

## **Prejudice in Singapore largely seen the same as 5 years ago: survey**

**Jeanette Tan**

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Most people in Singapore believe that the level of prejudice in Singapore – whether against race, religion, language, gender, age or nationality – has largely stayed the same in the past five years.

According to a survey conducted by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), between 40.5 per cent and 50.7 per cent of respondents feel that the level of prejudice that exists in Singapore is “about the same” as it was five years ago.

When it came to nationality-based prejudice, however, a greater percentage of respondents (32.1 per cent) believe there is “more or much more” prejudice in Singapore compared to five years ago than the percentage that think it is “less or much less”.

Asked about why the perception of nationality-based prejudice was higher than that of race or religion, Mathew Mathews, senior research fellow at IPS, said, “For one, generally, racial and religious prejudice is more often felt by minorities. However, immigration issues are felt by everyone, and so you can expect more concerns from a broader group of Singaporeans about this issue.”

Broken down further, the study found that among the 26 to 35-year-olds, more than half of Chinese respondents said there was more or much more nationality-based prejudice.

Meanwhile, 46.2 per cent of respondents of “other” races felt that way, as compared to 33.3 per cent and 39.1 per cent for Malays and Indians respectively.

These findings come amid rising social tensions in the densely populated nation-state over the large influx of migrants in the past several years.

A white paper released last year suggesting that the government should brace for an increase in the country’s population to as much as 6.9 million by 2030 triggered the largest protests seen in the city-state in decades.

The household survey was conducted among 4131 Singapore residents, most of whom are citizens, between December 2012 and April 2013. Its results were shared on Tuesday at the IPS Singapore Perspectives Conference.