36.1 | 39.0 |

More liberal respondents likely to desire greater public discourse on LGBT issues

Interestingly, education levels do not seem to exert significant impact on perceptions of public discourse regarding LGBT issues. In general, similar proportions of respondents across education levels feel that more public discussion is warranted for LGBT issues (about 40 per cent). Additional insights are gleaned from perusing views on public discussion of LGBT issues with reference to views on sexual relations. For instance, just under 60 per cent of respondents who felt that homosexual sex was “not wrong at all” desired more

public discussion on LGBT issues, as compared to their more conservative counterparts (about one-third; see Table 56). This suggests that the desire for greater public discourse is more driven by objectives of promulgating change in favour of LGBT. This premise is supported by the observation that greater proportions of conservative respondents desire *less* public discourse on LGBT issues (29 versus 13 per cent).

Table 56: Views on Sexual Relations vs. Public Discussion of LGBT Issues

| Respondents' views on sexual relations between two adults of the same sex | Among the issues mentioned, different people have varying opinions on how each should be managed moving forward. What are your opinions on each when it comes to the <i>desired level of public discussion</i> ? | | |
|---|--|--|-----------------------------|
| | LGBT Issues | | |
| % of Respondents | Have less public discussion | Sufficient public discussion currently | Have more public discussion |
| Always wrong | 28.8 | 34.4 | 36.8 |
| Almost always wrong | 27.0 | 39.4 | 33.5 |
| Only wrong sometimes | 22.7 | 44.2 | 33.1 |
| Not wrong most of the time | 19.6 | 38.7 | 41.6 |
| Not wrong at all | 13.3 | 27.4 | 59.3 |
| Overall | 24.9 | 36.1 | 39.0 |

7. COMMUNITY RECOGNITION AND ATTITUDES

Our data presented in the previous sections show that Singaporeans understand the consequences of mismanaging faultlines and recognise the importance of government intervention in this area. Community efforts are also vital in reducing potential tensions that stem from faultlines. In the ensuing section, we examine our survey data for community attitudes that might inform community efforts and policy-making so that faultlines are well managed. The additional data presented in this section is limited and non-exhaustive, due to exigencies in structuring a reasonably concise set of questions for the overall IPS RRL survey.

7.1 Attitudes Towards Inflammatory Content on Race and Religion

Community is circumspect when encountering inflammatory material on race and religion; it is important for vulnerable members of community to be better informed in dealing with online falsehoods

Strong narratives of racial and religious harmony in Singapore, coupled with the delicate nature of such issues, have instilled a sense of care, awareness and responsibility amongst Singaporeans when dealing with or responding to issues of a racial and religious nature. This sensitivity is visible in our survey results. One such question in our survey examined respondents' reaction to being forwarded a phone message or email that a business is refusing to serve people from a certain race and religion, despite the respondents not being able to recall reading or hearing about this in news reports. Respondents could choose multiple options from a set of possible actions. The most popular response

given by 52 per cent of respondents was to check with their friend who sent the message to find out more (see Table 57). This was followed by 47 per cent of respondents attesting to thinking about the matter on their own.

Most respondents would also remain passive, calm and neutral when encountering inflammatory content on a racial or religious issue: less than 10 per cent of respondents would report the potential discrimination (that they heard of over email or the phone) to authorities, mainstream media or circulate the issue on social media. In addition, close to three in 10 respondents (27 per cent) would do nothing in the event of a potential inflation of a racial and religious issue. These results indicate how most Singaporeans would be cautious, patient and rational when encountering inflammatory material. However, taken *in toto*, this passivity could also be less desirable, if individuals' views are shaped subconsciously by such encounters.

Table 57: Responses to a Potential Discrimination Incident

| A friend forwards you a phone message/email that a business is refusing to serve people from a certain race or religion. You do not recall reading or hearing about this previously in news reports. Which of the following would you do? | Yes | No | Maybe |
|---|------|------|-------|
| % of respondents | | | |
| Check with the friend who sent you the message to find out more | 51.9 | 20.5 | 27.5 |
| Make your own checks to find out more | 39.4 | 32.2 | 28.4 |
| Think about the matter on your own | 46.5 | 26.3 | 27.1 |
| Pass the message on to other friends to warn them | 21.9 | 48.9 | 29.2 |
| Report the matter to authorities | 17.2 | 49.8 | 33.0 |
| Report the matter to the mainstream media | 8.2 | 67.2 | 24.6 |
| Circulate it on online media | 6.9 | 75.0 | 18.0 |
| Do nothing | 26.7 | 28.4 | 45.0 |

Racial minorities are more likely to actively determine authenticity of inflammatory material on race and religion; better understanding of impact of such material on more “passive” individuals is necessary

When results were analysed by respondents’ race, it was found that ethnic minority respondents were slightly more likely than Chinese respondents to take the email or phone message they received about potential racial or religious discrimination by a business more seriously; and to respond more actively. Results show that Malay and Indian respondents were more likely to actively investigate the issue: nearly half of Malay and Indian respondents would actively make their own checks to find out more the issue, as compared to 37 per cent of Chinese respondents (see Table 58).

In addition, six in 10 Malay and Indian respondents would check the allegation with the friend who sent the message, as compared to under half of Chinese respondents. Ethnic minority respondents were also more likely to take the discrimination allegation seriously by reporting it to authorities: close to 30 per cent of both Malay and Indian respondents would report the allegation to authorities, as compared to 13 per cent of Chinese respondents. While overall numbers were small, Malay and Indian respondents were still slightly more likely to report the allegation to mainstream media and circulate the allegation on social media, as compared to Chinese respondents.

Table 58: Responses to a Potential Discrimination Incident by Racial Group

| A friend forwards you a phone message/email that a business is refusing to serve people from a certain race or religion. You do not recall reading or hearing about this previously in news reports. Which of the following would you do? | Chinese | Malay | Indian | Others |
|--|---------|-------|--------|--------|
| % of respondents indicating 'Yes' by race group | | | | |
| Check with the friend who sent you the message to find out more | 48.7 | 63.8 | 60.2 | 61.3 |
| Make your own checks to find out more | 36.5 | 49.6 | 47.6 | 49.1 |
| Think about the matter on your own | 47.9 | 36.8 | 44.4 | 60.9 |
| Pass the message on to other friends to warn them | 21.1 | 23.1 | 25.2 | 29.1 |
| Report the matter to authorities | 13.3 | 30.0 | 28.7 | 29.2 |
| Report the matter to the mainstream media | 6.7 | 13.3 | 12.8 | 9.6 |
| Circulate it on online media | 5.9 | 10.5 | 10.7 | 6.5 |
| Do nothing | 28.9 | 18.7 | 18.5 | 26.0 |

Youth, less educated respondents more likely to be proactive in investigating and circulating inflammatory content on social media; continued efforts needed for a more media-cognizant population

While there was less of a pronounced age difference in perceiving potentially racially and religiously inflammatory material, youths were more proactive in investigating the source of the email or phone message, as compared to older respondents. For example, two-thirds of respondents aged 18–25 would check the allegation over with the friend who sent the message, as compared to only half of respondents aged 65 and above (see Table 59). In addition, respondents aged above 65 were more likely to remain passive and report that they might do nothing in response to the allegation: 35 per cent of respondents aged above 65 would do nothing, as compared to only 18 per cent of respondents aged 18–25. These differences could be attributable to the fact that younger people are more sensitive and concerned about issues revolving around discrimination and being digital natives, are thus more likely to investigate matters further.

Table 59: Responses to a Potential Discrimination Incident by Age Cohort

| A friend forwards you a phone message/email that a business is refusing to serve people from a certain race or religion. You do not recall reading or hearing about this previously in news reports. Which of the following would you do? | 18-25 | 26-35 | 36-45 | 46-55 | 56-65 | Above 65 |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------|
| % of respondents indicating 'Yes' by age group | | | | | | |
| Check with the friend who sent you the message to find out more | 65.7 | 55.9 | 48.8 | 49.7 | 48.2 | 49.3 |
| Make your own checks to find out more | 45.9 | 44.0 | 38.6 | 38.5 | 35.4 | 36.5 |
| Think about the matter on your own | 54.7 | 50.7 | 45.3 | 45.1 | 43.9 | 42.6 |
| Pass the message on to other friends to warn them | 26.4 | 22.5 | 17.7 | 19.6 | 23.6 | 24.9 |
| Report the matter to authorities | 20.0 | 16.1 | 12.6 | 15.7 | 18.5 | 22.8 |
| Report the matter to the mainstream media | 10.1 | 7.9 | 5.8 | 6.5 | 8.5 | 12.1 |
| Circulate it on online media | 11.2 | 8.2 | 6.5 | 4.5 | 6.6 | 6.8 |
| Do nothing | 18.0 | 22.4 | 29.0 | 26.3 | 26.7 | 35.1 |

When results were analysed by education, it was found that less educated respondents were more likely to circulate inflammatory content and involve authorities. Close to three in 10 respondents with secondary or lower education levels would pass on the message to their friends without any further investigation, as compared to only 17 per cent of their degree-holding counterparts (see Table 60). In addition, 21 per cent of respondents with secondary or lower education levels would report the matter to authorities, as compared to only 13 per cent of their degree-holding counterparts. Perhaps among those with greater educational attainment, there was an increased confidence in their ability to determine the accuracy of what they read.

Table 60: Responses to a Potential Discrimination Incident by Education Levels

| A friend forwards you a phone message/email that a business is refusing to serve people from a certain race or religion. You do not recall reading or hearing about this previously in news reports. Which of the following would you do? | Below Secondary /Secondary | Diploma/ITE /Professional Qualification | Bachelors' /Masters' |
|---|----------------------------|---|----------------------|
| % of respondents indicating 'Yes' by education levels | | | |
| Check with the friend who sent you the message to find out more | 48.5 | 53.7 | 53.8 |
| Make your own checks to find out more | 36.5 | 42.5 | 39.6 |
| Think about the matter on your own | 41.1 | 43.3 | 56.1 |
| Pass the message on to other friends to warn them | 27.8 | 19.5 | 17.1 |
| Report the matter to authorities | 21.4 | 17.1 | 12.5 |
| Report the matter to the mainstream media | 11.2 | 7.7 | 5.4 |
| Circulate it on online media | 8.4 | 6.5 | 5.5 |
| Do nothing | 28.7 | 26.5 | 25.0 |

7.2 Attitudes on the State and Policies for Race and Religion

Community recognises the role of government in maintaining racial and religious harmony; it is important for policy to continue to ensure the cultural rights of population and the needs for minority representation

In previous sections of the paper, it was noted that large proportions of respondents alluded to greater governmental involvement in addressing key societal faultlines. Almost all respondents (91 per cent) agreed that the government is responsible for racial and religious harmony in Singapore (see

Table 61). Almost all respondents (93 per cent) also agreed that the government should help all religious and racial groups preserve and maintain their traditions and customs.

Table 61: Opinions on Government Responsibility Regarding Race and Religion

| How much do you agree with the following statements? | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| % of respondents | | | | | | |
| Government is responsible for racial and religious harmony in Singapore | 0.8 | 2.6 | 5.7 | 27.0 | 42.2 | 21.6 |
| Government has done well to improve racial and religious harmony | 0.9 | 1.7 | 5.4 | 30.8 | 45.6 | 15.6 |
| Government has maintained a fair system/policy for everyone in Singapore, regardless of race/religion | 1.2 | 2.0 | 7.0 | 29.7 | 45.4 | 14.7 |
| Government should help all religious and racial groups preserve and maintain their traditions and customs | 0.7 | 2.4 | 4.1 | 31.6 | 42.4 | 18.7 |
| Need more legislation and policies to safeguard racial & religious harmony | 1.3 | 3.5 | 12.7 | 34.0 | 36.5 | 12.1 |

In addition, most respondents also agree that the government has executed its responsibilities well, with most indicating that the government has succeeded so far in preserving racial and religious harmony in Singapore. Almost all (92 per cent) respondents agreed that the government has done well to improve racial and religious harmony; and 90 per cent agreed that the government has

maintained a fair system for everyone in Singapore, regardless of one's race or religion.

Nonetheless, eight in 10 respondents also agreed that we need more legislation and policies to safeguard racial and religious harmony — signalling that efforts to manage race and religion need to be sustained. While this appears to contradict the finding presented in Section 5.2 that two-thirds of respondents feel that there is sufficient government involvement in *managing racial and religious faultlines*, this question was framed in the context of querying participants' openness to more legislation *on safeguarding racial and religious harmony*. Hence, while some groups may feel that state involvement in managing faultlines is presently sufficient (or should be reduced); this finding implies that a significant majority still believe in “preemptive” governance as opposed to “reactive” governance.

Minority races and youth slightly more likely to perceive bias and express stronger desire for more legislation to safeguard harmony. Effective communication of policies and outcomes needed for these groups

When results were analysed by race, it was found that ethnic minority respondents were slightly more likely to be unsatisfied with the current management of racial and religious faultlines. At the outset we note relatively similar or marginal differences in agreement to various degrees, with the need for more legislation to safeguard harmony across the racial groups. Eighty-one per cent of Chinese respondents, along with 92 per cent and 87 per cent of

Malay and Indian respondents respectively indicated they “somewhat agree”, “agree”, or “strongly agree” (see Table 62). Similar overarching agreement trends are noted regarding views on systemic fairness too (see Table 63).

However, when we further analyse the strength of agreement amongst majority and minority racial groups, clear differences are observed. 61 per cent of Malay and 55 per cent of Indians indicated relatively stronger agreement with the need for more legislation (“agree” or “strongly agree”), as compared to just 46 per cent of Chinese respondents (see Table 62). In the same vein, while the great majority of Malay and Indian respondents believed that they were treated fairly, there were slightly more who perceived the current system as biased against them. Fifty per cent and 58 per cent of Malay and Indian respondents respectively agreed or strongly agreed that the government has maintained a fair system regardless of race or religion, as compared to 62 per cent of Chinese respondents (see Table 63).

Table 62: Opinions on Government Action Regarding Race and Religion, by Racial Group

| Need more legislation and policies to safeguard racial & religious harmony | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of respondents by racial group | | | | | | |
| Chinese | 1.3 | 3.8 | 14.4 | 34.3 | 35.9 | 10.3 |
| Malay | 1.2 | 1.4 | 5.5 | 30.7 | 41.8 | 19.4 |
| Indian | 1.2 | 3.8 | 8.2 | 32.3 | 37.5 | 17.0 |
| Others | 3.7 | 2.8 | 11.0 | 44.0 | 27.5 | 11.0 |

Table 63: Opinions on Government Efficacy Regarding Race and Religion, by Racial Group

| Government has maintained a fair system/ policy for everyone in Singapore, regardless of race/ religion | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of respondents by racial group | | | | | | |
| Chinese | 0.8 | 1.7 | 6.2 | 29.0 | 48.3 | 14.0 |
| Malay | 3.2 | 2.8 | 10.5 | 33.9 | 35.9 | 13.7 |
| Indian | 2.1 | 3.2 | 8.2 | 28.4 | 38.4 | 19.6 |
| Others | 0.0 | 1.8 | 10.0 | 35.5 | 30.0 | 22.7 |

In conjunction with previous sections of the paper, this segment of the survey found that younger respondents were more critical of the role of government in managing race and religion, as well as its level of success in managing these faultlines. While insignificant or marginal age cohort differences are noted if considering agreement to varying degrees (“somewhat agree”, “agree”, and “strongly agree”), we note that younger participants are more “lukewarm” in their agreement. While seven in ten respondents aged above 65 agreed that (agree / strongly agree) the government is responsible for racial and religious harmony in Singapore, only half of respondents aged 18–25 felt this way (see Table 64). Along similar lines, while seven in ten respondents aged above 65 agreed (agree or strongly agree) that the government has maintained a fair system for everybody regardless of race or religion, slightly less than half of respondents aged 18–25 (47 per cent) felt this way (see Table 65).

Table 64: Opinions on Government Responsibility Regarding Race and Religion, by Age Cohort

| Government is responsible for racial and religious harmony in Singapore | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of respondents by age cohort | | | | | | |
| 18-25 | 0.7 | 2.7 | 10.2 | 34.8 | 35.8 | 15.7 |
| 26-35 | 0.4 | 3.0 | 6.6 | 29.3 | 40.8 | 19.8 |
| 36-45 | 0.6 | 2.4 | 7.0 | 32.3 | 37.2 | 20.4 |
| 46-55 | 1.2 | 2.6 | 4.8 | 25.1 | 41.3 | 25.2 |
| 56-65 | 0.8 | 2.9 | 4.3 | 21.6 | 48.2 | 22.1 |
| Above 65 | 0.8 | 1.7 | 3.2 | 20.9 | 48.9 | 24.5 |

Table 65: Opinions on Government Efficacy Regarding Race and Religion, by Age Cohort

| Government has maintained a fair system/policy for everyone in Singapore, regardless of race/religion | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of respondents by age cohort | | | | | | |
| 18-25 | 1.0 | 1.5 | 8.9 | 41.8 | 36.6 | 10.1 |
| 26-35 | 2.1 | 2.6 | 10.1 | 36.5 | 37.6 | 11.1 |
| 36-45 | 1.2 | 2.6 | 7.3 | 32.8 | 41.2 | 15.0 |
| 46-55 | 1.4 | 1.6 | 6.2 | 27.7 | 47.8 | 15.3 |
| 56-65 | 0.8 | 1.4 | 5.9 | 23.0 | 53.5 | 15.4 |
| Above 65 | 0.3 | 2.0 | 4.0 | 20.0 | 53.4 | 20.2 |

Respondents divided on impact of increasing religiosity on religious harmony, and whether religious groups should be accorded more rights.

Need to prioritise a consultative approach to incorporate varying views

While religion has been a perennial faultline in Singapore alongside issues of race; responses to our survey questions concerning religion yielded additional insight on the role of increasing religiosity. Respondents were split between agreement and disagreement that 1) increasingly religiosity could harm religious harmony (58 per cent of respondents agreed); 2) religious groups should be given more rights than those they have presently (42 per cent of respondents agreed); and 3) religious groups should be able to spread their teachings in public areas (39 per cent of respondents agreed) (see Table 66).

Table 66: Opinions on Issues of Religion

| How much do you agree with the following statements? | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| % of respondents | | | | | | |
| Increasing religiosity among religious groups could harm religious harmony | 3.7 | 15.0 | 23.0 | 27.3 | 23.1 | 7.9 |
| Religious groups should be given more rights than those they have now | 5.4 | 16.2 | 35.9 | 25.8 | 13.2 | 3.4 |
| Religious groups should be able to spread their teachings in public areas | 10.8 | 20.8 | 29.7 | 23.2 | 12.4 | 3.2 |

Muslims and Christians more likely to desire wider boundaries on religious freedom and expression; nonetheless policies have to incorporate views of the broader community too

An in-depth analysis of the results found differences amongst different religious groups. Muslim respondents, for example, were much more likely than respondents of other religious backgrounds to feel that religious groups should be given more rights: 64 per cent of Muslim respondents felt this way, as compared to approximately 30–40 per cent of respondents of other religious backgrounds (see Table 67). In addition, Muslim and Christian respondents were more likely to feel that religious groups should be able to spread their teachings in public: close to half of Muslim and Christian respondents felt this way, compared to approximately three in ten of respondents of other religious backgrounds (see Table 68). These results allude to potential future disagreements between different religious segments on the boundaries of religious freedom and expression in Singapore.

Table 67: Opinions on Issues of Religious Rights by Religion

| Religious groups should be given more rights than those they have now | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of respondents | | | | | | |
| Buddhists | 4.8 | 17.2 | 39.5 | 25.3 | 10.8 | 2.5 |
| Taoists | 7.2 | 17.6 | 31.1 | 22.2 | 16.9 | 5.1 |
| Muslims | 2.7 | 5.6 | 21.9 | 40.5 | 23.4 | 5.9 |
| Hindus | 7.0 | 17.5 | 30.5 | 27.0 | 13.0 | 5.0 |
| Catholics | 2.4 | 21.3 | 41.1 | 21.3 | 13.0 | 0.9 |
| Christians | 5.8 | 14.9 | 40.7 | 26.6 | 9.4 | 2.6 |
| No Religion | 9.5 | 22.2 | 39.9 | 16.6 | 8.8 | 3.0 |

Table 68: Opinions on Issues of Religious Rights by Religion

| Religious groups should be able to spread their teachings in public areas | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of respondents | | | | | | |
| Buddhists | 11.2 | 22.1 | 30.1 | 24.1 | 10.6 | 2.0 |
| Taoists | 12.4 | 23.9 | 29.9 | 14.1 | 14.4 | 5.3 |
| Muslims | 6.4 | 12.3 | 28.5 | 29.8 | 17.3 | 5.7 |
| Hindus | 18.4 | 22.9 | 25.4 | 18.4 | 11.4 | 3.5 |
| Catholics | 8.0 | 24.3 | 34.7 | 19.0 | 12.2 | 1.8 |
| Christians | 7.0 | 15.7 | 28.9 | 30.6 | 15.1 | 2.8 |
| No Religion | 15.7 | 26.1 | 29.3 | 18.4 | 7.9 | 2.5 |

Similarly, youth and the less educated more likely to support greater religiosity and rights for religious groups. Maintenance of a balance between religious freedoms and broader social considerations essential

Disagreements on the extent of religious freedom and expression occur not only amongst different religious groups, but also across age and education demographics. For example, older respondents were slightly more guarded about increasing religious freedom. They were more likely to feel that increasing religiosity could harm religious harmony: nearly seven in 10 respondents aged above 65 felt this way, as compared to five in 10 of respondents aged 18–25 (see Table 69). It is also pertinent that less educated respondents were more likely to be sympathetic to increasing religious freedom. For example, half of respondents with secondary education or lower agreed that religious groups should be given more rights; as compared to only 30 per cent of their degree-holding counterparts (see Table 70).

Table 69: Opinions on Issues of Religiosity by Age Cohort

| Increasing religiosity among religious groups could harm religious harmony | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of respondents | | | | | | |
| 18-25 | 4.5 | 10.0 | 31.8 | 27.0 | 17.5 | 9.3 |
| 26-35 | 4.0 | 14.7 | 23.1 | 28.4 | 23.7 | 6.1 |
| 36-45 | 2.7 | 15.5 | 24.3 | 30.2 | 20.5 | 6.8 |
| 46-55 | 4.1 | 16.9 | 25.0 | 26.8 | 20.6 | 6.6 |
| 56-65 | 3.9 | 16.3 | 20.1 | 25.0 | 26.0 | 8.7 |
| Above 65 | 2.7 | 13.9 | 16.3 | 26.3 | 29.2 | 11.7 |

Table 70: Opinions on Issues of Religious Rights by Education Levels

| Religious groups should be given more rights than those they have now | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of respondents | | | | | | |
| Below Secondary/ Secondary | 4.2 | 15.9 | 28.8 | 29.0 | 17.5 | 4.5 |
| Diploma/ ITE/ Professional Qualification | 6.0 | 14.3 | 35.7 | 27.8 | 12.7 | 3.4 |
| Bachelors'/ Masters' | 5.9 | 18.4 | 45.4 | 20.5 | 7.8 | 2.1 |

More minorities and the less educated agree with affirmative action. More engagement needed on the efficacy of prevailing meritocratic ideals but also need to consider the merits of representation

When it came to managing faultlines of race and religion through affirmative action, respondents were significantly more divided in whether the state should provide additional help to ethnic minorities, through preferential treatment and increasing racial representation in high-ranking public sector positions. Half of respondents disagreed that the government should give special treatment to minority groups, with four in 10 respondents disagreeing that it is more important to have racial diversity in top civil service jobs, as compared to simply using the most qualified and able people (see Table 71). One reason for these differences in opinion could be the varying efficacy the state-advanced ideal of meritocracy has in Singapore, prioritising ability over traits such as race, gender or age.

Table 71: Opinions on Government Prerogatives Regarding Race and Religion

| How much do you agree with the following statements? | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of respondents | | | | | | |
| Government should give preferential/ special treatment to minority groups | 10.5 | 19.7 | 25.3 | 24.2 | 16.1 | 4.2 |
| More important to have racial diversity in top civil service jobs, than simply using the most qualified and able people | 6.9 | 14.1 | 17.4 | 26.0 | 26.7 | 8.8 |

Minority-race respondents were however more likely to support affirmative action in social policy. For example, close to 70 per cent of Malay and close to 60 per cent of Indian respondents agreed (at least somewhat) that the government should give preferential treatment to minority groups, as compared to only 39 per cent of Chinese respondents (see Table 72). Along similar lines, eight in 10 Malay and close to seven in 10 Indian respondents agreed (at least somewhat) that it is more important to have racial diversity in top civil service jobs, than simply using the most qualified and able people; as compared to only 58 per cent of Chinese respondents (see Table 73).

Table 72: Opinions on Government Prerogatives Regarding Race and Religion, by Racial Group

| Government should give preferential/special treatment to minority groups | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of respondents by racial group | | | | | | |
| Chinese | 11.8 | 22.0 | 26.8 | 22.6 | 14.5 | 2.2 |
| Malay | 4.9 | 9.9 | 18.8 | 31.2 | 23.9 | 11.3 |
| Indian | 8.8 | 15.0 | 20.9 | 24.7 | 20.6 | 10.0 |
| Others | 7.9 | 14.9 | 24.6 | 33.3 | 11.4 | 7.9 |

Table 73: Opinions on Government Prerogatives Regarding Race and Religion, by Racial Group

| More important to have racial diversity in top civil service jobs, than simply using the most qualified and able people | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of respondents by racial group | | | | | | |
| Chinese | 7.7 | 15.9 | 18.9 | 25.7 | 25.9 | 6.0 |
| Malay | 2.8 | 5.0 | 10.9 | 27.4 | 33.1 | 20.8 |
| Indian | 6.2 | 12.1 | 13.8 | 23.5 | 27.9 | 16.5 |
| Others | 7.8 | 13.0 | 16.5 | 36.5 | 18.3 | 7.8 |

In addition, less educated respondents were much more likely to support preferential treatment and representation in high-ranking jobs for ethnic minorities. Slightly more than half of respondents with a secondary school and below level of education agreed (at least somewhat) that the government should give preferential treatment to ethnic minorities, as compared to only one-third of their degree-holding counterparts (see Table 74). In addition, seven in 10 respondents with secondary or below levels of education agreed (at least somewhat) that it was more important to racial diversity in top civil service jobs,

than simply using the most qualified and able people, as compared to slightly less than half (48 per cent) of their degree-holding counterparts (see Table 75).

Table 74: Opinions on Government Prerogatives Regarding Race and Religion, by Education Levels

| Government should give preferential/special treatment to minority groups | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of respondents by education levels | | | | | | |
| Below Secondary/ Secondary | 7.7 | 18.4 | 21.3 | 26.5 | 21.0 | 5.2 |
| Diploma/ ITE/ Professional Qualification | 10.9 | 17.6 | 24.9 | 26.4 | 14.9 | 5.2 |
| Bachelors' / Masters' | 13.4 | 23.4 | 30.1 | 20.0 | 10.9 | 2.1 |

Table 75: Opinions on Government Prerogatives Regarding Race and Religion, by Education Levels

| More important to have racial diversity in top civil service jobs, than simply using the most qualified and able people | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of respondents by education levels | | | | | | |
| Below Secondary/ Secondary | 3.8 | 11.2 | 14.3 | 27.3 | 34.7 | 8.7 |
| Diploma/ ITE/ Professional Qualification | 6.6 | 10.9 | 17.8 | 28.6 | 26.1 | 9.8 |
| Bachelors' / Masters' | 10.4 | 20.2 | 21.1 | 22.3 | 18.0 | 7.9 |

7.3 Attitudes on the State and Policies for Immigration and SES

Community open to migrants in calibrated proportions. Policy-making should consider population's threshold for migrants in different spaces

Overall results show marked resistance to fully embracing immigrants in Singapore, with levels of acceptability and embrace decreasing as proximity to immigrants increases. The majority of respondents (approximately 60 per cent or more) indicate that ideally, only 1 to 20 per cent of individuals in their vicinity would be immigrants (see Table 76). Respondents were also less likely to accept immigrants in very close proximities, such as their own housing blocks. Just under half of respondents felt that the ideal proportion of immigrants in their housing block was 1–10 per cent. However, approximately three in 10 respondents stated that the ideal proportion of immigrants in their housing blocks was 11–20 per cent. Respondents were slightly more open when it came to ideal proportions of respondents in Singapore itself: close to half of respondents felt that the ideal proportion of immigrants in Singapore would be 11–30 per cent.

Table 76: Opinions on Immigrant Proportions by Location / Proximity

| What do you think is the ideal proportion of immigrants in the following places? | No immigrants - 0% | 1 to 10% | 11 to 20% | 21 to 30% | 31 to 40% | 41 to 50% | Any proportion above 51% |
|--|--------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------|
| % of respondents | | | | | | | |
| Your housing block | 4.8 | 42.9 | 28.2 | 13.2 | 5.1 | 2.9 | 2.9 |
| Your neighbourhood | 3.0 | 36.1 | 31.9 | 16.0 | 6.6 | 3.4 | 2.8 |
| Your office / workplace | 4.6 | 35.8 | 26.8 | 17.6 | 7.0 | 4.5 | 3.6 |
| Your child's school | 4.9 | 34.7 | 29.0 | 18.7 | 6.2 | 3.5 | 3.1 |
| Singapore | 2.7 | 27.9 | 27.6 | 20.2 | 8.4 | 5.2 | 7.9 |

While there was not much of a race-based difference in opinion when it came to immigration, results show some age-based differences in opinion. Results show that younger respondents were slightly more accepting of immigrants, as compared to older respondents. Close to half of older respondents, especially those aged above 65, found the ideal proportion of immigrants across vicinities ranging from their neighbourhoods to Singapore in general, to be 1 to 10 per cent. Lower proportions of respondents aged 18 to 25, (20 to 30 per cent) indicated the ideal proportion of immigrants across various vicinities in Singapore to be 1 to 10 per cent (see Tables 77 and 78).

Table 77: Opinions on Immigrant Proportions in the Neighbourhood, by Age Cohort

| What do you think is the ideal proportion of immigrants in your neighbourhood? | No immigrants - 0% | 1 to 10% | 11 to 20% | 21 to 30% | 31 to 40% | 41 to 50% | Any proportion above 51% |
|--|--------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------|
| % of respondents by age cohort | | | | | | | |
| 18-25 | 1.5 | 26.6 | 37.1 | 18.7 | 10.4 | 4.5 | 1.2 |
| 26-35 | 3.5 | 29.8 | 34.6 | 17.2 | 8.9 | 3.3 | 2.6 |
| 36-45 | 2.4 | 32.4 | 32.6 | 17.7 | 7.2 | 4.3 | 3.4 |
| 46-55 | 3.5 | 38.9 | 30.6 | 14.8 | 4.9 | 3.1 | 4.2 |
| 56-65 | 3.7 | 42.1 | 30.6 | 15.1 | 4.1 | 3.0 | 1.4 |
| Above 65 | 2.8 | 44.9 | 27.7 | 12.9 | 5.6 | 2.8 | 3.3 |

Table 78: Opinions on Immigrant Proportions in Singapore, by Age Cohort

| What do you think is the ideal proportion of immigrants in Singapore? | No immigrants - 0% | 1 to 10% | 11 to 20% | 21 to 30% | 31 to 40% | 41 to 50% | Any proportion above 51% |
|---|--------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------|
| % of respondents by age cohort | | | | | | | |
| 18-25 | 1.0 | 18.4 | 26.9 | 28.1 | 10.9 | 7.2 | 7.5 |
| 26-35 | 3.2 | 21.9 | 30.1 | 21.3 | 10.6 | 5.3 | 7.7 |
| 36-45 | 2.6 | 25.1 | 29.0 | 19.7 | 9.0 | 6.4 | 8.1 |
| 46-55 | 2.9 | 31.6 | 24.8 | 19.5 | 7.1 | 4.0 | 10.1 |
| 56-65 | 3.7 | 32.6 | 27.9 | 17.8 | 6.7 | 4.6 | 6.7 |
| Above 65 | 2.4 | 34.9 | 26.4 | 17.7 | 7.1 | 4.5 | 6.9 |

Majority of individuals open to inter-class interactions; nonetheless policy measures need to address perceived difficulties in social mixing

Our survey results reaffirm the nature of socio-economic status as an increasingly salient faultline in Singapore. To examine attitudes towards people of other income brackets, our survey asked respondents a range of questions on inter-class interaction. The results show that in general, the majority of respondents were open to inter-class interactions: six in 10 respondents disagreed that it was hard to mix with people of a different income background (66 per cent), and that they preferred doing activities with people of similar income levels (64 per cent; see Table 79). Interestingly, almost all respondents (93 per cent) agreed it was good for their children to play with others from a variety of backgrounds, as it would give them greater exposure. These results are promising, as it demonstrates unity and openness regardless of class. Yet, we note that there are still substantial proportions (over a third) of respondents who indicate a preference to associate with others with similar income levels, and difficulties with inter-class mixing.

Table 79: Opinions on Class-Related Scenarios

| How much do you agree with the following statements? | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of respondents | | | | | | |
| I prefer to do activities with people having similar income levels as myself | 10.4 | 26.5 | 27.2 | 19.2 | 14.2 | 2.5 |
| I find it hard to mix with people of a different income bracket | 10.9 | 27.9 | 27.3 | 20.3 | 11.2 | 2.3 |
| It is good if my children play with others from a variety of backgrounds, as it will give them more exposure | 1.0 | 1.9 | 4.1 | 22.9 | 48.5 | 21.7 |

Education positively correlated with openness to social mixing and inter-class interaction; to potentially consider how those from lower socio-economic backgrounds can be provided greater confidence in interacting with those who are better-off

A further breakdown of the results by respondents' education bore some significant trends. Less educated respondents were much more likely to be insular when it comes to inter-class interaction: four in 10 (42 per cent) respondents with a secondary school or lower level of education agreed that they preferred doing activities with people of similar income levels, as compared to two in 10 of their degree-holding counterparts (see Table 80). This distribution was evident when respondents were asked if they found it hard to mix with people of other income brackets; less educated respondents were twice more likely to find it hard (see Table 81). However, regardless of class, respondents wanted their children to play with and be exposed to others from

a variety of backgrounds (approximately nine in 10 across all levels of education), which is a promising sign (see Table 82).

Table 80: Opinions on Class-Related Scenarios by Education Levels

| I prefer to do activities with people having similar income levels as myself | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of respondents by education levels | | | | | | |
| Below Secondary/ Secondary | 9.0 | 24.5 | 24.3 | 18.9 | 20.1 | 3.2 |
| Diploma/ ITE/ Professional Qualification | 11.8 | 26.2 | 27.2 | 20.1 | 12.4 | 2.3 |
| Bachelors'/ Masters' | 10.6 | 29.4 | 31.6 | 18.0 | 8.4 | 2.0 |

Table 81: Opinions on Class-Related Scenarios by Education Levels

| I find it hard to mix with people of a different income bracket | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of respondents by education levels | | | | | | |
| Below Secondary/ Secondary | 8.8 | 23.1 | 25.4 | 23.9 | 15.6 | 3.1 |
| Diploma/ ITE/ Professional Qualification | 11.6 | 29.5 | 27.2 | 18.9 | 10.6 | 2.2 |
| Bachelors'/ Masters' | 12.2 | 32.9 | 29.9 | 16.8 | 6.6 | 1.6 |

Table 82: Opinions on Class-Related Scenarios by Education Levels

| It is good if my children play with others from a variety of backgrounds, as it will give them more exposure | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of respondents by education levels | | | | | | |
| Below Secondary/ Secondary | 1.4 | 2.9 | 5.4 | 24.1 | 50.1 | 16.1 |
| Diploma/ ITE/ Professional Qualification | 0.4 | 1.3 | 3.8 | 24.6 | 46.5 | 23.4 |
| Bachelors'/ Masters' | 1.0 | 1.4 | 3.2 | 19.4 | 48.5 | 26.4 |

While education encourages inter-class interactions, variances across racial groups require some tailored responses specific to the perceptions and preferences of individual communities

When these trends were examined with a race- and class-based lens, we note that respondents who were less educated were more likely to be insular and to reject inter-class interaction. For instance, 42 per cent of lower-educated Chinese respondents agreed to varying extents that they preferred to do activities with people of similar income levels, compared to 28 per cent of their higher-educated counterparts (see Table 83). Preferences for inter-class interaction also cut across racial groups, in addition to education levels. Class differentials were also noted albeit to a more muted extent, when we consider the views of respondents on whether it is good for their children to play with and be exposed to others from different backgrounds (see Table 84).

Table 83: Opinions on Class-Related Scenarios (Individual) by Education Levels and Racial Group

| I prefer to do activities with people having similar income levels as myself | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of respondents by education level and race | | | | | | | |
| Below Secondary / Secondary | Chinese | 7.4 | 25.2 | 25.5 | 17.9 | 20.9 | 3.0 |
| | Malay | 10.9 | 23.1 | 21.7 | 21.7 | 19.5 | 3.2 |
| | Indian | 16.7 | 20.6 | 18.6 | 22.5 | 15.7 | 5.9 |
| Bachelors' / Masters' | Chinese | 9.5 | 28.8 | 33.5 | 17.7 | 8.7 | 1.8 |
| | Malay | 8.0 | 24.0 | 32.0 | 26.0 | 8.0 | 2.0 |
| | Indian | 18.5 | 30.3 | 21.8 | 15.1 | 10.1 | 4.2 |

Table 84: Opinions on Class-Related Scenarios (Playground) by Education Levels and Racial Group

| It is good if my children play with others from a variety of backgrounds, as it will give them more exposure | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of respondents by education level and race | | | | | | | |
| Below Secondary / Secondary | Chinese | 1.6 | 3.0 | 5.5 | 25.3 | 52.2 | 12.4 |
| | Malay | 0.5 | 2.7 | 3.6 | 21.3 | 45.7 | 26.2 |
| | Indian | 2.0 | 3.9 | 5.9 | 19.6 | 37.3 | 31.4 |
| Bachelors' / Masters' | Chinese | 0.7 | 1.3 | 3.3 | 20.2 | 50.8 | 23.8 |
| | Malay | N/A | 2.0 | 4.0 | 16.0 | 38.0 | 40.0 |
| | Indian | 2.5 | 1.7 | 4.2 | 10.9 | 41.2 | 39.5 |

7.4 Attitudes on the Interplay of Religion and LGBT Issues

Significant community discomfort in religious leaders speaking up strongly on LGBT issues in public; attesting to the importance of current policy direction on disaggregating religion and politics

A significant proportion of respondents indicated discomfort with a hypothetical scenario involving the interplay of two faultlines (religion and LGBT). In our survey, the majority of respondents (62 per cent) would feel uncomfortable if religious leaders/ people spoke up strongly in public about LGBT issues (see Table 85). However, a substantial proportion of respondents also disagreed, with close to four in 10 indicating no issues with religious leaders or persons speaking in public on LGBT issues. This illustrates the potential social divide that may arise as a result of religious groups' involvement in public conversations on LGBT.

Table 85: Comfort / Discomfort with Religion / LGBT Interplay Scenario

| How much do you agree with the following statements? | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| I feel uncomfortable if religious leaders/people from a certain religion speak up strongly in public about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues | 7.6 | 12.7 | 18.2 | 24.3 | 22.9 | 14.3 |

Christians likelier to be more amenable to religious leaders speaking strongly on LGBT issues in public; spotlighting consultative and inclusive policy-making needed to mitigate polarisation

However, this division in opinions varied across different religious groups. The majority of Buddhist, Taoist, Muslim respondents and respondents with no religion reported feeling uncomfortable with religious leaders speaking about LGBT issues publicly (seven in 10 respondents from these religions; see Table 86). The division in opinion was more salient for Catholic and Christian respondents. About five in 10 Christian respondents disagreed that they were uncomfortable with religious leaders speaking out strongly in public on LGBT issues.

Table 86: Comfort / Discomfort with Religion / LGBT Interplay Scenario by Religion

| I feel uncomfortable if religious leaders/people from a certain religion speak up strongly in public about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| % of respondents by religion | | | | | | |
| Buddhists | 5.6 | 12.5 | 18.9 | 26.6 | 23.9 | 12.6 |
| Taoists | 6.0 | 7.9 | 15.3 | 24.0 | 26.4 | 20.4 |
| Muslims | 9.5 | 11.8 | 16.8 | 25.5 | 21.8 | 14.5 |
| Hindus | 12.6 | 17.6 | 14.6 | 26.6 | 16.6 | 12.1 |
| Catholics | 7.9 | 13.7 | 21.6 | 20.8 | 24.9 | 11.1 |
| Christians | 11.1 | 18.6 | 21.4 | 21.6 | 16.9 | 10.5 |
| No Religion | 6.4 | 9.9 | 17.2 | 22.1 | 25.4 | 19.0 |

Greater proportions of older, less educated respondents uncomfortable with religious leaders speaking strongly on LGBT issues in public

Similarly, older people were more likely to agree they would be uncomfortable with religious leaders speaking out publicly about LGBT issues, as compared to their younger counterparts; 68 per cent of respondents aged above 65 felt this way, as compared 53 per cent of respondents aged 18–25 (see Table 87). Similarly, less educated respondents were more likely to be uncomfortable, as compared to highly educated respondents: 67 per cent of respondents with a secondary school and below level of education felt this way, as compared to 55 per cent of respondents with degrees (see Table 88). Older and less educated respondents may adopt a more conservative stance as to whether public discourse by religious leaders is appropriate for these “hot-button” issues; compared to their younger, more educated counterparts who were possibly more amenable to the values of free speech.

Table 87: Comfort / Discomfort with Religion / LGBT Interplay Scenario by Age Cohort

| I feel uncomfortable if religious leaders/people from a certain religion speak up strongly in public about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of respondents by age cohort | | | | | | |
| 18-25 | 12.3 | 13.8 | 21.5 | 24.5 | 13.8 | 14.3 |
| 26-35 | 7.6 | 13.3 | 21.2 | 26.6 | 19.6 | 11.8 |
| 36-45 | 7.4 | 11.0 | 19.0 | 26.1 | 22.7 | 13.8 |
| 46-55 | 7.6 | 13.5 | 16.6 | 24.7 | 22.4 | 15.2 |
| 56-65 | 4.2 | 15.9 | 16.8 | 21.5 | 26.7 | 14.9 |
| Above 65 | 8.7 | 8.3 | 15.3 | 21.9 | 29.5 | 16.3 |

Table 88: Comfort / Discomfort with Religion / LGBT Interplay Scenario by Education Levels

| I feel uncomfortable if religious leaders/people from a certain religion speak up strongly in public about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| % of respondents by education levels | | | | | | |
| Below Secondary/ Secondary | 7.3 | 9.9 | 15.6 | 24.1 | 26.9 | 16.2 |
| Diploma/ ITE/ Professional Qualification | 6.8 | 12.0 | 19.3 | 26.7 | 22.1 | 13.2 |
| Bachelors'/ Masters' | 8.4 | 16.5 | 20.3 | 22.9 | 19.0 | 12.9 |

8. CONCLUSION

This FiS study has attempted to provide an overview of five key faultlines with the potential to engender social division in Singapore: 1) race; 2) religion; 3) immigration; 4) SES or class; and 5) LGBT issues. In tandem with existing scholarship, FiS considers three main areas of interest: 1) the perceptions of our resident population regarding the consequences of mismanaging significant societal faultlines and the relative volatility of issues; 2) desired levels of state involvement and public discourse in addressing the faultlines; and 3) key insights on community attitudes towards and management of faultlines. The survey responses to new questions in the 2018 IPS RRL study were utilised across all three areas to facilitate a more in-depth social sensing of the broader community's key concerns and desired approaches.

In general, this study has found that the majority of Singaporeans were cognizant of the gravity of managing our societal faultlines. Most recognised that there would be dire consequences to Singapore society if faultlines were not properly dealt with. Clearly, the faultlines associated with race and religion were seen as most consequential. Even then, one may contend that the proportion that expected violence as a result of mismanagement of this faultline is fairly low — just under 40 per cent. It is hard to imagine a Singapore ridden with racial and religious tension culminating in violence. The relative high levels of harmony and quick action by the authorities to quell any potential fallout from the mismanagement of race and religious differences, have perhaps given us an illusion that this state of affairs is natural.

However, the reality, as can be demonstrated in many other societies, is that these faultlines can continue to deepen and may, if the conditions allow, spark very negative consequences including violence. The close management of faultlines — especially race and religion — which continue to be a hallmark of the Singapore state, cannot be disregarded if there is to be sustained peaceful co-existence in Singapore.

We conclude with a summary of the key insights gleaned from the survey findings across the five faultlines as follows.

Most perceived that the perennial issues of race and religion were adequately managed by the state. However, younger respondents perceived the consequences of mismanaging race and religion to be more ominous, compared to older cohorts. Education plays a key role in sensitising individuals to the potential fallout of mismanaging race and religion. Race is another pertinent factor, whereby majority-race respondents were more likely to perceive greater susceptibility to social fracture due to mismanaging race issues.

In terms of views on state involvement, lower-educated Chinese and higher-educated minorities were more likely to desire increased state involvement in managing race and religion. Similarly older cohorts were more likely to desire more state involvement in issues of race and religion compared to youth. Taken in tandem with findings on perceived mismanagement consequences, younger cohorts seemed most aware of the perils of mismanaging race and religion —

but were less interested in state involvement. The converse was true of older cohorts. This contradiction could result due to differing views on the role of government in managing race and religious issues. Young people were certainly more likely to have learnt from National Education and Social Studies education efforts alongside available media that such issues are potent. However, they are likely to believe that we have had enough of government intervention in this area, and that community efforts are sufficient. For instance based on a previous study, younger persons are much more open to extremist ideas perpetuated online. Perhaps this is because they believe that the online community is sufficiently mature and empowered to handle such issues.

Older people, even those who lived through some of the earlier race and religious tensions, may be of the opinion that the consequences are less adverse. Most agreed that there were consequences but differed on the extent — perhaps their lived experiences involving violence might have resulted in some desensitisation. Nonetheless, the fact that older people believed that the government was the best “fixer” of problems in Singapore illustrates their trust in the state to deliver. This is supported by the finding that older respondents were more likely to eschew public dialogue for issues of race and religion; preferring state intervention. Of course, minority-race respondents were significantly more likely to feel more public dialogue needed on race and religion. Education and religious conservatism were also other factors impacting desire for public dialogue on race and religion.

In terms of attitudes towards inflammatory content on race and religion, the broader community was circumspect when encountering such material. Minority-race respondents were more likely to actively determine authenticity of inflammatory material on race and religion; and youth and less educated respondents more likely to circulate inflammatory content on social media to their friends. This suggests that continued efforts are needed for a more media-cognizant population — especially for vulnerable members of the community who may need a better grasp of how to determine the veracity of information. There is also a need for a better understanding on how such content mentally impacts “passive” individuals despite their non-action.

Generally, the community recognised the role of government in maintaining racial and religious harmony. However, minority-race respondents were slightly more likely to desire more legislation to ensure harmony. Respondents were also divided on the impact of increasing religiosity on religious harmony, and whether religious groups should be accorded more rights. Muslims and Christians, alongside youth and the less educated, were more likely to desire wider boundaries on religious freedom and expression. These entail the need for policy to continue to ensure the cultural rights of population and the needs for minority representation; effective communication of policy directions and outcomes; and the prioritisation of a consultative approach to incorporate varying views.

One finding that warrants augmented attention involves respondents being divided on embracing affirmative action to manage faultlines. A greater proportion of minorities and the less educated were agreeable to such a policy approach. More engagement is hence needed on the efficacy of prevailing meritocratic ideals; as well as to consider the merits of representation.

On the issue of the potential consequences stemming from mismanaging immigration and class issues, most respondents perceive that such a scenario could impact national identity and government trust the most. This is especially so for Chinese respondents. Affluence, age, and perceived financial mobility were also correlated with expectations of consequences arising from mismanaging immigration and class — whereby more well-off and younger respondents, as well as those who perceived negative financial mobility were more likely to expect more severe consequences.

Across the five faultlines, largest proportions of respondents indicated their desire for the state to do more in mitigating immigration and class issues — especially for youth. Such desire is associated with views on social welfarism and education levels. Similarly, youth and the higher-educated desired more public discussions on class and immigration. Local-born and affluent individuals were more likely to desire increased public discussions on the immigration faultline.

When it comes to attitudes towards the state and policies for immigration and class issues, the responses indicate that Singaporean residents are open to migrants in calibrated proportions; and that the majority of individuals open to inter-class interactions. Education is positively correlated with openness to social mixing and inter-class interaction, although some variances across racial groups are observed. These entail the need for policy-making to consider the population's threshold for immigrants in different spaces; address perceived difficulties in social mixing; potentially consider how those from lower socio-economic backgrounds can be provided greater confidence in interacting with those who are better-off; and provide tailored responses specific to the perceptions and preferences of individual communities.

On the topic of LGBT issues, the study finds that many expect a polarised, angry society should such issues be mismanaged. These sentiments feature especially among youth. Christians, Muslims and higher-educated individuals are also more sensitive to the consequences of mismanaging LGBT issues. Consequently, millennials especially those who hold more liberal sexual values are more likely to desire state involvement in LGBT issues (possibly hoping the state will through policy changes increase freedoms for LGBT persons). Christians and Muslims are also more likely to support greater state involvement in LGBT issues — though for differing reasons. Similar trends are noted for youth vis-à-vis the need for more public discourse on LGBT issues. More liberal respondents are also more likely to desire greater public discourse.

When perusing views on the interplay of religion and LGBT issues, it is clear that there is significant community discomfort in religious leaders speaking up strongly on LGBT issues in public. Greater proportions of older, less educated respondents indicated such discomfort; even as Christians were likelier to be more amenable to religious leaders speaking strongly on LGBT issues in public. These attest to the importance of current policy direction on disaggregating religion and politics, as well as the need to spotlight consultative and inclusive policy-making to mitigate polarisation.

A more in-depth review of community attitudes towards various issues associated with the faultlines reveals the need for further study and focus vis-à-vis: 1) equipping the community to deal with inflammatory content circulated across traditional and contemporary channels such as social media; 2) continued efforts to navigate increasing religiosity and preferences for greater religious freedoms; 3) the efficacy of meritocratic ideals in relation to desires for affirmative action; 4) continued calibration and communication of immigrant inflows to be congruent of resident population's preferences in relation to immigrant proportions; 5) the need to address perceived difficulties and sustain the positive impact of education in social mixing; and 6) the disaggregation of religion and politics to prevent the "deepening" and "conflation" of faultlines along religious and sexual identities. In addition, it is noted that a significant number of differing viewpoints expressed vary based on age cohorts and education levels.

So, whither social divisions in Singapore? By various measures, the first half-century of the island-state's independent existence has given rise to a nation able to robustly check the potential deepening of faultlines across race, language, religion and more contemporary issues. This has involved, and will continue to involve sound and pro-active governance coupled with strong community engagement and inclusion efforts. Yet, amidst novel and evermore intractable challenges resulting due to the myriad of forces at play — such as the globalised, connected landscape replete with ever-faster flows of information — policy and people prerogatives will always require constant appraising and revising to ensure Singapore continues to maintain its coveted social harmony. Consultative governance, apart from leveraging state-driven dialogues with stakeholders and ordinary citizens, will now have to account for opinions and views promulgated on a range of community platforms too.

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